

S.I. accuses Pelagians of holding to, or else, of nurturing the ideological seeds of, Marxism. He asserts that Pelagianism is incompatible with biblical patriarchy. In defense of this position, he cites Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield's *Studies in Perfectionism* (<https://www.monergism.com/works-b-b-warfield-ebook-collection>), which traces the doctrinal development of several Christian Pelagian/Perfectionist sects of the 1800s—most shockingly and, according to S.I., exemplifyingly, that of the Oneida Community in their descent into free-love Communism (i.e. wife-sharing, or group marriage). Upon inspection of Warfield's work, however, no necessary causal connection can be proven between Pelagian soteriology and Communism/Marxism, but rather only, as will be shown, between antinomianism and the latter. From pages 99-101,

"The Reformation doctrine that the Christian life is a continuous repentance, that the believer is conscious of continual shortcomings which, he knows, deserve the wrath of God, and is continually receiving unmerited forgiveness, was not merely repugnant, but impossible to [Albrecht Ritschl]. He was compelled to develop a conception of the Christian life which inferred perfection. There could be no room in it, we do not say merely for distrust, fear, despondency, but for contrition, repentance, self-abasement. The very essence of the Christian life is for him necessarily freedom from these things. Precisely what "reconciliation" is to him is the discovery that God takes no account of sin in us. Not that we are freed from sin. But that it makes no difference whether we sin or not: God closes His eyes to our sin. This is of course an antinomian attitude. All perfectionist doctrines run into antinomianism. It is intrinsic in Ritschl's low view of sin. What is at the moment important for us to note is that it enables us to understand that Ritschl is not willing to have the perfection which he proclaims for Christians measured by the standard of the moral law [Warfield's use of this specific term "moral law" will be addressed later]. Whatever the Christian may actually do, he is no "sinner," and his conscience must not accuse him.

In order to sustain himself in this lamentable position Ritschl develops an unhappy argument designed to show that the moral law is in any event incapable of fulfilment. Not incapable of fulfilment by sinners only, but intrinsically and of its very nature incapable of fulfilment. This because it is in effect infinite in its demands: it claims the will simultaneously for illimitable requirements spread out through space, and the series of claims made by each of these requirements extends inimitably [note: this is not a spelling mistake] through time. The finite being is capable, however, of only one act at a time. And since it is impossible for him to do at once everything that falls under the category of the good, he is under no obligation to do it. What he is required to do, in point of fact, is not to fulfil the moral law in its abstract completeness, but to make of his life a moral whole [that's w-h-o-l-e], rounding it out in dutiful conduct in accordance with its intrinsic requirements as such a whole. It is the conception of vocation to which Ritschl appeals here to supply the limitation of duty by which it may be rendered capable of performance.

"Everyone," says he, "is moral in his behavior when he fulfils the universal law in his special vocation or in that combination of vocations which he is able to unite in his conduct of life." Thus, we are told, *"there is excluded every moral necessity to good actions on ends which do not fit in with the individual's vocation,"* and the apparent obligation is invalidated that *"we have to act morally at every moment of time in all possible directions."* The situation, however, he perceives not to be relieved in this manner. The spatial infinity is cleared away, indeed, but the temporal remains. We are moving now in one, narrow path, but there is no end to it. *"Even when the fulfilment of the moral law is confined to one's own calling and what is analogous thereto, the series of good actions which are incumbent is still illimitable in time."*

Relief can be found only in discarding all responsibility whatever to "statutory law"; that is, to externally imposed law. We *"find the proximate norm which specifies for every one the morally necessary conduct in our moral vocation"* itself, and thus vindicate the *"autonomy of moral conduct."* We are under no law but such as is evolved out of our moral disposition in the course of our activities themselves: and we evolve this law, of course, only as it is needed and fulfil it as it is made. Thus, executing the particular judgments of duty as we form them, we preserve steadily, it seems, our perfection. *"Under these circumstances," says Ritschl, "and in this form, the individual produces the moral law out of his freedom, or"—that is, in other words—"lives in the law of freedom."* **We are therefore under no other law but "the law of freedom," and "the universal statutory law" has no authority over us. Emancipated from all externally imposed law, we are a law to ourselves, and we recognize no other law as having dominion over us."**

