

# FREEDOM

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# PREFACE

**H**as freedom become a lost cause? Has the word itself been drained of all substantial meaning? Have we forgotten why brave men gave up their lives in a bygone era? I wonder. Christians, conservatives, and patriots have to a great extent lost the vision for freedom. There is less and less interest in liberty anymore, and the word is hardly mentioned in the political campaigns. Words like “tyranny” and “liberty” seem to have fallen into disrepute. The terms have come to feel a bit strange and unwieldy when used in common parlance.

One so rarely hears pastors preach against tyranny in Washington DC, as was common at other times in this nation’s history. The passion for freedom that burned in the hearts of the Pilgrims, Presbyterians, and patriots

has greatly diminished today. Some politicians seem reluctant to even invoke the word. When the word is employed, it is usually in reference to libertine behavior, or to some insubstantial freedom, as for example the possession of marijuana.

In the fall of 1994, I ran as a gubernatorial candidate in the State of Colorado. Basically, I wanted freedom from big government, a restoration of what our forefathers called “the right to life, liberty, and property.” In my campaigning, I would display a graph of government spending as a percentage of the Gross National Income over the last 200 years. I showed the crowds the massive increase in the size of government since 1900 (rising sharply from 9 percent to 46 percent of the Gross National Income). I would point out that Republican and Democrat alike have contributed to this trend by increasing the purview of government in the nation, incrementally over 120 years. Then, I would follow up with a dramatic rendition of Samuel Adams’ famous quote:

“If you love wealth more than liberty, the tranquility of servitude better than the animating contest of freedom, depart from us in peace. We ask not your counsel nor your arms. May your chains rest lightly upon you, and may posterity forget that you were our countrymen!”

The crowd stared at me in shocked disbelief—not a single “hear, hear!” from the lot of them. It seems that the tranquility of servitude to the Social Security System, to Medicare and Medicaid, and to all the other bureaucracies, had fairly absorbed the populace. It was hard to find more than a few individuals across the state who had any genuine interest in freedom from big government. Suffice it to say that I walked away with less than 4 percent of the vote in the 1994 gubernatorial election. Since then, the purview of government has continued its steady growth.

Yet, I cannot believe that we are destined to a future of eternal slavery on earth. I cannot believe that all humans, believers included, are forever consigned to increasing levels of enslavement to their fellow man (and to the all-consuming state). As sure as I am of Christ’s resurrection, I am certain that He will set the captives free in more ways than one. I am certain that if the Son will set us free, we will be free indeed (John 8:36).

## FALSE PRETENSES

Though the word “freedom” is hardly used in our day, symbols of bondage are increasingly popular with the youth. One of the most popular movies of 2015 prominently features sexual practices that signify “bondage.” Body-piercing, certain clothing styles, jewelry, and other symbols popular with the youth attempt to celebrate the accoutrements of bondage and slavery. These things are cultural manifestations of a post-Christian era.

Nonetheless, slavery still retains something of a negative connotation in the mind of most Americans, at least with those who have been influenced by a Christian world and life view. The modern world however, demonstrates itself to be shallow, inconsistent, and disingenuous when it preaches the freedom message. Feminists boast of their freedoms. Progressives promise to free women from their husbands, and then place them under fifteen layers of bureaucratic control (through socialist systems or highly-regulated capitalism). They liberate African Americans from slavery, only to deliver them over to the Washington welfare state by the millions.<sup>1</sup> “Liberals” fight for freedom to abort children and to use recreational drugs, while removing all other meaningful freedoms and constructing a police state. These examples are emblematic of the agenda of the Left in this country (and other socialist nations in the modern world).

There is no neutrality in the war of worldviews, and the first battleground forms over the definition of terms. Big Brother’s “Newspeak”<sup>2</sup> will rush in to define “freedom” as slavery, and “peace” as war. The devil is not an idiot, and he knows that “he who defines, wins.” Therefore, we must lay out our terms by clear biblical definitions from the outset, or we will lose this battle.

*Part I*

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# FREEDOM



## *Chapter 1*

# FREEDOM DEFINED

**T**he word “freedom” has a wonderful ring to the Western ear. If you were to ask the average person, “Would you like to be free?” doubtless he would still answer in the affirmative. However, based on the Google Ngram metric, frequency of usage in popular literature of the word “freedom” has dropped off by about 30 percent since the 1960s. The use of the word “liberty” has decreased in popular usage by 80 percent over the last century. Despite the wild revolutions and protests of the last century, people are far less interested in liberty than they were in previous centuries. But “freedom” is a problematic word, and it is generally avoided in conversations now. Widely differing values produce widely varying definitions of freedom, and the subject is best avoided in civil conversations. This value confusion has come about via the clever deception of the evil one.



The word “freedom” is a vital part of the Christian vocabulary. Above any and all others, Christians should speak often of freedom. No one should value freedom more, speak of freedom more, seek freedom, and exalt in their freedom more than followers of Christ. In fact, the entire Bible is a story of redemption, and the very word redemption denotes freedom from slavery (Gen. 48:16, Ex. 6:6, 15:13, Lev. 27:28, 2 Sam. 4:9, Neh. 5:5, Ps. 25:22, 34:22, 44:26, 49:7,15, 72:14, 107:2, 130:8, Isa. 1:27, 35:9, 44:22, 50:2, 51:11, 52:3, 63:4, Hos. 7:13, 13:14). Nine psalms speak directly to Israel’s deliverance from Egypt (Ps. 68, 78, 80, 81, 105, 106, 114, 135, 136). This historical event dominates the Old Testament consciousness. The exodus was the main event of the Old Testament story of redemption, and the psalmists and prophets repeatedly referred to it. It was the supreme act of God in the Old Testament whereby His people were delivered from bondage, and led into the Promised Land.

The Greek word for “freedom” in the New Testament is the same word used for “forgiveness,” namely, ἐλευθερώω. It is translated “to obtain a release” or “to exempt from liability.” Enslavement entails allegiance and obedience to the master. From passages like Matthew 11:30, we learn that while some level of servitude is inevitable in God’s created order, some masters are better than others. The Hebrew word used in Isaiah 61:1 and Leviticus 25:10 is דֶּרֶר (Deror). As is characteristic of the Hebrew language, the definition is better presented in pictorial form, as the release of a dam allowing water to flow freely without hindrance.

