Friendship in the Civic Order: A Reformation Absence

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In Michael Pakaluk's anthology of the key writings in the western literary and philosophical tradition concerning friendship, which begins with Plato and Aristotle, there is a major lacuna. So, too, in several recent collections of scholarly treatments of the topic in the self-same tradition, or even in wider comparative context.[1] Missing in every case are *all* of the sixteenth-century Reformers. The reasons for this gap seem not to be arbitrariness or capricious ideology. We look in vain for a treatise or even a brief, consolidated treatment concerning friendship, especially civic friendship, among *any* of them—Zwingli, Luther, Calvin, Bucer, Menno Simons. Their biographers tell us of friendships, so the problem is not that the phenomenon or its experience was personally alien to them. Both Luther and Calvin explicitly rejected Aristotelian teleology, and we might imagine that this dismissal disabled them from thinking about friendship in specifically teleological Aristotelian terms. But both Luther and Calvin were heavily influenced by Augustine, who had a good deal to say about friendship,[2] leading us to expect that their anti-Aristotelian handicaps would not have hindered them from understanding the importance of the topic. This topical gap is indicated more widely in the absence or abbreviation of friendship in modern accounts of political life,[3] but that is reading backward: Luther and Calvin did not set out to be "modern" in our sense of the word, and both were raised in the cultural context of a waning mediaeval period in which

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[1] Michael Pakaluk, ed., *Other Selves: Philosophers on Friendship* (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1991); Examples of extensive collections of recent treatments include: Thomas A. F. Kelly and Philipp W. Roseman, eds., *Amor amicitiae: On the Love that is Friendship* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004); Luigi Cotteri, ed., *Il concetto di amicizia nella storia della cultura europea* (Merano: Tip Hauger, 1995).

[2] See John von Heyking, *Augustine and Politics as Longing in the World* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2001).

[3] Cf. Steven Salkever, *Finding the Mean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 243.

friendship had been core experience and a key element of political life.[4] It may be the case, then, that the Reformers provide a clue to the curiously thin treatment and understanding of friendship in the modern period. Given the centrality of these figures to our modern religio-political landscape, what are we to make of the friendship gap, both in the original writers and in subsequent scholarly treatment? What, if any, are its implications for us?

If my preliminary reading of Calvin and Luther are correct, then an evaluation of their notions of friendship becomes a report on an absence. Like the problem of counter-factuals in historical writing, such a report must refer to what *could* have happened, what *could* have been said, but was not. It is a report in the subjunctive mood. Therefore, to highlight what is both present and missing in Calvin and Luther's treatments, I will conduct a brief excursus that maps out a few mythic and literary aspects of civic friendship before returning to Calvin and Luther. Since they both rejected the Aristotelian tradition of inquiry, I deliberately consider examples of pre-Socratic, non-Greek sources to indicate the basic structure of questions found even in myth that could have been available—not in specific *content*, but in general structure—to Calvin and Luther, but seemingly were not or were considered to be unimportant. The role of this contrast is to point briefly to neglected options and missed opportunities (that do not require an acquaintance with Aristotle), which then permits us to ask why such omissions occured.

1.   *Friendship and Philosophical Analysis*

Friendship is portrayed as a vital part of civic life—and therefore as a central problem of human life together—long before Greek philosophy. The Mesopotamian *Epic of Gilgamesh*, for example, includes an extensive treatment of friendship in the medium of epic myth, and we know that this epic existed in various forms in a number of diverse cultures in the wider Mesopotamian region.[5] Gilgamesh is the ruler of a city, a great doer

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[4] For example, see Gerd Althoff, "Friendship and Political Order," in Julian Haseldine, ed., *Friendship in Medieval Europe* ((Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing, Limited, 1999), 91-105.

[5] Cf. N. K. Sandars, "Introduction," in *The Epic of Gilgamesh: An English Version with an Introduction*, N. K. Sandars, ed. (London: Penguin Books, 1972), esp. 13-20; and Stephanie Dalley, "Gilgamesh:

of deeds, physically perfect, wise, but arrogant and demoniacally energetic. His worn-out subjects plead with the gods to create a companion for him who will re-direct his energy away from them and their sons and daughters to more worthy pursuits. The gods find/create Enkidu, a "natural man," who "was innocent of mankind and knew nothing of the cultivated land." Seducing him by means of a woman, the gods civilize him, thereby alienating him from the wild animals and filling his heart with a longing for civic companionship. Enkidu finds and enters Uruk, the city of Gilgamesh. During an ensuing battle —over access to a woman some versions of the myth imply —the two discover their mutual qualities of great strength and other god-like attributes; they "embrace," and their friendship is sealed. The two heroic friends now engage in a project of urban renewal: Enkidu reports of a great pine or cedar forest inhabited by a ferocious "evil" giant, Humbaba; conquering this giant and bringing back the lumber to build great walls and temples for the city will win them honor among the subjects.

Humbaba and his forest, we may suggest, represent in conventional mythic form the natural world in all its unruliness ("evil") against which the ruler of the city and his friend(s) must do battle in order to found and maintain the order of the city. It is also out of this unruly nature and its destructive forces that the friends extract the raw resources to build and maintain the city over against that nature. No doubt we see reflected in this episode of the myth the experience of early city-building and the experience of salvation to be found in the city that is the refuge and sure defense against a nature that is hostile and yet benevolent at the same time.[6] It is in the context of this establishment and preservation that the friendship of the two heroes—which began in an associational conflict—finds its meaningful purpose. Humbaba's defeat is the clear work of partnership, of a cooperation of companions in arms. It is in the context of contest, not

Introduction," in Stephanie Dalley, trans. and ed., *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 39-49.

[6] For an account of the modern version of this state myth, see William T. Cavanaugh, "The City: Beyond secular parodies," in John Milbank, Catherine Pickstock, and Graham Ward, eds., *Radical Orthodoxy: A New Theology* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 182-200, esp. 186-194.

civic order, however, that a friendship of equality is first formed.[7] I note without comment that a woman is a source of the civilizing of Enkidu and a woman is also the source of strife that leads to friendship.