If you struggled to choke down that veritable compost pile of Ritschl's word salad, you are in good company. What Warfield seems to be showing is that Ritschl held a particularly lunatic Neoplatonic view of God's transcendence, wherein God had set the bar for perfection not merely at Torah-obedience, but at infinite repetition of simultaneous performance of all Torah commands. Irrationality aside, however, the point to be grasped is Ritschl's clear antinomianism. Indeed, perfectionist groups had apparently made quite the antinomian name for themselves. From page 1120,

"It is, in point of fact, not the perfectionism of the rejected [label] "Perfectionism" which offends [William Edwin Boardman], any more than [Asa] Mahan, but its antinomianism. And his real concern is to protest that not all perfectionism—not his own variety, for example—is chargeable with the antinomianism which men had been led to associate with the name through experience with the body of religionists who had arrogated to themselves, and had had accorded to them by common usage, the specific name of "Perfectionists.""

John Humphrey Noyes, founder and leader of the infamous Oneida Community, is inarguably guilty of antinomianism. From pages 829-832,

"Noyes naturally desires not to be thought of as an antinomian. It is not antinomianism that he teaches, he says, but "anti-legality." He believes that the law—the whole law, moral as well as ceremonial—has been abolished for the sons of God. But this does not mean that we have escaped beyond the government of God; it means only that the instrument through which He governs us has been changed—from law to grace. He even says that the *"standard of holiness"* which constitutes *"the ultimate object of God's government"* has suffered no alteration. Only *"the measures which God chooses to employ to effect that object"* have been changed. The children of God neglect law not because they desire to be free to sin; but precisely because they have no desire to sin and do not require law to restrain them from it. It is the way of holiness, not of sin, that they pursue; and they pursue it because it has become their second nature and they cannot do otherwise. They do not transgress the law but have transcended it. They are not seeking *"an easy method of escaping the necessity of works,"* but have found *"the only and the sure foundation of such works as will survive the fire of judgment."*

Now, Noyes says, *"regeneration or salvation from sin," that is perfection, "is the incipient stage of the resurrection."* We are married to Christ, he reasons, and the status of the wife, of course, follows that of the husband: since Christ has risen from the dead, we therefore are living the resurrected life. We have passed from the carnal into the resurrection state; from this world into the heavenly world; our *"state and relations are as fully changed, as the idea of a translation from earth to heaven demands."* *"Believers by fellowship with Christ in his resurrection, are released from the beggarly elements and carnal ordinances of that worldly sanctuary which they have left."* We are freed, then, from sin; and we are freed from the law—for law *"cannot carry its claims beyond death"*; and we are freed, indeed, even from death itself—at first, from its sting, but not its form, since men were so far within the territory of him that has the power of death that they are slow to escape from its form; but this too is coming. *"The intent of the Gospel," we are told in another place, "was, and is, to take people out of this world into a state beyond death, in which the believer is spiritually with Christ in the resurrection, and hence is free from sin"*

and law, and all the temporary relations of the mortal state.” The church has its “standing” therefore now “in a posthumous state”; a posthumous state which may also be called “the angelic state.” In this angelic state, as is natural, different conditions obtain from those of the carnal state in which we have hitherto lived, and “free social relations are to be inaugurated as soon as existing obligations can be disposed of.”

