

What is a Christian to say about the conservative idea of private virtues?

I should think this: that what God really wants in the way of "virtues"—in the sense of habits of acting or dispositions to act in certain ways and to do certain things—are only such as conduce toward the realization of God's purpose: that one and all shall not only be but be well, and not only be well but be abundantly.

To seek any virtues other than these is, in effect, to seek "one's own righteousness" instead of "the righteousness of God" (Rom 10:3)—in the double sense of both the passive righteousness that God alone can give and gives freely and the active righteousness that is the only righteousness God demands.

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