In a subsequent episode, the question of friendship turns in a much different direction. Heroic poetry inevitably includes in its depiction of the structure of society "a conception of the human condition as fragile and vulnerable to destiny and to death, such that to be virtuous is not to avoid vulnerability and death, but rather to accord them their due."[8] Having subdued the guardian of the forest and having refurbished the city with its natural treasures, Gilgamesh glories in his deeds. With the arrogance of accomplishment, he insults a goddess. His punishment is the death of his companion. The unheroic death of Enkidu from illness is a loss of true friendship built on equality and reciprocity of heroic deeds, but Enkidu's death also reminds Gilgamesh of his own fear of death: "what shall I be when I am dead?" he asks. As in later epics of quest, Gilgamesh goes on a long and ultimately futile journey to discover the answer to this deepest question. This spur to reflection is bound not merely to death as such, but to the death of a friend. The great warrior Gilgamesh had previously seen and dealt death, as is implied in the complaint of the citizens of Uruk to the gods, but this death is different, because it is the death of a friend.

It is surely not stretching the interpretation of the mythic narrative to suggest the following conclusions; friendship is central to the foundation and internal maintenance of the city; friendship redirects the spirit in constructive, civically salutary pursuits; friendship is a source and perhaps even a spur to reflection; friendship arises among equals. Friendship may be rare, and it takes root in mutual recognition, which may

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[7] The strong Romantic (perhaps wistful) overtones of his treatment notwithstanding, it seems to be something of this sort that Nietzsche has in mind in his understanding of friendship. (Cf. "Sternen-Freundschaft:" Aph. 279 of *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* and his early essays, "Der Griechische Staat" and "Homers Wettkampf" in Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, eds., *Friedrich Nietzsche: Sämtliche Werke, Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol 1, (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 764-777 and 783-792.

[8] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 128-9.

originate in conflict and contest,[9] but it provides harmony that flows beyond the immediate relationship of the friends.

Betrayal and neglect of friends are not features of the Gilgamesh epic—it is the arbitrary gods, not Gilgamesh, who kill Enkidu as punishment for Gilgamesh's dishonoring speech—but they were known to the inhabitants of the ancient world as they are to us. In the well-known third-millennium lament of the Egyptian poet who contemplates suicide with his soul, one of the several signs of social breakdown is that one either has no friends, or one cannot face them honestly:

> To whom can I speak today?
>
> (One's) fellows are evil; . . .
>
> To whom can I speak today?
>
> Faces of disappeared;
>
> Every man has a downcast face toward his fellows. . . .
>
> To whom can I speak today?
>
> There is lack of an intimate (friend);
>
> One has recourse to an unkown to complain to him. . . .[10]

Here again, we may recur to the positive inversion of this complaint: friendship and trust—meeting one another's eyes with no injustice to hide—are constituents of an orderly society. These mythical and poetic accounts remind us that friendship can be a primary experience, not a derivative one. Indeed, one may argue that notions of politics arise out of experiences of friendship, and not the reverse. That is to say, "Western political speculation finds its origin in a system of thought in which the idea of friendhsip is the major principle in terms of which political theory and practice are described, explained and analyzed."[11]

And so to the Greeks, where the two most important epic poems that survive from the cycle of epics surrounding the Trojan War and its aftermath are laden with well-

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[9] Which is an equality that is not the same as Hobbes's equality in the ability to kill one another.

[10] "A Dispute Over Suicide," trans. John A. Wilson, in James B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 406.

[11] Horst Hutter, *Politics as Friendship: The origins of classical notions of politics in the theory and practice of friendship* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1978), 2.

known treatments of friendship. The *Iliad* is a story of the rage of Achilles, a rage that brings much destruction to Achilles' friends, the Achaians, and that results in the death of his best friend (dear comrade) Patroclus. This epic, and Homer's other surviving epic, the *Odyssey*, contain multiple accounts of friendships gained, kept, lost, or betrayed. Surprisingly, but importantly for our considerations of how to understand the Protestant Reformers, Homer does not use the later standard Greek term for friendship, φιλια. He does use φιλοσ—friend— and, less surprisingly, there is considerable unresolved etymological and philological debate concerning its origin and its precise meaning in his poems.[12] And again of importance for how we should approach the friendship topos in Calvin and Luther, the "uncertainty about this issue [concerning "the original and Homeric meaning of φιλοσ"] should not obscure the fact that the *idea* of friendship is clearly present in the Homeric epics."[13]

A thorough study of Homer reveals that there exist a variety of friendships in his world, and one is led to the conclusion that Homer and Homer's time may have lacked or only partially possessed "a specific vocabulary of friendship," so that "the practice of friendship thus precedes its precise definition."[14] That *practice* in its varied forms and meanings, however, is made clearly visible in Homer's works.[15] Homeric friendship of whatever kind requires, for example, a "oneness of mind," or "unity of mind and purposes."[16] Homer's poems also treat specific friendship problems, including especially the nature of guest-friendship, the death of friends, and alienation (and reconciliation) between friends.[17]

This illustrative excursus, already far afield from the topic of Reformation Europe, could be extended into a multi-volume treatment of the specifics of friendship in the Greek and wider ancient world. It delivers several matters of importance for our

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[12] John T. Fitzgerald, "Friendship in the Greek World Prior to Aristotle," in John T. Fitzgerald, ed., *Greco-Roman Perspectives on Friendship* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 13-34, at 15-21.

[13] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 19.

[14] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 20.

[15] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 21.

[16] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 22, 23.

[17] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 24-26.

concerns. First, there is no instance in any treatment of story of friendship in a purely private matter. None. In all cases, from the myth of Gilgamesh to the epics of Homer, through the poems of Theognis, to the tragedies of Sophocles and all points between, friendship always has public, political connotations and implications. Indeed, as Fitzgerald claims, "the history of Greek friendship is thus intertwined with Greek political history, and the one cannot be written without a knowledge of the other."[18] More strongly, perhaps, we may argue that it is not only the case that, as in the *Eudemian Ethics*, the political art consists in the production of friendship, but that for the Greeks, practices of friendship were what first informed their practice of politics, or that politics was understood "as the means for the exercise of friendship."[19] To put it yet a third way, friendship leads to deeds, and deeds –heroic, legislative, tyrannicidal, marshal, etc.— are public.[20] It is perhaps this central role of friendship in public life that also raises the immediate question of its potential destructiveness in Homer's epics and the plays of the Greek tragedians, a question that also lurks in the background of Plato's *Republic*.