When he wrote these words, Noyes was thinking of the abolition of marriage in the “resurrection” or “angelic” state, in accordance with Matt. 22:23–30, which he absurdly reads as the proclamation of the reign of promiscuity in this state, thus throwing a lurid light on his contention that the abolishment of the law in the resurrection state is not that evil may be done, but that good may be done spontaneously. In this case at least the law is simply reversed and made to read, Thou shalt have thy neighbor’s wife. It is not, however, merely a relaxation of morals which Noyes finds in the “resurrected” state. He finds in it also, as has been already incidentally noted, nothing less than “the abolition of death” itself—although he recognizes that this is to come “as the last result of Christ’s victory over sin and the Devil.” And it is to be noted that it is precisely through the abolition of marriage—that is to say, the institution of promiscuity in the relations of the sexes—that the abolition of death is to come. “Death is to be abolished, and ... to this end, there must be a restoration of true relations between the Sexes.” When what he has to say on this point is weighed, the underlying meaning appears to be that sexual promiscuity is absolutely essential to the existence of a communistic society, and the abolition of death is to result from the removal in a communistic society of the wearing evils which in the present mode of social organization bring men to exhaustion and death. Remove these evils which kill man, and man will cease to die. Communism...is conceived as so great a panacea that it not only cures all the evils of life, but brings also immortality; and there seems to be no reason for a man to die in a communistic society. Running through the four great evils in which he sums up the curses which afflict life in our present social organization, Noyes says: “First we abolish sin”—that is by entering through faith into a perfect life; “then shame”—that is by practicing free love; “then the curse on woman of exhausting child-bearing”—that is by using his recipe for birth control; “then the curse on man of exhausting labor”—that is through community labor, in the attractive association of the sexes; “and so we arrive regularly at the tree of life.” All “the antecedents of death” are removed; and so, of course, death itself. “Reconciliation with God opens the way for the reconciliation of the sexes. Reconciliation of the sexes emancipates woman, and opens the way for vital society. Vital society increases strength, diminishes work, and makes labor attractive, thus removing the antecedents of death.” Perfectionism, free love, community in industry in happy association—take these things and you will not die. At the bottom lies nothing other than the amazing assumption that communistic association, if you can only achieve it, will bring immortality. All the other steps are only the means to communism.”

And from pages 770-771,

“It is worth while to turn aside to point out that one of the peculiarities by which Noyes separated himself from the perfectionists of the time was that he did, in point of fact, keep himself free from complicity with this evil [wife-sharing, group marriage]. He makes it quite clear that it was in his mind a characteristic of what he calls “New York Perfectionists,” and he declares with the utmost emphasis that he himself never gave it the least countenance. It was brought into New England from New York, he tells us, by Simon Lovett and Chauncey E. Dutton, who circulated at Southampton, Brimfield, and afterward at New Haven itself, as a sort of missionaries; and though beginning in mere “bundling,” passed on into actual licentiousness. As for himself, he asseverates that he had no connection with such things—whether at Brimfield, Rondout, or New York—except to reprove them. **It must not be imagined, however, that it was what we should call the immorality of the practice which kept Noyes thus free from this iniquity. He speaks of it as “licentiousness,” it is true; but he fully shared the “antinomianism” of which it was the expression. His chief concern was that the premature practice of this antinomianism should not prejudice the spread of the doctrine. And then again, the idea of spiritual wives did not go far enough to satisfy the demands of his antinomianism. It still was held in the bonds of law. He stood for promiscuity in principle. And spiritual wives are just as incongruous to the principle of promiscuity as are “legal wives”; they are “spiritual dualism.” “The only true foundation is that which Jesus Christ laid,” he writes, “when he said, that in the good time coming there will be no marriage at all”—meaning not that celibacy will rule, but “promiscuity.”**

