

At the Name of Jesus*Caroline M. Noel (1817–1877)*

At the name of Jesus ev'ry knee shall bow,
 ev'ry tongue confess him King of Glory now.
 'Tis the Father's pleasure we should call him Lord,
 who from the beginning was the mighty Word.

At his voice creation sprang at once to sight,
 all the angel faces, all the hosts of light,
 thrones and dominations, stars upon their way,
 all the heav'nly orders in their great array.

Humbled for a season to receive a name
 from the lips of sinners unto whom he came,
 faithfully he bore it spotless to the last,
 brought it back victorious, when from death he passed.

In your hearts enthrone him; there let him subdue
 all that is not holy, all that is not true:
 crown him as your Captain in temptation's hour:
 let his will unfold you in its light and pow'r.

Brothers, this Lord Jesus shall return again,
 with his Father's glory, with his angel train;
 for all wreaths of empire meet upon his brow,
 and our hearts confess him King of glory now.

ΤΩ ΚΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ*In the Nick of Time***Dominion***Kevin T. Bauder*

It was never meant to be easy, this business of exercising dominion. When God blessed the first humans, he gave them the power to fill the earth and to subdue it. Yes, subdue it, like the sons of Manasseh were to subdue the land across the Jordan (Num 32:22), like the children of Israel subdued the promised land (Josh 18:1), like Ahasuerus thought that Haman had tried to subdue Esther (Esth 7:8). To subdue a thing (*kavash*) is to tread it down, to dominate it, and to bring it into subjection (BDB, sv).

When God created the heavens and the earth, they were formless and empty (Gen 1:1–2). There was order, but it was a relatively lower level of order. Throughout creation week, God brought His world into higher and higher levels of order, and that was good. Nevertheless, the full ordering of the world was not complete at the end of Day Six. God did not finish ordering the world Himself. Instead, He committed that task to the godlike creatures whom He had made for the purpose—human beings.

Humans were made to rule the world. They were made to take dominion. To exercise that dominion, they would have to wrestle the created world into higher levels of order. They would have to subdue it. We were made to rule. We were made to dominate and subdue, and our world was made to be dominated.

Tragically, the work of exercising dominion was subverted by sin. The presence of sin in the world has at least two effects. First, sin has corrupted both our thinking and feeling. We now perceive it as good and right to dominate the created order—including other people—in predatory ways. Second, the order of creation itself has been distorted. God chose not to leave fallen humans in an untouched environment. Now the ground brings forth thorns and thistles. Scarcity has become part of life, which means that acquiring daily food has become a labor. Animals kill each other, and they kill humans, too. We experience fires, floods, earthquakes, storms, and other natural disasters. More than ever, we need to bring order to the world, but the degree of required effort has increased exponentially.

We can make two great mistakes in our present situation. The first mistake is the *preservationist* mistake: the belief that the best approach to the created



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order is to leave it alone. On this view, people treat the created world best when they affect it the least. The *summum bonum* would be to let the world function with minimal human interference. Indeed, some versions of this theory see humanity as a disease upon the planet, and a few of them are only too ready to see the human race eradicated.

The preservationist view tends to ally itself with religions that deify nature. Various forms of animism, shamanism, and pantheism feed this theory, and its adherents are quite prepared to impose their religion upon the rest of us. This view is also reinforced by an evolutionary theory that believes the earth evolved into higher levels of order without human interference.

The problem with preservationism is that God's original blessing and purpose have never been revoked. Left to itself, the earth will never function optimally. It was made to be governed and shaped by humans, and without human domination it will always display a chaotic element—the more so since sin entered the world.

Part of human dominion involves challenging the results of the Fall. It is good and right to subdue illness-causing viruses and bacteria. It is right to control flooding, till the soil, and otherwise harness natural resources. Sometimes it is even right for humans to displace parts of the created order, including other created beings. Not long ago a creature existed that caused smallpox; when we drove that creature into extinction, we did a good thing.

Preservationism is a serious error, and one that will work against human flourishing. But the opposite error is just as serious. It is *predation*, and it occurs when humans exploit the created world without any intention of increasing its good and its order. Sometimes predation is purely destructive. Sometimes it arises from ignorance. Sometimes it comes from negligence in cleaning up our messes.

Within living memory both bald eagles and wild turkeys hovered on the brink of extinction. During the 1960s Lake Erie was widely regarded as a dead lake. In 1969 the Cuyahoga River caught fire. These were emblems of a civilization whose industrial capacity had outstripped its willingness to clean up after itself.

Preservationism and predation both share the same core problem. They fail to recognize the vital role that human domination plays in developing the created order. God never made a world that could function without human supervision, without humans acting within creation to bring it to higher levels of completeness and order.

As a human, you were made to exercise dominion. You were made to subdue the earth. You should start now, with whatever part of the earth you control. If all you control is your own body, then learn to bathe and brush your teeth. If you control a bedroom, then make your bed and pick up

your clothes. Take dominion over your schedule and get up on time in the morning. Subdue your workspace and clean up your own messes. Exercise dominion over your relationships so that you show both justice and charity to parents, siblings, children, neighbors, and strangers. Subdue your work habits so that you give your employer an honest day's work for a day's pay. Exercise dominion over your finances and spending choices so that you not only live within your means, but so that you are able to about toward those who experience need. In all departments of life, avoid both the *laissez-faire* of preservationism and the inclination toward predation that comes from just wanting to be served. You can offer no workable solutions for the big problems of scarcity, oppression, inequity, and injustice in the world if you cannot first address these smaller problems within your own personal world.



This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, Research Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses.
