

# ANTITHESIS

A Review of Contemporary Christian Thought and Culture

## INSIDE:

The Mysticism of Sagan and Gould,  
the Protestantism of Chesterton,  
and the Cataclysm of the IMF

"If we must worship a power greater than ourselves, does it not make sense to revere the Sun and the stars? Hidden within every astronomical investigation, sometimes so deeply buried that the researcher himself is unaware of its presence, is a kernel of awe."

*Carl Sagan*

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to Him.... They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator."

*Romans 1: 21, 25*

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# Observing the Current...

## Federal Shut-Down As the Key to Deficit Reduction

After all the 1991 Federal Budget hugs and back-slapping subsided, Republican and Democratic leaders still left us with an expected 1991 deficit of \$254 billion.

The excitement over "deficit reduction" is simply focused on the fact that the Federal government reduced the initial deficit \$40 billion, from \$295 billion to \$254 billion. Moreover, this "reduction" doesn't include the final S & L bailout or the \$1 billion a month we are spending in the Persian Gulf.

*Time* magazine exclaimed that this was "a significant step toward controlling the deficit." The former director of the Congressional Budget Office, Rudolph Penner, sighed that the "reduction" was "just noise."

The best moment in the budget charade occurred when President Bush shut down the Federal government. It was like an idealistic flash from a Randian novel. Though the shut-down was not an innovation in Bush Administration policy, both parties (so hard to tell apart these decades) should be able to see the simple beauty of the shut-down. Sure.

For example, just as a start, we could erase the entire 1991 deficit by selling-off to productive hands the assets of the Postal Service, National Airports, TVA, Air traffic control, Utility administrations, federal lands, federal loan portfolio, and Amtrak.

This is the sort of thing people outside of civil government mean by deficit reduction. **DMJ**

## Henry Miller: The Life and Literature of Obscenity

Movie critics are delighting in a recent change in the movie industry's self-imposed rating system. In the place of the old "X" category of movies we now have the NC-17 designation, indicating that no children under seventeen are permitted. The X-rating has now been dropped, recognizing that what it communicates is that a movie is pornographic, rather than it is "adult" in its theme or treatment. The movie moguls and critics are pleased because they argue that some films are too explicit to be assigned the R-rating, and yet — according to them — are not pornographic in character or intent. This is hopeless, if not hypocritical, moral vacillation.

The movie which finally pushed the rating agency to change its code is a recent release entitled *Henry & June*, based upon the book of the same title by Anaïs Nin, who was the friend, literary colleague and sexual partner of Henry Miller, the controversial author of *Tropic of Cancer* and other obscene works. (June was Henry's wife and another sex-interest of Nin's, ever before her involvement with him.)

Henry Miller was born in 1891 and grew up in Brooklyn. During a self-imposed "exile" to France and Greece (1930-40), his first book, *Tropic of Cancer*, was published in Paris in 1934 — due to the encouragement and financial backing of Anaïs Nin. It was immediately banned from publication

in all English-speaking countries, and Miller himself was even denied entrance to England by port authorities. In 1953, the ACLU lost in its attempt to have the ban against the book lifted. However, after Grove Press published it in 1961, suits against it were lost in Chicago (1962) and before the U.S. Supreme Court (1964).

Anaïs Nin is known for her own volumes of erotica (the polite word for pornography), books of "sophisticated naughtiness" according to *Cosmopolitan* and highly praised in *Newsweek* and the *New York Times Book Review*. The multivolume *Diary of Anaïs Nin*, in which she describes her relationship with Henry Miller, began to be published in 1966. It was a work that had been praised to the sky (or zodiac anyway) by Miller himself. Nevertheless, not until the 1985 death of Nin's husband, Hugh Guiler, did she disclose the drawn-out love affair which she shared with Henry Miller, which she does in intimate detail in *Henry & June* — now showing at the movies (NC-17). Nin died in 1987. Miller eventually married five times, back in the U.S. experienced both poverty (needing to appeal for old clothes in *The New Republic*) and luxury (living in the fashionable Pacific Palisades — thanks to the notoriety bestowed by the censorship controversy), suffered a stroke and eight years later died in 1980.

The controversy which has

recently stirred over the rating of the movie *Henry & June* proved to be an ironic case of "life imitating art" — or, at least, of reaction to a man's life (the movie) imitating reaction to man's art (his books). In Henry Miller we find the life and literature of obscenity. This correlation is no surprise. Miller boasted that his novels were exercises in autobiography and self-analysis. Proverbs tells us, "as a man thinks in his heart so is he" (23:7). Jesus pointedly taught that "out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, fornications...adulteries...lasciviousness...pride, foolishness; all these evil things proceed from within and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23).

Miller resisted this truth. In his strained apologetic essays for obscenity ("Obscenity and the Law of Reflection" and "Obscenity and Literature"), Miller repeatedly argued that obscenity is actually found in the world ("every department of life is...corroded with what is so unthinkingly labeled 'obscene'"), and he was simply persecuted for telling the truth. "My concern has never been with morals but with life, my own life particularly." In the distorted reasoning of unbelieving thought this meant that "Nothing would be regarded as obscene, I feel, if men were living out their inmost desires." Everything is obscene so that nothing is obscene. Indeed, in his essay on immorality and morality, Miller ends with a quotation from Hindu scripture, declaring evil does not exist!