Modern English definitions betray a wrong worldview, by taking a humanist, absolutist view of these words. For example, the Google definition of freedom is “the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants without hindrance or restraint.”<sup>1</sup> Liberty is defined as “the state of being free within society from oppressive restrictions imposed by authority on one’s way of life, behavior, or political views,” or “the power or scope to act as one pleases.”<sup>2</sup> The second definition especially illustrates the humanist approach to the word, as natural man does seek unrestrained individual license.

According to a Christian view of the world, all men by nature are enslaved by the devil who is the worst tyrant who ever lived (Eph. 2:2). The devil is the essence of that which is evil. He is deceptive and malignant, desiring nothing for mankind but misery and bondage. Therefore, wherever the Christian Gospel has not penetrated, slavery of all stripes dominates.

Torture, unrestrained beatings, chattel enslavement, long-term confinement, pain, mass-murders, widow burning, infanticide, human sacrifice, forced separation of parents and children, the murder of pregnant women, and child sex slavery mark those pagan societies under the power of the devil and untouched by Christian influence. In our day, Muslims, pagan animists, humanists, and communists are all known for these horrific evils. As the Christian influence in the West has waned over the last fifty years, it should come as no surprise that child sex slavery, infanticide, and torture are coming back. The same phenomena was observed in communist Russia and the Eastern bloc during the twentieth century.

## THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

Into this dismal world of tyranny and misery came the Lord Jesus Christ. He broke in on the scene in AD 30 pronouncing liberty for the captives from the very outset of His ministry (Luke 4:18). He spoke much of “freedom,” as did His apostles. If these words were important to Jesus, they should of course frequent the working vocabulary of every follower of Christ today.

Now, one of the reasons why people in the time of Christ or people today are unlikely to use words like “liberty” is that they do not believe they are in bondage. When Jesus raised the matter with the Pharisees in John 8, they were stunned to hear that they too were enslaved. They rather insisted that they were Abraham’s seed and consequently born free. Jesus however disagreed, responding emphatically, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin” (John. 8:35).

The Pharisees thought of freedom in terms of political and cultural identity, and they could not think of it in the more fundamental sense. This is typical for natural man who is always more concerned with superficialities and externals. But Jesus Christ came to both reveal and resolve the core problems with which man is terribly plagued. The ultimate and most fundamental form of slavery is enslavement to sin. Given that sin is defined as the “transgression of God’s law,” anybody who breaks God’s laws is the slave of sin (according to Jesus Christ).

Christ followed up his discussion on slavery with those glorious words in verse 36: “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

Thus, Christ's redemption is fundamental as well. When Jesus Christ provides freedom, it will be no sham freedom, no temporary, superficial, pseudo-freedom as that promised by pseudo-liberal politicians. His freedom is the ultimate freedom, as free as a man can possibly be. Of course, absolute freedom as imagined by the humanist is impossible. Men may dream of complete autonomy, such as Jean-Paul Sartre's "authentic" life of freedom from all constraints. But that is an impossible dream. It can never happen. Men will either serve the devil or they will serve Christ.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18).

Actually, the "freedom indeed" that Christ provides comes with another servanthood. When we come into His kingdom, we become servants of another King, the most benevolent King of all, and our relationship is characterized more by sonship (Gal. 4:7) and friendship (John 15:14,15) than by servanthood. His yoke is easy and His burden is light compared to all others (Matt. 11:28-30). In essence, our Lord tells us to "choose your servitude." Either we can be enslaved to the most oppressive tyrant who ever lived, or we can be a servant, a friend, and a son in the family of God.

## THE LAW OF LIBERTY

God's law is described in the Book of James as the "perfect law of liberty," (Jas. 1:25, 2:8-13). According to this text, the law of Christ allows for maximum liberty because mercy overcomes judgment, and releases us from bondage to sin (which is defined in Scripture as the transgression of the law). Christian believers are freed from condemnation because of Christ's forgiveness (Rom. 8:1-3), and they are free to keep the law because of His power working in them (Rom. 6:1-14). Thus, Christians of all people are the most free. They are forgiven for breaking the law and at the same time are enabled to keep the law, thereby maximizing their day-to-day liberty under that law. They are freed from the bondage of a guilt complex, and they are set free from those sins and addictions that curtail true liberty. Additionally, they are increasingly freed from extra-

neous man-made rules, regulations, and fences that do not in themselves represent God's moral laws. Under the law of liberty, we receive mercy and we grant mercy. We bind ourselves by judgment, and we bind others by judgment, a judgment that must be ordered according to the boundaries of God's laws. According to the law of Christ, mercy triumphs over judgment.

When God commands, "Thou shalt not steal," (Ex. 20:15, Deut. 5:19, 19:14, Luke 18:20, Rom. 13:9), He defines maximum liberty for ourselves and others. When men steal and kill, they curtail liberties (to life and property) for themselves and others. When a man steals another man's wife, he tightens the slave bands of sin around his own wrists. The libertine and antinomian are wrong when they define maximum liberty as "doing whatever a man wishes to do." When men serve other gods and submit themselves to addictions (such as alcohol, drugs, or pornography) they find themselves in the most severe bondage. These earthly gods will beat them to death. In reference to foods, the Apostle Paul writes, "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any" (1 Cor. 6:12-13; reference also 1 Cor. 10:23-25). To succumb to addictions is to walk into the cage and throw away the key. This is something Paul will not do, according to his own testimony. A nation has lost its interest in freedom when the populace gives way to addictions. From a recent collection of data published on addictions, it appears that most Americans are addicted to some form of destructive vice: For example, "Twenty-eight percent of young people between the ages of 18 and 24 binge-drink five times a month, putting away seven drinks in one sitting."<sup>3</sup> Add to this, the 9.2 percent of Americans who abuse drugs (this trend is on the rise).<sup>4</sup> Considering that there is an additional 66 percent of young men addicted to pornography,<sup>5</sup> with 10 percent clinically addicted to computer games, and we now begin to get a picture of modern society. Above all, addictive behavior points to problems with slavery in a culture.

