

The dearest idol I have known, / Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne, / And worship only Thee.

--Wm. Cowper, in "O for a closer walk with God" (italics mine)

Is the Bible's **masculine**-vertical liberation-by-submission inherently at odds with the current culture's **feminine**-horizontal liberation-by-egalitarian-relation? On the contrary: inherently supportive.

But the Bible is inherently, irrefutably, incorrigibly at odds with the notion that

the very idea of submission is macho, sexist, incorrigibly oppressive.

Anyone who can't entertain the possibility that submission is, in some relations, a Good Idea is in no condition to read this Thinksheet.

1 Turned outward, the energies released by the **victim** mentality become insubordination, rebellion, revolution, reform/ation; turned inward they become (active mode) resentment & (passive mode) paranoia. I have long observed these phenomena as one sector after another of the American populace has come to feel itself put upon, oppressed, societally assigned (by "structural violence") the short end of the stick.

2 Always, given the nature of the human mind & of universal sin, any victim mentality builds itself up into victim **ideology**, which at the price of distorting reality & counter-victimizing opponents provides the movement with both defensive & offensive intellectual strength. And always the backlash is driven not only by the desire to retain the allegedly oppressive power-advantage but also by counter-resentment over the reality-distortion & counter-victimization.

3 Especially since WWII, the similarites in said uprisings have led to their being called **liberation** movements, a term originating (not in [North] America but) among the landless of South America. But each movement is so distinct, so full of its own distinctive anomalies, righteousness, & excesses, that we should be cautious about putting them all in one tent with any single label on it, unless it's something like the movie resentment-turned-to-anger line "We're mad as hell & we're not going to take it anymore!" Or some such motto as "Liberation from Submission!"

4 While I vigorously accept Patrick Henry's liberty-or-death, the preaching of resistance to persons, structures, forces pressing demeaning, dehumanizing limits down on any human beings, I must defend the **balancing** truth that, like almost everything else, submissions come in two kinds, good & bad. "Liberation by Submission!" (while, as this Thinksheet's title notes, paradoxical) is as true as "Liberation from Submission!"

5 Which brings us to **sorting** out, & looking at, some good submissions, the obverse of bad liberations. Eg, Americans generally now agree that the unattached male, 25-34, is a primary cause of social pathology. He's been liberated from the social constraints or submissions normal to his cohort in healthy societies--liberated from submission to what for his own & others' good he needs to be subject to. My example, you observe, tests the limits of both terms, "submission" (which he's had a deficiency of) & "liberation" (which he's had an excess of).

6 Next move: Younger & future liberation movements can learn a thing or two by observing older liberation movements. Eg, women's liberationism may note that in black liberationism, **alienation** from "the oppressor" is the hybris end of the process that began with victim consciousness-raising & proceeded to ideologize itself (eg, "black theology," "black studies") to excess. Young American blacks have moved away from M.L.King's integration & into self-segregation, we/they self-alienation. This desultory retribalization is an anamoly, but it does have a loose parallel in radical feminism (eg, "women's theolgy," "women's studies"), which is pressing toward, though at an earlier stage than in the black case, self-segregation from "the oppressor," viz men (so, "women's church," "woman church," Goddess-God/ess religion). Many women are so alienated from men, whom they've been brainwashed into thinking not fit to live with, that they're not fit for men to try to live with. The battle of the sexes has become the battlefield of the living dead.

7 The biblical solution is **mutual submission with primary submission to God**.

In support of this assertion I reviewed all the Bible has to say about submission, subjection, subordination, subservience--all those Lat. "subs" implying "supers" (eg, "the power that enables him ["the Lord Jesus Christ"] to make all things subject [KJV, "to subdue"] all things to himself," Phil.3.21 NRSV--in context, not oppressing us, but as "Savior," transforming us from humiliation to glory). Scripture is permanently out of sorts, nose out of joint, against any submission that does not liberate us, women & men, from lower to higher development, fulfilment, "glory."....Next, I went through my library's section on "Ethics, Christian" with an eye consciousness-raised to the so-called feminine virtues/values. Overwhelmingly the Bible elevates them above the so-called masculine virtues/values: in what it teaches about how to live, the Book, *just as it stands* (with no so-called inclusive-language bowdlerizing), is a feminine book, which explains why women's just revolts against supermasculinity have most occurred in societies where the Bible has had most influence.

8 So what's all the antibiblical radical-feminist fuss about? Words, that's what, words. Not substance: the biblical substance is profeminine....F. Bertram Clogg's THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER IN THE EARLY CHURCH (Epworth/44) details the predominance of the non-macho virtues/values of humility, gentleness, meekness, concern for others (vs. self-centeredness), modesty, simplicity, love, compassion, kindness, loyalty, nurturance-helpfulness, hospitality, respect for parents & elders, submission to proper authorities (religious & civil) properly functioning, fairness, peace-lovingness. Is it any wonder that women were so influential in the early church under the apostles?

9 "Under," eh? To radical feminists, genderphobes, a dirty word; for it triggers their hysterical resentment against those who are "over," who are everywhere-&-always (because of the testosterone factor) mostly males. Mother Nature says (1) that's the way it's been, that's the way it's going to be (2) because that over/under is one of Father God's arrangements in "the order & constitution of of nature." But what can "over" mean in light of the Christian virtues/values (§8)? Certainly not dominance, men "lording it over" women. Put M.10.42-45 alongside Phil.2.3-11. Both passages preach humble service--the first in Jesus' words, the second by the story of the incarnation (Jesus "emptied himself" of divinity, "taking the form of a slave...obedient to the point of death...on a cross")....Let's be clear about what Christian ethics does *not* say here: (1) That women are not to be over (ie leaders of) women & men; (2) That men have the right to rule over women (the truth: they have the natural tendency, not the right); (3) That women should step aside & let men take over (the truth: they have the tendency, not the duty); (4) That God always chooses men to lead (the truth: God always chooses the best person available, but society in its ignorance-prejudice-sin does not always ratify that choice)....Of the many blessings the women's movement offers, one certainly is the challenge to take a fresh, honest, courageous look at the power processes & arrangements in general & ecclesial societies.

10 §9 says that in human relations, "under" is highly qualified in ab/use. Now I must affirm that "under God" is unqualified, absolute, in nature-history-duty: no humanity-honoring freedom except as continuous with "liberation by submission" to God. Stronger: exaltation by submission ("the Lord...lifted up the lowly," L.1.52; Phil.2.5-9: "Christ Jesus...humbled himself....Therefore God...highly exalted him...so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend...and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"--the submitter to be submitted to !).

11 The Gettysburg Address has a high place in the world's liberation literature. Let's have a quick peek at its language. "Our fathers," far from having any sexual reference, performed like women: they "conceived" & "brought forth...a new nation." That first-sentence indirect feminine reference is enveloped by the last-sentence's making us all the national mother ("a new birth of freedom," the first being "in liberty"). "Men" is used as dead males ("The brave men") & also generically ("all men are created equal"). Put a circle around "equal"! Then, as an eye-opening exercise in fatuity, try rendering the Address in inclusive language, making sure to get rid of that highly objectionable "under God."