Second, friendship is not only intertwined with politics generally, but specific *kinds* of friendship and specific problems concerning friendship only make sense within specific political or sociological contexts. Indeed, this may well be an extension of the argument that any systematic account of a particular ethics demands a specific social embodiment in order to be intelligible.[21]

Third, friendship is an old story, and does not require philosophy to make it work. What philosophical analysis *does* do, however, is to make available to us a clear understanding of the various alternatives concerning types, "uses," and roles that friendship could play or does play in various contexts. Philosophical analysis

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[18] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 27. Accordingly, Fitzgerald argues that "in a very concrete sense, the *Iliad* is not so much about the "wrath of Achilles" (1.1) as it is about the loss and restoration of friendly relations between Agamemnon and Achilles." (25). It is only the reconciliation of the two rulers that can re-establish communal harmony and a concomitant winning military strategy among the Greeks camped on the shores of Ilion.

[19] Hutter, *Politics as Friendship*, 25.

[20] Hutter, *Politics as Friendship*, 26.

[21] MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 22, 23.

"differentiates" the various kinds, qualities, contexts, possibilities, or shortcomings of friendship, thereby providing us with more or less useful philosophical maps by means of which we make sense of the world even as we act in or into it.[22] Just as importantly, it is not possible to crawl back into the womb of the cosmos, the compacted articulation—pardon the contradictio in adjecto—of the myth once philosophical analysis has had its way with the phenomenon. Certainly, it is possible to continue to tell and enjoy illuminating stories, but we now know their shortcomings.

When we reach Aristotle's encyclopedic philosophical treatment, we can dispute whether his discussion reflects an essentially Homeric (or more widely "Greek") understanding of friendship (φιλια), or if it "reflects the specific concerns and values of the democratic polis of the classical period."[23] We may suspect, moreover, that Aristotle was specifically and flatly wrong about some aspects of friendship; for example, his claim that bad people cannot be good friends even to those who are not themselves bad and that friendship with a bad person cannot be a good friendship.[24] The correction to Aristotle's apparent error and elaborations of his contextual meaning, — however deeply intrusive into Aristotle's conception of things these may seem— can be absorbed into an account of friendship that is still fundamentally Aristotelian. The reason for this possibility is roughly the same as the reason that Homer's heroic account can be rendered intelligible to a Midwestern, middle-class high-school student: insofar as our lives take narrational form and insofar as human experience across time and space contains substantive and structural similarity, if not to say equivalence, we can imaginatively re-enact the substance and structure of past experience based on present experience, including the alien sociological structure within which these experiences are rendered intelligible. And, while that same youth may understand what it might mean to take vengeance on one's widowed mother's spendthrift suitors, he is unlikely to do so,

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[22] For a brief discussion of "philosophical maps" that is particularly critical of modern versions and sympathetic to classical epistemological arguments, see E.F. Schumacher, *A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1977), 1-14.

[23] Fitzgerald, "Friendship," 14.

[24] MacIntyre, "What Both Bad and Good Bring to Friendships in Their Strange Variety," in Kelly and Rosemann, eds., *Amor amicitiae*, 241-255.

because the socio-political strictures of middle-class society indicate otherwise, offering a different, perhaps more or perhaps less just and satisfying set of options for action. Beyond equivalences of this sort, we may suggest more strongly that it is only some kind of account like Aristotle's that will allow for a coherent account of a life of virtue that includes friendship.[25] Aristotle's context for friendship is the polis, but this context is at least in part a retrospective. The polis as Aristotle describes it —autarkic, a site for the final administration of justice and the determination of what is just, for example— no longer existed when he wrote his lecture notes we now possess as his *Politics* and *Ethics*. Indeed, Aristotle was tutor to the man who brought about the demise. We are not all heroes or rulers, and our associations are not all political. In his inimitable encyclopedic fashion, Aristotle lays out for us some of the possibilities and qualities of friendship. There are, he argues, three kinds of friendship, distinguished from one another by what it is that attracts the friends to one another. The three basic categories of mutual attraction are pleasure, utility, and virtue. In order for friendship to come into being, the mutual attraction must result in activity, be it centered in pleasure, utility, or virtue. In Aristotle's estimation, friendship of any kind must include an element of "mutual liking" or "well-wishing and well-doing out of concern for one another."[26] While Aristotle's "central case," namely "friendship based on the recognition of moral goodness" most clearly requires such mutual concern, he holds this requirement to be true for all three species of friendship.[27]

The upshot of this basic outline is two-fold for our purposes. First, no polis is necessary for at least certain kinds of friendship, although some varieties of friendship may be necessary for a certain sort of polis. Second, it is therefore the case —and so, it seems to me, Aristotle argues— that every-day *political* friendships are not, in fact, virtue-friendships, but utility friendships. While it may be that case that the best sort of polis is a partnership in virtue, it is also that case that all "lesser" sorts of poleis, as well as the best sort, require partnerships in utility in order to be preserved. Thus, it seems that

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[25] Cf. MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 109-120.

[26] John M. Cooper, "Aristotle on Friendship," in Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, ed., *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, Ltd., 1980), 303, 304.

[27] Cooper, "Aristotle," 303, 304-305.

utility relations are both necessary and sufficient for the preservation of political order, and partnerships in virtue are a constituent part only of the best regime.[28] Civic concord [homonoia] as Aristotle describes it, moreover, does not require moral excellence either, but only agreement in utility.

Luther, Calvin, and Friendship

To begin with the observation that Calvin and Luther reject Aristotelian philosophy is not a full reading of what we might expect from their account of friendship; friendship is prior to Aristotelian philosophy and Aristotle's work was unknown to the medieval era in which specifically Christian notions of friendship developed. These practices, however, were informed by other classical accounts of friendship, especially that of Cicero, whose notions of ideal friendship as a disinterested bond cultivated among the virtuous was strongly civic-minded in the tradition of other classical modes of friendship, because such friendship was to serve a public good, which was for Cicero the preservation of social order of the administrative machinery of the (Roman) imperium. Like the Aristotelian account, moreover, Cicero's account of friendship was "based on virtue, not private emotion."[29] The theologian of the medieval West, Aurelius Augustine, too, had an elaborated account of friendship, and it, too, was arguably linked to a conception of political justice. Augustine, moreover, experienced the loss of a friend as a devastating occasion for reflection.[30]

Beyond the common experiences that myths, epics, and philosophical analysis share and which we might therefore anticipate as available to the Reformers, we might

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[28] For a thorough discussion of this point, see Edward W. Clayton, "Aristotle and Political Friendship," 1997 (unpublished manuscript, cited with permission of author).

