

Fr. Perozich comments —

The highlighting and bolding are my additions.

The article defines a commonly used term, **liberalism**, and lists its origins, qualities, and power over our life.

Liberalism is worldly centered, not transcendent as is faith. Part of its power is that it promotes human desires and choices free from outside morality. Its limitation is that it folds us into ourselves and choices. Good and evil are reduced to what I like and what I do not like.

**“The biggest reason though that liberal modernity seems invincible is that it is basic to the way people do things today.”**

Jesus and His church classically have fought to bring human beings to a higher level against liberalism. Thus he was killed. [The Church} **“embodies transcendent standards acceptable to reason, and possesses a structure of authority capable of resolving make-or-break issues.”**

Or at least is used to do so in past times. Too often it seems liberalism has dominated the minds of leaders such as the head of the Jesuits who says the devil is not a person, just a composite of evil; or those who claim that prudential issues of income and population redistribution are equal to life, sexuality and other non negotiable issues.

While the church **SHOULD** be embodying transcendent standards of Jesus, liberalism in her leaders is crippling that fight, and the faithful are not always taught the timeless truths, rather they are taught liberalism.

I know this because lay Catholics send me rants when they object to Catholic teaching in favor of liberalism that they have been taught or have embraced. I know this when clerics criticize classic teaching because liberalism allows them to do and to say whatever they “like”.

Kalb ends the article saying, **“So in spite of our weakness, we have everything we need to prevail. When we recognize that God is at the center of all things, the fictitious anti-world of liberal modernity dissolves. That recognition is a task for a lifetime, but what has been done can be done again. And that is what we are here for.”**

Hold fast to the timeless truths. Respect church leaders when we preach it. Look directly to Jesus if we do not.

## WHY IS LIBERALISM SO DURABLE?

James Kalb

Liberalism sees technology, bureaucracy, and markets as uniquely rational ways to promote the fulfillment of preferences, and therefore the only legitimate sources of authority.

**Liberalism tells us everyone should be able to do, be, and get whatever he wants, as much and as equally as possible.** People believe that represents a new and higher stage in political and moral evolution that can't be reversed short of horrific civilizational collapse. Why?

There are a couple of points to notice here. One is that like all systems **liberalism limits people's goals. It guides them toward manageable**

**goals that support the system and don't interfere with other people.** So they are encouraged *to be politically correct careerists and otherwise mostly interested in consumer goods, leisure time activities, personal indulgences, and so on.*

That leads to a second point, which is that **liberalism sees global markets and bureaucracies as the only truly rational and therefore legitimate principles of social order.** Traditional ordering principles, like *religion, settled family forms, and inherited cultural community, don't fit the system and are considered irrational and oppressive.*

**Such views are radically at odds with the views the Church** and indeed most people have generally favored. These views involve a natural law perspective that bases politics on human nature. By nature, they say, man is a social being who joins together, starting with the family, in communities oriented toward a common good. That good can't be chosen arbitrarily, because **our goods are mostly natural to us, and define a universal natural law all communities should respect.**

The traditional view includes more of reality. Even so, liberals more and more find it incomprehensible and indeed hateful. Why?

Ultimately, behind that attitude lies a tendency associated with modern natural science to view the universe as defined by numerical features and mathematical law. That approach has been enormously successful in the natural sciences, so much so that educated people today accept its unique validity, and generally accept that the real world is the wholly numerical and mechanical world of modern physics.

**But that leaves out essential aspects of experience, like good and evil, that are neither numerical nor mechanical. The result is that such things, which are outside the scope of science, become subjective. "Good" means "I like this," "evil" means "I don't like this."** But that paradoxically leads to a fairly clear system of morality: morals tell people what to do. Subjective desire also tells them what to do, and Occam's razor tells us not to multiply entities beyond necessity. It follows that satisfying preferences is the *summum bonum*. And since all preferences are equally preferences, they all have a presumptively equal claim to fulfillment.

But why aren't educated people struck by the obvious problems with that view?

One reason is that **modernity has been so very successful on its own terms.** It is hard to argue with tanks, bombers, the Internet, modern medicine, constant distraction, and trillions of dollars. And within modernity liberalism has won decisively, **so it too has the argument from success.**

Another is its practical intellectual defenses. **Science and technology tell us what rationality is, liberalism tells us what morality is.** The system seems to work, so to treat anything outside it, for example *human goods other than preference satisfaction, as more than optional private opinion would be to impose an unnecessary assumption on other people.* Why should they put up with it?

**The biggest reason though that liberal modernity seems invincible is that it is basic to the way people do things today.**

We live in a hyper-connected age in which electronics makes every person, place and thing immediately present to every other. *It is also a hierarchical and hyper-organized age* in which even amusements and breakfast food are provided by huge bureaucratic organizations. In such a setting, there is no hiding place for anything at odds with dominant institutions and understandings.

