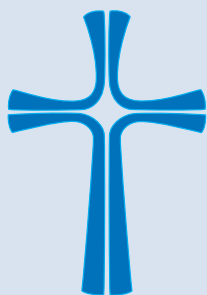


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Symposium on the Education
of the Core Group

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The Education of the Core Group

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THE JOURNAL OF CHRISTIAN RECONSTRUCTION

This *Journal* is dedicated to the fulfillment of the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28 and 9:1—to subdue the earth to the glory of God. It is published by the Chalcedon Foundation, an independent Christian educational organization (see inside back cover). The perspective of the *Journal* is that of orthodox Christianity. It affirms the verbal, plenary inspiration of the original manuscripts (autographs) of the Bible and the full divinity and full humanity of Jesus Christ—two natures in union (but without intermixture) in one person.

The editors are convinced that the Christian world is in need of a serious publication that bridges the gap between the newsletter-magazine and the scholarly academic journal. The editors are committed to Christian scholarship, but the *Journal* is aimed at intelligent laymen, working pastors, and others who are interested in the reconstruction of all spheres of human existence in terms of the standards of the Old and New Testaments. It is not intended to be another outlet for professors to professors, but rather a forum for serious discussion within Christian circles.

The Marxists have been absolutely correct in their claim that theory must be united with practice, and for this reason they have been successful in their attempt to erode the foundations of the noncommunist world. The editors agree with the Marxists on this point, but instead of seeing in revolution the means of fusing theory and practice, we see the fusion in personal regeneration through God's grace in Jesus Christ and in the extension of God's kingdom. Good principles should be followed by good practice; eliminate either, and the movement falters. In the long run, it is the kingdom of God, not Marx's "kingdom of freedom," which shall reign triumphant. Christianity will emerge victorious, for only in Christ and His revelation can men find both the principles of conduct and the means of subduing the earth: the principles of biblical law.

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INTRODUCTION: SYMPOSIUM ON THE EDUCATION OF THE CORE GROUP

R. J. Rushdoony

The primary subject of this issue of the *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* is “The Education of the Core Group.” Otto Scott’s two articles tell us what happens to a society when the faith and the character of the core group are damaged, and also of the attack strategy against the core group. By turning children against their parents, humanistic schools break the continuity of a faith and its culture. This strategy is in process today.

At the same time, a major countermovement is emerging, the Christian reconstruction movement with its dominion emphasis. It is no longer possible, nor has it been for some time, to speak of the reconstruction movement as a Chalcedon emphasis. It has caught fire among many diverse groups, all with a common concern for the “Crown Rights of Christ our King.” A few years ago, at a meeting where some pastors were expressing hostility to Chalcedon’s postmillennialism and its dominion and victory emphasis, an older pastor, a premillennialist to the core, spoke sharply against the criticism and expressed his strong approval of Chalcedon’s position. He concluded by saying, “Our Lord tells all of us, ‘Occupy till I come,’ (Luke 19:13), and no one, premil, a-mil, or postmil, is exempt from that commandment.”

All Christians without exception have a duty to serve the Lord with all their heart, mind, and being, and this duty applies to every sphere of {2} life and thought.

Central to this duty is the Christian education of our children. We cannot turn our children over to the humanistic state schools without serious consequences. If it is wrong for a Christian to join ungodly churches, or to become a worshipper in pagan cults

and religions, is it not at least equally wrong to turn our children over to schools which refuse to acknowledge Christ as Lord or Sovereign over all men and nations?

It is a grim and ugly fact that most pastors do NOT have their children in Christian schools, or in home schooling. The highest percentage of Christian-school attendance is from the ranks of the children of public-school teachers, those whom the *Wall Street Journal* calls “informed consumers.” Certainly no real revival or renewal in the church will have taken place until pastors lead the way in having their children receive a Christian schooling.

The Gospels make it clear that children are important in God’s sight. Our Lord, over the protests of His disciples, welcomed them, and blessed them (Matt. 19:13–15). Not only so, we are told that “He laid hands on them,” an act of transmitting blessings and an inheritance, something not done lightly. Moreover, how can any Christian parent who places his children in a humanistic school read Matthew 18:6 without fear? Our Lord says, “But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.”

Otto Scott writes of the importance of the core group. Everything in this issue is here as a means of encouraging, informing, and strengthening the core group, and expanding it in numbers and strength.

In condemning the cities, Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida, our Lord makes it clear that heedless, indifferent cultures, as well as persons, face sharp judgment (Matt. 11:20–24). The sin of these cities was not so much hostility as indifference. Compared morally to the other cities of the Roman Empire, they, and Jerusalem, represented a markedly higher level, religiously and morally. But, having received greater blessings, they received the greater condemnation.

In Amos 3:2, we read God’s judgment on Israel: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.” Precisely because Israel had been so richly blessed, it was all the more severely punished. We can say of the church of our time, and the nations of the West, that, precisely because God has {3} blessed them richly, and they are now indifferent or hostile to Him, He will judge them all the

more severely—unless they become again true salt, again a vital, determinative core group in the world, the light of the world (Matt. 5:13–16). The alternative to being used by God, to serving Him with all our heart, mind, and being, is “to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men” (Matt. 5:13). We cannot say the Lord did not warn us! “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light” (Eph. 1:14).

1.
THE EDUCATION
OF THE
CORE GROUP

THE DISAFFECTION OF THE CORE

Otto Scott

As a writer, I am more interested in the behavior of people than I am in the circles or sets in which they behave. I recall, for instance, that one of my colleagues in the Overseas Press Club asked me, a few years back, if I was still getting money from what he called “the fat cats in the petroleum industry.”

I said I was, and he shook his head. “I don’t see how you can do it,” he told me.

“Do what?” I asked.

And he said, “Get along with those business bastards.”

“Well,” I told him, “if you’re interested in how people react to money, power, and influence, I don’t see how a real writer can stay away from business.”

The point is an obvious one, so obvious that it reminds me of Ferdinand Demara, the great imposter. Among other deceptions, Demara successfully posed as a professor of applied psychology, and not only taught classes, but ran a college. Asked later how he could do that, he said, “Oh, social science is easy, because it’s based on self-evident observations.”

On the other hand, William Bennett, the secretary of education, has said that the social sciences are expert in proving what is obvious by the most obscure methods.

Writers, however, are not social scientists. We don’t take surveys, {6} and we are apt to focus on what people actually do, in contrast to what they say. For that reason we are always trying to figure out what motivates people. Nor is it enough to say, for instance, that individuals buy and sell simply to make a profit. They buy and sell according to their own, private set of values. If we know these, we can sometimes predict what they’ll buy. Not often, of course, but sometimes.

Of course, there are many pitfalls. Richard Whitney, the socialite

head of the New York Stock Exchange, as some of the old timers may recall, liked applejack. That's not really a very common taste. Applejack is fiery, and can get you drunk very quickly. But during Prohibition the upstate New York farmers used to make applejack and sell it, in fairly large quantities, to downstate bootleggers. People drank a lot of it, because booze was hard to get during Prohibition.

When Repeal came along, Mr. Whitney invested a lot of his money, and that of his wife, and some belonging to his friends and other investors, into distilleries that made applejack. But when other liquors became available, it seems that Mr. Whitney was the only one in all New York who still liked applejack. The consequence was that he lost everybody's money, including his own—and since many of his clients had not known of his speculation with their funds, he wound up in Sing Sing.

The lesson of that is that one cannot predict the behavior of the world on the basis of one's own values. Whitney's knowledge of the world was within his own class and social circle, and that was obviously too limited to enable him to make accurate forecasts of popular behavior.

That is, of course, one of the pitfalls of being a specialist. Whitney specialized in applejack, in terms of personal taste. But there are other specialties, individually impressive, that are nevertheless overly limited in terms of general analysis. I recall that I once handled corporate public relations for a large firm whose chairman was obsessed by financial maneuvers and Wall Street in general. He wanted all his decisions to be reflected in the price of the company stock, but he didn't have much faith in corporate advertising. He preferred analysts' meetings, and conversations with underwriters. I could never convince him that a corporate reputation is made to a national audience, and that Wall Street is more like a giant mirror, which reflects values already held by people throughout the nation.

Today, however, the marketplace is global. We have to look beyond our nation to discern the trends of our times. And to keep from being {7} drowned in the floods of data by which we are surrounded. To assess events we must rise above them, by taking a longer view—a historical view, if you like. Because history teaches us that, though we will never know all the facts, the values of the

core group of a culture ultimately determine its behavior.

Because hindsight is clearer than foresight, we can discern these values more easily when we look at the past than when we look at the present. Therefore, let's glance at the world in 1912—the year before the Fed was created, before the income tax, and before the direct election of United States Senators.

In 1912 the entire world system was capitalistic. People could travel anywhere without passports, except into czarist Russia. There was an international currency in the form of gold, though most nations also had paper money. One could get a ship to any port one chose, and disembark with gold coins, and change them without question. One could settle virtually anywhere. Our own borders were open to the world. So were those of many other nations.

Governments, with some exceptions, but at least in the West, had limited powers. They existed in societies that contained several pyramids of limited but special powers. The Church had limited but special powers, which the government could not abrogate. The universities had limited but special powers which kept them free from interference. The professions had special powers, which others could not deny. The clergy could keep the secrets of its congregations; lawyers could keep the secrets of their clients. Physicians didn't have to tell anyone why they treated whom they treated. Business could keep the secrets of its processes, sales, and market strategy. Inventors could keep the monopoly production of their inventions. The military had its own laws, distinct from all others. So did the admiralty, and the maritime industry. The private sector was private. Earnings could be kept by those who earned the money. Incomes were your own business. That was 1912.

Of course, that was not true everywhere. Czarist Russia was autocratic, and its government refused to accept limits to its powers. But autocracy, although seemingly efficient, digs its own pitfalls. I recently read a paper by Dr. Ellen C. Myers, a descendant of an Old Believer family in czarist Russia, which indicates the depth of the error committed by the czarist government.¹

1. Ellen C. Myers, "The Impact of Old Believers upon Russian Society," *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 10, no. 2 (1984): 112–77.

This paper described how, centuries ago, while the West was undergoing the Reformation, an archbishop of the Russian Orthodox {8} Church arbitrarily introduced a number of innovations. The Old Believers considered these changes heretical, and withdrew from the Church—and from their allegiance to the czar. This led to terrible persecutions of the Old Believers, on a scale that equaled or exceeded the persecutions of Jews and other minorities.

The Old Believers, however, survived by going underground. They stopped registering their marriages, deaths, or children with the authorities, and used, when they could, false papers. But they were active in commerce, grew wealthy, and were very influential. They numbered, in 1905, about one third, or from twenty to twenty-five million of the Great Russian population of about 65 million, upon which the czarist government relied for support.

The Old Believers, however, were silently hostile to the czar and the established Church, and provided the Mensheviks and Bolsheviks and other revolutionaries with funds, sanctuaries, and moral support. In the view of Dr. Myers, these traditionalists did incalculable harm to the czarist regime. By their secrecy and abstention from overt propaganda, they allowed that regime to believe it remained popular with traditionalists. That support did not exist to the extent the authorities believed. Therefore that government, undermined from within, collapsed in the strong winds of World War I. Therefore, the surface stability of the czarist regime in 1912 was founded on an illusion.

This contribution by Dr. Myers is more than interesting: it is significant. Well documented but mainly remarkable for its insights, it provides a clue to what has otherwise always seemed quite mysterious: the abrupt collapse of a great empire.

We are all familiar, of course, with other explanations. We have whole libraries describing the disaffected intelligentsia of Old Russia, with its discontented literati, and its seething Polish, Ukrainian, and Jewish minorities (among others). But Dr. Myers is the first to call to our attention a group of disaffected Christians, who numbered in the tens of millions. Suddenly we see why the czar lacked traditional support.

With the Myers thesis in mind, let us look at the collapses of the other great empires of that period: the Austro-Hungarian

and the Ottoman. Austria-Hungary was an empire of minorities. These minorities contended for group rights, and the government placated them by creating a complicated quota system, according to which jobs and all forms of governmental largesse were distributed. Because a quota system kills merit, it is no wonder that the entire Hapsburg empire was {9} riddled with discontented individuals as well as groups. In this contentious arena of jealous ethnic and racial competition, the national interest was forgotten or denied, in the heat of the interests of family, ethnic group, race, or religion. When the wind blew against this rickety structure, it collapsed. Yet before that carefully contrived and painfully maintained quota system undermined its national solidarity, that empire had withstood wars, famines, plagues, and other distresses for hundreds of years. Like czarist Russia, the Hapsburgs had forgotten the principles that held its core population together.

Finally, the Ottoman Empire. Turks ruled over a vast collection of other races and peoples, at one time including the Greeks, Bulgars, Armenians, Syrians, Egyptians, Libyans, Algerians, Jordanians, Palestinians, and others. Their system was based on two tiers of citizenship, consisting basically of Moslems and others. Moslems had full rights; all others were allowed limited rights in national terms. By 1912 their empire had been reduced, but still held tens of millions in thrall. The sultan attempted to hold change at bay, and, riddled with fear of a brilliant minority, launched genocidal attacks against the Armenians. But the Ottoman Empire did not collapse because it committed crimes against minorities: it fell because it lost the support of its core group: the young Turks. These, led by Kemal Ataturk, wanted to share the modernization launched by Europe. Therefore, the Grand Portal was weakened by the disaffection of significant members of its core population. And although their discontent was different than that of the Old Believers of czarist Russia, or the discontent of the Germanic Austrians over having to accede to a quota system, the results were the same: *a loss of support among the core group*, which led to the collapse of the government in a time of crisis.

The fall of great empires in the period from 1912 to 1923, in other words, was the result not simply of war, but of governments who had lost touch with the most important elements in their population. This is one reason why, during World War I, Britain,

France, and the United States had to resort to conscription and rule by decree. These governments realized that their people were no longer patriotic enough to support a modern war.

Since then, no Western government has really repaired this breach. Instead, we have seen what John Adams called “the old trick,” in which every emergency is seen as an excuse for the expansion of governmental power. There is no need to repeat what we all know about this {10} sequence in the USSR, its satellites, and throughout western Europe and here at home.

Much has been said about this trend, and no doubt more will be said. But what interests me is that in the great debacles I have briefly described—in czarist Russia, in Austria-Hungary, and in the Ottoman Empire—all three of these debacles did not occur from the operations of the marketplace, but from the disaffection of the people from their governments along largely religious, ethnic, and ethical grounds.

When we regard the shape of the future from the viewpoint of what disaffection means, I think we come closer to what Dr. Myers described in her paper on the Old Believers. That analysis does not center upon minority discontent, but on shifts in attitude among *the core groups by which a society defines itself*.

We in the United States live, as did the Austro-Hungarians, in a nation that consists entirely of minorities. Minority ethnic status here is the common lot. Wilcomb Washburn in the *Wall Street Journal*² described us as being 14 percent English, 13 percent German, 12 percent black, 8 percent Irish, and 7 percent Hispanic. “Only the term ‘white’ keeps the concept of a majority alive,” he said, “and that masks the enormous inequalities among such minorities represented in the professions, school admissions and the like.”

Among these, I draw your attention to the parallel drawn by Dr. Myers between the Old Believers of czarist Russia and the American Catholics who have not fully accepted the changes in the liturgy and practices introduced by Vatican II. When we add to these ranks those members who have quietly departed from the Episcopal Church over its modernism and changes in

2. March 22, 1984. Mr. Washburn is director of the Office of American Studies of the Smithsonian Institution.

the Book of Common Prayer and the Hymnal, and all those who have left other mainline denominations for similar reasons, then we see a series of cultural tremors taking place of enormous and disquieting significance.

It does not require special study to realize this. It does not require an expert's vocabulary to know that when religious issues penetrate the political scene for the first time in decades that millions of Americans have been seriously insulted by having their traditions and beliefs trashed in the media, the schools, and by the intellectuals.

Of course, there are other signs of disaffection. These are very well described by Joseph Sobran, a senior editor for the *National Review*, and a syndicated columnist. Using the subway shooting by Bernhard Goetz and the official response it evoked as a springboard, Sobran has come to [\[11\]](#) the conclusion that “the liberal regime now presumes, as a matter of official policy, that white Americans are racist. Their motives are automatically suspect.” But, says Mr. Sobran, “something enormous is left entirely off the liberal map of moral reality.”³

“The liberal language—the language of the *Times* editorials,” wrote Sobran, “... abounds in words for the hostility of the native for the alien, the majority for the minority, Christian for Jew and so forth. We have prejudice, bias, discrimination, and so forth. But these words are themselves prejudicial. They sum up, one-sidedly, a vast range of sentiment and behavior without admitting reciprocal moral realities: the hostility of Jew for Christian, black for white, marginal for respectable, minority for majority, alien for native, abnormal for normal. Yet anyone who walks the streets of New York knows vividly, after a while, that these attitudes are real too, and they are all the more powerful for passing unnamed. Not to say uncensored.”

Sobran goes on, after this, to point out the unrelenting nature of the liberal attack upon what he calls the majority, and what I today call *The* core groups of our culture. He links the normally pro-Soviet stance of the *New York Times* with its preference for a culture that is adversarial to ours, and he cites a long list of *Times* correspondents—Walter Duranty in the Soviet, Herbert Matthews in Cuba, Sidney Schanberg in Cambodia, Alan Riding in Central

3. “The Natives are Restless,” *National Review*, 22 February 1985, 25–29.

America, and others, to make his point.

Sobran's article deals largely with the fantasy world created by the media, reflected in poor textbooks, elucidated by mediocre teachers, and disseminated by politicians who believe what they read more than what they see. A long series of attacks against this huge and tolerant nation has not yet resulted in its collapse, in inciting a revolution, or in a civil war. The core group is patient and remarkably law-abiding, in the face of continuing insults.

When it can, it expresses an opinion. But such opportunities are relatively infrequent. The last national election was an outstanding rebuke to the media, but the results—remarkable though they were—do not seem to have changed many minds in the intellectual community. The same liberal arguments, repudiated by the core population, rose in the same volume the day after election as the day before.

The disparity between the cultural attitudes of the media and the core of the American population, and a similar disparity in attitudes between Hollywood and the people, represent, however, serious problems {12} for us all. They are especially disturbing because they lead the traditionally wealthy white leaders of the Democratic Party into believing what they read, see, and hear from the media more than what they conclude from the votes of the people. These illusions also exercise great sway over the bureaucracy in the governmental infrastructure. Therefore the increasing exacerbations between the American people and their government, and between the media and the people, appear unlikely to change in the near future, without some special effort.

This situation would be serious if it were purely domestic, and limited to the United States. But the fact is that the entire West is in a very strange position. Our enemy has tens of thousands of spokesmen inside our gates, occupying positions of prestige and honor in our schools, in our media, and in our government. By spokesmen, I mean those who rationalize and defend what international Marxism is doing. Whether such defenders consider themselves members of a foreign army is beside the point. They promote, or at least defend, a system alien to the West.

In contrast, we have no apologists of our system or this culture in the Soviet, or in Communist China, or in any totalitarian regime. Businessmen are welcome if they offer goods or services

on credit. Fellow travelers are briefly welcome. But the idea of a Russian university professor being allowed to discuss the merits of capitalism in Moscow is enough to make a tree laugh. To believe the Russians will ever make a pro-American movie is sheer lunacy. To think that they would permit their bookstores to bulge with American-admiring books, the way ours bulge with Marxist rhetoric, is simply ludicrous. Despite the Helsinki Treaty, nobody is crazy enough to expect such developments. To say that an international dialogue exists is absolutely wrong. We are free to speak to ourselves, but not to the populations of totalitarian lands. We communicate only with their oppressors, and that on their terms.

The world of 1912 is gone, excepting in the rhetoric of our politicians. The special privileges of the professionals, the separate spheres of Church and State, are crumbling. The private sector is monitored, day and night, and Congress calls for an investigation at every sign of independent life in the marketplace.

Meanwhile, our government, in the form of Congress, the bureaucracy, the White House, and the courts, shrinks from confronting the realities of our domestic divisions, and from taking any direct action to resolve them. Paul Johnson, the British writer, recently discussed the {13} British parallel to our situation in the *Spectator*. He called it "Playing the Fool," and his essay was devoted to the English press criticisms of the British government's handling of the fall of the pound on the international exchanges.

"The real reason why sterling is weak," Johnson wrote, "has nothing to do with the strong dollar or oil prices. It is because we are a nation of appeasers." He then drew attention to the coal strike, called by the union leader without a vote, openly designed to bring down the British government, openly funded by enemies of Great Britain such as the Soviet Union and Libya, which was allowed to drag on for eleven months without hindrance from either the British executive, Commons, or the courts.

"The truth is," Johnson continued, "that the Thatcher Government, far from being an instrument of the hard Right, is in many ways weak, wet and ineffectual. Mrs. Thatcher's heart is in the right place.... But the second she proposes to do anything rigorous ... a fearful caterwauling arises from the liberal stage army which treats us like an occupied territory." He then listed bishops,

judges, and various newspapers. Finally, he concluded, "At such times the only ones to remain staunch, as they did in 1940, are the British people, who would happily see Scargill hanged tomorrow. Alas, they cannot make their voices heard over the privileged whining of the cowardly elite. So nothing is done ... the economy founders and sterling comes under pressure."

It is a great pleasure to acknowledge Mr. Johnson's superiority of eloquence and clarity of vision. When I read his analysis, I could not help thinking that the reason so much European and Latin American and Arab money is being bet on the dollar is that Europe is resigned to defeat and eventual occupation. And the wealthy members of those societies regard us as their last bastion, their last hope.

Does our government know this? I doubt it. Paul Volcker praised the then "strong dollar" for bringing so much investment to our shores, for bringing us so many of the world's goods at bargain prices. But the chairman of the Fed was occupying an office created by those who didn't believe in the world of 1912, and who believed that our incredibly complex economy could be mastered and directed by a handful of supermen. Paul Volcker is the product of a liberal elite who believed that the core group, having created the richest nation in all history by 1912 from a few scattered millions occupying a fringe of the continent a century earlier, needed to be controlled by their betters. {14}

The argument was that panics and depressions would be made obsolete. The Fed would eliminate cyclical dips and rises, and usher in a new, wonderfully flat economic world in which all graphs would show only upward lines. There is no need to recite the number of crashes and failures, panics and depressions since then; the wonder is that those who created the Fed are still considered intelligent men in our history, still treated as though they deserve respect.

But that is only in textbooks, and in mediocre histories. The fact is that every election, except the most recent, shows that a diminishing number of the core group citizens bother to vote. Every year I hear comments about the government that indicate a deep-seated contempt. Of course, we all know individually intelligent members of Congress, and individually honorable bureaucrats. But the same could be said of journalists and

physicians, and used-car salesmen. The fact is that an honorable politician is regarded as being as rare as a unicorn, as an exception, in an otherwise contemptible group anxious only to advance its own interests at all costs.

Overall, we witness the growing disaffection of the core group of the United States. We are watching a loss of faith in our government on the part of the most important elements in our population. They no longer believe in the value and legitimacy of our government, or its works.

Many factors have contributed to this decline of faith, and I have cited only the cultural ones. Monetary experts know in detail and in depth how much the money of a nation is a measurable expression of its value. The connection between an honest government and an honest monetary unit is well-known to every student of history. The connection between a dishonest government and an unstable currency is equally well-known.

The connections between a loss of faith in a government and the collapse of that government *during a period of crisis* have been repeated so often as to have long since become a historical cliché. At this moment, a reform of the currency could, conceivably, restore our government to a position of strength and the nation to a position of stability. But when the rulers of a nation break faith with its people, they intervene into every avenue of national life. They strip the people of liberty, and chief among the instruments of liberty is the opportunity to become wealthy, to achieve independence from the government. The American government moved against such liberties in 1913. The American {15} government pulled this nation out of the global capitalistic system of 1912 when it created the Fed and the income tax in 1913.

Since then, our government has moved, step by step, into fiat money, into controls, and into continuing deceptions. If we are to regard the marketplace, as centered in Wall Street, as the mirror of the economic nation in which we live, we can see reflected a lack of integrity at the heart of our economy, in our imitation money. It is a psychological law of the human race, that none of us ever again trusts anyone who has ever lied to us in an important matter. Our money is dishonest, and we know honest men would not have done that to us. We also know that other honest men would not retain the deception.

We see in the silent retreat of the core groups from their full participation in the cultural life, as expressed by the media and the arts, in academia and even in politics, a classic withdrawal of support from the government. The significance of that silent hostility will not appear until our next great period of crisis. *But a crisis is inevitable.*

Whether viable alternatives will then arise, or whether the destructive forces that swept across old Russia will then appear in our midst, is up to us to determine. If we continue to behave as though this situation does not in reality exist; if we continue to watch and listen to a media that hates the American majority; if we do not alter a government that seeks to abandon limits, if we wait for some one else to come along to improve the situation, we will lose what we have, for conditions much worse than many can imagine. But if, as I believe, the present revival under way in religious sectors, coupled with the observations of a Bill Bennett and Joe Sobran and others have their intended effect, we shall—while we can—devise measures to avert the failures we have so often seen in this century, in other regions.

I will not say what shape such alternatives should take, but it is not necessary to do that. All that is necessary is to decide that alternatives are necessary. Once such a resolution is reached, the rest is detail.

THE USE OF CHILDREN AS WEAPONS AGAINST SOCIETY

Otto Scott

American society is undergoing changes undreamed of by our forbears, promoted by members of our elite in academia, the media, and government, in defiance of the opinions of the majority of Americans and constituting grave dangers to the American family. Both men and women have, for a considerable period, been targets of a sophisticated series of efforts to alter this society into one that reflects authoritarian socialism. But it has been mainly in the last decade that a new lobby, using children as weapons against society, has emerged.

That is not to say that the use of children is a new tactic on the part of critics of the family. From the days of Saint-Just and the French Revolution¹ the use of children against their parents has been a revolutionary staple.

Western visitors to the People's Republic of China are taken to nursery schools where Chinese tots are paraded in semi-military fashion, salute their teachers in unison, and chant revolutionary songs and verses. The schools of Cuba, the USSR, and contemporary Nicaragua and other totalitarian societies are similarly organized, and are regular stops for official delegations.

At first this may seem merely odd, for modern visitors to the United States no longer make it a point to look in on our schools, prisons, and hospitals. {17} That fashion vanished with the days of Charles Dickens and the period when the United States was considered the avant-garde society that others admired and wanted to emulate. Of course, that is not to say that the United States lacks international admirers. Our educational system is replete with foreign students whose governments and families

1. "Every boy over the age of five belongs to the State," said Saint-Just.

alike regard American techniques and skills as highly desirable. But these students are apt to be on university levels, not in our nursery schools.

The USSR regards the control of children as a crucial element in the control of families. *It is, for instance, a felony in the USSR to teach religion to anyone under the age of 18.* This law is rigorously enforced and is a key element in the antireligious campaigns conducted by official agencies entrusted with that task. The children of dissidents convicted of activities against (or attitudes that differ with) the Soviet State are denied higher education or superior jobs, and are subjected to deliberate persecution, on the theory that the children of those wronged will harbor resentments against the government.

The system in which Soviet mothers are forced by the government to leave their children in nursery schools and work in the job market throughout the day (irrespective of their husbands' incomes) is credited by some observers with being one of the features of Soviet society that is responsible for the fact that Soviet women now endure multiple abortions (averaging seven per capita during childbearing years).

Open efforts to create the societal equivalent of the USSR and the People's Republic of China would not, of course, meet with the approval of the American people and government. But indirect efforts leading toward that eventual result can be remarkably effective. Efforts to have the government fund nursery schools for working mothers, to have the government fund abortions, and to establish lesbian and homosexual unions as equal in status to heterosexual marriages, *and to redefine marriage and the family*, seem to be aimed—if not toward a parallel to totalitarian societies (which forbid lesbianism and homosexuality)—at least toward a society markedly at odds with, and distinctly different from, the patterns of traditional America.

The latest lobby toward this undefined new society is the children's lobby. Its appearance was marked by a series of articles about "Child Abuse," in which the worst cases were presented as not only rampant, but evidence of the situation of American children in general.

This campaign in the media appeared after a preliminary number of semi-scholarly works appeared in various journals and

from university presses. (This sequence is usual in the discussion of societal issues in {18} American life, and is noteworthy for the fact that such discussions usually filter from the top down, in a manner designed to influence, rather than reflect, majority opinions.)

Many such works regarding “children’s rights” began to appear in the 1970s. They include: “*A Bill of Rights for Children*,”² *The Children’s Rights Movement: Overcoming the Oppression of Young People*,³ *Children’s Rights: Contemporary Perspectives*,⁴ “*A Philosophical Justification for Children’s Rights*,”⁵ “*The Rights of Children*,”⁶ and *Children’s Rights: Toward the Liberation of the Child*,⁷ among many others.

The arguments in these and related works are that children deserve to enjoy all the rights of adults, and that anything less leaves children open to “abuse” within the family and in society in general. To “treat children as objects of adult protection rather than as subjects of inherent rights slights their human dignity and diminishes their stature as persons.”⁸

A subsidiary theme is that familial and societal restraints upon children represses their sexuality, inhibits their freedom of expression, and constitutes unjustifiable restraints upon their freedom. And a final argument is that the American family has failed children, as indicated by record numbers of runaways and abused children. This final argument is often accompanied by the charge that many parents lack the judgment necessary to protect their children.⁹

These arguments received great impetus, according to Jan H. Blits, professor of the philosophy of education and political

2. Henry H. Foster (Charles C. Thomas, 1974).

3. Beatrice and Richard Gross, eds. (Anchor Press, 1977).

4. Yardin and Brody, eds. (Teacher’s College Press, 1979).

5. Victor L. Worsfold, *Harvard Educational Review* 44, no. 1 (February 1974).

6. Mary Kohler, *Social Policy* (March/April 1974).

7. Paul Adams et al. (Preager, 1972).

8. Jan H. Blits, “What’s Wrong with Children’s Rights?” *This World*, no. 7 (Winter 1984): 5–19. This quote does not indicate any sympathy on the part of the author for the children’s lobby. The article from which it is cited is a powerful indictment of the lobby.

9. *Ibid.*, 5–6.

philosophy at the University of Delaware, from the ideas of French historian Philippe Aries in his work, *Centuries of Childhood*,¹⁰ which traces the contemporary idea of childhood back only to the sixteenth century. Prior to that, Aries argued, children were treated as miniature adults, exposed to adult behavior in all forms. Modern childhood, according to this analysis, is merely a legal fiction. As such, it can be legally abolished.

The legalistic approach is, of course, part of the American tradition. And, as Dr. Blits points out, so is the argument based upon "rights." In the hands of the children's lobby advocates, children's rights are now held by the self-created lobby to be extensive and elaborate. They include the right to "adequate nutrition, free health care, education, housing, comprehensive child development services, birth control information and legal counsel ... being regarded as a person and receiving parental love and affection."¹¹

If the idea of having the government force parents to love their {19} children seems extreme, the balance of the list of children's rights, as defined by the lobby, places that demand as only one among many strange arguments. Children are to have the right to "alternative home environments," sexual freedom, and political participation. They are to have the *right* to grow up in a society where their birth was desired by their parents, to be free of poverty and of the threat of war, and of racism and sexism. In short, children have a right to an earthly paradise, guaranteed by law.

It does not require unusual analytical power to see that "children's rights," in the hands of its advocates, slide easily into a general attack upon American *mores* as a whole, and the traditional American family pattern in particular. Inherent in the efforts of the lobby are arguments for social welfare programs involving children, separate from their parents or the desires and situations of parents.

This movement has already achieved some remarkable successes. One is the decision of the courts to keep parents in ignorance of the fact that their adolescent daughters have obtained birth control devices. Another is the decision that adolescent daughters may

10. (Random House, 1962).

11. Blits, "What's Wrong with Children's Rights," 10.

have abortions without parental knowledge or consent. Maxine Greene, cited by Dr. Blits, argues for the right of “[a]n adolescent girl ... to help when she is pregnant, or when her baby makes her intolerably nervous, or when her lover finds himself addicted to drugs.”¹²

That is an extreme expression of a viewpoint usually couched in more appealing terms. Dr. Blits believes that Greene is one of many Americans who believe—on the basis of our written Constitution—that rights can become whatever anyone says they are, and whatever is mandated by law. This belief is not, of course, without many other adherents. We have welfare rights groups, equal *social* rights groups (under a variety of names), and other movements demanding the legalization of desires that are, in reality, goals, ideals, or simply dreams.

The usual argument of the children’s lobby is that parents do not love their children, nor treat them properly. The argument sometimes extends to the charge that American society *in general* does not even like children. Then-Senator Walter Mondale is quoted by Dr. Blits as writing that “[o]ur national myth is that we love our children.”¹³

All these arguments and charges add up to the politicization of American family relationships. The movement toward this end began with male and female relationships, expanded to include marriage, and has more recently expanded to include children. “The pretense that {20} children’s issues are somehow above or beyond politics endures and is reinforced by the belief that families are private, nonpolitical units whose interests subsume those of children.”¹⁴

That argument completes the political circle drawn around the family by those who hate American society and its traditions and *mores*. Because its essence calls for greater authority to be exercised by the government, through bureaus and agencies of the executive, through the courts, and through Congress (which can enact enabling legislation), the argument is a seductive one to

12. *Ibid.*, 11–12; cf. *An Overview of Children’s Rights: Contemporary Perspectives*.

13. *Ibid.*, 17

14. *Ibid.*, 19; cf. *Harvard Educational Review*.

those in a position of public authority.

What is less discussed—and needs to be more effectively aired—is that the end result of such a series of rationalizations would be a police state in which parents would entirely lose control of their children, and the children themselves would officially become wards of the State. In essence, the advocates of “children’s rights” would treat all parents in the way in which foster homes are now monitored and supervised by the government, or as Soviet parents are treated in the USSR.

No area of parent-child relations would be left to parents to determine. Our government would, if the children’s lobby efforts succeed, monitor private family life much as it now monitors public schools, public events, public behavior. There would remain no private sector worthy of the name. This situation is what is encompassed in the term “totalitarian.”

Of course, this extreme is unlikely to occur in the near future, for ours is a government in which the citizenry is not without ability to defend its rights. An official effort to concretize the rationalizations of the children’s lobby might well lead to changes in the government more sweeping than children’s rights, *per se*. It is, after all, parents who have the vote. And it would be a uniquely unworldly administration that would attempt to take their children away from American citizens upon grounds as spurious as those cited by the children’s lobby.

In the interim, however, there seems little doubt (though the evidence is largely empirical and inductive) that the advocates of “children’s rights” have, under the rubric of concern, actually driven deep wedges between parents and children throughout the land. The weakening of American parental authority has been one of the worst features of modern American life. No institution in the land has escaped the discomforts of adolescent rebellions, defiances, and disorders.

Those who cannot see the connection between the children’s {21} lobby, with its intellectual roots in the left-wing educational establishment, and current disorders in public school and general society can only avoid the sight by deliberately looking aside.

When this situation, with its family trauma and societal disorder, is contrasted with the calm children in private Christian schools (as in Chalcedon’s school), the lesson seems quite clear. Christian

religious values cannot be flouted by the government, any more than by individuals, without evoking a host of societal disorders that can, if unchecked, bring down the entire national structure.

Since these results are fairly evident and this conclusion far from unimaginable or impossible, it seems fairly evident that the children's lobby, while using the language of concern, is actually engaged in a deliberate war upon the American family and society. Its aims are to destroy all that Americans traditionally hold dear: family, religion, morality, and the peace of the nation.

Seldom has so sinister a movement appeared in so hypocritical a disguise.

THE FRAUD OF EDUCATIONAL REFORM

Samuel L. Blumenfeld

The more I read what secular educators write these days, the more convinced I become that their grasp of reality has slipped beyond retrieval. Professors of education are a very special breed, living in a very rarified atmosphere. They tend to discuss the problems of education as if educators had nothing to do with creating them. They pretend to be victims of social forces beyond their control. They are very fuzzy about cause and effect and prefer to speak in broad generalities.

This is particularly true when they write about our illiteracy problem. They write as if they had nothing to do with causing it. Yet the historical record proves beyond a doubt that our reading problem began when the professors of education changed the way reading was taught in our primary schools in the early 1930s. All of that was first exposed by Rudolf Flesch in his well-documented book, *Why Johnny Can't Read* (1955), and further elaborated by Dr. Jeanne Chall in *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (1967), and by myself in *The New Illiterates* (1973). In short, there is no lack of knowledge on how we got to where we are today, and any professor of education who sincerely wants to know the truth can find it in any university library.

But in all the recent television coverage of the illiteracy crisis, and in all the interviews with professors of education, I did not hear or see any reference to the information contained in the three books mentioned above, which, by the way, are by no means the only books written on [\[23\]](#) the subject. On television we were shown in the most dramatic and pathetic terms how awful it is to be illiterate in America. But when it came to explaining why so many Americans who have spent from as many as eight to ten to twelve years in public school come out functionally illiterate, no

answers were given. If any answer at all was attempted, it tended to indict the home as the source of illiteracy. In other words, if a child came out of an illiterate home, he remained illiterate no matter how many years he spent in school!

No attempt was made to explain why there are so many illiterate homes in a nation that has had compulsory school attendance in virtually every state for almost a hundred years. The media accepts at face value anything they are told by the educators. They cannot imagine that they are being deceived by some of the cleverest con artists who ever earned a doctorate of education.

But what makes matters worse is that there are now many new, relatively young professors, former flower children of the sixties, who see the world through thick Marxist lenses and thereby project a grossly distorted view of education's problems. Their influence is growing within the establishment as their articles appear in more and more educational journals which, of course, are only read by other professors of education.

Professors of education are probably the most useless, parasitic group in American society. They are supposed to teach teachers how to teach while they themselves have never taught a classroom of kids. They teach from theory only, and whatever they write or ruminate about is rarely worth reading, which is why virtually no one outside the profession knows what's going on inside.

Professors of education are a relatively new species. They came into being early in the century when the marriage between education and psychology led to the creation of graduate schools of education. The marriage elevated both subjects to new exalted positions in academe.

Hitherto, teachers were trained in private academies or normal schools. A college degree was not considered necessary to become a teacher. But the marriage of education and psychology made education a "science," a far more complex area of expertise, and so the normal school became a state college which, in time, became a state university conferring doctorates in education.

So now we have thousands of doctors of education who spend most of their time talking to one another and making little sense to the public. {24} If you want to find out what they are saying, you have to read their journals of education, published by the graduate schools of education.

What do they say about the illiteracy problem? Very little that will contribute to its solution. For example, Barbara Ann Scott, associate professor of sociology at the State University of New York (New Paltz), wrote an article for Boston University's *Journal of Education* (vol. 168, no. 1 [1986]) entitled, "The Decline of Literacy and Liberal Learning." Writing from a Marxist point of view, she applied class theory to her interpretation. She wrote:

"Back-to-basics" is basically a demand for functional literacy and, to a degree, cognitive literacy within the bourgeois tradition. It is not an explicit and purposive quest for critical literacy, at least not for the mass of students in the educational system, as has been amply demonstrated by recent public statements by the new Secretary of Education and former NEH chief, William J. Bennett. The main concern of the mainstream literacy crusade is the short-term, extrinsic payoff, for both the individual and the society, not the intrinsic, long-term pleasure to be found in educational excellence.

Thus, the literacy crusade currently being mounted by the educational establishment is fundamentally anti-radical and anti-democratic. An authentic (and, consequently, radical) concern for literacy starts with the assumption, in Stanley Aronowitz's (1982) words, that "critical thinking is the fundamental precondition of an autonomous and self-motivated citizenry" (283). This means, in turn, appropriating the bourgeois tradition of liberal learning in order to ultimately transform it in the interest of intellectual and social empowerment. Critical literacy, in short, is the essence of the radical democratic agenda.

... Radical educators need to recognize the shortcomings of liberal and conservative approaches to educational reform, take care to avoid cooptation, distinguish short-term from long-term agendas (i.e. the progression from cognitive to critical literacy), and be eternally vigilant in defending and extending the liberal arts and sciences curriculum. They need, above all, to remember that the broad tradition of bourgeois culture and liberal learning has often yielded, unintentionally, or otherwise, a radical payoff: namely, the liberation of critical thought and democratic action.

Is it not interesting that the prestigious *Journal of Education* provides Marxists with the means to conduct the class struggle in its pages? But what is even more interesting is the revelation

that “critical thinking” is “the essence of the radical democratic agenda.” We have noticed in educational journals an increasing preoccupation with “critical thinking” as a new, essential component of the reformed curriculum. We {25} were at a loss to understand what “critical thinking” consisted of until reading Ms. Scott’s article. Apparently, “critical thinking” means the application of Marxist dialectical analysis and interpretation to the content of the curriculum. Is it now the intention of our educators to indoctrinate American youngsters in the art of Marxist analysis under the guise of “critical thinking”?

Apparently that is the case. And we get further confirmation of this in a review of Jonathan Kozol’s book, *Illiterate America*, by James Paul Gee, in the same issue of the *Journal of Education*. Professor Gee, a specialist in linguistics, teaches in the Program in Applied Psycholinguistics at Boston University. It should be noted that current methods of reading instruction in American schools are based on psycholinguistics, which is, in my view, the chief cause of our learning disability explosion. Dr. Gee writes:

The physical center of Kozol’s book ... is “a plan to mobilize illiterate America.” One approach to illiteracy that has worked in this century in such places as Cuba and Nicaragua, Kozol concedes to be impossible for us.... The sole alternative, he argues, is a grass-roots struggle fired from the bottom up. His written call to arms to illiterate America is:

“We need, above all else, to do away with the idea of literacy as training for domestication, contrived to fill existent or imagined lower-level slots and consumer roles, and search instead for instruments of moral leverage strong enough to scrutinize those roles and to examine the political determinants of subjugation: examine, study, stand back, and reflect upon their purpose and, by virtue of reflection and examination, first to denounce and finally transform. Literacy, so conceived, is civil disobedience in pedagogic clothes; a cognitive denunciation of dynastic power, an ethical affront to an imperial injustice. Critical and analytic competence on such a scale is more than ‘functional.’ It is a literacy for human liberation. It is cultural action: an event, not an idea. It is political; it is endowed with anger; it is not neutral.”

What we have here, pure and simple, is a call for revolution on the part of the illiterate masses. Much of Kozol’s strategy of

using an illiteracy campaign as a means of inciting the masses to revolution is derived from Paulo Freire, the Brazilian Marxist, whose book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1973), has had a profound influence on radical educators in both North and Latin America. Freire, apparently, is also the source of the “critical thinking” movement. Beverly M. Gordon, professor of education at Ohio State University, writes in an article entitled, “The Use of {26} Emancipatory Pedagogy in Teacher Education” (*Journal of Educational Thought* 20, no. 2 [August 1986]):

One of the best known advocates of emancipatory pedagogy is Paulo Freire. His writings describe the development of educational pedagogies designed to promote critical consciousness, to enable students to become critical thinkers and active societal participants, and to give people the emancipatory capability of redefining the nature of their own lives.

Freire’s advocacy of education for critical consciousness and his model of emancipatory pedagogy for oppressed groups together heighten our awareness of the inherently and inescapably political nature of curriculum....

In the emancipatory classroom, students begin to participate as an active citizenry and to overcome their feelings of despair and hopelessness, apathy and alienation.... [e]ducating someone is an awesome responsibility and an unavoidably political act.

Isn’t it amazing that there are so many “educated” Americans still roaming the vast Marxist desert, seeking an illusory “liberation”? The failures of applied Marxism never seem to daunt them. The gulags, the starvation, repression, mass murders, and religious persecution, which the dictatorships of the proletariat have brought about, never seem to open their minds to question; the stories of defectors, ex-communists, escapees from these Marxist hells make no impression. Why? One can only attribute such blindness to satanic influences and depraved hearts.

Yet these are the people to whom is entrusted the education of American children.

In sum, we can expect the next phase of educational reform to be dominated by radical ideas disguised in “pedagogic clothes.” Such phrases as “critical thinking,” “emancipatory pedagogy,” and “master teachers” will sound benign to the public but will convey

the right message to the radicals.

THE NECESSITY FOR THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

John M. Otis

1. Introduction

Education is one of the most vital issues facing America today, especially the Christian community. The crucial question is *not* whether our children are being educated but *how* they are being educated. Whether we like it or not our educational system operates from a distinctive philosophical perspective. There is a philosophy of life being fed to our children. As Christian parents do we know what that philosophy is? *We should, if we are responsible parents.* We often fail as parents in caring for our children in the fullest sense. We would not think twice about providing adequate medical care for our children, and baby-sitting if we leave our children. But how concerned are we about their *total* spiritual welfare? Our children spend an average of thirty hours each week in school. They are being taught, most assuredly, a world and life view. Sadly, most Christian parents have never taken the time sufficiently to examine the philosophy and methodology of the education being taught to their children. It is paramount that we take the time!

The purpose of this study is to help the Christian parent to realize his biblical responsibility for his child's education, to comprehend the kind of education his child likely is receiving, to understand *what* is Christian education, to imagine the tremendous implications a genuine Christian education can have on a generation and a future culture, and [28] to challenge the parent that a Christian school is not just a viable alternative but *an absolute necessity*.

2. Parental Obligations

To whom belongs the primary responsibility for the education of children? Does it belong to the government? Does it belong to the school? The biblical answer to these questions is: none of the above. The Bible says the primary responsibility for a child's education belongs to the parents. We cannot begin to grasp the necessity for the Christian school without first understanding our roles as Christian parents. Deuteronomy 6:4–9 states the parents' responsibility. Parents are to teach their children to love God with all their heart. This teaching is to be done everywhere and at anytime. Every situation in life is an opportunity for godly parents to instruct children in how to walk in the paths of righteousness. There is to be an undeviating obedience to God's law regardless of where one might be. God's law is to be constantly before us (before our eyes, on our hands, and upon the doorposts of our homes). This passage states so magnificently a biblical world and life view.

The primary responsibility for education fell upon the father, who is the covenant head of the family. The Proverbs emphasize this fact along with Ephesians 6:4. In Ephesians 6:4 the Greek is very emphatic. Fathers are told to “nurture” their children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The verb that can be translated “nurture” has an imperative meaning; it is a *command*. And the present tense of the verb definitely implies a constant ongoing activity. Fathers are to be unceasing in nurturing their children. This is to be done through the discipline and instruction of the Lord. The discipline carries with it the idea of chastening that leads to correction (Heb. 12:11). The “instruction” or “admonition” leading to godliness carries the idea of *training* by means of a spoken word, whether it be teaching, warning, or encouragement. Hence, the father is engaged in a comprehensive Christian training of his children. This would include a training whereby the father teaches by the *example* of his life.

Even though parents are primarily responsible for their child's education, they must never forget that the child is ultimately not the parent's property but God's property. Children are gifts to parents (Ps. 127:3). They are given for a time to bless us. But one day they must leave and begin their own families. As in all things given to us by God, [29] the principle of *stewardship* is applicable.

We are accountable to God for the type of training we give to the children He has blessed us with. It behooves all Christian parents to examine the training of their children.

3. Parental Authority and Christian Schooling

It is interesting to note that *the* fundamental institution in society is that of the *family*. In Scripture we see such institutions as the family, the church, and the government. But nowhere do we see the “school” as an institution. This is highly significant. The Scripture never gives any God-given authority to the school. There is no direct command to start a school, to attend one, nor to obey the authority of a school teacher. Biblically speaking, a school derives its *only* existence and authority from the parents. The school’s authority is thereby a derivative one. The only reason a godly parent should secure the services of a Christian school is because he is lacking in the knowledge, skill, and time that a professional Christian teacher can provide.

When Christian parents send their children to a Christian school, they are delegating full authority to that school for the education of that child during the school hours. The Christian teacher stands *en loco parentis* (“in the place of a parent”) with respect to the child. The school assumes the godly role of the parent during those school hours. The school is engaged in a disciplining process in its fullest sense. It is engaged in character building.

The teacher is the backbone of the school. The biblical model of discipleship is that the pupil becomes *like* the teacher (Luke 6:40). The selection of teachers, therefore, becomes a vital process for the Christian school. Their beliefs, personalities, knowledge, skills, and lifestyles will affect the children they teach.

The Christian school, properly seen, is an extension of the Christian home. The school exists for no other purpose than to *supplement and not replace* a parent’s instruction at home. The school and home work closely together in educating the child.

4. A Conflict of Worldviews

If we are responsible Christian parents, we will diligently determine the kind of philosophy being fed to our children. It

may be a surprise to many that a conflict does exist. The conflict is between Christianity's philosophy and the world's philosophy. The word "world" often carries a negative connotation in Scripture. It refers to a godless and evil system [30] which is *antithetical to God's law*. The conflict is not only possible but *inevitable* (2 Tim. 3:12; John 15:18–20; 17:14; 1 John 3:13; 1 Pet. 4:12).

The conflict is basically one of contrasting worldviews. What do we mean by "worldviews"? A worldview is simply one's philosophy of life. This philosophy involves the basis for one's entire thinking. Our moral values are undergirded by a worldview as well. No human being thinks or behaves in a *neutral* fashion. What we think and the way we act stem from our governing philosophy of life—which is our world and life view.

Actually, one's worldview is a person's religion. It is wholly incorrect to speak of one person being religious and another not. All thinking and behavior is religious by its very nature. The question is always *which* religion one is espousing, *not* whether they are espousing one. There is no neutrality in thought. One thinks and acts according to his religious beliefs. Even the atheist is religious. His religion is that he believes there is no god. Of course, in saying this he becomes his own god. He is the final interpreter of truth, of what is real or not.

5. What Is a Christian Worldview?

Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." A Christian worldview presupposes the truthfulness of God's Word. It begins with the *inerrancy* of Scripture. The Bible is truth. It is God's Word given to tell us who God is, what the world really is like, and how we are to live in relationship to our creator and with one another.

A Christian worldview believes in a universe that is the handiwork of a personal God who made it and who constantly governs it. The *doctrine of creation* undergirds a Christian worldview.

A Christian worldview believes man was created to fellowship with God and was created perfect but because of disobedience sin came into the world. This sin affected the whole human race to the point that we are said to be children of wrath (Eph. 2:1ff.). Sin

has affected every part of our being—especially our thinking. This means we cannot think properly apart from God who is the final authority. Unless a man first presupposes God, he cannot know reality accurately, seeing that God is the creator. The facts of the universe are what God made them, and they cannot be interpreted without reference to Him if they are to be truly known. Hence, a Christian worldview is rooted in an *accurate knowledge of man's nature*. {31}

A Christian worldview sees man's hope of deliverance from this sinful nature, with its eternal consequences, as only possible through faith in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is seen as preeminent. He is Lord over all (Col. 1:17). No knowledge can be *accurately* perceived in its fullest sense apart from how it relates to Jesus Christ. The Christian worldview is rooted in the *redemptive work of Jesus Christ*.

In summary, the Christian worldview says that man cannot accurately know the physical universe apart from the interpretation God gives to its facts, that man cannot accurately know himself, that is, why he thinks and behaves the way he does, apart from what the Bible says about him. In short, man cannot truly know anything apart from his creator.

6. What Is a Humanist Worldview?

The philosophy that characterizes the system referred to in the Bible as the “world” is presently termed *humanism*. Humanism is a man-centered philosophy which seeks to interpret the universe independently of any reference to the triune God of the Bible.

Humanism's four great pillars are: 1) atheism; 2) organic evolution; 3) autonomous ethics; and 4) worldwide socialism.

Humanism's beliefs are clearly delineated in the *Humanist Manifesto I* and the *Humanist Manifesto II*. These works were formulated by self proclaimed humanists. These documents sought to codify the distinctives of what these people believed. One could call these works the “Bible” of humanism.

The first pillar is that of *atheism*. Secular humanism says there is no personal God such as the God of the Bible. In *Humanist Manifesto II* this is said: “We find insufficient evidence for belief in the existence of a supernatural.... as nontheists, we begin with

humans not God, nature not deity ... we can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species ... humans are responsible for what we are or will become. No deity will save us; we must save ourselves.”¹

The second pillar is *organic evolution*. Since humanists reject a belief in God, they must explain the origin of the universe independently of God. This theory postulates that the universe has come into existence by pure chance. Man is not the product of a personal God, but he is the accidental product of millions of years of gradual change from lower forms of life. In *Humanist Manifesto I* it is stated, “Religious humanists regard the universe as self-existing and not created.... Humanism believes that man is a part of nature and that he has emerged as the [32] result of a continuous process.”² Sir Julian Huxley, one of the founders of the American Humanist Association, defined humanism: “I use the word ‘humanist’ to mean someone who believes that man is just as much a natural phenomenon as an animal or plant; that his body, mind and soul were not supernaturally created but are products of evolution, and that he is not under the control or guidance of any supernatural being or beings but has to rely on himself and his own powers.”³

The third pillar of humanism is *autonomous ethics*. Some years ago *Humanist* magazine said: “... Darwin’s discovery of the principle of evolution sounded the death knell of religious and moral values. It removed the ground from under the feet of traditional religion.”⁴ The *Humanist Manifesto II* states: “... Ethics is autonomous and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human need and interest. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life.”⁵ The humanist sees man as innately good and quite sufficient to solve his problems apart from any supreme God. *Humanist Manifesto II* goes on to say, “Too often traditional faiths encourage dependence rather than courage

1. Paul Kurtz, ed., *Humanist Manifesto I and II*, 16.

2. *Ibid.*, 8.

3. Henry M. Morris, *Education for the Real World*, 82.

4. S. S. Chawla, “A Philosophical Journey to the West,” *Humanist* (September/October 1964): 151.

5. *Humanist Manifesto I and II*, 17.

... We believe in maximum individual autonomy consonant with social responsibility.”⁶ Man is the measure of all things for the humanist.

The fourth pillar is *worldwide socialism*. The humanist dislikes free- enterprise economics. *Humanist Manifesto I* has said, “The humanists are firmly convinced that existing acquisitive and profit motivated society has shown itself to be inadequate and that a radical change in methods, controls and motives must be instituted. A socialized and cooperative economic order must be established to the end that the equitable distribution of the means of life be possible.”⁷ *Humanist Manifesto II* advocates a one-world government. It says, “We deplore the divisions of humankind on nationalistic grounds. We have reached a turning point in history where the best option is to transcend the limits of national sovereignty and move toward the building of a world community in which all sectors of the human family can participate.”⁸

7. Education: The Arena for Conflicting Worldviews

Education, simply put, is “instruction in life.” Education seeks to inform us what the real world is like, what we are like, and how we are to relate to the physical world and to each other. It should be obvious by now that education cannot be neutral. Education is inherently religious. As noted earlier, we cannot interpret the facts of the universe apart {33} from our presuppositions, that is, apart from our worldview.

Education has become a major arena of conflict between a Christian and a humanist worldview. The conflict is inevitable. They cannot coexist. To adopt one is to deny the other. America’s schools have become that arena of conflict. The great prize is the minds of our children. To win the battle for the mind today is to win the victory for tomorrow’s culture. Both worldviews realize this fact, and the struggle is indeed one to the death.

A. A Christian Worldview in American Education:

6. *Ibid.*, 18.

7. *Ibid.*, 10.

8. *Ibid.*, 21.

Historical Roots

C. B. Eavey gives an excellent survey of early American education in his work, *History of Christian Education*. Much of the following information is derived from his survey.

The Puritans, who were Calvinistic dissenters from the Church of England and who settled in the New England colonies, did more than any other people in setting the course for early American education. The Puritans recognized the Scripture as their supreme authority, and they structured their whole community around the Scripture. Great emphasis was placed on home education, but as early as 1635 the Puritans began to establish schools for their children. These schools were either in partnership with or subordinate to the church. Grammar schools were established to prepare young men for entering college. These schools stressed diligent study in the original languages and the reading of the works of ancient writers. Teachers were usually college graduates or candidates for the ministry until they obtained churches.

Puritan education included emphasis on higher education. Harvard College was founded in 1636 to advance learning, to supply churches with ministers and the colony with teachers and civil officials. The college was distinctly Christian in its founding, for every student was to be instructed that the chief purpose in life is to know God reconciled in Jesus Christ. Yale University was begun for the same purpose in 1701. In the middle colonies parochial schools exerted the greatest influence. Such universities as Princeton, the University of Pennsylvania, and Rutgers were all begun because of Christian zeal to see Christ as the principal theme of education. In the South apprenticeship was a very important means of Christian education. Parochial schools were under the control of the Church of England. In 1693 the College of William and Mary was started for the training of ministers and to train youth correctly so that the Gospel could be furthered. {34}

Eavey has said that "Christianity was the mother of education in America."⁹ Elementary schools were closely associated with churches so that students could read the catechism and the Bible to learn to do God's will. Secondary education in grammar schools was under the direction of Christian auspices. Schoolmasters were

9. C. B. Eavey, *History of Christian Education*, 202.

obtained in light of Christian character and were required to instruct and lead children to live Christian lives. It was the duty of the teacher to pray for his students morning and evening; he was to see that they attended church on Sunday and on any other day that worship was conducted.

During the colonial period the book which was most influential, next to the Bible, was the *New England Primer*, which served for over a century as the chief school and reading book in all the colonies except those controlled by the Church of England. Noah Webster's *The American Spelling Book*, which was published in 1783, was another tremendously influential work. Some estimate that it sold "100 million copies in the first one-hundred years of its circulation."¹⁰ The McGuffey readers were extremely popular in the first half of public education in America. They formed the Bible curriculum of early public schools.