[29] Julian Haseldine, "Friendship, Equality and Universal Harmony: The Universal and the Particular in Aelred of Reivaulx's *De Spiritali Amicitia*," in Oliver Leaman, ed., *Friendship East and West: Philosophical Perspectives* (Richmond: Curzon, 1996), 192-214 at 192; cf. 197-8; and, James McEvoy, "The Theory of Friendship in the Latin Middle Ages: Hermeneutics, Contextualization and the Transmission and Reception of Ancient Texts and Ideas, From *c*. AD 350 to *c*. 1500," in Haseldine, ed., *Friendship*, 3-44, at 13;

[30] Augustine, *Confessions*, 4.4.

also look to the New Testament writings, a source that was key for them. The *topos* of friendship is not missing there. Indeed, as Mitchell shows in his review of recent New Testament scholarship on this question, the friendship *topos* plays an important role in the Pauline correspondence and in Luke's writings. While Paul rarely uses the usual Greek friendship terms—φιλοσ and φιλια— he does appeal consistently "to conventions associated with friendship," and he uses the *topos* of friendship to describe both his relations with his correspondents and to prescribe the kinds of relationships that should be occurring within the communities to which he writes.[31] Luke, on the other hand, uses φιλοσ frequently, including, it seems, as a title for Christians.[32] Luke has specific interests revolving around reciprocity and (social) obligation in friendship that he appears to highlight in his Gospel and his church history accounts.[33] These, too, would have been available to the Reformers.

Luther

Luther, I have noted, explicitly rejected Aristotelian teleology, which, we might imagine, disables him from thinking about friendship in Aristotelian teleological terms.[34] Friendships based on pleasure and utility may form the substructure of virtue relations for Aristotle (by administering necessities, for example), but they do not require a teleologically informed philosophical anthropology in order more or less to make sense of themselves. Perhaps Luther would admit of pleasure and utility friendships. The sharing in virtue, as contrasted with sharing in pleasures or utility, however, would be excluded.

In the Small and Large Catechisms, undoubtedly Luther's most-read works, we find several possible topoi in which a discussion of friendship might take place: the

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[31] Alan C. Mitchell, "Greet the Friends by Name: New Testament Evidence for the Greco-Roman *Topos* on Friendship," in Fitzgerald, ed., *Friendship*, 225-262, at 226.

[32] Mitchell, "Friends," 236.

[33] Mitchell, "Friends," 237.

[34] See especially "An Appeal to the Ruling Class of German Nationality as to the Amelioration of the State of Christendom," in John Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections from his writings edited and with an introduction* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1961), 470-71.

discussion of the Seventh and Eighth (by Luther's count) Commandments; the Lord's prayer, and the final article of the Apostle's Creed, for example. Friendship and friends are mentioned in several instances. He who "trusts and boasts," in contradiction to the prohibitions of the First Commandment, "that he possesses great skill, prudence, power, favor, friendship, and honor," "also has a god." Friends, like neighbors, exist for aid, and, like other external goods, they can be treated as resources.[35] On the other hand, "good friends," along with neighbors and servants [*Gesinde*] "from whom I expect good . . . defraud me most of all."[36] Resources can be two-edged.

       In Luther's exegesis of the eighth commandment, we receive a hint of virtue friendship, a hint, indeed, that most clearly distinguishes him from his classical past. This commandment, Luther argues, forbids us to speak evil of our neighbor, but "the civil authorities [weltliche Obrigkeit], preachers, father and mother" are exempted from this rule, because otherwise this commandment would imply that evil should go unpunished. While no one "has a right in his own person to judge and condemn anybody," there are divinely sanctioned offices [Ämter] in society that require those who hold them to speak necessarily "of the evil, to lay charges, to serve affidavits, to interrogate, and to testify:"

> Indeed, the procedure here is no different than with a physician, who must sometimes examine and touch in hidden parts the one he is supposed to heal. In the same way, political authorities, father and mother, indeed, even brothers and sisters and other such good friends are obligated among one another to punish evil where it is necessary and useful.[37]

But what is "useful" [nützlich]? In what ways do the seemingly disparate members of this large category of entities and persons, each playing an apparently distinct role with regard to the beloved malefactor in question in fact belong to this self-same category? Luther, argues Sheldon Wolin, labored under an imperative to simplify both the politics and the

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[35] Martin Luther, *Der Grosse Catechismus* (München und Hamburg: Siebenstern Taschenbuch Verlag, 1964) (my translation), 22.

[36] Luther, *Grosse Catechismus*, 70.

[37] Luther, *Grosse Catechismus*, 76 (my translation).

theology of medieval Christendom.[38] Here we see an instance of this imperative. Friendship implies the making of distinctions— friend and not friend (how to decide?); worthy of friendship and not worthy (how to know?); and the creation of hierarchy (on what basis?). In Luther's flattening of distinctions and hierarchies, the roles that political authority, parents, kin, and friends play are not identical, but they are of one category. Moreover, none should be understood as aids to virtue. Rather, as I will elaborate presently, both spiritual and secular authority exists to restrain evil, no more. Accordingly, friendship cannot be understood as a mutual aid to virtue, since no such exist.

As another instance of this simplification, doing good merely to friends is a "heathen virtue," but Luther takes no pains to resolve the Christian dilemma of having love for all while also holding to select friends.[39] Our "neighbor" [Nächsten] may be either friend or foe, and we are obliged to "help, support, and lend" to both alike.[40] To extend such kindness, regardless to whom, is to do these acts out of "friendship."[41] There is in these writings no effort whatsoever to identify various kinds of friendship and to distinguish them from each other. Luther's explicit rejection of Aristotle's *Ethics*[42] does not issue in an effort to replace Aristotle's account of friendship with another. So, too, Luther elides friendship not only with other kinds of relationships, but with other kinds of objects and forces. In his "Treatise on Good Works," he lists friends, along with "body, property, honor . . . or whatever they have," as those things in which we can suffer, and he lists friends as one of the possessions, along with "body and life and property" that people will sacrifice to gain glory, which he considers the worst of vices.[43] Possessions, honor, favor, and friendships are, in converse, the list of goods we must be willing to give

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[38] Sheldon Wolin, *Politics and Vision: Continuity and Innovation in Western Political Thought* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), 143.

[39] Cf. Eoin C. Cassidy, "'He Who Has Friends Can Have No Friend': Classical and Christian Perspectives on the Limits to Friendship," in Haseldine, ed., *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, 45-67.

[40] Luther, *Grosse Catechismus*, 72.

[41] Luther, *Grosse Catechismus*, 72; cf. 79.

[42] Luther, "Appeal to the Ruling Class," 471.