Here is the self-refutation of every apologist for obscenity. If evil does not exist, then it cannot be evil for the author's works to be banned! Henry Miller was a walking self-contradiction. He complained that "Instead of respect, toleration, kindness and consideration, to say nothing of love, we view one another with fear, suspicion, hatred, envy, rivalry and malevolence. Our world is grounded in falsity." But given Miller's worldview, it was meaningless to condemn a lack of love and toleration. One literary critic has written that Henry Miller struggled "to give expression to the romantic notion — underlying all his work — that there should exist something better than the loveless world in which he found himself enmeshed." But Miller's moral anarchy cannot logically sustain that "romantic notion" at all. His obscenity in life and literature, we should see, was the degrading and destruction of *romance* in more ways than one.

**GLB**

## Is Kuwait the Fifty-First State?

At one point during Dan Rather's garishly announced interview with Saddam Hussein, Hussein switched roles and questioned Rather about the propriety of U.S. intervention in the Gulf: "Is Kuwait the fifty-first state?" Rather sat glassy-eyed momentarily, as he is apt to do in such situations, and then insisted that he was the one who was supposed to ask the questions.

Hussein is obviously no constitutional theorist or ethicist (though he plays one on TV), but his question was right on the mark. The question correctly assumed that the exercise of political authority is limited to the jurisdiction of that authority. Put in broader, Biblical terms, the exercise of authority, whether by oneself, family, church, voluntary associations, or the state, is limited to the social sphere of that authority as defined by Scripture. For example, the church may not usurp the jurisdiction of the state, the family may not usurp the jurisdiction of the church, a business may not usurp the jurisdiction of the individual, and the state, the most notable usurper, ought not usurp the jurisdictions of the self, family, church, or business.

Hence, these Biblical jurisdictions place moral limits on various social authorities. So, if Scripture leads us to oppose one social sphere intervening in another, then we should also oppose our particular political authority intervening by military blockade in the non-political social spheres of other nations. Though our stated goal is to "hurt Hussein," we are doing so by intervening in social spheres, like the family and business, which are not properly "him" anyway, unless we unbiblically assume that the political sphere is the supreme owner of all the other spheres.

But Scripture does not just restrict one sphere from intervening in a different type of sphere, it also prohibits intra-sphere interventions. For example, a particular business may not fire another business's employees; a particular church may not excommunicate members of another church; a particular family may not unilaterally require another family's child to mow their lawn. Similarly, in foreign affairs, one state may not disrupt another state's jurisdiction. It simply has no legitimate authority there. This lack of legitimate authority is especially evident for those of us committed to representative forms of gov-

ernment. For example, we elect presidents and thereby grant them some legitimacy to rule that we don't grant to the heads of other nations. Thus, the leaders of other nations have no such jurisdiction over us since we didn't grant it to them.

In short, then, a political authority who intervenes in non-political or political spheres (inter and intra) of another nation stands in violation of the most elementary Biblical standards.

If we alter some of the circumstances assumed above, we see other standards come into play. For example, if a state or political authority is attacked by a foreign nation then that nation being attacked is obligated to wield the sword in protection of its citizens and their property — this is one of the few legitimate functions of the civil government. Moreover, the nation being attacked may resort to a whole host of measures, along with defensive warfare, to undermine the enemy from within: espionage, propaganda, and sometimes assassination. The U.S. government, however, is not the model to imitate in any of these areas, but one can envision a Biblical use of such measures in a defensive manner. Defensive warfare is now the only legitimate form of warfare Scripture allows, since offensive warfare *à la* the Old Covenant necessitated direct revelation, which is obviously no longer an option.

The above sketch is not a popular view, especially in the midst of "Saddamania" where appeals to bipartisan endorsement (that should scare us) must go unquestioned. Still we should ask — what Biblical justification can someone offer for such an intervention? Let's at least consider the reasons offered by the Administration.

One of the reasons given for sending U.S. troops to the Gulf is to restore "Kuwait's legitimate government." Are we Biblically obligated to send our own people to die to accomplish this? — especially given the fact that the government we aim to restore is a hereditary monarchy, which, as Richard Ebeling notes, "is a form of government that some leading Americans found less than desirable about two hundred fifteen years ago." The Kuwaiti monarchy recently closed down its already limited parliament and prohibited criticism of its corruption and abuse of power.

A second reason given for intervening is that we must fight new forms of dictatorships. The media and U.S. government representatives constantly attempt to draw a parallel between Hussein and Hitler. But this is pathetic. First, this is the standard ploy of every nation that wants to drum up support for war. The "Hitlers" may vary from century to century but political rhetoric doesn't change. Second, how are we supposed to believe that Hussein is a threat to all of the Mid-East, Africa, Europe, and the U.S. when he could not even beat Iran in an eight-year war? Third, there is simply no Biblical obligation to rescue every nation from domination by tyrants. To appeal to "loving one's neighbor" mistakenly confuses personal and national ethics.