One of the giants in terms of propagating Christian education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was Noah Webster, who was best known for his American dictionary. Probably "no single American has contributed so much to American education as has Noah Webster."¹¹ Webster put the greatest emphasis on the family for education, and upon the individual. Many of his textbooks were self-help books. He believed that the English language was to be a means of propagating the sciences, arts, and Christian faith to an extent exceeding any other language. Webster spent sixty years of his life writing books which presented a Christian worldview of education. One of his crowning achievements was his famous *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, published in 1828 after some twenty-six years of work. He had learned twenty-eight different languages for his work on his dictionary. Webster's final achievement was his translation of the Bible from its original languages. Webster saw this as "the most important enterprise of my life."¹² He published an *American Scriptures* for the daily reading of Americans.

Webster's letter to a young gentleman commencing his

10. Slater and Hall, *Rudiments of America's Christian History and Government*, 4.

11. *Ibid.*, 3.

12. *Ibid.*, 5.

education in 1823 probably best reflects a Christian worldview which he sought to expound, as did early American education in general:

As men are furnished with the powers of reason, it is obviously the design of the creator, that reason should be employed as their guide, in {35} every stage of life. But reason, without civilization, without experience and without the aid of revelation, is a miserable guide; it often errs from ignorance, and more often from the impulse of passion. The first questions a rational being should ask himself are, Who made me? Why was I made? What is my duty? The proper answers to these questions, and to practical results, constitute, my dear friend, the whole business of life.

Now reason unaided by revelation, cannot answer these questions. The experience of the Pagan world has long since determined this point. Revelation alone furnishes satisfactory information on these subjects. Let it then be the first study that occupies your mind, to learn from the Scripture the character and will of your maker; the end or purpose for which he gave your being and intellectual powers, and the duties He requires you to perform. In all that regards faith and practice, the Scriptures furnish the principles, precepts, and rules, by which you are to be guided. Your reputation among men; your own tranquility of mind in life, and all rational hope of future happiness, depend on an exact conformity of conduct to the commands of God revealed in the sacred oracles.¹³

B. Humanism's Role in American Education

The humanist sees the value of education and of the public school in the propagation of humanist beliefs. This quote by John Dunphy from the January/February 1983 issue of the *Humanist* is quite significant:

I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classrooms by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith: a religion of humanity that recognizes and respects the spark of what theologians call divinity in every human being. These teachers must embody the same selfless dedication as the most rabid fundamentalist preachers, for they will be ministers of another sort, utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values

13. *Ibid.*, 8.

in whatever subject they teach, regardless of the educational level—preschool, day care or large state university. The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and new—the rotting corpse of Christianity, together with all its adjacent evils and misery, and the new faith of humanism, resplendent in its promise of a world in which the never realized Christian ideal of “love thy neighbor” will finally be achieved.¹⁴

Humanists have long seen the importance of the public school in their goal to *humanize* America. In fact, the humanists of the nineteenth century in America were the ones who championed tax supported public education. As a matter of historical fact, Unitarianism was the mother of {36} secular humanism in America. It is interesting to note that 21 percent of the original signers of the *Humanist Manifesto I* in 1933 were either Unitarian ministers or Unitarians.¹⁵

Samuel Blumenfeld documents an incredible account in his work, *Is Public Education Necessary?* Blumenfeld speaks of Robert Owen, a socialist from Scotland. Owen came to America in 1825 and started a communal experience in New Harmony, Indiana. Owen taught that education was a prerequisite to the success of what came to be known as Socialism. The Owenites, as they were called, were joined by the Transcendentalists, Unitarians, and Universalists. Their goal? To plot the take over of public education.

Orestes A. Brownson (1803–1876), who was a Universalist minister (later a Catholic convert), joined the Owenites in the 1820s and wrote this in his autobiography:

The great object was to get rid of Christianity, and to convert our churches into halls of science. The plan was not to make open attacks on religion, although we might belabor the clergy and bring them into contempt where we could: but to establish a system of state,—we said national schools, from which all religion was to be excluded, in which nothing was to be taught but such knowledge as is verifiable by the senses, and to which all parents were to be compelled by law to send their children.... The first thing to be done was to get this system of schools established. For this purpose, a secret society was formed.... This organization was commenced in 1829, in the city of New York, and to my own knowledge was

14. John Dunphy, *Humanist*, 25–26.

15. Tim LaHaye, *The Battle for the Public Schools*, 60.

effected throughout a considerable part of New York state. How far it was extended in other states, or whether it is still kept up, I know not, for I abandoned it in the latter part of the year 1830, and have since had no confidential relations with any engaged in it: but this much I can say, the plan has been successfully pursued, the views we put forth have gained great popularity, and the whole action of the country on the subject has taken the direction we sought to give it.... It would be worth inquiring, if there were any means of ascertaining how large a share of this infidel society, with its members all through the country unsuspected by the public and unknown to each other, yet all known to a central committee, and moved by it, have had in giving the extraordinary impulse to godless education which all must have remarked, since 1830, an impulse, which seems too strong for any human power to resist.¹⁶

In the humanist's plan to take over public education, these basic steps were undertaken: 1) make school attendance compulsory; 2) establish government-sponsored "free" schools; and 3) establish teacher {37} training schools—controlled, of course, by an elite—where future educators would essentially be taught how to secularize education.

"The year 1837 marked the end of one era and the beginning of another. It was the end of America's total commitment to Christian education [and the beginning of the shift] to centralized secular public education under government auspices."¹⁷ Horace Mann was one of the dominant forces in this transformation. He became a powerful force for secular education during the nineteenth century. He is even referred to as the father of public education. On April 20, 1837, Mann was chosen the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, which was the first state-supported school system financed by property taxes. He was chosen not for his educational expertise but for his Unitarian skepticism. Mann had numerous friends in the Boston "Friends of Education" (a group consisting of socialists, Unitarians, atheists, educators, and all who favored tax-supported, government-controlled schools) who pushed for his selection.

Mann was a staunch rival of traditional Christian beliefs.

16. *Ibid.*, 61–62.

17. Paul Kienel, "Christian Schools or Public Schools—Which Came First?" *Christian School Comment* 4, no. 3.

Under his control, the Massachusetts Board of Education pushed for compulsory attendance and established public school libraries stacked with “approved” writers—namely Unitarians, Transcendentalists, atheists, etc. He excluded what he called “sectarian books.”

Later Mann became the first secretary of the Federal Department of Education. What he did for Massachusetts in education he sought to do for all of America. Several results were: 1) education was made compulsory and public; 2) state teacher’s colleges were established where teachers were trained in the new nonsectarian philosophy of education (humanism); and 3) control of schools was taken from parents and the local community and given to the “state,” meaning humanist educators were hired by the state to train our children.

John Dewey, who is called the father of progressive education, was one of the most influential humanists of the twentieth century. Dewey became the head of the Department of Education at Columbia University in New York. His so-called “progressive education” became the model for teacher education departments at universities across the U.S. Dewey was a professed atheist, and his “progressive education” was in reality nothing more than a propagation of his atheism, evolutionary thought, autonomous ethics, and socialism upon this century’s schoolchildren. Dewey was a signer of the *Humanist Manifesto I* in 1933.

The humanists plotted the takeover of American education and for {38} all practical purposes have succeeded in winning the battle for the public school, for a time. The fact that our public schools cannot openly advocate or teach a Christian worldview but are allowed to propagate what is in reality a humanist philosophy simply shows *who* has won the battle for the minds of our youth in America’s public schools.

The victory has been achieved because our government bureaucrats, our Congressional lawmakers, and the Supreme Court have been brainwashed to think of religion only on narrow or sectarian grounds. For them, Christianity is obviously a sectarian faith, and to openly propagate this faith violates the Constitution’s supposed separation of church and state (of course this separation as put forth by humanists is *not* in our Constitution). But the beliefs of humanism, such as evolution, are seen *not* as a religious

faith even though the Supreme Court in 1961 in the *Torcaso v. Watkins* case called secular humanism a religion. Our government sees its public schools as neutral with regards to religion. As we have seen earlier, this is impossible; nevertheless, the government still believes it, which thereby has tremendous implications, such as the disestablishment of Christianity from public education.

8. What Constitutes a Genuine Christian School?

A genuine Christian school will:

1. Recognize that the Bible is God's inerrant and infallible rule for faith and practice. The Bible is the source book for all of life. Though it is not a textbook on academic areas, it does provide the basis for such pursuits, and when it does speak to these areas it speaks authoritatively and without error. The Scripture is the guiding principle for the entire educational process (2 Tim. 3:16–17).
2. Recognize that the overarching goal for education, as in all of life, is to glorify God (1 Cor. 10:31).
3. Recognize that Jesus Christ is preeminent in the realm of education. No knowledge can be accurately understood apart from Him (Col. 1:17; 2:2–3; Prov. 1:7; 9:10; Phil. 2:9–11).
4. Seek to provide a harmonious continuity with godly parents' instruction. ^[39] The Christian school is an extension of the Christian home. The school's only authority is a derivative one which the parent gives it. Education ultimately is the parent's responsibility (Deut. 6:4–9). The school stands *en loco parentis* with respect to the child—in place of the parent for a specific period of time.
5. Provide a discipline which will make the school a conducive atmosphere for proper education. This discipline is consistent with the godly parent's discipline at home which is rooted in Scripture (Heb. 12:5–11; Deut. 8:5; Prov. 3: 11–12).
6. Recognize that the child is a unique creature of God, created in His image (Gen. 1:26–27). The child is not to be manipulated. The child is not a blank slate to be written upon according to the whims of an educator. The child is to be guided in the paths of righteousness (Prov. 2) respecting his/her individuality as a unique creature of God.

7. Recognize the uniqueness of the child in his/her possession of talents. The school seeks to promote the maturing of those God-given talents for His glory (Col. 3:23; 1 Cor. 10:31).
8. Recognize the sinful nature of the child (Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:1–3) and will seek to teach that child God's remedy for the consequences of that sinful nature (John 3:16) and will seek to guide him/her in how to overcome this nature's effect through the power of the Holy Spirit (Col. 1:28; Gal. 5:16, 21, 26; Rom. 13:14). Though the Christian school's primary function is not that of evangelism, it should always be sensitive to the spiritual status of the child and aid in the propagation of the Gospel to that child. The school realizes this is primarily a function of the home and church but it cannot neglect it. And of course the school teacher and other personnel must help the child in learning a biblical response to everyday problems. The school aids in character building.
9. Hire teachers who are committed to the task of yielding to God His rightful place in their preparation, instruction, and in the example of their lives. The Christian teacher is the backbone of the school for he/ she is a potent role model for an impressionable child (1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7–9; 1 Cor. 4:15–17). The teacher is standing in place of the godly parent during school hours. {40}
10. Provide a curriculum that is Christ centered in its orientation (Matt. 12:30; Col. 1:15–17; 2:2–3). The curriculum is shaped by God's Word. Only a Christ-centered curriculum is capable of providing a truly integrated curriculum where all the diverse areas of knowledge find their unity in Jesus Christ. The curriculum should reflect both unity and diversity. Each course is a distinct area of instruction yet each essentially is interrelated with every other course. "God's word either directs, controls, and determines the whole curriculum or has no rightful place in it; the only way to truly honor God's word is to give the Bible the central place in your child's education that it assigns to itself."¹⁸
11. Provide a faculty that is able to translate a Christian philosophy of education into everyday classroom practice. The teacher seeks to integrate the Christian faith into the

18. David B. Cummings, ed., *The Basis for a Christian School*, 22.

subject matter. The Christian teacher realizes that religion cannot be compartmentalized. The Christian faith has a bearing on all of life.

12. Enable the student to carry out his/her scriptural mandate to subdue the world for God's glory by properly utilizing biblical principles in his/her vocation (Gen. 1:28; 2 Cor. 10:3–5; Matt. 28:18–20). The child learns that there is a Christian perspective to science, math, history, grammar, physical education, sociology, psychology, music, art, etc.

9. Why Some Christian Parents Don't Send Their Children to a Christian School

1. They don't have a Christian worldview themselves. They are ignorant of what one is and the necessity for imparting it to their child.
2. They are ignorant of the philosophy that has captured public education—namely humanism. They do not realize its detrimental effects upon their children.
3. They have been brainwashed by a humanist culture that education can be neutral and that this neutrality necessitates the elimination of a Christian belief from the classroom for the sake of that neutrality in a pluralistic society.
4. They believe it costs too much. What price tag, however, would a {41} parent place upon the spiritual welfare of his/her child? And besides, who owns the cattle on a thousand hills? Where there is the commitment to educate a child in the truth there will come the sacrifice, if necessary, to meet that need.
5. They believe that a Christian public-school teacher is sufficient to satisfy any parental obligation to educate a child in a Christian way. The problem with this mentality is that it fails to see that a Christian teacher without a godly curriculum, without a godly atmosphere, and without the complete freedom to integrate the Christian faith into the subject matter on a daily basis, is seriously handicapped from the perspective of a biblical worldview of education. Any attempt to teach in a distinctly Christian way is to invite likely reprimand from school administration for violating

a so-called separation of church and state. Of course, all of this assumes the Christian teacher desires and is capable of teaching in a genuinely Christian way. This assumption is highly questionable seeing that most Christian teachers probably have not been adequately trained to teach from a thoroughly Christian perspective. Therefore, Christian parents should seriously question whether their child is receiving a biblical worldview even from a Christian teacher in a public school.

6. They think the Christian school is a sub-quality education. They simply don't know the facts. The great majority of Christian schools test out better than their public school counterparts, generally speaking. A genuine Christian school will always demand quality education of its personnel simply because the pursuit of excellence is a hallmark of Christianity (Eph. 6:7; Col. 3:23). Of course, quality education must never be restricted to mere academics.
7. They think their child can be a positive influence in salvaging a decaying public school. These parents see their child as an evangelist. Usually the argument goes like this: "If all Christians pull out of the public school then it will really fall apart." First of all, the school is not primarily a place for evangelism—that is a mission field. The child is not sent to school to be a missionary, but he should be sent to learn how to think and act in a God-glorifying way. In all seriousness, would a Christian parent under other circumstances send a five- or six-year-old child as a missionary to a group of unbelievers? Besides, what young child clearly knows the Gospel and has the initiative and courage to share it? Secondly, with regard {42} to the idea of staying in the school for a type of preserving of the system is, in reality, contrary to scriptural teaching (Ps. 1; Prov. 13:20). We are never to violate a clear mandate of Scripture supposedly in order to be of benefit to someone. And besides, how is a mere presence of body going to change a system thoroughly entrenched in humanism?
8. They claim there is no Christian school in their nearby community. This never relinquishes a Christian parent's obligation to educate a child in the truth. The parent either teaches the child at home or helps start a Christian school

along with other Christian parents.

9. They say, "If the public school was good enough for me then it's good enough for my children, and besides, the public school didn't hurt me." First of all, the public school of twenty years ago is more than likely not the same as the school of today. But this isn't the real issue anyhow. The point is: does the Bible mandate Christian parents to educate their children in the truth or not? Besides, how does one define "hurt"? The fact that the parent doesn't see the value of a distinctly Christian education and the consequences of a humanistic education is itself a sign of damage.
10. They want the school to have a complete athletic program. So many cannot comprehend a high school without a full-fledged athletic program. The real question is: what is more important, my child's academic education or his opportunity to play a sport?
11. They think of a Christian school as a kind of reform school for social misfits or as a place for those with learning disabilities. This simply shows a complete ignorance of what a Christian school is.
12. They contend that the Christian school shelters their child from experiencing the realities of life such as living in a sinful world. First of all, the Christian school is not free of sin by any stretch of the imagination. A Christian school doesn't totally eliminate sin, per se, it merely teaches the child how biblically to deal with his sin. Nevertheless, in another sense, the Christian school should be a shelter from a blatant manifestation of man's sinfulness. The Christian school would never tolerate drug use, pornographic literature to be read, profane language, and disrespect for authority on the part of its students. The Christian school {43} should be characterized by a godly atmosphere both on the part of faculty and students. Perhaps an analogy would help us. A knowledgeable and caring gardener would never put a tender plant in an environment that would be extremely harsh on it. A young plant needs to have a very suitable climate and soil for it to grow properly. With such careful nurturing over an extended period of time the plant is far more capable of withstanding the harsh winds, rains, and scorching sun. Likewise, a caring and knowledgeable educator would

insist upon an atmosphere conducive to the disciplining of that child to the glory of God. To reiterate, such a godly atmosphere would consist of a godly curriculum, a godly faculty and personnel, and a godly approach to dealing with sin in the world. Contrary to the contention as stated above, the child educated in a Christian school will be better able to live in the community at large full of its sinful influences. The child knows how to deal with his own sin and how to deal biblically with the sins of others. The Scripture demands that we be careful of our associations. We are told not to walk in the counsel of the wicked nor stand in the path of sinners (Ps. 1:1). We are to walk with wise men and not with fools (Prov. 13:20). We are not to be unequally yoked with unbelievers (2 Cor. 6:14–18).

10. Future Implications

There are tremendous future implications regarding our present educational structure in America. It should be obvious that the kind of culture we experience in generations to come largely depends upon the kind of education our children are presently receiving. The battle for tomorrow, indeed, is won in today's classroom. Each person must seriously ask himself, "What kind of people are we producing in our educational process?" The philosophical basis for education does shape the end result of the educational process. It always has; it always will. Therefore, the overriding question we must ask is: what is the final product of humanistic education as opposed to Christian education?

A. Humanism's Final Product

Humanism is a self-defeating system. The declining status of American public education is the direct result of the logical consequences of humanism. Modern educators are bewildered with the continuing decline of public education. A recent task force, the National Commission on Excellence in Public Education, submitted its findings to President Reagan on April 26, 1983. The Commission said, "The educational {44} foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity

that threatens our very future as a nation and a people.”¹⁹ The Commission went on to say, “Secondary school curricula have been diluted and diffused to such an extent that they no longer have a *central purpose*” (emphasis mine).²⁰ It found that twenty-three million adults are functionally illiterate; 13 percent of all teenagers are likewise. There has been a steady decline in SAT scores from 1963–1980.

What were its recommendations? 1) triple the requirements for high school graduation in math, science, and English; also, require a half year in computer science; 2) require at least one foreign language for graduation; 3) demand that colleges raise their entrance requirements; 4) either make the school day more effective, have a longer day (seven hours), or a longer school year (180–200 days); 5) more homework be assigned; 6) demand higher standards for teachers; and 7) increase the teachers’ salaries and give them an eleven-month contract.

How sad it is that secular educators cannot see the truth. All of the commission’s solutions are only bandaids or treatments of symptoms only. The real problem is a cancerous philosophical basis undergirding public education, which is killing it. Humanism is destined to fail simply because it is a *false* system, and given enough time such a system will break down into chaos. Humanism fails because it has an incorrect view of the universe, of man, and how man relates to the universe and to other human beings. If a system is contrary to reality it simply cannot survive. It would be like trying to fuel one’s automobile with water rather than gasoline. It will not work because the car is made to run on gasoline, not water. If Christianity is true, which it is, then man is not a product of pure chance, he is not basically good, he cannot solve his problems independently of a creator, and he is not morally free to do what he pleases. God made man to think and act in a particular fashion. Any digression from this created design is futile. No wonder our children, especially children from Christian homes, are often confused in public education. The child hears one thing at home and at the church and another at the

19. Goldberg and Harvey, “A Nation at Risk: The Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Public Education,” *Phi Delta Kappan*, 15.

20. *Ibid.*, 16.

public school. Moreover, humanism cannot give accurate answers to several key questions every young person *needs* to know: Who am I? Why am I here on earth?

What is the product of humanistic schooling? It is a student who often is disillusioned, possessing a fragmented view of reality based on a lie. In light of this fact the future isn't so rosy. The crisis in public education is but a microcosm of an ailing culture. Without a doubt, humanism {45} has had the greatest influence in transforming the American culture within the past fifty years. Our morally decadent, permissive, and lawless society is but the logical consequence of a humanist worldview. If one tells a man that he is but an animal who is essentially worthless, that he is not accountable to a supreme God, and that, morally speaking, he can do practically anything he wants, then it is not surprising he begins to act like an animal, treating others essentially as worthless. It is no surprise that respect for authority is at a low ebb. It is no surprise that one-in-two marriages end in divorce. It is no surprise human life is devalued to the extent that millions of innocent children are brutally murdered by abortion each year. Humanism has succeeded in creating a self-centered, monstrous society.

B. Christianity's Final Product

Whereas humanism is a self-defeating system leading to meaninglessness and to great atrocities, Christianity is a system leading to meaningfulness and order. It will succeed because Christianity is a worldview rooted in truth—that is—in an accurate understanding of the world, of man, and man's relationship to his God and to one another. Truth will always prevail in the final analysis because the all-sovereign God who controls human destiny is a God of truth. A Christian worldview correctly answers the student's questions of: who am I and what is my purpose in life? I am a creature of the Triune God, created in His image and accountable to Him. I am here on earth to bring glory to my creator and, in so doing, I will experience the fullness of life, because I am functioning in accord with my creator's design.

For those who are willing to look objectively at history, it is an inescapable conclusion that Christianity has been *the* guiding agent in the development of Western civilization. Robert Oppenheimer

(1904–1967) and Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) both stressed that modern science is heavily indebted to a Christian worldview. Whitehead said that because of God’s rationality, early scientists had an “inexpugnable belief that every detailed occurrence can be correlated with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner, exemplifying general principles. Without this belief the incredible labors of scientists would be without hope.”²¹ This is readily seen in such Christian scientists as Francis Bacon; Johannes Kepler, the father of modern astronomy; Robert Boyle, the father of modern chemistry; Sir Isaac Newton, the discoverer of gravity and inventor of calculus; Blaise Pascal, the inventor {46} of the barometer; Michael Farraday, the inventor of the electric transformer, motor, and generator; and James Clerk Maxwell, a physicist who extended Farraday’s research in magnetic fields and electricity. Maxwell was a contemporary of Charles Darwin who opposed Darwin’s theory. All of these men operated and thought from a Christian worldview.

Can one begin to imagine the impact on a future culture of a generation which is trained to *think* and *act* biblically in all areas of life? The child who is taught in a genuinely Christian way is taught to view all things through the spectacles of Scripture. The student is taught to do all things to God’s glory. In every area of human endeavor, he is to seek, reclaim, and restore a creation that is marred by sin. The student knows the difference between worldly wisdom (humanism) and godly wisdom wherever he meets it in the world, whether it be on T.V., in movies, in books, etc. The student learns that he is gifted with talents endowed by his creator, and he is helped to discover these areas and nurture them in order that one day he will utilize them in his task of exercising dominion over all creation. The student learns how to deal with problems from a biblical perspective and live in peace with others. Hence, the goal and hopeful product of a genuinely Christian education is a person who in his dominion task gives evidence of God’s values—namely by bringing captive all thoughts to the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. 10:3–5) and by manifesting the fruit of the Spirit in all endeavors (Gal. 5:24–26).

There is no doubt that today’s generation which is taught from a

21. Quoted in Tim LaHaye, *The Battle for the Mind*, 102.

Christian perspective can transform tomorrow's culture. After all, the blessing and power of God will be behind it. This generation could carry out the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19–20 in an unprecedented way. This generation could be a great factor in the spreading of the knowledge of the Lord over the earth as the waters cover the sea (Hab. 2:14). It can be the generation that reclaims the waste places lost to humanism. It can be the generation that sends humanism reeling in defeat on all sides.

To think any less lofty thoughts is to fail to see the grandeur of our Lord, Jesus Christ. He is Lord of lords and King of kings. Through him all things are indeed possible. To think any less lofty thoughts is to fail to see the truth of Matthew 16:18. The gates of Hell *cannot* prevail against the onslaught of Christ's church. They will crumble, for the faithful church will march on from victory to victory! The Christian school *can* be that agent of change; nay, it *must* be that agent, and with God's power it *will* be that agent. {47}

11. Concluding Remarks

One of the greatest problems, today, within the Christian community is the mistaken notion that life can be compartmentalized. Such thinking views church attendance as Christian training and public school education as training in the other areas of life, as if the two are not related. Our children for about three hours a week are being trained to think as a Christian at church while they spend about thirty hours being trained to think as humanists at the public school. One of the greatest hoaxes being perpetrated upon even the Christian sector is that education is *neutral*. Gordon Clark states the fallacy of such thinking:

Obviously the schools are not Christian. Just as obviously they are not neutral. The Scriptures say the fear of the Lord is the chief part of knowledge, but the schools, by omitting all reference to God, give the pupils the notion that knowledge can be had apart from God. They teach in effect that God has no control in history, that there is no plan of events that God is working out, that God does not foreordain whatsoever comes to pass ... the public schools are not, never were, can never be neutral. Neutrality is impossible. Let one ask what neutrality can possibly mean when God is involved. How does God judge the school system which says to Him, "O, God we neither deny nor assert thy existence, and O God, we

neither obey nor disobey thy commands, we are strictly neutral.” A school system which ignores God teaches its pupils to ignore God and this is not neutrality but the worse form of antagonism for it judges God to be unimportant and irrelevant in human affairs. It is atheism.²²

A Christian worldview and a humanist worldview are diametrically opposed. Their conflict with each other is inevitable. One either thinks and acts as a Christian or one thinks and acts as a humanist. There is no neutral stand (Matt. 12:30).

Our children are being educated all the time. The question is: what religion or worldview is being conveyed to them and being used to shape their lives? Is it the godless system of humanism or is it the God-glorifying truths of Scripture? The choice lies with the Christian parent as to which system will educate his child. As Christian parents we need to have a genuine Christian worldview which directs our whole approach to life. Our task as educators (remember that education is foremost a parental one) is to guide our children in their development of a Christian worldview. The godly parent sees the Christian school as an indispensable tool in the achieving of this goal. The Christian school exists because the Bible mandates the Christian parent to educate his {48} child *only* in the truth. For a Christian parent to think of education as a neutral endeavor is an outright denial of the Lordship of Jesus Christ (Col. 1:17; 2:2–3). And it is high time that Christian parents be exhorted to recognize Christ’s Lordship in the realm of education and act accordingly with respect to their child’s education. This alone constitutes the necessity for the Christian school.

22. Quoted in *The Basis for a Christian School*, 27.

THE ERRORS OF EGO-FULFILLMENT IN EDUCATION AND THE ROLE OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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Introduction

The dominant educational tendency of this twentieth century is that the education of children must aim at what one can call *the fullest development of the child's ego*. This apparently praiseworthy aim has become a universally accepted pedagogical cliché, undergirded, though it is, by errors which can be traced back at least to the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. But Rousseau himself belongs to a generous but excessively optimistic pedagogical tradition which goes back to Fénélon (1651–1715), Comenius (1592–1670), Rabelais (1494–1553), and Montaigne (1533–1592). The biblical pedagogical tradition of the Reformation is quite different. This tradition bears the stamp of that great teacher of Christian humanities, Mathurin Cordier,¹ of whom Calvin himself had been a student. Cordier was the teacher of many of the fine intellects produced by the Reformation.

In the first place, we will discuss a few of those false notions covered by this pedagogy of the development of the ego. Among the ideas we will examine are those of NON-DIRECTIVITY, of DISINHIBITION, of MORAL AND INTELLECTUAL

1. Mathurin Cordier (1479–1564).

NEUTRALITY, as well as that of RESPONSABILISATION. These are some of the key concepts of what is known as “modern pedagogy.”

Secondly, we will examine the main points of reference we laid {50} down in “The Fundamental Educational Charter” of the Christian Parent’s Association of the Canton of Vaud by which we attempted to counter the errors of the pedagogy of the development of the ego.

To conclude, we will attempt to formulate the reasons why truly Christian schools should be set up and on what doctrinal and intellectual foundation they should be established.

The Errors of the Development of the Ego in Education

One of the guiding principles inspiring what is known as “active pedagogy” currently practiced nowadays is that of NON-DIRECTIVITY. Whoever teaches in this way must, if he is to be consistent with the method, limit himself to allowing the children self-expression with unrestrained freedom. The educator assumes a passive role, and must merely draw out of his pupils the answers to their own questions.

To begin with, this principle of non-directivity, which is one of the basic principles of the so-called “reform” imposed on the content of public education in most of the West, is the very opposite of any kind of true teaching and education. The teacher, to be worthy of his vocation, can only LEAD his pupils TOWARDS knowledge until then unknown to them. How then can one, at the same time, lead one’s pupil to the acquisition of knowledge without leading or directing him? If the *ability* to reason is innate in everyone, the *content* of our thinking can only come from outside, from the one who leads the pupil towards the knowledge to be acquired, that is, from the teacher, from objective reality, or from the Creator. For example, for all normally constituted children the capacity for speech is an *a priori* intuitive ability. But the words he will use to speak will all have to come from outside his mind, from his parents, from his brothers and sisters, from his environment. This is where lies Descartes’s fundamental error, and that of the entire idealist tradition in philosophy, for he placed as a basis to

all knowledge the *a priori* notion of God as innate and intuitive in man. At the root of this theory is the idea that the child, like God, has all knowledge *within himself*. He must not, as a result, be led to knowledge outside himself—in philosophical terms *a posteriori* knowledge—but must draw all concepts out of his own being as the spider extracts the thread with which it weaves its own web out of its own body! It is obvious that whoever tries to apply these so-called non-directive methods consistently will in fact teach nothing to his pupils. He will end up by leading them towards evil [51] in the form of nothingness. This can be observed in a number of countries which have now fortunately given up this disastrous experiment. In the meantime, a generation of children has been sacrificed on the altar of a false and harmful theory. What right has the official state school to experiment on children in this manner? This is one major mistake embedded in this precious education through the development of the EGO.

If the SELF absolutely requires development, and if the heart of all true education lies in that accomplishment, then all that inhibits that development must be eliminated. Religious, moral, rational, and aesthetic inhibitions must be abolished so that the education, no, rather the fulfilment of the ego, can manifest itself fully in the child.

At the root of this educational approach is the idea that inhibitions, and more particularly *the external causes of these inhibitions* in the pupils, are bad in themselves. Obviously the corollary of this affirmation is Rousseau's idea that the CHILD IS NATURALLY GOOD IN HIMSELF, and that the morally inhibiting exterior constraints society imposes on him, cause all evil. As a result, in order that the child may fully and harmoniously develop all his "beneficent" potentialities, he must be given full FREEDOM. He must be freed from the socially inhibiting restraints usually exercised by the teacher, the parents, or society, for all good naturally resides in himself. For this reason we must speak of a disinhibiting education, an education which *liberates* the child, which in fact brings him *salvation*. For this is no longer a modest attempt to educate the child but a programme aiming at the total development of man. This is nothing less than a new HUMANIST RELIGION.

This pedagogical choice, if followed consistently, implies that the

teacher should have as little *direct moral influence* as possible on the child. In addition, the pupils must be set free from the inhibiting moral influence of their parents. In this perspective, the parents' influence is considered to be a harmful manifestation of the fixed ethical values which they seek to inculcate in their children. This is where the key notion of an indispensable moral NEUTRALITY emerges. This ethical neutrality is essential to the whole pedagogy aiming at the development of the child's personality.

The concept that the school must be "neutral" is an anachronistic echo of the positivist ideology of the secularist humanism of the nineteenth century. One of the soundest acquisitions of recent thinking on methodology is the realization that this neutrality is simply not possible. Any {52} teaching, any kind of discourse, all science necessarily implies specific values. Thus, in order to respect the religious, moral, and political values of all parents, as it pretends to do, the public school in a pluralist society such as ours, ends up by disregarding all values. This subtraction of all parental values leads inevitably to moral, pedagogical, and spiritual NIHILISM. The absence of all moral guidance is a consequence of this neutral stance and certainly a major cause of the spiritual, moral, and political confusion prevalent among so many young people, adults who have gone through this system, and, of course, among so many of the teachers who have practiced such a debilitating pedagogy. It is frightening to realize that in this country, Switzerland, suicide has become the most frequent cause of death amongst our young people. On the other hand, if teachers have to abandon all personal convictions when going into the classroom, it is obvious that they will be incapable of imparting to their pupils those strong convictions which necessarily found true intelligence and form the backbone of all truly human living.

Obviously when one does away with the ethical and spiritual dimension of education—remember that this is in order to give free rein to the self-expression of the pupil—the result is the depersonalisation of the relationships in the classroom. A collective dynamic develops similar to that existing between the psychoanalyst and his patient. There must be complete freedom of expression, for only free expression, that is, with no moral restrictions, can heal. According to the "liberating" educationalists, the children must be cured of the harmful, inhibiting influence

of their parents, their teachers, and of the “bourgeois” society in which they live. According to Freud, any moral inhibition causes neurosis and is an obstacle to the true fulfillment of the EGO. Thus are opened the floodgates of moral anarchy, revolution, and totalitarian repression.

But one may ask: is this Rousseauist and Freudian vision of man compatible with human nature as we observe it, or with the revelation of true Christianity, which alone can give meaning to Creation?

As we watch any small child we cannot but observe his strong egocentric tendencies. His parents, brothers and sisters, young friends, classmates, teachers, in fact all the hard realities EXTERNAL to himself, both natural and social, must teach him that there are rules, physical and moral laws, that must be kept if he is to live with his fellows in a way which is fruitful and which is pleasing to God. In addition, the teaching of the historical Christian faith enables us to understand why this is so. For Scripture states that since the Fall, man is a sinner and, if left to himself, is {53} naturally prone to evil. It follows that if we allow children complete freedom of expression in any sphere, the worst latent ideas and impulses will inevitably also find expression. This the Bible calls the freedom to follow the impulses of the *flesh*. The Scriptures also teach us that the diverse authorities established by God in the family, the school, society, and in the State all exist in order to repress evil, to check the natural tendency of man to follow his worst impulses and to curb the unhealthy development of the carnal ego. Thus the sight of a policeman puts a brake on our tendency to exceed the speed limit. With regard to our children, parental and school authorities have a beneficent, restrictive effect on their natural impulse to evil. On the other hand, we know that evil cannot be removed by the law, by education, or by the disciplinary actions of the authorities set up by God. Only the Lord Jesus Christ, by the atonement He made once and for all for sin at Golgotha in time and in history, can remove our sin and through the power of His resurrection enable us to obey His will, to fulfill His law.

It is affirmed that the public school by its policy of at all costs maintaining a strictly neutral posture, never pointing out, recommending, or counseling the pupils to follow any specific

line of behaviour whatever, would succeed in giving the children a sense of *personal responsibility*. We have here a new aspect of the pedagogy of the child's self-realization. The children are made to believe that the responsible being is he who assumes his responsibility only with regard to himself. This responsibility is defined as the quest for the highest possible development of one's own personality. Such a program of self-realization clearly leaves little room for those limits to our self-love which are the absolute love we owe God and the duty we owe our neighbor to love him as ourselves.

To begin with, ethically we always stand either for good or for evil. If we pretend to be neutral, everyone being free to do what suits him best, we in fact place good and evil on the same plane, thus abolishing all absolute moral distinctions. We thus create a greater confusion than if we openly, consciously, and cynically advocated evil. It is clear that this pretended ethical neutrality hides a very definite code of values. But this ethical code into which our non-directive educationalists wish to initiate our children is in fact so contrary to Christian ethics and to plain common sense that it dare not show itself for what it is. Indeed our conscience is not free, as we often pretend. We are not simply responsible to our own impulses, and our moral action does not have as its aim [54] simply our fullest self-development. In fact, the human conscience is governed by an unchanging law, God's law, a judicial, moral, and spiritual system applicable to all aspects of personal and social living. Man's responsibility uniquely directed to his own impulses is no doubt an excellent definition of blatant irresponsibility. No, man is firstly responsible towards God, then towards his fellow men, and finally towards the creation itself. The criteria establishing the limits to this responsibility are inalterably fixed in the divine law. This law faithfully reflects God's precise ethical thought, His holiness, and the order of His creation.

This process of uninhibiting children, or rather to put it more plainly, of perverting them, put forward by those pedagogues who advocate the methods we have examined which pretend to develop the ego of their pupils, in no way liberates them. It rather abandons them to their own anarchical instincts. In a class left "free" in this way, the dominating influence will inevitably be that of the strongest, the worst, the most anarchical elements. So the

freedom advocated by these pedagogues leaves the children free to do evil rather than to do good.

The Philosophical and Pedagogical Basis of a Christian School

In the same way as an explicit Confession of Faith is essential to the theology and to the life of the Church, an undertaking such as Christian education, threatened as it is on every side by practical and theoretical errors, requires a declaration of Christian educational principles. Such a formulation of precise Christian pedagogical principles is an essential weapon in the struggle in which we are engaged to restore a truly Christian conception of education. Thus, when in the summer of 1979 we considered founding in the Canton of Vaud, here in Switzerland, a Christian Parents' Association, one of our first preoccupations was to define a number of Christian pedagogical principles which would answer the dangers of the hour. After much discussion and various consultations, *The Fundamental Educational Charter* was adopted as the doctrinal base of our association. We will briefly examine its eight chapters.

The first chapter deals with the purpose of any education worthy of the name and, more precisely, with the specific purpose of a truly Christian education.

We consider the final purpose of all education to be to teach children to know God, to glorify Him, and to give Him the worship and honor that are His due.^[55]

Our second chapter answers the subjectivism of modern philosophical idealism which denies the very possibility of attaining the truth in any field of human enquiry. The relativism of this evolutionary dialectics penetrates into every aspect of modern thought and has, of course, infiltrated the churches. This intellectual relativism which so easily conditions us prevents our seeing the necessary relation between the visible and the invisible worlds, between what is natural and the supernatural, between the cosmos and its Almighty Creator and Sustainer. Since Descartes, and even more so since Kant and Hegel, philosophical idealism, the epistemological base of our present humanism, rejects the very possibility of continuity between the general revelation of

God in nature and His particular revelation in the Scriptures. Further, through a general and unconscious adoption of Hegelian dialectics, the logical capacity of human thought to define truth and falsehood, good and evil, in precise, stable concepts has been largely undermined in our Western culture. Those who submit to this perverse method render themselves incapable of attaining truth in any domain whatever. In order to redress such errors we affirm,

The universe and all it contains being the handiwork of the Creator, it follows that all true knowledge must be founded in God's Revelation, both general and special, and must respect the stable order of created reality.

This stable order is attacked from all sides by the prevalent epistemological and moral relativism. Biological evolutionism—contrary to the discipline of the experimental method—mathematical relativism introduced in school by the so-called “new-math,” grammatical anarchy, “new-French” which replaces the stable structure of formal grammar by a kind of linguistic existentialism, history without dates and therefore formless and meaningless, and easily manipulated, all sorts of inept pedagogical theories, all these glaringly demonstrate the disastrous effects of a subjectivism which rejects all truth and all belief in an ordered creation. This irrational “reasoning” which basically denies all meaning to reality, abandons both young and old to a completely absurd universe. Such an education sends out our young people on a shoreless sea, with neither compass nor polestar, to be tossed about in every direction by the changing fashions of thought.

The separation between the spiritual realm and the material world leads to an excessive intellectualization of education and to a cleavage between the training of the mind and moral discipline. The door is thus {56} opened to what Pascal called “Science without Conscience,” producing an entirely individualistic and variable conscience apt to consider such evils as abortion, euthanasia and test-tube babies to be good. The Kantian moral imperative, being finally entirely subjective, could not have ever affirmed as did Luther at Worms, “*My conscience is captive to God's Word.*” In this perspective we affirm,

As a result, in the education of our youth, the acquisition of

knowledge must not be separated from moral and spiritual growth. To ignore this is dangerous.

The modern State abandons more and more the functions of justice, police, and national defense entrusted to it by God, to encroach on the responsibilities of the individual exercised in the context of those natural, or creational institutions, such as the family, the school, the business enterprise, the Church, and all the free associations created by men. In our time the family, which without doubt is the keystone of any healthy society, is under increasing attack. Let us take up two examples among many others. The proposed new Swiss matrimonial law-code² places the family under the tutelage of the State by doing away with the legal function of the husband as head of the family. The idea is to bring about total equality between men and women. This equality implies the impossibility of resolving within the family any disagreements between husband and wife. In consequence, the judge is to become the true head of the family, having as his task the arbitration of any difference between husband and wife. Another aspect of this tendency of the State to interfere in the life of families is to be found in the sexual education given to practically all children in our state schools. This is a particularly glaring intrusion of the State in a domain which should be the exclusive reserve of the parents and of those to whom the parents entrust such a delicate responsibility. God's law confirms the creational right of parents to educate their children. They can, however, delegate this duty to an institution of their choice. Contrary to what is generally believed, the State has no intrinsic right whatever to educate children. By undermining the family, the State weakens the healthy cells of a society and encourages the development of cancerous growths: outright individualism and bureaucracy. In these we find the symmetrical temptations of antinomian liberalism and collectivistic socialism. To counter such tendencies we affirm:

The responsibility for the education of children rests on the parents' {57} shoulders. It is only by the parents' delegation of their responsibility and authority that this becomes the task of educational institutions. The rights and duties of parents with regard to their children have priority over those of the State.

2. Accepted by popular referendum the 22nd September 1985.

Myths of all kinds, such as non-directive education, total equality of ability, dialogue, child-centered education, self-creativity, the innate innocence of the child corrupted by social institutions (and especially by his family), etc., all seriously hinder the normal process of learning. Our reaction to these myths is to affirm:

All true education can only rest on the acceptance of a hierarchy, the teacher introducing the children into the domains with which he is familiar. The teacher, as a result, must be vested with specific authority over his pupils. He will thus be able to communicate knowledge, up till then unknown to them, to those placed under his authority. A clear system of discipline is vital for teaching to bear fruit.

One of the main reasons why children learn less and less in school is that these elementary principles are ignored or rejected. These principles have their origin not only in the teachings of the Bible, but also in the traditional common sense of mankind.

How often in the course of history has it been observed that intellectuals in their arrogance have pretended that they had, all of a sudden, discovered the foundations of knowledge, the new philosophers' stone. To give greater credit to their suppositions, they all too often did all they could to discredit their predecessors. The scorn with which many regard the study of history, as well as the general contempt we find today for any living tradition, bears witness to this unhealthy attitude. A classical example is to be seen in the self-boosting characteristic of the *Pléiade* poetical movement in sixteenth-century France. Ronsard and his colleagues have thereby caused the whole French tradition of literary criticism—with a few rare exceptions—to believe that before the advent of this clique of poets the Muses had altogether forsaken France. We are, however, beginning to recognize the great wealth of the Christian poetry of the Middle Ages. But this was the very tradition abandoned by the poets of the Renaissance in favor of a return to the pagan classicism of antiquity. In the sixteenth century the Christian medieval poetic tradition was renewed in a wonderful way by the poetry of the Reformation. The period that goes from 1540 to 1640 represents a century of great Protestant poetry in France, with the dominating figure of Agrippa d'Aubigné (1552–1630), ancestor of the Southern theologian [58] Robert L.

Dabney. But the Plž•ade and its successors completely stifled this tradition, and the effects of this literary disinformation are still with us today. Our modern educational reformers have adopted the same methods of slandering their forerunners to gain credence for their ideas. So, according to the protagonists of the so-called new-French, all grammar before this present blessed era was entirely unsatisfactory. The same applies to all the present pedagogical innovations. This may help to explain the purpose of our sixth chapter:

Any kind of educational perspective which seeks to innovate by wiping clean the slate of the past—whether it be in the teaching of the exact Sciences, that of History, or of Languages—damages a genuine instruction. The transmission of knowledge, a precious inheritance handed us by our forebears, must necessarily constantly be corrected in conformity to the truth and to the respect we owe to created reality. The desire to abolish—rather than correct—the spiritual, moral, and intellectual achievements of our forebears results in a misunderstanding of reality and in an uprooting. No constructive future is possible without the base of tradition.

Our precursors in the Middle Ages were more modest than our latter-day reformers who do not hesitate to sweep away all previous educational practices. The men of the Middle Ages, when they said that they could see further than their predecessors, added that this was only because they sat on the shoulders of their forebears!

Our charter also reacts against the unhealthy notion that children are mere abstractions, without specific qualities or genders and unrelated to any kind of social, historical, cultural, or religious context. Children are thus considered to be interchangeable entities, mere cyphers, robots. This is an education for a society envisaged on the pattern of the assembly-line, with its fragmented, discontinuous work and its radical impersonalism. But is such the real aim of education? Must true education lead to that soulless industrial society so well described by the Swiss novelist, C.F. Landry, in his novel *Bord du monde*?

There honesty had ceased to exist, even with regard to the dead. This was because the living had led wasted lives with the meaningless haste of a newspaper, read today and meaningless tomorrow. In a world where there were no graves why should there be a future? and what sense could there be for the notions of responsibility or

morality?³

Do we want that kind of senseless life for our children, a life without rhyme or reason and above all without flavour? The Christian life is of a different measure. Diversity and inequality are the texture of God's creation. {159} Roger Barilier puts this very well:

Equality does not exist in this world. Some mountains are higher than others, some regions more attractive, climates are either warmer or colder. And among the thousands of millions of men who have peopled our planet, no two have been identical. This is the way things are. And the Bible declares that God Himself is at the origin of this inequality. According to one of Jesus' parables, one man received five talents, another two and a third only one. What flagrant inequality!⁴

Why should the stupid, simplified ideas of men reduce to such a degree the rich, beautiful, and varied diversity of God's creation to such an ideological monotony? This is the reason why in our seventh chapter we say:

Instruction must be of such a nature as to respect the specific intellectual and moral development and the particular qualities of those who are taught. Boys and girls should receive a partially differentiated education. This differentiation should take into account their specific natures. The teaching given must be adapted to the age, to the capacity, and to the rate of assimilation of the children. It is absurd, for example, to try to introduce small children to an abstract kind of reasoning proper only to fully developed minds, or to impose indiscriminately a purely intellectual education on all pupils. The education of children should also be planned in such a manner as to lead to the practical initiation of young people into the world of work of their particular society. The quality and the social life of the school and its size have a decisive influence on the standards of the school and on the behaviour of the pupils. Schools of an excessive size are detrimental to the individual pupil's sense of personal and social significance.

To conclude, a truly Christian school cannot merely cover up a humanist curriculum with a kind of superficial Christian

3. C.F. Landry, *Bord du monde* (Lausanne: Editions Rencontre, 1970), 136–37.

4. Roger Barilier, "Egalité et Justice," *Nouvelle Revue de Lausanne* 10, March 1984.

“influence.” Such schizophrenia of Christian piety married to pagan intelligence has already caused far too much damage to the cause of the Lord Jesus Christ. Ways of thinking independent of God’s thoughts as revealed to us in the Bible are nothing else but idols. We cannot afford to waste our time building Christian schools in order to house our intellectual idols. That is why we affirm in the eighth and last chapter of our charter:

It is of the greatest importance that a curriculum applied to all aspects of the school program be worked out so that the teaching given in Christian schools corresponds systematically to the Christian aim of education. This school program should also take into account man’s increasing knowledge of the whole created order. It is also our duty to do all we can to see that the Christian vision of education defined above should begin anew to influence {60} the public education of the region in which we live.

What Kind of Christian School?⁵

Nowhere does the Bible teach that the task of educating children is the task of the State. The Scriptures place this responsibility squarely on the shoulders of the parents who will be answerable to God for the education they have given to their children. *The aim of the Christian school is simply to help the parents to accomplish this task.* Moses is quite clear on the parents’ duty in this respect:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. (Deut. 6:4–9)

The following commandment is given to the children:

Listen, my son, to your father’s instruction and do not forsake your mother’s teaching. They will be a garland to grace your head and a chain to adorn your neck.” (Prov. 1:8)

5. This section owes much to the following study by Rev. C. K. Cummings: “Parents,” in the collective work, *The Purpose of a Christ-centered Education* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1979).

And the parents are told:

Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it. (Prov. 22:6)

These two aspects to the teaching of the Proverbs are explicitly taken up by that of the Apostles:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth." Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. (Eph. 6:1-4)

These passages show quite clearly that it is the task of Christian parents to give their children an education centered on the knowledge of God and to the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is not the secular, and often anti-Christian, teaching of our State school systems that will accomplish this task for us. Those private schools which follow the curriculum of the secular educational systems, and which are thus imbued with the pedagogical heresies we have examined, hardly do any better.

Christian parents anxious to educate their children in the fear of the Lord must join forces with other Christian parents in order to give their children a truly Christian education. The aim of such a school and the task of the Christian teachers it employs is to help parents accomplish their God-given educational task. At heart the Christian school is nothing else than the educational extension of the Christian family. Such a school must be explicitly regulated by the parents themselves, who must be responsible as to what kind of teaching is to be given to their children. Thus, in this field, the responsibility is that of the parents prior to that of the Church. In this perspective the teacher is the parents' delegate with regard to their children. He must, as a result, exercise the parents' authority in the classroom, and the parents must inculcate in their children the same respect and obedience towards the teacher as they expect from the children in the home. However, if the Christian school must fulfill those educational tasks that the family cannot assume, it must never supplant the family. {61}

The second fundamental aim of the Christian school is to help parents to carry out their God-given duty to bring their children to

know God and to follow Jesus Christ. This, of course, is primarily the duty of the family and of the Church, but the Christian school must, in its own way, also pursue this aim.

Many Christian parents imagine that the chief aim of such a school is to protect their children from evil influences and from the immorality that so often prevail in State schools. But in fact, all Christian children are inevitably sinners, and it is not a kind of moral segregation from other sinners that will free them from their sins. The only sure protection from sin is a heart renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God.

Others parents expect from a Christian school that it should, above all, give their children a first-class education. All Christian schools should no doubt aim at excellence in all that they undertake. An evident fruit of our Christian dedication should be to do all to the glory of God. The Christian teacher should strive for quality, as much in the content of his teaching, as in the methods he uses. The pupil must also be motivated to do his best in all his school work. But the most important help the Christian school can give does not lie in this sphere.

The most important thing which the Christian school can give the child is the systematic teaching of a Christian world and life view. It is thus necessary to rethink all aspects of science and of education in the light of Christian truth. The Christian teacher helps the children to {62} become like Christ by imparting to them the mind of Christ on all aspects of His creation. They are thus taught to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. What must be done here is to think through Christ's very thoughts after Him on all matters rather than to follow the humanist current which abandons itself to a futile intellectual autonomy. Such a rational liberation from the very concepts of the Word of God leads to systems of thought fundamentally inadequate to the nature of the universe. Such an education must provide pupils with a knowledge of the universe in conformity with its created order. Thus God's Word illuminates the study of a universe created and sustained by Jesus Christ.

For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen. (Rom. 11:36)

After having taught the children to consider all things from

God's point of view as revealed in the Bible, they will be taught that everything must be done for the honor and the glory of God.

You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 7:20)

The Christian must regain for God all aspects of human activity and work to restore a universe corrupted by man's sin and to renew a humanity ruined by the Fall.

What an immense benefit such an education will be, not only to the child's mind but to his very life itself! Such a perspective gives meaning and purpose to life, for it is in Christ that

all things hold together. (Col. 1:17)

The Christian view of the world gives us the key to the meaning of life. In Christ we have the answers to those fundamental questions that have never ceased to trouble men: Where do we come from? Why are we born? Where are we going? Man's wisdom cannot answer such questions.

A Christian school is also the source of great moral blessings for its pupils. Children need to be taught the difference between truth and falsehood, between good and evil. They must then be expected to hold to the truth and do what is good. But left to themselves children cannot distinguish with certainty between truth and error, between good and evil. Even when they do know the difference they do not naturally choose to do what is good. In a Christian school there is an unchangeable and authoritative standard separating good from evil. {163} This standard is the Law of God. This moral law must be systematically taught and applied to all areas of human behaviour, private or public. The teacher, like anyone exercising authority, holds his authority from God (Rom. 13). Because his acts are thus backed by God, he can exercise a healthy and effective discipline in the classroom. This gives the child a sense of security and creates an atmosphere congenial to learning. The behaviour of the Christian teacher in the classroom corresponds to the values of the parents of his pupils. This ethical, psychological, and spiritual continuity helps to establish in the child a strong moral fiber and a firmness of character which will accompany him throughout his life.

In conclusion, it must be said that an education centered on the

Lord Jesus Christ is a source of uncountable blessings for the pupils. The very fact of living in daily contact with a teacher who walks with God and seeks to reflect Christ, is in itself a great blessing for the child. Children are deeply marked by the example of those who teach them. This is so to a greater degree when the teacher is a Christian. Children may forget what they have been taught, but the influence on a young life of a teacher who lives in the blessed presence of God can never be erased. The loving attention of the teacher for the child, his kind words of encouragement and firm but just discipline, are all used by the Holy Spirit to form Christ in a young heart. If that were the only benefit, by itself it would amply justify the existence of a Christian school. Such blessings are worthy of the greatest sacrifices.

May God, in His mercy by His Spirit, convince many Christians everywhere in our countries, of the urgency of this problem. May they come together and accept the cost which the establishment of such schools inevitably implies so that the Christian education of our children become a reality. May God grant the necessary faith, zeal and wisdom for the founding of such schools which our vocation as Christian parents, and the wickedness of the times, render so necessary.

The Fundamental Educational Charter⁶

1. We consider the final purpose of all education to be to teach children to know God, to glorify Him, and to give Him the worship and honor that are His due. {64}
2. The universe and all it contains being the handiwork of the Creator, it follows that all true knowledge must be founded in God's Revelation, both general and special, and must respect the stable order of created reality.
3. As a result, in the education of our youth, the acquisition of knowledge must not be separated from moral and spiritual growth. To ignore this is dangerous.
4. The responsibility for the education of children rests on the parents' shoulders. It is only by the parents' delegation

6. Adapted into English from the *Charte fondamentale de l'enseignement* of the Christian Parents' Association of the Canton of Vaud in Lausanne.

of their responsibility and authority that this becomes the task of educational institutions. The rights and duties of parents with regard to their children have priority over those of the state.

5. All true education can only rest on the acceptance of a hierarchy: the teacher introducing the children into the domains with which he is familiar. The teacher, as a result, must be vested with specific authority over his pupils. He will thus be able to communicate knowledge, up till then unknown to them, to those placed under his authority. A clear system of discipline is vital for teaching to bear fruit.
6. Any kind of educational perspective which seeks to innovate by wiping clean the slate of the past—whether it be in the teaching of the exact Sciences, that of History, or of Languages—damages genuine instruction. The transmission of knowledge, a precious inheritance handed to us by our forebears, must necessarily constantly be corrected in conformity to the truth and to the respect we owe to created reality. The desire to abolish—rather than correct—the spiritual, moral, and intellectual achievements of our forebears results in a misunderstanding of reality and in an uprooting. No constructive future is possible without the base of tradition.
7. Instruction must be of such a nature as to respect the specific intellectual and moral development and the particular qualities of those who are taught. Boys and girls should receive a partially differentiated education. This differentiation should take into account their specific natures. The teaching given must be adapted to the age, to the capacity, and to the rate of assimilation of the children. It is absurd, for example, to try [\[65\]](#) to introduce small children to an abstract kind of reasoning proper only to fully developed minds, or to impose indiscriminately a purely intellectual education on all pupils. The education of children should also be planned in such a manner as to lead to the practical initiation of young people into the world of work of their particular society. The quality and the social life of the school and its size have a decisive influence on the standards of the school and on the

behaviour of the pupils. Schools of an excessive size are detrimental to the individual pupil's sense of personal and social significance.

8. It is of the greatest importance that a curriculum applied to all aspects of the school program be worked out so that the teaching given in Christian schools corresponds systematically to the Christian aim of education. This school program should also take into account man's increasing knowledge of the whole of the created order. It is also our duty to do all we can to see that the Christian vision of education defined above should begin anew to influence the public education of the region in which we live.

EDUCATION: TODAY'S CRISIS AND DILEMMA

R. J. Rushdoony

Most people today recognize that statist education is in crisis. Across the country, the growing suspicion and even bitterness directed against the schools comes from a number of areas. The Christian community which is involved in Christian schools and home schooling is not alone in its opposition to statist education. Many liberal and radical critics, while eager to preserve and reform state schools, are strongly critical of the existing establishment. One such man, writing of the groups with an invested interest in statist education, says:

... They claim an ideological neutrality, but this is not an honest claim. Their ideology is self-perpetuation. The consequence, in terms of dry and jargon-ridden verbiage, is worse than mere futility. It is a decorated impotence that chokes off all imaginative fury, all bravado, and all sense of an imperative to strong mandated deeds.

The teachers' unions suffer from another inhibition. If they concede the true size of the problem, how can they avoid the risk that this may be imputed to their failure?¹

This same critic, Jonathan Kozol, states that twenty-one million American adults are functionally illiterate, and an additional thirty-one million are barely literate or barely functionally literate (according to some), or, in Kozol's words, "read only at a level which is less than equal to the full survival needs of our society." A variety of authorities give like statistics. These sixty million adults are more than one-third of the entire American adult population, {67} and the majority are "white, native-born Americans." Proportionately,

1. Jonathan Kozol, *Illiterate America* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1985), 49.

however, blacks and Hispanics are worse off. "Sixteen percent of white adults, 44 percent of blacks, and 16 percent of Hispanic citizens are functional or marginal illiterates. The functional illiteracy of black 17 year olds is 47 percent and it's expected to be 10 percent by 1990."²

There are some who believe, and Kozol tends to this view, that the situation in the United States with respect to literacy has always been bad. Others hold that our present rate of illiteracy is the highest in our history.