[43] Martin Luther, *A Treatise on Good Works*, [1520], I.xxi & I.xxxiii.

up in favor of defending the truth.[44] If friendship were a good that led to virtue or if the practice of friendship were itself a virtue, we could imagine either of these lists, so they alone do not distinguish Luther from his classical predecessors. Nor does his explication of Jesus' words that "You shall be hated by all men for My Name's sake" with the observation that "here we must provoke to anger father, mother, and the best of friends." It is precisely in the determination of what is our highest good that friendships are made and broken. Rather, it is in the failure to distinguish various kinds of such relationships or their ends that Luther flattens the idea of friendship and renders it essentially useless for any work in political ethics.

We may ask the question yet another way: what do friends do? For Luther, they bring material advantage or the practical advantage of prosperity and stability:

> Of this any one might indeed make a long prayer, and with many words enumerate all the things that are included therein, as that we pray God to give us food and drink, clothing, house, and home, and health of body; also that He cause the grain and fruits of the field to grow and mature well; furthermore, that He help us at home towards good housekeeping, that He give and preserve to us a godly wife, children, and servants, that He cause our work, trade, or whatever we are engaged in to prosper and succeed, favor us with faithful neighbors and good friends, etc. Likewise, that He give to emperors, kings, and all estates, and especially to the rulers of our country and to all counselors, magistrates, and officers, wisdom, strength, and success that they may govern well and vanquish the Turks and all enemies; to subjects and the common people, obedience, peace, and harmony in their life with one another, and on the other hand, that He would preserve us from all sorts of calamity to body and livelihood, as lightning, hail, fire, flood, poison, pestilence, cattle-plague, war and bloodshed, famine, destructive beasts, wicked men, etc. [45]

The passage is lengthy, but we cannot see Luther's meaning without this (much) wider context. Friends are a favor from God, a favor of utility like "faithful neighbors" which in turn are a part of the material and organizational requisites for prosperity and success. So, too, in the *Small Catechism*, where "daily bread" means:

> Everything that nourishes our body and meets its needs, such as: Food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, yard, fields, cattle, money, possessions, a devout spouse, devout children, devout employees, devout and faithful rulers, good government,

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[44] Luther, *Good Works*, I.xxx.

[45] Luther, *Good Works*, II.ii.

good weather, peace, health, discipline, honor, good friends, faithful neighbors and other things like these.

For this reason, unlike in Aristotle's conception of friendship, even the wicked can have friends,[46] and our acts of friendship are from "feeling" or from divine command, not an estimation of virtue.[47] None of this should take away from the possibility that friendship can be understood as a kind of blessing, even a spiritual one. Friendship even of a utilitarian kind requires work, and Luther could give personal advice on how such work should proceed:

> Although we are moved to suspicion and displeasure, we should beat these back and remember not to allow them to sever the bond of love and extinguish its fire; but we should cling firmly to our friendship in the face of them. And if perchance displeasure and disagreement arise, we should renew and improve our love and friendship. For to begin to love is not so great, but to remain in love (as Christ here says) is a real task and virtue.[48]

To continue such friendship is a practical activity of securing spiritual goods negatively, which is to say, to avoid loss or a fall from grace:

> Throughout life a faithful friend is a very great blessing and a very precious treasure. This is true not only in view of the ordinary dangerous difficulties in which he can offer help and consolation but also in view of spiritual temptations.
>
> For even though your heart is thoroughly confirmed by the Holy Spirit there is nonetheless a great advantage in having a friend with whom you can talk about religion and from whom you may hear words of comfort.[49]

To know what, precisely, to make of this advice, we require one final step—a glimpse into Luther's ecclesiology.

It has become virtually a common-place that Luther tended from early in his reformist career to "minimiz[e] the political character and ecclesiastical power of the Church," which logically "opened the way for a temporal monopoly on all kinds of power."[50] The effect that this move had on his ideas of friendship is less immediately

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[46] Luther, *Good Works*, X.ii.

[47] Luther, *Good Works*, II.xii.

[48] Martin Luther, *What Luther Says*, ed. Ewald Plass. Vol. 1; (Concordia Publishing House, 1986), lecturing on John 15:9, xxx.

[49] Luther, *What Luther Says,* (Vol. 1; Concordia Publishing House) lecturing on Genesis 13:5-7, xxx.

[50] Wolin, *Vision*, 148.

clear, but we have now observed its results. Since the political realm is not a realm of virtue, but of "repressive power, law backed by coercion," whose role it is to suppress evil,[51] one can hardly imagine much of a positive role for friendship in such a realm of activity. And, for Luther, there is not one. The community of believers, on the other hand, seems not to have any features that would give us much more. Luther's exegesis of the third article of the Apostle's Creed stresses the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual believer and its accumulation of such individuals into a "flock," where the word of God is preached and whereby individual faith is instilled and nourished.[52] Reading it, one is persuaded that Luther understands faith as entirely individual. Outside of the collective nouns—church, assembly, flock—Luther mentions the collective of believers as a mutually supportive group only once: "Because we live in Christianity [Christenheit] in which there is all forgiveness of sins, in the double sense that God forgives us and that we forgive, carry, and help one another."[53] Luther adds no explicit details for what these three activities should look like; indeed, he adds no elaboration whatsoever. Friendship, if these acts constitute it, is not articulated. This absence should not surprise anyone who reads that "The one who does much 'work' is not the righteous one, but the one who, without 'work,' has much faith in Christ," or that "The work of Christ shall rightly be called an active work, and ours that which is worked, so the one which is worked is well-pleasing unto God, thanks to the active work,"[54] and who finds nowhere a communal context for either human faith or the work of God.

Luther was heir to a long medieval tradition in which "innumerable medieval anthologies and encyclopedias frequently included a chapter on friendship,"[55] but he did not avail himself of the inheritance. Concentrating instead on man's forensic status before God, Luther preached grace, but a grace taken up individually *in* the collective, not collectively for the individual; nor, more modestly, individually *amidst* the collective.

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[51] Wolin, *Vision*, 151.

[52] Luther, *Grosse Catechismus*., 98, 104.

[53] Luther, *Grosse Catechismus*, 161. Luther also calls it a "holy congregation" [heilige Gemeinde].

[54] Luther, "Theses for the Heidelberg Disputation," in Dillenberger, *Martin Luther*, 503 (Theses # 25 and 27).

[55] McEvoy, "Theory of Friendship," 29.