What about the hostages? Protecting our citizens is a legitimate goal, but the Bush Administration created the hostage problem. Bush rushed troops to Saudi Arabia immediately following the Iraqi attack on Kuwait and gave no warning or time for U.S. citizens to leave. Moreover, other nations have had hundreds of hostages released without needing to send troops to the Gulf.

The most troubling reason given for intervening is that the Persian Gulf is economically important to the United States. The President declared: "Our country now imports half the oil it consumes and could face a major threat to its economic independence." This is tragic. We are ordering soldiers to prepare to sacrifice their lives so that we can maintain low oil prices. As Jacob Hornberger has argued, "To choose the death of our fellow citizens over a relatively small economic discomfort is an abomination."

George Weigel of the Ethics and Public Policy Center argues that the issue is not "cheap oil...but rather order vs. chaos." And consequently, in order to avoid international "chaos" there is "no alternative to American leadership in maintaining a minimum of order in international public life." What are the premises for such an ominous conclusion? How could one fill them out without invoking amorphous concepts of political duty? It's just not possible.

In all, then, we should turn from another instance of our twentieth century devotion to world social-engineering since Kuwait is *not* the fifty-first state.

DMJ



## U.S. Post Office Needs to Look Down Under

The U.S. Postal Service, that innovative institution which gave us "Overnight" mail that most often takes two nights, may now look to New Zealand as a model. In mid-1987 that country's government removed the monopolistic privileges of the New Zealand Post and surrendered all control of its actions and all stakes in its profits and losses.

Though the New Zealand service is not completely privatized (the state still retains ownership of the corporation), its several years of operation demonstrate a much more pro-consumer approach than our own monopolistic postal system.

For example, *Consumer Research* reports that the new New Zealand postal system has increased on-time delivery of first class mail from 84% to 99%. It has also increased the number of postal outlets by 17% by contracting out mail services to retail stores, and, by doing so, it has increased the number of hours and days postal service is available.

The New Zealand Post also

dropped its monopoly over mailboxes. Merchants, utility companies, etc. may deliver their own mail or advertising to individual boxes. This too has freed up competition and service. In contrast, the U.S. Postal Service still insists on maintaining monopolistic access to mailboxes. This is pure silliness and bureaucratic protection of the few against the many.

Also very impressive is the New Zealand service known as Fast Post. Normal first-class service costs 23 U.S. cents, but if consumers want the guarantee of next-day delivery, they need only pay 80 cents per letter!

As regards postal rates, while the New Zealand Post was under state control in its last two years before the change, postal rates rose 40%, but since demonopolization, rates have not increased.

The New Zealand Post has been able to keep rates constant by cutting its costs. Among other changes, managers have cut paperwork by 90% and the workforce by 20%. In contrast, by having mo-

nopoly protection, U.S. postal workers, sincere as they are, have become the highest paid semi-skilled workers in the world! — at our expense.

The virtues of privatizing postal services are evident in principle and in practice. So what keeps the U.S. Postal Service from following suit? As John Crutcher notes, the current Postmaster General, Anthony Frank, "knows he would have no support from his own management 'unions'" and that such a change would lead unions to "generate hundreds of inquiries from Congress. So why should he try to make fundamental change?" Change will have to come from outside.

Given the fact that Scripture limits the State to matters of justice and defense, Christians should be some of the first to want to jettison the U.S. postal monopoly. What a vision! I can see it now — a massive wave of Christians all-across the nation holding hands and chanting, "Separation of Post and State!." Sure.

DMJ

## "Rational Suicide" and the Dearth of Courageous Humanists

Cornelius Van Til famously compared the non-Christian's attitude toward God to a child who sits upon his father's lap in order to slap his father's face. This comparison highlights the unthankfulness of non-Christians, even while they openly demonstrate their dependence on the Christian God.

Why do non-Christians persist in invoking assumptions which ultimately only Christians can justify? I know the simple epistemological answer — they can't help it — but I am still surprised by the brazen use of Christian assumptions in anti-Christian contexts. Why don't non-Christians have the courage of their own convictions? Where have all the Nietzsches gone?

In a recent *Free Inquiry* editorial, Tim Madigan defends "rational" suicide in light of questions raised by Dr. Jack Kevorkian's "suicide machine."

Madigan begins by invoking David Hume (another uncourageous anti-Christian) to refute traditional objections to suicide. But Hume's rather sophomoric retorts either beg-the-question or assume principles

which can in turn be used to justify even genocide.

Moreover, Hume's refutation of traditional arguments against suicide rests upon moral notions which he claims to derive from "objective" and "universal" moral sentiments (which in fact turn out to be very subjective and parochially English sentiments). Ironically, Hume can only transform these sentiments into norms by committing the naturalistic fallacy.

Madigan himself argues that though there are cases of irrational suicides — e.g., jilted lovers — there is a positive case for "rational" suicide. Madigan claims that "in order for an action to be deemed rational, it must involve effective deliberation and a realistic assessment of possibilities."

Why, according to Madigan, ought we to opt for rational over irrational suicide? He answers: "life is precious, and should not be given up lightly." There it is, sitting and slapping. Madigan can't ultimately justify the "precious" nature of human life in terms of his anti-Christian worldview, but he invokes a remnant of the Christian "image-of-God-in-

man" without flinching.