Certainly there have been problems in the past. In our earlier years, most slaves were probably illiterate, and the great numbers of immigrants were unlettered in English. Night-schools taught immigrants to speak, read, and write English, and, for generations, they were readily absorbed into American life. Despite segregation, black schools did an able job educating blacks, according to the Coleman Report; black and white illiteracy has risen in the past twenty-five years.

This is not all. Illiteracy in the past was on the margins of society, i.e., in isolated rural areas or within the slums. Today we see the schools in the wealthier parts of cities also turning out functional illiterates. Illiteracy is no longer marginal to our society but central to it.

Herbert Hoover was the last president (or vice president) to write his own speeches. One can say with much merit that modern campaigning makes speech-writers sometimes a necessity. On the other hand, one speech-writer has written that the vice president he worked for (as governor and presidential candidate) required speeches on a simple, basic English level in order to be able to deliver them. Another man, a presidential candidate, "wrote" an influential book in which the word "conscience" appeared in the title and to which he merely contributed his name as author; the rest was written by a fine Christian scholar.

In brief, on all levels of society, literacy is poor, and illiteracy is high. Book publishing is beginning to suffer the loss of an audience; newspapers have fewer readers, and the level of culture has fallen dramatically.

Never before in history have we had less need for unskilled labor,

2. *Ibid.*, 4.

and never before have we had more of it. Our modern technological society requires an increasingly more informed and literate labor force, and we are less able to provide it. It would take a foolhardy man to say that we do not have a crisis in education, or that it is to a large degree a product of the educational establishment. {68}

It is our position that this crisis is a logical result of two forces governing education today: the state, and humanism.

The early promoters of state control of education had a slogan, "It costs less money to build school-houses than jails." To this Robert L. Dabney in 1876 responded, "But what if it turns out that the state's expenditure in school-houses is one of the things which necessitates the expenditure in jails?"³ In 1886, Zach Montgomery, in *The School Question*, provided evidence that the growth of state control of schools was marked by an increase in delinquency and crime. Is this a coincidence, or is there some essential connection?

Reynolds, in his study of criminality, notes, "The family, schools, and churches are the main institutions for value formation."⁴ All three, Reynolds holds, are failing. However, this was not true in Dabney's day, nor in Montgomery's; family and church both had a little more strength then. Could it be that state control of education not only undermined the school but also undercut the authority of the family and the church?

Who should control education? Historically, we have seen church and state contend for that power. Dabney held that the Christian position should be parental control, the family as the determining power. The mistake in control by the church is that education becomes ecclesiastical and institutional. State control means politicization and secularization. Dabney rejected the concept of secularized education as both impossible and inadmissible, since education is inescapably a religious discipline.⁵ All education is the transmission of the values and skills of a culture to its children, and this is a religious task.

Dabney saw also the premise of communism in taxing all people

3. Robert L. Dabney, *Discussions* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, [1897], 1979), 195.

4. Morgan O. Reynolds, *Crime By Choice: An Economic Analysis* (Dallas, TX: Fisher Institute, 1985), 170.

5. Dabney, *Discussions*, 225–47.

to provide schools for some. This was a radical innovation which did not exist under the previous common-school system.⁶

But this is not all. As Dabney wrote in 1897, "A state religion [is] logically involved in state education."⁷ Because education is the importation of values, it is inescapably religious, because values are religiously determined.

Thus, the Catholic Church, in the early days of state schools in the United States, opposed them strongly as a Protestant establishment. This they were, in a vaguely Unitarian sense. While individual teachers commonly were evangelical Protestants, the philosophers and determiners of statism education were Unitarians and humanists, as I have shown in *The Messianic Character of American Education*. Over the generations, what Horace Mann and his associates worked for has been [69] attained, a school system stripped of Christianity and made a humanistic religious establishment.

Whether Catholic, Protestant, Unitarian, or humanist, the establishment of religion by means of the state control of education is morally and legally wrong. Humanists are rightly critical of earlier attempts in Western history by one church or another to impose their church upon others. Such criticism, however, is hypocritical, given the insistence by such critics on the state control of education, and the use of statist coercion against parents, students, and independent Christian schools.

It is significant, moreover, that the courts, if they are willing to consider favorably the defense of Christian and home schools, limit their perspective to two things, the free exercise of religion, and nonestablishment in the sense of no control over the religious character of such a school. What the courts refuse to consider is the fact that the state schools are in fact establishments of religion. This has been very extensively documented again and again.

I myself have used at times on the witness stand an anthology of essays, a collection used in training teachers, entitled *Humanistic Education Sourcebook*. One of the essays, by Stephen N. Stivers, L. Gerald Buchan, C. Robert Dettloff, and Donald C. Orlich, is

6. *Ibid.*, 248–80.

7. Robert L. Dabney, *The Practical Philosophy* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, [1897] 1987), 339.

entitled, "Humanism: Capstone of an Educated Person."⁸ This title is revealing. For our statist educators, a truly educated person is a humanist. Hence, Christian schooling cannot produce a truly educated person by definition! At the same time, our established humanist schools are in crisis. They have created a population in which more than a third of all adults are illiterate or functionally illiterate. In all past illiteracy, the illiterates were outside the school system: they were slaves and immigrants. Now they are a product of the state school system. As a result, the state school's main defense is to abuse its critics and to prosecute its rivals.

In facing this crisis, we must recognize *first* of all that no civil government can be neutral with respect to religion. Every system of laws is an establishment of a code of morals; it declares certain acts to be wrong and punishable. Morality is an essential branch of theology, an aspect of religion, so that every legal system is an establishment of religion. We need to oppose the establishment of a *church*, but we cannot escape the establishment of a religion. A humanistic state will establish humanistic laws and institutions.

Second, we need to restudy Scripture. The Bible is an anti-statist book. It sees man's hope in regeneration, not in revolution nor in the {70} control and use of the state to impose its order on others. I believe it was Albert Jay Nock who observed many years ago that the Bible gives us government, not statism. We have in Scripture an essentially libertarian emphasis which depends on the redeemed man and his dominion work, not on ecclesiastical nor on state power. This means we must develop and extend what is wrongly called the private sector, the area where dominion man functions to reorder society. If we do not act in the spheres of health, education, and welfare, once historic Christian spheres of action, we cannot blame the state for assuming the responsibility.

Third, we are in a battle to regain our Christian freedoms. This battle must be waged in and out of the courts, patiently, consistently, and unremittingly. "The earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Ps. 24:1). We cannot surrender what belongs to the Lord to His enemies, nor can we blame only the state, because Christians have too often

8. Donald A. Read and Sidney B. Simon, eds., *Humanistic Education Sourcebook* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 363ff.

shrugged off and abandoned their responsibilities. We have thus a task of reclamation, restoration, and dominion ahead of us, and we had better get to it.

2.
*BIBLICAL
STUDIES*

TITHING: A BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

Rev. Douglas Erlandson, Ph.D.

Preface

The following is not intended to be a complete discussion of tithing. Its purpose is to provide the pastor and layman with a brief but adequate biblical defense of the tithe. My own purpose in writing this monograph was to provide my congregation and myself with a “position paper” on the subject of tithing and to provide an outline in my own thinking for a series of sermons on the issue. Others have written lengthier, more scholarly defenses of the tithe. For the reader interested in pursuing the matter in more detail, I would heartily recommend *Tithing and Dominion*, coauthored by Rousas Rushdoony and Edward A. Powell. A more popular defense of some merit (though I reject certain of its secondary conclusions which come from its refusal to see the full significance of God’s Law as published in the Old Testament) is *Tithing: A Call to Serious, Biblical Giving*, by R. T. Kendall.

I am sure that certain discerning readers will observe a commitment to theonomy in my thinking. I readily accept this label, if, by this, it is understood that a theonomist is one who believes that the entire Law of God as revealed to man in Scripture possesses eternal validity, that Christ came to establish and not to abolish the Law, that all of God’s Law is as binding on Christians today as it was on the saints of the Old Testament, and that whatever of that Law is not part of the ceremonies that foreshadowed the work done once for all in Christ (e.g., the sacrifices, [72] the temple services, and the religious feasts) and thereby were fulfilled in Christ, is to be faithfully adhered to today. Therefore, I unashamedly acknowledge my debt to Rushdoony,

particularly his *Institutes of Biblical Law*, and Greg Bahnsen, especially his *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*.

Nevertheless, my overall argument and my general conclusions do not depend on accepting theonomy. As I show in the body of this monograph, the paying of the tithe predates the “Mosaic Law,” since Abraham paid the tithe to Melchizedek (whom Scripture declares to be a type of Christ, the Great Head of the Church!), and it was explicitly *reaffirmed* by Christ and very likely by St. Paul as well. So, all but the most intransigent of antinomians ought to be convinced that the Christian has a duty to pay the tithe. On the other hand, some of the specifics of my reasoning and my conclusions will appear most convincing to those who share my theonomic leanings.

My espousal of the rejoicing tithe and the third-year tithe in addition to the first tithe (i.e., the Levitical, or social, tithe) will be new to many unacquainted with the writings of contemporary theonomists. Many convinced tithers have heard only of one tithe and believe that the Christian’s obligation to God is fulfilled when he has returned one-tenth of his income to the “Lord’s work.” I trust that those who truly believe Scripture to be the infallible Word of God will listen to what I have to say, for I am convinced that short of an argument to show that Jesus (and the author of Hebrews) meant something else when talking about the tithe than did the writers of the Old Testament (and I do not believe that any such argument can be given), we are every bit as much obligated to pay all the tithes noted in the Law as were the saints of the Old Testament.

Some who have written in defense of tithing have argued that the whole of the tithe ought to be given to the local church, and there are many tithers who believe this. I did too at one time. However, as I have more thoroughly studied the function of the tithe in the Bible, I have come to the conclusion that the tithe ought to be used for all aspects of “Kingdom work,” including those not under the church’s sphere of control, such as Christian education. (It is particularly difficult to see how the rejoicing tithe, a portion of which is to be used for one’s own enjoyment, can be given as a whole to the church.) Nevertheless, given the functions that the church legitimately performs, a large share of the first tithe ought to go to the church. Some of the details of

this matter of the beneficiaries of our tithe are discussed in the section on “Practical {73} Questions on Tithing.” My comments there are of a programmatic nature. Any detailed analysis and recommendations would have required a study of much greater length.

Ibid.

In addition to the authors noted above, I would like to express my appreciation to the various ministers in the Reformed Church in the United States whose own commitment to tithing has been a continual source of encouragement to me. I would be remiss if I did not above all thank my wife, Elizabeth, who not only tirelessly reads what I write and offers helpful comments, but who especially encouraged me to write this particular study, and who has wholeheartedly joined me in our own efforts as a family to tithe in accordance with the Law of God.

1. Introduction

The work of God's Kingdom is strapped for funds. Many congregations can barely pay their minister a living wage. Mission works, both at home and abroad, suffer because the money is not available to send reapers to labor in fields ready to be harvested. Christian schools offer pitiful remuneration to their faculty, even though they charge high tuition, thereby effectively excluding many of the poor from the opportunity to be given an education resting on biblical presuppositions. Dissemination of Christian literature as well as proclamation of the Good News through the media of radio and television is hampered severely because so little money is available. Diaconal work—help for the poor, the aged, the orphaned, the retarded—is hardly even considered in a serious manner by the church, with the result that the government has taken over where the church has failed.

How is the work of the Kingdom to be financed? In particular, what guidelines can be given whereby the individual believer will know what he is to give to the church and to other Kingdom work? Typically, those organizations involved in the work of the Kingdom other than the church must either resort to fund drives and to pleas to raise even pitiful amounts in support of their labors or charge high fees for their services, thus effectively limiting their

range of influence.

The church itself often operates somewhat as follows. Having received a certain amount through offerings and other donations in the previous year (an amount procured through pleas and cajoling), the local congregation sets, at its annual meeting, a budget for its current year within a few percentage points of its income for the past year. If this congregation is part of a denomination, it will be expected to give a {74} certain amount to the denomination (typically set by the denomination in a per capita fashion). The denomination has set its own budget and made its assessment of the local congregations in a similar fashion. Knowing what the member churches have given in recent years and thereby can be “reasonably” expected to provide, it sets at its annual presbytery, classis, or synod meeting a budget very much in line with those of previous years and assesses the local congregations accordingly. Once the budget is set for both the local congregations and the denomination, it is up to the minister and elders of each congregation again to cajole and plead with the members to give enough to meet the annual budget. If it is met, the congregation gets by and sends its dues to the denomination. If not, the denominational work suffers accordingly, with the result that typically home and foreign mission works, Christian education, and denominational publications are the first to feel the squeeze.

This is a muddling system, but it “works.” Mostly, however, it works to keep the work of the Kingdom in general and of the church in particular from advancing. Using pleas and cajoling as ways of getting people to give and setting a budget based on previous years of pleas and cajolings (which seem to have just about the same financial results year after year) has the result of ensuring the status quo. The upshot is that year after year ministers of the Gospel and educators are severely underpaid (which results in many gifted men seeking employment elsewhere), mission works are kept on hold or even terminated for lack of funds, poor relief remains almost nonexistent, and Christian publications become even more expensive and without wide distribution.

Some congregations have resorted to a dues system to ensure that their annual budget is met. This is certainly no better and probably worse. Since the dues are set on the basis of the budget

and the budget for the current year reflects that of the previous years, the status quo remains. Moreover, the dues system puts an unfair burden on the poorest members of the congregation who wind up paying a much larger percentage of their income than do the rich. However, the chief reason why the Christian ought to reject the dues system is that it is entirely unbiblical. As we will see, the principle upon which Scripture operates in its laws concerning giving to the work of the Kingdom is that of giving a proportionate amount of one's increase. Nowhere is the member of the covenant community assessed a flat fee. (It will not do to argue that the "poll tax" or "head tax" described in Exodus 30:11-15 is an example of a flat fee paid by each member to the church. It was {75} indeed a flat fee, but as others have shown,¹ it was paid to the civil government of ancient Israel for the maintenance of civil order.)

When the church does see the need for "extras" not in the budget (such as new carpeting for the church, pads for the pews, and the like), these things are financed by various gimmicks, such as bake sales, rummage sales, and car washes. Few would argue that there is biblical precedent for this form of financing the work of the Kingdom, other than a bit of similarity when conducted from the church itself to the practice of selling sacrificial animals from the outer courts of the temple. (Other and larger-scale non-biblical ways of "financing" the Kingdom exist, such as "Christian stewardship" and "annuity" programs.²)

Seeing that these methods have had the result of keeping the work of the church and of the Kingdom at a virtual standstill, it is only proper that we ask if the Bible gives any specific directions on how those in the covenant community are to give to this work. It does. In fact, Scripture provides us with a complete program for giving. When I was still a young child my father taught me something about biblical giving. From the earliest that I received an allowance I can remember being told that one-tenth of that was not my own but was for the "work of the Lord." Now, although my father had an incomplete understanding of the full extent of

1. E.g., R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law* (Craig Press: Nutley, NJ: 1973), 281-84.

2. Certain of these have been described and rightly condemned by Gary North in "Stewardship, Investment, and Usury: Financing the Kingdom of God," an appendix to Rushdoony, *ibid.*, 799-824.

the tithe (or the tenth), not having been taught concerning the rejoicing tithe and the third-year tithe (which we will discuss later on), at least the principle was there. I never forgot that principle. Even when I went through a period of wandering from the faith in my twenties and early thirties, I always assumed that Christians tithed. It was only after, by God's grace, coming back to the faith that I found out that many Christians did not believe this, with the result that the work of the Kingdom was suffering.

There was something else that I learned about the tithe from my father. And that was that the tithe was God's. It was not something that I gave back to God out of the goodness of my heart and voluntarily. It was something that I owed to God, something that if I did not return it to Him it would mean that I was sinning. As a result, I learned that I did nothing meritorious or beyond my duty if I returned the tithe to God. At the same time I learned that the tithe was to be given gladly and not begrudgingly. I can still remember being glad that my father increased my allowance from fifty cents to a dollar per week, not because this would increase my spending money, but because it would permit me to give more to the church. These lessons were never lost on me. {76}

As I began to study Scripture again as an adult, and after returning to the faith, I saw that what I had been taught by and large conformed to the biblical rule for giving to the Kingdom and to the church. This rule may be stated in two parts.

1. The tithes (or tenths) are God's taxes upon our increase (i.e., our profits, salaries, wages, etc.). They are not optional for God's covenant people. Rather, we are duty bound faithfully to return the tithes to Him. If we refuse to do so we sin and provoke His wrath. After we have faithfully paid the tithes we are like the "unprofitable" servant of which Christ spoke in the words recorded in Luke 17:10. We have "only done our duty." At the same time, we ought to pay the tithes gladly and with rejoicing, knowing that by so doing we are faithfully contributing to the furtherance of the work of God's Kingdom.

2. Besides our duty to pay the tithes we are also enjoined by Scripture to bring our offerings and gifts for the work of the Kingdom. These are not to be given sparingly or grudgingly (2 Cor. 9:6-7), but insofar as God gives us the means, bountifully and cheerfully, even hilariously. (The Greek word *hilaros*, from

which we get the English “hilarious,” is the word that is translated “cheerful” in 2 Corinthians 9:7b: “God loveth a cheerful giver.”) Strictly speaking, the gift is optional, in that it is not part of God’s tax. However, Scripture promises bountiful reaping for those who give bountifully and sparing reaping for those who give sparingly. A gift to the church or the Kingdom is a gift, and thus optional, only if the tithes have already been paid. Otherwise, it is not a gift but the dutiful payment of God’s tax.

This is the rule for biblical giving. Any other principle (such as that of so-called “sacrificial giving”) is unbiblical, and those who deny the tithe and preach another principle not only do a disservice to the church and the work of the Kingdom but provoke the wrath of God upon themselves and upon those whom they lead astray.

In this monograph I will defend and expand upon the first part of this rule, the part concerning the tithes, though I will from time to time mention the second part when the occasion warrants. In everything I say it is my sincere desire that all who are truly God’s covenant people will search the Scriptures to see “whether these things be so,” and that thereby we may all be led to give to the work of the Kingdom as God has commanded us. Only if we do so will the work of God’s Kingdom prosper and will His wrath be turned from His people. {77}

2. The Biblical Basis for Tithing

A. *The Laws of the Tithe*

The word translated “tithe” in the Old Testament comes from a Hebrew word that means “tenth.” The tithe, then, is the tenth part. Although the tithe is mentioned in various places in both the Old and the New Testaments, the laws governing the payment of the tithes are found in what is commonly called the Mosaic Law, that Law given by the Lord to Moses on Mount Sinai for the governing of the children of Israel. As we examine what the Law says concerning the tithes, we find that there are three separate tithes—the Levitical or social tithe, the rejoicing tithe, and the third-year tithe. Looking at each in turn will provide us with an understanding of their separate functions. This will allow us to get

some idea of how the work of the Kingdom is to be financed.

1. *The Levitical tithe*

The Levitical, or social, tithe is sometimes called the *first tithe*. We read about it first in Leviticus 27:30–33 and then again in Numbers 18:20–24. The former of these two passages is as follows:

And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD's: it is holy unto the LORD. And if a man will at all redeem ought of his tithes, he shall add thereto, the fifth part thereof. And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD. He shall not search whether it be good or bad, neither shall he change it; and if he change it at all, then both it and the change thereof shall be holy; it shall not be redeemed.

The law of this first tithe is couched in terms of the agricultural economy of ancient Israel. Nevertheless, we can without difficulty understand the basic teaching and principle involved. Each year as the Israelite tended his vineyard or orchard, the vines or trees produced a certain amount of fruit. A tenth of that was to be given to the Lord. Or, if he owned sheep or cattle, a tenth of the offspring produced were to be given. (Since there might be a tendency either to give only the best or the worst to the Lord, in order to ensure that a true tenth was given, not something worth more or less, the law declared that the person paying this tithe was not to single out the good or the bad when he set the tenth aside.) The principle operating in this can be stated {78} straightforwardly. The tithe of the *increase* on one's capital was to be given to the Lord. For example, every tenth fruit tree which a man owned was not what was singled out, but rather the tenth of the fruit from all of one's trees. Since fruit from the tree or offspring from the flock represented potential profit, we can say that the tithe was to be the tenth of the *profit*.

From this we can determine the abiding rule of tithing. We are to pay a tithe of our profit. The member of the covenant community is not obliged to pay a tithe on the value of his existing property (be it a house, land, or cattle). God never taxes property. (For this reason a person receiving an inheritance, whether in the form of land or other capital, does not need to pay a tithe on that inheritance when he receives it.) However, any venture that returns

a profit to us, whether it be a business or simply hiring out our time and effort (which is what we do when we work for a wage or salary), requires us to tithe on that profit. We are duty bound, then, to pay the tithe on all of our wages, salary, profit from business, interest from investments, and the like. For most of us living in the United States this yearly tithe can be pretty well figured by taking a tenth of the adjusted gross income as submitted on our annual income tax return. (Some adjustments may have to be made due to “loopholes” created by IRA’s, All-Savers certificates, and the like. But the Christian who honestly desires to tithe will be aware of these and will adjust his tithe accordingly.)

The second passage mentioned above (Num. 18:20–24) tells us to whom we are to pay this first tithe:

And the LORD spake unto Aaron, Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any part among them: I am thy part and thine inheritance among the children of Israel. And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation, lest they bear sin, and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation, and they shall bear their iniquity: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations, that among the children of Israel they have no inheritance. But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

The first thing that we must note about this passage is that it tells us to whom the tithe was to be given. It was to be given to the Levites. [79] The next thing that we see is that we are not told where the tithe was to be given. Nowhere in the Law do we find mention of the locale at which the children of Israel were to pay this tithe. However, we do know that the Levites lived throughout Israel, having been given certain cities throughout the various tribes for their habitation (see Num. 35:1–6). From this we can infer that the tithe was to be paid wherever the Levites lived and engaged in their various services. This would mean that the tithe could be paid either locally or at the tabernacle (later the temple)

in Jerusalem where the Levites regularly served.

The Levites performed various functions. Not only were some of them priests (namely, the sons of Aaron), but they were also educators (2 Chron. 17:7–9; Neh. 8:9), musicians (1 Chron. 15:16–24; 25:1–7), officers and judges (1 Chron. 23:4), and the like.

The Law tells Israel to pay the tithe to the Levites. Scripture tells us that the Levites performed a variety of functions. From the information that it gives we can derive the abiding biblical principle concerning to whom or what we are to pay the first, or Levitical, tithe. It is to be paid to those persons or organizations that are engaged in Kingdom work. It is to be paid, for example, to the church to support its various ministries, and in particular, to its pastor, who instructs the people in God's Word, but also to its musicians and others who give their time and energy to the worship service and to the maintenance of the church buildings. (Although many churches do not have or need full-time musicians, refusing to pay an organist or pianist adequately for his or her services is anti-biblical.) But the local church does not have exclusive claim on the tithe. Evangelizing work, particularly missionary work, must be supported, especially through the denomination (to insure proper oversight of such efforts), that the Gospel of the Kingdom may be preached to others. Christian schools and their teachers must be supported through this tithe as well. Christian publishing houses and Christian scholars and writers, as part of the educational process, also legitimately may be supported through the Levitical tithe. In sum, many diverse aspects of Kingdom work deserve to receive a portion of the first tithe.

The ancient Israelites had the option of paying the Levitical tithe locally or at the tabernacle. In all likelihood, most of them paid it locally. Not only would this be more convenient, but those paying it could better determine where the greatest needs were if paid locally. Although we too have a certain liberty to distribute our tithe as we see fit, nevertheless, we have an obligation not only to make sure that the work of the {80} Kingdom in our immediate area is progressing as it ought but also to pay the tithe to those who are responsibly engaged in Kingdom work. In this day and age in particular, when there are many different "Christian" organizations vying for our money (some responsible organizations, some

irresponsible), it is extremely important that we know to whom or what we are giving. Although there are legitimate exceptions, a good rule of thumb for us to follow is to pay the lion's share of the first tithe to the local congregation and our denomination and to other local Kingdom work (such as Christian schools in our town or city). Of course, if we know that some other Christian organization (e.g., a publishing house or a college) is truly and responsibly engaged in Kingdom work, we have a right to support it with a substantial part of our tithe, but only if we know that the Kingdom work in our own locale is being adequately supported.

We must make one final comment on the first tithe. In Numbers 18:26–28, we find that the Lord commands Moses as follows:

Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe. And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshingfloor, and as the fullness of the winepress. Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD's heave offering to Aaron the priest.

The Levites were supported by the first tithe from the children of Israel. However, they too had to tithe. They tithed to the priests (who were the descendants of Aaron) serving at the tabernacle or temple. In this way the priests received their support. One thing in particular must be noted about this. Some who gain their livelihood from Kingdom work claim that they do not have to pay the tithe. They are wrong. They are every bit as much under God's tax as is everyone else. Just because the tithe is used to support the minister, the missionary, or the Christian educator does not mean that he is himself exempt from payment. As the Levites had to pay the tenth of all they received, so too the minister and others supported by the tithe must pay as the first tithe the tenth of their income.

2. The rejoicing tithe

Many Christians believe that their obligation to tithe begins and {81} ends with the first, or Levitical, tithe. This is because few preachers, even those who preach tithing, are themselves aware of

the further tithing obligations described in Scripture, or, if they are aware of them, do not have sufficient understanding of the place of the Law in Scripture to see that the additional tithes have never been abolished. (We will talk more about this a bit further on.) There are, however, two tithes in addition to the Levitical tithe.

In Deuteronomy 12:5–27 and again in 14:22–27 we have a rather lengthy description of a period of rejoicing in which all the Israelites were required to participate. Once a year they were to go up to the tabernacle (and later temple) at Jerusalem with a tithe (or tenth) of their increase and use this in a feast of rejoicing. From Deuteronomy 16:13–15, in which the Feast of Tabernacles is described as a feast of rejoicing after the corn and wine was gathered in, we can infer that this rejoicing was to take place at this feast. (The Feast of Tabernacles, or Ingathering, as it is sometimes called, was to take place five days after the Day of Atonement, at the end of the harvest season. It was thus a time of thanksgiving to the Lord for blessing them through the harvest.) Provisions were made for the Israelites who lived a distance from Jerusalem. Those who lived such a distance that they could not get there under any circumstances could celebrate the feast locally. Those who could not bring their increase to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast could exchange it for money and then could in turn spend that money on “whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever they soul desireth” (Deut. 14:26).

Clearly, this tithe, also an annual tithe, was distinct from the Levitical tithe. The first tithe was to be given in total to the Levites, and was to be used to support their work. The rejoicing tithe was used by each Israelite and his family largely for his own consumption, during a period of rejoicing before the Lord. Scripture, then, speaks of two annual tithes.

While the first use of this tithe was for the Israelite family to rejoice before the Lord, it was also to be shared with those who would not themselves receive an increase from the harvest. The Levites did not own land and were not farmers. As a result, on at least three separate occasions (Deut. 12:18–19; 14:27; 16:14) the Israelites are commanded to share this rejoicing tithe with the Levites so that they too may rejoice. In Deuteronomy 16:14 the aliens, orphans, and widows {82} (who also would otherwise not

share in this tithe of the harvest) are included in this command. This tithe, then, was to be shared so that others might rejoice as well.

Assuming that this tithe is still to be paid by the Christian today, how is it to be used? The Feast of Tabernacles was to be celebrated in Jerusalem because God had placed His Name there. However, just as the high priest of the Old Testament dwelt in Jerusalem, Christ now dwells in heaven and God's tabernacle is now universal, throughout the world. Therefore, we are no longer obliged to use the rejoicing tithe at any one location.³ However, the Christian is still obliged to use a tenth of his income for rejoicing before the Lord, both that he may rejoice and that others may share in this rejoicing. Since this tithe has so much fallen into disuse, there are at present insufficient organized opportunities to use this tithe (though such would increase greatly if those in God's covenant community demanded that such outlets be provided). Certainly, however, income used for participation in family camps and retreats is an appropriate use, as are harvest dinners in the church. (The Christian family can also use part of this tithe to provide the widows and the poor of the church with the means to participate.) I would not rule out a family "vacation" spent joyously returning thanks to the Lord (perhaps with another Christian family) as a legitimate use of this tithe. The possibilities are endless, and only our own lack of imagination and the fact that this tithe has fallen into disuse prevents those in God's covenant community from thinking of more than enough ways fully to use this tithe each year. (A quaint but legitimate vestige of the rejoicing tithe can still be found in many smaller communities in rural America, where the minister regularly receives as a gift part of the produce of the gardens of those in his congregations or even a slaughtered and processed animal of the flock.)

3. *The third-year tithe*

Scripture speaks of another tithe in addition to the Levitical and rejoicing tithes. In Deuteronomy 14:28–29 we read:

At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine

3. I am indebted for this point to Edward A. Powell in Rushdoony and Powell, *Tithing and Dominion* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1982), 118.

increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest. {83}

The first thing to note about this tithe is that it was to be paid every three years. This makes it distinct from the annual Levitical and rejoicing tithes and *additional* to them. If it were simply a third-year substitute for one of these tithes, Scripture would have clearly noted that these others were to be paid only two of three years. Moreover, its function is different. The rejoicing tithe was to be used for feasting before the Lord. The Levitical tithe was to be used to support the work of the Levites, an ongoing work that required annual support. While this tithe was to be shared in part with the Levite, it was also to be used for the alien, the orphan, and the widow. Because this is its primary function it is sometimes called the *poor tithe*.

Next let us note to whom it was paid. In addition to the Levites, it was to be paid to certain of the poor, to those whose condition would likely result in chronic poverty. This aid was not to be given to the poor indiscriminately but only to those deserving of aid. It was not to be used for those who were capable but simply too lazy to earn an honest living, nor for all those who through no fault of their own hit on hard times. (The Law provides other ways for these to reestablish themselves, for example, through interest-free loans to be cancelled on the Sabbatical, or seventh, year.)

Finally, let us note that this tithe was to be given to those who were “within the gate,” that is, it was to be given locally. So doing enabled those who gave the aid and those who received the aid to be known to each other.

The covenant community today is duty bound to pay this tithe and to use it to support the deserving poor in accordance with these biblical guidelines. The state has pretty much taken over social welfare in America and most other countries today, allowing the church blissfully to shirk its duty, with the result that the aid is indiscriminately administered, thus leading to all sorts of abuse and inequities and a much higher tax upon the working citizen than this tithe would ever represent.

If the covenant community administered this tithe and this aid in a biblical manner, however, those who were truly deserving would receive it, for it would be limited to those who had no viable means of livelihood. Moreover, being administered locally, the perpetual cheat and loafer for the most part would soon be found out. Finally, being administered every third year it would significantly reduce the tendency towards dependence. Aid that is administered monthly (as is most governmental [84] aid to the poor) or even yearly tends to create an attitude of perpetual dependence in those receiving it. If the aid were given every third year those who were truly chronically dependent on it would learn to budget what they received and would thereby learn good financial habits. Those who might receive it because of a temporary condition (e.g., the alien or the newcomer to a community who had not yet found work), knowing that they would not receive another such handout for quite some time, would have incentive to find work. This biblical method for administering aid to the poor is far superior to anything that the state has invented, and the covenant community would do well to heed it as it seeks to provide relief to the deserving poor.

B. Has the Law Been Set Aside?

Scripture, then, speaks of three tithes as part of the Law of God. It would seem that those in Christ's church would feel duty bound faithfully to tithe. Such is obviously not so. Some do not tithe because as hypocrites they feel under no obligation to be obedient to what they know to be the Law of God. Others do not tithe because they have been taught that the Christian is under no obligation to tithe since the laws of tithing have been set aside. We must now answer those who teach such things.

Generally, those who argue against the tithe hold that the "Mosaic" Law has been set aside by Christ, and that the Christian is obliged to obey only those parts of the Law that have been specifically "republished" by Christ or the Apostles. Against such teaching we must argue *firstly*, that not so much as a "jot or tittle" of the Law has been set aside by Christ, and *secondly*, that even if (contrary to fact) it has, the tithe both predates the Mosaic Law and is "republished" by Christ and the Apostles.

Before establishing these two points it would be worthwhile to

ask just what those who tell us that the tithe has been abolished seek to replace it with as a principle for Christian giving. Generally, the tithe is thought to be superseded by the principle of “sacrificial giving.” To begin with, the tithe at least has the support of both the Old and New Testaments. The idea of sacrificial giving as a principle for supporting the work of the Kingdom is entirely foreign to Scripture. It might be argued that it is established by Jesus through His approbation of the widow who cast into the temple treasury her two mites, “all the living that she had” (Luke 21:1–4). This passage does not establish any such principle. {85} First, Jesus is not so much commending the widow as He is condemning those who do things for show. Jesus had just finished decrying the scribes for their show of religiosity when He saw certain rich men casting large sums of money into the treasury in order to display their wealth. His point in singling out the widow who threw in her two mites is simply to show that outward appearances are deceiving and should not be trusted. Secondly, if He were establishing a principle of giving (which He is not), it would not be the principle of sacrificial giving but that of “giving *everything* one possesses,” since the widow threw in all that she had to live on. Even the most ardent defender of the principle of sacrificial giving would not preach this, since this would immediately make welfare cases out of all of God’s covenant people!

Not only is the principle of sacrificial giving without scriptural basis, but in practice its results are untoward. The reason why the work of the Kingdom is strapped for funds is because ministers have preached sacrificial giving for so long. It is argued that sacrificial giving allows God’s people the liberty to give more than the tithe (as though those who preached tithing could not also preach that God’s people are free to give generously beyond the tithe). In practice, however, in churches in which the tithe is not faithfully proclaimed, sacrificial giving inevitably results in overall giving *far* less than the tithe. (I would ask any minister who preaches sacrificial giving if, with a straight face, he can say that his congregation as a whole gives so much as half of the Levitical tithe to the church or to other Kingdom work. I am sure that in many cases it is less.) The reason for this is obvious. *Any and all* giving is sacrificial giving. If I make fifty thousand dollars a year and I give fifty dollars to the work of the Kingdom the sacrifice is slight, but

it still represents fifty dollars that I have sacrificed and that I cannot use elsewhere. If I make ten thousand dollars a year and I give five thousand the sacrifice is great. But whether I give one-thousandth or one-half of my income, I have practiced sacrificial giving. All that the minister who preaches sacrificial giving can do is plead for greater sacrifice. But if the biblical principle is sacrificial giving, I am fulfilling my duty towards God no matter how much or how little I give.

If the tithe has been abolished, there is no principle of giving, and we are left to flounder in a morass at this point without any clear directive. But the tithe has *not* been abolished, for the Law itself has not been abolished. {86}

1. *The Law has not been set aside.*

In a short monograph of this sort, I cannot give a complete treatment of the status of the Law in the New Testament. (I would refer the interested reader to *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, by Greg Bahnsen, for such a treatment.⁴) However, I would like to make several suggestions to show that the whole of the Law is as valid today as it was in the time of the Old Testament.

When trying to determine the status of biblical Law today we have three choices. Either all of the Law has been set aside, part of it has and part is still applicable, or all of it is applicable today. The first alternative is quite impossible. If none of God's Law were applicable today, I would have nothing to be obedient to, and it would make no sense whatsoever to call any of my conduct sin (since sin is any want of conformity to or transgression of the Law of God). Any and all conduct would be acceptable. God's covenant people could behave exactly as they pleased and church discipline would be entirely arbitrary. Since the last of these three alternatives is the one that I believe is scriptural and must be accepted, let us examine the second, namely, that part of the Law has been set aside and part is still applicable. If we can show that this is unscriptural, then our conclusion must be that the whole of God's Law is applicable today.

To begin with, we must acknowledge that certain of the laws

4. Greg Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, 2nd ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1984).

given to the Israelites involved practices that foreshadowed the great work of Jesus Christ which He Himself accomplished on the cross. These are the aspects of the Law that the *Heidelberg Catechism* in Question 19 calls “the sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law.” Examples are the sacrificial system, the priestly intercession, the Old Testament sacraments, and the feasts (e.g., Yom Kippur, Tabernacles). These, however, were to be performed by the Israelites as part of their obedience to the Law as a way of foreshadowing what could only truly be done by Jesus Christ. (For example, the ceremonies on the Day of Atonement would have been meaningless and of none effect except that they foreshadowed the atoning work of Christ; and in a very real sense God saw in them not the inadequate earthly expression but the reality of Christ’s work on the cross.) Once done in history by Jesus Christ, their continued performance by His people became unnecessary and indeed (as in the sacrifice of the Mass) a blasphemous denial of the one and complete sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. However, although they need not be repeated by God’s covenant people now that Jesus Christ has accomplished what {87} they foreshadowed, the Law which they represented is not abolished. Rather, this aspect of the Law is fulfilled in Christ, so that our obedience to it today is truly found not in our continued performance of the sacrifices and the ceremonies but in the completed work of Christ.

We may also freely acknowledge another area of change without saying that the Law itself has changed. The Law concerns our duties towards God and our neighbor and is summarized in the Ten Commandments. These Commandments or Law Words are then spelled out by means of various cases or specific examples. Thus, besides the general prohibition of adultery found in the Seventh Commandment, the Law proscribes various other specific unlawful sexual relationships (e.g., in Lev. 20:10–21). Now, many of these examples are couched in the very concrete situation of an ancient Near Eastern agrarian economy (for instance, the cases governing restitution when a bull gores a neighbor or does property damage). Although the Law is certainly applicable today in all its ramifications, it is necessary that we apply the Law and the cases in Scripture in such a way that they become relevant to our contemporary, industrialized Western economy. (For example,

the law of restitution in the case of property damage by someone else's animal needs to be applied to motor vehicles and the like.) So doing does not detract one whit from the eternal validity of the Law. It is simply applying the eternally valid Law to our changing historical situation.⁵

Those who say that the whole Law has abiding validity for God's covenant people of all ages grant these points. Those who believe that part of the Law has actually been *abolished* with Christ want to say something more. They want to say not only that the sacrifices and ceremonies are fulfilled in Christ, not only that the Law must be applied to different cultural situations, but that part of the Law is no longer valid and therefore need not be obeyed by Christians. We must ask these people to tell us their criterion for deciding what is valid for today and what is not. We can't simply pick and choose what we like. This would lead to a hopeless moral relativism in the covenant community. There must be some criterion, a criterion found in Scripture (for otherwise it would be a criterion of fallible human construction and open to doubt and dispute).

Some have argued that laws governing personal morality and one's interpersonal relationships have abiding validity while the civil laws and those teaching the separation of the children of Israel from the nations around them (e.g., the dietary laws) do not. This is a totally arbitrary {88} separation. Nowhere do Jesus or the Apostles give us any indication that the full revelation of Christ has abolished certain parts of the Law and not others. None of the New Testament passages which talk about the Law make a distinction between different parts of the Law. Moreover, these alleged distinctions are simply not found in the Law itself. While it may be argued that the vision of Peter concerning the clean and unclean animals recorded in Acts chapter 10 has abolished the dietary laws (though it is certainly arguable that this vision was only teaching by analogy that the Gentiles were not an unclean people), it is certainly wrong to contend that any specific set of laws and those alone taught the Israelites that they were a separate

5. A detailed and admirable attempt to do this is found in Rushdoony's *Institutes*. While I do not agree with every conclusion and application in this monumental work, it is, on the whole, a very worthwhile study.

and holy people. The whole of the Law (e.g., the forbidding of idolatry) taught this. Unless we are willing to admit that witchcraft (and many other satanic practices) are permissible today because God was simply teaching the children of Israel to be holy by forbidding them (see Lev. 20:26–27), we simply cannot argue that the laws teaching separation are no longer applicable.

Similarly, no clear distinction can be made between “civil” laws and “personal” laws. Scripture itself never makes this distinction, and it is certainly instructive that so-called civil and personal laws are often found side by side in the Law. The reason for this is that it is impossible for an individual to be personally righteous without this having social and even civil implications, and it is impossible for certain duties to be prescribed or proscribed in the civil sphere without having implications for interpersonal relationships. The life of the community is an organic whole, and one cannot have true righteousness in one area and unrighteousness in another. Scripture, moreover, never absolves the civil government or its magistrates from the requirement of godly conduct. To argue that the civil code of the Old Testament has been abolished is to argue against Scripture that the civil magistrate does not need to rule in a godly fashion.

It is quite impossible, then, to find a motivated distinction between parts of the Law that have been abolished and parts that are applicable today. Some, however, have treated the whole Law as having been abolished in Christ with the “republishing” of parts of the Law by Christ and the Apostles. Using this criterion, it is argued that those things not specifically commanded in the New Testament may be ignored without being disobedient to God. Even if this did not completely misunderstand the relationship between the Law and Christ, its results would be untoward. The very same people who argue in this fashion find bestiality {89} and transvestism horrible sins. Yet, the commands against these are not republished in the New Testament. Those who adopt this criterion should at least be consistent enough to find such practices acceptable. Moreover, even supposing this criterion to be a legitimate one for determining what is binding on those in the covenant community today, it would not rule out the tithe as binding. The tithe has most certainly been “republished,” as we will soon see.

But let us think of the consequences of even saying that part (or all) of God's Law has been abolished. God's Law is either eternal or it is not. If it is not, then it is not truly God's Law, for any changing standard is that of a finite creature and not of the sovereign Lord of all creation. If God's Law is eternal, however, our duties to God have not changed, nor has sin changed, since sin is a transgression of or want of conformity to God's Law. This alone should be sufficient to rule out the possibility that God has a different standard for obedience today than He had for the saints of the Old Testament.

Aren't there passages in the New Testament, however, which indicate that Christ has abolished the Law or that the Law has undergone significant change? We cannot look at every relevant passage in this short work. We can, however, comment briefly on the two most crucial.⁶ The first of these is Matthew 5:17–18, which reads as follows:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

The first thing that we must note about this passage is that Jesus said that He did not come to destroy the Law or the prophets. These terms were the common designation at the time of Christ's earthly ministry for the whole of the Old Testament canon. Jesus thus declared that He did not come to destroy the Old Testament, which certainly includes God's Law. Rather, He came to "fulfill." The Greek word here is *plerosai*. This word can mean various things. In some contexts it can mean to fulfill in the sense of bringing to a completion or to an end. But as the Greek text makes clear, Jesus is making a strong contrast between destroying and "fulfilling." "To bring to an end" could hardly be Jesus's meaning, since this would not provide warrant for the strong Greek adversative that is translated by our English word "but." *Plerosai*, however, can also mean "establish" or "make firm." The context makes it clear that Jesus has this meaning in mind. He declares, in effect, that until

6. The interested reader may refer to Bahnsen, *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*, in which a detailed treatment is given of the relevant passages, including those which are discussed here.

{90} the end of earth's history ("till heaven and earth pass") not the least thing will be removed from the Law. This is possible because Jesus is the One Who makes firm the Law.

It must also be mentioned that the Greek word underlying "fulfilled" at the very end of the quoted passage is different from *plerosai*. It is the word *genetai*. This word means "becomes" or "comes to pass." Thus, when Jesus says that "one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." He is not saying that this will happen when He "fulfills" the Law, but, as the context makes clear, when "heaven and earth pass away," that is, when "all comes to pass."

The immediately following remarks of Jesus bear out that this is the correct interpretation, that He has not come to abolish the Law but to establish it. For in verses 19–20 our Lord proclaims:

Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

It would be more than strange for such a strong warning against disobedience to the Law to come at the very point where Jesus was proclaiming that He came to bring the Law to an end. No, the Law has not been abolished by Jesus. Rather, it has been made firm. We are, then, duty bound to obey the Law and to teach others to obey it.

The comments of our Lord should be enough for us to conclude without further discussion that He has neither in whole nor in part abolished the Law. There are passages in the writings of the Apostles, particularly of Paul, that would seem to teach otherwise. The book of Galatians is often thought to oppose grace to law and to speak of the abolishment of the Law, especially the "Mosaic" Law. One passage appears to teach this without doubt, namely, Galatians 3:24–25:

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

This passage calls the Law our “schoolmaster” and appears to make it clear that we are no longer under this schoolmaster. However, we must ask in what sense this is so. This might seem to be an odd question. However, Scripture speaks of two functions of the Law. The Law is first {91} of all a curse to those whose trust is not in Christ. “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,” Paul tells us in Galatians 3:10, quoting from Deuteronomy 27:26. Since all are conceived and born in sin (Ps. 51:5), no one apart from faith in Jesus Christ will escape this curse. The Law, then, teaches us that we are accursed apart from Christ. In this way it functions as a schoolmaster, an instructor, by which we are made aware of our need for redemption in Christ, Who has kept the Law perfectly, and Whose perfect righteousness will be credited to us, if by God’s gracious work in us we have faith in His blood. But once we are thus justified by faith through grace, this function of the Law is completed. It no longer has to act as a schoolmaster. Its other function remains. For the Law of God is also the lamp whereby I learn how to be obedient to God. Having been justified by faith through grace, the believer is enabled by the Holy Spirit more and more to be obedient to God, and his obedience is guided and informed by the Law of God itself.

A glance at the context in which Galatians 3:24–25 is set will show that when Paul is arguing that we are no longer under the Law, it is only this first function that he has in mind, its function of teaching us our accursedness apart from faith in Christ. For his whole point in Galatians chapter 3 is to show that by obedience to the Law no man is justified, for no man can keep the Law perfectly. The Law, then, being powerless to justify, becomes a curse. However, even before the Law was specifically given to Moses, Abraham was justified by faith in the coming Christ, and when the Law was given on Mt. Sinai justification through faith in Christ was not set aside. As Paul argues, this would have been to set aside the promise. So, declares Paul, the purpose of the Law was never to justify man, Abraham, Moses and the Israelites, or us. It was a schoolmaster to teach us that we are cursed and to drive us to Christ for our salvation and justification. Having shown that the first function of the Law is fulfilled and completed for all those whose trust is in Christ (whether Abraham, Moses, or any

one of us today), Paul in no way goes on to argue that the second function of the Law, as a means of sanctification of the Christian, is in any sense abolished.

In sum, then, the Law has not been abolished. Neither some of it nor all of it is less applicable to those in God's covenant community today than it was in the time of the Old Testament. If the Law as a whole is in force today, the laws governing the tithes are also applicable, and those who do not pay tithes are sinning. [92]

2. The tithe is "republished" in the New Testament.

It should be obvious from the foregoing that even if the New Testament said nothing about tithing, the Christian would nevertheless be required to pay the biblical tithes. However, tithing is explicitly reaffirmed in the New Testament.

In Matthew 23:23 Jesus declares:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgement, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

The first thing that we must note about the remarks of our Lord is that He is condemning the scribes and Pharisees for failing to obey the really great matters of the Law. This has led some to suppose that Jesus did not regard the tithe as important. But He Himself warns against this interpretation of His remarks when he concludes by saying that the Pharisees were "not to leave the other undone."

This leads us to the second thing that must be noted. Jesus clearly tells the scribes and Pharisees to *continue* tithing. He is *not* abolishing the tithe but is in fact reaffirming the necessity of tithing. However, it is not enough for us just to tithe or just to keep any other part of the Law that we find easy to keep. We should earnestly strive to keep the whole Law, including those areas that are so central, so weighty, and, yes, so difficult to keep.

Third, we note that our Lord's remarks show how *easy* it is to tithe. A hypocrite may camouflage his disobedience by meticulously and with great show keeping one aspect of the Law that is particularly easy for him. This is exactly what the scribes and Pharisees were doing. Once one is in the habit of tithing, keeping the Law at this point takes little or no effort. One simply

moves the decimal one digit to the left to determine the proper tithe on any and all income. In fact, it can become a game to see how exact and thoroughgoing one can be. This is what the scribes were doing as they tithed on the “mint and anise and cummin.” However, though tithing with great exactness and great show, they completely ignored those matters that were at the heart of the Law.

In all of this, however, the present point is that Jesus *does* reaffirm the tithe. Though it is the easiest part of the Law, the tithe must be kept just as much as every other part of the Law. It is quite possible to keep the easiest part and ignore the rest. But one who intentionally ignores the easiest part will not keep the more weighty parts either. One disobedient {93} in the small things will be disobedient in the great as well. Our righteousness is to exceed the Pharisees. Those who are willingly and knowingly unfaithful in tithing will not keep the greater matters of the Law. Their righteousness does not even come up to that of the Pharisees. At least the Pharisees tithed.

The tithe is in effect reaffirmed as well by the writer to the Hebrews. As is well known, this author compares the priesthood of Christ to that of Melchizedek, declaring the latter to be a foreshadowing of the former. In Hebrews 7:6 the writer speaks of the fact that Abraham, the spiritual father of the faithful, paid tithes to Melchizedek, the priest of God, an event recorded originally in Genesis 14:20. From this passage in Hebrews we can learn two important lessons about the tithe. First, the tithe is not simply a feature of the “Mosaic” Law. Abraham, who lived half a millennium before Moses, faithfully paid the tithe to the priest of God. Even if, contrary to fact, the “Mosaic” Law were abolished, this would not mean that the tithe had been abolished. Secondly, by showing that Abraham, the father of the faithful, paid tithes to the priest who foreshadowed our eternal and great high priest, Jesus Christ, the author of Hebrews establishes that we have an obligation to return our tithe to Christ and His Kingdom every bit as much as Abraham tithed to Melchizedek.

Now, unless it can be shown that Jesus and the author of Hebrews meant something different by the tithe than did the Law, we are obliged to see what they say as a reaffirmation not only of the Levitical tithe but of the rejoicing and third-year tithes as well. No such argument can be given, since Jesus and the author

of the Hebrews simply mention tithes without distinguishing the different tithes. And, in fact, since Jesus addressed His comments to the scribes and Pharisees, who were surely acquainted with all the tithes and prided themselves on keeping the Law, when He mentioned tithing without any distinction, He most certainly had in mind all the tithes, and not any one in particular. Thus, Jesus commanded the scribes and Pharisees (and every one of us as well) to not leave undone the paying of any of our tithes.

Finally, although not an explicit reference to tithing, it is very likely that this practice is presupposed when Paul says in 1 Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." The New International Version translates the phrase "as God hath prospered him" with "in keeping with his income." The tithes, of course, are [94] given in proportion to or in keeping with one's income, or, to put it another way, as a percentage of one's prospering (or increase). Although it is conceivable that Paul is talking about gifts beyond the tithe, the language of proportion and increase is there, and so it is likely that Paul here is commanding tithing.

The tithe, then, is clearly reaffirmed in the New Testament. Even if, contrary to fact, part of the Law has been abolished, the tithe has not. God's covenant people are duty bound to pay all the tithes required of them.

C. Law and Grace

Perhaps the tithe hasn't been abolished. But are Christians really required to pay it? After all, aren't we under grace and not law?

To this we must immediately reply, "If the Christian is not required to pay the tithe because he is not under law but under grace, is he required to do *anything at all*?" The argument that we do not have to pay the tithe because our righteous standing is not through our obedience to the Law, can be used as an argument against obedience to any and all of God's commands. The Christian is no longer required to be faithful to his marital partner because he is under grace and not law. He should no longer feel himself constrained not to murder. He is free to be a homosexual, a bank robber, a drug smuggler. After all, he is under grace and not law.

There is obviously something terribly wrong with the argument

that we are not required to pay the tithes (or do not have to be obedient to a given part of the law) because we are under grace and not law, because, that is, we are justified by grace through faith and not by our works of righteousness. And it won't do to try to defend disobedience to the laws of the tithe by saying that it is a minor transgression of the law. Sin is sin. Lawlessness is lawlessness. And this is true whether the sin involves murder, theft, or bestiality on the one hand, or tithing or some other "minor" matter on the other. God nowhere declares that we must be faithful in certain matters but can be unfaithful in others since we are under grace and not law.

The problem with this argument should be clear from what we said in the previous section when discussing Galatians 3:24–25. We are in a very real sense not under the Law but under grace, but only insofar as our justification is concerned. By obedience to the Law is no man justified. But as Paul shows in Galatians chapter 3, this was just as true for {95} Abraham and Moses and the Israelites as it is for us today. We are justified by faith and by the grace of God because *Christ has fulfilled the Law on behalf of His people*. By His life of perfect obedience and by His atoning death on Calvary's cross, He has fully obeyed the Law on our behalf and has paid the extreme penalty, death, for our disobedience. God by His grace has justified all the elect who, enabled by the Holy Spirit, put their trust in Christ. We are not under law but under grace in terms of our justification because Someone else has completely fulfilled the terms of God's Law. However, though we cannot be justified through our obedience to the Law, our being *sanctified* implies that we will be obedient. Jesus declared in Matthew 7:17 and 20, "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit.... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Paul declared in Ephesians 2:8–10 not only that we are saved by grace through faith but also that we are saved "unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Time and again this teaching occurs in Scripture. Those who are truly justified by grace through faith, those who are truly trusting in Christ, *will* be obedient. They will bear fruit. There are no two ways about it. The same Holy Spirit that enables the elect to trust in Christ also enables them to do good works. And good works, works of obedience, are none other than, as the *Heidelberg Catechism* says in Question 91, "those which are done according

to the Law of God, unto His glory, and not such as rest on our own opinion or the commandments of men.”

So, although we are justified apart from our obedience to the Law, obedience is *not* an optional matter. The true believer, the one in whom God is truly working through His Holy Spirit, is one who is turning from sin unto obedience. (The Greek word that is translated into English as “repentance,” *metanoeo*, means a turning around. The believer, when he repents of his sin, by the grace of God turns his life around. He becomes obedient.) No part of the Law of God can be considered optional. The hypocrite willingly disobeys the Law of God when it is not convenient to obey. The one who is truly elect, the one who has been born again of the Spirit, seeks to obey. Like the Psalmist he exults, “O how love I thy law!” (Ps. 119:97). The true believer, knowing that the Law commands him to tithe, will do so gladly and willingly.

3. The Consequences of Not Tithing and Tithing

From time to time in Scripture we read about the children of Israel [96] bringing in their tithes. For example, in 2 Chronicles chapter 31 we are told that during the reforms of King Hezekiah the people faithfully brought in the tithes to the Levites, and that the Lord blessed them as a result, so much so that the resultant tithes were more than the Levites needed. Verse 10 is especially noteworthy:

And Azariah the chief priest of the house of Zadok answered him, and said, Since the people began to bring the offerings into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and have left plenty: for the LORD hath blessed his people; and that which is left is this great store.

Tithing brings blessing to God’s people.

We also read on other occasions about God’s people bringing in the tithe. In the book of Nehemiah in particular (10:37–38; 12:44; 13:5, 12) we are told that when the children of Israel returned from their exile in Babylon, they once again began faithfully to tithe “unto the Levites” as had been “commanded.” The Israelites, having learned for the time being the painful lesson of disobedience to God through their captivity in Babylon, once again desired to be faithful. Part of this faithfulness included bringing in the tithes.

A. Stealing from the Lord

Nevertheless, the children of Israel were not always this faithful. In fact, within a century or so after the reforms of Nehemiah, at the time of the last prophet of the Old Testament, Malachi, the Israelites had again become unfaithful in their tithing. Through Malachi the Lord indicted the Israelites for their failure to pay the tithe, telling them exactly what they were doing and what the consequences were. Listen to these stinging words of Malachi 3:8–9:

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Failure of an individual or a people to tithe brings a curse. Later we will talk about some of the temporal aspects of this curse and the way in which we are cursed today. At this juncture I want to focus on what Scripture calls failure to tithe in order to show the eternal perspective of this curse.

According to Scripture, not tithing is nothing less than *stealing from the Lord*. All stealing is sin, but stealing from the Lord is especially heinous. Those who sin will have to answer for their sin. Those who sin {97} repeatedly, willingly, and unrepentantly in an area or in general have no right to call themselves Christians. The one who is truly Christ's does not go on willingly sinning. Not to tithe and to continue not tithing once one has been made *aware* of the laws concerning tithing, once one sees that Scripture does not treat tithing as optional but as God's tax which we owe to Him, and which if we do not pay we are stealing from Him, is a sign of hypocrisy. The true believer will repent of his sin in this area and will begin tithing faithfully.

I cannot issue a stronger warning to those who refuse to tithe than I am now doing. Indeed, the prophet Malachi has issued warning enough. You who are not tithing are stealing from the Lord! There are many in just about every congregation today who would not think of stealing (in any obvious way) from their neighbor—from friends, stores, even the government. There are many who dutifully if not cheerfully pay their taxes to the federal government, the state, and the city. Yet, they willfully ignore God's tax—the tithes. Until now, if they have sat under unsound

teaching, they may have been unaware of what they have been doing. Their teachers will be judged for this. But, those who are taught that tithing is paying God His due, that not tithing is sin, if they continue to sin by not tithing, are utterly without excuse. They are stealing from the Lord and should be branded as hypocrites.

Moreover, they will have to answer to the Lord for why they have not tithed. People who know about tithing have all sorts of excuses for why they cannot tithe. What these excuses boil down to is that they cannot afford to tithe, which is simply to say that they do not want to tithe. *You cannot afford not to tithe.* Some day each and every one of us will stand before God's judgement seat and there we will have to give account for all that we have done. Our excuses for not tithing may sound convincing to us and to others. God will not be convinced. We have robbed God. People in the church today feel that they cannot afford to tithe. However, there seems to be little or nothing that they want for themselves that they cannot afford. It is indeed a source of grief to see those who cannot afford to tithe spending ten or more dollars per week on cigarettes, taking vacations in their new motor homes which have cost them fifteen to twenty thousand dollars and burn up a dollar's worth of gas every few miles, buying new television sets every few years and video games for their children, and in many other ways lavishing money on themselves. They are mocking God in all this. But be not deceived. God is not mocked. All those who do not {98} faithfully tithe will have to answer for their theft from God Almighty. And in particular, those who know that tithing is the Law and those who have provided well for their own comforts will be severely judged before God's judgement seat. In the end they are robbing no one but themselves.

