This morning (3Apr74), after a SYNCON gala evening in which the human future was multi-disciplinarily celebrated, I happened upon this in Jesus (Mt.5.16 CW): "Let your light shine before people in such a way that they may see your good deeds, and praise your Father in heaven." The stark motivational contrast between last evening and what hit me in my devotional reading this morning has occasioned this thinksheet: the Jewish/Christian (biblical) central motif of reality and motivation for humanity (i.e., humane behavior, humanization, conscientization) was never voiced amid the paeans to the human potential (though in private, SYNCON founder Barbara again spoke to me of her growing biblical awareness, and SYNCON director John said that for him the high moment in the first SYNCON was my asking and answering the question "Is there a future for the word 'God'?"). The center has dropped out not just for SYNCON (which I support enthusiastically) but for our whole civilization, especially our WASP culture, which is a stranding of the Puritan hope-in-God (Ps.42f: "As a hart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God.... Hope in God.... Hope in God.... Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him...."); Col.1.27: "Christ in you, the hope of glory") and 18th-c. rationalism's hope-in-man....Perhaps this particular thinksheet would better be called a worrysheet: (1) I'm worried about humanity's amnesia about the Center and consequent inability to center and consequent lethally clashing center-claims; (2) I'm worried about impoverishing, knee-jerk turn-offs (tabus) on "God-talk," automatic rejections of anything that strikes anybody as traditionally religious in the particular culture (in the West, against Judaism and Christianity); (3) I'm worried about the West's naive opening on what is for the West a <u>non</u>traditional religiousness, viz. Eastern, especially the Ganges and Indus flooding West (this form of piety now dominating the West's so-called human potential movement in both its individual and its collective dimensions); (4) I'm worried about the future of my own faith on planet Earth: "When the Son of man comes, will he find faith on earth?" (L.18.8); and (5) I'm worried—as were Moses (Gen.18) and Jesus (Mt.23.37f, L.13.34f: those who forsake God, "killing the prophets," silencing the witness to the Center, become God-"forsaken; and their structures are destroyed so that not one stone any longer stands upon another: Mt. 24.2, M. 13.2, L. 19.44, 21.6) -- about divine punitive action. The biblical alternatives are "the glory of God" as positive sanction and "the wrath of God" as negative sanction. It isn't true that "There's no fury like a woman scorned": God, scorned, is a worse fury, the obverse of the fact that G, honored, is the highest glory, the ultimate liturgy, the cosmic celebration leaving no remainders, the denouement of creation, the messianic convergence of justice and joy, the marriage supper of the Lamb in the power of gentleness, swords beaten into ploughshares, and a child leading through the gates of new life.... Of course this view of God is monstrous and is believed by almost nobody in or out of synagogue-temple-church. The disciplined child experiences the parent as monster. The Monster ejected Adam and Even from the garden (when they were only trying to grow!?) (Gen. 3). The Monster destroyed communication at Babel (when they were only trying to get their thing together!?) (Gen. 11). The Monster was rough on Abraham and Moses, roughest on Jesus and his immediate followers, rough on God-pointing prophets through the ages--paradoxically, vicariously. Reject this and you reduce the Bible from vigorous religion to effete moralism only temporarily invigorable with humanistic sanctions. But how can a scientific culture, which has time and again proved that the numinous will not get you if you don't watch out and honor it through the priestly prophylaxis of praise, come to believe again that God will get us if we truncate the COVENANT->WELL-BEING->GLORY process? If it is impossible, the culture (and now, probably, mankind) is doomed. This thinksheet calls for "doing theology" on this biblically central issue which for liberal Protestantism has always been a nonissue.

EXPLANATION OF DIAGRAM: The letters are the radicals of the three Hebrew words for COVE-NANT (berith, the covenant of remembering and honoring God), WELL-BEING (shalom, the consequence of covenant-keeping), and GLORY (chavodh, "the glory of God" in his creation's celebration of his benevolent creative and providential power). The vertical word (shekinah) means the Presence of God in and through the whole process of nature and history, and "sin" is the violation of this Presence by dishonoring anybody/anything in creation and/or by forgetting, by drift or design, the Creator.

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