CHAPTER SIX

COMPARING VISIONS OF PEACE

The earlier chapters of this study cover considerable ground. Chapter one lays out the task of this project, providing a brief history of prior interpretations and stating the assumptions and guidelines of my project. Chapter two compares Ephesians vis-à-vis Colossians, argues that the motif of peace is prominent in Ephesians, and provides an initial investigation into the character of its vision of peace. Chapter three further examines this vision of peace. It investigates the character of Ephesians as a tractate περὶ εἰρήνης, arguing that the letter can be read politically as it shows similarity in subject matter, themes, and terms with Greek and Roman political thought. Chapter four examines the vision of peace in Dio Chrysostom’s orations, chapter five the Confucian Four Books. In this concluding chapter, I compare the three visions of peace, then highlight the implications of my study.

THREE VISIONS OF PEACE

Comparison of the three visions of peace must be selective. I emphasize those elements that are pertinent to the reading of Ephesians. Consequently, I do not discuss the similarities and differences of the Dionic and Confucian visions of peace if they do not contribute to an improved understanding of Ephesians. I consider first the nature of peace, and second the various elements in the three visions of peace.

Nature of Peace

I began this project with a working definition of peace derived from contemporary English usage. I then subsequently adjusted and developed this semantic field as I interrogated each set of texts. I can now summarize and compare the concepts of peace in the three sets of texts, paying attention to their respective metanarratives, multiple frames of reference, bases for peace, impediments against peace, and the relationships between heavenly and human peace.
Nature of Dionic Peace

Dio’s vision of peace is located within the framework of the Second Sophistic, a period in which sophists and philosophers wrestled with issues concerning Greek identity under Roman imperial power. Through the *Kingship* and the *Bithynian Orations*, Dio portrays himself as an emissary of peace sent by Zeus, and seeks to craft a vision of peace that promotes communal flourishing and Greek vitality. Although Dio holds to the Stoic theory of eternal cycles of cosmic conflagration and regeneration, he does not locate his vision of peace within this metanarrative.

Dio sees peace operative at multiple levels. At the molecular level, peace holds the elements together; in the animal kingdom, peace exists among the ants, birds, and the bees; in the human sphere, peace pervades the city, province, and kingdom; in the geographical and atmospheric sphere, peace exists between the earth and the ether; and finally in the heavenly sphere, peace is expressed as friendship among the gods. Of all these contexts, Dio considers only the human sphere to be in need of correction.

Dio focuses on three frames of reference: relationships within a city, relationships between cities, and relationships within the kingdom. The primary failing in these three reference frames is discord (στάσης). Discord within a city arises from enmity, distrust, and jealousy between different socio-economic classes, between the ruling elite and the poor. Discord between cities arises from the desire for primacy, the love for titles, and quarrels over territorial boundaries. Discord and instability within the empire result from the moral failings of tyrannical rulers. In contrast to discord, Dio envisions a state of peace that is characterized by concord (ὁμόνοια). Concord is the elimination of enmity, hostility, strife, and war. Concord is friendship between members of a city and reconciliation between disputing cities. More important, concord is civic order, the maintenance of the prevailing social and political hierarchy, and the imposition of beneficent rule by an ideal king characterized by φιλανθρωπία. Given the centrality of concord within Dio’s oration, we may conclude that concord is the defining character of Dio’s vision of peace.

Zeus is the source of concord, but human concord is accomplished not by divine intervention but by human accomplishment. The gods may assist, but the primary onus lies on human effort, or more precisely, on the development of moral character in humanity. The