

Yet we know that we ought to try to do these things, out of obedience to God and love to our neighbors, while at the same time realizing that these things are just not going to happen.

- F. Doesn't the paradox between the Plan of God and the Law of God cut the nerve of motivation to attempt to stop or slow down the secularization of our culture and society?

That is, if by the Law of God we know we ought to do a thing, but by the Plan of God we know we cannot totally succeed in it, will not this realization cut the vital nerve of motivation? If we cannot realize total success, will we even try?

Christians need to have ideals, to strive toward objectives and goals, even if they are humanly impossible. On the other hand, Christians need to be realistic, and be aware that the Bible has clearly predicted some things, and those events are surely going to come to pass. The mouth of the Lord has spoken it!

But even as we realize that no matter how much effort we put into certain kinds of work for the Lord, we are not going to be so successful that we prove the Lord's predictions to be wrong; we also need to realize that whatever degree of success the Lord achieves through us is all to the good, and brings glory to Him and blessing to our fellow human beings as well as to ourselves.

Thus our obedience to God's commands will never disprove God's Plan. God will use some obedient servants to alleviate some of the poverty in the world (but never all of it); and God will use some obedient disciples to eliminate some of the unbelief in the world by winning some human beings to faith in Christ (but never all of them).

When Christ returns, He will complete the task we have begun. And eventually all poverty on earth will be gone, and all unbelief on earth will be banished. Then there will no longer be any poor people on the earth and all of the earth's inhabitants will be believers.

Thus, even though the Bible predicts that evil men will grow worse and worse, and that the cultures and societies in the world will become increasingly secularized, nevertheless Christians need to struggle against the development of evil in the world, and resist the increasing corruption and deterioration of their culture and society. Christians need to be salt, and to try to hold back corruption in the world; Christians need to be light, and to shine the light of God's Law upon wickedness, and the light of God's gospel upon sin-darkened hearts.

And as they do so, they do not need to concern themselves with ultimate success, for ultimate success belongs to God in His good time, and it is assured!

What then is our motivation to obey the commands of God when complete success is not possible? At least three motives suggest themselves:

(1) We are moved to obey specific commands of God out of love to God and love to our neighbors

(2) We are moved to obey specific commands of God by the realization that