Sheldon Wolin well articulated the aftermath: "The pressing problem confronting Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin was to bring Protestant man back to a consciousness of community after first having encouraged his individualism."[56] How to restore harmony and order around a governing principle in what had come to be conceived as a highly individualistic collectivity? Apart from advocating authoritarian forms of rule within and without the church, Luther furnished little by way of an answer and friendship played no significant role in that minimum.

Calvin

If Calvin's theology has been accurately described as in part a kind of hyper-Lutheranism,[57] then we may expect to find little more concerning friendship in Calvin's work than in Luther's. We will hardly be disappointed. Calvin uses "friend" and "friends" for the most part in a casual associational mode without further comment. In his commentary on Hebrews, he equates "concord" with "friendship," arguing that we cannot be friends with "the wicked" to the point of having such relations "defile or pollute" us: "concord" is limited by conscience.[58] Friendship has no special qualities here, being reduced to a kind of civil association of the most basic sort that includes no common aim aside from a desire for peace, but without moral compromise, whatever that may mean. Friendship is here, as in Luther, a utilitarian association. It may call us to make compromises we should not make, and so we must resist its siren call at that boundary.

In his booklet "On the Life of the Christian Man," which Calvin extracted from his *Institutes*, he has almost nothing to say of friendship; he appears to see no important role for friendship as such in his description of the "Christian Life." Indeed, he calls upon his readers to have "courteous and friendly" relations with all, exhibiting "moderate and modest" behavior toward everyone, but no more is said. Concerning the death of friends,

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[56] Wolin, *Vision*, 240.

[57] Ralph C. Hancock, *Calvin and the Foundations of ModernPolitics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

[58] John Calvin, *Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews* John Owen, ed. and trans. (Ages Digital Library, 1996), 265.; This is *not* the *homonoia* of Paul.

Calvin enjoins an attitude adopted from Stoicism (with which, his first publication having been a commentary on Seneca's *De Clementia*, he was closely familiar): our tears are the payment due to nature at the death of our friends, and such occurrences, along with disease and poverty, are but one variant of adversity in life. In all three kinds of adversity, "the Lord so wills it, therefore let us follow his will," is the recommended response. Insofar as friendship is mentioned at all in Calvin's *Institutes*, its qualities and features remain unanalyzed and Calvin treats it as an instrumental function of social cohesion. People have friends, and so does God, who can make people His friends.

How people become friends with one another and why, Calvin does not say, nor does he distinguish with any precision between friends within and without the body of Christian believers, the organization that most concerns him. Insofar as Calvin does comment on it, friendship is, like all other human relationships, prescribed by duty:

> Our Savior having shown, in the parable of the Samaritan, (Luke 10:36,) that the term *neighbor* comprehends the most remote stranger, there is no reason for limiting the precept of love to our own connections. I deny not that the closer the relation the more frequent our offices of kindness should be. For the condition of humanity requires that there be more duties in common between those who are more nearly connected by the ties of relationship, or friendship, or neighborhood. And this is done without any offense to God, by whose providence we are in a manner impelled to do it.[59]

Like Luther, Calvin recognizes the tension in Christian doctrine between particularity and love of all and, like Luther, he makes no effort to resolve or even clearly address this tension, nor does he care to analyze the important potential differences between "neighbor" and "friend." He tends strongly as possible toward treating them as the same:

> But I say that the whole human race, without exception, are to be embraced with one feeling of charity: that here there is no distinction of Greek or Barbarian, worthy or unworthy, friend or foe, since all are to be viewed not in themselves, but in God. If we turn aside from this view, there is no wonder that we entangle ourselves in error. Wherefore, if we would hold the true course in love, our first step must be to turn our eyes not to man, the sight of whom might oftener producehatred than love, but to God, who requires that the love which we bear to

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[59] John Calvin, *Institutes of Christian Religion,* trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983[1945]), II.viii.55.

> him be diffused among all mankind, so that our fundamental principle must ever
> be, Let a man be what he may, he is still to be loved, because God is loved.[60]

Calvin perceives or acknowledges little difference between neighbor and friend with regard to obligation, nor does he entertain the possibility that there may be nuances or differences in what is meant by "love" in different circumstances. Missing almost entirely from the *Institutes*, for example, are references to the friendship tropes of such New Testament passages as Acts 4; John 17:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20. In what would become the hallmark of Protestant theology, Calvin rejects at the same time the Roman Catholic distinction between professional religion and laity regarding what the practice of loving the neighbor should be. His vituperative prose against this distinction does not, however, lead him to offer any practical advice concerning love of neighbor. Indeed, the *context* of this brief discussion is an exegesis of the Tenth Commandment, and Calvin is largely at pains to demonstrate the inviolability of God's law and the work of divine grace in making it possible to both keep the dictates of that law and to obtain pardon when human weakness subverts our efforts. Love of neighbor is love of God, and love of God is understood by means of reference to divine edicts and exhibiting in action what is commanded,[61] not by means of a growing maturity in practice:

> It is certain that, in the law and the prophets, faith, and whatever pertains to the
> due worship of God, holds the first place, and that to this charity is made
> subordinate; but our Lord means, that in the Law the observance of justice and
> equity towards men is prescribed as the means which we are to employ in
> testifying a pious fear of God, if we truly possess it.[62]

Possession of this pious fear and of God's grace is of paramount importance for Calvin, and its individuality undermines any elaboration of the possibility of friendship. In this light, consider Calvin's exegesis of the third article of the Apostles' Creed.

The creedal claim that "I believe in the holy catholic and apostolic church" reminds the speaker first and foremost of his or her duties: "every one of us must maintain brotherly concord with all the children of God, give due authority to the Church,

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[60] Calvin, *Institutes*, II.viii.55.

[61] Calvin, *Institutes*, II.viii.51.