Madigan not only invokes "precious" human life in his case, but he goes on to invoke the values of "compassion," "understanding," "autonomy," "consequences...upon family and friends," and a "right" to die.

None of these moral notions makes any sense in a naturalistic outlook (notwithstanding Kai Nielsen types). How do "rights," "compassion," and "precious life" have any place in a cosmos of material processes? Why play games?

This sort of leeching-off of the Christian worldview is common. I find it amusing that *Free Inquiry* publishes on its back cover "An Affirmation of Humanism" (offering a "parchment copy of this page, suitable for framing") which is full of humanistic mysticisms and is obviously modeled after historic Christian creeds.

If non-Christians are going to persist in being like the children in Van Til's analogy (and they will), then they should be told to either play right, or go get their own worldview.

DMJ

# Beyond Creation vs. Evolution: Taking the Full Measure of the Materialist Challenge

**The popular materialist-science apologetic of Sagan, Gould, and Hawking falls prey to its own demands.**

**T.M. Moore**

For the better part of the past century, evangelicals have become increasingly frustrated as modern science's hold on crucial sectors of society has blocked certain of their most cherished aspirations. In recent years this frustration has swirled around the debate over the content of the science curriculum in public schools, a contest in which evangelicals have made an enormous invest-

ment of time, energy, and resources. It would be difficult to calculate the large number of man-hours or the huge amount of money that evangelicals have invested in their effort to achieve the goal of pluralism in the public school curriculum. And, while some evangelical leaders see progress in the not-unfavorable wording of a recent California law on the subject, evangelicals still have no real foothold for their viewpoint in the public school classrooms of the land.

The public school curriculum is a stronghold which evolutionists confidently occupy. They consider their position to be unassailable, and a series of recent court decisions has given them every reason to believe that they can withstand any future assaults as well.

What many evangelicals fail to understand, however, is that the creation/evolution battle in the schools is neither the only, nor indeed even the most important, front along which the struggle between the Christian worldview and that of modern materialist-

science is being contested. Nor are the public schools the sole or even the main avenue along which the opponents of Biblical truth are trafficking their materialist propaganda. Much more is at stake in this struggle than whether or not children will be exposed to an alternative to the dominant evolutionary cosmology. Larger questions about the nature and purpose of human life, the progress of society, and the meaning of values and culture are being contested. And the evolutionary scientific community has not been content to assume a merely defensive posture in its determination to maintain its hard-fought ascendancy over the erstwhile Biblical consensus. In our day a sustained effort is underway from within the evolutionary camp to exalt the evolutionary and materialist paradigm, to eradicate from the public consciousness any lingering notions about the broad scope of Biblical authority, and to dispense with everything other than a merely personal need for God and religion.

Spearheading this attack is a new school of science apologists, armed with a panoply of lavish publications and televised productions; allied with societies and associations of science professionals, numerous publishing houses, and public television networks; and represented by articulate and prolific spokesmen, whose credentials, positions, and accomplishments leave no doubt in the public's mind that these men know whereof they speak. The thrust of this initiative reaches far beyond the public school classroom to cut across every segment of our society.

At the forefront of this movement, three names stand out as men dedicated to the task of making the intricacies and subtleties of the scientific way of thinking the personal faith of the common man, and who are committed to the absolute necessity of ensuring the place of materialist-science as the paradigm within which all matters of public policy and human well-being are to be discussed and resolved. These men are Cornell University's Carl Sagan, Harvard's Stephen Jay Gould, and to a lesser extent, Cambridge University's Stephen Hawking.<sup>1</sup> Each is a respected member of his professional discipline. Sagan and Gould have published numerous popular books and appeared on television series, while Hawking is just beginning to emerge alongside these two as a recognized spokesman for this movement.

The purpose of this essay is to examine the broader challenge to the Biblical worldview of the new materialist-science apologetic as it is represented in the works of these three individuals and to suggest some avenues along which the evangelical Christian community may begin to mount a more concerted and effective response. We shall first examine the twin thrusts of this apologetic, in which Sagan, Gould, and Hawking make their ultimate objectives clear. We will then turn our attention to the specific areas in which the paradigm of

<sup>1</sup> Carl Sagan, *Broca's Brain* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 38; Stephen Jay Gould, *Wonderful Life* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1989), p. 16; Stephen W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988), pp. vi, 168.

materialist-science challenges the Christian worldview and the authority of Scripture before finally suggesting some rather broad outlines for a concerted evangelical response.

