

The Indicative of Being
and the Imperative of Doing
John R Gavazzoni

One of the last of the articles of 2003 posted on our web page is titled, "The Divine Imperative and Indicative." What follows is a continuation of that theme, hopefully clarifying and theologically establishing this divine principle discoverable as one of the golden threads running through the whole of scripture.

It is at the encouragement of my dear friend and co-worker in the gospel, Alan McSavage, who felt that the original article and my thoughts on the subject shared during a recent conference hosted by Greater Emmanuel International Apostolic Team Ministries had sufficient value to warrant elaboration.

I do not want to be guilty of a form of plagiarism, so I hasten to acknowledge that those two words, "indicative" and "imperative," used as I have in written and spoken ministry are, what I would call, semantic hooks, provided by my mentor of many years, Harry Robert Fox, during a time of delightful fellowship in a small group gathered around the dining table at the home of Lenny and Jan Antonsson.

It was one of those golden moments when a true elder of the faith, out of abundance of revelation, confirmed by years of drawing from the riches of many quarters of the body of Christ, gave us those "hooks" on which to hang the substance of that evening's fellowship so that, in recalling those two words, we could bring back to mind the light that infused our evening's dialogue.

This time around, I chose to connect the indicative and imperative of the economy of God with the essentially identical thought with regard to being and doing. Whichever of those homiletical combinations one chooses to work from can be helpful since they overlap quite nicely as we seek to translate spiritual light into human words without spirit becoming lost in dead letter.

Scripture is clear that we all "...have our being" in the divine Being. It is not that divine Being is separate from our being, one there and the other here, which seems to be how most Christians view it.

Essentially, God is looked upon as the Big Being, and all others as little beings who He created out of nothing. Rather, scripture presents the Being of God as that Ground from which all being is birthed and created, God's Being thus multiplied and glorified by the impregnation of His Seed as the family which He is continues to grow resulting in "the increase of God." The thought of God, fully expressed in the Logos, of course, would be consistent with this truth.

It should be elementary to us then, that God would base all His imperatives---all that He deems necessary to be done, all that must be done, all the action that His will and purpose call for---upon the indicative of His Being and the being that we have in Him. When one's eyes are opened to this principle, suddenly page after page of Holy Writ are found to have examples of this foundational truth. What God does proceeds from what God is, likewise so with His children, born of His Seed.

It is supremely devilish to reverse that order so that, in countless, overt and covert ways, the people of God are religiously deceived into trying to be (indicative) who they ought to be, by doing (imperative) what they ought to do. But we do not hope someday to be the children of God. We are, even now, according to the beloved apostle John, the children of God, and that sublime spokesman of the Word takes a resolute stand on that truth always extrapolating from that revelation high ground.

He reminded the earliest believers that whatsoever is born of God cannot continue in sin. That is, though that which is born of God has been, in the divine wisdom, subjected to what it is not, so that in some way it has been made to endure being what it is not, it shall be proven that it cannot continue so, for that which is born of God is the only thing which has continuance. Only He and only we in Him, and He in us abides.

All else is dissolved in the Reality of the Eternal.

"As He is, so are we in this world," writes John in his first epistle. It is not that we hope by faithful doing to become what He is in this world. We must, even while our five senses confront us with the lie of apparent evidence to the contrary, take our stand upon the indicative,

proceeding to the imperative with that spontaneity of life that is at the heart of the new covenant.

By the reversal of that order of life, the enemy projects onto the screen of our natural mind a false persona, constituted by his greatest lie, using the law to keep us in the prison of spiritual frustration and futility, or if not that, places the flesh on the pedestal of religious pride on the part of those who are adept at creating mere external forms of action that have no true spiritual content.

Brother Paul is in full agreement with brother John, always basing his encouragements and exhortations to the saints upon indicative statements. There is no basis to be found in Paul's theology for struggling to be crucified, buried and risen with Christ, which is the summation of "the Christian life." Instead there is the unabashed declaration, in the indicative, that we are in truth included in Him in the entirety of His descent and ascent.

Though our Lord Jesus was made to be sin for us, He, the divine Seed could not continue so, for the temporal alterations of personhood are always swallowed up in the eternal "I AM."

Clearly, Paul's way, the true apostolic way of teaching, is to call forth from the inner man of the believer, that which God, in Christ, has made him to be (indicative), and to strengthen his argument by declaring all that is seemingly to the contrary an alien(ated) mentality that has no ground in Truth. When we build upon the indicative, we build with gold, silver and precious stones, but when we begin with the imperatives of either or both attitude or action, we provide an incarnation of the big lie.

But I must not leave the reader with a problem so that he or she becomes vulnerable to fruitless self-correction, for the Reality is that the Liar and his lies has been defeated already by Christ, a victory that is ours in Him, and the victory of Jesus of Nazareth, our Head, will be confirmed in His body, the church; not a victory yet to be won, but a victory already won by Him for us, to be confirmed in us as the indicative of our being in Him breaks out of the shell of contrariness and unfolds in the imperative of our manner of living in this world.

In closing, I delight to share with the reader, the sublime, pertinent thought contained in a beautiful worship chorus composed (both lyrics and music) by the inimitable Bill Green:

And now I know the battle lies behind me
The night is past, the light of God surrounds me.
The Victor's crown that Christ has won in beauty now adorns me.
And in His love I know that I've been born free.

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