Noyes himself tells us that he had already adopted this theory of promiscuity in general in May, 1834, that is to say, on the very heels of his “second conversion”—or conversion to perfectionism—and at the very beginning of his propaganda for the formation of a perfectionist sect. One gets the impression that it held from the first in his mind the place of an essential principle—we might even say of the essential principle—of his system, while the whole doctrinal elaboration led up to it and prepared the way for it. Meanwhile, however, he kept it in the background, putting it forward only tentatively and as men, having absorbed the doctrinal preparation, were able to bear it. As he himself expresses it: “I moulded it, protected it, and matured it from year to year; holding it always, nevertheless, as a theory to be realized in the future, and warning all men against premature action upon it.” How he was accustomed to propagate it is, no doubt, fairly illustrated by his circumspect and veiled, and yet perfectly clear, presentation of it in a letter written in January, 1837, to his friend David Harrison of Meriden, Connecticut—a letter which has acquired the name of “the Battle Axe Letter” from the circumstance that Harrison, acting on a suggestion of Noyes’s (who was eager to make quiet propaganda), showed it to Simon Lovett (who liked it), and Lovett showed it to Elizabeth Hawley, who sent it to Theophilus R. Gates, who published the salient parts of it in his paper *The Battle Axe* (August, 1837)—and thus forced Noyes’s hand, and drew him for the first time to make public acknowledgment of this central element of his teaching. In this letter he writes:—

“I will write all that is in my heart on one delicate subject, and you may judge for yourself whether it is expedient to show this letter to others. When the will of God is done on earth as it is in heaven, there will be no marriage. The marriage-supper of the Lamb is a feast at which every dish is free to every guest. Exclusiveness, jealousy, quarrelling, have no place there, for the same reason as that which forbids the guests at a thanksgiving dinner to claim each his separate dish, and quarrel with the rest for his rights. In a holy community there is no more reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law, than why eating and drinking should be; and there is as little occasion for shame in the one case as in the other. God has placed a wall of partition between the male and the female during the apostasy for good reasons, which will be broken down in the resurrection for equally good reasons; but woe to him who abolishes the law of apostasy before he stands in the holiness of the resurrection. The guests of the marriage supper may have each his favourite dish, each a dish of his own procuring, and that without the jealousy of exclusiveness. I call a certain woman my wife; she is yours; she is Christ’s; and in Him she is the bride of all saints. She is dear in the hand of a stranger, and according to my promise to her I rejoice. My claim upon her cuts directly across the marriage covenant of this world, and God knows the end.”

What is proclaimed here is complete promiscuity among the perfect; those that are perfect are already living the “resurrection life.” Noyes could not repudiate his letter, and, with characteristic courage, declared his purpose thenceforth to publish the doctrine taught in it from the housetop. But with his equally characteristic caution he kept it still in the background, and put in the front those doctrines which he appeared to value more and more, chiefly because they led up to this; but which meanwhile produced less scandal to talk about. A typical example of his dealing with the matter may be seen in the attempt which he makes in June, 1839, to explain to a correspondent how his brand of perfectionism differed from that of the Methodists, Friends, and Asa Mahan. They all agree, he says, that “perfect holiness is attainable in this life.” But the “Perfectionists”—that is, his own sect—are discriminated from the others by certain primary and also by certain secondary tenets. The primary ones he enumerates thus:

“1. Their belief that perfect holiness, when attained, is forever secure....

2. Their belief that perfect holiness is not a mere privilege, but an attainment absolutely necessary to salvation. Holding this belief they of course deny the name of Christian to all other sects....

3. Their belief that the second coming of Christ took place at the period of the destruction of Jerusalem.”

On this third point of doctrine he remarks: “Perfectionists insist upon this doctrine as the foundation of the two preceding”—that is to say it stood with them as the fundamental doctrine out of which all else is deduced. Out of it ultimately come then the “secondary consequences,” adherence to which also characterized “Perfectionists.” These he enumerates as “their ‘Antinomianism,’ [irony quotation marks around this word are Noyes’s own] *their belief of a present resurrection, their peculiar views of the fashion of this world in respect to marriage, etc.*” The promiscuity for which “Perfectionists” stand is not left here, it is true, unsuggested; but it is not obtruded. It is made a mere secondary result of their most fundamental doctrines.”