## Outline of the New Materialist-Scientific Apologetic

We turn, in the first place, to an examination of the twin thrusts of this new science apologetic. Sagan, Gould, and Hawking are dedicated to the goals of firmly establishing the superiority of the scientific way of thinking in the mind of the public and, along the way, of eliminating the necessity of the supernatural as an explanation of life in the cosmos. These two objectives are never far from one another in the writings of these men. And, while the temperament with which they communicate these goals can vary from Gould's subtle condescensions to Sagan's outright scorn for matters religious, it is abundantly clear that, in the minds of these three men, the materialist and Biblical worldviews cannot co-exist.<sup>2</sup>

Gould suggests that the disciplined process of gathering, analyzing, and testing data, and then of providing only tentative explanations, procedures characteristic of the scientific method, must prevail over the glib "assertions of certainty" that are the tool of "preachers and politicians."<sup>3</sup> He criticizes those who reach their conclusions on the basis of an equal consideration of the facts of nature and the teachings of Scripture.<sup>4</sup> Hawking gloats at having circumvented a papal directive on the limits of cosmological speculation, escaping in the process a fate similar to that of Galileo, while, at the same time, keeping the Catholic Church from making "another bad mistake" by curbing the activities of scientists.<sup>5</sup> He sees science as occupying the "advancing frontier of knowledge,"<sup>6</sup> and its mission to be that of leading men in discovering the depths of the mind of God,<sup>7</sup> which he sees as embodied in the laws of nature. Sagan views science as part of the "common language that all technical civilizations, no matter how different, must have."<sup>8</sup> Unlike the proponents of doctrinal religion, scientists are not "threatened by the courageous pursuit of knowledge."<sup>9</sup> Whereas "religions can be so shamelessly dishonest, so contemptuous of the intelligence of their adherents,"<sup>10</sup> the scientific model is "a powerful and elegant way to understand the universe."<sup>11</sup> Science has

become sufficient unto itself as a way of knowing. It is a "self-correcting enterprise."<sup>12</sup> Unlike religion, science does not seek to suppress "uncomfortable ideas."<sup>13</sup> Instead, it welcomes any approach to arriving at new truth, "no matter how strange."<sup>14</sup>

Gould asserts, albeit only indirectly, that proponents of a creationist cosmology are simply wrong.<sup>15</sup> He suggests that recent scientific discoveries in the realm of paleontology have cut off the path of logic that led from a consideration of the natural realm to contemplation of the supernatural.<sup>16</sup> Hawking thinks out loud about a God who has surrendered His crown rights to natural law and thus, as Sagan eagerly submits, may have rendered Himself obsolete.<sup>17</sup> The Cambridge physicist's reasoning leads him to a virtual apotheosis of matter in a world without beginning or end, leaving him to ask the question, "What place, then, for a creator?"<sup>18</sup>

Carl Sagan assigns the role of religion to a place in man's dark, uncertain past. Before mankind entered the age of scientific rationality, he maintains, it "made sense" to believe in a Great Designer, even a Creator of the cosmos and man.<sup>19</sup> Yet that outlook is no longer necessary. As Sagan puts it, recalling the evolution of the modern scientific outlook,

And so it was that the great idea arose, the realization that there might be a way to know the world without the god hypothesis; that there might be principles, forces, laws of nature, through which the world could be understood without attributing the fall of every sparrow to the direct intervention of Zeus.<sup>20</sup>

## The Materialist Challenge to the Biblical Worldview

The apologetic for modern materialist-science that these men and others have launched is determined to make the scientific way of thinking the model for all other forms of human decision-making and to push religion and the supernatural out of the arena in which matters of truth and public policy are discussed. With such clear-cut objectives, the materialist mindset cannot help but clash with the Biblical worldview in a great many areas. We will examine four of the primary points at which the materialist worldview challenges the authority of Scripture.

### 1. The Cosmos as Creator

In the first place, materialist-science challenges the Biblical notion that the universe and everything in it are the results of the creative activity of God. Instead,

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the subtlety of Gould in *Time's Arrow, Time's Cycle* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1987), p. 21; the questioning and generalizing of Hawking, *Brief History*, pp. 1, 9, 11, 13; and the contemptuous, dismissing tone of Sagan, *Ibid.*, pp. xiv, 290.

<sup>3</sup> Gould, *Wonderful Life*, p. 282.

<sup>4</sup> Gould, *Time's Arrow*, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Hawking, *Brief History*, p. 116.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>8</sup> Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 206.

<sup>9</sup> Sagan, *Broca's Brain*, p. 290.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>11</sup> Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. xii.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Gould, *Time's Arrow*, p. 194.

<sup>16</sup> Gould, *Wonderful Life*, p. 262.

<sup>17</sup> Hawking, pp. 20, 21, 222; Sagan in Hawking, p. x.

<sup>18</sup> Hawking, *Brief History*, pp. 136, 140.

<sup>19</sup> Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. 29.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

the cosmos — “all that is or ever was or ever will be,” to quote Sagan<sup>21</sup> — is merely the product of matter, time, and chance. The universe is without design or direction. Its existence is eternal, even if its present form was neither inevitable nor the only alternative that the process of evolution might have taken. Everything in the universe is explainable according to a materialist perspective. Not only the massive bodies and infinitesimally small particles in which are contained the great bulk of the mass of the universe, but also such things as life itself, our thought processes,<sup>22</sup> our passions and our reasoning ability,<sup>23</sup> and even our sense of history<sup>24</sup> are nothing more than variations on the first law of thermodynamics.<sup>25</sup>

In such a universe there is no need for the distractions that come from a commitment to the supernatural. Since everything that we derive ultimately from matter, even our metaphysical sense must have its root in the chemical processes of the universe. Thus, as Sagan sees it, it makes sense to turn our “religious” attentions, if we must indulge them, on the universe itself. As he puts it,