## THE CONNECTION WITH POLITICAL LIBERTY

America's founding fathers understood an important axiom which was worked into the fiber of the national character from the beginning. Two of the most important figures in America's history state the same thing in different ways:

“Those who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants”  
- William Penn<sup>6</sup>

“Either you’ll be governed by God, or by God you’ll be governed.”  
- Benjamin Franklin

These men certainly understood the vital importance of self-government, the indissoluble connection between personal morality and political freedom. The principle is taken from the wisdom of Solomon:

“For the transgression of a land many are the princes thereof: but by a man of understanding and knowledge the state thereof shall be prolonged” (Prov. 28:2).

This should explain the modern leftist agenda, where government agencies are eager to see parents kill their own children, and promote the most perverse sexual acts with tax dollars. From whence comes their enthusiastic commitment to bring about the destruction of the family? Fundamentally, they are committed to the establishment of tyrannical governments. Thus, as much as they break down the moral fiber of the people, they grease the skids for more tyranny. If there is a central principle that drives “the Gentiles,” it is the power motive.

“The kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve” (Luke 23:25-26).

This power motive drives the politics, the corporations, and the non-profit systems controlled by “the Gentiles” or the heathen nations. These leaders are primarily focused on position and power, and their systems will maximize servitude and minimize political freedoms within their systems over time. Their educational systems, technology, media, and organizations are always in the process of accumulating and centralizing power.

Here then, is the connection with political freedom. At root, it is a sinful people that provides the basis for political tyranny. Satan understands this, and all tyrants take advantage of it. But Christ solves the problem, when He tells us, “If the Son will make you free, you will be free indeed!” If sin is the transgression of the law, and if Jesus came to save His people

from their sins (Matt. 1:21), then we have the solution! As more people enjoy the salvation that Christ brings, the seedbed for tyranny disappears. The Israelites never quite learned this over 1800 long years. You cannot solve the problem of Egypt, the Philistines, Assyria, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, until you have addressed the problem of sin. So Jesus Christ enters the picture to provide the world a seedbed for freedom.

## THE PRIMA FACIE EVIDENCE FOR THE CASE

Slaves who are locked into a slavish mindset will not be interested in self-government. Both Scripture and history testify to this truth. Those least likely to be interested in freedom from tyrants are usually already controlled by the idolatry of materialism, pornography addiction, drunkenness, or the self-centered life. They would sacrifice nothing for a higher value than their own present comfort. This is the young man who plays video games while his empire burns even as the Romans sat in the games while the pagan hordes burned down the city. This is the man who is more interested in the Super Bowl than the elections. This is the father who puts more time into his golf game than in teaching his children God's Word or fighting for righteousness and liberty in the public sphere.

When men have embraced sin, they will usually embrace tyranny as well. They run to it, and they will "kiss the chains that bind them," to use Samuel Adams' words. They may even boast in their chains. They commend the systems that regulate them and recommend them to others. Such is the deception of the evil one. To hope that an immoral people would join the struggle for freedom is but a pipe dream. The leeks are better in Egypt (Num. 11:5).

The problem with the man who is too enthralled by pornography to battle the rising tyranny of the day is that he is blinded by sin. He loses all sense of his condition, and he loses a grasp on the distinction between good and evil. A Christian businessman was speaking to several coworkers about his interest in supporting ministries that rescued children forced into sex slavery. It was immediately obvious that the other men were uncomfortable with the discussion, and they changed the subject. Why weren't they as ardent in their opposition to tyrannical forms of evil as the Christian? We may not be able to identify the precise problem with these men. But it should be obvious that any man caught in pornography addiction will apply little or no enthusiasm towards ridding the world of child sex traf-

ficking. Sin is the root of all tyranny, all blindness, all loss of perspective, and all evil in the world. Therefore, a man can hardly engage the battle for freedom elsewhere if he has yet to be set free from the shackles of sin in his own life. This can only happen by the powerful blood of Jesus Christ. The gospel therefore, is basic to all forms of liberty.

“For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled” (2 Cor. 10:4-6).

This text puts both the individual and the social responsibility together in the right order in a single passage. Every Christian is called to cast down every imagination that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ (vs. 4, 5). However, we cannot avenge *all* disobedience, until our own obedience is matured or perfected (vs. 6). The man who is dealing with individual sin in his own life can hardly address institutional sin until his obedience is matured.

## A CRUCIAL CONNECTION

Most Christians would readily agree that Christ came to “set us free from Satan’s power and might.” They seek freedom from sin by the redemption of Christ. However, many still do not accept the necessary implications which extend into the temporal, political, and economic settings. Or they do not regard them as important. The Apostle Paul makes this crucial connection in 1 Corinthians 7:

“Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called. Art thou called being a servant? Care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant is the Lord’s freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ’s servant. Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men” (1 Cor. 7:21-23).

While the Apostle Paul recognizes the inevitability of some manner of slavery in a sin-cursed world (whether to local slave masters, large corpo-

rations, banks, or governments), he is not content to leave it there. Specifically, Paul addresses the slave in the Roman economy of the day. On one hand, Paul does not recommend slave revolts and illegitimate revolutions. If there is no lawful way to extricate yourself from this condition, he says, “Abide in the same calling... don’t be anxious about it.” Nonetheless, he adds an important qualification: “If there is an opportunity to obtain freedom, take full advantage of it. Use it rather.”

In case the reader is tempted to ignore this qualification, Paul concludes the paragraph with a sharp rejoinder: “Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.” This brief statement offers tremendous support for the cause of freedom from the unnecessary and illegitimate servitude of men. What more could he say? Is there any higher value we may attach to it than the price of the precious blood of the Son of God? Yes, the blood of Christ most certainly redeems us from sin. But that blood redemption also extends to the *effects of sin, including temporal slave-based systems of men.*

Thus, Christians will resist all forms of slavery, while still recognizing the inevitable consequences of sin in a sinful world. Surely debt, tyrannical governments, and varying forms of enslavement are as inevitable as divorce and disease in this world of sin. But we are not content to leave it there. We continue to value and believe in the efficacious power of the blood redemption of Christ. We cling to His promise: “If the Son will set you free, you will be free indeed.” Where Christ works His redemption, He will make thorough work of it.

