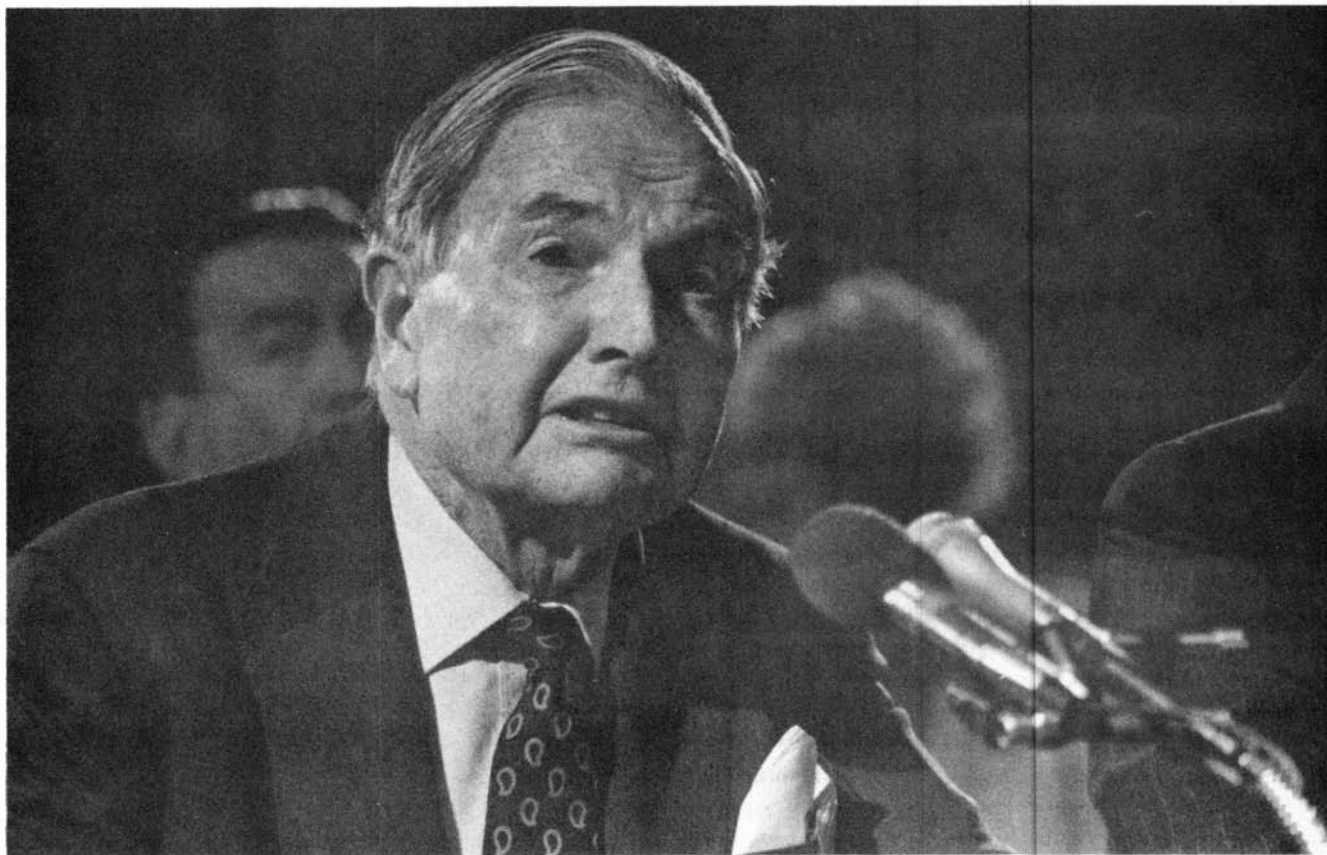


Is there an American (Protestant) ideology?

I note the fact that this section is drafted on Sunday with a certain irony, because I refer inclusively to what is sometimes named the problem of the American Protestant ideology.

Contrary to the admirers of Adam Smith at the University of Chicago, such as Thorstein Veblen, the Rockefellers, Teddy Roosevelt, and so forth, the American Protestant ideology is not the hallmark of economic success which Teddy Roosevelt's New Age cult professes it to be. Let us look at the aspect of this which is relevant to this Project A.

