CHAPTER THREE

ECONOMIC SYSTEM OF CALVINIST THEOCRACY

A Theocratic Master-Servant Economy

The economic system of Calvinist evangelical theocracy is by assumption and/or in reality a theocratic economy, including both its pre-capitalist and capitalist forms. In turn, a theocratic, either pre-capitalist or capitalist, economy is also a paradigmatic exemplar of what can be described as a master-servant economic system in the form and sense of Calvinist theocrats or divines claiming to be or acting as masters, and others being their servants or subjects. In this sense, the economic subsystem and logic of Calvinist theocracy as a total or totalitarian social system is a master-servant *cum* theocratic economy. While certainly not all master-servant economies are theocratic or religiously sanctified, but also non-theocratic or non-religious (as in Nazism and communism), the opposite is invariably true for the economic system and logic of Calvinist and perhaps any similar theocracy. Universally, the Calvinist and other comparable (e.g., Islamic, Hindu) theocratic economy is an axiomatic (by design) master-servant and thus authoritarian or totalitarian and in that sense anti-egalitarian and exclusionary economic system.

*From the Mastery of Society to a Master-Servant Economy and Back*

In economic terms, Calvinist theocracy consistently proceeds from the mastery of the social world to a master-servant economy, thus from societal to economic masters, and conversely. Calvinism’s aimed total mastery of society and nature, as a species of “chiefdom consciousness” (Angel 1994), logically or eventually comprises the economy, thus resulting in a master-servant economic system as the constituent component of this societal rule and sanctified as Providential Design (Bendix 1984). Simply, Calvinist theocratic masters, political and military “chiefs” seek and typically succeed to become so in the economy also, making others their economic servants.

Negatively, it seems illogical and unrealistic to assume or expect that the Calvinist total mastery (or “chiefdom consciousness”) of the
social-physical world, by comprising the economy and technology as well, does not entail or generate a master-servant economic system, either pre-capitalism (slavery, feudalism, patrimonialism, caste) or capitalism. And, it would be irrational for Calvinism not to do so in respect of fully attaining its supreme aim. Alternatively, it is also illogical to assume or predict that Calvinism instead comprises or results in a liberal-democratic and secular economic system, notably modern capitalism in the form and sense of liberalism in the economy. Economic liberalism is *prima facie* deeply incompatible with the Calvinist total, specifically theocratic, mastery of the world. In essence, Calvinism’s mastery of society, and thus theocracy as a total social system without a master-servant, and conversely with a liberal-democratic, secular economic, as well as political, civic, and cultural, subsystem, is incomplete or partial. Hence, it is “non-Calvinist” and what Weber calls an “impossible contradiction.”

Simply, Calvinists, rather their charismatic (or not) leaders a la Calvin et al. (Heller 1986; Sorkin 2005; VanDrunen 2006), act as or aim to become masters of the world in a sociological, just as eventually geographic, sense, thus incorporating by assumption or in reality the economy. In short, they behave as or claim to be Divinely ordained rulers in the economy and society alike, including the polity, the civil sphere, and culture. Hence, they transform the economy, including both pre-capitalism and capitalism, into an equivalent economic system. This is the system in which Calvinist “godly” theocrats or divines act as predestined, “chosen” masters with Divine rights to rule and other “ungodly” humans are reduced to servants or subjects with their equally Providential destiny of serfdom or subjection owing to their damnation by the God of Calvinism.

By transforming the economy, including modern capitalism, into a master-servant system and sanctifying this transformation, like their theocracy overall, as Divinely ordained, Calvinists apply the foundational Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Specifically, they apply what Weber calls God’s everlasting “double decree”\(^1\) of salvation and

\(^1\) Weber adds that Calvinist predestination “is a “belief of virtuosi, who alone can accept the thought of the everlasting “double decree.” But as this doctrine continued to flow into the routine of everyday living and into the religion of the masses, its gloomy severeness became more and more intolerable. Finally, all that remained of it in Occidental ascetic Protestantism was a remains (*caput mortuum*), the contribution which this doctrine of grace made to the rational capitalistic orientation.”