We will not take one form of slavery in exchange for another. Should the federal government attempt to enslave a nation in exchange for abolishing fiefdoms in the Southern states, we will not settle for it. We want an end to all forms of slavery, by legitimate means. We understand that revolution and war cannot accomplish what regeneration can do. Thus, we are primarily interested in the preaching of the Christian Gospel and the salvation of men from their sin. Should the humanists recommend alternate forms of slavery and revolutionary forms to bring it about, we will reject it. Should an ungodly president promise to set men free, we will suspect his agenda. However, whenever a nation seeks freedom by repentance and appeals to the Lord Jesus Christ, we are more hopeful.

When men cease looking to big governments and petty lords for their



security and when they learn to trust in God for their daily food and their salvation, they will begin to value true freedom again. When they repent of their sins of pride, slothfulness, idolatry, and addictions, they will find less of a need for the chains of institutionalized slavery to form their social systems. The day they are more impelled by the power of love than the motive of power, they will spend more time preaching the Gospel and disciple-ing men than enslaving them. They will walk away from the temptation to centralize power and wealth in fiefdoms large or small.

## BIBLICAL LAW DEFINES LIBERTY

Actually the Bible does not speak of liberty or freedom apart from redemption from sin, which is the transgression of the laws of God. Thus, true liberty and human rights properly derive from the law of God duly respected and obeyed in all spheres of life including the political. If liberty is defined by the laws of God, then the freedoms to be defended and secured by human governments should be obvious for the Christian. The following offers several examples of these “rights” as defined by the laws of God.

A man and his family have a right to defend their home, if one breaks in at night (Ex. 22:2).

A man and his family have the right to own private property, protected from thieves (Ex. 20:15, Rom. 13:9). The civil magistrate should require thieves to work and retribute to the victims of theft (Ex. 22:1, Eph. 4:28). Governments have no right to eminent domain over a man’s home (1 Kings 21:17-19).

A man has a right to possess appropriate weaponry to defend himself and others. Defense of others is preferred to self defense in Scripture (Neh. 4:14, Luke 22:36).

Christians ought to have the freedom to preach the Gospel in public forums, public parks, public beaches, and public streets without interference from the civil magistrate or the mob (Acts 5:29).

Christian parents ought to have the freedom to direct the education and make medical choices for their children (Ex. 21:16, 22:16, Num. 30:1-6, Deut. 6:7, Eph. 6:4).

A man has a right to set wages for his employees, free and clear of government control (Matt. 20:15). All must maintain their verbal or written contracts made in the marketplace.

Governments that take more than 10 percent of the people's income are tyrannical (1 Sam. 8:15-18).

When it comes to public projects, the rich shall not pay more and the poor shall not pay less (Ex. 30:15).

The state has no right to dictate the worship of the church (2 Chron. 26:17ff). However, the state may interfere when a cult engages in human sacrifice or possibly even animal sacrifice (Ex. 22:20). The limits of religious liberty in any nation must be carefully considered. Jesus Christ tolerated the idea of multiple denominational strains (Mark 9:38ff), and, the parable of the wheat and tares prohibited any kind of religious jihad for Christians (Matt. 13:29-30).

A man may not be convicted of a crime without at least two or three witnesses (Deut. 17:6, 19:15, 2 Cor. 13:1). Severe penalties must be meted out on false witnesses in a court of law (Deut. 19:16-19).

If a baby in utero is killed accidentally (when subjected to hazardous conditions by careless men), at least a fine must be imposed on those responsible (Ex. 21:22-23). The civil magistrate must protect the right to life.

These are very basic laws that establish liberty, as determined by the God who is the very definition of justice. True Christians then must and will seek justice by the incorporation of the general equity of these laws with the civil magistrate. Above all people in the world, they will recognize the bounds of true liberty and defend them rigorously.

## WESTERN LIBERTIES FORMED BY CHRISTIANS

Over the last two thousand years, great men have appeared on the scene - heroes of the Christian faith who have identified this connection between Christ and the blessing of liberty, and they have brought freedom to the world. If history provides us any heroes at all, these real freedom-fighters are worthy of our admiration and appreciation. These heroes did not

appear in Muslim countries or in pagan nations, nor do they come from Mexico, Africa, or China in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. They did not take men out of the hands of one tyrant only to deliver them into the hands of another (as in the case of Marxist revolutions and slave revolts). These great men came from Ireland, Scotland, England, the Netherlands, and America. To this day, these are the countries which remain the most free in the world (according to the Heritage Foundation Freedom Index). Of the most free nations in the world, each of the top ten have roots in the Protestant Reformation which took place in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>7</sup> The battle for freedom played out in Scotland with William Wallace, in England with Oliver Cromwell, in Ireland with Patrick, and in America with Patrick Henry and a host of others. The effect of this work is evident in the Freedom Indexes centuries later. While England, America, and Scotland have had their tyrants and turncoats, they have also been blessed with an unusual number of courageous freedom heroes who have secured liberty by their blood and by their faith. This is the only explanation for what little economic and political liberty this world has ever experienced. It is history's unfolding story of Christ and His followers.

It is one thing to tell the stories of pastors and missionaries who brought a good message, and these are all very encouraging. Yet it is quite another thing to look at the fruits of other courageous men of faith who did something with their faith in other spheres. They secured something of lasting value with their faith—they brought liberty to millions of oppressed peoples. That is what makes this story so compelling.