[62] Calvin, *Institutes*, II.viii.53.

and, in short, conduct ourselves as sheep of the flock."[63] Calvin's focus, after all, is on the "Government, Order, and Power" of the Church. Having recovered a political vocabulary after Luther jettisoned it in his radical simplification and dichotomization, Calvin approaches the question of church community:

> . . . saints are united in the fellowship of Christ on this condition, that all the blessings which God bestows upon them are mutually communicated to each other. This, however, is not incompatible with a diversity of graces, for we know that the gifts of the Spirit are variously distributed; nor is it incompatible with civil order, by which each is permitted privately to possess his own means, it being necessary for the preservation of peace among men that distinct rights of property should exist among them. Still a community is asserted, such as Luke describes when he says, "The multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul" (Acts 4:32); and Paul, when he reminds the Ephesians, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Ephesians 4:4). For if they are truly persuaded that God is the common Father of them all, and Christ their common head, they cannot but be united together in brotherly love, and mutually impart their blessings to each other.[64]

Having approached community, Calvin turns without further comment or elaboration of its particulars to the individual and the relationship between that individual and divine command:

> Then it is of the highest importance for us to know what benefit thence redounds to us. For when we believe the Church, it is in order that we may be firmly persuaded that we are its members. In this way our salvation rests on a foundation so firm and sure, that though the whole fabric of the world were to give way, it could not be destroyed. First, it stands with the election of God, and cannot change or fail, any more than his eternal providence. . . . so long as we continue in the bosom of the Church, we are sure that the truth will remain with us.[65]

Like Luther, so Calvin reduces community to a minimum, a relation between divine sovereign and individuals who are bound together chiefly to receive an assurance of grace, mediated through church rulers who themselves possess considerable authority:

> We see that God, who might perfect his people in a moment, chooses not to bring them to manhood in any other way than by the education of the Church. We see the mode of doing it expressed; the preaching of celestial doctrine is committed to pastors. We see that all without exception are brought into the same order, that

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[63] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.3.

[64]. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.3

[65] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.3

they may with meek and docile will it allow themselves to be governed by teachers appointed for this purpose.[66]

Calvin does not seem to know what to make of the community of saints, so he leaves it aside, shifting instead to an authoritarian model in which he depicts teachers of "heavenly doctrine" standing before docile, imbibing listeners: "Let us hold, agreeably to the passage we quoted from Paul, that the Church can only be edified by external preaching, and that there is no other bond by which the saints can be kept together than by uniting with one consent to observe the order which God has appointed in his Church for learning and making progress."[67] Progress is understood, it appears, as largely related to understanding of doctrine, not maturity in prudence, wisdom, or other virtues, all of which are peripheral if to Calvin's vocabulary and none of which are understood or at least articulated in the context of some kind of mutuality.

More strongly still, Calvin gives second place to this visible, concrete community in which friendship could conceivably take root. Rather, this manifest institution points us to the invisible church, to an apprehension of the unknown, and to an inward assurance of divine election that Calvin clearly and deliberately distinguishes from the visible community:

> we are not enjoined here to distinguish between the elect and the reprobate (this belongs not to us, but to God only), but to feel firmly assured in our minds, that all those who, by the mercy of God the Father, through the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, have become partakers with Christ, are set apart as the proper and peculiar possession of God, and that as we are of the number, we are also partakers of this great grace.[68]

This grace is known not primarily in its visible manifestation, but in its invisible assurance, "a unity into which we feel persuaded that we are truly ingrafted," and that Calvin argues is of primary importance over the more "external Church," the visible community of saints.[69] In the invisible realm of truth, friendship is unimaginable.

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[66] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.5.

[67] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.5. "Still everyone who listens with docility to the ministers whom God appoints, will know by the beneficial result, that for good reason God is pleased with this method of teaching, and for good reason has laid believers under this modest yoke."

[68] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.3.

[69] Cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.i.7-10, 21.

It is not the case that Calvin denies friendship any place at all in human life. We have seen instead that he acknowledges friends and friendship, and that he does so not only in his personal references, but also in some references to scripture. For example, Abraham is "called by the command of God," Calvin reflects, by which "he is torn away from friends, parents, and country, objects in which the chief happiness of life is deemed to consist, as if it had been the fixed purpose of the Lord to deprive him of all the sources of enjoyment."[70] Rather, like Luther, Calvin understands this relationship in utility terms, and he, like Luther, is unclear what place to give it in his theology generally and in his political theology or ecclesiology specifically. Like Luther, he appears unable to conceive of friendship as something more than a relation of pleasure or utility in the course of a life in which we move not toward moral excellence and maturity in that excellence, but toward the overwhelming experience of the grace and election of God that descends upon the solitary individual.

To be sure, friendship, like justice, temperance, fortitude, and prudence, are means by which God preserves society, even through the unbeliever, but these "good works" can all be executed through bad motives, and none are worthy of regard apart from the grace of God. In what way friendship preserves order Calvin does not say. His recovery of a language of politics from its Lutheran demise is a recovery toward authoritarian forms of rule, both in his ecclesiology, as I have noted, and in his account of civil government in the final chapter of the *Institutes*. The vocabulary of that chapter includes rule and magistracy, law and obedience, sovereign decree and individual conscience, but rarely concord and never friendship.[71] Government may exist to promote piety,[72] but this promotion is doctrinal and institutional, not convivial, effected through "common peace and security," and laws that safeguard public manners.[73]

It is possible, finally, to be "admitted to [the] friendship" of God, but not by any action that we may undertake. "On the contrary, though we may be redeemed by Christ, still, until we are engrafted into union with him by the calling of the Father, we are

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[70] Calvin, *Institutes*, II.x.11.

[71] See, for example, Calvin's summary at *Institutes*, IV.xx.2.

[72] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.9.

[73] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.9.

darkness, the heirs of death, and the enemies of God."[74] What the substance of friendship with God, once we are elected to it by God, consist of Calvin does not say. Indeed, Calvin leaves his reader with the distinct impression that friendship is nothing other than that status of election itself. It is in its motives, not its outward appearance, that a deed of virtue—including "friendship"—is distinguished from one of vice.[75] The friends and family of God are the Church, which has this status by dint of God having elected each individual member individually to divine grace.[76] The substance of such friendship is exhibited in specific acts of obedience,[77] but these acts do not bring us closer to a sovereign, omnipotent and omniscient God in the way that common experience tells us acts of mutual kindness, support, or understanding can deepen or solidify friendships.[78] We cannot be fellow-workers of God except in the sense that God imputes to Himself any acts of His people that display His benevolence.[79]

Concluding Remarks

"The practice of friendship which was characteristic of the medieval centuries," writes James McEvoy, "can be illuminated strikingly by means of the theories, ideas and images which lent it consistency and afforded it at the same time a generous measure of moral guidance. The ideas which helped to shape the experience of friendship themselves require, in their turn, to be elucidated."[80] It should not need to be said that to be able to *say* what we are doing helps (or hinders) in the doing of it. To say, then, what friendship is and is not aids in the practice of it. To clarify may mean to fix, change, and even transform an activity, but the phenomenon or activity on which the analysis rests existed

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[74] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xiv.6.

[75] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xiv.5 & 7.