B. The Blessings of Tithing

Not tithing brings the curse of God upon the disobedient. Tithing brings blessing. We have already seen how the people were blessed during the time of Hezekiah's reforms. Let us now hear the Lord's word through Malachi immediately after the severe judgement is issued upon those who do not tithe. In 3:10-12 we read:

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts,

if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Quite simply, the Lord promises to bless those who tithe. Certainly, there are eternal blessings, for although the reward is of grace and not of merit, God promises blessings in heaven for those who are obedient to Him on this earth. But there is also here most clearly the promise of temporal blessings. Indeed, not only a promise but a challenge is issued. The Lord says to His covenant people to “prove” Him. We are invited to tithe in order to see whether God will bless those who faithfully tithe. God would not issue to us this challenge to tithe unless He were going to bless us. If we tithe, we will not only receive rewards in heaven but on this earth as well. This, of course, does not mean that each and every individual who tithes will have more material goods than those who do not tithe. Nor does it mean that we should tithe simply that we might get something in return. It would be wrong to tithe for this reason, and the fact is that some people who do not tithe still are given many material comforts in this life (though they will have to answer for their misconduct in the life to come). Nevertheless, time and again in history God has blessed as a people those people and those nations that have been faithful to Him, and we can be certain that He will continue to do so. We are invited to take up this challenge, to prove the Lord in this {99} matter. Let us eagerly tithe, not for the sake of getting something in return but because of a desire to be obedient, knowing that God will bless His people if they tithe.

C. Practical Consequences of Tithing and Not Tithing

The work of the Kingdom can go forth only if God’s covenant people tithe. God has promised to bless His people if they tithe, and although those blessings will take many forms, one great set of blessings will be found in the unhampered work of the Kingdom. I began this essay by stating that the work of the Kingdom is strapped for funds. This is part of God’s curse upon us for being

disobedient. If God's people tithed as they should the curse would be replaced by blessing.

A people that returned all their tithes to the Lord would be a people blessed by churches that could have complete educational and diaconal programs for their people, that could start mission and evangelistic works at home and could send missionaries abroad to reap the fields white unto harvest. They would be a people blessed by Christian schools that could not only pay their faculty and staff adequately (and would probably not need to pay fund-raising and public relations personnel) but could offer tuition-free education for their covenant children. They would be a people blessed by publishing houses that could offer books and pamphlets at little or no cost, writing that could be widely disseminated as instructional and evangelistic tools. They would be a people blessed by Christian radio and television programming. They would be a people blessed by programs to offer relief for the poor and adequate and inexpensive nursing care for the aged and the helpless.

These would be some of the consequences of tithing. And these would be followed by others. Imagine what all this would do to our state schools, to the secular press and publishing houses, to commercial broadcasting systems. All these would begin to lose a tremendous amount of impact. As Kingdom organizations gained strength their own influence would grow and the truth would be heard in many quarters where the humanistic lie predominates at present. Governmentally funded programs to aid the poor would be confined to the deadbeats and the ne'er-do-well, while the covenant community would render aid to the truly deserving poor. (Eventually, of course, the superiority of programs locally administered by the church would become evident. Sufficient protest would then be mounted against such government programs so that they would be cut back greatly if not cut out entirely.) {100}

This is not a pie-in-the-sky dream. It *will* happen if all God's people begin to tithe faithfully, and it will be a part of the great blessing that God has promised to pour out upon His people. It is only because the covenant community has refused to tithe as it should that these blessings are not realized and that we are cursed with all these other things. We have statist schools (to which even most covenant parents send their children either out of ignorance

or because of lack of funds), a strong and vocal secularist press, and strong anti-Christian commercial television stations because God's people by not tithing have prevented Kingdom work from being done in these areas. We have government welfare programs because God's covenant people have failed to provide for the deserving poor. All these things are manifestations of a curse which is upon us as a people.

Lest it be argued that statist education and welfare are not a curse, since the money for education and welfare would have to be spent in any case, consider the difference between God's tax and the state's tax. It is estimated that the various taxes of government (federal and state income taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, excise taxes, inheritance taxes, etc., as well as various hidden taxes) consume as much as 45 percent of our income. This does not take into consideration the tax which is in effect made on our income through inflation, which results from governmental devaluation of the currency so that it can pay its debts resulting from excessive spending. God's tax (including the rejoicing tithe which is to be used in part, though not as a whole, on ourselves) actually requires a smaller percent of our income. Now, it is true that government does not spend all of our tax dollars on education and welfare. Much, in fact, goes to military spending (which though necessary for our protection is mismanaged in countless ways). On the other hand, God's tax would be used for many things for which government does not pay but for which we must pay nonetheless—e.g., television and radio programming. (Think of how much of the money we pay for the products we buy goes into advertising which supports commercial television and radio stations.)

Clearly, statist taxation is oppressive while God's tax is not. Faithful payment of the latter would eliminate the need for much of the former. There is a very practical reason why this is so. If God's covenant people administered education, welfare, and other programs, they would be administered honestly and on the local level. Welfare programs provide a good example. It is estimated that of every three taxpayer dollars that {101} is spent on aid to American Indians, two dollars goes to support the graft and inefficiency of the bureaucracy. Only one dollar actually is spent on the Indians, and that dollar is spent not only on those who deserve

the aid but on the cheats as well. Other federal and state programs are hardly more efficient. When a program is administered on a large scale from one central location a large bureaucracy is needed to administer it. This simply cannot be avoided. Moreover, such a program is out of touch with the recipients of the aid, with the sure result that many who do not deserve aid will receive it. Besides all this, there is absolutely no incentive to efficient administration if the government administering it has the power to raise taxes at will or to print more money to pay off its debts. The program can be run with utter inefficiency, since no matter how much it costs, the government will find the funds to run it. God, however, doesn't raise His tax. He requires the covenant community to work with the tithe and to run its operations efficiently. Efficiency and local operation combined result in better programs being run for a fraction of the cost. Finally, a large bureaucracy and a class of welfare cheats take an extremely large number out of the productive class. Someone has to be taxed to support all the programs. That is the productive class. As the programs get larger, as more and more people become part of the bureaucracy or recipients of aid, as the programs then cost more and more, the burden falls squarely on the shrinking productive class, and taxes are raised even more to support the same programs.

We as a people are today under a tremendous curse because we have not faithfully tithed to the Kingdom. We have the curse of humanistic and statist education, anti-Christian broadcasting, a humanistic press, and an oppressive statist taxation. So long as we, the covenant people, are disobedient, so long as we refuse to tithe as we ought, we will continue to feel this curse. Only if we as a people repent will this curse be removed and will we be blessed. In the meantime we must live under God's curse. Nevertheless, this does not for a moment mean that we are free not to tithe. We must still be obedient to God. We must still faithfully tithe. Only if we do so will the Kingdom work go forward. We must tithe and we must exhort others to tithe. The ministers of the Word must preach tithing. People must encourage each other to tithe. If they do, then little by little the blessings of tithing will come about, little by little the Kingdom work will go forward, and little by little the curse will be removed. {102}

I am firmly convinced that according to Scripture, God's

Kingdom will some day flourish on earth. All power, dominion, and authority in heaven and earth have been given unto Christ. Our Lord Himself told us to pray that His Kingdom come and His will be done on earth. We do not truly believe in the great second petition of this prayer if we do not work for the coming of God's Kingdom on earth. For too long we have been lulled into passivity by premillennialist and many amillennialist preachers who in effect tell us that the Kingdom on earth is in a hasty retreat. Nearly six hundred years before Christ, the prophet Daniel interpreted a dream of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar, of a great and everlasting Kingdom that would destroy all earthly kingdoms and would itself fill the whole earth. That Kingdom is Christ's. The Apostle John in his apocalyptic vision heard the seventh angel of the Lord announce from heaven, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15). Jesus Himself spoke of His Kingdom as a mustard seed that would grow to be a great tree and fill the whole earth. This Kingdom will come. But we will not see it in its fullness so long as God's people are disobedient to His Law. Tithing is the least part of the Law. But if we are unfaithful in the least of the Law we will be unfaithful in its weightier matters. We must begin by faithfully paying God's tax. Only then will God remove His curse from us and replace it with a blessing. Only then will the Kingdom of God forcefully advance. Only then will we be able to pray with honesty, "Thy Kingdom come on earth."

4. Practical Questions on Tithing

In answering the questions in this section I do not intend to be complete or to give the final word on the issue. I do hope to offer some essential guidelines in accordance with the biblical teaching on tithing. Some of what I will say here I have already indicated more briefly in my previous remarks.

A. To Whom or What Do I Pay My Tithes?

In answering this question I will focus most of my attention on the first, or Levitical, tithe, not because it is the most important of the three, but because the covenant community, even when it has preached tithing, is so unaccustomed to thinking of any tithe

other than the first tithe, {103} that means for distributing the rejoicing tithe and third-year tithes are much less available than for the Levitical tithe.

1. The Levitical tithe

There are those who claim that the whole of the first tithe is to go to the local church. The first, or Levitical, tithe, however, is to be used to support all of those endeavors in which the Levites were engaged. This means that the first tithe may be used for Christian schools and other educational efforts (e.g., Christian publishing houses, radio and television broadcasts, and the like), as well as various missionary works.

Nevertheless, just as the Levites lived throughout the land of Israel, and just as most of the support of the Levites through the first tithe went to them locally, so the Christian has a duty to make sure that the Kingdom work in his own community is supported. This means that the congregation of which he is a member as well as the Christian school or schools in his area ought to receive his support. (There is one important qualification to this that I will note presently.) The minister (i.e., the teaching elder) of his congregation is engaged in the Kingdom work both of education and of conducting public worship. Others in the church may be employed full or part time in the ministry of music. The teachers at the local Christian school are obviously involved in education. All these were Levitical functions. All those today, engaged in these activities, deserve our first tithe.

The minister of the Word and the teachers in the Christian school where we live and worship must be adequately supported. Until they are, a generous part of our Levitical tithe must go to support them. This brings up the question of when they are being adequately supported. The people of the covenant community commonly have the idea that the minister or Christian educator should be content to live on a bit less than everyone else, since his great reward is spiritual and not temporal. This reflects a Medieval and an even earlier pagan Greek view of the world. The spiritual is good, the physical evil. Those who are truly spiritual should get by with few material possessions so that they can remain truly spiritual. This, however, is not the biblical view. In fact, the biblical view is quite the opposite. Paul, in 1 Corinthians chapter

9, argues at some length that the teacher of the Word has a right to earn his living from the teaching and preaching of the Word. In 1 Timothy 5:18 he uses the same Old Testament Scripture (namely, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn”) which he used in 1 Corinthians to show {104} that the teacher of the Word had a right to a living wage, to establish his point of 5:17 that the teaching elder is “worthy of double honor.” In 5:18 he also declares, “The laborer is worthy of his reward.” It is clear that Paul is talking about financial remuneration when he says that the teaching elder is “worthy of double honor.” This goes directly contrary to the practice of most churches, in which the salary of the minister is set sufficiently low so that he is one of the poorer members of the congregation. If we would be biblical we would set the wages of our minister well above the norm in our congregation.

If we look at the Old Testament, we find that the biblical pattern of tithing would have resulted in the Levites being better off materially than the norm. In addition to sharing the rejoicing tithe with the Levites, the children of Israel were required to give a tenth of all their increase to the Levites for their support. Now, besides Levi, there were twelve tribes in Israel (Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, having both received an inheritance). At least at the time of the census in the wilderness the tribe of Levi was far from the largest. Had the tithe been faithfully paid to the Levites they would have been as a group at least twelve-tenths as prosperous as the norm. That the Levites of the Old Testament were so honored is sufficient to show that the double honor ought to be given not only to ministers but to Christian educators in general.

On a number of occasions the command to tithe to the Levites is conjoined with the reminder that they had no inheritance in the land. This remark is relevant to those congregations today which for whatever reason have decided to buy parsonages. The minister does not have one of the greatest investments, sources of financial security, and means of inheritance that the other members of his congregation have—a piece of property. Although he rents “for free,” he is in essence a renter throughout his ministry. This must be taken into consideration and the minister remunerated accordingly so that by wise investment he can build up sufficient funds not only for his retirement but to pass a worthy inheritance to his children. He should not be deprived of this biblical right and

privilege which the rest of his congregation has.

Along with the work of the local church and the local congregation, the denomination also deserves support from our tithe. This is particularly true because the denomination typically sends out missionaries, both foreign and domestic, and evangelists as well, and also engages in various publishing efforts. Although this is not the place to defend this, {105} the fact is that without proper oversight such as is possible with a denomination, missionary and evangelistic works do not conform to a biblical pattern.

The minister and other laborers in the local congregation and the local Christian school ought to be adequately supported, as should missionaries and evangelists, and we should make sure that they are. If the greatest part of our tithe is needed here it should go here. Nevertheless, one crucial qualification should be made. When our local congregation, Christian school, or denomination seriously misuses its funds and after hearing our proper protests continues in such practices, we would do well to give our tithe elsewhere. We must pay our tithes, but we must pay them responsibly. Thus, we must know the organizations to which we are tithing, and we must know that these organizations are using our tithes for the advancement of God's Kingdom. An apostate church or denomination or school deserves not one cent from us. Of course, one hopes that a true Christian would not be part of an apostate church and that a congregation of believers would leave an apostate denomination when it became clear that their protests had fallen on deaf ears. Nevertheless, with so many congregations, denominations, and schools so rapidly but insidiously heading towards apostasy, this warning must be given. However, funds can be misused by congregations, denominations, and schools that are rigidly orthodox. For example, a congregation that seriously underpays its minister while lavishly furnishing its church buildings or one that adds totally unneeded full-time staff is misusing funds. If we are contributing our tithe to such a congregation we need to reevaluate what we are doing.

Once the needs of the local congregation and Christian school are adequately cared for, the members of the covenant community are free to give the remainder of their tithes to other organizations. Christian publishing houses, Christian colleges thoroughly

committed to teaching from a biblical perspective (of which there are very few), Christian radio and television programs (such as the *Back to God Hour*), foundations dedicated to Christian reconstruction (such as the Chalcedon Foundation), and the like may receive part of our tithes. Of course, with any such organization we ought to be *sure* that it is faithfully engaged in Kingdom work. Organizations are continually bombarding God's people for funds. Some of them are responsible. Some are engaged in Kingdom work. But many are not. Before we give anything to them we ought to be certain that our tithe will be used wisely. {106}

2. The rejoicing tithe

I have already commented on the use of this tithe in the section on "The Laws of the Tithe." As I noted then, this tithe has largely fallen into disuse. Nevertheless, we are still duty bound to pay the rejoicing tithe and to rejoice before the Lord. Family camps and retreats run by our congregation or denomination are appropriate places to use part of this tithe. Funds should be provided from this tithe for the widows and other poorer members of our congregation (or other congregations) to attend such functions. Each local congregation would do well to organize various festive meals throughout the year whereby its members could rejoice before the Lord. The reason these things are often considered a burden rather than a joy is because the members of the covenant community do not see the need to set aside a tithe for this purpose. A family (or group of families) could put aside time on a regular basis to eat a meal of thanksgiving, as a reminder of the goodness of God in blessing them so abundantly. As indicated earlier, a family (or families) could plan a time away from their work and their home each year during which they might receive spiritual refreshment as with a carefree spirit they rejoiced over the goodness and mercy of God in providing for all their material and spiritual needs. Surprisingly enough, in this day when leisure time and vacation are so much sought after, one of the most difficult things for a family to do is to spend time in carefree rejoicing and rest. Vacations are usually harried and often spent where the glitter of lights and canned entertainment ensures that spiritual refreshment cannot take place. Moreover, worry over the cost of the vacation seriously diminishes the enjoyment for many

a person. For the Christian these things need not and ought not to be. The Christian ought to consider laying aside a portion of the rejoicing tithe for a vacation of rejoicing, rest, and renewed fellowship with other members of the family or with other families. So doing might well lead to some surprising blessings for oneself and others. Again, the possibilities in the ways in which the rejoicing tithe might be used are boundless. My hope is that those in the covenant community would begin to use their imaginations in thinking of them.

3. The third-year tithe

The third-year, or poor, tithe is quite easy to comment upon, despite its having fallen into disuse. That is because the functions which its use supports are amongst those historically performed by the church. [107] Part of it was to be given to the Levites. So, part of it today is to be used to support those functions performed by the Levites of Israel. We have already noted these functions in our discussions of the Levitical tithe, and so we do not have to make further remarks at this point. However, as we saw when discussing the laws of the tithe, not only were the Levites to share in this tithe, but the “worthy poor” were to receive a portion as well. This deserves further comment.

The first thing that we must note about the biblical Law concerning this tithe is that it does not specify how much of it was to go to the Levites and how much to the “worthy poor.” There is a good reason for this. The extent to which poor relief is necessary varies greatly from time to time and place to place. The general productivity of the land (not just in agriculture but in natural resources as well) differs from place to place. Years of famine can alternate with years of plenty. Natural disasters can hit a people with great frequency or avoid them completely for a long period of time. All other things being equal, the number of worthy poor will vary greatly with such factors that enough of the third-year tithe be set aside for the poor that their basic needs are met.

The next thing we must note is that this tithe was administered locally. As a general rule, this is as true today as it was in ancient Israel. We are duty bound to make sure that the needs of the poor in our own locality are met. It is a shame that for the most part the covenant community is not more active in this. However,

faithfully administered food pantries, clothing outlets, and the like deserve our support and donations. The local congregation ought also to provide care first of all for its own aged and then for the rest of the aged in the community. Temporary shelter ought to be given to the traveler and the homeless. Care for the sick ought also to be included here. There is no reason, if the covenant community were doing its duty, for hospitals and health care facilities to require those who must use them either to be heavily insured, to be dependent on government subsidy, or to suffer extreme economic loss. Only because God's people have neglected to pay their poor tithes has this inequitable situation come about and does it continue.

As with the Levitical tithe, the rule of thumb is that the lion's share of the third-year tithe should be given for local poor relief. However, there is nothing wrong with sending part of this tithe for relief in other areas when it is not needed locally but when needs arise elsewhere. {108} Here, too, the warnings noted earlier need to be repeated. We must know the integrity of the organizations to which we give for the purpose of poor relief. We must be sure that the money is actually being used for this purpose and not to pad the pockets of administrators or to support revolutionaries or other anti-godly enterprises. ("Relief" administered by liberal churches is especially suspect in this area.) Whenever we go beyond our own locality we are dealing with groups of which we are likely to be ignorant. We must be responsible in our tithing. Therefore, we must be careful that our tithe be used rightly.

B. On What Do I Pay My Tithes?

Many are fond of raising the question, "Do I pay my tithe on the gross or on the net?" either as a way of showing how it is impossible to lay down rules for tithing or to show that the Christian has liberty in this area. There is, however, a straightforward answer to this. *The tithes are to be paid on the adjusted gross income.* Israel had a tax, a flat head (or poll) tax in addition to the tithes. Israel was nonetheless commanded to tithe on all of its increase. The same is true today, for we are still under the laws of the tithe. It will not do to argue that we should not have to pay on the gross because we are under an oppressive taxation while Israel's civil tax was minimal. We are under an oppressive taxation because

we are cursed for our disobedience. We are nevertheless duty bound to pay the tithe in accordance with God's Law. The curse will not be changed into a blessing by our doing anything less. If God's Kingdom is to advance and if we are to be relieved of this oppressive taxation, we must pay tithes on all of our increase.

This straightforward answer, however, is subject to certain obvious qualifications. While in general our true adjusted gross income will be close to that reported as such on our income tax return form (and in some cases will not need to be further adjusted), we must be careful to note those sources of income that the government does not require that we count as part of our adjusted gross income. For example, income placed in tax shelters, such as IRA's and Keogh plans, is income on which we ought to tithe, as is interest from certain savings plans which are exempt from government taxation. Self-employed persons (farmers, shop owners, salesmen, ministers, etc.) may deduct legitimate expenses as well as outlays for inventory, for these reduce the size of one's true increase. Nevertheless, such persons must seriously examine each area in which they claim something as a "business expense" to see {109} whether it is such or a "loophole" provided by the state.

On just what income do we tithe? In general, on that on which we presently pay taxes. We tithe on our wages or salary, since they represent increase. We tithe on the true profits from a business. We tithe on the interest from savings, for this too is increase. If we sell something at a profit we tithe on the net profit, since that represents true increase. (For example, if I buy a house for \$50,000 and sell it for \$75,000, and agent's fees, filing fees, and the like associated with the sale amount to \$6,000, I should tithe on \$19,000, for that is my true profit.)

We do not tithe on gifts we receive. This is not true increase. The gift may have been possible because the giver has realized increase. If so, he is duty bound to tithe on his increase. But the Law of God does not require a tax to be paid more than once on the increase. Moreover, it is the duty of the one who realizes the increase to pay the tithe. If he has not, he has sinned before God. I am not required to make amends for his sin.

Nor are we required to tithe on any inheritance that we receive. This is already existing property and not increase. God does not have a property tax. Though all the land is His, He gives it to

man, His deputy on earth, to use and to exercise dominion over it. He does not tax this. Moreover, the Bible recognizes the right of man to assign his property to someone else. When we receive an inheritance this is what has happened. The area of inheritance is one in which the state exercises the power of taxation but in which God does not. (By taxing both property and inheritance the state makes the claim that it and not God is the true owner of this earth. Property and inheritance taxes, then, are amongst the most ungodly of all forms of taxation.)

C. When Do I Pay My Tithe?

There is certainly some liberty in this area. Following the biblical pattern of bringing in the tithe at harvest, we can say that the tithe is to be paid whenever there is increase. Most people who are salaried or wage earners are paid once or twice a month. One should pay the tithe at least as often as he is paid. However, there is nothing wrong, as far as I can see, with such a person distributing certain portions of his tithe (particularly that to the local congregation) on a weekly basis, even if he is paid biweekly or monthly. There is also a good deal of liberty in the frequency of payment on the part of a self-employed person. Here, of course, for some increase comes daily but in varying amounts (such as {110} for a shop owner) or irregularly (such as for certain salesmen). With the intricacies of legitimate business expenses to figure in, it may be quite impossible to get a true figure of one's increase except at the end of the fiscal year. Although there is nothing wrong with taking care of all of one's tithing obligations at that time, it is also feasible (and perhaps wiser given that the work of the Kingdom has to progress throughout the year) to estimate one's real increase on a frequent basis (perhaps monthly, or at least quarterly) and tithe regularly on that basis, making any adjustments that need to be made at the end of the year.

The third-year tithe represents a special situation. Given the description of this tithe in the Law, it appears that it was to represent a tenth of one's increase of the third year. If so, then if we are to be truly biblical it appears that those in the covenant community should decide upon a certain year as the third year (e.g., 1986) and pay this additional tithe upon their increase of that year. Until God's covenant people in general begin to take their

tithing duties seriously this might be quite impossible. However, it would still be a good idea for a family that desires to obey the Law to start designating for themselves every third year as the year that their increase for that year will be tithed with this additional tithe. At this point, however, there does not seem to be any necessity for distributing that tithe all at once. Until the covenant community as a whole respects this tithe and until organizations engaged in poor relief can plan accordingly, we are best advised to figure this tithe on our third-year income and then distribute it throughout the period of the subsequent three years as we see fit.

D. What About Gifts Beyond the Tithe?

Paul declares that he that sows sparingly shall reap sparingly, he that sows bountifully shall reap bountifully, and that God loves a cheerful giver (see 2 Cor. 9:6–7). Once the Christian has faithfully paid all his tithes, he has only done his duty. He has merely paid God's tax. He is still encouraged, yea, admonished to be generous in giving gifts beyond the tithe. He should do so willingly and not grudgingly, cheerfully, yea, hilariously, and not sadly or hesitantly. Through the Apostle Paul, God promises even greater blessings to those who give generously. Giving bountifully they will also reap bountifully. This should be a great encouragement for Christians to contribute generously beyond the tithe.

Of course, the same words of warning apply to gifts as to tithes. The Christian should give generously but not indiscriminately. He should {111} give where there is a need and only when the gift will in all likelihood be used wisely. Nor should he give so as to do harm to himself or his family. We are to give generously, not stupidly. There is no more pathetic a picture than that of a family suffering because of a father's indiscriminate giving. God promises to bless bountiful giving, not stupid, irresponsible giving.

God's covenant people are required to tithe. To do less is to sin. Those who are truly converted to the Gospel will be convinced of this through the Holy Spirit, and they will joyfully and willingly accept this obligation. They will be blessed and God's Kingdom work will advance. Those who do not tithe will wither on the vine as will those congregations in which the tithe is not faithfully preached. Like dead branches they will be cut off and consumed like firewood. Let us pray and let us work in order that God will

raise up forceful men so that God's Kingdom may forcefully advance upon this earth.

MARRIAGE: THE IMAGE OF THE UNION OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Jean-Marc Berthoud

*Adapted from a marriage sermon delivered in Yverdon,
Vaud, Switzerland on Saturday, 2nd of August 1986*

However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Eph. 5:33)

Before briefly examining the magnificent text in the epistle to the Ephesians (5:12–33) where the Apostle so solemnly gives the Christian marriage its titles of nobility, it is necessary to place this passage in the context of this fifth chapter where it is to be found. We will thereby see that the words Paul addresses to the state of matrimony are in no way to be interpreted as merely conditioned by local cultural and historical circumstances, as is often so lightly affirmed by certain commentators and preachers. These, while dishonoring the name of Christian, strive to relativise the divinely established norms of marriage.

Paul begins this chapter by exhorting the faithful in Ephesus, and among them, of course, all who are married, to aspire to nothing less than to be “*the imitators of God as dearly loved children*” (v. 1). He calls them to take example from Jesus Christ Himself in making continual progress in the love they owe one another, “*just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering to God*” (v. 2).

The Apostle then warns them of the danger of letting themselves be deceived by the empty words of false doctors who would oppose themselves to his divinely inspired teaching by relativising the commandments he is about to give them (v. 6). As if the Word of God {113} were only valid for a certain epoch, for a particular culture, and, as a result, of no worth today, Paul goes on to add

that such a revolt against the order set up by the Creator can only provoke God's judgement, for "*his wrath comes on those who are disobedient*." Therefore, he adds, we are to have nothing to do with such so-called Christians (vv. 6–7).

Paul goes on to show that the true difference is not that between epochs, cultures, or races, but between the state of spiritual darkness far from God and that of light in His presence. God's order, which is the fruit of light, "*consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth*" (v. 9). All the rest is but the fruitless, sterile activism of darkness. Sterile both physically and spiritually, for it is shameful to mention what these perverted men and women do in private (v. 12). Let us not forget that Ephesus was a Greek city and that Greek culture at this time considered homosexual relations practiced by both sexes as a sign of moral virtue and particularly a basic element in the education of boys.¹

Thus the Christians of Ephesus, and in particular the married couples in the Church, are required by Paul to be particularly careful as to how they live. They are not to be fools, but filled with wisdom, buying up the time, for the days, even then, were evil. Having understood God's will for them as it is revealed in his Word, that is, in this letter from Paul, and filled with the Holy Spirit, they are continually to praise and worship God for His infinite mercies as Creator, Savior, and Lord.

What follows is a precise description, far too precise for the likings of most of us, of the exact nature of God's will for husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves, a very practical social moral code.

After recommending all the Ephesian Christians to a general spirit of mutual submission, the very opposite of that claiming of one's "rights" so common today, each assuming in the fear of the Lord the duties of his vocation, Paul gives us a brief description of this God-given order in marriage.

Wives must submit to their husbands as to the Lord himself (v. 22). Why set up such a drastic requirement which seems to our civilization the height of barbaric obscurantism? The answer is no less clear: "*For the husband is the head of the wife*" (v. 23).

1. H.-I. Marrou, "Homosexuality in Education," in his book, *Histoire de l'éducation dans l'Antiquité* (Paris: Seuil, 1965).

This is a far cry from our present fashion of sexual equalitarianism, from that unisex mentality where created differences between men and women are totally discounted in favor of that imaginary asexual being {114} proposed as model by Elisabeth Badinter (wife of the former French minister of justice, Robert Badinter) in a book which seriously envisages childbearing by men to redress the injustices of nature! It is this attitude which, with the blessing of the Swiss Roman Catholic bishops, of the Federation of Reformed Churches, and the embarrassed and ambiguous silence of the Evangelicals, succeeded in inducing the Swiss people to adopt in the autumn of 1981 a new matrimonial law which establishes husband and wife not only as equal juridically but identical in roles and even interchangeable. Thus was abolished in our country the position of the man as head of the family, and in addition his paternal authority was replaced by that of the bureaucratic State.

Far more demanding still is Paul's requirement of husbands, that they love their wives as Christ loves His Church, identifying Himself with her, taking great care of her, sacrificing Himself for her. His demands go so far as to recommend that, "*Husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies,*" for "*He who loves his wife loves himself.*"

How far are we here from that modern ideal of the husband by the "grace" of modern scientific technology and its vast array of contraceptive (literally antilife) techniques, as the irresponsible pleasure seeking playmate-lover of his wife, a wife so often become a domesticated mistress whose husband is the devoted servant of their common pleasures. How far are we, in Paul's vision of marriage, from that "cohabitation," "for the better, without the worse," as the French expression goes, so popular today. In fact this institutionalized "cohabitation" has become so normal and so generally approved that our French neighbors have named "cohabitation" their present political setup.² They have simply forgotten that the term means nothing less than concubinage, fornication, adultery. When a great nation can use such a term complacently to describe its political system it cannot be far from that judgment which fell on Sodom and Gomorrah.

2. One even speaks of the necessary "cohabitation of children and television." See E. Sullerot, "Pour le meilleur et sans le pire" *Fayrd* (Paris, 1984).

For God, marriage, an institution divinely established from creation as God's order for all men and women of all times and all places, reflects the order which should prevail between the Creator and His creation. For the Christian, marriage in addition is a representation of the relation between Christ and His spouse, the Church. Just as a man leaves his father and mother to attach himself to his wife, in the same way Christ left His Father in heaven, according to His divinity, and His earthly mother, according to His humanity, to attach Himself for ever to His wife, the {1115} Church, which He loved,

and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. (vv. 25–27)

In this way the husband and the wife, as on a stage, must in the family play their proper roles. These roles rightly executed represent the fundamental order which should reign between God and His creation, between Jesus Christ and His Church, the new creation. The husband must play the part of God, of the Creator, of Christ; the wife that of the creation, the Church. In this respect this differentiation in the symbolic roles of the man and the woman does not imply the notion of superiority or inferiority of the one over the other. Nor do we see in the authority vested in the husband any indication of masculine tyranny, as if Christ were the dictator arbitrarily dominating His Church. Nor is the attribution of these roles arbitrary either, for they correspond to the created nature of those who exercise them. Further, the mathematical ideal of complete quantitative equality which is at the heart of the democratic ideology can be found nowhere in God's creation. Each creature has its own individuality, its own characteristics. No two leaves on a tree are identical nor are two grains of sand on a beach. No two human beings are interchangeable, and the differences between men and women are very great indeed. This sexual diversification is of a complementary nature which renders the complex organization of a normal family possible. Abstract equalitarianism is no doubt Satan's most effective weapon in the post-enlightenment world for the systematic destruction of God's created order.

As disorder in creation came from the revolt of the creature against the Creator, the reestablishment of the disrupted divine order must likewise come from the perfect obedience of the creature to his Creator. This perfect obedience of the creature was effected by our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity. The fundamental image of this restored obedience is that of the Church, obedient to all things in Christ. The second image of this restored faithfulness is the submission of the Christian wife to her husband. As from the beginning, God has established the family as the theatre where the relationship between husband and wife symbolically represents that of the Creator to His creation. Divine authority on the one hand, submission of the creature to the Creator on the other. These function under the overarching sovereignty of God's {116} law. For the Christian, the model proposed by God, though keeping the same fundamental characteristics, is much more intimate, more expressive, more accessible. On the one hand the husband holds the role of Christ, unquestionably Lord, but a Lord filled with affection for his wife, the Church, identifying himself with her, sacrificing himself for her. On the other hand the wife must keep the role of God's faithful heavenly bride, the Church. By the wife's submissive and respectful attitude to her husband, she witnesses to what should indeed be the constant attitude of the obedient Church towards her Lord, of the restored creation towards her Renewer and re-Creator.

It is not possible to overestimate the importance for the future of the world of the faithfulness of individual Christian married couples where husband and wife keep their respective roles. Nor can we measure how vital is the faithful attitude of the bride of Christ towards her divine Bridegroom, her Creator, her Savior, and her Lord. The Devil is constantly pushing us, as families and churches, in the direction of revolt against God and His law-order, tempting us to organize our families and Churches otherwise than is required by the Word of God. To take a very striking example of a blatant ecclesiastical disobedience, at the end of October (1986) Pope John-Paul II convened a new Babel of the religions of the world in Assisi in Italy to pray for the peace of the world. As if peace could be obtained by a kind of syncretistic diplomatic compromise between the religions of the world.

Very different is the way of God's faithful Church, firstfruits

of a new creation, once again submissive in joyful obedience to her Lord and Savior. Very different is the way of the Christian family where the relationship between man and wife constantly and faithfully (though imperfectly) reflects the relationship Jesus Christ has established with His Church. The obedience of a husband, identifying with and sacrificing himself for his dear wife; the obedience of a wife submissive to and respectful of her cherished husband; the obedience of a Church built up according to the prescriptions of the Word of God and maintaining, through the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, a biblical standard of holiness; have far greater importance in the sight of God and for true effectiveness here on earth for the future of the world, than all the vain political and religious activism, both of our nations which have revolted against their Sovereign King, and of so many Churches disobedient to their divine Bridegroom.

3.

HISTORICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

CHRISTIANITY, SOCIALISM, AND THE LANDMARKS SYMPOSIUM OF 1909

Ellen Myers

One of the most important works in the intellectual history of Europe was the *Landmarks* symposium, first published in tsarist Russia in 1909, and recently republished in English in America.¹ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn consciously worked in the tradition of this book when he edited the excellent collection of articles on matters of fundamental principle concerning the present state of Russia, *From Under the Rubble*.² Because *Landmarks* touches upon the moral, philosophical, economic, and social errors of socialistic thought as expressed in a situation of national crisis, the objections it raises against socialist methods and solutions are still relevant today in a situation of world-wide crisis. *Landmarks* also bears close comparison to the symposium *Is Capitalism Christian?* recently edited by Franky Schaeffer.³ A common emphasis upon biblical morality and faith as the foundation for sound social-economic principles, upon the importance of economic production rather than, or equal to, distribution, and upon perception and acceptance of reality rather than utopianism, distinguishes all three books. This paper will review *Landmarks*, unfortunately little known among the general public, from the biblical creation/Christian perspective.

The Russian revolutionary intelligentsia was tested and found

1. Boris Shragin and Albert Todd, eds., *Landmarks*, trans. Marian Schwartz (New York: Karz Howard Publishers, 1977).

2. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, ed., *From Under the Rubble*, intr. Max Hayward, 3rd printing (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1975).

3. Franky Schaeffer, ed., *Is Capitalism Christian?* 1st cloth ed. (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1986).

wanting in the abortive revolution of 1905. At the heart of this failure lay the polarization of Russian society “into intransigent or dogmatic extremes: those who are exclusively for the state and those ... who are exclusively {119} for the liberated individual” (*Landmarks*, vi). The *Landmarks* contributors accused the left-radical intelligentsia of having lost touch with reality, that is, absolute values, historical and spiritual truth, and the meaning of “culture” defined as “the totality of objective values realized in socio-historical life” (Semen Frank, xxvi, 164). In the name of a “self-destructive justice” (xxix), the intelligentsia embraced merely negative ends, “destruction without construction, distribution without production” (*ibid.*).

While the seven contributors (Nikolai Berdyaev, Sergei Bulgakov, Mikhail Gershenzon, Aleksandr Izgoev, Bogdan Kistyakovsky, Pyotr Struve, and Semen Frank) disagreed among themselves on a number of points, they yet came to similar conclusions, appealing “for pure knowledge, for moral self-perfection, and ... for ... Christianity” (Boris Shragin, xxxiv). While *Landmarks* aroused instant rapt and widespread attention, it “was snatched up everywhere only in order to be repudiated: a *succ s de scandale*” (xxxii). Lenin, rightly recognizing that he and his party “were the extreme embodiment of those intellectual and moral defects that *Landmarks* was warning against” (xxxiii), was most vituperative against it. However, other individuals and groups whose repentance the *Landmarks* contributors might have more reasonably hoped to stir up, such as the Constitutional Democrat Party led by Pavel Milyukov, also stopped their minds and hearts from receiving its solemn warnings. Thus it came to pass that after 1917 Lenin and his Bolshevik cohorts “destroyed virtually to a man the Russian intelligentsia with the exception of those who managed to flee abroad” (xxxiii). This was largely the outworking of the intelligentsia’s willful blindness to reality, which the *Landmarks* contributors had labored to dispel.

In his “Introduction 1,” B. Khazarnufsky describes the development of the Russian church from the Mongolian yoke of AD 1240–1480 to the 1917 Revolution, and the meaning of this historical course of events for the Russian state and society. At issue was the institutional role of the church, and the role of public institutions in general as either expressing a collective spirit

among the people, or else individual self-assertion on the part of the leaders (such as patriarch or tsar). Certainly this problem is still and everywhere very much with us and applies to institutions, such as churches and legislatures, in free societies as well. The history of philosophy in Russia from Hegel to Marxism is also briefly narrated.

Boris Shragin, in his "Introduction 2," concentrates upon the meaning {120} of the failure of the Russian intelligentsia shown in the 1901 revolution for contemporary (1970s) intellectuals in the West. He hopes Western intellectuals will not be as blind as their pre-1917 Russian counterparts, but fears they might be. Even when *Landmarks* first appeared in 1909, its warnings were not new, as Mikhail Gershenzon, the symposium's editor, pointed out: "Our warnings are not new: all of our most profound thinkers, from Chaadaev to Solovyov and Tolstoy, have asserted the same thing. But no one listened to them; the intelligentsia passed them by" (2).

Nikolai Berdyaev, doubtless best known among the *Landmarks* contributors in the West for his existentialist philosophy, leads off the essays in his paper which discusses philosophic and moral truth (*istina* and *pravda*). He accuses the intelligentsia of twisting any and all philosophies of the West for its own socialist utilitarian purposes. When such distortion is impossible, that philosophy is neglected in favor of one such as Bogdanov's, which the intelligentsia can "reduce to a nickel pamphlet" (11). It is true that Russian history has made the Russian intelligentsia what it is, and much guilt lies with the despotic form of government. "But it is unworthy of free beings always to accuse external forces of everything and thereby excuse themselves" (22). The intelligentsia must admit its own guilt in the events of its time; only thus can its "new soul" be born (*ibid.*).

In "Heroism and Asceticism: Reflections on the Religious Nature of the Russian Intelligentsia," Sergei Bulgakov contrasts the self-glorifying "heroism" of the Russian revolutionary "intelligents" with the Christ-glorifying "asceticism" of Christian believers and martyrs. He appeals to the intelligentsia to learn from history, which "is not merely a chronology... it is ... the experience of good and evil, which forms the condition for spiritual growth" (23). He portrays the intelligentsia as possessing "a certain other-

wordliness ... Puritanism ... asceticism" (28), a "feeling of guilt before the people" and "capacity for self-sacrifice" along with atheism, and motivated by faith in science as competent to give final answers (29–30). (We can instantly think of such people among radical left-wing leaders today, and even more so in the revolutionary youth movements of the 1960s and '70s). Bulgakov says that in its uncritical, historically and culturally ignorant, dogmatic acceptance of "the most extreme and shrill forms of the Enlightenment" (33), the Russian intelligentsia "felt called upon to play the role of Providence to its homeland" (31). The intelligentsia thus became arrogant, conceited, {121} scornful for those of other opinions, and an abstract and unrealistic judge of actual reality. (This is surely true of Western left-wing intellectuals today as well, especially in the news media elite. See the revealing essay by Rael and Erich Isaac in *Is Capitalism Christian?*)

Bulgakov points out that the Russian intelligentsia of his time used a "maximalism" in both means (terrorism) and ends (seeking out persecution and death). This maximalism led in turn to a nihilism of amorality, a "heroic 'all-is-allowed'" (42), and made unfit the intelligentsia for simple everyday life and work, "the stuff of daily existence" (*ibid.*). (The young terrorists so active in Europe and the world ever since the 1960s are also such "maximalists.") The Christian "ascetic," Bulgakov shows, is quite different. He "believes in God the Provider, without whose will not a single hair falls from a man's head" (41). He humbly works out his life moment by moment in obedience to God's plan. But the intelligentsia "hero" despises humility, believes man to be essentially good, denies sinfulness, and ascribes all his ills to the environment, which must be improved under the intelligentsia's leadership. To the intelligentsia, progress "signifies contempt for one's fathers ... and historical and ... personal ingratitude" (11). No internal resemblance exists between Christianity and intelligentsia revolutionism; only repentance on the part of the intelligentsia can bridge the abyss between them (13). Finally, there is a need for a "church intelligentsia, uniting genuine Christianity with an enlightened and clear understanding of cultural and historical tasks" (61). This same need, of course, exists today around the world. The modern biblical creation movement, the Christian reconstruction movement, and related efforts are attempts to fill

that need. In fact, *Landmarks* may well be seen as a precursor to these movements.

Mikhail Gershenzon's "Creative Self-Cognition" might be called an elaboration in idealist-philosophical terms of Bulgakov's call to repentance. Gershenzon defines the task of each person as self-cognition and integration into the Divine, or universal, will. The *intelligents* have failed to do so; nevertheless, the failure of the 1901 revolution may have been "almost as beneficial for the intelligentsia as its success would have been" (82), because it forced the *intelligents* to reassess themselves, their "mistaken ends and incorrect means" (87). Gershenzon ends on an optimistic note: "The movement ... toward creative individual self-cognition has already begun" (87). In view of subsequent history, one wonders whether he was whistling in the dark. {122}

One of the most interesting and informative essays of *Landmarks* is Aleksandr Izgoev's report "On Educated Youth: Notes on its Life and Sentiments." It throws much light upon how Russian-educated young people, in particular the children of the intelligentsia, lived and thought at the turn of our century. Izgoev refers to a poll showing their alienation from their families, their sexual promiscuity, and their appalling lack of real education in the sense of thorough and diligent acquisition of knowledge. (Parallels to modern public education and its terrible lack of basic instruction and discipline are instantly apparent.) Izgoev points out the incomparable superiority of foreign university study to that in Russia. He shows the ingrown "youth culture" with its own exclusively youth-oriented literature and its rejection of anyone over thirty-five (99). Moreover, "the Russian *intelligent*, coming ... out of this unique infant culture, does not enter any other kind of culture and is stranded in a void" (100). A "new religious orthodoxy" makes outcasts of those students who do not accept the prevailing radical leftism of their *intelligent* schoolmates (101–2). If one can pass for a radical revolutionary, however, one gets away with theft, cheating, and lying. The "death wish" among these young people, already mentioned by Bulgakov, is also discussed by Izgoev. This desire to die for the "cause," he argues, must be replaced by "love for life" as a basic motive for activity (106). Otherwise, all Russia may be "doomed to die and perish with no possible reprieve" (*ibid.*). Anyone who has had personal insight

into the promiscuity, pessimism, and moral nihilism fostered by some teachers, textbooks, and the entire current events doomsday propaganda, and parental indifference toward the climate prevailing at almost all American public schools (especially high schools) today, will see the urgent relevance of Izgoev's essay.

Bogdan Kistyakovsky, a prominent Ukrainian legal scholar, exposes the intelligentsia's lack of legal consciousness in "The Defense of Law." Legal consciousness and formulations must undergird and implement constitutional government (then barely established in Russia pursuant to the 1905 uprisings). This government must be based upon the ethics of the utmost possible freedom of the individual person. Kistyakovsky refers to the famous populist-socialist writer N. K. Mikhailovsky (d. 1904), who had believed Russia might pass by political freedom and a constitutional government on her road to a socialist order (120). He says Mikhailovsky overlooked the fact that constitutional government, in its very method of compromises between various parties and groups, preserves {123} the individual's inviolability and freedom—a lesson present-day Marxists and socialists ought to ponder. G. B. Plekhanov, chief theoretician of the Russian Social-Democratic Workers Party (communist), explicitly placed the supremacy of force above the principles of law (124–25). This idea, says Kistyakovsky, is "truly monstrous" (125). He calls upon the intelligentsia to "embrace the conditional values of the most everyday but solid and inviolable legal order, along with the absolute values of individual self-improvement and the moral world older" (137). However, patient, constitutionally founded, law-abiding gradualism in achieving social improvement does not appeal to utopian radical "intelligents" at any time.

Pyotr Struve's essay, "The Intelligentsia and Revolution," briefly delineates earlier revolutions or political upheavals in Russia, beginning with the Time of Troubles of the early seventeenth century. Previous revolutions, Struve believes, were struggles between "state-oriented elements" and "anti-state 'thievery.'" The intelligentsia embodies the spirit of the latter, added to its irreligiosity; it "rejects the world in the name of the world, and in so doing serves neither the world nor God" (142). (This line of thought is reiterated almost verbatim in Richard John Neuhaus's essay on the modern Western liberal clergy in *Is Capitalism*

Christian?) Struve (as Neuhaus) essentially demands the intelligentsia's voluntary demise "as a special cultural category" by abandoning its antistate, anti-God stance (112).

The concluding essay of *Landmarks* is Semen Frank's "The Ethics of Nihilism: A Characterization of the Russian Intelligentsia's Moral Outlook." Frank traces intelligentsia thought back to the mechanistic-rationalist worldview of the Enlightenment. He states that "the Russian intelligentsia's moral world has remained unchanged ... over the course of many decades" (157), and that this moral world "is painted a bright moral-utilitarian color" (158), echoing Bulgakov (see above). Anything but utilitarian practicality is seen as "unnecessary and dangerous luxury" (159). At the root of this mentality lies "the *nihilistic* attitude" (160), radically opposed to the religious attitude. It is expressed in what Frank calls "moralism" as service to "self-denial, ascetic self-restriction, and self-restriction *per se*" (161–62). True culture, built upon human creativity and "the embodiment of ideal values in life" (164), is replaced by a pseudo-culture preoccupied with the subjective requirements of life (such as roads, sewers, or politics). There exists a veritable "cult of *simplicity*" among the intelligentsia, a "populist" {124} anticultural spirit. (Similar trends can be observed today among Christians inclining to socialism, and this attitude was embraced by the heterodox and semi-Buddhist "Christianity" of Leo Tolstoy, who in turn inspired Gandhi.)

Frank recognizes that the intelligentsia sees the world as in chaos and "determined only by blind material forces" (168), and thus indifferent to man and his happiness. Yet atheistic moralism illogically but optimistically believes the world can be made perfect for mankind by its adherents. (Both these mutually exclusive beliefs stem from modern Darwinian evolutionism, then and now rampant among the educated public, and the foundation of secular humanism as laid down in *Humanist Manifesto I* and *Humanist Manifesto II*.) For the atheist moralist, "it is only necessary to eliminate the injustice of the oppressors or the ... stupidity of the oppressed majority to establish the kingdom of earthly paradise" (169). (All communist societies witness to the contrary.) Those won over to this false faith, Frank states, no longer cherish simple grass-roots individual charity from person to person but rather despise it as trivial and cheap "philantropy" (169). In addition,

love for an abstract mankind (rather than concrete, flesh-and-blood men, women, and children) and its future happiness leads to a love for destruction of the present, and thus “the faithful populist-socialist becomes the revolutionary” (170).

Such a socialist-revolutionist substitutes destruction for creation, and distribution for production, believing that conditions for happiness need not be constructed but can be merely expropriated from the hated “rich.” Thus “the socialist intelligentsia remains barren ... and ... leads a parasitic existence feeding off the nation’s body” (171). “It is time,” Frank writes (in a section which could be addressed to modern communist, socialist, or semi-socialist societies everywhere), “to reduce the number of middlemen, transporters, guards, administrators, and distributors of all kinds throughout the economy of our national culture and to increase the number of genuine producers” (176).

Frank even dares state that “it is necessary to love wealth if one is going to create it. We are taking the concept of wealth here not only in the sense of material wealth, but in the broad philosophical sense in which it encompasses the possessing of both material and spiritual goods, or, to be more precise, in which material well-being is merely an accompaniment or a symbolic index of spiritual might and spiritual productivity. In this sense the metaphysical idea of wealth coincides with the idea of culture as the totality of ideal values embodied in historical life” {125} (176). The intelligentsia’s opposition to the principle of productivity and creativity is, then, “not a theoretical mistake ... but ... rests on a moral or religious-philosophical misconception. In the final reckoning, it comes out of nihilistic moralism, out of the refusal to recognize absolute values” (*ibid.*). The *intelligent* indulges in a sort of asceticism and can be defined “as a *militant monk of the nihilistic religion of earthly contentment*” (179). But though he has isolated himself from actual reality, he yet “wants to rule the world from his monastery” (179), declaring “war on the world in order to forcibly do it a great favor and gratify its earthly, material needs” (180). Frank concludes by calling for rejecting nihilistic moralism and adopting “the creative and constructive nature of *religious humanism*” (184). (His conversion to orthodox Christianity in

1912 is foreshadowed here.⁴⁾

The principles espoused and disseminated by the *Landmarks* symposium are evidently still timely and relevant today. The malady of socialist utopianism which their adoption, and only their adoption, would cure, is also still infecting many. The abysmal failure of modern socialist utopias imposed over half the world by force to insure the welfare of its poor slaves ought to incline any informed observer to accept these principles as incomparably better—as alone—conforming to actual reality. On the basis of biblical Christian reasoning, the *Landmarks* writers were able to predict the failures of socialist utopianism before they occurred. The conclusion is that in its ability to predict, biblical Christianity rather than “scientific socialism” is truly scientific. The need among Bible-believing Christians today is the dissemination and further faithful development and application of the pioneering social, political, and economic thought of the *Landmarks* writers, the contributors to Solzhenitsyn’s *From Under the Rubble*, and to Schaeffer’s *Is Capitalism Christian?* To that end the Creator and Sovereign God revealed infallibly in Scripture, the Author of liberty and Redeemer of fallen man, has raised up and is blessing the modern biblical creation movement, the Christian reconstruction movement, and related efforts, prefigured and indeed anticipated by *Landmarks*.

4. It is remarkable that all three symposia (n. 1, 2, and 3 above) were written by both Christian believers (not including, of course, modernist-socialist “Christian” thinkers), and Jews.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN THE SETTLING OF AUSTRALIA

Graham McLennan

Graham McLennan is a dental surgeon from Orange N.S.W., who led the Call to Australia Senate team at the last federal election. He and Jack Sonnemann of the Australian Federation for Decency are joint national coordinators for the National Alliance for Christian Leadership (NACL).

A National Alliance for Christian Leadership has recently been formed, made up of a coalition of many Christian organizations, with the objective of restoring Christian leadership to government. The book *The Bicentenary and Beyond*, printed late in 1986, is being used as a basis for a course in Christian leadership which will cover aspects of our Christian heritage and the faith of our early pioneers, along with many other topics.

In his foreword to the manual, the Rev. Dr. Gordon Powell talks about Robert Steel, a Presbyterian minister, who had great influence on Australia.

Dr. Steel formed a young men's fellowship in which he trained the members in public speaking and encouraged them to enter politics. He died before seeing the dramatic results of his labors. Both Sir Edmund Barton and Sir George Reid, respectively the first and fourth prime ministers of Australia, were inspired and trained in that class by Dr. Steel. Another member of that class was Peter Dodds McCormick, author of *Advance Australia Fair*. {128}

In this article I would like to cover both the faith of those who discovered and explored Australia and also, as it is South Australia's 110th anniversary, the faith of some of the early pioneers of South Australia.

The Sovereignty of God in Delaying the Settling of Australia

Considering our proximity to the great and ancient cultures of Asia, one might consider why it was that these people did not discover and settle Australia.

The *Hindu/Buddhist* did not advance the limits of the known world because the Hindu religion particularly prohibited sea voyages and contact with foreigners. Their religious beliefs about the world prevented them from traveling south of Sumatra and Java. They believed that the world was flat, rectangular and held up by the heads of elephants.

The *Chinese* came as far south as Timor but believed further south was a kingdom of women (how terrifying!) where the waters flowed downward. With internal revolt, Chinese expansion ceased after 1433 when all contact with foreigners was discouraged.

The *Muslim* sailors referred to the area of the unknown South as Dedjal—“The Kingdom of Antichrist,” so that it was the European, particularly the British, who opened up the “first permanent occupation of Australia since the ice age.”¹

In Search of The Great South Land

It was a Portuguese, *Magellan*, a devout Catholic, who opened the South Seas to the Europeans. His purpose was to “contribute to the glory of almighty God and His church by converting barbarous nations to the Christian faith.”² He was a man of faith, and this faith sustained him until a strait into the Pacific was found.

Pedro Fernandez de Quiros, another Portuguese, believed “that he had been singled out by God as the vessel through whom the inhabitants of ‘Terra Australis’ would be received into the true church & that ‘Terra Australis’ would be Australia del Espiritu Santo—a land dedicated to the Holy Spirit.”³ He in fact discovered the New Hebrides; however, the narrative of his voyage described “all this *region* of the south as far as the Pole which from this time

1. C.M.H. Clark, *A History of Australia*, 3 vols. (Melbourne University Press, 1973), vol. 1, 10

2. *Ibid.*, 12.

3. *Ibid.*, 15.

shall be called Austrialia del Espiritu Santo.”⁴

“May God Almighty vouchsafe His blessing on this work,” *Abel Tasman* wrote in his journal before setting out on what was to be the {129} greatest voyage since Magellan. He became the first European to sight Tasmania and New Zealand, and, on his return, wrote, “God be praised and thanked for this happy voyage.”⁵

And what about *Captain Cook*? He was a nominal Anglican who wouldn’t allow profanity on board and was above reproach morally. His wife gave him a prayer book out of which a number of places discovered on significant days were named. Thus places such as the Whitsundays, Trinity Bay, and Pentecost Islands were named.

Matthew Flinders was the first person to circumnavigate Australia, naming many of the headlands, bays, inlets, and numerous islands such as Kangaroo Island. It was Matthew Flinders who in 1804 commenced using the name “Australia” for Terra Australis, “The Great South Land.” When questioned about sailing on the Sabbath, Flinders replied, “The stars still shine on the Sabbath. How could we keep it better, John, than in telling the glory of creation.”⁶ His navigational ability was unprecedented. “My leading object had hitherto been to make so accurate an investigation of the shores of Terra Australis that no future voyage to this country should be necessary.... such was the plan I pursued, and, with the blessing of God, nothing of importance should have been left for future discoverers upon any part of these extensive coasts....”⁷ It was Flinders who first charted the coast off South Australia.

Pioneers of South Australia

The person who opened up the southern portion of Australia for free settlement was *Captain Charles Sturt*, one of Australia’s greatest and heroic inland explorers. He was a man of courage and prayer, for “in many a scene of danger, of difficulty, and of

4. Clark and Markham, *Voyages of Quirose* (Hakluyt Society), vol. 1, xxx.

5. Clark, *History of Australia*, vol. 1, 31–32

6. Ernestine Hill, *My Love Must Wait* (Angus and Robertson, 1946), 169.

7. Sir E. Scott, *The Life of Matthew Flinders* (Angus and Robertson, 1946), 169.

sorrow he had risen from his knees calm and confident.”⁸ God spared his life on numerous occasions. He endured tremendous hardships when facing the harshness of the Australian inland, and, as Sturt completed his exploration with his men, who had complete confidence in and admiration for him, he “went down on his knees and with tears of joy offered his thanks to Almighty God.”⁹ Thanks to this man, who gave glowing reports of the noble River Murray, South Australia was soon colonised. Charles Sturt loved the majesty of the bush and often “praised his God that he had done such wondrous things.”¹⁰ It was Sturt who in February 1834 wrote to the Colonial office:

He prophesied that the men of South Australia would one day people the heart of the continent and that the Australian colonies would emulate {130} America. He urged them to convince the aborigine that the white man was coming as a brother. He urged them, too, not to give the aborigine trifling presents but to protect him against violence and aggression until that day when as children of the same heavenly Father they had all learned to look at each other with love and charity.¹¹

These sentiments were shared by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel and the London Missionary Society, influential organizations at that time.

Then, there were men who believed God had a special purpose in the Christian settlement of Australia, men such as the permanent under-secretary of the Colonial Office, *James Stephen*, who “believed that the government of men should conform to the government of God”¹² and encouraged Christian families to settle here as well as being influential in the choice of Christian leaders in the colonising of the country. Stephen’s desire was to establish our nation as “a Christian, virtuous enlightened state in the centre of the eastern hemisphere and within reach of the Chinese, Hindu and Mohammedan nations.”¹³ Certainly we are

8. Clark, *History of Australia*, vol. 2, 97.

9. *Ibid.*, 101.