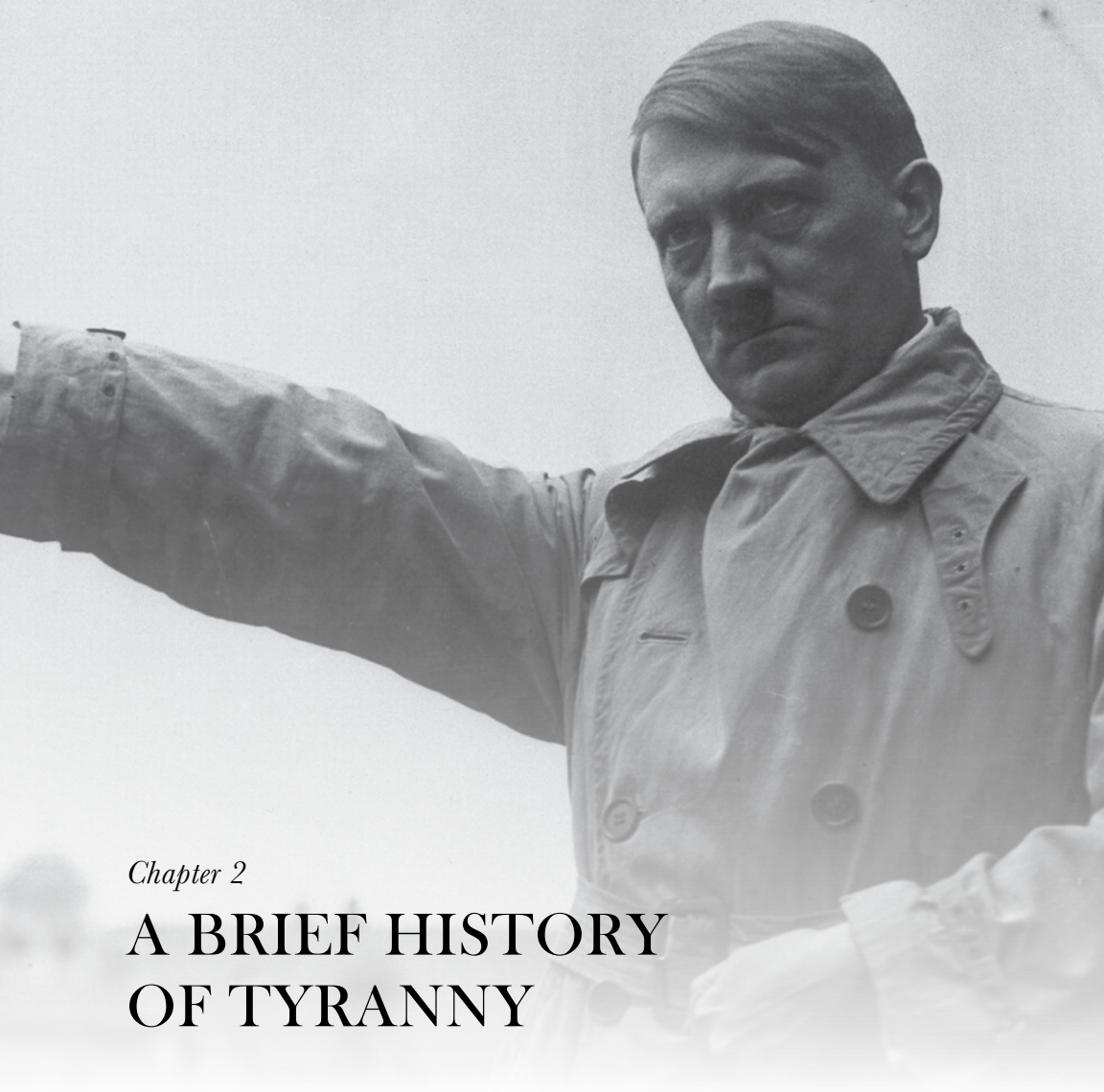
In the present day these great lessons from history provide us an inspiring vision for the future. The Western heritage of freedom is quickly fading as I shall explain later. Many enjoy the fruit of liberty, but few are doing anything to cultivate the tree that produces it. Might there be more opportunities to see liberty retained and expanded throughout the world? May God bring more freedom heroes to every nation in the world, should Christ tarry (over the centuries to come). Christ's kingdom proclaims the jubilee, and where His kingdom scratches the surface of this earth's systems, there will be more opportunities to bring about temporal freedoms.

“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof!” (Lev. 25:10)

*Part II*

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# TYRANNY



*Chapter 2*

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF TYRANNY

“When the wicked rule, the people mourn, but when the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice” (Prov. 29:2).

**H**uman leaders have quite the capacity to make the lives of their people miserable as shall be demonstrated in this chapter. The evil deeds performed by tyrants will challenge the limits of the imagination. This in itself proves the devil is real. He is the father of all tyrants and wicked men take their cues from him. Government is not neutral, and the policies advocated by leaders are not amoral. Given that rulers are the ministers of God (Rom. 13:1, 4), and God has directed His

rulers to praise the good and avenge evil, they violate His law when they do just the opposite. Wicked rulers then, are those who disobey God's laws in highly egregious ways. Tyranny may be defined as powerful men and powerful systems which oppose God and His just law. If men are to be free from tyranny, they must know something of the laws of God. It is only the law of God which provides maximum opportunity for liberty among men (John 8:35, Jas. 2:12). If tyranny represents the violation of God's laws in the corporate body, anarchy ensues when individuals engage in egregious violations of God's laws.

Noah Webster captured something of a biblical view of tyranny when he defined a tyrant as "A monarch or other ruler or master, who uses power to oppress his subjects, a person who exercises unlawful authority, or lawful authority in an unlawful manner; one who by taxation, injustice or cruel punishment, or the demand of unreasonable services, imposes burdens and hardships on those under his control, which law and humanity do not authorize, or which the purposes of government do not require."<sup>1</sup>

Tyrants attempt to supplant God's sovereignty by opposing His laws and imposing their own pseudo-sovereignty over the hearts and behavior of men. Actually, man-centered preaching does the same thing when church leaders strive to manipulate people into "decisions" for Jesus. This is justified by the intent to save souls from eternal damnation. At root, the inquisitions of previous centuries were concerned with the same sort of thing. The road to hell is paved with good intentions, as the saying goes. Under the pretense of religious care for human lives and souls, political or religious tyrants enforce their programs in an effort to change men's hearts, produce certain outward behaviors, and get them to heaven. What they may not realize is that they have replaced the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit of God with the sovereignty of man. This makes for a very bad religion indeed. The sovereignty of man is the very beginning of tyranny in all its forms.