[76] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xxii, passim; III.xv.6.

[77] See, for example, Institutes III.xviii.6.

[78] See, for example, *Institutes* III.xxiv.3; Calvin says nothing of such common experiences of friendship except with reference to the command to give alms.

[79] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xviii.6.

[80] McEvoy, "Theory of Friendship," 3.

prior to the analysis. If the Protestant reformers and the radical reformers did not talk about friendship, it doesn't meant that they didn't practice it. Did Calvin and Luther have friends? Certainly. But their understanding of friendship, however it may have looked in "real life," was rule- and duty-bound, not virtue-bound. And since those rules were of no avail for their ultimate aim, namely justification before God,[81] the contents of those rules, too, were relegated to second place in the theologies of these two Reformers. Included in that dis-placement was any serious engagement with the problems and possibilities of friendship.

Politically, too, friendship played a negligible role in their thinking. When they thought about government, both Luther and Calvin had in mind some kind of tyranny, strong monarchy, or at least territorially centralized authority. To have friends is difficult for authoritarian rulers and impossible for tyrants.[82] Friendship, in either case, is not an important category for understanding such rule —except negatively— so it is not surprising that neither of these Reformers employed it in thinking about government. More disconcerting is the absence of same in thinking about ecclesiastical polity. Here again, however, the authority of divine grace (Luther) or divine command quickened by divine grace (Calvin) seems to have overtaken any consideration of a polity informed by friendship.

Such remarks, however, cannot be the full measure of the friendship gap in the writing of these reformers. On the one hand, Calvin and Luther were focussed on problems in many ways alien to the western and pre-western tradition in which thinking about friendship begins. Of paramount importance to them, instead, was the juridical/forensic status of the individual before God. All other concerns were subsidiary. Their experience of politics did not raise to the first rank question of the origins of political order as we see in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* or in Homer's epics or other ancient literature concerned with friendship and social order. Government is a mandate of God, an ordinance of the Divine that seems to be largely unproblematic in its genesis,

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[81] Calvin, *Institutes*, III.xix.2.

[82] Plato, *Republic*, 567a-569c; Xenephon, *Hiero* VI.1-16.

maintenance, and sustenance.[83] The medieval experience of a fragile political and social order that required the bonds of friendship to sustain itself and the much more distant Mesopotamian and Greek experiences of political founding and political intimacy along with an ongoing fragility prior to the emergence of empire were far behind these reformers, even though all three problems were of foremost importance to their Italian contemporary, Machiavelli, and even though Calvin, at least, had experience of a small city-state.

On the other hand, while neither took their philosophical cues from Aristotle, this need not have disqualified them from a more intense engagement with the problem of friendship, since Aristotle was unknown to the European Middle ages, but careful thinking about friendship, based in the writings of Cicero (with which Calvin was familiar) and others, was extensive. So, too, we find considerable material for thinking about friendship in the writings of Augustine, which had a formative influence on both Reformers. Neither were Calvin or Luther ignorant of yet other classical writings, especially of the so-called "Church Fathers," whom both liked to cite, and where they should have found in abundant measure the topic of friendship.[84] It is therefore insufficient to say that because both Reformers, recurring to Augustine and dealing with a scholastic legacy after Aquinas, explicitly rejected Aristotelian or Thomistic scholasticism, they were therefore left without a closely articulated version of a human teleology, thereby disabling them from placing friendship in the same context that Aristotle and Aquinas's teleological frameworks of philosophical anthropology and concomitant analysis of political life could. Several other possibilities that all included a rich tradition of friendship accounts existed and were known to them.

One might summarize the Protestant socio-political and ecclesiastical problem by suggesting that it reduces to determining how to bring "Protestant man back to a consciousness of community after having first encouraged his individualism."[85] In this Luther was largely unsuccessful, but Calvin was not. With his conception of a "triangular relationship of ruler, people, and the law," he was able to re-establish "the idea of the

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[83] Calvin, *Institutes*, IV.xx.9.

[84] See especially Cassidy, "He Who Has Friends" 45.

institutionalized community,"[86] but, in my estimation, this idea never recovered the substance of the friendship idea that had animated so much of earlier political conceptions. Perhaps we cannot lay this loss entirely at the feet of the Reformers: perhaps, as Brian Patrick McGuire reports, it was already appearing in the late medieval period, when "an expectation of the fruits of friendship in the life of those who seek Christ" was replaced by "fear or hesitation about the worth of bonds of friendship in a Christian context," by a "loss of faith in the place of friendship in human and Christian life."[87] In the example of such loss in the life and thought of Jean Gerson, McGuire suggests that we first see "the terrible aloneness of the person in receiving God's unpredictable gift of grace," made more prominent by authoritarian churches and a "rejection of nurturing human bonds of equality that lead to Reformation dilemmas of conscience."[88] Perhaps the Reformers inherited a problem that they only amplified.

Regardless the efficient cause for their theological moves, with the Reformers we have lost something. In the conceptions of political friendship that take their cue from Aristotle and even the Stoics, virtue friendship is understood to be an activity of improvement—friends make each other better, more complete in virtue. For Calvin, and especially Luther, the sphere of politics can play no such role; oddly (at least until we consider carefully their theologies of divine grace), the church cannot or does not fully play such a role, either. In the accounts of friendship that Aristotle and Aquinas have left us, "the quality of our friendships and the quality of our moral lives are inseparable."[89] Calvin or Luther may have believed this, but they don't say so, and I suspect that they did not, in fact, believe it. Their estimation of the quality of a moral life was bound up in the terms of duty, law, command, and grace, not in accounts of a friendship with God or of human beings one with another in which one could give a narrative account of the constitutive elements of one's own or another's good and in which that good is

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[85] Wolin, *Vision*, 240.

[86] Wolin, *Vision*, 189.

[87] Brian Patrick McGuire, "Jean Gerson and the End of Spiritual Friendship: Dilemmas of Conscience," in Haseldine, ed., *Friendship*, 229-250 at 230.

[88] McGuire, "Gerson," 244.

[89] MacIntyre, "Both the Bad and the Good," 255.

understood as something attained in the ongoing development and practice of virtue.[90] Absent an account of human telos that contains a developmental narrative and not merely grace-infused, rule-bound acts in response to commands, the "quality" of a friendship may be judged in utilitarian terms, but not under the terms of its effects on the moral quality of a moral life. That is a modern absence to which Calvin and Luther contributed much.

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[90] MacIntyre, "Both the Bad and the Good," 255.