10. *Ibid.*, 98.

11. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 46.

12. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 83.

13. *Ibid.*, 110.

seeing the continuing fulfilment of this great prophetic statement given to the lieutenant-governor of Van-Dieman's Land more than 160 years ago, as we see China opening up to the printing of the Word of God, and as we see missionaries continuing to be sent out from this nation.

One of the initiators of the settling of South Australia was *Robert Gouger*, who wrote a "Sketch of a Proposal for Colonising Australia," a person of deep prayer who was helped by a man found guilty of child abduction who obviously had to remain anonymous for some time—his name was Edward Wakefield. In 1833 Gouger felt that people interested in the formation of a free settlers' province on the southern coast of Australia should form a South Australia Association, and in 1834, 2,500 people attended a public meeting in a Christian centre, at Exeter Hall in London.

Another individual instrumental in the formation of South Australia was *George Fife Angas*, a director in the recently formed South Australia Company and a colonizing commissioner who believed South Australia to be "rich in both material and spiritual possibilities."¹⁴

The colonization commissioners first met in May 1835, and with their chairman *Robert Torrens* they hoped to perform "an act of mercy for the natives of southern Australia by bringing them the gift of their great civilization and their holy faith."¹⁵ The colonial manager was *Samuel Stephens*, [131] appointed by Angas because he had been converted at a Wesleyan revival and "fallen to the floor in agony and cried for mercy so piteously that the Holy Ghost had showered the blessing of salvation on him."¹⁶ Samuel Stephens arrived with the four ships, *Duke of York*, *Lady Mary Pelham*, *John Pirie*, and the *Rapid*, in July–August of 1836, at Kangaroo Island. However, he apparently had not learnt about the perseverance of the saints and developed a drinking problem and was replaced by David McLaren, who wanted to enter the Presbyterian ministry but became a Congregationalist, then a Baptist.

The Colonial Office appointed *Capt. John Hindmarsh* as governor and, on 28 December 1836, proclaimed South Australia

14. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 48

15. *Ibid.*, 49.

16. *Ibid.*, 51.

a province, calling upon those present “to prove themselves worthy to be the founders of a great and free colony by their industry and sobriety, by the strict observance of the ordinances of their religion,” and to help the natives “by promoting their advancement in civilization and, always under the blessing of divine providence, their conversion to the Christian faith.”¹⁷ Two days later, on 30 December, Hindmarsh moved from Holdfast Bay inland and named Adelaide, where within ten years over half the population of 9,000 were attending two of the denominational churches, Episcopal and Congregational, and further church buildings were necessary.

Robert Gouger was appointed colonial secretary, and Charles Mann as the first advocate general, a person who believed it was his purpose to assist in the settlement “with the Bible in one hand and the axe (to clear the wilderness) in the other.”¹⁸

Adelaide was firmly established by 1838, and in that year a public dinner was held to honor Charles Sturt for his fine contribution in founding South Australia. When he spoke, he urged the dinner guests to trust in the Lord to complete what He had providentially begun.

Lt. Colonel George Gawler arrived in the infant colony in 1838 to become the new governor. Gawler, a hero of Waterloo, was converted by reading a book, *Evidences of Christianity*, and was determined to establish a Christian colony. He replaced the surveyor general, *William Light*, with Charles Sturt, giving Sturt a permanent position in the colony.

Many Christians settled in the colony, the first in the British Empire not to be officially aligned to the Church of England. A group of German Christians who had been persecuted in Prussia for refusing to allow a secular sovereign to dictate to them about their faith, settled at Klemzig on the Torrens and Harndorf near Mt. Barker, and were led by {132} God to settle there. These are the words of Pastor Kavel, their leader when they swore allegiance in May 1839:

A well established colony like this cannot but prosper under God, if those who form its population as an integral part of it, be determined

17. *Ibid.*, 55.

18. *Ibid.*, 49.

to enter into all those ideas that gave birth to its establishment, and that influenced the minds of those philanthropists who occasioned its foundation. Therefore, every newcomer ought to examine himself whether he is standing on those principles which the colony is founded upon, and when this is the case, not to conceal his feelings and sentiments as being ashamed of them but to profess them publicly, as soon as an opportunity offers. This opportunity was offered us last week when we had the honor to take the Oath of Allegiance to Her Most Gracious Majesty, Queen Victoria.

On our arrival here, we hailed this hospitable shore as a place of refuge to worship God without disturbance of our consciences, and entertained, and do still entertain, the hope to live and die here. We have found what we have been seeking for many years—religious liberty; we hailed and hail that sovereign under whose direction we are now placed: we consider her and her government as ordained of God, and with all our hearts we are desirous of being faithful subjects and useful citizens. We have been very glad to profess this our heartfelt desire and deep conviction on Her Majesty's birthday: we consider this also as a profession of Christ our Lord and Savior, who, through the King of Kings and Lord of lords, has created all thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and who commands his followers to obey them.

Hebrews 11:32 says, "And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised...." So also one could continue about many of the early settlers. People such as Edward John Eyre; Capt. Barker, a staunch evangelical; John Quinton Snow, who commenced the first Congregational Church in Adelaide in 1837; Lord Glenelg of the Home Office, who permitted the colonising of South Australia; or of Sir George Grey, who believed there was such "a dreadful waste of God's bountiful gifts in Australia"¹⁹ and who shared with James Stephan the view that "prayer and meditation on God's Holy Word ... were the inexhaustable unfathomable source of all pure consolation and spiritual strength."²⁰

In conclusion, may we wish South Australians in this special

19. *Ibid.*, 41.

20. *Ibid.*, 40.

year of celebrations God's richest blessings for the future, and to quote the words of Pastor Kavel: "May South Australia prosper; and all its inhabitants, its immigrants, and the natives grow together as one blessed nation {133} laboring unanimously for the advancement of those great objects"; and of Captain Charles Sturt: "May the inhabitants of South Australia continue to deserve and to receive the protection of that Almighty power, on whose will the existence of nations as well as that of individuals depends!"²¹

Additional Source:

Douglas Pike, *Paradise of Dissent*. Melbourne University Press, 1957.

21. Charles Sturt, *Expedition into Central Australia* (London: T & W Boone, 1849), vol. 1, 39.

JOHANN GEORG HAMANN: INTERPRETER OF REALITY IN CHRIST

Ellen Myers

*NOTE: Translations of statements by Hamann and German authors are this writer's, except for passages quoted from English language commentaries used in this paper. The writer wishes to thank Professor James C. O'Flaherty, dean of American Hamann scholars, for all his kindness and interest in her work while this paper was being prepared; Dr. Stephen N. Dunning for his gift of *The Tongues of Men*; and Mrs. Laura Stark, a beloved friend, for her indispensable help in obtaining German source materials.—E. M.*

1. Introduction

One of the most profound, influential, and permanently relevant Christian thinkers of the eighteenth century was the German Lutheran Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788). He waged an unremitting battle against eighteenth-century enlightenment and early Kantian rationalism, both of which unmistakably anticipate the full-fledged neo-pagan, anti-Christian secular humanism of our own day. After his own conversion to God and Christ in 1758, he followed his calling as an author and “preacher in the wilderness,” presenting in his writings the all-encompassing biblical view of reality in Christ.

While Hamann is as yet largely unknown in America, his work has had a remarkable resurgence in Europe after World War II when the authoritative, complete edition of his writings began to

appear.¹ One {135} German commentator speaks of a “Hamann-Revival,” as more books were published in Europe about Hamann between 1950 and 1958 than about any other philosopher or theologian.² According to computer listings obtained in May 1984 from the Deutsche Bibliothek (West German central national library) in Frankfurt by this writer, no less than eleven scholarly publications about Hamann appeared in Germany between 1966 and 1975, and nine more since 1976. It is true that America’s veteran Hamann scholar James C. O’Flaherty believes that “Hamann has always been at best a theologian’s theologian and a philosopher’s philosopher. Whether his appeal will ever extend beyond such circles to the general, cultivated public is an open question.”³ The present paper is written in part for the purpose of answering O’Flaherty’s question in the affirmative among educated Christian believers.

Unfortunately, most of Hamann’s work is still largely inaccessible to the English-speaking world as very little of it has been translated (Hamann wrote the bulk of his treatises in German, some of them in French, and was in the habit of quoting extensively from classical authors and the Bible in the original Latin, Greek, and Hebrew). Complete English translations exist of only two of Hamann’s major works, the *Socratic Memorabilia* (by James C. O’Flaherty), and *Golgotha and Scheblimini* (a “working translation” by Stephen N. Dunning).⁴ However, acceptable translations of numerous excerpts from Hamann’s writings are found in English-language commentaries on him. Thus it is now possible for the student who only knows English to become acquainted with at least the

1. Johann Georg Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke (Collected Works)*, ed. Josef Nadler, vols. 1–5. (Wien: Herder, 1949–1957); Johann Georg Hamann, *Briefwechsel (Correspondence)*, ed. Walter Ziesemer and Arthur Henkel, vols. 1–7. (Wiesbaden: Insel-Verlag, 1955–1975).

2. Walter Leibrecht, *God and Man in the Thought of Hamann*, trans. James J. Stam and Martin H. Bertram (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 3.

3. James C. O’Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), 168.

4. The translation of the *Socratic Memorabilia* is in James C. O’Flaherty, *Hamann’s Socratic Memorabilia: A Translation and Commentary* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967). The Translation of *Golgotha and Scheblimini* is in Stephen N. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men: Hegel and Hamann on Religious Language and History* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1979).

main ingredients of Hamann's thought. Obviously discernment is needed with regard to the commentaries themselves as to their own faithfulness to Hamann's biblical Christian presuppositions; some have attempted to see Hamann as an "existentialist" or "irrationalist," and hence misrepresented him in part or entirely.⁵ Much misunderstanding or misinterpretation of Hamann also underlies some of the movements or schools of thought supposedly founded upon him. Lest this fact deter some from learning more about Hamann, it should be kept in mind that even the Bible itself has been claimed as the foundation for many false cults and heresies.

Hamann knew that human autonomous, unbiblical thought systems must be attacked at their roots, that is, their non-Christian presuppositions: "I always hold it to be a fruitless work to patch up subordinate principles and expose their contradiction. One must plainly make up his {136} mind to dig deeper or to climb higher. Whoever has neither heart nor patience for this and cannot renounce his contemporary age, for him it is always better *manum de tabula* ['hands off the table']."⁶ "*Petitio principii* is the antidote for the disingenuous use of things and for their misunderstanding."⁷ Because the presuppositions of the philosophies of Hamann's age were essentially the same as those of autonomous human thought today, this prophetic "man of almost matchless genius"⁸ has so much of relevance and importance to tell us now.

The fundamental problem which Hamann faced is also that of Christians today who wish to interpret reality in Christ—to communicate—to their non-Christian fellow men. W. M. Alexander delineates this situation as follows:

5. The following English-language commentaries on Hamann are recommended as faithful to Hamann's own biblical presuppositions:—all commentaries by James C. O'Flaherty (see bibliography);—W. M. Alexander, *Johann Georg Hamann: Philosophy and Faith*.—Stephen N. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men: Hegel and Hamann on Religious Language*.—Walter Leibrecht, *God and Man in the Thought of Hamann*

6. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 7, 452 (letter to F. H. Jacobi dated April 27, 1788).

7. W. M. Alexander, *Johann Georg Hamann: Philosophy and Faith* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 101n1.

8. Wilhelm Koepp, "J. G. Hamann's Absage an den Existenzialismus," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Universität Rostock*, 5. Jahrgang 1955/56, 114.

Hamann's problem is the philosophy of his age and how his own thought as a Christian is related to it. How does the Christian exist ... how does he *think* authentically as a Christian in genuine contact with the world? Hamann was one of the first Christian thinkers to recognize that he lived—as did the early Church Fathers—in a non-Christian world: the Church no longer was communicating to “Jews” but to “Greeks.” As much as anyone Hamann can claim the title of “the first Christian modern thinker.”⁹

Hamann saw in biblical creation the unifying principle for biblically founded philosophical thought. He recognized man's redemption in Christ as integrally tied to creation because Christ's redemption brings about the restoration of God's image in man given at creation. It is of interest for present biblical scholarship and evangelism to see the same foundation in the biblical creation movement which arose in the 1960s and '70s and has spanned the globe. The very problem described above by Alexander has been recognized, for instance, by spokesmen of the rapidly expanding biblical creation movement in Australia who have pointed out that church evangelism today must understand that “our society... is no longer like the Jews but has become like the Greeks.”¹⁰

While Hamann was brought up partly under the influence of the movement known as Pietism, he deliberately and consistently rejected pietistic withdrawal from the battle against secular humanist unbelief and philosophical pretense. He opposed the unbiblical and un-Lutheran dichotomy between “secular” and “sacred” and a legalistic asceticism and unworldliness often enjoined by pietist teachers. In this Hamann was a faithful follower of the great Martin Luther, whose works he diligently studied, along with his chief source of life and wisdom, the Bible itself, all {137} his life. On Luther's own position, James Edward McGoldrick has written, in his excellent paper, “Luther on Life Without Dichotomy,” that

As a believer liberated through faith in Christ, Luther never ceased to extol the unity and wholeness of the Christian priesthood [of all believers]. He contended that all of God's people belong to a single *sacred* estate in which all have equal access to the Father through Christ. Every form of honest toil performed for God's glory is

9. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 14.

10. “Creation Evangelism,” *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (Summer 1984): 28.

therefore a divine calling....

Luther... espoused a joyous affirmation of life lived in society.... the Christian ... should not withdraw from the kingdom of earth in order to seek the kingdom of heaven, for the Christian life is one of service to be rendered here and now in Jesus' name.... In rejecting the sacred/secular, clergy/laity dichotomy of the medieval church Luther denied that the Christian life should be ascetic in character. He believed that God had created the world for his own glory, but also for the enjoyment of his people. Luther therefore encouraged Christians to engage in, for example, the visual and musical arts, and to enjoy the excitement of athletic contests. For music he had a particular love, and his contribution to Christian hymnody was immense.¹¹

While Hamann's biblical Christian view of reality of necessity gave offense to his rationalist critics and was more or less suppressed by them through rejection and neglect for well over a century after his death, he nevertheless exercised an immeasurable influence upon German thought and letters. He has been called the father of German literary classicism and romanticism. His editor and biographer Josef Nadler writes:

Johann Georg Hamann ... did not advance further in life than to a menial office in the customs administration of Kšnigsberg. But this is the man who infected his century with his spirit and totally transformed it. From Hamann proceeded in about 1760 that awakening of the inner man which found its artistic expression in the classical-romantic culture. Hamann's incomparable spiritual position within his age is visibly attested to in his friendship, as one of equal standing, with Immanuel Kant, in his spiritual disciple Johann Gottfried Herder, in the liberating influence which he exercised through Herder upon Johann Wolfgang Goethe. The mysterious power which this rare man radiated forth into his entire age belongs to the insoluble secrets of the history of spirit.¹²

11. James Edward McGoldrick, "Luther on Life Without Dichotomy," *Grace Theological Journal* 5, no. 1 (1984): 4-5, 9-10.

12. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, 1, 320.

2. Hamann's Life and Writings

Nadler estimates that during Hamann's lifetime he read some fifteen thousand books, whose principal lines of argument and often individual [138] statements he retained in his prodigious memory. Hamann was an outstanding linguist who knew German, French, English, Italian, Portuguese, Latvian, Greek, Latin, Hebrew and Arabic, having read the Koran for himself in the original. Next to his faithfulness to the biblical account and the very language of Scripture, his marvelous erudition and extensive citations of innumerable classic and contemporary authors cannot help but deeply impress the student of his work. In fact, Hamann may have been too well-read for his own good; not a few of his allusions to the writings of others lose their impact because readers simply do not understand them, being unfamiliar with the original sources. This was already true in Hamann's own lifetime when the average educated European was incomparably better prepared in literary knowledge (especially of classical Greek and Latin authors) than his modern American counterpart.

Hamann was the eldest of the two sons of the Kšnigsberg "old town's" physician and keeper of a public bath (Bader). He was named for his uncle, a writer of Christian hymns, some of which were set to music by Telemann and HŠndel. He was educated somewhat haphazardly and early acquired a habit of reading voraciously but without goals or framework. From 1746 to 1752 he studied theology and later law at the University of Kšnigsberg but did not take a degree. He had no plans for a career; a speech impediment (stuttering) must have made him shy away from any profession requiring much public speaking such as the ministry, teaching, or law.¹³ From 1753 to 1756 he served as private tutor for the sons of members of the Baltic nobility. He translated and wrote a commentary on a French treatise on British and French commerce. His commentary included a typically enlightenment-flavored, classical liberal praise of the merchants shared by the

13. In a copy of a letter to King Frederick II of Prussia applying for work in the Prussian customs administration, enclosed with a letter to Friedrich Carl von Moser dated 11 September 1763 (*Briefwechsel*, vol. 3, XIXn12), Hamann wrote, "... a heavy tongue and inability of pronunciation ... render me unfit for most public services. ..."

rising middle class at that time. This “Supplement to Dangeuil” was published in 1756; after his conversion, Hamann was somewhat ashamed of it, although he never rejected the free trade principles it espoused.

In that same year he was sent on an educational journey including a diplomatic mission to the Russian ambassador in London (Prussia and Russia were then at war) by the commercial firm of Berens in Riga which employed him due to his friendship with Johann Christoph Berens, begun in their student days. On his way to London through Berlin, Hamann met Moses Mendelssohn, the famous Jewish popularizer of enlightenment philosophy under King Frederick II “the Great” of Prussia. Although Hamann later sharply disagreed with Mendelssohn {139} about philosophy and “natural religion,” he always maintained cordial personal relations with him. In an age setting great store by friendship, Hamann was throughout his life famous for his exceptional ability to make and keep friends. He wrote his *Golgotha and Scheblimini* (“Scheblimini” is Hebrew for “Sit thou at my right hand”) in 1784 as a rebuttal to Mendelssohn’s rationalistic *Jerusalem* though all the while concerned about his friend’s personal salvation, grieving over possible unresolved misunderstandings between them after Mendelssohn’s death. With regard to Immanuel Kant, another philosophical enemy and personal friend, Hamann wrote a brief but profound critique of Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* but did not permit it to be published during his lifetime so as not to offend his friend. His extremely voluminous correspondence abounds with further ample proof of his genius for deep and loving, truthful and tender personal relationships.

While in London on his mysterious and doomed mission in 1757 and early 1758, Hamann met and was invited to live in the same house with an Englishman who, he found out to his disgust, was supported by a rich homosexual.¹⁴ This was the low point of his entire life. Hamann hurriedly moved into different quarters kept by

14. O’Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 22, and Wilhelm Koepp in a detailed examination of the primary sources (“Johann Georg Hamann’s Londoner Senel-Affäre Januar 1758,” appendix to Koepp’s *Der Magier unter Masken* [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1965]), maintain that Hamann was never involved in any homosexual relationship. Upon reading the primary sources for myself, I fully agree with them, especially with Koepp.

a simple, God-fearing English couple. Here, almost penniless and in near-despair in a small garret, he read the Bible from March 13 to 31, 1758, and “underwent a religious experience which was to change his life permanently, and, indirectly, to have a considerable impact on the cultural life of eighteenth-century Germany.... Hamann summed up his experience with the expression that God had poured him ‘from one vessel into another.’”¹⁵

Between March and the latter part of June 1718, Hamann wrote his *Biblical Reflections*, *Reflections on Church Hymns*, *Fragments*, *Prayer*, *Reflections on Newton’s Treatise on Prophecy*, and *Thoughts About the Course of My Life*, in an astounding release of creativity due to his newness of life in Christ and God (cf. John 17:3). All these works breathe the spirit of the Bible and abundantly bless and edify anyone who loves the Lord Creator and Redeemer they reveal. All of them, but especially the *Biblical Reflections*, already explicitly contain or forecast Hamann’s most important thoughts developed in his later writings.

Upon his return to Riga in July 1758, Hamann fell in love with and understood himself to be engaged to Johann Christoph Berens’ sister Katarina. Their relationship was broken off, however, by her brother because of Hamann’s newfound Christian faith which Berens scorned as “enthusiasm” (*Schwärmerei*) and superstition, calling Hamann a {140} “hodge-podge of great intellect and miserable good-for-nothing.”¹⁶ In the summer of 1759 Berens enlisted Immanuel Kant in an endeavor to reconvert Hamann back to the enlightenment. They also, in Hamann’s words, attempted “to seduce him into authorship” of a rationalistic, worldly kind. Their effort came to naught; Hamann even commented half humorously that he found the idea to charge a *philosopher* (of all people) with reconverting him back to enlightenment thought almost laughable.

But Berens and Kant did “seduce” Hamann into authorship after all—albeit one diametrically opposed to their intent. Their dialogue with him prompted him to write his first major work,

15. O’Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 23.

16. Walter Ziesemer, ed., *Der Magus im Norden* (Wiesbaden: Insel-Verlag, 1950), 71. This book is a representative selection from Hamann’s writings, ended by a biographical essay on Hamann by Ziesemer.

the *Socratic Memorabilia*, addressed “to the public and to the Two [Berens and Kant].” This essay was published around Christmas 1759, and began Hamann’s lifelong authorship as a “wooden arm pointing toward the way” of Christ, a “preacher in the wilderness,” a “philologist of the cross.” The burden of this paper is that a philosophy like that of Socrates which antedates Christ and is unaware of Him can honestly do nothing in the service of truth but humbly admit its own ignorance. Walther Ziesemer explains that in the *Socratic Memorabilia*

Hamann chose the mask of Socrates in order to tell his conviction to the great worldling [Berens] and the great thinker [Kant] in a mimic way: against an overvaluation placed on economic-commercial activity aiming only at acquisition—against this Hamann emphasizes the right of the soul upon her own individual life—and against a philosophy in so far as it claims sole rule over life and thought for itself.... he opposes the socratic word, “I know that I know nothing.” Ignorance as Hamann interprets it is ... “the humble awareness of the powerlessness of human reason and as its consequence trustful surrender to the wisdom of God which transcends it and is superior to the world.” ... Over against Kant he denies the absolute worth of science and scholarship (Wissenschaft). “Not civic work and not the work of a scholar determine the value of life but rather faithful giving of oneself to the living experience of the world and to the business of one’s own soul”¹⁷

The *Socratic Memorabilia* was the first of a considerable number of works with small and financially unrewarded circulation but incalculable influence. Almost all of them were occasioned by the works of other authors to whom Hamann responded in perception of their hostility to biblical Christianity. Among the most important ones are *Aesthetica in nuce* (*Aesthetics in a Nutshell*) which appeared in 1762 as part of his collection of essays [141] entitled *KreuzzŶge des Philologen* (*Crusades of the Philologist*); *Philologische EinfŶlle und Zweifel Ŷber eine akademische Preisschrift* (*Philological Ideas and Doubts about an Academic Prize-Essay*) and *Au Salomon de Prusse* (*To the Solomon of Prussia, that is, to King Frederick II “the Great”*), written in 1772 but not published until after Hamann’s death; *Hierophantische Briefe* (*Hierophantic*

17. *Ibid.*, 71–72.

Letters), directed against the historical method of the Deists and their misunderstanding of the pagan mystery religions and published in 1771; and *Konxompax*, also dealing with these mystery religions, published 1779. Hamann's *Metakritik Ÿber den Purismus der Vernunft* (*Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*), on Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, was written in 1781 but not published during Hamann's lifetime. In 1784 appeared *Golgotha und Scheblimini: Von einem Prediger in der WŸsten* (*Golgotha and Scheblimini: By a Preacher in the Desert*), Hamann's attack upon Mendelssohn's rationalistic *Jerusalem*, and in 1786 *Entkleidung und VerklŸrung, Ein Fliegender Brief an Niemand, den Kundbaren* (*Unclothing and Transfiguration: A Flying Letter to Nobody, the Notorious*), which was written in two versions and is of importance in judging whether Hamann anticipated modern existentialism.

Finally, only one month before and in conscious contemplation of his death, Hamann wrote the brief *Das Ietzte Blatt* (*The Last Page*) as a solemn summary of his faith. Most of this remarkable spiritual testament was originally written in the Latin of the Vulgate Bible, with a sentence about Hamann himself in French, and with six Greek words summing up the Law and the Gospel of Christ. An approximate translation ¹⁸ reads as follows:

Unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness 1 Cor. 1:23–24. The foolish, base, and despised things are those which GOD chooses for fellowship so that which is wise may be confounded. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female. All [are] One, All—One [Greek: *pantas—Eis*], Gal. 3:28. Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5:17, by HIM who said: I am Alpha and Omega, Revelation 21:6. Prophets shall fall, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away, because that which is perfect shall have come. In the beginning was the Word and the life

18. The original is found in Josef Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann, 1730–1788: Der Zeuge des Corpus Mysticum* (Salzburg: Otto MŸller Verlag, 1949), 446–47. Nadler calls this “last composition (*Dichtung*)” of Hamann “untranslatable,” but he then appends his own fine German translation from the original Latin, French, and Greek on 447–48. I gratefully acknowledge the help Hadler's translation was to me in translating the original into English. It is my understanding that other versions of the original exist but do not fundamentally differ from the one used here.

and the true light of men, which the darkness did not comprehend and which the world made by Him did not know. And GOD was made flesh—the only begotten Son, in the bosom of the Father, whom He nourished from His side, to Whom HIMSELF He talked. He Himself, like an earthly son, learned from that which He suffered, Hebrews 5:8. His suffering atonement [Greek: *pathimata*] our knowledge [Greek: *mathimata*] and {142} the great Moral Law [Greek: *ithika megala*]. As it was once, so it is now, Romans 11:30–31.

From a man in the twilight, a hypocrite turned inside out, an ancient and authentic clever talker, a stone with two swollen legs and sometimes functioning as a whetstone without himself being able to cut, a pregnant superwit, philosopher and baldhead, rascal and cross-bearer Rom. 9:20–21. Clay and loam in the power of the potter, whose pitcher is growing under the push of the wheel by his fellow man, to the honor and shame of both, the imitator of the venerable language of the Lord, and the babbler [Latin: *seminiverbius*, “seminal speaker”], Acts 17:18 who declares that His salvation and longsuffering, 2 Peter 3:15, is the sufficient reason of all religion.

Johann Georg Hamann

Münster, May 18, 1788, on the Eve

of the Feast of the Holy Trinity.

From March 1759 to July 1763 Hamann lived in his father's house without taking regular outside paid employment but eagerly reading, writing, and corresponding with friends. In February 1763 began his common-law marriage (he called it a “marriage of conscience”—*Gewissensehe*) with his father's maid and caretaker, Anna Regina Schumacher (1736–1789). Hamann later described what happened in a letter to a friend:

A yet more secret instinct brought a country girl into my father's house. Her flowering youth, oak-strong health, firm innocence, simplicity and faithfulness aroused such a hypochondriacal fury in me which neither religion, reason, well-being, medicine, fasting, new traveling and distractions were able to overcome. This Hamadryad [“tree nymph,” Hamann's frequent term of endearment for his beloved] became the only, dearest and best support of my old, lame, abandoned father, and his semi-adopted daughter to whom I could entrust him and his whole house. After his bitter

death she became my housekeeper and is the mother of my four natural and, praise God! healthy and cheerful children.¹⁹

Nadler reports that “Hamann and Anna Regina did not live like man and wife, but like master and maid”²⁰ until they set up a common household years later, around Christmas 1768.²¹ Their first child, Johann Michael, was born September 27, 1769. As hinted at in his letter, between 1763 and his father’s death in September 1766 Hamann did some traveling, partly to find employment outside of Kšnigsberg but also to overcome {143} his desire for Anna Regina. He did not return home until January 1767. After they began living as man and wife in 1768, Hamann and Anna Regina remained completely faithful to each other all their lives, were happy together, and their children were always openly recognized as Hamann’s. Their oldest daughter, Elisabeth Regine, later said in her memoirs of her parents,

The most noticeable features of his character were strictness, honesty, love of truth, selflessness, modesty and most importantly, fear of God. His facial features were noble, his eye fiery yet friendly, his mouth kindly. He was of middle stature, his walk extremely fast and his posture a little stooped. My mother was a gentle, unbelievably active, economical and orderly, friendly woman. In her face there was much mildness and goodness. Mutual commitment united my parents—a stronger, less dissolvable tie than that which is tied by priests’ hands.²²

Hamann never, however, spoke of Anna Regina as his wife but rather as the “housemother” or the mother of his children or one who had fulfilled a daughter’s duties in the declining years of his father. She was completely unintellectual, which was evident even to one-time, temporary visitors such as Count Friedrich Leopold Stolberg, who wrote to his wife about his visit with the Hamanns as follows:

In the morning I went to Hamann ... did not find him at home and spent some one and a half hours with his wife, a little housemother

19. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, 5, 207–8 (letter to Franz Kaspar Bucholtz dated September 7, 1784).

20. Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 158.

21. *Ibid.*, 171.

22. Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 76.

with whom one cannot really discuss anything at all and with whom time and while dragged along for me, however she had simplicity and sincerity [*bonhomie*] which I liked. Finally Hamann arrived, a very interesting, very strange man. Sometimes he looked as though he could not count to three, and immediately afterwards he overflows with genius and fire. So childlike in character, sometimes so simple, and yet so deep, so truly philosophical, and that with a cordiality, naiveness, openness, alienation from everything called *world*, that he became very dear and interesting to me.²³

Hamann gave two principal reasons for not normalizing his marriage before civil or church authorities. First, he believed that one night in Riga in 1758 God had given him to understand that Katarina Berens was meant to be his wife.²⁴ He remained attached to Katarina's memory for many years, perhaps all his life. Second, Hamann apparently wished to test Anna Regina's love and submission to him by his strange marriage arrangement.

In 1767 two friends, one of whom was Immanuel Kant, secured for Hamann a minor job with the French tax authority set up by Frederick II {144} to improve Prussia's finances after the Seven Years' War and the Russian occupation of East Prussia. Alexander writes that "[a]s it finally turned out his 'breadwinning' was a job utterly perfunctory and had virtually nothing to do with his authorship."²⁵ Nadler gives a more profound assessment of Hamann's "breadwinning":

One can imagine what may have passed through Hamann's mind when he decided upon this step out of necessity which permitted no escape. For as an expert and from his conscience he knew exactly whom he served.... He was a tax-gatherer, not in the sense of the public opinion of Palestine, but of the Gospel. As his relationship to a maid, so he also called for himself this service as a tax-gatherer an exercise of humility and a means to perfection.²⁶

Hamann served in the Prussian tax administration under

23. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 6, XII (letter of Count Stolberg to his wife dated October 8, 1785).

24. Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 89. We must agree with Nadler when he comments (304): "One must fear that [Hamann] misunderstood the voice of God in that night at Riga."

25. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 9.

26. Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 175.

French supervisors first as secretary-translator, and after 1777 as storehouse administrator (*Packhofverwalter*). Since he had learned to speak, think, and write French, the initial work was commensurate with his “bread-winning” ability as perhaps no other could be, also in view of his stuttering. In addition, to speak again with Nadler,

there was no profession within his reach which gave him a deeper view of the governmental principles of Frederick II, of the spirit of the age, of its mechanism and materialism, as did this one.... This profession held his fighting spirit in the continuous tension without which the campaign of an entire life, if one is chosen therefor, cannot be carried on. This inconspicuous post at the Lizent was a sentry post. It is not an accidental accretion in Hamann’s spiritual existence. It has its necessary purpose in Hamann’s life and mission just as the London experience and the prophet’s years at the brook Cherith [1 Kings 17:3] of Kšnigsberg.²⁷

Hamann, who attributed all events whatsoever to God’s providence, would have agreed wholeheartedly.

In addition to the general providential benefit through his job, Hamann was motivated by it to study French more thoroughly, to research the linguistic history of both French and German, and to criticize certain aspects of Prussian financial and economic policy in several clever and bold satirical essays written in French and published during the 1770s. On the other hand, his service after his promotion to storehouse administrator was largely marked by depression and boredom due to the inactivity and lack of real responsibility of the position.

Hamann’s income was barely sufficient to cover the living expenses of his growing family, especially after being reduced from 460 to 300 {145} thalers annually in 1782 because of the loss of certain perquisites. Hamann had to support not only his wife and children but also his younger brother Johann Christoph, who lived with them from 1768 until his death in 1778, totally dependent and helpless in increasing and finally complete mental and emotional deterioration. A great burden was relieved in 1784 when an admirer of Hamann, Franz Kaspar Bucholtz, Lord of Wellbergen near MŸnster in Westphalia, a young Catholic

27. *Ibid.*, 176.

nobleman, became informed of Hamann's precarious financial situation and generously provided for the education of Hamann's children.

In 1781 Princess Amalia von Gallitzin, a well respected and educated Catholic lay leader in the so-called "M  nster Circle" "whose influence in certain religious and philosophical circles was felt in Germany for several decades,"²⁸ became interested in Hamann's writings. Eventually she invited him to visit her at her estate near M  nster. He requested a furlough from the tax administration for this purpose in 1787, minimizing the importance of his job so a temporary leave of absence might be granted. "[I]n his lack of worldly wisdom"²⁹ he described his work as so unimportant that instead of being given a leave he was discharged, with an annual pension of only 200 thalers. Accompanied by his son and his physician and friend Gottlob Immanuel Lindner, and already severely ill (he had suffered a stroke in 1781, and his legs were swollen due to poor circulation), he made the long and arduous trip by stagecoach to M  nster. Though continuing in ill health, his last year of life was spent joyfully among new friends, many of whom were Catholic. Especially Princess Gallitzin deeply loved him as "the high image of Christian greatness in the appearance of rags" and "the truest Christian I have ever seen."³⁰ "Why could she never do enough and was never at peace? He answered straightforwardly and precisely: one must not ask about oneself or look upon oneself at all but rather trust God alone. 'Trust Him that He will bring to light, faithfully and richly reward every work of faith, every work of love, and the patience of our hope!'"³¹ O'Flaherty reports that

[u]ntil her encounter with Hamann she had clung to the notion that the only proper goal for a Christian was religious and ethical self-perfection. After referring to the series of spiritual counselors to whom she had listened, she writes: "Finally there came Hamann and showed me the heaven of true humility and submission—a child-like attitude toward God.... All my other friends ... had

28. O'Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 28.

29. Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 79.

30. Koepp, *Der Magier unter Masken*, 149.

31. *Ibid.*

previously regarded my strong urge toward perfection as the most amiable thing ... about me, which was to be admired.... But Hamann saw in it pride and told me so ... It seemed to me {146} that an only crutch was being snatched from me ... but I loved and honored him too profoundly not to receive his declaration into my soul.”³²

On June 21, 1788, while the stagecoach was waiting at the door for his planned return to Königsberg, Hamann died in Princess Gallitzin's home. He was buried in her garden. The inscription chosen by Franz Hemsterhuis, another friend of the princess, for Hamann's gravestone was one of Hamann's favorite Bible passages, 1 Corinthians 1:23, 27, in the Latin translation of the Vulgate, and the words, “Johanni Georgio Hamanni—Viro Christiano (To Johann Georg Hamann—A Christian Man).”³³ In 1851 Hamann's remains were transferred to the *†berwasserfriedhof*, a Catholic cemetery in Mýnster, although Hamann had never abandoned his Lutheran beliefs. Nadler comments: “How could a man of the church fathers like Hamann have another faith but that of the *Una sancta* (one holy Church).... This was not a Christianity beyond the confessions or outside the confessions, but the confession of Christ as the Head of the Body of all His members.”³⁴

3. Hamann's Theme: The Reality of God and Scripture

All Hamann's subsequent authorship was determined by his finding himself face to face with God and Christ as “really there,” living, just and merciful, mediated by the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, through the Bible in that London garret in March 1758. Wilhelm Koepp speaks of Hamann's London experience as his coming to understand that “the accusations of Scripture [of all men as sinners against God] are neither more nor less than concrete, radical, general realities.”³⁵ Beholding these realities in the Personal Trinity transformed Hamann from “the naive, elegant and right-thinking church moralist he had been

32. O'Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 28.

33. Walter Lowrie, *Johann Georg Hamann: An Existentialist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Theological Seminary, 1950), 21.

34. Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 432.

35. Koepp, *Der Magier unter Masken*, 2nd appendix, 255.

until then”³⁶ into the “Magus of the North” (the name given him by an early admirer of his work), who, like the Magi of the East in the Gospel of Matthew, beheld the star leading to the Christchild in Bethlehem. All Hamann’s writings are impregnated in their style, in the profundity of their message, and in their enduring “savor of life unto life” to Christian believers, or “death unto death” (2 Cor. 2:16) to unbelievers, by the fact that even after London he “could not speak of God as a dead object or of a metaphysical painted idol.”³⁷ He described God’s confrontation with him shortly after it happened in part as follows:

[O]n the evening of March 31 I read the fifth chapter of the fifth book of Moses, fell into deep reflection, thought upon Abel of whom God said: the earth has opened her mouth to receive the blood of your brother—I felt {1147} my heart beat, I heard a voice in the depth of it sigh and wail, as the voice of the blood, as the voice of my murdered brother.... I suddenly felt my heart swell, it poured itself out in tears and I could no longer—I could no longer hide to my God that I was the fratricide, the fratricide of His only begotten Son.³⁸

Hamann knew he had been brought to personal knowledge of God by none other than God the Holy Spirit Himself, the Same Who had also inspired the writing of the Bible:

I continued reading God’s Word with groanings presented before God by an Intercessor-Interpreter Who is dear and worthy to Him [the Holy Spirit, Rom. 8:26], and enjoyed the help with which it was written as the only way to receive understanding of this Scripture, and I completed my work with God’s help, with uninterrupted extraordinarily rich comfort and quickening, on April 21.³⁹

In view of his own life before and after this turning point, Hamann concluded that God and His Word are “the only light not only to come to God, but also to know ourselves, as the most

36. *Ibid.*, 249.

37. Helmuth Schreiner, *Die Stillen im Lande: Eine christliche Untergrundbewegung (Hamann, Jung-Stilling, Matthias Claudius)* (Bielfeld: Ludwig Bechauf Verlag, n.d.), 5.

38. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 40–41.

39. *Ibid.*, 41.

precious gift of God's grace."⁴⁰ Right human action, too, can only spring from this same source:

[I]t is impossible to love ourselves and our neighbor without faith in God, which is worked by His Spirit and the merit of the only Mediator; in short, one must be a true Christian in order to be a proper father, a proper child, a proper citizen, a proper patriot, a proper subject, yes, a good master and servant; and that in the strictest meaning of the word, anything good is impossible without God, He is indeed the only author of that which is good.⁴¹

A statement from his *Biblical Reflections* complements these passages from his *Thoughts About the Course of My Life*, and also concisely expresses his clear and true perception of how unbelievers seek to account for the world's origin and existence: "Without faith we ourselves cannot understand creation and nature—hence the efforts to exclude God's Word and Will, to explain reality [*das Daseyn*] by hypotheses and probability, and the many doubts which have been raised about Moses' report."⁴² Walter Leibrecht correctly describes the anchoring of Hamann's thought in the compelling reality of God as follows: "For Hamann God is not merely a figure of speech that still happens to be current ... God is really the origin and therefore the fullness of life and truth, without whom there is nothing. Belief in God does not primarily mean to profess him with accepted formulas, but simply this: to {148} be incapable of vision, thought, and action without him."⁴³

Consistent with this foundation in God Himself, Hamann warned against reliance upon conversion feelings or making one's own conversion experience a pattern for others. He pointed instead to God Himself: "[D]o not build upon the feeling of your faith for it is often a deceit of our flesh and blood and has in common the temporality of the same with the grass and the flowers of the field—even less judge others according to the first

40. *Ibid.*, 43.

41. *Ibid.*, 44.

42. *Ibid.*, vol. 1, 246.

43. Walter Leibrecht, *God and Man in the Thought of Hamann*, trans. James J. Stam and Martin H. Bertram (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 125.

experiences through which God has led you and will lead you.”⁴⁴

4. Hostile Reception: Principal Reasons

A. Enlightenment Bias

Reception of Hamann's Christian authorship has been generally hostile. Thus Werner Kohlschmidt told his readers in his authoritative German literary history published in Germany in 1961 that in the *Kreuzzüge eines Philologen* (*Crusades of a Philologist*) “the (pietistic) theology of Hamann has become a self-existing aesthetics” in “whose center now besides an irrational doctrine of genius an irrational view of language becomes more and more evident.”⁴⁵ Emil Adler, a contemporary Polish Marxist author writing about Hamann's disciple Herder, falsely portrayed Hamann as “doubtless a philosopher of the emotions” sharing, over against the enlightenment, “the standpoint of the fanatical and pietistic faith”⁴⁶—this while he elsewhere described the “inner-directedness” (and thus scarcely “fanatical” faith) of Pietism as “the first step on the road to breaking with the church and its doctrines.”⁴⁷

The *Concise Dictionary of Literature*, a handbook used by one of this writer's children in college and published in New York in 1963, carries the following misleading true-and-false entry on Hamann:

Born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad) in East Prussia; died at Mŷnster in Westphalia. After a youth of debauchery [sic] became a sincere and pietistic Christian. His writings, obscure and disorderly, are a defense of the irrational aspects of human nature in the Age of Enlightenment, and exercised a considerable influence on the romantic reaction to that age. His discovery of Vico's philosophy paved the way to Hegel and through Hegel to

44. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, 292 (letter to G. I. Lindner dated March 9, 1759).

45. Hans-Martin Lupp, *Philologia crucis: Zu Johann Georg Hamanns Auffassung von der Dichtkunst, Mit einem Kommentar zur “Aesthetica in nuce”* (1762) (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1970), 174.

46. Emil Adler, *Herder und die deutsche Aufklärung*, trans. Irena Fischer (Wien, Frankfurt, Zürich: Europa-Verlag, 1968), 60, 62.

47. *Ibid.*, 251.

Marx. He was known as “The Magus of the North.” Works include “Socratic Memorabilia” (1759), “Crusades of a Philologist” (1762).⁴⁸

This is simply not the kind of entry anyone well informed of Hamann’s work could have written. No mention is made of the then already considerable Hamann literature published in Europe after 1949. Walter {149} Lowrie and James C. O’Flaherty had already published books on Hamann in America as well, and O’Flaherty had been editing the internationally circulated *Hamann News-Letter* at Wake Forest University since 1953. Apart from the entry’s questionable contents as they stand, it was obsolete when published, reflecting the usual negative stance of Hamann’s critics before the 1950s.⁴⁹

One of the harshest judgments on Hamann was pronounced by Hermann Hettner, “one of the truly great historians of German literature,” in his history of German literature in the eighteenth century published in 1928: “Hamann’s thought and feeling is almost exclusively negative. It is the Pietistic blustering against the freedom and independence of science, which has emerged from the authority of the Bible, and against its alleged presumption.”⁵⁰

Hans-Martin Lupp begins his perceptive and biblically sound commentary on Hamann’s beautiful *Aesthetica in nuce* (*Aesthetics in a Nutshell*) with an overall picture of how Hamann was viewed (mostly with hostility and neglect, as in the samples given above) in German historiography of literature. Lupp then praises Friedrich Bouterwek, a German literary historian of the early nineteenth century, because Bouterwek

has given better information about Hamann than our contemporary histories of literature. [Bouterwek] represents [Hamann] as a “witty head” who had been counted not unfairly among odd people, who “however, was much misjudged by his contemporaries and was

48. I. A. Langnas and J. S. List, eds., *Concise Dictionary of Literature* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1963), 192–93. See also n. 162 below on Hamann and Vico.

49. Cf. James C. O’Flaherty, “Hamann in America: The Present Situation,” in O’Flaherty, ed., *Hamann News-Letter* 2, no. 1 (May 1962): 1–13.

50. James C. O’Flaherty, *Unity and Language: A Study in the Philosophy of Johann Georg Hamann*, University of North Carolina Studies in the Germanic Languages and Literature (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1952), 6, 102n28.

appreciated and admired, as he deserved, only by few intimates and friends.” About Hamann’s “mysticism ... which one ... believed to find,” he still knew how to give the right answer: it “consisted ... in nothing but this, a firm adherence to biblical Christianity and a deep insight into the weaknesses and the limits of human reason.”⁵¹

There are two principal reasons for Hamann’s “bad press.” One is the enlightenment idolatry of human reason, in its own way implacable and at the zenith of its power in the eighteenth century. It continued to influence leading scholars and critics through naturalism, positivism, and scientism to our own day. The other is Hamann’s often refractory style.

The enlightenment’s primary appeal was its presupposition and promise of human autonomy, based upon man’s potentially omniscient, infallible reason. Here lay the intoxicating effect of its proclamation of freedom from “revealed religion,” a code word for Christianity and the {150} institutional Christian churches. Thus Immanuel Kant defined the enlightenment as “the departure of a man out of his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the incapability of his making use of his understanding without the guidance of another.”⁵² But behind this definition lurked the enlighteners’ bid for power which Hamann, virtually alone among his contemporaries and even still today, instantly recognized and exposed.⁵³ For hidden in this talk about immaturity needing the guidance of “another” is the intention of the enlighteners to make *themselves* the new guides of the “immature” men whom they propose to emancipate from the God of Christianity.

The “enlightened” monarchs of the time, Catherine II “the Great” of Russia and above all Frederick II “the Great” of Prussia, Hamann’s king from 1740 to 1786, both courted Voltaire and other stars of the French enlightenment, but practiced the authoritarian stance discerned by Hamann in Kant’s definition of the enlightenment where it really mattered in their affairs of state. Thus Frederick II

had commenced his reign by allowing uncensored liberty to the Berlin press, but the privilege had been quickly removed. “Do not

51. Lumpp, *Philologia crucis*, 1.

52. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 78.

53. *Ibid.*, 79. Also see Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 5, 280, 289.

talk to me of your liberty of thought and the press,” wrote Lessing to Nicolai [a pillar of the Prussian “enlightened” press] in 1769. “It reduces itself to the permission to let off as many squibs against religion [i.e., biblical Christianity] as one likes. Let somebody raise his voice for the rights of subjects or against exploitation and despotism, and you will soon see which is the most slavish land in Europe.”⁵⁴

Hamann courageously fought his king by a number of daring, sardonic, and passionate small works written in French, including *Au Salomon de Prusse* (1772). He tried (but fortunately for his own welfare failed) to have them passed on to the “enlightened despot” by a friend. Possibly Hamann’s lifelong penury due to his mere subsistence wages in the service of the Prussian tax administration (whose affairs the king oversaw personally, as he oversaw all the government bureaucracy⁵⁵) was a kind of punishment inflicted by the “freethinking opponent of every Christian dogma and of all religious culture.”⁵⁶

The dichotomy between theoretical freedom and practical secular authoritarianism was only one of a number of ideological inconsistencies apparently unperceived by the enlighteners themselves. Thus they could simultaneously believe with Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) in the natural goodness of “primitive” (uncivilized, non-Christian) man, and also with the books of Julian offray de La Mettrie (1709–1751), welcomed [151] by Frederick II to his Royal Prussian Academy in 1748, in “Man as a Plant” (*L’homme plante*) and even “Man as a Machine” (*L’homme machine*). These views of man are, of course, reductionist positivist notions anticipating modern behaviorism of the B. F. Skinner variety. They are compatible with man’s supposed “natural goodness” only in jest or Orwellian Newspeak. Again we must ask, as Hamann asked about Kant, who would cultivate men-as-plants or run men-as-machines.

Denis Diderot (1713–1784), chief editor of the French

54. Peter Paret, ed., *Frederick the Great: A Profile* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1972), 49. This book is generally very friendly to Frederick II.

55. *Ibid.*, 63 and passim.

56. See especially Koepp, *Der Magier unter Masken*, 172–79. Also see O’Flaherty, *Johann George Hamann*, chap. 9, “Hamann contra Frederick the Great” 136–49.

Encyclopedia, a major vehicle of enlightenment thought, spent some time at the court of Catherine II of Russia. He believed in physiological determinist reductionism like La Mettrie's and Skinner's, stating explicitly, like Skinner in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971), that man's sense of freedom is illusory since all psychological phenomena are reducible to physiological bases. He successively adopted deism, atheism, pantheism, and belief in "natural religion" as underlying all historical religions and potentially uniting all men. He even showed a tendency towards pan-psychism, a tenet of ancient gnosticism revived today in the "New Age Movement" of the 1980s.

Diderot also already adumbrated modern evolutionism, in his case Lamarckism. So did the French natural scientist Georges Louis Leclerc de Buffon (1707–1788), who, over against the great Swedish Christian botanist Carolus Linnaeus (1707–1778) rejected the division of natural organisms into fixed classes or species. (Linnaeus's system has stood the test of time and in its essential features is still the universal standard taxonomy in use today.) Against Buffon's enlightenment-shaped, naturalistic speculation about the origin of the world by natural causes (obviating God and creation), Hamann stood by the Bible: "God's Word and God's work is all upon which I base myself, whom I believe.... Instead of Moses writing: in the beginning God created; Buffon proves: In the beginning a comet fell upon the sun so pieces of it flew away."⁵⁷ "Buffon proves"—here Hamann lays bare the enlightenment's incipient scientism claiming knowledge and authority to speak in the name of science where true science would confess its ignorance.

Newtonian scientific theory led to a mechanistic concept of the universe where God was either the deists' first cause and absentee landlord, or but another name for the scientifically discerned, probabilistically defined "laws of nature." These "laws of nature" were parallel to the "eternal verities" postulated by the enlighteners as normative for human thought. This impersonal mechanistic rationalism held sway also {152} in the churches, for "in the age of Enlightenment ... all theologians, whether they were

57. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, 307 (letter to Johann Gotthelf Lindner dated March 10, 1759).

rationalists or dogmatists, agreed in supposing that faith meant assent to abstract rational propositions which are believed to be the expression of universal and eternal truths.”⁵⁸ In Frederick II’s Prussia, this rationalist religion led to Christmas sermons about “the utility of cattle-feeding in stables,” or hymns about “the duties of midwives, chimney sweeps, and similar professions.” Old songs beloved by the common people in the pews, such as “Now All the Woods Are Resting” (“Nun ruhen alle Wälder”), were discarded as, in Frederick II’s words, “foolish and stupid nonsense.” After all, “‘reason’ knew that the woods do not rest any more in the night than during the day—so, away with this song by Paul Gerhardt!”⁵⁹

While faithful in attending church services, such dead orthodox or rationalist sermons were at times unbearable for Hamann, as is shown in his letter to a friend: “Now I go to church in order to make up for the second part of the Holy Communion sermon [*Eucharistie*]*—*God knows how? and how long? It was not possible for me to hear the first part to the end a week ago. Oh the babblers in a holy place—and the rabbinical lectures—*ut mihi saepe Bilem, saepe iocum* [to me as it were frequently gall, frequently a joke]....”⁶⁰

This aridity understandably led to the reaction known as Pietism, with its overtones of emotionalism (“enthusiasm”), private perfectionism, and abandonment of cultural pursuits to unbelievers partly in despair, partly in a false “holiness” prohibiting cultural creativity as “worldly” or “secular.” Hamann, of course, directed his chief fire at the rationalists, but he also kept a certain distance from the pietists. For instance, he deliberately used an ugly picture of the pagan god Pan as the frontispiece of one of his works when learning that pietists considered him their leader and regularly prayed for him, thus successfully alienating them. Nevertheless, while dwelling amidst the Mŷnster circle of Princess Gallitzin with its strong pietistic flavor, he wrote to a friend:

Without becoming offended or vexed over the humanness of an “enthusiast”—whether man or woman, I accept their weaknesses as a sickness self-incurred ... and their blindness is to me more useful

58. Lowrie, *Existentialist.*, 43.

59. Schreiner, *Die Stillen im Lande*, 6.

60. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 6, 103 (letter to F. H. Jacobi dated October 22, 1785).

than the most wonderful enlightenment of the so-called wits and freethinkers who, for all their moralistic and angelic appearance, are in my eyes apostles of lies.⁶¹

Hamann's authority helped begin among the somewhat pietistic "silent ones in the land" (*Stillen im Lande*) "that underground movement which arose amidst the laughter of public opinion in the age of Frederick {153} the Great and historically represents the roots of the [German Christian] Awakening Movement of the next century."⁶²

B. Hamann's Style

Let us now discuss some difficulties in Hamann's style which contributed to the adverse criticism of his authorship. Princess Gallitzin wrote Hamann's friend F. H. Jacobi about her initial acquaintance with Hamann's works as follows:

About eight months ago I read the first work by Hamann; it was the *Socratic Memorabilia*. Much of it was incomprehensible to me, but that which I did understand made me eager to understand all. I read it a second time, understood more, a third time, understood yet more, and yet there are still obscure places in it for me which, however, I think are references to books which I, a creature very little read and unfit for reading, do not know.⁶³

Others, unlike the princess, doubtless repelled by that which they could understand of Hamann's Christ-centered writings, did not take the trouble to decipher the rest. A contemporary reviewer of one of Hamann's works expressed his disgust in the following doggerel:

Wahrhaftig, das ist schōn!
Der Teufel selbst kann's nicht verstehn!
(Truly, this is grand!

61. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 17, quoting from letter to Jacobi dated May 22–23, 1788.

62. Schreiner, *Die Stillen im Lande*, 3.

63. F. H. Jacobi, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Friedrich Roth and Friedrich Koeppen, eds. (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1968), vol. 4, pt. 3, "Hamann-Briefwechsel mit F. H. Jacobi," 126 (letter from Princess Gallitzin to Jacobi dated February 17, 1785).

The devil himself can't understand!)"⁶⁴

O'Flaherty can praise Hamann because "[p]erhaps not since the Patristic age has a Christian thinker dealt so extensively and earnestly with the heritage of Greece and Rome."⁶⁵ Enemies of Hamann's faith, however, found in his style a welcome excuse for disposing of him as "mystical and obscure." "A young traveler had coined this judgment in his travel report; enlightened criticism avidly picked it up."⁶⁶ To a writer in a 1781 poet's dictionary, Hamann's "timid and symbolic wit, his mysterious allusions, [and] his exaggerated use of Bible passages" were "just as much a horror as his obscurity [was] a cover for 'empty sophistries [and] glistening nonsense.'"⁶⁷

References to biblical passages indeed abound in Hamann's writings. O'Flaherty comments on this aspect as follows:

Although few proper names from the Bible are mentioned, allusions to biblical passages are frequent. They range from the literal quotation of verses in both Greek and German to phrases and images which only a {154} reader well acquainted with the Lutheran version of the Bible would recognize. By far the largest number of biblical references, however, are submerged and therefore are not immediately obvious....⁶⁸

O'Flaherty believes that Hamann submerged or "veiled" scriptural references because "his purpose was to bear witness to the Christian faith" and "in a hostile environment he felt it necessary to adopt an indirect approach."⁶⁹ An alternative or additional reason may well be Hamann's being so steeped in the Bible that its words literally became his own unawares.

Hamann extensively used what he called "metaschematism," a term taken from 1 Corinthians 4:6 where the Apostle Paul

64. Lowrie, *Existentialist*, 8.

65. O'Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 104.

66. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 4, xviii.

67. *Ibid.* However, it was precisely the obscurity of Hamann's essays which later prompted Dr. C.H. Gildemeister to examine and eventually edit them between 1857 and 1873. See also n. 161 below.

68. James C. O'Flaherty, *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia: A Translation and Commentary* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 69.

69. *Ibid.*

tells the Corinthians, "These things, brethren, I have 'in a figure transferred' (*meteschematisa*) to myself and to Apollos for your sakes." Alexander explains this method as follows: "In Hamann it refers to the taking up of his opponent's position ... in order to expose its weaknesses and contradictions."⁷⁰ The difficulty this method sometimes presents is that the reader ought to be familiar with the original "target" writing of a particular opponent which Hamann "metaschematizes" before or while reading Hamann's critique. Thus, for instance, knowledge of Mendelssohn's *Jerusalem* is needed to digest Hamann's *Golgotha and Scheblimini*.

Hamann often used typology, such as Socrates as a type of pre-Christian thought and also of Christ Himself in the *Socratic Memorabilia*. Sometimes a thought or chain of thoughts is compressed in one short aphorism or even one little word. This, again, is a device challenging the friendly, thorough, and patient reader to further thought and often rewarding him with blessed new insights into Christ-centered true reality, but baffling the unfriendly and impatient.

The "gnarledness" of Hamann's way of writing is due to his awesome task, "how to make room for the truth of God. With an almost hypochondric carefulness this Christian author formulates his words, or rather actualizes the Christian message upon which he knows life and thought to be founded."⁷¹ However, "[i]t would create an entirely erroneous impression to suggest that Hamann's style is compounded of pure difficulty. The truth is that scattered among the difficult passages are sentences and indeed whole paragraphs which offer no lexical, syntactical, or other difficulty."⁷² It is also agreed that despite the complexity and seeming lack of "system" in Hamann's writings, Hamann was right when he said, "In my mimic style there rules a stricter logic and a more {1155} cohesive connection than in the concepts of lively heads."⁷³ In general, both commentator and reader must always hold the totality of Hamann's authorship, concerned with interpreting

70. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 153.