When governments deny the sovereignty of God, they inevitably cross the line into tyranny in a desperate attempt to dominate the minds and actions of men. On the other hand, when an individual sets out to determine his own law, refusing to submit to God's sovereignly ordained authority, the result is anarchy. These are the fundamentals with regard to the battle against tyranny. This revolutionary power-grab often occurs deep in the recess of the hearts of leaders, evading detection. In such

cases it is only by their fruits that they are known (Matt. 7:20).

## TYRANNY ADDRESSED BY GODLY MEN IN HISTORICAL RECORDS

The words “tyranny” and “tyrant” were formerly part of the common parlance of the day, and great Christian pastors and writers did not hesitate to address this critical topic. John of Salisbury (1120 – 1180 AD), while serving as Secretary for the Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote his Magnum Opus, *The Policraticus*. Such labors certainly would have had an effect on the nobles at Runnymede 35 years after he died (in 1215). John of Salisbury defined tyranny as “the abuse of power entrusted by God to man.”<sup>2</sup> In regards to the responsibility of the lower magistrates, he wrote,

“Loyal shoulders should sustain the power of the ruler so long as it is exercised in subjection to God and follows His ordinances: but if it resists and opposes the divine commandments, and wishes to make me share in its war against God, then with unrestrained voice, I answer back that God must be preferred before any man on earth.”<sup>3</sup>

Martin Luther’s major complaint before the Diet of Worms concerned ecclesiastical tyranny. His defense before the princes of Germany and Charles II, the Holy Roman Emperor could very well be viewed as the inception of the great Reformation of the Christian Church that would transform the world over successive generations. At the Diet, Luther explained, “For universal experience and world-wide grievances are witnesses to the fact that through the Pope’s laws and through man-made teachings the consciences of the faithful have been most pitifully ensnared, troubled, and racked in torment, and also that their goods and possessions have been devoured (especially amongst this famous German nation) by unbelievable tyranny... if I recant... the only effect will be to add strength to such tyranny.”<sup>4</sup>

In his writings Luther argued that capital punishment for murder was a legitimate function of the state on the basis of Genesis 9:6, Exodus 21:24, and Matthew 5:19. However, he restricted the purview of government from thought-crimes and teaching in church. He stated, “Heresy can never be prevented by force. That must be taken hold of in a different way, and must be opposed and dealt with otherwise than with the sword. Here God’s Word must strive; if that does not accomplish the end, it will remain

unaccomplished through the secular power, though it fill the world with blood.”<sup>5</sup> He described most princes as “the worst knaves and the greatest fools on earth.” In his paper *On Secular Authority*, he recommended disobedience and resistance to tyrants using the strongest possible words: “In Meissen, Bavaria, in the Mark, and other places, the tyrants have issued an order that the New Testaments be delivered to the courts everywhere. In this case their subjects ought not deliver a page or a letter, at risk of their salvation. For whoever does so, delivers Christ into Herod’s hands.”<sup>6</sup>

## THE SWISS REFORMERS

The Swiss reformer, John Calvin also soundly condemned every form of human tyranny, ecclesiastical and civil in his monumental work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He used the word “tyranny” 94 times throughout the four books (compare this to 106 mentions of predestination, which is thought to be his major theme). He described true heroes as those who deliver men and women from the oppression of tyrants, such as Moses and Othniel. Calvin wrote,

“Herein is the goodness, power, and providence of God wondrously displayed. At one time He raises up manifest avengers from among His own servants, and gives them His command to punish accursed tyranny, and deliver His people from calamity when they are unjustly oppressed; at another time He employs, for this purpose, the fury of men who have other thoughts and other aims. Thus He rescued His people Israel from the tyranny of Pharaoh by Moses; from the violence of Chusa, king of Syria, by Othniel; and from other bondage by other kings or judges.”<sup>7</sup>

John Calvin further warned tyrants that “the Lord takes vengeance on unbridled domination.”<sup>8</sup> While he cautioned private citizens not to take up arms against tyrants, he clearly left the door of resistance open for the “popular magistrates” or lower magistrates such as sheriffs, governors, or parliaments.

“For when popular magistrates have been appointed to curb the tyranny of kings (as the Ephori, who were opposed to kings among the Spartans, or Tribunes of the people to consuls among the Romans, or Demarchs to the senate among the Athenians; and perhaps there is something similar to this in the power exercised in each kingdom



by the three orders, when they hold their primary diets). So far am I from forbidding these officials to check the undue license of kings, that if they connive at kings when they tyrannize and insult over the humbler of the people, I affirm that their [the kings'] dissimulation is not free from nefarious perfidy, because they fraudulently betray the liberty of the people, while knowing that, by the ordinance of God, they are its appointed guardians."<sup>9</sup>

Pierre Viret, another influential Swiss reformer, also defined tyrants as those "who do not reign according to [God's] word or recognize Him as their sovereign Ruler (as appears with Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Saul). . ."<sup>10</sup> Viret reminded rulers of the Old Testament requirement that "the book of the Law be read before the king after he was elected, that he might know how to lead and govern according to its teaching. . . (Deut. 17:18-20).<sup>11</sup> Viret also allowed for the interposition of the lower magistrates when he wrote, "If such a people possess a lawful means to resist the tyranny of such tyrants by their legitimate magistrates, and are able by this means to avoid slavery, they can follow the counsel of Paul (which we previously spoke of) who said. . . 'For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman.' He adds, 'but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather' (1 Cor. 7:21)."<sup>12</sup>

## JOHN KNOX

Scotland yielded a powerful reformation, and it could not have been done without the aid of the nobles. The mighty reformer, John Knox wrote his appeal or "Appellation" to the nobles in which he exhorted them to defend the cause of liberty from the tyrannical church and political leadership in Scotland. He told them to "defend your brethren and subjectes whome he hath putt under your charge and care. Now if your King be a man ignorant of God, enemy to his true religion, blinded by superstition, and a persecutor of Christes members; shall yee be excused, if with silence yee passe over his iniquitie? Be not deceived, my Lordes, ye are placed in authoritie for another purpose then to flatter your King in his folie and blind rage."<sup>13</sup>