Here in Noyes’s particularly repulsive system are evident, besides a rejection of Torah sexual ethics, a once-saved-always-saved soteriology—how to distinguish this from the “perseverance of the saints,” your village Calvinist can surely tell you—combined with a preterist eschatology. But his identification of preterism as the purported foundation of his system notwithstanding, it is his antinomianism which remains visible underneath it all as the true root error. His eschatology and soteriology do not inherently require it, but are easily made to prop it up.

These groups seem to share, more deeply than either Warfield or S.I. are able—or perhaps willing—to detect, a true starting point of antinomianism. Warfield’s repeated use of the term “moral law” shows that he was laboring under the Christian conception of a tripartite distinction of the Torah into moral, civil, and ceremonial categories, with only the moral parts being required of Christians in the present age. This renders his *anti*-antinomianism inconsistent, though understandable enough. But for someone who teaches others to discern that “moral law” and “natural law” are subtle terms for inculcating Torah-rejection, and who has, moreover, literally been nominated as Top Educator In The World and whose Flat Earth Encyclopedia rivals even that of Jesus, one cannot help but wonder how it was that S.I. did not at once perceive that if, from the start, the definition of the word “perfect” in the minds of Perfectionists or of Christians of what soteriology soever did not coincide with the Torah’s definition, then it was only a matter of time before such minds were bound to wander into lawlessness of some kind or other.

Furthermore, S.I. was not unaware of Warfield’s compromised position on Genesis literalism when, on 8 Feb 2019, he wrote in his *55 Geological Proofs of the Noahic Flood*, page 6, that,

“The Hodges and B.B. Warfield capitulated to the old earth and day age theories.”

So then why, nearly three years later on 27 Jan 2022 in his blog article “The Mystery Cult and Liberatory Foundations of Christianity That Preceded the Enlightenment and Renaissance By Centuries” (<https://southernisraelite.wordpress.com/2022/01/27/the-mystery-cult-and-liberatory-foundations-of-christianity-that-preceded-the-enlightenment-and-renaissance-by-centuries/>), does he attempt to cite him as some reliable opposition to Darwinism?

“X. Pelagianism – later developed into Darwinism (ateleology)

[Pelagianism and Open Theism Refuted](#)

See *Studies in Perfectionism* by B.B. Warfield...”

Delving only as much further into Warfield as his Wikipedia article, it also comes to light that despite criticizing Darwin, he was at least open to the possibility of *theistic* evolution, and did not see Calvinism as inherently incompatible with evolution. From his article’s “Evolution” section (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._B._Warfield#Evolution),

“Warfield’s views on evolution have been a source of dispute. Scholars David N. Livingstone and Mark A. Noll highlighted Warfield’s statements on evolution to demonstrate his acceptance of the theory in their article *A Biblical Inerrantist as Evolutionist*.^[4] Theologian Fred G. Zaspel argues that these statements have led Livingstone and Noll to assume too much about Warfield’s views on the subject. Zaspel writes “That Warfield actually committed himself to a doctrine of evolution seems impossible to affirm simply because although there are some indications that he entertained the idea, he never admits to accepting it.”^[5]

Warfield studied and wrote about Charles Darwin’s religious views. In an article on Darwin’s religious life, he concluded that Darwin’s doctrine of evolution directly expelled Darwin’s Christian belief. Warfield writes, “Thus the doctrine of evolution once heartily adopted by him (Darwin) gradually undermined his faith, until he cast off the whole Christianity as an unproven delusion.”^[6] Warfield did not believe that evolution required such a rejection of faith. His 1889 review of *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* included this statement: “There have been many evolutionists who have been and have remained theists and Christians.”^[7] In his 1915 article *Calvin’s Doctrine of Creation*, Warfield wrote “It should scarcely be passed without remark that Calvin’s doctrine of creation is, if we have understood it aright, for all except the souls of men, an evolutionary one. The ‘indigested mass,’ including the ‘promise and potency’ of all that was yet to be, was called into being by the simple fiat of God. But all that has come into being since – except the souls of men alone – has arisen as a modification of this original world-stuff by means of the interaction of its intrinsic forces. Not these forces apart from God, of course...”^[8] And further more he says, “What concerns us here is that he [Calvin] ascribed the entire series of modifications by which the primal ‘indigested mass,’ called ‘heaven and earth,’ has passed into the form of the ordered world which we see, including the origination of all forms of life, vegetable and animal alike, inclusive doubtless of the bodily form of man, to the second causes as their proximate account. And this, we say, is a very pure evolutionary scheme.”^[8]