71. Lumpp, *Philologia crucis*, 3.

72. O'Flaherty, *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia*, 73.

73. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, 378 (letter to Immanuel Kant dated July 27, 1759).

reality in the real and living God of Scripture, in mind and heart as they examine its various parts. In *fine*, in nothing so much as in Hamann's peculiar style is the biblical word of the prophet Isaiah fulfilled, "With stammering lips and another tongue will He speak unto this people" (Isa. 28:11).

5. Friendly Reception and False Understanding

As we have seen, by no means everyone whose judgment counted rejected Hamann. Despite the small circulation of his writings his reputation grew. A stream of influential visitors from all over Germany began to flow towards his modest home in remote East Prussia. They included "Johann Heinrich Merk of Darmstadt, the critic and mentor of the young Goethe ... Friedrich Karl von Moser [who had first called Hamann "the Magus of the North"] ... Moses Mendelssohn ... Johann Friedrich Reichardt (1752–1814), musician and director of the Royal Symphony Orchestra in Berlin ... Friedrich Leopold Count von Stolberg; and numerous others."⁷⁴ In his own lifetime, and also occasionally in later historical assessments, he was seen as of equal or comparable literary importance with such as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock (1734–1803), the leading poet of early German classicism; Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803), Hamann's best friend and in some ways his disciple; Immanuel Kant (1724–1804); the noted Swiss pastor and writer Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741–1801), who became Hamann's friend and correspondent; and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781).

False Understanding

1. Goethe

Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1823), Germany's most famous classical poet, was greatly influenced by Hamann through their mutual friend Herder. He became Hamann's most important admirer. In a generally laudatory passage about Hamann in his autobiographical *Dichtung und Wahrheit* (*Poetry and Truth*), Goethe wrote in part:

74. O'Flaherty, *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia*, 34.

[H]is *Socratic Memorabilia* attracted attention and were dear especially to those who could not bear the blinding light of the *Zeitgeist*.... It is true that by the arbiters of literary fashion he was regarded as an abstruse fanatic; but young men eager in the pursuit of truth were drawn to him naturally.... I possess a collection of his works which is all but complete ... {156} do not give up hope of an edition of Hamann's collected works, whether produced by me or at my instigation. And when this important document is available to the public it will be time to write about the author.⁷⁵

After reading a book about the sixteenth-century Italian author Giambattista Vico (1668–1744),⁷⁶ Goethe wrote to a friend, "It is good for a nation to possess such an ancestor. The German people will some day find in Hamann a similar codex."⁷⁷ Upon becoming acquainted with Hamann's *Golgotha and Scheblimini*, Goethe wrote another friend that he had "always loved the Sybilline writings of this modern Magus."⁷⁸ However, Goethe, a self-confessed non-Christian (a fact quite evident to the Christian student of his works, especially his famous *Faust*), avoided personal contact with Hamann, much as their mutual friend Herder tried to bring it about. Goethe also admitted that he could understand Hamann only "up to a certain point"⁷⁹ and even asserted that when reading Hamann "one must by all means renounce that which one

75. Lowrie, *Existentialist*, 17. Goethe never realized his intention to edit the complete works of Hamann. The first, incomplete edition by Friedrich Roth appeared between 1821 and 1825. Another important collection of Hamann's works was published by C. H. Gildemeister between 1857 and 1873 (cf. n. 153 above). These two editions remained the most authoritative sources of Hamann's writings until at long last they were superseded by the historical-critical edition by Josef Nadler (1949–1955) and the Ziesemer-Henkel edition of Hamann's correspondence (1955–1975).

76. Some commentators have seen an ideological relationship between Giambattista Vico and Hamann. However, Hamann "did not begin to browse through a small section of Vico's writings until the 1770s," according to Terence J. German, *Hamann on Language and Religion* (Oxford University Press, 1981), 36.

77. Lowrie, *Existentialist*, 18.

78. *Ibid.*

79. *Ibid.*

ordinarily calls understanding.”⁸⁰

More serious than Goethe’s mere lack of understanding was his sometimes false understanding of Hamann’s meaning. Such false understanding underlies Goethe’s much cited characterization of Hamann’s principal thought as “All that a man undertakes to perform, whether by deed, by word, or otherwise, must proceed from all his powers united; everything isolated is worthless.”⁸¹ To this characterization O’Flaherty makes the following crucial rejoinder:

It is true that the idea of “das Ganze” or wholeness lies at the center of [Hamann’s] thought, but such wholeness may be achieved only in response to the Logos, the divine revelation. By no means is man capable of harmonizing the often disparate and contradictory elements of his nature out of his own resources. God’s speech to man is never directed merely to intellect (as the contemporary Deists would have it) or to feeling alone (as the contemporary Pietists would have it) but to both at the same time.... Viewed from this angle, Goethe has inverted Hamann’s principle, for the latter’s theocentrism requires that God, not man, be understood as the source of harmony.... Once it is clearly understood that the Hamannian idea of wholeness results from man’s creatureliness, not from any humanistic idea—which presupposes man’s autonomy—one may proceed to treat the concept as central to his thought.⁸²

As a non-Christian humanist who certainly presupposed man’s autonomy throughout his life and authorship, Goethe thus perhaps admired Hamann precisely because he misread Hamann’s thought as compatible {157} with his own. Modern existentialists as admirers, and Hegel as an adversary, of Hamann have misjudged him for this same reason, as we shall see in a moment.

2. “Storm and Stress”

Goethe at least did not misinterpret Hamann by taking his ideas or aphorisms out of context. This was the error of the German

80. Lumppp, *Philologia crucis*, 178. Lumppp, whose commentary on Hamann’s *Aesthetica in nuce* is a delight to the Christian reader (and ought to be translated into English), adds: “That one certainly need not ‘renounce that which one ordinarily calls understanding’ with Hamann we have since learned.”

81. O’Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 34.

82. *Ibid.*

literary movement of the 1770s and 1780s known as *Sturm und Drang* ("Storm and Stress"). Lupp rightlly warns that "[h]e who pieces together from Hamannian fragments a manifesto in the sense of the Storm and Stress has interpreted Hamann twistedly as to contents.... He never wanted to do anything else but point to the God Who became man, and Hamann cannot be understood in any other way if one does not read him superficially."⁸³ The Storm and Stress movement ignored Hamann's biblical Christian presuppositions behind his statements which it adopted out of context as their own, and which then "became a signal for the unbridled expression of emotion ... in the case of those adherents of the *Sturm und Drang* who looked to Hamann as their mentor."⁸⁴ Hamann himself referred to the movement as "the ridiculous 'Storm and Stress'" in a letter to a close friend.⁸⁵

3. German Romanticism and Aesthetics

Through Goethe, Hamann's views were communicated to Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg, 1772–1801), the initiator of German romanticism. Novalis's most famous work, *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*, is seen by Terence J. German as decidedly "Hamannian as it seeks to explain how the poet is a muse who shows man where his true home is located."⁸⁶ Now while German romanticism contains important biblical elements which would harmonize with Hamann's thought,⁸⁷ there are major differences. First, romanticism partook from its beginning of an unbiblical pantheistic strand of thought which Hamann would have emphatically repudiated on the grounds of biblical creation. Second, the romantic emphasis on man's subjective and aesthetic emotions began with man himself and was thus merely a reverse aspect of the enlightenment's emphasis upon autonomous man's

83. Lupp, *Philologia crucis*, 174.

84. O'Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 43.

85. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 17, from letter to F. H. Jacobi dated February 18, 1786.

86. German, *Hamann on Language and Religion*, 25.

87. For the biblical elements in German romanticism, see Abraham Albert Avni, *The Bible and Romanticism: The Old Testament in German and French Romantic Poetry* (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1969), and John Neubauer, *Novalis* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1980).

supposedly objective intellect and reason. Rationalism and emotionalism are poles of tension between which the humanistic worldview has perennially moved. Both as expressions of man's autonomy are at odds with Hamann's biblical, theocentric view of the whole man made in the image of God (see {158} O'Flaherty's rejoinder to Goethe above). It is already evident from the fact that Hamann has been called the father of both German classicism and romanticism that there must be divergences between Hamann and the latter.

German avers that the influence of Hamann's *Aesthetica in nuce* historically extends to the following works on aesthetics from the Storm and Stress period to the twentieth century: Herder's *Kalligone*; Friedrich Schiller's (Germany's most famous poet after Goethe, 1719–1821) *Die Kŷnstler*; Jean Paul Friedrich Richter's (pen name "Jean Paul," 1763–1821) *Die Vorschule der Aesthetik*; and Benedetto Croce's (1866–1912) work also named *Aesthetica in nuce*.⁸⁸ It would require a separate investigation beyond the scope of this paper to determine the extent to which these works (especially Croce's) may be in agreement with Hamann. This should be a challenge for research by biblical Christian scholars of literature and aesthetics. In connection with Croce it is of interest that a not inconsiderable body of Hamann research exists in Italy, as described in the *Hamann News-Letter* by Italian Hamann scholar Valerio Verra.⁸⁹

6. Hamann as Prophet and Critic of Post-Hamannian Philosophies

A. Existentialism

Attempts have been made to see Hamann as a precursor of modern existentialism. Such attempts rest upon a fundamental misunderstanding of his thought, akin to that of Goethe's. Hamann was not concerned with existence as such, nor with a Kierkegaardian "existence-before-God." He saw reality as existing solely by virtue of its creation, redemption, and providence in God

88. German, *Hamann on Language and Religion*, 22.

89. O'Flaherty, ed., *Hamann News-Letter* 3, nos. 1 and 2 (May and October 1963).

and Christ as revealed in the Bible. This is shown inescapably by many of his statements. Shortly after his conversion he wrote: “[I]t is evident how necessarily our self is rooted in its Creator, so that the knowledge of self is beyond our capacity. Indeed, in order to survey its full dimensions, we must penetrate into the very person of the Godhead which alone can determine and solve the whole secret of our existence.”⁹⁰ Shortly before the end of his life he wrote:

We have in the logical pure milk of the Gospel a firm prophetic word (2 Peter 1:19), whose light drives away the darkness of our fate until the day will break and the morning star will arise. We have a conciliator and advocate who has redeemed us from the vain conversation according to our fathers’ ways, and whose blood speaks better things than the first martyr’s [159] and saint’s.... Herein consists the Alpha and Omega of my whole philosophy on which I must suck and chew daily for my comfort and to fill my time. I know no more nor do I demand to know more.⁹¹

The American existentialist scholar Walter Kaufmann has defined existentialism as “[t]he refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life—that is the heart of existentialism.”⁹² Hamann, being a faithful Bible-believing Christian and Lutheran, flatly fails the first two qualifications. It is true that Hamann often spoke out against “systems,” and he was decidedly the enemy of traditional, Greek-inspired, humanist philosophy and its abstractions as shown perhaps most memorably in the following passage from the *Aesthetica in nuce*:

Your murderous lying [*mordlÿgnerische*] philosophy has eliminated nature ... your hands are always washed unless you want to eat bread, or also when you have passed bloody judgments—Do you not also ask: Whereby you have eliminated nature?—Bacon accuses you of torturing her by your abstractions....

90. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 301.

91. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 7, 377 (letter to Princess Gallitzin dated 1 December 11, 1787).

92. Walter Kaufmann, *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, 18th printing (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing Co., Meridian Books, [1956] 1963), 12.

Oh, for a Muse like the fire of a goldsmith, and as fuller's soap! She will dare purify the natural use of the senses from the unnatural use of the abstractions by which our concepts of concrete things have been as mutilated as the name of the Creator is suppressed and blasphemed. I speak to you, Greeks! ... You make nature blind so that she may become your guide!⁹³

This passage is comparable in its prophetic fire with Isaiah and Jeremiah, and in its passionate concern with true God-created reality with the best parts of the problematic writings of Søren Kierkegaard, who highly treasured Hamann.⁹⁴ Hamann, however, attacked abstraction-mongering rationalist philosophy not only because of its remoteness from true reality. He also saw, as with Kant's definition of the enlightenment, the devious bid for power behind all merely human would-be autonomous thought:

Our beautiful intellects who deny the Pope his infallibility, assure us that something is wrong with religion in order to find us all the more gullible with regard to their own arguments, and they raise the flag of their own infallibility; for what other right would they have otherwise for taking our reason prisoner?⁹⁵

This accusation, of course, applies also to existentialism, for in the words of its most consistent modern champion, Jean-Paul Sartre, "existentialism {160} is [also] a humanism," that is, part and parcel of would-be autonomous human thought. In fact, existentialism is probably humanism's most forthright, most logical because essentially solipsist form; for the epistemologically self-conscious, consistent existentialist, "hell is other people" (Sartre's famous line from his play *No Exit*) and God is dead. Not so was Hamann's God-centered epistemology and view of existence, precisely because he knew that the autonomous quest

93. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 206, 208.

94. For the influence of Hamann on Kierkegaard, see Lowrie, *Existentialist*, 1–7. On 4, n. 1, Lowrie lists all of Kierkegaard's references to Hamann in both his works and his *Journal*. Lowrie believes that no other author influenced Kierkegaard as profoundly as Hamann, whom Kierkegaard called his "emperor" and "the most humorous author in Christendom." This writer, of course, profoundly disagrees with Lowrie about calling Hamann "an existentialist." Differences between Hamann and Kierkegaard exist in both the fundamental content of their thought, and in their style; for instance, Hamann could never have spoken of a "leap of faith!"

95. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 154, from "French Project."

for and preoccupation with one's self is a "descent into hell,"⁹⁶ and that God is alive.

Nevertheless, existentialist thought presented a temptation to Hamann as Wilhelm Koepp has shown in his thorough examination of how Hamann wrote his *Flying Letter to Nobody, the Notorious*.⁹⁷ Hamann began the first draft of this essay by positing the temporal "present," certain of observation, over against the temporal "absent," which included the past and the future. The "present" is related to the past as effect, and to the future as cause, although compared to the "absent" the "present" is very small, as it were an indivisible point. Interpretation of the whole depends upon a "spirit of prophecy"—either of poetical genius which transfigures visions of past and future into present representations, or of the philosopher who makes the present absent by abstractions and reduces it to pure appearances and phenomena. Koepp comments at this point:

It is a great and truly "existentialist" train of thought by which Hamann here intends to make ineffectual the thesis [of Mendelssohn in *Jerusalem*] of Judaism as the pure and reasonable religion ... the foundation ... is within the best body of thought of modern phenomenological and ontological existentialism ... It is indeed truly modern: it does not unfold from God and is not thought out from God ... but it unfolds from the realm of man, from itself, from ... existence in the indivisibly single point of the present....⁹⁸

However, Hamann thereupon totally rejected this line of reasoning in a second draft of the *Flying Letter*. Koepp carefully shows from Hamann's correspondence of the period how Hamann conceived the original, rejected draft shortly after a stroke in December 1785 in a mood of "tremendous euphoria": "The kettle of my brewing brain is foaming ... terribly.... It is no longer the voice of a preacher in the desert, but of the three-headed hound of hell Cerberus.... I am frightened by my own power which ... does not seem natural to me."⁹⁹

96. *Ibid.*, 164.

97. Koepp, "Absage."

98. *Ibid.*, 111.

99. *Ibid.*, 113, quoting from Hamann's letter dated December 24, 1785.

Hamann understood that an existential refutation of his adversaries {161} was ultimately a temptation “which only seduced him away from the world of revelation of God’s Scripture, his essential ultimate weapon against all enlightenment reason.”¹⁰⁰ On August 23, 1786, he “announces the funeral of his untimely birth. True, his mouth is still watering for the ‘forbidden fruit of knowledge of that which is good and evil’ (adjectivally: being-there, existence); but ‘the mustard seed of my faith and conscience’ is more sacred for him.”¹⁰¹ An entirely different draft was eventually published in 1786, pointing

only and simply to the God of revelation in Christ, ... the only “key of the universe everywhere present to the senses from the invisible nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*) through all aeons”.... Here every trace of an incipient existentialism-in-itself has also objectively disappeared ... one could perhaps speak of a “putative existence-before-God’s revelation,” which, however, is not an existence but only a phantasmagory of the swamp of the world without God and without God’s revelation.¹⁰²

Koepp concludes that Hamann rejected the “existential temptation” because it was totally incompatible with “the real (Christian) truth which was his basic concern. His authorship was to remain what it had always been for him: a hidden testimony before God of His Gospel against all reason.”¹⁰³ Koepp also speaks of a “perennial temptation” to Hamann “to do better with the weapon of the enemy than the enemy, and thereby to become himself the prey of reason, only in a new manner.... This man of almost matchless genius thus ... anticipated and again relinquished still untrodden future ways of reason.”¹⁰⁴

B. Hegelianism and “New Age Thought”

The German monist-idealist philosopher G.F.W. Hegel (1770–

100. *Ibid.*

101. *Ibid.*

102. *Ibid.*, 114.

103. *Ibid.*

104. *Ibid.*

1831)¹⁰⁵ misread Hamann as in some sense his own unworthy precursor in a lengthy essay, “Hamanns Schriften” (“Hamann’s Writings”), published in 1828. In a conversation about Hamann with Goethe, Hegel had purportedly displayed “a deep insight into (Hamann’s) extraordinary mind, such as could only have arisen from a most earnest and scrupulous study of the subject.”¹⁰⁶ His hostile review of Hamann’s thought was due to his fundamental hostility to the God of the Bible. This hostility had already surfaced in his *Life of Jesus*, published in 1791, where he depicted Christ as exclusively and merely a moral teacher who had claimed a divine mission only to accommodate the supernaturally minded Jews. This view of Christ was then and is now part and parcel of modernist, “higher criticism” theology prevalent in mainline Protestant {162} churches. Of course, this emasculated, “de-mythologized” perversion of biblical reality would have been anathema to Hamann, as evidenced by his entire Christian authorship.¹⁰⁷

Hegel’s monistic-pantheistic speculative philosophy had roots in classical Greek thought which he greatly admired. Human autonomous thought has perennially tried to solve its inherent epistemological difficulties in accounting for the world by hovering between “irrational” idealism and “rational” realism. It has also had perennial and insuperable trouble accounting for the relationship between the one and the many (unity and diversity in the universe), finiteness and infinity, permanence and change, the absolute and the relative, monism (“all is fundamentally one”) and dualism (“matter over against spirit”). Plato saw the world monistically and in an ascending order from material chaos to spiritual pure idea. Aristotle similarly taught (*Physics*, 8) that matter-energy was coextensive and co-eternal with God. So did the other pagan cosmologies of the ancient world whose mythical deities brought the world into existence by struggling with

105. I have generally followed the excellent analysis of Hegel’s life and thought by Frederick Copleston, S.J., in his *History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, chaps. 7–9 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image Books, 1963–1965), 194–294.

106. German, *Hamann on Language and Religion*, 13, quoting from *Conversations of Goethe with Eckerman and Sorel*, trans. John Oxenford (London, 1892), 302.

107. On this subject, cf. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*.

preexisting chaotic matter. Thomas Molnar has called this thought system, also shared by Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, “the spontaneous bent of the archaic mind which predominated in most parts of the world and which threatens to prevail once more in our time ... the temptation ... to identify God and self, to recognize in the soul a divine substance, indeed the seat of divinity.”¹⁰⁸ In fact, if biblical creation *ex nihilo* is denied, as it must be for human thought to be autonomous, then all human autonomous thought systems are of necessity fundamentally monist-pantheist no matter what their myriad individual differences may be in detail.

Hegel’s monistic-pantheistic speculative philosophy was given a “Christian” flavor as Hegel substituted his own impersonal idealist terms for the Persons of the biblical Trinity. God the Father became the “universal Idea,” God the Son, empirical nature/matter, and God the Holy Spirit, the “universal” or “world Spirit” relating “nature” to “Idea” through a process of dialectically struggling forces. This process was seen as an upward movement leading the universe to ever greater “spiritual” heights of universal self-awareness, self-realization, and ultimate total freedom. Men exist to carry out the world Spirit’s “universal will” or “reason”; they do this best when determinedly imposing their ambitions and passions upon their fellow men and nature without petty moral scruples.

In Hegel’s monist-idealist worldview, then, in his own words “the {163} real is the rational and the rational the real”; “the actual world is as it ought to be”; and “might is right” (a slogan often heard from educators in the Nazi German schools of this writer’s childhood). For Hegelianism, therefore, biblical morality is worse than irrelevant; it is an obstacle to the progress of the ruthless individuals, movements, and forces spearheading the “universal will” or “reason” behind world history. Darwinist upward evolution based upon “survival of the fittest,” popularized

108. Thomas Molnar, “The Gnostic Tradition and Renaissance Occultism,” *Journal of Christian Reconstruction* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1974): 112.

in Germany by the monist Ernst Haeckel,¹⁰⁹ is a pseudo-scientific adaptation of Hegelianism (except insofar as it strips it of its idealist and teleological notions). Hegelianism is also a very prominent ingredient in the instrumentalist philosophy of the American philosopher and educator John Dewey.¹¹⁰ As is well known, it supplied roots to Marxism and Nazism. Consistent with his philosophy, Hegel justified and approved of the despotism of Frederick II “the Great” of Prussia, and explicitly rebuked Hamann’s resistance to the king “as a sign of his religious hypocrisy and insubordination to God.”¹¹¹

Hegelian idealism is also closely akin to the influential modern gnostic, evolutionist thought of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881–1955). Teilhard held to “theistic” emergent evolutionism as a form of process philosophy or theology, and he inspired the worldwide pantheistic “New Age Movement” of the 1980s where many if not all strands of ancient and modern autonomous anti-biblical humanism meet. Like ancient Greek philosophy, paganism, Hinduism, the “vitalist” evolutionism of Henri Bergson (1859–1941), and Hegel, Teilhard envisioned the emergence of God from matter, culminating in the total transformation of matter into God, which he also called “pure Spirit,” “Point Omega,” or “the cosmic Christ.”¹¹²

Like Teilhard and leaders of the “New Age Movement,” Hegel explicitly defined an individual’s consciousness of freedom as the individual’s “see(ing) himself in his distinct existence as inherently universal, as capable of abstraction from and renunciation of

109. Cf. Ellen Myers, “Monistic Evolutionism as a Pseudo-Paradigm,” *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (Winter 1982): 14–28. A major source for this article was the excellent study by Daniel Gasman, *The Scientific Origins of National Socialism: Social Darwinism in Ernst Haeckel and the German Monist League* (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Co., 1971).

110. Cf. Ellen Myers, “Conflict-Action-Growth vs. Rest in God: An Appraisal of John Dewey,” *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 3, nos. 2–4 (Winter 1980, Spring and Summer 1981).

111. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 108. On Frederick II, Hegel, and revolution, see James H. Billington, *Fire in the Minds of Men* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 19–20, 229, 389.

112. Cf. Ellen Myers, “Pantheist Mysticism vs. Created Reality,” *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 4, no. 3 (Spring 1982), on Teilhard de Chardin.

everything particular, and therefore as inherently infinite.”¹¹³ Hegel castigated Hamann because he, despite his admitted genius and originality of thought, had not attempted freely to live out this inherent god-like infinity and universality. It would seem clear that Hegel “was so rough on Hamann and also treated his daughter with such contempt when she begged Hegel ... to say or write kinder thoughts about her father”¹¹⁴ because he was hostile to Hamann’s God and Hamann’s communication of the knowledge of God. {164}

In his masterful analysis concentrating upon Hegel’s and Hamann’s religious language, Stephen N. Dunning shows that Hegel systematically refused to understand Hamann’s constant references to the Bible and use of biblical language. Instead, Hegel doggedly misread Hamann in terms of his own unbiblical philosophy, never bothering to take Hamann’s statements seriously within their own biblical context. Hegel had no place for the biblical concept of sin and hence for Christ as Redeemer from sin and Mediator between God the Father and man. Hegel also unbiblically, in his typically monist-pantheist way, believed that man’s knowledge was potentially infinite; he even “saw thought as the human capacity to penetrate God, and ‘even participate in God’s unfolding of Himself in and as reality.’”¹¹⁵

C. Kant and “Pure Reason”

While on a continuum with classic Greek and pagan philosophy and religion, Hegel’s idealism was more immediately a reaction to Kant’s still largely rationalist and moralist system. Kant had attempted to solve the epistemological difficulties entailed by autonomous humanist thought by positing a dichotomy

113. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 43. On the “New Age Movement,” see an account by a leader of this movement, *The Aquarian Conspiracy*, by Marilyn Ferguson (JLos Angeles, CA: Tarcher Inc., 1980). On an individual’s being inherently universal and infinite as taught by educators of “New Age” persuasion in American public schools in the 1980s, see Frances Adeney, “Educators Look East,” *SCP Journal* 5, no. 1 (Winter 1981–82), published by Spiritual Counterfeits Project, P.O. Box 2418, Berkeley, CA 94702. Also see Ellen Myers, “Denying True Reality: Mystic Evolutionism in Practice,” *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (Fall 1982).

114. German, *Hamann on Language and Religion*, 14.

115. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 131.

between the empirically knowable outward appearances of things ("phenomena"), and empirically unknowable things-in-themselves ("noumena"). Kant's at first sight more traditional deontological ethics ("so act as you would wish everyone else to act") was devised as a humanist autonomous means to obviate the need for supernatural revelation as the foundation of ethics. It foreshadowed Hegel's "universal will" as the basis for "ethical" human action. Whereas Kant's emphasis lay upon the individual, Hegel's lay upon the collective whole as the self-actualization of the "world Spirit," concretely represented by the state. This difference, however, is of secondary importance as individualism and collectivism are merely another pair of dichotomic poles of tension within autonomous humanistic thought.

Hamann's *Metacritique of the Purism of Reason*, written in 1784 against Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, witnesses to the brilliance and prophetic perspicacity of its author who, reasoning on the basis of biblical creation by the Word (John 1: 1-3), "succeeded in comprehending in its essential points ... such a novel, difficult and bulky book as Kant's *Critique* without needing more for this than one little octavo sheet."¹¹⁶ Kant had attempted to define, in answer to David Hume's thoroughgoing skepticism about reason itself, "how far reason can go, without the material presented and the aid furnished by experience."¹¹⁷ His {165} work sounded the death knell of the superficiality of enlightenment thought's naive trust in the objectivity of human reason and epistemologically unfounded assumption of "eternal truths" or "verities" as a sufficient basis for ethics, aesthetics, and especially its anti-Christian "natural religion." Few of Kant's humanistic contemporaries understood Kant's "radical significance"; one of these was Mendelssohn, who "accepted stoically the dashing of his philosophic hopes by the 'all-destroying Kant.' 'I know,' he confessed by way of capitulation, 'that my philosophy is no longer the philosophy of the times.'"¹¹⁸ Kant opened the way to Hegel and thus to modern process philosophy and theology, where "pure reason" reiterates the "pure idea" of Plato freed from any and all "eternal verities" as a last tenuous,

116. Nadler, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 350-51.

117. O'Flaherty, *Unity and Language*, 83.

118. *Ibid.*

impersonal, and adulterated link to the God of the Bible.

Hamann, the towering Christian thinker far ahead of his time, understood and showed the impossibility of basing human autonomous thought upon “pure” reason, that is, a reason independent of any data provided from outside man himself. Hamann pointed out that human thought is impossible without *language*, which itself can only work upon data given from outside man himself: “No deduction is necessary to establish the genealogical priority of language ... over the seven sacred functions of logical propositions and conclusions. Not only the entire capacity to think rests on language ... but language is also the center of the misunderstanding of reason with itself.”¹¹⁹

Hamann correctly saw in Kant’s “purifying” endeavor merely the most recent of similar past philosophical enterprises. He recognized that Kant’s “pure reason” was another formulation of the Platonic “pure idea” (*nous*) which is incompatible with Christian thought.¹²⁰ He traced the historically unfolding philosophical “purification” of human would-be autonomous reason as follows:

The first purification of philosophy... consisted in the ... attempt to make reason independent of all tradition, custom and faith in it. The second is even more transcendental and aims at nothing less than independence from experience and its daily induction, because after reason has looked for over two thousand years for, one knows not what?—she ... promises just as defiantly to the impatient contemporaries, and within a short time too, that ... philosopher’s stone to which religion, its sanctity and its majesty’s legislation will soon be subjected....

The third highest and so to speak empirical purism therefore concerns language, the one first and last organon and criterion of reason.... {166} Receptivity of language and spontaneity of concepts!—from this double source of ambiguity pure reason takes all elements of her assertion of being, her skepticism and her claim of aesthetic judgment....¹²¹

Hamann also realized that Kant’s attempt to establish a “pure” reason anticipated idealism of a Hegelian kind (this, of course,

119. Hamann, quoted in *ibid.*, 88.

120. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 279.

121. *Ibid.*, 284.

prophetically as Hegel's work lay yet in the future):

Words ... have an aesthetical and also a logical power. As visible and audible objects they belong with their elements to sense and perception, but according to the spirit of their use and meaning, to reason and concepts.... Words as objects undetermined by empirical perceptions are named, according to the basic text of pure reason, aesthetical appearances: therefore ... words as objects undetermined by empirical perceptions are ... non- or anti-words ... This last possibility, to draw the form of an empirical perception without object or sign for it from the pure and empty quality of our outward or inward consciousness [*Gemüht*], is just the starting point and first error, the entire cornerstone of critical idealism and its tower and lodge building of pure reason.¹²²

In what Hamann called “words as objects undetermined by empirical perceptions, non- or anti-words” lies the foundation of Hegel's semantic transmutation of the three Persons of the God of the Bible, Who is really there (so that the words He uses of Himself, “God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit,” are true and meaningful words) and Who really acts and speaks in all historical events from creation to His coming again “as you have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11), into an impersonal monist-idealist, Neoplatonic “pure Idea” lawlessly and ruthlessly realizing itself in the phenomenal world through the “world spirit.” Even the Hegelian modern despotic, collectivist-elitist state is already foreshadowed in Plato's *Republic* and the pagan collectivist slave states of antiquity (for example Egypt, the Incas, Mesopotamia, and ancient China).¹²³

In Kant's “pure reason” lies also the root of gnostic mysticism which would know the secret things of God by direct “illumination.” While attacking Kant, Hamann also condemned the perennial gnostic claims to illuminist “higher” knowledge independent of God's personal, concrete, and especially scriptural revelation, along with a “liberated” individual's inherent infinity

122. *Ibid.*, 288–89.

123. On the subject of ancient and modern collectivist-elitist slave states, and also Plato's *Republic*, see especially the excellent study by Igor Shafarevich, *The Socialist Phenomenon* (New York: Harper & Row, 1980). Shafarevich also delineates similar collectivist-elitist political concepts among certain personalities of the enlightenment.

and universality posited by Hegel and “New Age Thought” as attributes of pantheistic divinity. As Hamann wrote in his *Metacritique*:

To the hidden secrets whose challenge, not to mention whose solution, {167} has not as yet entered the heart of any philosopher, belongs also the possibility of human cognition of objects of experience without and before all experience, and next to it the possibility of sensual contemplation before all sense perception of an object.¹²⁴

7. Application of Hamann’s Biblical Thought

A. Christian vs. Non-Christian Presuppositions

Having shown the irreconcilable enmity between Hamann’s biblical God-centered thought and important representative samples of would-be autonomous humanistic philosophy, we will now discuss some major implications of Hamann’s position for contemporary Christian philosophy, scholarship, and creativity. Hamann foreshadowed by two centuries Christian thinkers of our own day, such as Herman Dooyeweerd, Cornelius Van Til, and Rousas John Rushdoony. Like these pioneers, Hamann was fully aware that all philosophical propositions stand or fall by their epistemological presuppositions (compare his statements noted in the introduction to this essay). He denied that there is such a thing as “neutral,” “objective,” or “unbiased” human thought, because “all of our knowing is piece-work and all human rational foundations consist either in faith in the truth and doubt of the untruth, or faith in the untruth and doubt of the truth.”¹²⁵ For Hamann himself, “[t]he fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and His evangelical love is the end and conclusion of wisdom. I know no other starting point than His word, His oath and His *I am—and will be*, in which consists the entire glory of His old and new Name, a name which no creature is able to pronounce.”¹²⁶ Implied in this exclusion of any other starting point but the God of the Bible Himself and His Word is Hamann’s rejection of alien philosophies within

124. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 283.

125. *Ibid.*, 317.

126. Hamann, quoted in Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 32–33.

ostensibly Christian thought. This rejection is well summarized by Alexander as the repudiation of

the usual alternative in Christian history ... the attempt to “borrow a philosophy from some other source.” The attempt to borrow another philosophy was the attempt to borrow another faith. For Hamann strange gods are not so easily strained out: they are imbedded in language, reason, categories, terminology, systems, etc.... Christian thought must be created on its own soil, not on the ground of alien presuppositions.¹²⁷

Hamann already anticipated Rousas John Rushdoony’s 1959 Christian “presuppositionalist” manifesto *By What Standard?*¹²⁸ when he declared that

[w]ithout an individual providence God cannot be regent of the universe {168} nor judge of men and spirits. I am convinced of this truth *a priori* by the given word of revelation and *a posteriori* by my own and daily experience. The Highest Being ... cannot be conceptualized or imagined by any other standard but the one it itself gives, and not according to arbitrary presuppositions of our presumption and our impertinent ignorance.¹²⁹

B. The Concrete Self-Revelation of the Living God

Hamann was not the founder of a theological or philosophical “system.” Important as he knew epistemological presuppositions to be, not “presuppositionalism” but the Living God Himself, “His Word, His oath and His *I am—and will be*” was Hamann’s starting point. This is why he refused to call himself a theologian or philosopher but spoke of himself as a “lover of the word” (philologist or philologist). Because he had personally come to know the Personal Triune God of the Bible Who is really there, “God’s revelation in his Word is of such fundamental importance to Hamann. For it concerns a reality which is possible only between persons and which radically excludes all categories which apply to things.”¹³⁰

127. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 161.

128. R. J. Rushdoony, *By What Standard?* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1959).

129. Hamann, quoted in Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 40.

130. Erwin Metzke, quoted in Leibrecht, *God and Man*, 41n5.

In agreement with such Scripture passages as Romans 1:18–20, Hamann held that God reveals Himself concretely not only in Scripture but also in the created universe:

Speak, that I may see you!—This desire was fulfilled by creation which is a speech to the creature by the creature; for day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night shows forth knowledge. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world; there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.¹³¹

This thought is reiterated in the following passage, also from Hamann's incomparable *Aesthetica in nuce*:

The more vivid ... the image of the invisible GOD is to our awareness, the more capable we are of seeing His generosity in the creatures, and to taste it, to contemplate it, and to seize it with our hands. Every impression of nature in man is not only a reminder but also a token of the foundation truth: Who the LORD is.¹³²

Hamann refers to biblical creation over and over again in his writings. It is central to his thought and incontrovertible evidence that he accepted the Bible as God's inspired, inerrant Word. While not a "literalist" in the sense of allowing only one, the literal, understanding of each and every Scripture passage—and surely such "literalism" exists [1169] nowhere except in the hostile imagination of "higher critics"—(he himself extensively used typology in Scripture interpretation, in the manner of St. Paul in the book of Galatians) Hamann repudiated, as in the *Aesthetica in nuce*, any "higher criticism" of the biblical text. There is no room at all for seeing Hamann as in some way "liberating" theology from faithful acceptance of and adherence to the received Scripture. To any and all modernist theologians today who might still ask with Hamann's contemporary Lessing, "You [Luther] have saved us from the yoke of tradition; who will save us from the unbearable yoke of the letter?" Hamann gives the perfect answer:

The Spirit justifies and makes alive; flesh and blood without Spirit profit nothing.

How now! Should a sanctimonious philosophy and hypocritical

131. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 198.

132. *Ibid.*, 206.

philology crucify the flesh and exterminate the book, because the letter and the “historical faith” can be neither the seal nor the key to the Spirit?¹³³

Alexander’s comment is astute: “The epistemological question is not innocuous: *how* God is known involves *which* god is known. The God of rational salvation is one; the God of historical revelation is another.”¹³⁴ For Hamann, God, the Living and True God Who is really there, is the God of historical revelation: “The characteristic difference between Judaism and Christianity concerns ... historical truths...”¹³⁵ Also in his *Golgotha and Scheblimini*, directed against Mendelssohn’s defense of Judaism as “natural religion” built upon assumed “eternal truths,” Hamann wrote that

Christianity knows and is acquainted with no other chains on belief than the sure prophetic word in the oldest of all documents of the human race and in the holy Scriptures of authentic Judaism.... That depository made even the Jews into a chosen race for His possession, instructed in divinity, anointed and called before all peoples of the earth for the salvation of mankind.¹³⁶

Hamann knew that “[h]e who feels the Spirit of God within himself will surely also feel Him in the Scriptures.”¹³⁷ About attempts to deny God’s action in all history, and in particular as reported in Scripture, he said, “We see our custom to explain the works of God by natural causes in the example of those who attributed the finger of the Holy Spirit to the effect of sweet wine [Acts 2:1-13].”¹³⁸ He disagreed with his friend Herder over the latter’s prize-winning essay on the origin of human language by naturalistic causes, where Herder implicitly considered “the {170} creation account only a Mosaic allegory of the analysis of creation within divine instruction.”¹³⁹ He held fast to his faith in the Bible all his life, writing his son that

133. *Ibid.*, vol. 3, 227.

134. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 99.

135. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 304.

136. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 220.

137. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 128.

138. *Ibid.*, 220.

139. Lutz Richter, ed., *Johann Gottfried Herder in Spiegel seiner Zeitgenossen: Briefe und Selbstzeugnisse*. (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 150 (quoted from letter from Kant to Hamann dated April 8, 1774).

“[h]eaven and earth will pass away, but His Word remains—and upon this rock establish your building. Hear and believe what your old father tells you from double experience.”¹⁴⁰ Indeed, Hamann’s entire authorship began and ended with the expression of his utter trust of and submission to the received, written Scripture as God’s revealed, Spirit-given Word:

God an Author!—The inspiration of this book is just as great a condescension and humiliation of God as the creation of the Father and the Becoming Human of the Son. Meekness of heart is therefore the only state of conscious awareness which is fit for reading the Bible, and the most indispensable preparation for the same.

The Creator is denied, the Redeemer crucified, and the Spirit of Wisdom has been slandered. The word of this Spirit is just as great a work as the creation and just as great a mystery as is the redemption of man, yea this word is the key for the works of the former and the mysteries of the latter....

As little as an animal is able to read the fables of an Aesop, or a Phaedrus and a La Fontaine; but should it be able to read them, it would not be able to render such bestial judgments about the meaning of the stories and their aptness as man has criticized and philosophized about the book of God.¹⁴¹

C. History

Directly following from Hamann’s knowledge of God as the God of the Bible and of historical revelation, is his view of the history of the Jewish people in the Bible as “the elementary text of all historical literature.” Dunning comments: “That means: only when the biblical portrayal and classification of historical events is grasped will an understanding of other historical literature become possible.”¹⁴² For Hamann the biblical history of the Jews is a “type” of all other history, as he explained in beautiful detail in *Golgotha and Scheblimini*, doubtless with the salvation of his Jewish friend Mendelssohn in mind and heart:

140. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 5, 282 (letter to Johann Michael Hamann dated December 10–14, 1784).

141. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 5. These are the opening paragraphs.

142. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 81.

The entire history of Judaism was not only prophecy; rather, its spirit was occupied more than that of all other nations, to whom one perhaps cannot deny the analogy of a similar dark divination and anticipation, with the ideal of a savior and judge, a man of power and miracles, a lion's whelp, of whom it was said that his descent according to the flesh was from the bosom of the Father. Moses' Pentateuch, the Psalms and the Prophets are full of hints {171} and glimpses of this appearance of a meteor over the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire, of a star out of Jacob, a sun of righteousness with salvation under its wings! of the signs of the contradiction in the ambiguous form of his person, his message of peace and joy, his works and pains, his obedience unto death, even death on a cross! and of his elevation out of a worm's dust of the earth to the throne of immovable majesty—of the kingdom of heaven, which this David, Solomon and Son of Man would plant and complete as a city with a foundation, whose builder and creator is God, as a Jerusalem above, which is free and the mother of us all, as a new heaven and a new earth, without sea and temple within....¹⁴³

Again Dunning singles out the salient point for world history: "[T]he quest for a savior and judge, which is implicitly the ideal inspiring all historical movement, can be recognized in other nations only by analogy with that of Israel ... In [Hamann's] view, the histories of other nations contain great meaning, but meaning that can be comprehended only through the Bible. At this point, the principle of particularity and the principle of types intersect."¹⁴⁴

The following passage from *Golgotha and Scheblimini* restates Hamann's view of Jewish history as prefiguring universal history:

[T]he entire history of the Jewish people seems, according to the parable of their ceremonial law, to be a living, spirit- and heart-awakening elementary text of all historical literature ... a permanent, progressive leading toward the year of the Jubilee and the governmental plan of the divine regime for the whole creation from its beginning up till its exit, and the prophetic puzzle of a theocracy is mirrored in the pieces of this smashed vessel, like the sun "on the dewdrops on the grass, which tarries for no one, nor does it wait for men." For yesterday the dew from the Lord was only

143. Hamann, *Golgotha and Scheblimini*, trans. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 224.

144. Dunning, *ibid.*, 79–80.

on Gideon's fleece, and all the ground was dry; today the dew is on all the ground, and only the fleece is dry [Judg. 6:36–40].¹⁴⁵

Here we see a beautiful example of Hamann's use of scriptural events as typological not only for the interpretation of Scripture, but also for matters outside the scriptural record. Here the famous story of Gideon's fleece is seen as a parable or type of Jewish history related to world history. Further, this passage is worthy of consideration by Christian historians as the basis of a truly biblical philosophy of world history, and the guide for practical historiography.

Hamann's reference to "a permanent, progressive leading toward the year of the Jubilee and the governmental plan of the divine regime" might be seen out of its biblical context, as it was by Hegel, as supportive of modern evolutionist, monist, process philosophy or historiography. {172} O'Flaherty, ever on guard against unbiblical misinterpretations of Hamann, points out on the basis of the *Aesthetica in nuce* that

Hamann ... inverts the notion of progress as held by his adversaries. In all the arts of civilization: language, agriculture, writing, rhetoric, philosophy, and commerce he holds the earlier stage to be the natural and therefore the more desirable one. Thus with a clean sweep he rejects the whole idea of progress. In so doing he aligns himself with Rousseau. But there is a fundamental difference, for Hamann's idea of history is rooted in the biblical revelation, not in a hypothetical state of nature. The creation, fall, and redemption of man in the incarnation provides the fundamental typology which explains all human experience.¹⁴⁶

Dunning also sees in Hamann's biblical language of historical meaning a "principle of transcendence" insisting that "God's transcendence over the world is not reduced by virtue of His involvement with it."¹⁴⁷ Thus no upward progress from the primitive to the perfect or the material to the spiritual with a deity immanent in the pantheistic-monistic whole can be read into Hamann.

Finally, Hamann, obeying in his authorship the biblical

145. Hamann, *Golgotha and Scheblimini*, trans. Dunning, *ibid.*, 223–24.

146. O'Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 74.

147. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 84–85.

admonition to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21), recognized and pointed to “that which is good” in non- or pre-Christian thought and history as early as in his *Socratic Memorabilia*, “[T]here were godly men among the heathen [and] we should not despise the cloud of these witnesses [Heb. 12:1].”¹⁴⁸ Here he also saw the preservation or the loss of historical documents as acts of God’s all-ordaining providence in history:

As no young sparrow falls to the ground without our God; thus no monument of antiquity has been lost for us which we should have need to bewail. Should not His providence extend to writings in view of the fact that He Himself became a writer, and as the Spirit of God was so precise in noting down the value of the first forbidden books which a pious zeal of our religion has sacrificed to fire [Acts 19:18–20]?¹⁴⁹

Characteristically, Hamann immediately after this passage referred to examples from the history of classical antiquity, mindful of his neo-pagan readers with their unscholarly bias against the Bible as a historical primary source and their equally unscholarly trust in the classic Greek and Roman historians:

We admire in Pompey as a good and noble deed that he destroyed the writings of his enemy Sertorius; why not in our Lord that He allowed the {173} writings of a Celsus? Thus I do not say without reason that God has given at least as much attention to books which are of value to us as did Caesar for the written scroll with which he leaped into the sea, or Paul for his parchment at Troas (2 Timothy 4:13).¹⁵⁰

We need Hamann’s knowledge of history and of a neo-pagan audience more than ever among Christian evangelists, teachers, and historians today.

D. The Wholeness of Man and Creation under God

We have already seen that “Hamann’s theonomous conception of wholeness is quite different from the mature Goethe’s conception of the individual’s autonomous power to shape his

148. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 64.

149. *Ibid.*

150. *Ibid.*

life.”¹⁵¹ Positively, Hamann’s concept of the whole man under God was expressed by him as follows:

Because the mystery of marriage between such mutually opposed natures as the outward and the inward human being, or body and soul, is great: therefore in order to arrive at a comprehensive concept of the fullness in the unity of our humanness a recognition of several different earthly marks is required.

Thus man is not only a living field but also the son of the field, and not only field and seed ... but also the king of the field who plants good seed and medicinal herbs on his field; because what is a field without seed and a prince without land and revenue? These three in us are therefore one, namely, God’s husbandry (*Theou georgion*—1 Cor. 3:9).¹⁵²

This line of thought, which denies a body/soul or sacred/secular dichotomy in man and all his works under God, was already present shortly after Hamann’s conversion when he had lost a commercial career with the firm of Berens due to his faith: “My destiny is neither to be a merchant, statesman nor worldly man. I am nothing and if need be can be many things.... Each book is a Bible for me and each business is a prayer. These are not mere stray ideas—the pound is of God, the use of the same is of God, the profit belongs to Him.”¹⁵³

Hamann rejoiced in the all-sufficiency of reality in Christ for man’s reason, emotions, and bodily needs: “I love Christianity as a doctrine which is commensurate with my passions, which does not demand and promise a pillar of salt but a new man.”¹⁵⁴ He had already rejoiced in his *Meditations on Church Hymns*, written immediately after his conversion, in “this suitability of our religion to all the inclinations, drives and requirements of our nature, this exact relation of its truth and revelations {174} to our greatest needs and minutest imperfections as well as to our highest and most transcendent desires” which he recognized as a “convincing proof

151. O’Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 43.

152. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 40.

153. Hamann, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 1, 309 (letter to J. G. Lindner dated March 21, 1759).

154. Hamann, quoted in Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 72.

that it has the same Author as does nature.”¹⁵⁵

Hamann’s life was lived out through total and concrete involvement of all his faculties under God. As a Christian he was a dutiful son, compassionate brother, faithful husband, and a loving and very much present and interacting father to his children. He was a conscientious teacher and tutor, a life-long scholar, a most generous host, and a welcome, stimulating guest. He was a menial worker by day and filled the nights with his profound writings and unbelievably extensive correspondence of deep and warm friendship. Alexander simply states the obvious when he writes that Hamann “wanted his philosophy, and his faith, which stood behind it, to be at home in every human situation.... Certainly no area of life was shunned.”¹⁵⁶

For Hamann the wholeness of the individual person includes far more than his own “self” abstracted from the rest of reality: “God and my neighbor belong ... to my self-knowledge and my self-love.... When I desire to fathom myself, it is not a question alone of knowing what man is, but also what his status is. Are you free or a slave? Are you a minor, an orphan, a widow, and how do you stand in respect of higher beings?”¹⁵⁷ For Hamann there is no abstract, impersonal, reified “good” and “evil”; rather, “[g]ood and evil indicate a relation of ourselves to other objects and the reciprocal relations of these to ourselves.... We thus stand in connection with other things and on this *nexus* is based not only our true being and real nature, but also all changes and nuances of which it is capable.”¹⁵⁸ This is simply a corollary of Hamann’s experience and authorship of living, concrete, personal reality in Christ Who is there, “always clothed in his flesh, in his gospel which must be heard, in bread and wine which must be tasted and felt; the Spirit is always clothed in language, in sensual concepts and feelings; God is always clothed in His world which He created.”¹⁵⁹

Philosophically, Hamann’s emphasis upon the unity and wholeness of man and creation under God made him “a forceful

155. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 1, 286.

156. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 12.

157. Hamann, quoted in O’Flaherty, *Unity and Language*, 59.

158. O’Flaherty, *ibid.*, 51.

159. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 35.

and still too often neglected critic of the subject-object scheme of thought in scholastic philosophy since Descartes.... His belief in the unity of everything as given in God's action leaves no room for a dualistic antithesis between subject and object."¹⁶⁰ O'Flaherty calls "the manner in which he surmounts the difficulty posed by the subject-object dualism" Hamann's "greatest achievement in this area [philosophy]" and sums up Hamann's {175} thought on this subject as "the notion that the ideas of subject and object do not arise simply in relation to each other, but always in relation to a third element [God]."¹⁶¹ Leibrecht states this same point more precisely as follows: "[A]ll truth and unity are hidden in God himself, in his triune nature. For Hamann all thinking is possible, meaningful, and conformable to reality, which is its object in the concrete case, only in the light of God."¹⁶² This seminal Christian philosophical-epistemological principle cries out for elaboration by Christian philosophers and scholars today.

The foregoing discussion also shows that Hamann, anticipating modern thinkers like Cornelius Van Til and Francis A. Schaeffer, eschewed the "nature-grace" dichotomy of medieval scholasticism.

160. Leibrecht, *God and Man*, 78.

161. O'Flaherty, *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia*, 45.

162. Leibrecht, *God and Man*, 79.

The following remarks on the "subject-object" stance of non-biblical philosophy by Paul D. Ackerman, a leading scholar of the biblical creation movement of the 1970s and 1980s, are relevant:

"If starting from an 'above-and-beyond nature' position originating in the express revelation by the Creator *ex nihilo* of the Bible ... then, and then alone man ... may exercise a 'subject-object' task of evaluation of the remainder of the created universe around him. ...

"On the other hand, if man starts with 'nature' or the universe itself ... then man is of necessity himself part of 'nature' or the universe. In that case he cannot logically or empirically maintain a 'subject-object' stance when trying to evaluate himself or the rest of the world. John Dewey, by the way, recognized this.... Dewey derisively called the 'subject-object' analytical stance a 'spectator theory of knowledge' and attempted to replace it with his own evolutionist, monist approach of continual change in which 'doing' and 'knowing' are the same, and in which epistemological certainty is impossible....

"Of course Dewey himself was also guilty of the 'subject-object' approach when presupposing a priori that monistic evolutionism is true. To reason at all, man must reason as though he himself stood apart from nature; his very mode of reasoning shows his super-natural origin."—*Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly*, .5, no. 3 (Spring 1983): 6–7.

Alexander correctly writes that

[t]he Thomistic division between two theologies, a natural and a revealed, is utterly rejected, as is the Aristotelian concept of a natural or “neutral” man upon which it is based. Proving God is likewise utterly foolish, since man does not and cannot argue himself into a deity. Man always has a god. Thus the question is not “Whether God” but “What God?”¹⁶³

In Hamann’s biblical, God-centered theonomic thought there is no internal contradiction, nor is there tension between the dichotomic polarities entailed by the would-be autonomy of humanistic thought (nature-grace, sacred-secular, body-soul, reason-emotion, collective-individual, and so on). In God Himself, of course, Who always stands in right relations with all His creatures as the sovereign, omniscient, just, and merciful Creator, Provider, Redeemer, and Judge, such dichotomies do not exist. They are also reconciled in His creatures redeemed by and in His only-begotten Son and Word, Jesus Christ.¹⁶⁴

E. Christ’s Incarnation as Norm for Human Cultural Action

1. *Language*

The incarnation of Christ is central to Hamann’s Christian philosophy. It typifies God’s dealings with man and links God’s condescension in original creation to His redemption and restoration of it as promised in His Word where He condescended to use men and human language. This glory of the Word Himself, and the word of Scripture, one and the same, “the living, energetic, double-edged, penetrating, marrow-piercing and critical Word, before Whom no creature is invisible, but before Whom all lie bare and exposed to His eye,”¹⁶⁵ caused Hamann to call himself a “lover of the Word” (philologist). Language for him “was [176] never a matter of purely aesthetic or belletristic interests, but a profound concern with the medium in which God has chosen to

163. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 195.

164. I take this to be the meaning of what Hamann called the principle of “*coincidentia oppositorum*.”

165. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 158.

reveal himself.”¹⁶⁶

Hamann attacked the Hegelian dialectical reasoning process which he found already in Mendelssohn, and philosophical abstraction-mongering in general, because it falsifies the meaning of language as the sacramental symbol for concrete reality. Language is part of the image and likeness of God bestowed on man at creation; it must never be prostituted as a tool of man's sinful, autonomous, “murderous lying philosophy.” Moreover, as God's words in Scripture are true as reflecting true reality and stand fast forever, so “[t]he words of a man must stand; if they are false, all his intentions and actions are also false.... The basis for Christian moral relations is linguistic honesty, which is a covenant to say what one means and do what one says. Without this honesty, there can be no morality and no social relations or contracts of any kind....”¹⁶⁷

Philosophical word games, “stories,” and systems were to Hamann signs of merely academic, speculative curiosity, “the sickness of the age ... because its interests were not desperate.” Love for truth would have meant “passionate concern” which “is the way that truth which is ultimate must be approached.” Any “truth” which “does not have to be encountered and received in faith ... is of no concern to Hamann since it cannot have to do with the living God. Here ‘curiosity’ and ‘objectivity’ are useless.”¹⁶⁸

Note that while “curiosity” and “objectivity” are excluded, reason is not. On the contrary, “faith needs reason just as much as reason needs faith.”¹⁶⁹ However, Hamann thought “of reason as does St. Paul of all the law and its school justice—I only trust it with recognition of error, but I do not think it is a way to truth and to life.”¹⁷⁰ Hamann traced the false use of reason through words back to man's fall in Eden: “... this anticipation of being like God has paved the way for all philosophical knowledge and legalistic justification.... This Harpagmos [robbery, grasping—Phil. 2:6] was the Proton Pseudos (first error) of the first attempt to displace our

166. O'Flaherty, *Unity and Language*, 19.

167. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 155, 160.

168. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 68–69.

169. Hamann, quoted in Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 43.

170. *Ibid.*, 42.

senses from simplicity in words, and to spoil the peace of God upon earth through the wanton taste of reason.”¹⁷¹ Faith, Hamann knew, “is not the work of reason, and therefore cannot succumb to its attack, because faith arises just as little from reason as do tasting and seeing.”¹⁷² Again, however, this does not mean that for Hamann faith in God comes without the written word as the instrument of the Holy Spirit, as witnessed by his utter, lifelong dependence upon the Bible. With regard to {177} all experience for Hamann, “the subjective aspects of experience always imply, at least on the human level, their objective correlates.”¹⁷³

Hamann took issue with Herder over the latter’s prize-winning *Treatise on the Origin of Language*. Here Herder had made “room for the argument that man invented language (Bacon, Locke) as well as for the opposed doctrine that language arose from the sounds of nature (Condillac).”¹⁷⁴ Both these doctrines, of course, are naturalistic and thus contrary to the biblical creation of man in God’s own image and likeness, which means that God created man with full-fledged human language analogical to His own. Today both these doctrines still exist, amalgamated together as the linguistic “grunt theory” of modern psychology. Faithful to the biblical creation account, Hamann averred that “[t]here must be similarities among all human languages which are based on the uniformity of our nature.”¹⁷⁵ Modern linguistic research has shown this to be true, and it also appears to support the original “design” of language, as surmised by Noam Chomsky in opposition to merely naturalistic theories of the origin of language.¹⁷⁶ O’Flaherty, doubtless the foremost authority on Hamann’s philosophy of language, calls Hamann a pioneer comparable to LŽvi-Strauss or Whorf (we might add Chomsky).

Hamann conceptualized the nature of created reality as

171. Hamann, in quoted by Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 77.

172. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 74.

173. O’Flaherty, *Unity and Language*, 33.

174. *Ibid.*, 71.

175. *Ibid.*, 69.

176. See *Creation Social Science and Humanities Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1978), and no. 3 (Spring 1979), article by Dennis Farrell, “Overdesign as a Model for Language,” pts. 1 and 2.

concrete objects and their relationships. Language must reflect this reality as perceived by man by naming concrete objects, and by apparently “abstract” but actually concrete reality-describing terms symbolizing the relationship between concrete objects. Abstractions from words alone are then errors *per se* as they do not correspond to anything existing in concrete reality. Sin, of course, introduces factual error in man’s perception, reflection, and hence linguistic symbolization of reality. When Adam named the animals (Gen. 2:19–20), responding in human language to God’s language whereby He had created them, his naming corresponded factually and perfectly to God’s creation because Adam had not yet fallen into sin.

As we have seen from his *Metacritique* of Kant’s “pure reason,” for Hamann thought and language were inseparable. This linguistic consequence of this principle of reality is that Hamann accepts “the ineluctable union of thought and language as a fruitful marriage of inner and outer experience” and sees therein “the most promising possibilities, and therefore neither search for an escape into a realm of a-lingual intuition nor wish to remold linguistic symbolism after the image of reason.”¹⁷⁷ {178} A biblical Christian linguistics should find much to develop in Hamann’s seminal work.