Knox instructed these lower magistrates that God has raised them up, "to be as bridels, to repress the rage and insolencie of your Kinges, whensoever they pretend manifestly to trasngresse Goddes blessed ordinance."<sup>14</sup>

A century later, Samuel Rutherford emerged as an important leader among the Scottish Presbyterians. Rutherford may be looked to as the ecclesiastical apologist for the founding of this country. Certainly the American Presbyterians who supported America's War for Independence en masse, and secured the victory in the key battles in the South, well understood Rutherford's points. He wrote his masterpiece, *Lex Rex* in 1644 in which he placed the King under the authority of God's law. Rutherford's efforts warranted him the charge of high treason under King James II. He died before facing trial, at which point the English authorities proceeded to burn his book. Tyrants do not like books on tyranny.

In the opening paragraphs, Rutherford described tyranny as "a work of Satan, not from God, because sin, either habitual or actual, is not from God."<sup>15</sup> Thus, Rutherford equated tyranny with sin and the transgression of the law of God. He also pointed out that "the magistrate is good in the nature of his office, and the intrinsic end of his office (Rom. 13:4), for he is the minister of God for thy good."<sup>16</sup>

Rutherford's view of kingdoms gained solely by conquest was tentative, even condemnatory. He wrote, "We cannot think that a tyrannous and unjust domineering can be God's lawful means of translating kingdoms; and for the other part, the conqueror cannot domineer as king over the innocent and especially the children not yet born."<sup>17</sup>

Further on in the work, Rutherford addressed the "law of the tyrant" as that which stands opposed to the law of God.

"God can give no moral power to do wickedly; for that is license, and a power to sin against a law of God, which is absolutely inconsistent with the holiness of God; for so the Lord might deny himself, and dispense with sin. God avert such blasphemies."<sup>18</sup>

He considered slavery in all of its forms, an unnatural state of being; originating in the fall: "Slavery should not have been in the world, if man had never sinned, no more than there could have been buying and selling of men, which is a miserable consequent of sin and a sort of death, when men are put to the toiling pains of the hireling..."

Rutherford also allowed for resistance to kings "when the power is abused to the destruction of laws, religion, and the subjects."<sup>19</sup> However, he did

add the important qualification that this resistance by defensive wars be administered only “at the commandment of the estates of the kingdom.”<sup>20</sup> These estates are the lower magistrates such as sheriffs and county governments. Rutherford made an important distinction here between revolutionary anarchy and acting under the existing order that is ordained by God to resist tyranny.

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF TYRANNY

From the earliest biblical records, we read the stories of tyrants such as Nimrod, Pharaoh, Herod, and Ahab. Their most serious sins included forced infanticide, abortion, and the confiscation of private property. King Ahab’s eminent domain exercised against Naboth was the very act that brought about God’s judgment upon him (1 Kings. 21:17ff). The very worst crime committed by nations and governments is the persecution of Christians (Rev. 13:7, 14:8-9). Whether the beast of Revelation is a single man, a particular government, or a series of persecuting powers, doesn’t really matter. For the purposes of this study, the beastly principle consists of powerful tyrants who support sexual perversions and persecute the people of God (Rev. 17:4-6). It doesn’t take much effort to identify where this has happened in history. Herod married his brother’s wife and killed John the Baptist. Nero introduced homosexual marriage for the first time in recorded history and launched the first major Roman persecution against the church of Christ (killing Peter and Paul in the bloody purge). Today, most Western countries are embracing Nero’s agenda. They wish to institute homosexual marriage everywhere and persecute any Christian that stands against it. The beast lives on.

## THE PROTOTYPICAL TYRANT

The first tyrant in the history of the world according to biblical record, surfaces in the form of Lamech, Cain’s great great great grandson (Gen. 4:19ff). He was a murderer and a vengeful man who promised to kill seventy-seven men, if anyone should attempt to hurt him. Lamech set himself against the standard of God’s justice when he proclaimed, “If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and seven fold” (cf. Gen. 4:14 and Gen. 4:24). Harking back to God’s sentence on Cain, Lamech ups the ante. If God’s justice would demand a seven-fold retribution for any person who should touch Cain, Lamech’s vengeance would exceed that in severity by a factor of eleven-fold. The tyrant is one who is more

assiduous and aggressive in the execution of his personal vengeance than even God would require according to His standards of justice. Whether these tyrants be drug lords, petty dictators, emperors, bureaucrats, legislators, or presidents (Republican or Democrat), they all follow in the footsteps of Lamech, the truly original tyrant.

The roots of the modern tyrants such as Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin may be found in Friedrich Nietzsche or Karl Marx—modern apostates who abandoned the Christian faith and became the powerful “Nephilim” in the modern world.<sup>21</sup> The remarkable influence of these powerful, ungodly men over nations and empires is due in part to their robust character which they inherited from a Christian past. Their virulent wickedness may be traced to their rejection of Christ. Thus, the spiritual roots of these giants may be compared with the prediluvian giants found in Genesis (6:4,13). They were called “the Nephilim,” having appeared out of an unholy synthesis between the sons of God (God-fearers) and the daughters of men (humanists). They were in a real sense, the original line of tyrants that brought tremendous violence and mass-murder to the earth.

Then came the tyrant Nimrod after the flood, who masterminded the kingdom of Babel (Gen. 10:9-10). Nimrod was known for his commitment to the power principle or “master morality” embraced by the Gentiles, condemned by Christ, and defended by Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>22</sup> Every force that presses towards centralizing power may be traced back to Genesis 11:4, when Nimrod’s men said, “Go to, let build us a city and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name.” This statement bears witness to the strong inclination towards pride, autonomy, and wickedness. It is the very basis of the humanist empire, and the Lord quickly dismantled the project (Gen. 11:8). Now, this “Babel Principle” has surfaced repeatedly throughout the annals of human history. Man instinctively turns towards centralizing power, as one poet put it, “The burnt fool’s bandaged finger goes wabbling back to the Fire.” As a result, great and mighty empires have formed throughout the world over the last 5,000 years. Following is a list of the major empires that have followed the Babel instinct.