It has been my not-uncommon experience in past years in speaking to some Americans, to speak of the fact that the financial system is collapsing, or to offer a list of catastrophes to indicate the way and the approximate time frame in which they may be expected if the United States continues its present course of action. During this, in some of these cases, some of these fellows will interrupt me to say, "Yes, I agree;



Council of the Americas chairman and banker David Rockefeller, testifying to Congress in May 1990. "Irresponsibility is the characteristic of the so-called Rockefeller variety of American Protestant ideology, and its secularized expressions."

yes, I agree; yes, I agree.”

I say, “If you agree, what are you going to do about it?”

“Oh, I’m going to wait for the Rapture, I don’t have to worry about all this. What you say is all true, it is all happening; but I don’t have to worry about it; I’m going to be raptured.”

That is one aspect; it is an extreme, if actual case, also a very illuminating one. That illustration goes to the core of the matter; it goes to the core of the worst, radical version of Calvinist dogma, and of related, radical forms appearing within Protestant dogma. The worst version of Lutheran dogma, is a variant on the radical Calvinist dogma, and is the same thing, in effect. The typical such American radical Protestant follows Adam Smith, as does the Quaker who refuses military service: “The larger matters, and the larger consequences of my behavior, I leave entirely to the ministrations of God; they are beyond me. And God will decide that, I have nothing to do with it, I have no responsibility for that. I,” he says, or she says, “am responsible only for my immediate personal affairs; my happiness, and that of my family and friends, my wealth, security, and so forth. And my personal dealings.”

The essential character of the American Protestant variety of predestinationalism, of the rapture variety, of the radical Calvinist variety, or of the Quaker variety, or of the Lutheran variety, is an essential, underlying immorality: a refusal to recognize that individual behavior has something to do with the ultimate consequences of the present for the future society, and that acts of omission are as much acts, as acts of commission, at least in many respects.

So, the failure to recognize this, is typical of the American ideology.

Therefore, I must say to my interlocutors, “You are each responsible for the outcome of your nation’s future.”

They retort, “What kind of nonsense is that? I reject that,” they will say. “I reject that. That is your opinion. I reject that. I take care of my personal affairs, I’m a moral person, and these are the matters I have no control over. I’m not responsible, I’m not responsible, I’m not responsible.”

Yes, they are very irresponsible. This irresponsibility is the characteristic of the so-called Rockefeller variety of American Protestant ideology, and its secularized expressions. This is not necessarily an irredeemable feature of the American, but it is a widely prevailing viewpoint which imposes itself upon many Americans, and which, because it is *popular*, is deemed acceptable, and authoritative widely.

The key to the weakness and the stupidity of the Americans is the term “popular,” and the equation of the term “popular” with democracy: “consensus politics,” and so forth. That truth and falsehood are rejected, and moral value is put on the “consensus”; “popular”; “majority”; and so forth, even though popular opinion usually happens to be wicked or merely stupid.

Thus, the essential thing which keeps nations going, in

times of crisis, great travail, is the role of the individual, or small group of leaders in taking the leading position—the others, recognizing that they are morally obliged to act similarly. Most of the time, that is lacking, in general, among Americans, at least most of the time.

So, the essential part of history is rarely understood by Americans.

At the same time, the importance of the individual is not understood. The so-called Rockefeller type of American Protestant, is not really a Christian.

Christianity, if we take the Gospel version, for example, or the New Testament epistles, quite explicitly casts man in the image of the living God, and does this in respect of creative reason. The Christian is responsible, in the sense that Cusa describes the relationship between the maximum and minimum, and so forth, with corresponding implications. The essence of Christianity is that “I am responsible; I have potentialities, which I am obliged to develop, to the degree of need about me; and, I am responsible to apply those developed potentialities to better the condition of mankind. I am an instrument; I am responsible; I am the agency.”

For example, another expression of this cited pathology: “We must meet our responsibilities; yes, we must *pray* for the right outcome.” Pray for the right outcome? By what means do we propose that prayer will prevail in inducing this right outcome? The Christian retorts, “Prayer must, among other things, summon in me the strength to become the instrument, the solution.”