2. Art

In his important study *How Should We Then Live?*¹⁷⁸ Francis A. Schaeffer shows that the development of Western art is a reliable indicator of the rise and decline of Western Christian culture. Similar parallels have been drawn between art and the biblical Christian thought of Hamann. Alexander rightly contrasts Hamann’s concept of the condescension of God in creation with the waning understanding of the God of the Bible and His transcendence over the world in Sebastiano Conca’s Baroque painting *David Dancing Before the Ark*. Here the earthly scene is made to appear far more real than the clouds above—meant to point to the transcendent but essentially unreal and

177. O’Flaherty, *Unity and Language*, 34–35.

178. Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, [1976] 1983).

unnneeded deity.¹⁷⁹ Hamann perceived the watering-down and falsification not only of God's but also of created earthly reality by the enlightenment rationalists and mocked it in his *Socratic Memorabilia*. O'Flaherty refers to a French Rococo painting by François Boucher in the Louvre,

which admirably illustrates Hamann's point. The picture is entitled "Venus at the Forge of Vulcan," and presents a doll-like goddess of love with a tiny mouth beside a handsome and well-made Vulcan, whose muscular body strikes a rather soulful pose. A rococo cupid, accompanied by doves, adds to the preciousity of the picture.... Any suggestion of the elementary power and robust strength which one would expect in a representation of the celestial smithy is ruled out in the name of die schöne Natur [beautiful nature], the quintessence of preciousity.¹⁸⁰

For Hamann, all earthly reality sacramentally reveals the reality of the Living God Who condescended to create the world from nothing out of His transcendent majesty and ineffable glory. Reality also sacramentally reveals the incarnate Christ, Who humbled Himself to suffer pain, shame, and death on the cross to redeem and restore the fallen world. In the artistic portrayal of reality, therefore, "Hamann's notion is that earthly beauty may appear to the beholder even as the contradiction of spiritual beauty."¹⁸¹ However, since art must portray living reality in the Living God and not aesthetic "abstractions,"

those who prefer the ugly and painful side of life, unredeemed by religious faith, for its own sake have little in common with the Magus.... he by no means abolishes the distinction between the high and the low, the sublime and the base. What he does ... is to recognize that the base elements of life {179} may, if transformed, serve as ... effective symbols of the spirit. This conception ... is derived from the biblical revelation and from Christian theology. What is original with Hamann, however, is the application of the biblical doctrine of Knechtsgestalt ["form of a servant"] to aesthetics.¹⁸²

179. Alexander, *Philosophy and Faith*, 28.

180. O'Flaherty, *Hamann's Socratic Memorabilia*, 112.

181. *Ibid.*, 63.

182. *Ibid.*, 129.

3. Education

Hamann's worship of the incarnate Christ and admiration of God's condescension to His creatures also shaped his thoughts about the education of children as an essentially humble communication of the higher with the lower, the teacher with the pupil, under God. To Hamann, himself a teacher and experienced tutor, "a proper teacher must go to school with God himself if he wants to exercise the wisdom of his office; he must imitate Him as He reveals Himself in nature and in the Holy Scriptures, and by means of both in our soul."¹⁸³ For him "a child who knows nothing is not for that reason a fool or an animal but rather always remains a human being *in spe* ("in hope")."¹⁸⁴ This biblical principle applies especially to the "special education" of mentally slow or handicapped children, and we may remember that Hamann supported his younger, mentally deteriorating brother in his home for ten years till his death. (Hamann intended to write a paper in memory of "his cretin.")

Hamann was not too satisfied with the education he himself had received, and for that reason opposed "small corner schools [*Winkelschulen*]" and also the mechanical rote study of foreign languages and classical authors. He himself learned and taught foreign languages from their best authors; thus he taught Herder English from reading Shakespeare, and has been called Shakespeare's first popularizer in Germany. He taught his own son, who at the age of thirteen "began to read the New Testament [in Greek] for the sixth time.... In Hebrew [we are] in the fourth book of Moses [Numbers]. In Latin we are reading the third book of the Aeneid with Heyne's notes and exercises.... I also already am with him in the last book of the Iliad ... we will soon make an attempt with Pindar—and so at least I serve as a dull stone to sharpen others and to give them a cutting edge which I myself lack."¹⁸⁵ His son, a stutterer like his father, nevertheless became head of a German high school (*Gymnasium*) and served with distinction. All the daughters, too, made good marriages and did

183. Hamann, quoted in Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 11.

184. *Ibid.*, 13.

185. Hamann, *Correspondence*, vol. 4, 401 (letter to Herder dated July 7, 1782).

well in life.

Hamann's thoughts on education were fully formed already soon {180} after his conversion. This is evident from a letter he wrote in 1759 to Immanuel Kant when the latter consulted him about a textbook he intended to write for the instruction of children in the natural sciences. Hamann replied at length and with great care. Parts of his letter follow:

You are in truth a master in Israel if you think it a trifle to change into a child, despite your scholarliness! ... your project requires an excellent knowledge of the world of children which cannot be acquired in the world of good taste and academics....

To prepare for oneself praise from the mouths of babes and sucklings! to take part in this ambition and taste is no common business. One must begin, not with stealing feathers of many colors (to deck oneself with) but rather with a voluntary giving up of all superiority in age and wisdom, and with a denial of all vanity. A philosophical book for children would therefore have to look as simple, foolish and trite as a divine book written for adults....

The greatest law of the method for children thus consists in condescending to their weakness; to become their servant if one wants to be their master; to follow them if one wants to rule them; to study their language and their soul if we want to move them to imitate ours. This practical principle, however, is neither possible to understand nor to fulfill in actual deed if one is not, as we say in common life, crazy about children and loves them without really knowing why. If you feel ... the weakness of such a love of children; then the *Aude* (listen) will be very easy for you, and the *sapere* (to know) will also flow....

I am amazed how the wise Builder of the world could have had the notion of giving as it were an account of his labor with the great work of creation; since no clever man easily takes the trouble to inform children and fools about the mechanism of his actions. Nothing but love towards us sucklings of the creation could have moved Him to this weakness.¹⁸⁶

4. Church and State

Hamann lived at a time and in a country where both church

186. Hamann, *Correspondence*, vol. 1, 445–46 (letter to Kant of 1759).

and civil government were subject to the ruler of the state, in his case Frederick II of Prussia. He seems to have had no contact with “nonconformist” or independent Christian groups such as the Methodists of John Wesley (1703–1791) in England or the Moravian Brethren, led by Count Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760) in Germany. Thus he did not address the problem of separation of church and state in its modern judicial aspects as applying to the United States today. However, he clearly understood and exposed the root of what is really at stake: the {181} intentions and actions of a Christian as a citizen as the concern of both church and state. On this subject he wrote in *Golgotha and Scheblimini*,

To the true fulfillment of our duties, and to the perfection of man belong actions and intentions. State and Church are concerned with both. Therefore actions without intentions, and intentions without actions, are a cutting asunder of whole and living duties into two dead halves. When motives may no longer be reasons of truth, and reasons of truth are no longer considered fit to be motives; when being depends upon necessary reason, and reality depends upon accidental will: then all divine and human union ceases both in intentions and in actions. The state becomes a body without spirit and life—a cadaver for vultures! The church becomes a specter, without flesh and bone—a scarecrow for sparrows!¹⁸⁷

The final stage of a morally bankrupt and wilfully suicidal society is here prophetically described. Is our own state today becoming a body without spirit and life, a cadaver for vultures? Is our own church a specter, without flesh and bone, a scarecrow for sparrows? Whether our own church or churches happen to be legally separate from the state matters relatively little in this assessment.

In the same writing Hamann refers to Christ’s famous “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Mark 12:13–17). For Hamann, as always, it is the believers’ and churches’ “truth in the inward parts,” their undivided fulfillment of their whole and living duties (a paraphrase of James 2:14–26), which must be lived out. Merely outward conformity to religious instruction, mere church ceremony combined with bowing to a state’s anti-biblical legislation, is not to serve either

187. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 3, 303.

church or state as Christ meant. Hamann applies to church and state relationships the ground principle of man's creation in God's image of which the incarnate Christ is the norm. Dunning's comments are apposite:

Mendelssohn [claimed] that Christ teaches "an obvious contradiction" between duties to God and duties to Caesar, and that men should therefore "bear both burdens" as best they can. Hamann rejects this interpretation, for it sets up a double standard of "religious" and "civil" behavior. If God is Lord of all life, He will not be satisfied by merely ceremonial religious actions and mechanical conformity to civil laws; He wants every word and deed to serve Him in their fundamental unity.¹⁸⁸

Hamann's devastating judgment of just such merely ceremonial and mechanical conformity to civil and church law confirms this application of the norm of Christ. He also extends it to the state educational system {182} where the state inculcates moral concepts for its own autonomous ends, aided and abetted by a dead "neutral" ecclesiasticism:

The mystery of Christian holiness consists ... not in legislation and moral doctrines, which concern merely human sentiments and human actions, but in execution of divine decrees by means of divine deeds.... Dogmatics and ecclesiastical law belong solely to the public educational and administrative institutions, and as such are subject to the arbitrariness of the authorities, an outward discipline that is sometimes coarse and sometimes refined, according to the elements and degrees of the dominant aesthetic. These visible, public, common institutions are neither religion nor wisdom which come down from above, but earthly, unspiritual and devilish, according to ... the changing system of statistical balance and preponderance, or of armed tolerance and neutrality—church and school affairs have, as creatures and miscarriages of the state and of reason, often prostituted themselves for both just as sordidly as they have betrayed them.¹⁸⁹

We have already made reference to Hamann's resistance to Frederick II. In *Golgotha and Scheblimini* he castigates the king as a "philosopher without sorrow and shame" and as a "Nimrod"

188. Dunning, *The Tongues of Men*, 151.

189. Hamann, trans. Dunning, *ibid.*, 224–25.

claiming totalitarian rule in defiance of God. Elsewhere, he called the king “Saul,” “Nebuchadnezzar,” “Rehoboam,” “Belshazzar,” and “Herod”;¹⁹⁰ Berlin, the capital, was “Babel.” For Hamann, a king should exercise his calling under God just as much if not more than any other man, humbly and “in the form of a servant,” as did Christ Himself in His incarnation. Frederick II, the autocratic despot and the “Solomon of Prussia” who despised the God of the Bible and committed spiritual adultery with the enlightenment philosophers he nurtured at his court and academy, personified for Hamann the lawlessness of an anti-Christian state and government. The importance of this matter for a Christian view of and resistance to ungodly governments in our own time is clear.

8. Concluding Remarks

Hamann was an interpreter of reality in Christ not only in his own time but with even more urgent relevance for us today. He himself looked for greater understanding by “a better posterity”¹⁹¹ and knew that “an author who hurries to be understood today or tomorrow risks being forgotten day after tomorrow.”¹⁹² Are we “a better posterity”? Or do we listen to Hamann because the battle lines in the confrontation between biblical theocentric faith with autonomous humanist thought have become so much more distinct, and because the number of men and women knowing the Personal Triune God of the Scriptures Who is {183} really there, as did Hamann, seems to have become so much smaller?

We really know, if we know and believe on the immutable Living God of the Scriptures, that He has kept and will keep in all ages from the beginning of creation to the end of this age “His seven thousand who have not bowed to Baal” (1 Kings 19:18). Yet it is perennially tempting to lament our apparent lack of power, and our persecution by unbelievers. Hamann’s friend and fellow Christian soldier Lavater already complained in a similar vein that his enlightenment critics permitted themselves all those things against him which they would never pardon him for, ending sadly, “Dear Jacobi, what a negative decade it is! what armies of negative

190. O’Flaherty, *Johann Georg Hamann*, 146.

191. Hamann, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 2, 114.

192. Hamann, quoted in Ziesemer, *Der Magus im Norden*, 61.

people. All rob, no one wants to give; all destroy, no one wants to build. No seriousness, all is frivolity; no dignity, everything is jest; no goals, everything is random will...."¹⁹³ Over against this defeatism, Hamann rejoiced to the end of his life in our marvelous, gracious, condescending God the Creator, His Son our Redeemer and Mediator, and His Holy Spirit revealing Him and true glorious reality in Christ through His written word, the Scripture. When Hamann was converted in that London garret in 1719, he was converted wholly, heart, mind, soul, and strength, with all his intellect and abilities henceforth worshipping God his Savior. Yet this God could speak of His own weakness and foolishness in His dealings with men (1 Cor. 1:25). Therefore, Hamann His redeemed child chose as his favorite Scripture verses, written on his gravestone:

But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block,
and unto the Greeks foolishness;

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound
the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to
confound the things which are mighty. (1 Cor. 1:23, 27)

Even so, God chose the stutterer whom his worldly friend rejected as a husband for his sister as an "enthusiast" and "good-for-nothing," to speak of Him all his life and across two centuries "with stammering lips and another tongue."

In his unique writings, Hamann hid the precious pearls of the biblical revelation of reality in Christ amidst myriad authors of antiquity and modernity. Thus he, "a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven," was literally like the householder of Christ's parable, bringing forth out of his treasure of prodigious reading and memory "things new and old" (Matt. 13:12). Perhaps God is reviving interest in Hamann today in part in order to raise up similar methods of evangelism by similar scribes [184] instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.

Word about him spread "by honor and dishonor, by evil report and good report" (2 Cor. 6:9). He was given understanding and prophetic power to cast down the imaginations of proud

193. Jacobi, *Briefwechsel*, vol. 4, pt. 3, 126–27 (from letter by Johann Kaspar Lavater to F. H. Jacobi dated December 14, 1785).

and superficial eighteenth-century enlightenment rationalism with all its internal contradictions and all its inherent seeds for the positivistic, mechanistic streams of humanistic thought today, such as modern Skinnerian behaviorism. But Hamann also exposed and cast down Kantian “pure reason”; the monist-panteist idealism of Hegel and his defense of the collectivist-elitist power state preached and practiced from Plato and the slave states of antiquity to our own Nazism and Marxism-Communism; and finally, modern existentialism and the neo-gnostic “New Age Thought” of the 1980s.

Most important of all, Hamann did not only do battle against the enemy by exposing his unbiblical presuppositions, striking at the root of would-be autonomous humanism in all its forms. Hamann also laid foundations for the constructive, forward-looking, pioneering application and development of biblical Christian thought itself. He did this by taking the God of the Bible Himself as his starting point. He wholly and in joyful obedience in thought and in his own life accepted God’s concrete self-revelation in Scripture, nature, and history, with Scripture the key. Beginning with biblical creation and the wholeness of man created in God’s image and restored to that image by redemption in Christ, Hamann overcame the dichotomies of autonomous human philosophies and epistemology, including the traditional “subject-object” stance of these philosophies and also of medieval scholasticism infected with them. Hamann took Christ Incarnate as the norm for man’s every thought and action. He even already worked out the concrete beginnings and first steps of a biblical Christian theory of language, of philosophy, of history, of art, of principles of education, and of the relationship between church and state. He did the same in additional areas of human cultural thought and action not covered in this introductory paper for lack of space, such as a theology of biblical language and a theory of time. His seminal work offers ample room and joyful invitation for further development to Christian scholars and workers in the humanities, and indeed to us all who name the Name of Christ, our Ever-Living Lord by Whom all things were made, all things consist, and by Whom we must be saved. {185}

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THE COUNCIL OF CHALCEDON AND THE THEORY OF EVOLUTION

Mace Baker

We find already in the days of the apostles, when Christianity was presumably at its strongest, the development of deviations from the truth, such as legalism and angel worship. It should be no surprise then that in the days to follow, when the apostles were gone and the wolves of which Jesus spoke would have time to multiply and become even more adept in their attempts to portray themselves as sheep, the problems of error would increase. This would be especially so since more and more people would be joining the church and bringing into it their own preconceived ideas, weaknesses of character, and the negative effects of their former education in the world system.

The latter is exemplified by the person and work of the great theologian Augustine. He was so impressed with the scholarly work of Aristotle that he tried to reconcile much of it to Scripture. Consequently, he devised what might be called the first popular theory of theistic evolution in church history.¹ Aristotle had believed in a "Planner," but he was also convinced that life evolved. For him it was not a branching evolution as we have presented before us today, but a straight-line evolution from the simplest organism to the most complex.² In Augustine's attempt to reconcile Aristotle and Scripture in the area of origins, he did the church a great disfavor. (It is interesting to note that Henry Fairfield Osborne has indicated that if the church would have continued to accept Augustine's idea, the theory of evolution would not have

1. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. 3, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1910), 832.

2. Aristotle, *On Man in the Universe* (New York: Wm. J. Black, 1943).

led to the great controversy {193} that we see today.)³ Thankfully, such a man as Francisco Suarez took issue with Augustine and was able effectively to oppose Augustine's idea and guide the church back to what we might call biblical creationism.⁴

And so it came to pass, especially after Christianity was designated as the official religion of the empire, that wrong ideas and heresies began to be keenly felt in Christendom. And thus the central leadership of orthodox Christianity found itself, not only fighting to overcome the popular and more obvious heresies, but also, surely to its own dismay and consternation, hopelessly embroiled in arguments, within its own circle, over the most minute distinctions regarding the nature and work of both God and His church.

It was because of such controversies and dissensions that the seven great councils of the church were held; and in this connection we would like to consider the central point of the council at Chalcedon (the fourth council), which had to do with the distinctions regarding the nature of Christ, and to see how they relate to the battle over the origin of man in our present theological and secular arena of debate.

In brief, here is how it came about: Because of the fame Nestorius had achieved as a preacher, he was promoted to the patriarchal see of Constantinople by Theodosius II in 428. In those days there occurred a disagreement over an appropriate title for the Virgin Mary, and that which seemed to arouse a considerable amount of furor among some of the clergy was the term *Theotokos* ("God-Bearing").

Nestorius seems to have been quite even-minded about this and rendered the decision that the term *Theotokos* might be suitable if it were always accompanied by the term *Anthropotokos*, or "Man-Bearing." He furthermore forthrightly asserted that the term *Christotokos* ("Christ-Bearing") would be more accurate. In response to this, the highly respected Cyril of Alexandria castigated this decision and the council at Ephesus pronounced

3. Bolton Davidheiser, *History of Evolution*, lecture vol. 4 of the audiotaped series, *And God Created*, ed. Kelly L. Seagraves (Creation Science Research Center, San Diego, 1973).

4. *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13 (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1967), 751–54.

Nestorius a heretic. He was forthwith deposed from his high clerical responsibilities. Modern scholars are yet divided with regard to the propriety of his doctrines.⁵

It is pertinent at this point to be briefly definitive of the views of Nestorius regarding the nature of Christ. While there does not seem to be any wavering on his part concerning the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice nor the issue of salvation by faith, some scholars say that he "denied the real union of the divine and human natures of Christ, affirming or implying a twofold personality in Christ."⁶ However, we find that there was {194} no disinclination on his part to consider Jesus truly God and truly man. His difficulty was in his explanation as to how these resided in Christ. It was his contention that the divine and human nature were in no way compromised in their coexistence within the person of Christ. Indeed, he was convinced that they were as eternally separate as parallel lines, while consistently present within the body and person of Jesus Christ. To him it was unthinkable that the divinity of Christ could ever have anything to do with his physical sufferings. So, to put it succinctly, he insisted that Christ was one person possessing two distinct and separate natures. Though pronounced a heretic, his ideas nevertheless continued to be promulgated by others in the Eastern Church, where, for the most part, they remained popular and prominent for at least 200 years.⁷

In this same general space of time, Eutyches, who had achieved high position in the church, felt the necessity to involve himself in this battle against Nestorianism, and in his zeal he apparently stressed the single nature of Christ to such a degree that the upholders of orthodoxy became alarmed.⁸ The consequence of this assumed threat to basic Christian doctrine was that another church council was soon convened at Chalcedon. The central thrust of this conference was to establish once and for all a definitive statement regarding the nature of Christ. In brief, the council ruled (in conformity with a letter from Leo, the bishop of Rome) that Jesus Christ was one person with two natures and was

5. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*, 717–18.

6. Theisen, *Lectures in Systematic Theology*, 285.

7. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*, 717–18.

8. *Ibid.*, 736–37.

in fact “very man” and “very God.”⁹

They agreed that “the Lord Christ is one. His two natures preserved in one prosopon and hypostatis.” They also asserted that “both natures, God and man, are unimpaired, ‘perfect,’ consubstantial with God and man, preexistent and born of the Virgin. He is ‘acknowledged in two natures’”¹⁰ “...without confusion, without conversion, without severance, and without division.”¹¹ Finally, “the definition affirmed that the distinct natures are fully God and man, thus securing salvation by a saving God and a man identified with men.”¹²

We concern ourselves with this historic effort for the purpose of carefully noting with what care these Christian theologians established the nature of Christ as true God and true man. In contrast to this, we note that several hundred years later, modern theologians adopted a different view with respect to the nature of man. This change was influenced by the advent of the theory of evolution. In accepting the theory as fact, they inadvertently eliminated the possibility of man existing as an entity biologically and ontologically distinct from the animal kingdom. {195} His lingering “uniqueness” was largely a Romantic concept. Scientifically, he was merely an extension of the animal kingdom.

In 1950, Pope Pius XII issued his encyclical, *Humani Generis*. This stated that Catholics could believe either in special creation or in evolution. If they opted for evolution, however, they were required to believe that at some point along the evolutionary journey, God put into man a human spirit, thus distinguishing him from the animal kingdom. Many within the Protestant realm have also given credence to the general idea of theistic evolution. Since these two groups have been willing to fit evolution into their theological framework, it becomes important to expose some of the problems inherent in such a compromise.

1. First of all, this idea that God put a human spirit into the

9. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, “The Seventh Ecumenical Council,” *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser. vol. 14 (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979), 254, 258.

10. J. D. Douglas, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Zondervan, 1974), 209.

11. Schaff, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*, 745–46.

12. Douglas, *New International Dictionary*.

emerging man—can this be substantiated by science? No, and it is highly objectionable to the mainstream of evolutionary thinking. Then we ask, is it supported by theology? No, the Scriptures are categorically opposed to such a suggestion. Therefore, the idea falls wholly within the realm of philosophy. Are we then so devoid of written revelation or so poor with regard to facts from nature that we must base a major doctrine of the Christian faith on philosophical reasoning which is contrary to both science and Scripture?

2. It would be difficult to argue from a scientific basis that only two people, as the Scriptures state, rather than dozens, were at any given time the ones to make the transition successfully so that it could honestly be said that all humanity came from them. The Scriptures state that Adam called his wife Eve because she was to be the mother of all humans. If the evolutionary scenario really occurred, this section of Genesis cannot be accurate. In fact, there would be so many discrepancies in the first chapters of Genesis that the entire book could not be taken seriously as the authentic revelation of the almighty God. The Scriptures state that woman was created by a special act of God and that she was made from a part of man's anatomy. Later we are told that she was the first to take of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. Indeed, the pain of childbearing was to become a part of her judgment. Apart from the scriptural account, there is no explanation as to why women have to suffer in giving birth to their offspring.

3. Moreover, not only is it strikingly obvious that the transition from apelike creatures to men is hopelessly lacking in significant fossil evidence, but it would be impossible to determine at what point the {196} hominid line crossed over into true homo sapien. Did only two make the transition? By chance did it happen to be one male and one female, or did many couples in different parts of the world make the transition, thus developing several human population centers? Does it not then become next to impossible to attempt to explain when the descendants of the early hominids ever became capable of sin? What could be sin to such a species, and what would its effect be on this species, seeing that death had occurred to their ancestors as a normal part of the creation process?

Romans 5:12 states: "Wherefore as by one man sin entered the

world and death by sin, so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.” It is relatively easy to understand why the world and mankind have been ravaged since the occurrence of sin, but how can it possibly be explained that such a grotesque war of nature with untold suffering and the occurrence of countless deaths could have occurred before there was sin? Could God actually be responsible for such a cruel and inefficient system? Was it not possible for Him to do as the book of Genesis indicates so that man and all species of creation could begin their lives in an environment that was propitious for health and productivity? Does this not severely undermine the reputation of God? If God is as the Scriptures repeatedly speak of Him, all powerful, just, merciful, and omniscient, we would expect of him a mode of creation which would be compatible with His nature and attributes. Could God, looking upon the evolutionary process with its five billion years of suffering and wastefulness, say, “It is good”? Thus, if evolution is true, there is no relationship between sin and death. The origin of sin becomes vague, and the necessity of redemption is based as much on the problems of the creation process as upon man’s personal failures.

4. Furthermore, the meaning of soul and spirit in the light of evolution is completely inexplicable. Could it be that the only thing which truly distinguishes us from the animals is the soul and spirit? Why then is the Scripture writer so careful to tell us that God formed man from the dust of the earth and that He made woman from the rib of the man? Are these meaningless allegories or just Hebrew folklore? Can we dispense with the foundation of man’s meaning as it is stated in Genesis 1:26, “And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...”?

5. Jesus Christ attests to the credibility of the first several chapters of Genesis. Now that we have gone to such great length to tell in what way Jesus is both God and man, and since men have fought so tenaciously {197} for the clarification of His nature to be both God and man, it seems highly contradictory now to diminish His deity by assuming that He either did not know what really happened with regard to origins, or that He was unwilling to tell us the unpleasant truth.

6. It has been said by some that God gave Moses the Genesis account of creation as a sort of general account, because the idea

of evolution would have been too complicated for him and his generation to understand. To this we would say: if God is to be consistent with this kind of reasoning, then we would not expect to find the book of Revelation in the Bible at all. Here is a book that is much more complicated by far than the theory of evolution. While we find that the book of Revelation seems to proceed in a logical way out from the previous biblical writings, the theory of evolution appears quite contrary to both the laws of science and the doctrines of Scripture.

It is to be remembered that neither the idea of evolution, of life occurring over long periods of time, nor of gods being involved in various creative activities regarding the earth and universe, was at all foreign to the science and religion of the time in which Moses wrote. The Genesis account where all things are created to reproduce after their kind, where all things were accomplished in six days, where one God creates in an atmosphere of peace and goodness, would have been a radical conception of origins at that time. The easiest thing and the less embarrassing idea that Moses and his contemporaries could have received would have been the idea of theistic evolution. It is indeed significant that Moses's account of origins does not commend itself to the science of his day, even though he was well trained in the learning of the Egyptians. In the annals of history, such an incident is remarkably rare.

7. Finally, it can honestly be said that if indeed evolution is true, then it appears as if God was unnecessary and the only significant difference between a Christian and an unbeliever is that one of them has arbitrarily chosen to make God responsible for the initial stimulus. In the great judgment it will be quite fair for an unbeliever to state that, as best he could understand, life through evolutionary principles had come into existence by itself and thus he felt no reason to engage himself in any particular religious belief. Yet the Scriptures state repeatedly that God has designed, created, and left His imprint upon the earth in such a way as will render the man who refuses to acknowledge God in faith "without excuse."¹³ {198}

Let us note briefly the growing evidence against evolution as it is

13. Rom. 1:20.

recorded by well-known evolutionists:

A. Darwin called the origin of flowering plants an “abominable mystery.” Today E. J. H. Corner writes, “Much evidence can be adduced in favor of the theory of evolution from biology, biogeography, and paleontology, but I still think that to the unprejudiced, the fossil record of plants is in favor of special creation.”¹⁴

B. In the lowest layers of the geological record, life appears abruptly as the creation model would predict. Thus, Axelrod of UCLA writes, “One of the major unsolved problems of geology and evolution is the occurrence of diversified, multi-cellular marine invertebrates in Lower Cambrian rocks on all the continents and their absence in rocks of greater age.”¹⁵

C. A main feature of Darwin’s theory has been natural selection, and a star witness to this proposal was the Galapagos finches. In time, this testimony has undergone objective scrutiny, such as the statements set forth by Marjorie Green, a leading philosopher of science. With regard to the Galapagos finches, she has this to say: “It is their story that is told in the *Origin* and is elaborated by selectionists today, but these are dead ends, last minutiae of development. It is not from them that the great massive novelties of evolution could have sprung. For this, such dissenters feel, is the major evolutionary theme: Great new inventions, new ideas of living which arise with startling suddenness, proliferate in a variety of directions, yet persist with fundamental constancy as in Darwinian terms they would have no reason in the world to do. Neither the origin and persistence of great new modes of life: photosynthesis, breathing, thinking, nor all the intricate and coordinated changes needed to support them are explained or even made conceivable on the Darwinian view. And if one returns to read the *Origin of Species* with these criticisms in mind one finds indeed that for all the brilliance of his hypothesis piled on hypothesis, for all the splendid simplicity of the ‘mechanism’ of which it ‘explains’ so many and so varied phenomena, it’s simply not about the origin of species, let alone the great orders and

14. E. J. H. Corner, *Contemporary Botanical Thought*, ed. A. M. MacLeod and L. S. Coglem (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1961), 97.

15. D. Axelrod, *Science* 128 (1958): 7.

classes and phyla at all. Its argument moves in a different direction altogether, in the direction of minute specialized adaptations which lead, unless to extinction, nowhere. And the same is true of the whole immense and infinitely ingenious mountain of work by present-day Darwinians.”¹⁶ {199}

D. Regarding the fossil evidence in general, Dr. David Kitts of the University of Oklahoma says, “Despite the bright promise that paleontology provides a means of ‘seeing’ evolution, it has presented some nasty difficulties for evolutionists, the most notorious of which is the presence of ‘gaps’ in the fossil record. Evolution requires intermediate forms between species, and paleontology does not provide them.”¹⁷

E. And how about the field of biology? Dr. L. Harrison Matthews, a Fellow of the Royal Academy of England, writing the preface to the fourth edition of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*, states: “In accepting evolution as a fact, how many biologists have paused to reflect that science is built upon theories that have been proven by experiment to be correct, or which remember that the theory of animal evolution has never been thus proven. The fact of evolution is the backbone of biology, and biology is thus in the peculiar position of being a science founded on an unproved theory. Is it then a science or a faith?”¹⁸

Finally, it might be added, that it is a mystery to this writer how a Christian who bases his salvation and future upon the veracity of the Scripture, could abandon both the clear statements of Scripture regarding man’s origins, as well as the hard fact of real science, for the purpose of holding onto a theory which undermines the Scripture on the one hand and flies in the face of empirical science on the other.

In short, by means of the propagators of the theory of evolution and the subsequent compromises that Christendom has made in order to live with the so-called “fact” of evolution, the pureness and significance of the nature of Christ has become as much compromised and distorted now as in the days of Chalcedon,

16. Marjorie Green, *Encounter*, November 1959.

17. D. B. Kitts, *Evolution* 28 (1974): 467.

18. L. Harrison Matthews, intro. to *The Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin, reprint (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1971), xi.

when there was need of defining in what manner He was both true man and true God.

In summary, it might well be said that atheism holds that there is no true God, and that evolution holds that there is no true man. While biblical Judaism states that there is both true God and true man, biblical Christianity acknowledges that God and man have been united in one person forever. The Council of Chalcedon, by setting forth the true doctrine of Christ, preserves for us also the true doctrine of man.

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND CHRISTIANITY'S ETHIC OF DOMINION

Ruben C. Alvarado

In the May 1981 edition of *Audubon* magazine, Ron Wolf presented his view of then Secretary of the Interior James Watt's resources management philosophy, in behalf of the environmentalist movement. Watt at the time was redirecting the department towards a management strategy of development as opposed to preservation, in line with the Reagan administration's sympathy for the condition of the "Sagebrush Rebels" in the West. Those people saw government lands as the key to their continued well-being, and were understandably opposed to environmentalist efforts to withdraw from development vast amounts of acreage. Environmentalists, in turn, saw Watt as a "fox in the chicken coop," giving up for despoliation lands which he was sworn to protect.

Wolf's article was entitled, "God, James Watt, and the Public's Land." He saw, underneath the squabble over land use, a war of religion taking place: two religions fighting for philosophical control of "the public's land." Environmentalism, he wrote, was characterized by a sense of identification with nature. "In general this broad tradition has given rise to forms of belief in which a person's spiritual, physical, and even economic well-being are considered to derive from his rapport with all of creation, from being in tune with the infinite." He contrasts this view with that of Watt's fundamentalist Christianity, of man's dominion over nature as ordained by God. Wolf says it is this attitude of dominion that is the cause of environmental despoliation. This is the root of the problem, [202] he writes, and the real point of battle between Watt and environmentalism.

The thesis that orthodox Christianity is the cause of ecological

disruption by our society is not new with Wolf. Aldo Leopold, whose book *A Sand County Almanac* (1949) has been termed "one of the bibles" of environmentalism,¹ advanced this idea in his critique of utilitarian conservation philosophy. He wrote, "Conservation is getting nowhere because it is incompatible with our Abrahamic concept of land. We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us."² And again: "In human history, we have learned (I hope) that the conqueror role is eventually self-defeating.... In the biotic community, a parallel situation exists. Abraham knew exactly what the land was for: it was to drip milk and honey into Abraham's mouth. At the present moment, the assurance with which we regard this assumption is inverse to the degree of our education."³ This hostility towards the ethic of dominion was made orthodoxy with Professor Lynn White Jr.'s article, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis" (first published in *Science*, 10 March 1967, and reprinted many times thereafter). After describing the impetus which Western Christianity gave to the development of science and technology, White decries the impact of these developments on the environment, attributing their abuse to the worldview which contributed so much to their appearance. He writes that "somewhere over a century ago science and technology—hitherto quite separate activities—joined to give mankind powers which, to judge by many of the ecologic efforts, are out of control. If so, Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt." He advocates a return to pantheistic values, where all creatures are seen as equals: "A democracy of all God's creatures."

This conflict points to the necessity for a clarification of the issue. Is Christianity the cause of the ecologic crisis? Does Christianity justify the wanton despoliation of the environment for the wants of man? Is Christianity being accurately represented here, or are these accusations properly directed towards a caricature of the dominion ethic? And what is the dominion ethic of Christianity?

1. William Tucker, *Progress and Privilege: America in the Age of Environmentalism* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1982), 130.

2. Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Oxford University Press, [1949] 1966), x.

3. *Ibid.*, 220.

Before directly addressing the questions posed above, a quick look at the historical development of environmentalism as a school of thought is in order. Its belief system has only recently become a coherent, viable force in the shaping of the public consciousness, but its roots date back to at least the Romanticist movement of the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. Deism, the view which saw the universe as a vast {203} clocklike mechanism set in motion by God, had failed to satisfy the emotional longing of the human soul, its need for intuitional, transcendental experience with the mystical or divine. The mechanistic, "billiard ball" universe which offered so much hope to the constructors of rationalistic philosophy had become a prison. Logic had excluded intuition and inspiration, yet their claims to the heart could not be so easily overridden by the former's appeal to the head. Inevitably, the backlash to secular sterility came, involving a flight to pantheistic experience of oneness with the Infinite. The mechanistic view of nature was replaced with an organismic one.

In young America, this trend received great impetus through the Transcendentalists, Emerson and Thoreau being their chief exponents; today they are patron saints of environmentalism. Emerson emphasized the organic relationship of man to nature, of nature's being "the mirror of the soul." Oneness with God for him was the natural condition of every man open to nature's ethereal pulse, who could find fulfillment not in separation from her but in harmony with her. Nature was the expression of God's essence, and man was her highest creation, nurtured in her bosom, delighting in her bounty. A process of mutual fulfillment in as-yet-unrealized evolution was man's destiny with her.

The rise of Darwinism in the mid-nineteenth century brought inevitable conflict with this romanticized view of nature. Here the deistic mechanism which rationalism had previously proposed as the model of Creation gave way to that of a chance-determined process of natural selection. Darwin applied the Malthusian interpretation of the course of life to nature, nailing it firmly down with the concept (succinctly described in the title) *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. There was some correlation between the two views in that both involved a concept of continuity of being and also turned away from the Christian God of *ex nihilo*

creation. Yet Darwin's hypothesis involved quite a strained view of Mother Nature; Transcendentalism's emphasis on her beneficence and benignity were hard to reconcile with Darwinism's "red in tooth and claw" paradigm of nature. The enthronement of the ultimacy of chance by Darwinism also brought about unsolvable dilemmas for those with a romantic view of nature.

Notwithstanding such intellectual difficulties, environmental concern as a separate school of thought got underway with the publication in 1863 of George Perkins Marsh's *Man and Nature*, a ground-breaking {204} work which called attention to the deterioration of the environment on account of man's cultural advance. Marsh was an orthodox Christian who grounded his position in the biblical teaching of righteous stewardship of the natural heritage: "Man has too long forgotten that the earth was given to him for usufruct alone, not for consumption, still less for profligate waste."⁴ This emphasis set the tone for future development of conservation philosophy; (contrary to environmentalist dogma espoused today, it can be seriously doubted if effective environmental concern would have been produced, had scriptural teaching not made up such a large part of the intellectual inheritance of the time).⁵

Subsequent development also benefited, however, from the notions of state-oriented progress which came into vogue after the Civil War. Already in Marsh, one notes hostility towards private enterprise, and the call for increasing governmental control and regulation of natural resources. Environmental degradation was increasingly seen as wholly the production of unfettered special

4. George Perkins Marsh, *Man and Nature*, ed. David Lowenthal (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1965), 36.

5. "All over the globe and at all times ... men have pillaged nature and disturbed the ecological equilibrium ... nor did they have a real choice of alternatives. If men are more destructive now ... it is because they have at their command more powerful means of destruction, not because they have been influenced by the Bible. In fact, the Judeo-Christian peoples were probably the first to develop on a large scale a pervasive concern for land management and an ethic of nature." Rene Dubos, *A God Within* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), 161; quoted in Tucker, *Progress and Privilege*.

business interests.⁶ Bureaucracy came to be seen as the salvation of the natural heritage: statist control, administered by professional, scientifically trained experts. “Wise use,” “the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run,” came to be watchwords. Then came the rise of the Progressive Republicans, who stood against the conservative, laissez-faire wing of the party. Theodore Roosevelt was their chief leader; Gifford Pinchot was the ideological exponent of the conservation movement it nurtured.

Pinchot was the first native American trained in forestry. Under his leadership the U.S. Forest Service was established, and through the influence he had with Roosevelt vast amounts of Western acreage were set aside as federal reserves. Pinchot did not advocate setting them aside as preserves, but managing them for “the public good.” This policy was designed to mollify Westerners dependent upon the timber and grasslands for their economic well-being, while protecting the lands from the rapacious special interests. It ran into trouble, however, not so much with these, but with another constituency of the conservation movement—the preservationists.

John Muir was a leader of the opposition to utilization of state-owned natural resources. He carried on the Transcendentalist tradition in that wilderness for him was a spiritual haven:

Muir infused his prose with the religious echoes he detected in his wilderness temples: “The grand priest-like pines held their arms above us in blessing.” Again: “Meadows grassed and liliated head-high, spangled river {205} reaches, and currentless pools, cascades countless and untamable in form and whiteness, groves that heaven all the valley!”⁷

6. However, Tucker writes that “one of the greatest confusions about both the Conservation Movement and current-day environmentalism has been the idea that they pit ‘the public’ against ‘the special interests,’ or ‘big business.’ This is not the case. Since the beginnings of our history, the major environmental and conservation battles have pitted the land- and growth-hungry masses against a smaller minority that was attempting to husband resources under the principles of aristocratic stewardship. If anything, ‘big business’ has usually been a spectator to these conflicts. And ... big business has often been on the side of the conservationists and opposed to unrestricted development.” Tucker, *Progress and Privilege*, 47.

7. Frank Graham Jr., *Man’s Dominion* (New York: M. Evans and Co. Inc., 1971), 151–52.

But, as Graham points out, "Muir's reverence for the forest was pagan rather than Christian."⁸ In keeping with this "sacred grove" tradition, Muir campaigned for the preservation of wilderness from any pressure for utilization by man.

Pinchot and Muir were destined to be antagonists; preservationists and conservationists split over the issue of use vs. non-use. This conflict became apparent in what has come to be seen as a landmark in the history of environmentalism, the Hetch Hetchy Valley confrontation. Hetch Hetchy was a beautiful river valley located less than twenty miles from Yosemite. Another of its "neighbors," however, was the city of San Francisco, which wished to convert the valley into a reservoir.

This remote mountain valley, which Muir called a "wonderfully exact counterpart of the great Yosemite, not only in its crystal river and sublime rocks and waterfalls, but in the gardens, groves, and meadows of its flowery, park-like floor," also had certain characteristics that appealed to the city's engineers. The water carried through the valley by its "crystal river" was sweet and pure. Its "flowery, park-like floor" was flat, suggesting an ideal bottom for a reservoir. And its "sublime rocks" formed steep cliffs narrowing at one end into a slit that would be convenient and relatively cheap to dam. The floor of the valley was about three and a half miles long and it lay 150 miles from San Francisco.⁹

Pinchot led the charge for converting the valley into a reservoir; Muir anchored the resistance. For upwards of thirteen years the battle raged, but in 1913 Congress passed a bill allowing construction of the dam to proceed. It was a victory for the advocates of "wise use," yet it would be seen as the Alamo of the yet-to-be-formed environmentalist movement.

The philosophy which Pinchot and the "progressive conservationists" espoused became the reigning dogma of statist land-use management. Government agencies have since proliferated in this century, especially with the impetus of the New Deal. Their adherence to "wise use" management philosophy kindled the opposition movement which was incipient in the preservationists of Muir's time. With the end of World War II came

8. *Ibid.*, 152.

9. *Ibid.*, 160.

a huge increase in the number of people interested in public lands not for purposes of utilization, but for recreation. Increasingly, as well, came the disillusionment with material progress which [206] spawned a Romanticistic return to the organic view of nature. Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* preached ecological awareness and nature's intrinsic rights. Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* warned of the dangers of the use of pesticides upon the fabric of life. These developments spurred the formation of the modern environmentalist movement, totally adverse to technological exploitation of nature, and dedicated to changing the management philosophy of the government bureaucracies from "wise use" to one of biocentric, harmonious interrelationship.

As has been noted, the notion of man's oneness with nature is the reigning presupposition of environmentalism. Thus environmentalism is often spoken of as being *biocentric*, that is, as making nature as a whole the focal point of value. Man is not above nature, but a part of her; as such he is considered of equal value with other animals and plants. The ecosystem as a whole is considered as a unit: its stability and integrity are made of uppermost importance. Right and wrong are then judged in terms of this standard. Aldo Leopold stated it this way: "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise."¹⁰

Biocentricity is reinforced by Darwinian theory, which is another pillar of environmentalist thought. Man and nature are products of an evolutionary process of the struggle for life against a hostile, impersonal environment. There is no Savior-God ordaining that which comes to pass; chance is the backdrop against which life has come into being.

The necessary implication of this view of life is statism, as Gary North has shown.¹¹ The socialistic impulse is pervasive among environmentalists, because salvation is seen to lie in the hands of a planning elite. If society is to be ordered biocentrically, it must be done through this centralization of power, for the vast

10. Leopold, *Sand County Almanac*, 240.

11. Gary North, "From Cosmic Purposelessness to Humanistic Sovereignty," appendix A in *The Dominion Covenant: Genesis* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1982).

majority of people care more about themselves than they do about other species of life. Yet they are of no more value than these other species; so in order to properly integrate the ecosystem, planning by ecologically enlightened leaders is necessary. Human survival is seen as at stake in the maintenance of the integrity of the ecosystem, which integrity can only be preserved through centralized planning. The capitalist system is perpetrator of ecological destruction, and must be replaced. Barry Commoner typifies the sentiment here:

[Commoner's] analysis points to the eventual necessity of a planned, rational, socialist economy because capitalism is inherently wasteful in its {207} irrational pursuit of profit maximization instead of a rational and efficient use of energy, labor, and capital.¹²

These values lie behind environmentalist public policy agendas. Putting land into public (that is, state) ownership and then making sure that agency policy is biocentric are the measures of success. The text used as an introduction to wildlife biology on the university level makes this clear:

The principal goal for any government wildlife agency, state or federal, is to *maintain viable populations of the wild species of America*, living so far as is possible, in their natural habitats. If that goal is accomplished, the agency can be given credit for having done its job well.¹³

Most lands are in private ownership, and commonly the owner does not give wildlife conservation a high priority among the purposes for which he or she uses and manages the land.¹⁴

[P]ublic lands amount to over 760 million acres in the United States, with the greatest area in Alaska and the western states. According to Gustav Swanson: "Without these lands, the future of wildlife in the United States would be very grim for the onslaught of *Homo sapiens* is expected to continue."¹⁵

12. Joseph M. Petulla, *American Environmentalism: Values, Tactics, Priorities* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1980), 70.

13. Raymond F. Dasmann, *Wildlife Biology*, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1981), 181.

14. *Ibid.*, 184.

15. *Ibid.*, 189.

[T]hose to whom wildlife is important must play an active political role. Those wishing to exploit land for their own private benefit never cease their political efforts. Those who would protect the natural world cannot afford to do less.¹⁶

The anti-private ownership bias is evident. Salvation for the ecosystem is obtained by the work of collective man, who must organize and regulate society for the preservation of the ecosystem as a whole.

The biocentric orientation of environmentalism is its Achilles' heel. It is idolatrous to make the ecosystem the focal point of value. Psalm 24 states that "[t]he earth is the LORD's, and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Valuation must come in terms of His Word.

Herbert Schlossberg succinctly states the issue:

Idolatry in its larger meaning is properly understood as any substitution of what is created for the creator. People may worship nature, money, mankind, power, history, or social and political systems instead of the God who created them all.¹⁷

The ramifications of this idolatry include a decisive distortion of the {208} issue and a consequently perverted plan of action. In the case of environmentalism, the idol of material progress has given way to that of nature redivinized.

Now that nature is no longer to be exploited, it is ready to be worshiped. It is still the whole show and we are still part of it, but now being part of it means that we no longer recognize anything that transcends it. For this mentality, the closer we are to nature and the further from civilization, the better off we are. The extreme hatred for human beings and corresponding love for animals that fills the satires of Jonathan Swift is coming into vogue.... Pure nature, hateful mankind.¹⁸

With this pantheistic view of nature, human beings lose their value as made in the image of God. There is no way to decide upon what portion of the ecosystem, and how much of it, is to be

16. *Ibid.*, 191.

17. Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983), 6.

18. *Ibid.*, 170.

expended on human needs. All human action modifies ecosystems to some extent; the system which sees ecological integrity and stability as primary would then necessarily see satisfaction of human wants as subordinate to whatever measure of stability the ecologists happen to settle on. Yet Jesus said that we are of more value than many sparrows (Matt. 10:31). Francis Schaeffer notes that "[t]he economic dilemma of India is complicated by their pantheistic system, in which the rats and cows are allowed to eat up food that man needs. Instead of man's being raised, in reality he is lowered.... Man becomes no more than the grass."¹⁹ The pantheistic, mystical view of nature is thus a primary cause of the poverty in many areas of the world.²⁰

In addition to the ruin pantheistic values would bring to society, the triumph of statism would bring about the repudiation, not the establishment, of environmentalist values. Bureaucrats are oriented towards acquisition and maintenance of power, which power is derived much more readily through the utilitarian exploitation of nature than its conservation.

The more powerful the State, the more concentrated the control of economic resources available to State administrators, the more opportunities for economic control through monopolistic economic manipulation, the more ruthless will be those who satisfy their quest for power. The bigger the stakes, the more likely the least moral, most unscrupulous people will claw their way to the top.²¹

Unless the Stalins of this world harbor a soft spot for unspoiled wilderness, there can be little doubt that eco-values would be short-changed

{209} under a socialistic regime. Even in a "free" society, bureaucracies tend to maximize agency benefits, whether or not they serve the public interest. Predation on the treasury "commons" becomes an end in itself, rather than the common good being the

19. Francis Schaeffer, *Pollution and the Death of Man* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 1970), 33.

20. P.T. Bauer, *Dissent on Development: Studies and Debates in Development Economics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976).

21. North, *Dominion Covenant*, 97.

end.²²

The upshot of biocentricity is fittingly summarized by Schlossberg:

The heaving sea of naturalism therefore casts up onto the shore two odd fish. One is he of whom Charles Reich is the exemplar: noumenal man, with a dreamy irresponsibility repudiating the rationality that makes possible what he values as well as what he hates, glorifying sensual experiences, and exalting attitudes and values that, widespread enough, would make it impossible for society to persist. Here is an antinomian egoism that by some miracle is expected to result in love and justice. The other is he heralded by the Galbraiths and the Skinners: phenomenal man, exalting rationality with a philosophy that makes reason impossible, submerging man into a nature that binds him irretrievably, giving him the status of brute or machine and, finally, taking charge in the name of survival. The phenomenal man is the one who kills Reich as a parasite who reduces the chance of survival. We have had prophets warning us about both specimens since early in the century, and we do not yet know which is the greater danger or which will gain ascendancy.²³

Environmentalism values thus provide no way of providing for either the needs of man or those of nature. Environmentalism tries to safeguard nature's integrity by subordinating man to like creaturely status with the animal and plant kingdom. It tries to promote man's survival by making him aware of ecological interrelationships. Nowhere does it justify or regulate the exploitation of nature for the needs of man, provide for human rights, or resist the slide into totalitarianism. Its idolatry condemns it to outlandish and ineffective programs for the stewardship of the natural heritage, and subjugation to political expediency. May the Church be prepared with its own program for the righteous stewardship of God's creation, derived from His Word.

As has been noted, environmentalism is essentially a reaction to technology and material progress. It is the spiritual heir of the

22. John Baden and Richard L. Stroup, eds., *Bureaucracy vs. Environment: The Environmental Costs of Bureaucratic Governance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1981); John Baden, ed., *Earth Day Reconsidered* (Washington, DC: Heritage Foundation, 1980).

23. Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*, 173–74.

Transcendentalist movement, embodying values consistent with a sacralized view of nature, and the necessity of organic harmony with her. As such, it is a form of idolatry, in that it replaces the Christian view of creation and dominion with pantheism and escape from responsible stewardship before God. If nature is to be properly conserved, a framework consistent with God's Word is needed to guide the body of Christ in {210} stewarding the creation, which avoids the pitfalls of unrestrained exploitation on the one hand, and inability to provide for human need on the other.

That man is called to dominion over nature is made explicit in God's initial commandment to him (Gen. 1:26–28). He, as made in the image of God, is above nature, and he is called to fill the earth and subdue it. The implications of this command are decisive.

In the first place, it is clear that nature was created for the benefit of man. From it he was to derive his sustenance (Gen. 1:29). He was to cultivate it (Gen. 2:15). The animals were created as helpmeets for him (Gen. 2:18–20). The biocentric perspective contradicts this, because man is placed on a par with the rest of creation.

Additionally, this dominion over nature was to be pursued familistically. God created man male and female (Gen. 1:27), and created Eve as helpmeet for Adam in their common mandate. Rushdoony notes that

[a]lthough originally only Adam was created (Gen. 2:7), the creation mandate is plainly spoken to man in the married estate, and with the creation of woman in mind. Thus, essential to the function of the family under God, and to the role of the man as the head of the household, is *the call to subdue the earth and exercise dominion over it*.²⁴

The family is thus the primary institution of dominion.

Ownership of the land is unavoidably an aspect of dominion. Psalm 24 affirms God's primary ownership, yet He delegates such to men.

The earth is indeed the Lord's, as is all dominion, but God has chosen to give dominion over the earth to man, subject to His law-word, and property is a central aspect of that dominion. The absolute and transcendental title to property is the Lord's; the

24. R. J. Rushdoony, *The Institutes of Biblical Law*, vol. 1 (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., [1973] 1984), 163.

present and historical title to property is man's.²⁵

Environmentalists characteristically advocate placing the ownership in the hands of the state ("public" ownership). Yet as the Bible calls man to dominion in terms of the institution of the family, it speaks of familistic ownership of property. "The Scripture ... places property in the hands of the family, not the state. It gives property to man as an aspect of his dominion, as a part of his godly subduing of the earth."²⁶ *The stewardship of resources should be supervised by the most intensely committed social unit, the family.* It is not the only legitimate institution of ownership, but it is unquestionably the most universally recognized ownership [211] institution historically, and it is the social unit to which God originally announced the dominion covenant."²⁷ Thus the family is called to steward the creation in terms of private ownership.

To all of this must be added a time perspective. Dominion must be attained through a trans-generational orientation, that is, in terms of inheritance. Parents are to pass on to children the teachings and the tools that enable them to continue the extension of their dominion in the earth. Gary North calls this *familistic capital*: "Capital is to be used faithfully, expanded, and directed into the hands of one who will continue the faithful administration of the assets. Capital is primarily familistic capital."²⁸ Economic growth is then a function of the extension of families in the land over time. In this light the command to population growth (Gen. 1:28) must be seen.

Here again, environmentalism is at odds with biblical teaching. Population growth is seen as inimical to the preservation of the natural heritage. North gives a concise and absolute rebuttal to this perspective, which deserves quotation in full:

Unquestionably, nothing can grow at a constant rate of increase forever. The effect of "positive feedback," meaning compound growth, is to push life against the inescapable limits of the

25. *Ibid.*, 451.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Gary North, *The Sinai Strategy* (Tyler, TX: Institute for Christian Economics, 1986), 167.

28. *Ibid.*, 162.

environment. If, for example, the population of the world in the 1970s, some 4 billion people, were to increase at 1 percent per annum for a thousand years, the world's population in human beings alone—not to mention the supplies of beef or other animals to feed them—would be over 83 *trillion*. Either the rate of increase slows eventually to zero, or less, or else we run out of time. But this is precisely the point: *exponential growth, meaning compound growth, points to a final judgment, the end of time*. If the growth process is God-ordained in response to a society's covenantal faithfulness, then the day of judgment should become the focus of men's concern and hope. History is not unbounded. The zero-growth advocates assume that resources are finite, that history is indefinite, and therefore growth has to be called to a halt eventually. The Christian response is different: *growth is legitimate and possible, resources are indeed limited, and therefore the end of history will arrive before the growth process is reversed*, assuming society does not first return to its ethically rebellious ways, thereby bringing on temporal judgment (Deut. 8:19–20; 28:15–68). Any attempt to challenge the ethical legitimacy and economic possibility of an epoch of long-term compound growth that is the product of God's external blessings for covenantal faithfulness is nothing less than paganism. Such an attack is based on a philosophy of history which is unquestionably pagan, either cyclical time or {212} unbounded temporal extension. The goal of both views of history is the same: to deny the possibility of an impending final judgment. Compound growth points to final judgment, so humanists are faced with a major problem: either the growth must stop or history must end, and most Western humanists in positions of academic, economic, or political responsibility are afraid or unwilling to admit the existence of this dilemma. They want endless progress and growth, and the “numbers”—compound growth rates matched against finite resources—testify to the impossibility of achieving both goals. A few have become zero-growth advocates; most simply prefer to ignore the problem.²⁹

These are the basic aspects of the dominion mandate. This mandate must be prosecuted covenantally, however, and not in autonomy of God. This is the key difference between secular and scriptural dominion. Secular dominion operates in terms of human needs, wants, or desires. Scriptural dominion operates in

29. *Ibid.*, 175.

terms of God's commandments.

It has been noted that environmentalism is a response to technological progress. This "progressivism" was, in turn, a secularized form of the dominion mandate—it is a *parody* of that mandate. Pollution, degradation, and despoliation of the environment are effects of man's rebellion, of Adam's fall. Since then, man has operated in terms of what he has wanted to do, not what God has wanted him to do. The result of this with respect to the environment has been an alternating wanton exploitation of it, or an abject subjugation to it. Yet the dominion mandate partakes of neither of these; its prosecution, conducted covenantally before God, results in both the dominion of man and the fulfillment of nature.

This can be understood when we see that the fall of man has resulted in the creation's subjection to "vanity" (Rom. 8:20) and "bondage to corruption" (v. 21). Paul says that "we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now" (v. 22). Man's sinfulness redounds to the corruption of nature. Such passages as Isaiah 24:4–6 chronicle this result: "The earth mourneth and fadeth away, the world languisheth and fadeth away, the haughty people of earth do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant. Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left."

Yet Paul speaks as well of the redemption of the creation from this {213} condition: "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.... Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Rom. 8:19, 21). He thus ties this redemption intimately with the rule of the righteous. The covenant of grace, then, encompasses the dominion mandate, as in Christ the curse is lifted. The pride, selfishness, and greed of humanity are replaced with meekness and humility. And this, far from resulting in an escape from dominion, is its restoration.

Jesus Christ described Himself as "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29, rendered "gentle and humble" by both Moffatt and BV). He described Himself as such in relationship to those who sought

Him. In His relationship to the Pharisees and Sadducees, Christ's conduct was firm and resolute. As Christ used the term meekness, it meant not the surrender of dominion, but rather the wise, merciful, and gracious use of dominion. We cannot understand the meaning of meekness in Scripture unless we realize that it is not the surrender of dominion but rather the humble and godly use of dominion that it has reference to. The blessed meek are the tamed of God, those harnessed to His law-word and calling, who shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:6). The blessed meek are those who submit to God's dominion, have therefore dominion over themselves, and are capable of exercising dominion over the earth. They therefore inherit the earth.³⁰

The covenantal use of the natural heritage then involves not only cultivation, but also conservation (Gen. 2:15). This is the twofold character of righteous stewardship. The Mosaic law provided for soil conservation and also wildlife conservation in the Sabbath ordinances. Rushdoony notes that the Sabbath symbolized the rest and release of redemption and regeneration for all of creation, and that "[t]he great work of restoration, of undoing the work of the Fall, includes the soil also. By this rest, the soil also is restored and revitalized."³¹ In Leviticus (25:7) it is stated that, among others, "for the beast that are in thy land, shall all the increase thereof be meat" during the Sabbath rest for the land. The first ordinance for the protection of wildlife in man's history was a part of the Mosaic law, specifically Deuteronomy 22:6.³²

Such examples make it clear that a place is to be left for nature in the kingdom of God. It must be understood, however, that nature is subordinate to man, to be utilized in the first place for his benefit. Man in submission to God is to fill the earth and subdue it. Christ is Lord of heaven and earth since His ascension to the right hand of the Father, {214} who has put Him "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under his feet" (Eph. 1:21–22). His kingdom is extended through His chosen: "and [the Father]

30. Rushdoony, *Institutes*, 450.

31. *Ibid.*, 142–43.