But what are these institutions?

*Liberalism sees technology, bureaucracy, and markets as uniquely rational ways to promote the fulfillment of preferences, and therefore the only legitimate sources of authority.* For that reason it leads ultimately to a technocratic and oligarchical society. In doing so, **it suppresses natural and traditional arrangements**, which work on entirely different principles.

**It also suppresses popular government.** Liberals appeal to democracy rhetorically, but they have always had an uneasy relation to it. **Voting lets the majority makes decisions that the minority—who may be severely disadvantaged by them—must accept.** Also, the voters may be illiberal, self-centered, and ignorant of the facts and likely consequences of their choices. And they *[voters] can be manipulated, especially in an electronic age that dissolves reality into a whirl of images and soundbites that can be reassembled to tell any story whatever.*

So voting can't be relied on to maximize equal freedom or public benefit. **The result is a tendency to move away from voting (and consumer choice) toward decision-making by supposedly expert bureaucrats. Consumer choice becomes thoroughly regulated, and voting becomes an ultimate check rather than a normal way of making serious decisions.**

That tendency conforms to the technocratic vision of social engineering. It also gives business and other institutions an opportunity to exert influence behind the scenes and ensure that government actions are not too much at odds with their needs and desires. That helps the system by making it more coherent overall.

In such a society practical life comes to depend wholly on markets and bureaucracies. **Independence** of the kind once possessed by the Church, local communities, independent producers, and families in their internal life **disappears.**

The result is that **personal identity—what people think they really are and their reasons for valuing themselves—comes to depend more and more on their relation to money and large institutions.** Everyone with talent and energy becomes a careerist devoted to getting along as a bureaucrat or market participant.

The point of education becomes careers for the students and technical expertise, trained operatives, and compliant subjects for their rulers. To that end we now have not only mass university education but mass graduate study. The absorption of women into the full-time paid workforce has added daycare and early childhood education to the mix.

**The result is that minds and plans of life are fully formed by liberal institutions.** Children are still influenced by their parents and others outside the educational, childcare, and pop culture industries, but those ties are weaker than in the past, and the people exerting influence have also been formed by liberalism. The effect of liberal institutions and understandings thus becomes cumulative.

Under such circumstances **questioning liberalism becomes incomprehensible. It would be an attack on basic social reality and on everything our contemporaries have been taught to hold sacred.** It would also be an attack on the life history, personal identity, social affiliations, and dearest hopes of everyone who matters.

Further, it would call for relying on institutions like family, Church, and local community and culture that are less and less functional, have no recognized grounds for claiming authority, and therefore hardly count as institutions.

The result of all this is a governing outlook that will not last forever, but is certain to cause a great deal of damage while it lasts. **The job of those who see what is going on is to survive the current situation, defend and carry forward as much of the Faith, civilized life, and sanity as we can, propagate those things as opportunity offers, and eventually prevail as liberalism and modernity destroy themselves.**

**The Church**, in spite of her corruptions, has resources that **make all those things possible**. She gives us a point outside the world from which it can be understood and moved. And she gives us a community worthy of supreme loyalty that by its nature fosters tradition, recognizes natural law, **embodies transcendent standards acceptable to reason, and possesses a structure of authority capable of resolving make-or-break issues.**

These things can be obscured, but they can't be lost. For 2000 years they have repeatedly brought the Church back from what seemed certain death. And even from a human standpoint, by establishing a pattern that works durably, they are perpetually leading her to revert to type.

So in spite of our weakness, *we have everything we need to prevail. When we recognize that God is at the center of all things, the fictitious anti-world of liberal modernity dissolves. That recognition is a task for a lifetime, but what has been done can be done again. And that is what we are here for.*



**James Kalb** is a lawyer, independent scholar, and Catholic convert who lives in Brooklyn, New York. He is the author of *The Tyranny of Liberalism* (ISI Books, 2008) and, most recently, *Against Inclusiveness: How the Diversity Regime is Flattening America and the West and What to Do About It* (Angelico Press, 2013).

