

form. Consider now that immunization is a *process* requiring repeated inoculations to build to the proper immunity. Well similarly in hardening against truths (rather than germs) that we find inhospitable to our natural bent, we might take bits and snatches of those truths and acclimate our minds, over time, to a *distorted* or *greatly qualified and edited* construal of their main import. *Gradually* we no longer see the truth for what it is—even if our continuing ability to see it is vital to our survival.

"In my analogy I've reversed what is pathological, though. I've likened Christianity to a disease and then asked why Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom *would have* caught it, whereas Korazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum did not. Or if you prefer, why the former cities, in spite of their legendary wickedness, *would have* repented, while the latter did not. What we see here is a conspicuous difference between the two groups of cities in terms of the kind of immunity I've been talking about. Going back to just Capernaum and Sodom, Sodom was not practiced at reconstruing, distorting, and conceptually editing the *special* revelation of God. At best, Sodom had perhaps several years of awareness of Lot's commitment to a strange God named Yahweh. By contrast, at the time of Jesus's earthly ministry, Capernaum's Jewish population was the living perpetuation of a legacy of *centuries* of fine-grained biblical distortion with regard to the character and mission of the Messiah. They had studiously and strenuously dimmed the light of prophetic and soteriological Scripture. From the mindset of that legacy, they could not (were unwilling to) recognize their own Messiah! It was, for them, 'biblical' to reject him. A truly horrifying immunity to have."

IX

A Final Reflection from Linus: We are *only* knowers.

"And that is why the Sodomites' evidential threshold was so much lower than the evidential threshold of the apparent heirs of Abraham," spoke Linus to no one in particular. "'Real world' hope, it's becoming plain to me now, is fastened to 'real world' evidence. Isn't it curious how we find ways to squander that evidence?"

"How is that?" asked Schroeder, overhearing Linus.