- Akkadian in the twenty-third century BC (Sargon)
- Egypt in the sixteenth century BC (Hatshepsut and Thutmose III)
- China in the thirteenth century BC (Wu Dynasty)
- Babylon in the twelfth century BC (Nebuchadnezzar I)

- China in the twelfth century BC (Shang Dyansty)
- China in the eleventh century BC (Zhou Dynasty)
- Persia in the sixth century BC (Darius)
- Greece in the fourth century BC (Alexander)
- India in the fourth century BC (Maurya)
- Rome in the first century AD (Augustus)
- The Muslim Empire in the eighth century AD (Al-Walid)
- The Mongolian Empire in the thirteenth century AD (Genghis Khan)
- Spain and the Holy Roman Empire in the sixteenth century AD (Charles V)
- The Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century AD (Suleiman)
- France in the seventeenth century AD (Louis IV)
- Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries AD (George III, Victoria)

Egypt, Assyria, Babel, Persia, Greece, and Rome took their turns working the Babel project from 2000 BC until 475 AD. Then for a thousand years, the empire-building effort waned while missionaries disciplined most of the nations throughout Europe.

In some cases, the god-state is self-consciously realized, and the king is taken as representative of god (or gods) on earth. This was the case for the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Japanese Emperor, the Byzantine Emperor, the Indian Raja, and the Aztec Montezuma. In the case of the medieval European kings, they took themselves as God's vice-regent on His absence and refused subservience to His laws. Ordinarily, the kings of men worked hard to centralize power and to exert control over vast resources and lands.

The god-state was revived in the modern world by humanist philosophers like Rousseau, Hegel, and Marx—this time it is the democracy that worships itself. G.W.F. Hegel sermonized on this new religion, when he wrote, “The state is the march of God through the world... We must worship the state as the manifestation of the Divine on the earth.”<sup>23</sup> Regrettably, men like Lenin, Stalin, and Hitler took Hegel seriously.

Any resistance to a dictator or to the power state is perceived as the ultimate crime for which these Lamechs would demand requital to seventy-seven fold. This becomes a reality when every conceivable method of torture is employed by these power centers against Christians in particular. The horrific Roman tortures recounted by Eusebius and Foxe, included searing with hot irons, dipping in hot oil, ripping limbs apart, stretching on racks, and so on. The Nazis and Communists perfected these demonically-inspired methods of torture over the last century and used them generously on Christians and others considered as enemies of the state. Stories from Russia, North Korea, China, and Romania have provided ample evidence of the depravity of the human heart and the vile evil of which men are capable. Modern humanist governments have made significant strides towards recovering the legacy of pagan Rome. China has imposed forced abortion and infanticide on its people from the early 1980s to the present day. The Soviet Union, China, and North Korea have used slave prison camps for political and religious dissidents over the last century. Hundreds of millions of citizens have been murdered at the hands of their own governments. Untold millions starved to death by government policy (at the hands of centrist dictatorships).

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MODERN POWER STATE

The modern age of empire building commenced again with several important power grabs - first, the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 AD, and then the Treaty of Meaux in 1229 AD. This was the point at which the Northern Kingdom of France wrested control of Southern France from Raymond VII. The Vatican assisted in the effort at a time when a significant portion of the Christian church was capitulating to political power games. There were religious concerns with the Cathari's in the south of France to be sure, but the political aims were preeminent in the hearts of men. Natural man has a hard time resisting the accumulation of power, and the subsequent centuries would tell the sad story of empire-building and the rise of tyranny.

Similar power struggles followed in Ireland and Scotland in the fourteenth century, Germany in the sixteenth century (and briefly under the Nazis), and the United States in the nineteenth century. The only major "accomplishment" of the "Holy Roman Empire" was the persecution of the Protestants. And the major impediment for the empire building was that there were some 10,000 castles in Germany, none of which support-

ed the empire with much enthusiasm. The Reformation also thwarted the empire's intentions. The Spanish empire produced the Inquisition, and came to a quick end shortly after the defeat of the Armada. The French empire persecuted the French Huguenots, and the Revolution quickly put an end to its aspirations. In the early years of the nineteenth century, Napoleon attempted to salvage the empire but failed. Finally, the English empire had its start in the seventeenth century with the colonization of America. By the eighteenth century, England overwhelmed France as the new world power, and the sun did not set on the British empire until the end of the nineteenth century. After World War II, America became the heir apparent in this sequence of world empires. In their efforts to build empire, England and America each participated in the slave trade in the eighteenth century, and England joined the French and Spaniards in their persecution of certain Protestant sects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

## POWER HANDOFF

Babel provided the opportunity for the centralization of power and the abuse of it. This is the lesson to be drawn from Genesis 10. Thus, the rise of the tyrannical state in the modern age may be traced to the centralizing impulse, beginning with the papacy.

Well before William Wallace appeared on the scene, the Synod of Whitby took place in AD 664. This church council held in Britain and officiated by King Oswy, addressed the minor differences between the Irish and the Roman churches. The debates centered on the supremacy of the Roman papacy and the Roman interpretation of Matthew 16:18. In the end, the Northumbrians (the Irish church in Scotland) were forced to submit to the Pope on the matters of debate. Even the Venerable Bede acknowledged that the Irish church better replicated the teachings of Christ than the Roman church, so there was no debate as to the legitimacy of this Christian work in Scotland and Ireland.<sup>24</sup> Nonetheless, this power grab did not wrest complete control of the Scotch-Irish Culdean church. It wasn't until the twelfth century that the Pope had complete ascendancy over the Culdean churches. This paved the way for King Edward's political control over all of Scotland, although he did run into the "little" problem of Robert the Bruce. However, there would have been no Scottish War for Independence had it not been for the powerful machinations of the Roman Church employing the power principle centuries earlier.