# Liberalism is a theological disorder - Revisited

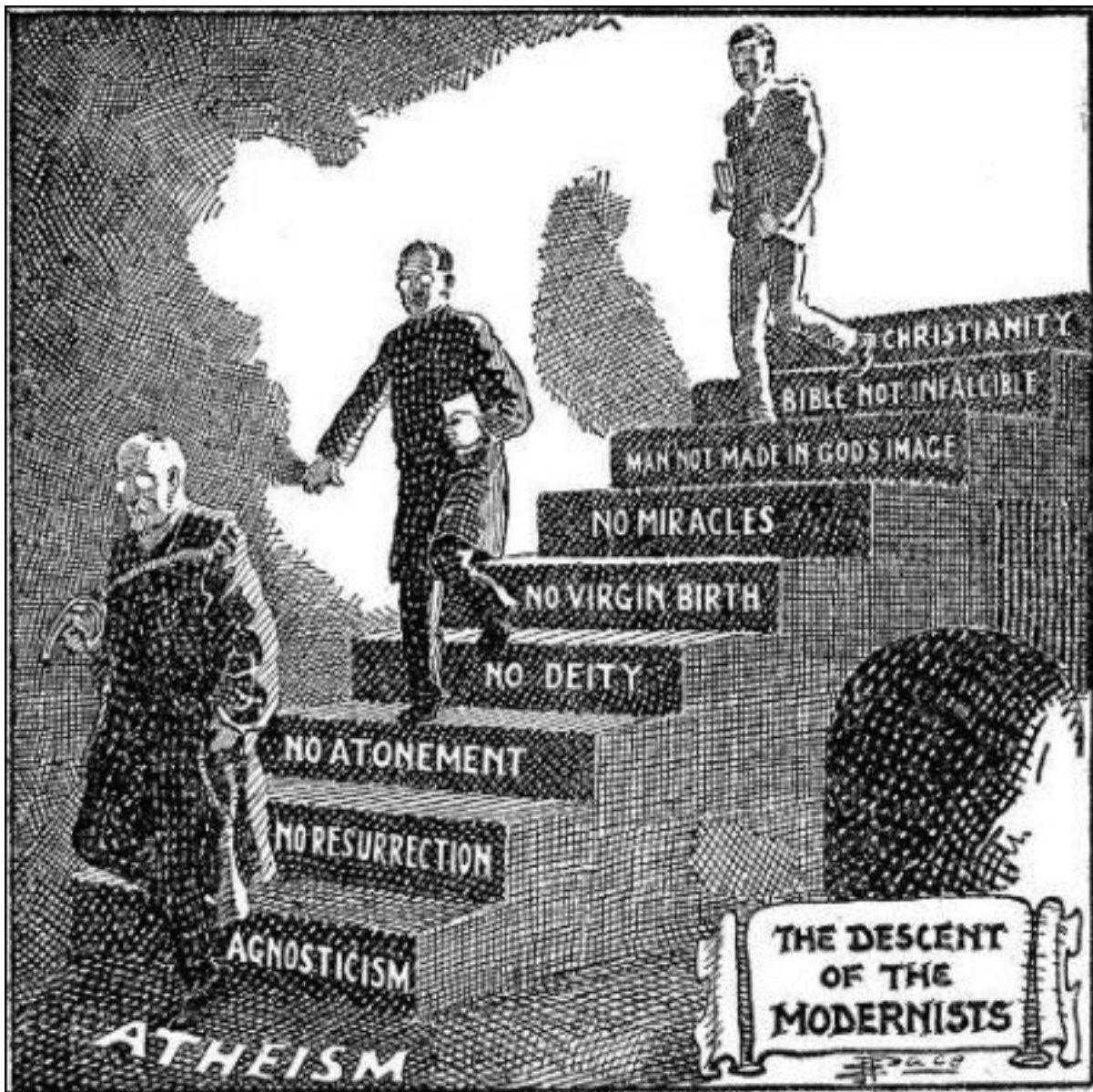
By [A.J. Castellitto](#)  
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**Machen's Christianity and Liberalism**

*"The movement designated as "liberalism" is regarded as "liberal" only by its friends; to its opponents it seems to involve a narrow ignoring of many relevant facts." – J. Gresham Machen*

The late, great, J. Gersham Machen, in his magnum opus apologetic, *Christianity & Liberalism*, vividly defines the dividing line between the fact and fiction of the human condition. His insights are still as relevant and invaluable today...

*"The dominant tendency, even in a country like America, which formerly prided itself on its freedom from bureaucratic regulation of the details of life, is toward a drab utilitarianism in which all higher aspirations are to be lost." – JGM*



The truths of the bible don't change. No amount of progress or sophistication can account for the evil that lies in the human heart. A seared conscience void of biblical discretion is a tragic thing.

*"The liberal doctrine of God and the liberal doctrine of man are both diametrically opposite to the Christian view." – JGM*

Godless ideology promoted under the guise of true religion can only lead to misery and unbridled criminality. In fact, while the true church remains under perpetual assault, it is the lawlessness of nations that continues to abound like never before.

*"A solid building cannot be constructed when all the materials are faulty; a blessed society cannot be formed out of men who are still under the curse of sin." -JGM*

Jesus did not die for the sins of man so that a boundless, utopian society may prevail. Jesus came so that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).

<https://reformedforum.org/ctc609/>

\*A new edition of J. Gresham Machen's classic work, Christianity and Liberalism, is now available via Westminster Seminary Press.

<https://www.wtsbooks.com/products/christianity-liberalism-legacy-edition-9781733627214?variant=11602097143855>

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