

4. Well, don't I at least believe in equality before the law and equality of opportunity? Not without reservations. E.g., I don't object to the fact that my sons, as male and white, get inferior treatment.

1. One of the refreshing and delightful discoveries of aging is, if one is so disposed, growing liberation from cultural and subcultural conformity--said another way, increasing ease in not being conformed to "this world" (Ro.12.2Wms., "the customs of this world"). Paradoxically, the more culture you have [from having more experience, from having lived longer] the lighter you can sit to it: the elders are potentially the natural radicals in both senses of the word. Here there's a rough parallel to the paradoxicality, in the gospel, of being superior by being inferior (the sophisticated, tensile meaning of "servant," and the sardonic story of gaining superior recognition by action of crafty-phoney humility): Jesus both outwits and transcends the power perspective of both superior/inferior and equality. This thinksheet is, in obedience here to Jesus, an attack on the culture-bound, politics-conformed notion of "equality" as a primary human value. I hear Christians, along with worldlings, talking as though equality were not a secondary, derivative, and conditional value, but rather primary, natural, and therefore theic (having divine sanction and being, as ideological slogan, of divine-sanctional force). "Liberation theology" needs liberating from this pernicious nonsense, as do the remaining tatters of Enlightenment liberalism and the shining garments of "humanistic psychology." How are we Christians to "do theology" between, below, and above the contest between "power" and "equality"?

2. To begin with "nature" but not to make illegitimate extensions therefrom, the inferior/superior gamut is awesome. Ruskin, near the beginning of his "Essay on Composition" [which had great influence in forming Biblical Seminary's "inductive method," and therefore is reproduced in Kuist's THESE WORDS UPON THY HEART], says that "the gift of composition is not given...to more than one...in a thousand; in its highest range, it does not occur above three or four times in a century" (p.162). There are superior people, and inferior people (including, by date of birth, all children) should be taught to stand in proper awe of them at the points of inferiority/superiority. [The qualifiers in the previous sentence are all weighty.] Very young I was taught to recognize, and be with, superior people, and given freedom to go be with them, and indeed sometimes taken to be with them (so much so that I have to resist natural name-dropping). When defeated by a superior brain (i.e., a brain to which mine was inferior), I was so joyed to be with such a person that I told my hurt ego to shut up and stop being stupid--hard to do especially when the superior brain was attached to an uncivil and cruel mouth laughing at me (e.g., Mortimer Adler). Now, I find younger people hcking in this "proper awe," and outraged in verbal defeat, as though God had insulted them! Worse yet, I find in them a joyless sense of oppression instead of joyful gratitude, and a consequent resistance to learning ["dysagogy"], a self-deprivation and closure at the points of discovered inferiority, and a foolish and anti-natural claim of "equality." How, if they fail to acknowledge and profit from this situational inferiority, can they advance to the spiritual inferiority ["servant"] of which our Lord speaks? If the genetic factor is denied or despised, how can the life-response be moral, not to say also spiritual? How can "each esteem the other better" [Phil.2.3] when under the oppressive doctrine of "equality"? How can one even experience the freedom of being inferior?

3. People(s) differ radically in respect for persons and property and institutions (with their status-role values for persons), and "rights" are defined vis-a-vis the hyper/hypo-respect factors in all these dimensions. So, the predictable hay-making on the July/77 NYC blackout looting and on the Dade Co.-Anita Bryant anti-homo-rights success. Theological education should seize such issues and "do [Christian] theology" on them free of ideological slogans such as "equality" and ideological taboos such as no-no-ing upstairs/downstairs language properly used in context of Christian-realistic conversation. I'm sick-to-here for being put down for using straight talk unconformed to au-courant blacklists of terms, especially terms denotating vertical realities in nature and society...as though, by the magic of nonuse of such terms, the denotated realities would eventually vanish.