So implicitly, the misled American Protestant of the type I have described, does not accept the implications of the divine spark of reason, of *imago viva Dei*. They may accept it, in one sense, in one degree; but they haven’t made the connection to individual responsibility, the universal responsibility of the individual, and, thus, the universality of the individual.

Thus, in both of these cited varieties of regrettable tendencies, we find the inclination to a false, anthropomorphic theology: God as an anthropomorphic being; and He is portrayed in what is sometimes called an “Old Testament fashion,” in the sense of being some kind of a capricious Mesopotamian potentate, whose laws are known to us by dictate, and are arbitrary: “It is not for us to know; it is for us to accept revealed instruction: not to accept knowledge, the responsibility of knowing.”

Thus, you have the American populist. The populism and the Protestantism of the type I have described, interface.

This is not to imply that all American Catholics are virtuous heroes; Pope Leo XIII referred to “the American heresy”; this problem has been referred to from Rome many times. All too frequently, the professed American Catholic is not necessarily a Christian, even though many of them would like to be called such.

So, we are not just picking on the Protestants; we are looking at a phenomenon; we find the same phenomenon in

characteristic of what Rome has often described as defective American Catholic behavior. Such errant American Catholics are defective, and tend to be gnostic and heretic, precisely to the degree that they imitate, all too often, the New York City Episcopalian of the present New York City Cathedral of St. John the Divine. It is to that extent the American Catholic tends to be not a Christian, as the Bishop Paul Moore type of Episcopalian is not a Christian, but, is, rather, a gnostic, sometimes veers, as the Lindisfarne crypt of St. John the Divine does, toward outright satanism.

So, this is the problem we have to face in ourselves axiomatically; as those of us who are exposed to the United States, and, also others, those of us in Europe, for example, of a Kantian inclination. For both, it is the same problem. The Kantians are immoral; they are professedly irresponsible, as the overtly anti-Christian Adam Smith makes a point of it; and, as Jeremy Bentham after Smith makes the point much more clearly and much more nakedly.

These are the problems we face in pedagogy, even in a preliminary way, in approaching the subject of natural law in the United States. You are talking to Protestants, and to Catholics who are Protestantized, and so forth. Among many Jews, the same thing, or even worse (cabbalist lunacy). That is what we are dealing with.

Now, you say, "These ideas of LaRouche are not popular"; recently, truth itself is not popular in the United States. Everyone says, "Well, I'm telling the truth"; but most of them don't know what the truth *is*, so how can they be telling the truth?

Worse, not only do they not know what the truth is, but they are not truthful. That is, their errors do not flow from a method which is seeking truth. They may think they are seeking truth, but they are not looking for truth in fact; they don't accept truth in fact. Instead of truth seekers, they are poor pragmatists, who would rather seek ideas that are popu-

lar, or presumably will be popular; they test the merit of ideas by their actual or implicit potential popularity.

The lower, animal type of belief, which is the typical American popular-opinion level of the mass media, the bite-sized opinions expressed by the mass media, the buzz words, all that nonsense, that level of animal-like thinking, is characteristic of most Americans most of the time. Equate us with another type of thinking, which is truth-seeking, Socratic, critical, in the sense we described earlier; what we represent is generally rejected among liberals. So, when we are trying sometimes to be "popular," or we are being instructed how to become popular, how to become influential through becoming popular, we destroy ourselves; we become less than ourselves, and we fail.

The strength of my friends' association lies, regrettably, but unavoidably, in our being often unpopular, because of our adhering to truth and truthfulness. We follow the truth where it leads, and we find that society is sick. We find the society riddled by qualities which are rightfully subjects of scandal. We find people who call themselves liberals, who, in point of fact, through economic policies, are greater mass murderers than Adolf Hitler.

This is the kind of society in which we live; and, we, to the extent we follow the truth, and, by the path of truthfulness, make ourselves unpopular. But, by making ourselves unpopular in that way, in the service of truth, we touch that aspect of our fellow human, even of our adversary, which is human, which is *imago viva Dei*, which really seeks the truth, which seeks the path of truthfulness, and which knows that it must combat the degrading impulse to be popular, as a whore is popular.

One must fight the whore in oneself to face the sometimes dangerous pathway of truthfulness, and virtue—*virtù*, in the classical Italian sense.

So, that intermezzo is added.