If we must worship a power greater than ourselves, does it not make sense to revere the Sun and the stars? Hidden within every astronomical investigation, sometimes so deeply buried that the researcher himself is unaware of its presence, is a kernel of awe.<sup>26</sup>

## 2. The Mechanism of Chance/Law

Related to this is a second point at which the materialist worldview clashes with the teaching of Scripture. This has to do with the essential mechanism of the cosmos. According to historic Christianity the universe is what it is and functions as it does according to the decrees of God and His providence.<sup>27</sup> At bottom, it is the Word of God that is actively at work to coordinate and sustain all the processes and interactions of His creation. But in the materialist worldview the place of God has been taken by chance and natural law. Gould, Sagan, and Hawking are

all adamant on this point.<sup>28</sup> In the materialist worldview the present state of the cosmos has arisen quite randomly, yet according to specific natural laws. But the universe is without design or predictable destiny. It has ever been and ever will be subject to the whims of contingency, and therefore the only eschatology that can be described is one of change and uncertainty.<sup>29</sup>

## 3. Man as the Insignificant Caretaker

Yet, in the midst of the whirl of contingency and natural law, it has somehow fallen out that man finds himself in something of a caretaker role in the cosmos, by virtue of his superior reasoning abilities. Apparently the interaction of randomness and natural law has produced a creature whose powers of intellect allow him to assume a more active, less passive, role in the universe.<sup>30</sup> By laboring to understand the laws of nature at greater depth, and by committing himself to a scientific approach to life, man can, it seems, rein in powers of contingency, anticipate the whims of chance, and manipulate the processes of nature for his own and for the universe's well-being, at least to a point. In other words, he can assume the place that Christianity recognizes as belonging to God in the functioning of the cosmos.<sup>31</sup>

This leads us to a fuller consideration of the materialist view of this marvelous creature. And, again, we find that materialism challenges the authority of the Bible when it comes to defining the nature and purpose of man. For, whereas the Scriptures teach that man has been created in the image of God, the noblest creature in the vast creation, vice-regent to His Creator in the management and development

of the world, materialist-science views man as merely the chance product of time and matter, an enlightened animal, to be sure, but one whose only hope for meaning and purpose must be derived from a proper understanding of his relatively insignificant place in the cosmos.

I find it especially interesting the great lengths to which materialists go to assert the insignificance of man. With the psalmist they have asked, “What is man?”, but in seeking an answer they have not ascended to the heavens but have probed the mysteries of life only under the sun. Gould wants to debunk the idea that

**If only brute factuality and rugged testability are to be allowed in the arena of truth, then how does the materialist explain the inescapability of his own presuppositions, when he knows that none of these is amenable to confirmation according to any of the criteria he insists upon?**

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Sagan, *Cosmos*, pp. 32, 277; Carl Sagan, *The Dragons of Eden* (New York: Random House, 1977), p. 210; *Broca's Brain*, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. 232.

<sup>24</sup> Gould, *Time's Arrow*, pp. 190-208.

<sup>25</sup> Hawking, p. 136.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. 24; Carl Sagan, *Comet* (New York: Random House, 1985), p. 21. *Broca's Brain*, p. 286.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Westminster Confession of Faith*, III, 5.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Gould, *Wonderful Life*, pp. 288, 290; Sagan, *Cosmos*, pp. 30, 31, 232, 282; *Dragons of Eden*, p. 27; Hawking, *Brief History*, pp. 56, 122.

<sup>29</sup> Gould, *Wonderful Life*, p. 51.

<sup>30</sup> Sagan, *Dragons of Eden*, p. 62, *Broca's Brain*, p. 40.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Hawking, *Brief History*, p. 175.



there is some "intrinsic meaning" or "transcendent importance" to human life.<sup>32</sup> He glories in the fact that science has accomplished man's "progressive dethronement from the center of things" and left him in a position of "increasing marginality in the uncaring universe."<sup>33</sup> He contends that mankind is a "thing so small" in a vast universe, a wildly improbable evolutionary event well within the realm of contingency.<sup>34</sup> The fact that we have become "large reasoning animals" we owe to nothing more than "our lucky stars."<sup>35</sup> Without any intrinsic meaning or purpose to guide us we have been left alone to "establish our own paths in this most diverse and interesting of conceivable universes."<sup>36</sup>

In the same way Hawking, while he insists that man is but an "insignificant creature"<sup>37</sup> celebrates our ascendancy over the other animals of the cosmos. He claims that,

we are rational beings who are free to observe the universe as we want and to draw logical deductions from what we see. In such a scheme it is reasonable to suppose that we might progress ever closer toward the laws that govern our universe.<sup>38</sup>

This occurs until, one must suppose, we have achieved the mind of God and become at last a sovereign law unto ourselves.