Warfield also points out that, “Calvin doubtless had no theory whatsoever of evolution; but he teaches a doctrine of evolution.”^[9] In that same article, Warfield adds a significant footnote: “H. Bavinck in the first of his Stone Lectures (‘The Philosophy of Revelation,’ 1909, pp. 9–10) remarks: ‘The idea of a development is not a production of modern times. It was already familiar to Greek philosophy. More particularly Aristotle raised it to the rank of the leading principle of his entire system by significant distinction between potentia and actus... This idea of development aroused no objection whatsoever in Christian theology and philosophy. On the contrary, it received extension and enrichment by being linked with the principle of theism.’ **Calvin accordingly very naturally thought along the lines of a theistic evolutionism.**”^[9]

In a separate reference:

‘I do not think that there is any general statement in the Bible or any part of the account of creation, either as given in Genesis 1 and 2 or elsewhere alluded to, that need be opposed to evolution.’ B.B. Warfield^[10]”

Much of these philosophical ties to evolutionism S.I. may, to be fair, have sufficiently dealt with in his *Darwin And The Church Were Wrong About Biology* and in his critique of Calvin’s *Psychopannychia* and the soul doctrine generally. But the point is not so much whether Warfield erred as that he does not appear to have held the specific beliefs for which S.I. turns to him for defense.

Finally, and most laughably of all, in light of S.I.'s constant appeal to the man for the buttressing of his own biblical kinist, Southern White Anglo-Saxon *Calvinist* Protestant platform, including in his not altogether useless works *Defense of the South Against the Jesuit Counter-Reformation* (pages 137, 165, and 274), *A Timeline of Jesuit Intrigue* (page 86), and *Thomas Jefferson Was Wrong* (page 44), is the fact that Warfield was also, not only a vocal abolitionist (and therefore, an antinomian), not only the offspring of abolitionists and a member of an extended family maritally allied with such people, not only (one mo' 'gin) husband to a woman of similar pedigree, but seemingly even proud of the fact. Again from his Wikipedia article, this time the "Race" section (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B._B._Warfield#Race),

"Warfield came from a family of emancipationists and was himself an outspoken opponent of segregation and racism at Princeton Seminary.[11] This led to Warfield, when he was principal of the seminary, to allow a black student to live in white university halls, an action which was met by opposition from fellow faculty members.[12] Warfield termed segregation a "wicked caste system" and wrote a number of theological treatises[sic] and essays to undermine the segregationist position.[13]"

Following that linked source number [11] to Fred G. Zaspel's article for The Gospel Coalition (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/reversing-the-gospel-warfield-on-race-and-racism/>), we encounter the following,

"Both of Warfield's parents had come from families of outspoken abolitionists and with important connections to the cause of emancipation. In one letter he seems to boast of it:

'John C. Young, the drawer of the resolutions of the Ky. Synod of 1835 was the husband of my mother's first cousin. My Grandfather R. J. Breckinridge ran on an emancipation ticket in 1849 – at the peril of his life. Cassius M. Clay was the husband of my father's first cousin. My Mother-in-law was an abolitionist of the Garrison type. My grandparents, parents & the parents of my wife sought in every way to do their duty to those whom they felt themselves sinners to hold in bondage.'"

Once again, the August Desk does not fail to disappoint us with its selective reading comprehension whenever the cherished cornerstone of its imagined Anglo supremacy—Calvinism—is threatened.