32. Class notes from a wildlife biology course given in spring 1982 by Prof. James D. Fraser, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (vv. 22–23). Thus through the church the kingdom is extended, to the extent that the church is established. The fulfillment of the kingdom is seen in such prophecies as Isaiah 11:6–9 and 65:25, where the wild kingdom is tamed, and brought into the fellowship of the kingdom. This is the fulfillment of the Father's eternal purpose: "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:10).

This is the fulfillment of the dominion mandate, and this is what makes it essential. We cannot escape this calling, nor seek to prosecute it apart from God. We must work to complete this task; as Jesus said, "Occupy until I come" (Luke 19:13). Renunciation is as sinful as wanton exploitation. Our task now is to bring, in the various fields of natural resources management, "into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5); that is, into conformity with the categories of thought revealed in Scripture.

ANTHROPOLOGISTS AND MISSIONARIES: MORAL ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Robert J. Priest

Anthropologists and missionaries are two groups defined by their relation to social others. Yet each group responds in divergent ways to the social other. Such responses are, in part, moral. Anthropologists' criticism of missionaries is, at least partially, a surface indicator of fundamental moral oppositions. It is our thesis that moral values and ways of conceptualizing morality are central to the conflict.

While it is obvious to the general public that missionaries are bearers of moral values, popular images of science or of scientists as objective and value-neutral tend to obscure the fact that anthropological endeavor is seldom, if ever, value-neutral. There is today, on the part of many, a growing realization that science (particularly social science) is a human enterprise affected by the human component. Far from being neutral, inquiry is a human activity which involves passions, hopes, and values and not merely abstract intellectual curiosity. Philosopher of science Michael Polanyi, in his book *Personal Knowledge*, presents the thesis that personal passion is at the heart of all successful scientific endeavors; that it is an indispensable element in science and not a mere psychological by-product. He presents scientists as gamblers who follow hunches, make acts of faith and leaps of commitment, who are committed to personal visions of reality and who will not rest until they can demonstrate that those visions are not just personal, but are universally true. {217} Successful scientists, he argues, tend to be driven by such passion, often to the point of obsessiveness. In his book *The Psychology of Science*, Abraham Maslow also argues a similar thesis.

Polanyi's and Maslow's suggestions take on added significance when we move from the physical sciences to the social ones. Under the physical sciences it is at least possible to think of the scientist as a spectator having

no necessary involvement with what he is looking at, no loyalties, no stake in it. He can be cool, detached, emotionless, desireless, wholly other than what he is looking at. He is in the grandstand looking down upon the goings on in the arena; he himself is not in the arena. And ideally he doesn't care who wins ... no hopes or wishes for one outcome rather than another.¹

But with the social sciences it is precisely human concerns, man's contemplation of himself, which is at stake. And it is clearly impossible to be wholly neutral to the outcome of such an investigation. The student of man has a vested interest in how man (i.e., self) is perceived and how morality is conceptualized. We will return to this point later.

It is important, at this point, to remind ourselves that the anthropological observer is an active factor in the creation of knowledge, and not a passive recipient or register. All construction of knowledge involves selectivity. This is particularly true of ethnographic analysis. Agar writes,

Ethnography is really quite an arrogant enterprise. In a short period of time, an ethnographer moves in among a group of strangers to study and describe their beliefs, document their social life, write about their subsistence strategies, and generally explore the territory right down to their recipes for the evening meal. The task is an impossible one. At best an ethnography can only be partial.²

Ethnography thus entails, of necessity, a high degree of selectivity. Ginsberg writes, "In the social sciences the selection of the material and the criteria of relevance are influenced to an enormous extent by the direction in which we want our society to travel."³ Selective choices thus reflect underlying latent values, values

1. Abraham H. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science* (South Bend, IN: Gateway Editions Ltd., 1966), 50.

2. Michael H. Agar, *The Professional Stranger* (Orlando, FL: Academic Press Inc., 1980), 41.

3. M. Ginsberg, *Sociology* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1934), 35.

which are often hidden from view and not openly discussed.⁴ Such values may be idiosyncratic to the individual or part of what was implicitly learned during one's inculturation into the discipline of anthropology. Whatever the source, [218] moral traces are almost always present in anthropological ethnographies.

But bias arises not merely because anthropologists have a vested interest in how we conceptualize man and morality, nor because the subject matter is complex and capable of alternative analyses, but also because the very instrument of analysis is suspect. Redfield writes,

To find out the nature and significance of human nature there is no substitute for the human nature of the student himself. He must use his own humanity to understand humanity.⁵

And again, Rosemary Firth suggests that, "the human personality of the investigator [is] one of his most powerful tools."⁶ In other words, the ethnographer is his own instrument. How is he calibrated? What if he is calibrated to pick up certain elements of social reality and not others? For example, suppose that Norman Malcolm is correct when he states "that by and large religion is to university people an alien form of life."⁷ If true of anthropologists generally, that would be an important sociological datum to bear in mind when evaluating anthropologists' analyses of religious actors, such as missionaries. In other words, if anthropologists are color-blind or tone-deaf to the religious but carefully calibrated in terms of the economic or political, it is hardly surprising that they would explain what is essentially religious in economic and political terms.⁸

4. Laura Nader, "Professional Standards and What We Study," in *Ethics and Anthropology*, ed. by Rynkiewicz and Spradley (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976), 168.

5. Robert Redfield, "The Art of Social Science," *American Journal of Sociology* 54, no. 3 (1948): 184.

6. Rosemary Firth, "From Wife to Anthropologist," in *Crossing Cultural Boundaries*, ed. by Kimball and Watson (San Francisco, CA: Chandler Publishing Co., 1972), 10.

7. Norman Malcolm, "The Groundlessness of Belief," in *Thought and Knowledge* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 204.

8. E.g., Søren Hvalkoff and Peter Aaby, eds. *Is God an American?* (Copenhagen: IWGIA, 1981).

Agar writes concerning the ethnographer,

These aspects of “who you are” deserve some careful thought. They raise problems for ethnographers, and for all social scientists. Even at this early stage, they show that ethnography is much more complicated than collecting data, and that “objectivity” is perhaps best seen as a label to hide problems in the social sciences. The problem is not whether the ethnographer is biased; the problem is what kinds of biases exist—how do they enter into ethnographic work and how can their operation be documented.⁹

After reading and surveying all the literature available on this topic, Agar concludes,

After reading all this material, I get the dizzy feeling that an ethnographer ... is like a drunk pretending to walk a straight line in a dark room with a gale-force wind blowing through it. It's clear that the ethnographer's culture-personality background, though increasingly acknowledged as critical, is a great unknown in ethnographic research. To make things worse, it's not clear how to integrate it into discussions of ethnographic methodology.¹⁰ {219}

Our point in all of this is to emphasize that the ethnographer is not a mere camera eye or tape recorder, and that ethnography is not simply “data collection,” but that it involves an active and complex process of selection and interpretation by people whose biases and values enter into their analysis. Thus anthropological knowledge must be seen as a social product, not as an abstract and pure reflection of social reality. It is a socially constructed reality. The case of Robert Redfield and Oscar Lewis clearly illustrates the problematic nature of anthropological knowledge. When Lewis violated the convention that anthropologists not study the same group another anthropologist had already studied, he unwittingly called into question the reliability of ethnographic analysis. Here we have two respected, competent, trained ethnographers who studied the same group of people and produced dramatically different descriptions of them. (Redfield pictured their lives as uniquely harmonious and Lewis as strikingly conflictual.) John Bennet documents similar conflicting interpretations of Pueblo culture and clearly shows how the personal values of

9. Agar, *Professional Stranger*, 41–42.

10. *Ibid.*, 44.

the ethnographers permeated their analyses of Pueblo culture.¹¹ What seems clear is that strictly logical or empirical criteria are incapable of adjudicating between these alternative analyses. Honigman writes,

Speaking realistically, there is practically a zero probability of ever testing the reliability of a comprehensive ethnographic report, so one ought to stop talking about replication as a technique of verification.¹²

What it gets down to, then, is that ethnographies are evaluated intuitively and even aesthetically in terms of questions such as: Are the problems dealt with “important,” “interesting”? Are the solutions “elegant,” “beautiful”? Are the results “simple” and “clear” or confused and sloppy?¹³

Assuming, then, that in the nature of the case, biases and values inevitably play a part in the anthropological endeavor, we must then ask if the individual biases of ethnographers cancel each other out or if there are not in fact shared patterns of bias amongst anthropologists in general. In other words, are biases merely individual and personal or might they be discipline wide?

If, instead of focusing on individual anthropologists as discrete actors, we focus on anthropologists as a social group or occupational community, it quickly becomes evident that there are values and biases {220} which are generally shared by the anthropological community at large. Thomas Kuhn suggests that scientific communities have particular constellations of commitments, that give direction to their work.¹⁴ He refers to these underlying patterned orientations and assumptions as paradigms and suggests that the paradigmatic elements in science are significant precisely because they are not consciously chosen or examined or even apparent. Nonetheless, these internalized dispositions, assumptions, and values guide the scientist’s everyday

11. John W. Bennett, “The Interpretation of Pueblo Culture: A Question of Values,” *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1946): 361–74.

12. John J. Honigman, “The Personal Approach in Cultural Anthropological Research,” *Current Anthropology* 17, no. 2 (1976): 246.

13. Cf. Maslow, *Psychology of Science*, 122.

14. Cf. Thomas S. Popkewitz, *Paradigm and Ideology in Educational Research: The Social Functions of the Intellectual* (New York: Falmer Press, 1984), 266.

practice. Polanyi suggests that this tacit dimension is not formally acknowledged precisely because no strictly logical or empirical evidence can be adduced to support it. This dimension simply rests on personal assent. Yet, he suggests, “no intelligence ... can operate outside such a fiduciary framework.”¹⁵

But although Kuhn and Polanyi agree that “paradigms” or “fiduciary frameworks” are not epistemologically grounded, they nonetheless argue that within a given science they are likely to be shared. This is because scientists are members of social groups which have their own gatekeepers, methods of socialization, and other mechanisms of social control. Leaders within these groups administer jointly the construction of scientific knowledge.

They do so through the control of university premisses, academic appointments, research grants, scientific journals and the awarding of academic degrees which qualify their recipients as teachers, and opens to them the possibility of academic appointment.¹⁶

Thus Feyerabend suggests that the sociopolitical authority of a scientific community may outweigh its theoretical or philosophical authority. In other words, science overpowers rather than convinces its opponents. I think his suggestion is particularly true of Polanyi’s “fiduciary framework” or of values in general.¹⁷

That the discipline of anthropology could have discipline-wide biases and values becomes even more apparent when we look at who is attracted to the discipline, and why. Sol Tax writes,

Whatever propensities and values may unite and distinguish anthropologists, first among them is a view of life that is relativistic and pluralistic ... we are the only profession, or even community, for which this view of life is definitive.... It must be kept in mind that anthropology is a free association. Nobody has to stick with it, or with us. Hence the self-selection for propensities and values becomes confirmed by association, ... books, ... contacts with fellow

15. Michael Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 266.

16. *Ibid.*, 216.

17. Cf. Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrove, eds., *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

students (etc.).¹⁸ {221}

Sol Tax thus points to a process of selection in terms of specific moral values and ways of conceptualizing morality which thus contributes to shaping the overall orientation of the discipline.

It is time to repeat our question: what are the passions and values which attract specific people to the discipline of anthropology and sustain them in their studies? Perhaps we should begin by suggesting what this passion is not. Anthropological endeavor has not generally arisen out of a passionate concern for the people being studied. Note, for example, how two prominent anthropologists refer to the people they studied. Levi-Strauss comments,

As he practices his profession, the anthropologist is consumed by doubts; has he really abandoned his native setting, his friends, and his way of life, spent such considerable amounts of money and energy, and endangered his health, for the sole purpose of making his presence acceptable to a score or two of miserable creatures doomed to early extinction, whose chief occupations meanwhile are delousing themselves and sleeping....¹⁹

And Malinowski comments in his diary,

As for ethnology: I see the life of the natives as utterly devoid of interest or importance, something as remote from me as the life of a dog. During the walk, I made it a point of honor to think about what I am here to do. About the need to collect many documents. I have a general idea about their life and some acquaintance with their language, and if I somehow "document" all this, I'll have valuable material.—Must concentrate on my ambitions and work to some purposes.²⁰

What is clear with both Malinowski and Levi-Strauss is that it was their own social concerns and not the interests of the natives which motivated their work.

Nor must we think of anthropological work as simply a passionate pursuit of exotic facts. Raymond Firth's comments are

18. Sol Tax, "A Community of Anthropologists," *Practicing Anthropology* 1, no. 1 (October 1978): 8.

19. E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes, eds., *Claude Levi-Strauss: The Anthropologist as Hero* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970).

20. Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term*, trans. Norbert Guterman (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), 167.

of interest here.

Some of us ... have not hesitated to tell our students in private that ethnographic facts may be irrelevant—that it does not matter so much if they get the facts wrong so long as they can argue the theories logically.²¹

And Leach honestly says,

When I read a book by one of my anthropological colleagues, I am, I must confess, frequently bored by the facts. I see no prospect of visiting either Polynesia or the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast and I cannot [222] arouse in myself any real interest in the cultural peculiarities of either the Tikopia or the Tallensi. I read the works of Professor Firth and Fortes not from an interest in the facts but so as to learn something about the principles behind the facts [i.e., principles which he can relate to his own social world].²²

In anthropology, we have “a discipline apart for societies apart.”²³ But although anthropology is defined by its study of the “other,” such a mode of study is but a tool governed by concerns and questions generated in the observer’s own context. Thus, for example, Vidich comments, “Margaret Mead studied New Guinea islanders in addition to Samoans in order to inform Americans of their own sexual biases and values.”²⁴ Or we have Redfield, Kluckhohn, Benedict, and Mead justifying their study of exotic and far off places by “the proposition that solutions to the problems of industrial society and the modern nation-state could be found by studying the primitives.”²⁵ In other words, anthropologists have refused to accept the judgment that their study of primitives is pure self-indulgence, even though it is true, unlike the missionary, that their work does not arise from desire to help those they study. (The anthropological ethic of cultural relativism and respect

21. Raymond Firth, foreword to *Political Systems of Highland Burma*, by E. R. Leach (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), vii.

22. Edmund Leach, *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1954), 277.

23. Marc Auge, *The Anthropological Circle*, trans. Martin Thome (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 4.

24. Arthur J. Vidich, “Ideological Themes in American Anthropology,” *Social Research: An International Quarterly of the Social Sciences* 41, no. 4 (1974): 721.

25. *Ibid.*

tends to preclude any such attempt to influence other societies for good.) The point is that anthropologists are actors and change agents principally with respect to their own society, and it is the concerns and questions generated within their own social context which governs their work. Therefore, it is their attempt to respond to those concerns and questions which has traditionally been pointed in justification of their work.

Auge argues that such a mode of thought was crudely introduced by Montaigne, Rousseau, and Montesquieu, who, in examining the savage, “used it as a pretext for reflecting critically on European customs and institutions.”²⁶ Susan Sontag speaks of Frazer, Spencer, and Freud as “great consumers of anthropological data,” using such data in their efforts to construct rationalist worldviews.²⁷ Maurice Bloch argues that Marx’s extensive use of anthropology in the putative attempt to reconstruct history was actually motivated by an altogether different aim. He suggests that Marx’s use of anthropology was primarily “rhetorical” and that he was principally concerned to show that non-capitalist forms of group life were both possible and preferable.²⁸ Auge argues that the use of other societies and their values as a yardstick against which to measure one’s own society’s shortcomings is a constant of our literary, philosophical, and anthropological tradition.²⁹ He summarizes his point [223] by suggesting that anthropologists use other societies as “pawns in a debate that primarily concerns western intellectuals.”³⁰ This is essentially Scholte’s point when he calls anthropology “a circumscribed enterprise in exploring the extremities and possibilities of our own thought and culture.”³¹

26. Auge, *Anthropological Circle*, 2.

27. Susan Sontag, “The Anthropologist as Hero,” in *Claude Levi-Strauss: The Anthropologist as Hero*, ed. by E. Nelson Hayes and Tanya Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1970), 190.

28. Maurice Bloch, *Marxism and Anthropology: The History of a Relationship* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983).

29. Auge, *Anthropological Circle*, 11.

30. *Ibid.*, 3.

31. Bob Scholte, “Critical Anthropology since its Reinvention: On Convergence between the Concept of Paradigm, the Rationality of Debate and Critical Anthropology,” *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 3, nos. 1 & 2 (1978): 24.

Chambers raises this issue in a slightly different form when he asks why he and other anthropologists have been motivated to try to preserve the traditional way of life of groups such as the Yanomamo. I find his remarks illuminating so will quote him at some length. He writes,

The Yanomamo are a part of the imagery some of us use to heal the breaks in our world of reality. Part of this imagery has to do with our desire and longing for what I call a sense of integrity—a wholeness in the collective being of a people. This kind of integrity can be associated with peoples who do not experience a great distance between the needs of society and those of the individual.... We experience the other kind of integrity—the collective wholeness of a people—largely in its absence. Some of our fascination with people such as the Yanomamo derives from our longing to witness, if not achieve, that very human condition. Our desire to try to preserve that kind of integrity somewhere in the world is not altogether altruistic—but is as much for our own peace of mind as it might be for people like the Yanomamo.

... In *The Roots of Heaven*, the novelist Romain Gary develops a story around a man who takes up arms to protect the wild elephants of Africa. When asked why elephants, and not some other suffering species, or even fellow humans, the protagonist explains that when he was a prisoner in a concentration camp he survived from day to day by thinking of huge herds of elephants stampeding wildly across an African plain. His motive for protecting the elephants was that he wanted that image to survive beyond his own imagination. Elephants are elephants and the Yanomamo are a people. And they are an image. [I.e., someone else's. Missionaries working with the Yanomamo are tampering with not just a people but with someone's image.] Human freedom is an idea we need from time to time, and our society has traditionally selected the artist, the bohemian, the desperado and the primitive to help provide it. Ideas of freedom are important because they can be freedom-producing. Even the comparatively stodgy study of modern anthropology has been known to help liberate the imaginations of a few students.

As much as we might, in our sophistication, fail to admit it, it is still comforting to imagine that there are people moving around a forest somewhere wearing little or no clothing, laughing a lot, wrestling around in the {224} dirt. Of course, the Yanomamo are not entirely free. Their customs limit them as ours limit us. But

they do seem to goof off more than we do. I suspect they do not take life seriously as we do, or at least not in the same worrisome way we take it. Even the understanding that there exists in this world a people who simply do not take seriously the same things that worry us somehow helps us liberate ourselves.³²

The point to learn from this is that the anthropological construction of knowledge does not involve pure, abstract, disinterested, or impartial description, but that the anthropological use of others as images or symbols involves elements both of a critique and of a quest or search.

A common bit of anthropological folklore suggests that anthropological recruits tend to be alienated from their own society. That alienated youth of the '60s enrolled in anthropology courses in unprecedented numbers lends credence to the claim.³³ Urban anthropologist J. Glick baldly asserts,

many American anthropologists hate American middle-class culture.... If my guess is correct, then we are faced with the very serious question of whether American anthropology as presently constituted is qualified to study American cultures reasonably objectively.³⁴

Maybury-Lewis suggests we learn from the lifestyles of other people "since we are clearly so desperately unhappy with our own."³⁵ And Kluckhohn suggests that

anthropology ... has a peculiar appeal to those who are dissatisfied with themselves or who do not feel at home in their own society. Consciously or unconsciously, they seek other ways of life....³⁶

Whatever the source of dissatisfaction, the point is that an intense rejection of one's own society and its norms is not possible unless alternative visions are available. This need to locate somewhere visions of greener social pastures than those in the

32. Erve Chambers, "The Yanomamo and Other Causes: The Ethics of Concern," *Anthropology and Humanism Quarterly* 3, nos. 1 & 2 (1978): 24.

33. Cf. Agar, *Professional Stranger*, 3.

34. J. Glick, "Urban Anthropology," in *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. by John G. Honigman (New York: Rand McNally, 1973), 1013.

35. David Maybury-Lewis, "Societies on the Brink," *Harvard Magazine* 79, no. 5 (1977): 59.

36. Clyde Kluckhohn, *Mirror for Man* (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett, 1970), 59.

West is met by the discipline of anthropology.

Again what we are emphasizing is that anthropologists are not generally involved in a pure and disinterested pursuit of truth. The anthropologist's attitude to his own culture and to what he is looking for from other cultures conditions the evaluative tone of his descriptions of other groups.³⁷ Prior estrangement from his own society and its ideals predisposes him "to find virtue in distant places and, when finding it, allows him to condemn his society all the more harshly and justify his {225} alienation more fully." The conviction, for example, that modern life is characterized by disenchanting complexities, ambiguities, and social unconnectedness and that our energy is devoted to meaningless, repetitive, and competitive work might understandably generate a quest for images of coherence, social harmony, and authenticity.³⁸ If preindustrial man is not yet alienated, and if the primitive is closer to the human condition,³⁹ then, perhaps, he can help us discover our own original identity or help us renew contact with neglected natural and cultural resources.

It is because factors such as the above are widely operative in anthropological work that Susan Sontag emphasizes that anthropology is a personal discipline, as well as a professional one, in which the anthropologist "is engaged in saving his own soul."⁴⁰ She suggests that Levi-Strauss's "extreme formalism is a moral choice, and (more surprisingly) a vision of social perfection,"⁴¹ and outlines his distinction between "hot" societies, "modern ones driven by the demons of historical progress,"⁴² and "cold" societies, "primitive ones, static, crystalline, harmonious. Utopia, for Levi-Strauss, would be a great lowering of the historical temperature."⁴³ Only then, as he indicated in his inaugural lecture at the College

37. Niels W. Braroe and George L. Hicks, "Observations on the Mystique of Anthropology," *Sociological Quarterly* 8 (1967): 173–86. They suggest that the less the ethnographer likes his or her own culture, the more favorably the alternatives may be viewed.

38. Cf. Vidich, "Ideological Themes," 725.

39. *Ibid.*

40. Sontag, "Anthropologist as Hero," 190, 192.

41. *Ibid.*, 196.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.*

de France, would society “once again be able to assume that quasi-crystalline structure which, the best-preserved primitive societies teach us, is not contradictory to humanity.”⁴⁴

But if anthropology contains elements of a quest, it is important to realize that those elements tend to be broader than the discipline of anthropology itself. If we point to the quest for community, for example, and suggest that anthropologists tend to value social and communal values over individual ones, we must also note the larger context. Thus the intellectual historian Hollander writes,

Every single political system Western intellectuals admired and idealized between the 1920s and 1980s was seen as offering the realization of communal aspirations.⁴⁵

The point is that moral quests within anthropology must generally be seen as part of a broader socio-historical context and must be understood accordingly.

In part, because anthropology is partially a personal quest, there is a tendency in describing societies to portray an idealized past rather than the realities and complexities of the ethnographic present. Vidich suggests that anthropologists “uphold ... the ... values of past societies {226} which are no longer the carriers of those same values.”⁴⁶ The majority of people in contemporary societies may desire, for example, the secret to the West’s wealth and power and thus desire change, with only a small minority opting for the status quo. Yet anthropologists often create symbolic categories that make the interests of the past majority and the present few seem to be the interests of the present society as a whole. As Auge comments, “the West knows when and how to exploit doubt or faith for its own purposes.”⁴⁷ Wilcomb Washburn’s comments in another context illustrate this tendency clearly.

When the American Anthropological Association meeting in Chicago in 1983 voted down the resolution I proposed that would require anthropologists claiming to speak for Indian tribes or groups to demonstrate that they spoke with the authority of those

44. Quoted by Sontag, *ibid.*, 196.

45. Hollander, 17.

46. Vidich, “Ideological Themes,” 738.

47. Auge, *Anthropological Circle*, 4.

tribes or groups (whether elected tribal councils or opposition groups), the ethical ambiguity of present-day action anthropologists was demonstrated. Many anthropologists indicated ... that they felt they needed no authority from those for whom they professed to speak.... Is this not arrogating to an unrepresentative non-Indian elite the right to speak for the majority of Indians?

The majority of most native groups seek change, not preservation of the past. The anthropologist too often arrogates to himself the ability to know what is good for the Indian whether the Indian knows it or not. He thereby repeats the error of the so-called "Friends of the Indian" of the late nineteenth century reform organizations such as the Indian Rights Association. He does this by elevating a minority or elitist position into a moral one.⁴⁸

Those who are familiar with the anthropological literature criticizing missionaries should certainly recognize this tendency.

We are finally ready to focus specifically on what I will argue is a key source of anthropological opposition to missionaries: anthropologists' approach to morality. Earlier in this paper we noted Sol Tax's observation that anthropologists constitute a community of scholars committed to cultural relativism and his claim that relativism is definitive of anthropology. The anthropological doctrine of cultural relativism as applied to moral values and norms is double-prolonged. At one level it is simply descriptive. Ruth Benedict writes,

We recognize that morality differs in every society and is a convenient term for socially approved habits. Mankind has always preferred to say "It {227} is morally good," rather than "It is habitual" But historically the two phrases are synonymous.⁴⁹

What is being argued here is simply that cultural norms are learned, that they differ from society to society, that they are merely conventional, and that since this is equally true of our own values and norms, we have no available transcultural criteria

48. Wilcomb Washburn, "Ethical Perspectives in North American Ethnology," in *Social Contexts of American Ethnology, 1940-1984*, ed. by June Helm (Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society, 1984), 59.

49. Ruth Benedict, "Anthropology and the Abnormal," *Personal and Cultural Milieu*, ed. by Douglas Haring, 195 (taken from *Journal of General Psychology* 10 [1934]:59-82).

by which to judge cultures invalid. But cultural relativism is not merely descriptive, it is also prescriptive. Since we do not have any available transcultural criteria to enter into moral critique of other cultures and since other cultures obviously form functionally integrated wholes, we therefore ought to respect other cultures with their different moralities as valid for those societies. To level a moral critique against any aspect of another culture is to be guilty of the sin of ethnocentrism.

Although the postulation of cultural relativism is phrased positively in terms of respect for others, it is implicitly a denial as well. If, as we argued earlier, anthropology be seen as Eric Wolf suggests, "... as a form of social action, operating within and against a certain societal and cultural context,"⁵⁰ then it is clear that the assertion of cultural relativism is in fact both a denial aimed against particular patterns in the anthropologist's own society and the postulation of an alternative to that which is being denied.

If, then, we look at the socio-historical roots and present context of anthropology and ask how morality has traditionally been conceptualized in the West, it is clear that it has been generally thought of as transcendently based. When Paul Johnson speaks of "the highly developed sense of personal responsibility, and of duty towards a settled and objectively true moral code, which was at the centre of nineteenth century European civilization,"⁵¹ he fails to make clear that the moral code was seen as "settled and objectively true" precisely because morality was believed to be rooted and grounded in the Judeo-Christian God who had commanded, "... Be holy as I am holy." A God of truth insisted on lives characterized by truth; a God of Love prohibited relationships characterized by envy and jealousy; etc. Raymond Firth acknowledges the historical connection when he writes,

The commonest answer... in the history of western social thought is that the source of all morality is God, that he provides both the absolute desirability of the standards and the unquestioned

50. Eric Wolf, "American Anthropologists and American Society," in *Concepts and Assumptions in Contemporary Anthropology*, ed. by Stephen A. Tylor (Proceedings of the Southern Anthropological Society, no. 3; Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1969), 3–11.

51. Paul Johnson, *Modern Times: The World from the Twenties to the Eighties* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983), 11.

authority for following them.⁵² {228}

The point is that up until the last century morality has been almost unanimously seen by those in the West as transcendent and transcultural because it is rooted and grounded in a Creator-God. Albert Camus writes

,

When a man submits God to moral judgement, he kills Him in his own heart. And then what is the basis of morality? God is denied in the name of justice but can the idea of justice be understood without the idea of God?⁵³

Then again we have Dostoevski's and Nietzsche's dictum that "if God is dead, then anything is permissible." The point to be observed is that for each of these intellectuals contemplating the condition of their own societies, the traditional understandings of morality are so closely tied to specific theocentric views that without a belief in God it becomes almost impossible for them to continue thinking in terms of morality at all. My point from these quotes is to emphasize a sociological datum about the nature of the socio-historical context in which anthropology arose and propagated its doctrine of cultural relativism. Even today, in America at least, a large number of Americans continue to think of morality in traditional terms. Richard Neuhaus writes,

When asked why certain attitudes or behavior is right or wrong, the great majority of Americans answer that the Bible or the church or religious teaching says it is so. This is an embarrassment to prevailing theories of politics and society. For instance, far from having entered into a "social contract" for the adjudication of interests, Americans are closer to thinking of themselves as accountable in some "covenantal" manner to divine purpose and judgment.⁵⁴

If, then, with Eric Wolf, we are to see anthropology as a form of social action operating within and against a societal and cultural context, it is this traditional moral context which must illumine

52. Raymond Firth, *Elements of Social Organization* (London, 1951), 186.

53. Albert Camus, *The Rebel* (Penguin Books, 1967), 57.

54. Richard J. Neuhaus, *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 180.

our understanding of cultural relativism. We must then note not only what is being affirmed by the cultural relativist but also what is being denied.

Essentially, then, we are looking at alternative approaches to morality. First we have the traditional view which sees morality as transcendentally based. This view continues to be held by significant proportions of the population, and, as I shall argue later, the missionary is the clearest exemplar of this approach. The alternative view sees morality as relative, culturally specific, conventional, and having functional utility for the social group. The anthropologist is the clearest exemplar, as [229] well as the most consistent defender, of this view.

In this context Evans-Prichard's claim of an earlier generation that most prominent European and all prominent American anthropologists have been agnostics or atheists is of great significance.⁵⁵ When E. B. Taylor proclaimed, "Theologians all to expose, tis the mission of primitive man," he clearly implied what he as an anthropologist considered the utility of "primitive man" to be, i.e., to expose theologians and the worldview which they supported and exemplified. Evans-Prichard implies that many of the early anthropologists were attracted to the discipline because it appeared to provide them with a weapon to be wielded against the religion of their own society.⁵⁶ Or, I would argue, if not an opposition to religion *per se*, it was at least an opposition to a specific religiously based conception of morality as transcendent.

If, then, in looking at moral conceptions, we discover that the historic conception of morality is tied to a belief in God (what is commonly labeled as religious), the religious composition of anthropology is also of interest. And while surveys tend to confirm the strongly secular stance of most social scientists and anthropologists, they also make it clear that that secular stance is

55. E. E. Evans-Prichard, "Religion and the Anthropologists," in *Essays in Social Anthropology* (New York: Free Press of Glencoe Inc., 1963), 29–45.

56. *Ibid.*, 35–36.

in large part due to the selection process referred to by Sol Tax.⁵⁷

What I am arguing, then, is that we have two approaches to morality and that the second approach is a historic response to the first approach. Naturally, anthropologists themselves do not often point out that what is at stake is two systems and that they are affirming one over the other, thus inviting listeners to respond by weighing the respective merits of each. Cultural relativism is introduced, set in place, and articulated through a sceptical discourse under the cover of “scientific” or “rational” doubt. According to Levi-Strauss,

research in the field, “where every ethnological career begins, is the mother and nursemaid of doubt, the philosophical attitude *par excellence*.” In Levi-Strauss’s program for the practicing anthropologist in Structural Anthropology, the Cartesian method of doubt is installed as a permanent agnosticism. “This ‘anthropological doubt’ consists not merely in knowing that one knows nothing but in resolutely exposing what one knows, even one’s own ignorance, to the insults and denials inflicted on one’s dearest ideas and habits by those ideas and habits which may contradict them to the highest degree.”⁵⁸

While Levi-Strauss appears to be humbly acknowledging the uncertainty {230} of his own conclusions, his method of “anthropological doubt” is, in fact, not neutrally objective.

In his critique of scientific doubt, Polanyi shows that “the doubting of any explicit statement merely implies an attempt

57. After reviewing the literature and conducting his own surveys, Thalheimer writes, “Secularization, particularly with respect to beliefs, occurs more often in high school and college years than during graduate training or later.... From data on the timing of secularization and faculty members’ own assessment, it appears that professional training and professional work have little or no influence on the religious beliefs and practices of the majorities of the academicians studied. In the rest of the cases, professional training is somewhat more likely to have had a secularizing influence, whereas work in an academic vocation more often has resulted in increased religiosity.” Cumulatively, these findings suggest the operation of a selection process whereby “a sizably greater than chance proportion of individuals who no longer (or never did) adhere to traditional religious beliefs and practices decided on advanced training in one of the scholarly-scientific disciplines and later join the faculty of a secular college or university.” Fred Thalheimer, “Religiosity and Secularization in the Academic Professions,” *Sociology of Education* 46 (1973): 184.

58. Sontag, “Anthropologist as Hero,” 188.

to deny the belief expressed by the statement in favor of other beliefs which are not doubted for the time being.”⁵⁹ He goes on to demonstrate “the logical equivalence of affirmation and contradiction ... [and that] the difference between a positive statement and the denial of a positive statement is merely a matter of wording.”⁶⁰ Polanyi concludes his discussion of rational doubt,

disbeliefs are recommended as “rational doubts.” Philosophic doubt is thus kept on the leash and prevented from calling in question anything that the sceptic believes in, or from approving of any doubt, that he does not share. The Inquisition’s charge against Galileo was based on doubt: they accused him of “rashness”.... Since the sceptic does not consider it rational to doubt what he himself believes, the advocacy of “rational doubt” is merely the sceptic’s way of advocating his own beliefs. Russell’s previously quoted sentence⁶¹ should therefore read: “the acceptance of rational beliefs such as my own would suffice to bring in the Millennium.” Rationalism expressed in this form would renounce its illusory principle of doubt and face up to its own fiduciary foundations.⁶²

The point is that strict scepticism would deny itself the possibility of advocating its own doctrine.⁶³ This the cultural relativist certainly does not do. The anthropologist who affirms cultural relativism and labels other approaches “ethnocentric” assumes the very issue that is at stake which is, what is the basis of morality? By labeling as ethnocentric the person who sees morality as rooted in God, the anthropologist implies that this person treats his culture as best simply because it is his. Actually, Western theologians and pastors have always made a distinction between sociocultural convention and moral norms and denied that they were coterminous. Since moral norms found their source in God, they could be used to

59. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 272.

60. *Ibid.*, 273.

61. “Arians and Catholics, Crusaders and Muslims, Protestants and adherents of the Pope, Communists and Fascists, have filled large parts of the last 600 years with futile strife, when a little philosophy would have shown both sides in all these disputes that neither had any good reason to believe itself in the right. Dogmatism ... in the present age as in former times, is the greatest of the mental obstacles to human happiness.” Quoted in Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 271.)

62. *Ibid.*, 298.

63. *Ibid.*, 315.

call into question even the conventions of one's own society and culture.

Cultural relativism, then, is not neutrally objective. It involves the denial of a particular mode of viewing morality and is itself the positive affirmation of an alternative mode. And it is embraced, in part, for personal reasons and thus entails what Polanyi would call a fiduciary commitment.

What we are suggesting, then, is that many are attracted to the study {231} of anthropology as a perceived legitimization of their personal rejection of moral standards before which they would be personally accountable, and of the consequent alienation which they experience. Agar writes, "Some people like ethnography because it justifies their detachment from what others consider important."⁶⁴ In the name of respect for all ways of life the cultural relativist is able to justify his own unwillingness to a normative standard outside himself.⁶⁵ Aldous Huxley, though not an anthropologist, illustrates clearly what I am arguing with respect to anthropology when he writes,

I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning: consequently assumed that it had none, and was able without any difficulty to find satisfying reasons for this assumption.... The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics; he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do.... For myself, as no doubt for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation. The liberation we desired was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality, because it interfered with our sexual freedom; we objected to the political and economic system because it was unjust. The supporters of these systems claimed that in some way they embodied the meaning (a Christian meaning, they insisted) of the world. There was one admirably simple method of confuting these people and at the same time justifying ourselves in our political and erotic revolt; we would deny that the world had

64. Agar, *Professional Stranger*, 4.

65. Anthropologists may idealize conformity for other societies, but seldom argue for such a conformity for self.

any meaning whatsoever.⁶⁶

Like Huxley, the anthropologist has personal motives for rejecting a particular conception of morality. Neither Huxley's philosopher of meaninglessness nor the relativistic anthropologist is concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics or social theory. One of Max Weber's biographers tells us that

Weber... actually sighed with relief whenever the impossibility of formulating objectively valid value judgments had once again been proved....⁶⁷

This "sigh of relief" (if an accurate depiction of Weber's mental status) indicates clearly that Weber was not an objectively neutral observer in the pure pursuit of truth but was in fact a partisan with a vested interest in one view winning out over another. It was the perception of an anthropological mental stance similar to that of Huxley and Weber that led A. J. Hanna to suggest in exasperation that "[a] ... psychological tendency {232} led the anthropologist to become the champion not only of the tribe whose customs he studied, but of its customs themselves."⁶⁸

Our point is that just as Huxley's philosophy of meaninglessness was an instrument of liberation, so also is the concept of cultural relativism equally an instrument of liberation. Thus Boas argued that the primary value of anthropology was to help liberate people from their immediate social and cultural constraints.⁶⁹ Elizabeth Colson suggests that she and other anthropologists "use the teaching of social anthropology to free ourselves, and our peers, from constraining tradition."⁷⁰ Presumably people would be liberated by the understanding that these socio-cultural constraints were merely conventional (arbitrary?) and thus need

66. Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means* (Chatto, 1937); quoted from R. F. R. Gardner, *Abortion: The Personal Dilemma* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1972), 57.

67. Karl Lowith, *Max Weber and Karl Marx* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1982), 32.

68. Ernest Gellner, "Concepts and Society," in *Rationality: Key Concepts in the Social Sciences*, ed. by Bryan Wilson (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 32.

69. Franz Boas, "History of Anthropology," *Science* 20 (1904): 513–24.

70. Elizabeth Colson, "Culture and Progress," *American Anthropologist* 78 (1976): 267.

not be treated as binding. This theme of anthropology as an instrument of liberation frequently recurs in the literature. For example, Miles Richardson writes

,

... my feelings about it [anthropology] and what I wanted from it were full and strong. I wanted freedom. To me, anthropology was liberation.⁷¹

What the context makes clear is that the freedom being sought by Richardson was in part freedom from a particular view of man in relationship to God. Thus he speaks of being “thrilled” when reading Thomas Paine’s *Age of Reason* by Paine’s “challenge to established religion.”⁷²

He concludes his magisterial address with the statement:

You have only to read the last sentence of Taylor’s *Primitive Culture* to learn that anthropology is a reformer’s science; that the study of culture is a way to combat absolutism and is a path to freedom.⁷³

Or as Colson puts it,

We have quoted the different customs of other people to prove the arbitrary nature of our own and asked the ... question, “Why conform?”⁷⁴

In his 1967 Reith Lectures, Edmund Leach clearly illumines the moral stance of the anthropologist. He asks,

can scientists and politicians who have acquired god-like power to alter our way of life be restrained by the application of moral principles? If so, what moral principles?⁷⁵

Essentially he is daring a people who have excluded God from the sphere of public discourse to state what they are therefore no longer capable of stating. Thus the implied answer to his own question is that there are no such binding moral principles. He suggests “that the battery of concepts borrowed from ... the Bible

71. Miles Richardson, “Anthropologist—The Myth Teller,” *American Ethnology* 78 (1976): 267.

72. *Ibid.*

73. *Ibid.*, 552.

74. Colson, “Culture and Progress,” 267.

75. Edmund Leach, *The Listener* (December 7, 1967).

... is not adequate for the {233} twentieth century.”⁷⁶ He argues that [o]ne of our fundamental troubles is that we ... take it for granted that there is something intrinsically virtuous and natural about law and order.⁷⁷

We must rather see that “respect for tradition is an evil,”⁷⁸ must cultivate “a persistent disrespect for all forms of bureaucracy,”⁷⁹ and must teach young people to treat “even the most bizarre new experience ... as plausible.”⁸⁰

Fundamentally, however, anthropologists’ (and other secular intellectuals’) rejection of a transcendent source for morality and values has created almost insurmountable problems for them. Hollander writes,

Unexpectedly, intellectuals emerged in the front ranks of those to whom a world from which the gods had retreated (as Max Weber put it) has become hard to bear. This intense need for sustaining values, a sense of purpose and meaning, constitutes one of the most often overlooked attributes of intellectuals.⁸¹

Having rejected the God who was traditionally thought of as the fundamental fact, the central equation, the integrating factor of the universe, pressures for meaning intensify in a world that becomes increasingly meaningless and threatening.⁸² The following quotes from Jean-Paul Sartre help us diagnose the problem. He writes,

If I have excluded God the Father, there must be somebody to invent values.⁸³

The moral “problem” arises from the fact that morals are for us both unavoidable and impossible.... I am deeply convinced that any

76. Edmund Leach, *A Runaway World?* BBC Reith Lectures, 1967 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 87.

77. *Ibid.*, 9.

78. *Ibid.*, 86.

79. *Ibid.*

80. *Ibid.*

81. Hollander, 17.

82. *Ibid.*, 21.

83. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Philip Mairet (Methuen, 1968), 269.

morals are both impossible and necessary.⁸⁴

Leach begins his Reith Lectures with the affirmation, "Men have become like gods. Isn't it about time that we understood our divinity?"⁸⁵ In Sartre's terms what Leach is suggesting is that men should become their own gods and self-consciously invent their own values. Despite his bold pronouncements, he is remarkably reticent when it comes to indicating how these new moral standards would differ from the old ones. But at one point he does provide a hint. He suggests that "the whole civilized world is dominated by our ethnocentric Christian ethic which puts such stress on the fostering of individual human life"⁸⁶ that scarce and valuable resources are used "to preserve the lives of the maimed, and the senile, and the half-witted."⁸⁷ He argues that "we ... need a new religious attitude,"⁸⁸ and points to the Hindu trinity, which includes Kali the destroyer, as the needed corrective for "our Christian {234} ethic [which] stresses only creation and preservation."⁸⁹ He concludes,

Men have become like gods, but we must remember that although gods create they also destroy: gods are the source of good, but also the source of evil. We too must accept our dual responsibility.⁹⁰

Presumably the maimed, senile, and half-witted may be destroyed with the utilitarian purpose of making room for others. In giving the powers of Kali the destroyer to our society's leaders, Leach's conception of morality fails to provide normative moral standards to which those who exercise such powers would be accountable. On what basis, for example, could Leach level a moral critique against the Hitlerian version of Kali?

The anthropologist thus faces the contradiction elucidated by Sartre of needing morality but finding that, having rejected

84. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism and Humanism*, trans. Edith Kern (Prentice Hall, 1962), 87.

85. Leach, *A Runaway World?*, 1.

86. *Ibid.*, 61.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*

89. *Ibid.*

90. *Ibid.*

God the Father, such a morality is impossible. Even if they see themselves as beyond morality, they nonetheless see society as needing it. But even the anthropologist who most consistently argues for cultural relativism fails to treat his own moral values as conventional and arbitrary. What is more likely is that he disguises them in other terms and fails to acknowledge their moral nature. Thus Ian Jarvie speaks of anthropology's "consistent refusal ... to debate and acknowledge its philosophical, and especially metaphysical ingredients."⁹¹ As an example of this he points to the anthropological concept of the psychic unity of mankind. After reviewing the literature, Jarvie concludes,

Because the underlying problems are metaphysical and moral, empirical data can at best verify the preselected view with which the anthropologist begins. The unity of mankind need not be a literal truth of descent for us to embrace it. It can be instead, a programme; a proposal for how to act and think.⁹²

Although anthropologists generally present the unity of mankind as descriptive, Jarvie suggests that it is actually morally prescriptive. Even though evolutionary theory would not tend to support such a unity of descent (as would the biblical cosmology), we should nonetheless act and think "as if" it were true. My response to Jarvie is to ask: how many other anthropological assertions are simply programmes for action rather than adequately supported descriptions of social reality, and what theoretical justification can such assertions have? I've already argued that cultural relativism is essentially this.

I think we could go further than this and suggest a whole battery of {235} terms employed by anthropologists, such as "ethnocentric," "function," "ideology," "colonialism," "neocolonialism," "exploitation," "cultural relativism," etc., which have morally evaluative overtones and which derive their power, in part, from the moral passions which they arouse. The anthropologist is thus able to express his moral indignation or affirmation safely disguised as a scientific statement. Polanyi writes,

91. Ian Jarvie, "Epistle to the Anthropologist," *American Anthropologist* 77, no. 2 (1975): 296.

92. Ian Jarvie, *Rationality and Relativism* (London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1984), 14.

The public, taught by the sociologist to distrust its traditional morality is grateful to receive it back from him in a scientifically branded wrapping. Indeed, a writer who has proved his hard-headed perspicacity by denying the existence of morality will always be listened to with especial respect when he does moralize in spite of this. Thus the scientific guise of our moral aspirations may not only protect their substance against destruction by nihilism, but even allow them to operate effectively by stealth. This is how great reformers like Bentham or Dewey have been able to use their utilitarianism for moral purpose.⁹³

What we have then is a two-step process. First, moral values, which are in large part religiously based, are denied through the sceptical discourse of cultural relativism. Such a discourse removes the only theoretical protection which moral judgments could have. Nonetheless, in a second step, moral values which were previously ruled out are repackaged in other terms and smuggled into sociological analysis. The result is that anthropologists and other social scientists tend to replace the clergy as the prime source of public moralizing.

If we are to understand the dynamic of anthropologists' claim to objectivity in these matters, we must push a little further. Anthropology can be thought of as a form of applied Hegelianism, a dialectical movement between the self and the other. Fieldwork involves an encounter and submission⁹⁴ to the other as a means of purifying and understanding the self.⁹⁵ But this surrender to the other is ultimately a means of colonizing and domesticating the other through science.⁹⁶

Several have asked why fieldwork in another culture, which is painful to many and often yields relatively insignificant results, should be so passionately insisted upon as the necessary rite of passage for fledgling anthropologists. Sontag quotes Levi-Strauss

93. Polanyi, *Personal Knowledge*, 234.

94. Cf. Kurt H. Wolff, "Surrender and Community Study: The Study of Loma," in *Reflections on Community Studies*, ed. Vidich, Bensman, and Stein (New York: Harper and Row, 1971).

95. Manda Cesara, *Reflections of a Woman Anthropologist: No Hiding Place* (New York: Academic Press, 1982). "Lenda unleashed many repressed memories which had the effect of driving me even harder to discover who the Lenda were, for in the discovery of them I would also discover myself."

96. Sontag, "Anthropologist as Hero," 185.

on this:

"It is sheer illusion that anthropology can be taught purely theoretically." ... Why? Because anthropology for Levi-Strauss, is an intensely personal kind of intellectual discipline, like psychoanalysis. A spell in the field is the exact equivalent of the training analysis undergone by candidate psychoanalysts. The purpose of fieldwork, Levi-Strauss writes, is to "create {236} that psychological revolution which marks the decisive turning point in the training of the anthropologist." And not written tests, but only the judgment of "experienced members of the profession" who have undergone the same psychological ordeal, can determine "if and when" a candidate anthropologist "has as a result of fieldwork, accomplished that inner revolution that will really make him into a new man."⁹⁷

Essentially, then, anthropological fieldwork produces a social actor who is able to transcend social context, cultural location, and biography.

Agar mentions as an item of professional folklore "that anthropologists are people who are alienated from their own culture."⁹⁸ What he fails to note is that the anthropological confession of marginality and alienation is actually a backhanded claim to moral objectivity. Postman and Weingartner suggest that

the anthropological perspective allows one to be part of his own culture and, at the same time, to be out of it.⁹⁹

It is precisely this objectivity which they are claiming for the anthropologist. Images of integrity, neutrality, and inspiration are appealed to by the presumed "detachment," "marginality," and "outsider" status of the anthropologist. Thus anthropologists claim for themselves a transcendent vantage point and therefore claim to be in a position to hold up a mirror for their own society to view itself objectively. But while such a comparative approach can certainly increase our social and cultural understanding, it is still not in a position to develop moral pronouncements. Of course, anthropologists may attempt to keep such pronouncements as

97. *Ibid.*, 190.

98. Agar, *Professional Stranger*, 3.

99. N. Postman and C. Weingartner, *Teaching as a Subversive Activity* (New York: Delecorste Press, 1970), 4.

universal as possible so that they do not sound ethnocentric. But the effort cannot succeed, for even if the anthropologist selects functional criteria such as social cohesion, ecological adaptation, anxiety reduction, or goals such as community, equality, or any other presumed end of morality, he faces the fact that not all groups will value anyone of these. In other words, any claim of a universal morality by the anthropologist can only be an imposition from without. And this, the anthropologist is not in a theoretical position to do. If, on the other hand, he simply defines the emic morality as the right one, he raises the problematic view that "the code of a culture really does create moral obligations for its members, whatever that code may be."¹⁰⁰

But the anthropologist is incapable of formulating epistemologically grounded objective value judgments not merely because of a theoretic problem. There is also the moral bias of the anthropologist which precludes such formulations, as we've already argued. Sontag argues that [237] alienation is an indicator of bias, not of objectivity, when she suggests that the anthropologist is one "who submits himself to the exotic [in order] to confirm his own inner alienation."¹⁰¹ And again she writes,

The anthropologist is not simply a neutral observer. He is a man in control of, and even consciously exploiting, his own intellectual alienation.¹⁰²

The anthropologist, then, in holding up a mirror for man, is holding up his own social construction, not a pure refraction of social and moral reality. Auge writes

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They have thus given laymen the impression that what they are expounding derives from a particular experience and mode of

100. "Writing to John Hawkes, Flannery O'Connor says, 'You say one becomes "evil" when one leaves the herd. I say that depends on what the herd is doing. The herd has been known to be right, in which case the one who leaves it is doing evil. When the herd is wrong, the one who leaves it is not doing evil but the right thing. If I remember rightly, you put that word, evil, in quotation marks which means the standards you judge it by there are relative; in fact you would be looking at it there with the eyes of the herd.'" *Ibid.*, 456.

101. Sontag, "Anthropologist as Hero," 192.

102. *Ibid.*, 189.

enquiry, when in actual fact they are imposing, in the course of illustrating certain exotic facts, a schema, a “theory” and perhaps a phantasy.¹⁰³

Anthropologists’ attempts to define the ultimate nature of man and morality must therefore be accepted with suitable caution. As Hartung writes,

The moral injunction of cultural relativists that we should be tolerant of all other ways can be regarded as simply an ethnocentric extension of our own liberal tradition.¹⁰⁴

Although anthropology is a scientific community, it is a community recruited from those with a particular moral vision and passion. Such a vision is broader than anthropology. Thus we have for example, former Chief Justice Frederick Moore Vinson saying, “Nothing is more certain in modern society than the principle that there are no absolutes.”¹⁰⁵ Yet anthropologists are the group, even in the public mind, most closely associated with such a perspective, and they provide it with its most articulate defenders. Again, such a perspective does not include all anthropologists. Yet it has dominated the discipline through most of its history.

Cook writes, “Relativists chiefly intend to be arguing against absolutism, which they identify with ethnocentrism.”¹⁰⁶ I suggest that missionaries are today the social group which, to the anthropologist, most clearly represents a vision of life which must be opposed. Missionaries are the clearest exemplars of absolutism in the world today. They are not, of course, the only group to believe that a particular moral and spiritual vision is transcendentally based, but they are the only group which self-evidently does so. As long as people have beliefs and practices which they only exercise in their own context, it is not clear whether {238} they actually treat them as conventional or absolute. But the “no other name” kind of approach motivating the evangelical missionary to cross

103. Auge, *Anthropological Circle*, 4.

104. Frank E. Hartung, “Cultural Relativity and Moral Judgments,” *Philosophy of Science* 21, no. 1 (1954): 121.

105. R. J. Rushdoony, *Law and Liberty* (Vallecito, CA: Ross House Books, 1984), 128.

106. John Cook, “Cultural Relativism as an Ethnocentric Notion,” in *The Philosophy of Society*, ed. Beehler and Orensoson (London: Methuen, 1978), 293.

cultural lines and confront others with their moral accountability before a transcendent God leaves no doubt in the mind of the anthropological observer that here is an absolutist.

This is why, as Cook makes clear, missionaries are labeled ethnocentric. The anthropological literature on missionaries consistently labels them as ethnocentric. No amount of cultural and social awareness and understanding on the part of the missionary can change the label since, as many have made clear, missionary activity is seen as inherently ethnocentric. No increased cultural awareness on the part of the missionary, but only the abandonment of a particular vision of reality, will ever convince anthropologists to drop the label.

A novel which apparently has some circulation in undergraduate anthropology courses, *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, presents an extremely stereotyped and devastating account of missionaries in the Amazon jungles. When SIL member Dennis Olson was required to read it for an anthropology class, he commented that he had never known any missionaries which even approximated the stereotypes of this novel. The professor smilingly acknowledged that he hadn't either. My question is, "Why then did he assign it?" It was obviously not to help students understand the actual facts about missionary realities. Rather, I would suggest, it was an attempt to exploit a symbol of ethnocentrism which would effectively immunize students against such a disease. Clifford Geertz refers to "the anthropologist's severest term of moral abuse, ethnocentric."¹⁰⁷ I am suggesting that what is being attacked by such a term of moral abuse is a particular way of conceptualizing moral reality as transcendently based. If, then, "ethnocentrism" is the anthropologist's severest term of moral abuse, the "missionary" is his clearest symbol of such ethnocentrism. Passing references to "missionaries" in undergraduate and graduate classes may therefore be seen as principally the rhetorical use of a "symbol" evocative of an approach to reality which stands in opposition to the anthropological ideology of cultural relativism. I suggest, then, that most anthropologists have been more interested in using the missionary as a symbol than in understanding him

107. Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 24.

as a social reality. I suggest that many anthropologists oppose missionaries less for the harm they bring other peoples than for their interference with the images which these people represent for the anthropologists. {239} I suggest that the fundamental opposition between missionaries and anthropologists is moral and that fundamentally we see in these two groups but the clearest exemplars of two broad and absolute approaches to morality. One rooted in the Creator-God, who has spoken and before whom the whole world stands accountable. And the other limited to the social conventions of men and thus subservient to the autonomous pleasure of man.

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THE MINISTRY OF CHALCEDON

[Proverbs 29:18]

CHALCEDON (kalSEEdon) is a Christian educational organization devoted exclusively to research, publishing, and cogent communication of a distinctly Christian scholarship to the world at large. It makes available a variety of services and programs, all geared to the needs of interested laymen who understand the propositions that Jesus Christ speaks to the mind as well as the heart, and that His claims extend beyond the narrow confines of the various institutional churches. We exist in order to support the efforts of all orthodox denominations and churches.

Chalcedon derives its name from the great ecclesiastical Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), which produced the crucial Christological definition: "Therefore, following the holy Fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man...." This formula challenges directly every false claim of divinity by any human institution: state, church, cult, school, or human assembly. Christ alone is both God and man, the unique link between heaven and earth. All human power is therefore derivative; Christ alone can announce that "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Historically, the Chalcedonian creed is therefore the foundation of Western liberty, for it sets limits on all authoritarian human institutions by acknowledging the validity of the claims of the One who is the source of true human freedom (Gal. 5:1).

Christians have generally given up two crucial features of theology that in the past led to the creation of what we know as Western civilization. They no longer have any real optimism concerning the possibility of an earthly victory of Christian principles and Christian institutions, and they have also abandoned the means of such a victory in external human affairs: a distinctly biblical concept of law. The testimony of the Bible and Western history should be clear: when God's people have been confident about the ultimate earthly success of their religion and committed socially to God's revealed system of external law, they have been victorious. When either aspect of their faith has declined, they have lost ground. Without optimism, they lose their zeal to exercise dominion over God's creation (Gen. 1:28); without revealed law, they are left without guidance and drift

along with the standards of their day.

Once Christians invented the university; now they retreat into little Bible colleges or sports factories. Once they built hospitals throughout Europe and America; now the civil governments have taken them over. Once Christians were inspired by “Onward, Christian Soldiers”; now they see themselves as “poor wayfaring strangers” with “joy, joy, joy down in their hearts” only on Sundays and perhaps Wednesday evenings. They are, in a word, pathetic. Unquestionably, they have become culturally impotent.

Chalcedon is committed to the idea of Christian reconstruction. It is premised on the belief that ideas have consequences. It takes seriously the words of Professor F.A. Hayek: “It may well be true that we as scholars tend to overestimate the influence which we can exercise on contemporary affairs. But I doubt whether it is possible to overestimate the influence which ideas have in the long run.” If Christians are to reconquer lost ground in preparation for ultimate victory (Isa. 2, 65, 66), they must rediscover their intellectual heritage. They must come to grips with the Bible’s warning and its promise: “Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he” (Prov. 29:18). Chalcedon’s resources are being used to remind Christians of this basic truth: what men believe makes a difference. Therefore, men should not believe lies, for it is the truth that sets them free (John 8:32).

Finis