Sagan declares that man is a rational creature who has arrived at his present state through the process of natural selection. As he puts it, "we are, all of us, descended from a single and common instance of the origin of life in the early history of our planet."<sup>39</sup> Since man has such random and inauspicious beginnings, there is no reason for him to believe that he is of any special significance in the cosmos. At best we are "only custodians for a moment of a world that is itself no more than a mote of dust in a universe incomprehensively vast and old."<sup>40</sup> Hence he concludes that "neither we nor our planet enjoys a privileged position in nature."<sup>41</sup>

And yet, man is somehow "responsible" for his conduct in the world, responsible to act in accordance with the laws of nature in order to

serve his own and the universe's best interest. As Sagan puts it, "We are, each of us, largely responsible for what gets into our brains, for what, as adults, we wind up caring about."<sup>42</sup> "The welfare of our civilization and our species is in our hands."<sup>43</sup> Gould writes like a coach in a pre-game pep talk about the "challenge" that is before us to carve out some cosmic niche for ourselves, to explore the limits of our "moral responsibility."<sup>44</sup> We possess, he maintains, "maximum freedom to thrive, or to fail, in our own chosen way."<sup>45</sup>

#### 4. The Tentative Nature of Truth

The final, and undoubtedly the main, point at which the materialist apologetic challenges the authority of Scripture is epistemological. How can we know that any of this is true? The Biblical answer is that we receive from God by way of written revelation His truth, which we strive, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to understand and to apply to every aspect of our lives. Received by faith, the Scriptures become the light in which we begin to make sense out of all our experience and to order our lives in a way that will reflect the goodness of God and cause His Name to be glorified.

For the materialist-science apologetic, nothing could be more archaic and therefore more absurd. Truth is only a tentative entity, arrived at through the laborious process of observing the cosmos, recognizing similarities, relationships, and tendencies, formulating hypotheses, and testing for validity. Since there is, as Gould might say, no preconceived meaning to life, only a vast sea of facts and occurrences,<sup>46</sup> we must patiently labor at the inductive method in all areas of life until the truth for our particular situation comes to light. Since the laws of nature can be discovered, and since discovering these laws leads to our being able to use them for

our purposes, we must continue to look to those who are at the "advancing frontier of knowledge" to show us the way to our salvation. We must gather unlimited observations, make predictions on the basis of what we see, and then test for re-

**Gould glories in the fact that science has accomplished man's "progressive dethronement from the center of things" and left him in a position of "increasing marginality in the uncaring universe."**

sults.<sup>47</sup> Sagan sums it up as follows:

First: there are no sacred truths; all assumptions must be critically examined; arguments from authority are worthless. Second: whatever is in-

<sup>32</sup> Gould, *Wonderful Life*, p. 43; *Time's Arrow*, p. 1.

<sup>33</sup> Gould, *Wonderful Life*, p. 44.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 291.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>37</sup> Hawking, *Brief History*, p. 140.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>39</sup> Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. 38.

<sup>40</sup> Sagan, *Comet*, p. 367.

<sup>41</sup> Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. 190.

<sup>42</sup> Sagan, *Ibid.*, p. 279.

<sup>43</sup> Sagan, *Ibid.*, p. 320.

<sup>44</sup> Gould, *Wonderful Life*, pp. 44, 291.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 323.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 52.

<sup>47</sup> Hawking, *Brief History*, p. 9; Gould, *Wonderful Life*, p. 282.

consistent with the facts must be discarded or revised. We must understand the Cosmos as it is and not confuse how it is with how we wish it to be.<sup>48</sup>

Most notably, we must not allow religion to gum up the works. All three writers indicate their desire to move beyond the restrictive barriers that have been imposed upon science by practitioners of doctrinal religion. There is no place for faith in the materialist-science worldview.

So we have seen that the materialist-science apologetic, active in a great many arenas and at a wide range of levels in our society, has set a determined course for itself. Its mission is to secure its judicial role in arbitrations of truth and meaning and to remove the threat of religion from discussions of morality and public policy. In order to accomplish this mission the materialist apologetic challenges head-on the major teachings of the Christian tradition. It encourages the public to reject the Biblical teachings on such important matters as the nature of the universe and the mechanism whereby it operates, the nature and purpose of man, and the way of knowing truth. Such a direct challenge, entered into so effectively on so many different fronts, must not go uncontested.

## **A Christian Challenge to Materialist-Science**

I turn now to describe something of an outline for a Christian response to the challenge of materialist-science. Five essential components for an effective Christian response can be indicated. These are (1) Renewing our confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture; (2) Carefully defining the areas at which the materialist-science apologetic challenges the authority of the Bible; (3) Demonstrating the vulnerabilities of the materialist worldview; (4) Alerting, recruiting, training, and enlisting the entire Christian community at some level; and (5) Persistently monitoring the various avenues along which the materialist apologetic mounts its attack. In my remaining comments I want to try to touch on each of these aspects of our response.

We look first at the need to recover a sense of the sufficiency of Scripture. Something in our apologetic in recent years, indeed, in our whole way of thinking about our faith, has encouraged evangelicals to embrace the idea that we must believe and obey the Scriptures for reasons other than the fact that they are the very Word of God. We have argued for the truthfulness and reliabil-

ity of Scripture based on the claim that the Bible satisfies the demands of reason. We have insisted that, since the findings of modern science can, with some imagination, be made to fit the Biblical framework, the Bible ought to be given a fair hearing. We have encouraged men and women to turn to the Bible because it will help them to find peace or happiness or meaning or solace, all of which, though they may indeed be found

from the study of the Bible, are hardly reasons in and of themselves for submitting to the authority of Scripture.

In our engagements with the materialist-science worldview, to take a specific instance, we have argued

that the teachings of Scripture are somehow "scientific" in a manner not dissimilar from the claims of evolutionists. This is as much as to say that we can trust the Biblical cosmology because it submits itself to the procedures of predictability and testing that materialists like to think they demand of themselves. Indeed, much of the creationist literature takes this tack, namely, of attempting to render in "scientific" terms or according to the demands of the materialist framework teachings which can only be understood by faith.

Each time we suggest that the Bible ought to be consulted or is reliable and true because it accommodates itself to some criteria beyond itself, we obstruct the work of the Holy Spirit in communicating, convicting, and converting; we undermine the integrity and authority of the Word of God; and we weaken our defense against the Bible's detractors.

What is needed is an unashamed, unapologetic acceptance of the teaching of the Bible, whether or not it can be made to "make sense" to scientific minds or meet the demands of personal whims or needs. Without a response to the apologetic of materialist-science that begins with a ringing, "Thus saith the Lord," our counterattack will lack the prophetic authority of an inspired message, boldly proclaimed and consistently lived.

Second, we need to show the Christian community the ways in which the materialist-science apologetic throws down the gauntlet to the Church's most basic convictions. The creation/evolution debate has helped in this regard, to a point. However, it has also created the impression that the battle between Christianity and modern science is one to be waged primarily in the classroom. Therefore, it is rather broadly perceived as a battle for experts and scholars. Yet this is emphatically not so. When the issues at stake are shown to involve not just whether or not a creationist cosmology will be *allowed in the science curriculum, but also deep and critical questions relating to such things as the dignity of man, the nature of morality, the purpose of society and culture, the future of nations, and the way to truth;*

**Each time we suggest that the Bible is reliable and true because it accommodates itself to some criteria beyond itself, we undermine the integrity and authority of the Word of God.**

<sup>48</sup> Sagan, *Cosmos*, p. 333; *Broca's Brain*, p. 62.

and when the outspokenness of unbelieving, materialist voices is shown to be flourishing in the popular magazines, book clubs, and television programming that have become so much a part of the materialist apologetic, then every member of the evangelical community will be forced to acknowledge that the battle is being engaged all around us, all the time. And then we will be in a better position to take our places in helping to turn back this tide of unbelief that even now threatens to overwhelm us.

Third, we must demonstrate the vulnerabilities of the materialist-science worldview. And these are considerable. First, materialist-science is vulnerable at the level of internal consistency. Its own most basic assumptions do not cohere. We must be prepared to challenge the materialist to explain to us, for example, how order and chance can exist together in the same universe. Is not one of these unknowable, uncertain, unpredictable, and uncontrollable, while the other is precisely the opposite? At which point does chance yield to order, and on what ground? In the same way the materialist must explain his contradictory beliefs about the nature of man. How can he be both insignificant and responsible? If we do matter so very little in the great cosmic scheme of things, then what's all the fuss about, and who is anyone to say anything about how any of us should or should not behave? If there is no final meaning or purpose to our lives, then why all the striving to discover the mind of God which materialists understand to be embedded in the laws of nature? And if only brute factuality and rugged testability are to be allowed in the arena of truth, then how does the materialist explain the inescapability of his own presuppositions, when he knows that none of these is amenable to confirmation according to any of the criteria he insists upon?

The materialist apologetic is also vulnerable when it comes to its operational consistency. As suggested above, materialist-science cannot meet its own criteria for truth. How, for example, does Carl Sagan demonstrate through quantification and testing the truth of a statement such as, "There are no sacred truths"? Or, "Arguments from authority are worthless"? How can materialists speak so confidently about the events and conditions of the beginning of life when, as they maintain, we can only speak with *tentativeness* about those things which we can verify through testing? How is the materialist to account for his own dependence upon specific presuppositions in an epistemological framework that disallows all acts of mere faith?

I suspect that a broad-based pressing of these and other such issues on the followers of the materialist worldview would elicit large quantities of silence, a condition, by the way, for which we are commanded to labor in our efforts on behalf of the truth of God.

The materialist apologetic is vulnerable, in the third place, when it can be shown that much of what it requires to make sense out of its own viewpoints derives ultimately from the teaching of Scripture and thus tends to support the Biblical perspective more than its own. Such notions as the orderliness and knowability of the universe; the real significance of man as the caretaker of the world; the reliability of reason as an avenue toward

truth; and the nature of man as a responsible being are not inherent in the materialist worldview. They have been imported from the cumulative heritage and lingering effects of the Biblical consensus in which Western civilization and modern science have their roots. Even the growing conviction among paleontologists that life on earth appeared almost all at once and that decimations of whole populations of animals occurred relatively closely together and almost always in conditions of flooding hark back more to the teachings of the Bible than to the pioneers of evolutionary materialism. Christian leaders need to know how to recognize these areas of vulnerability and how to mount a response to them.

And, fourth, Christian leaders need to begin to alert, recruit, train, and enlist the entire Christian community in fighting the battle against the materialist apologetic. Every man, woman, and child in the evangelical community needs to be prepared for battle at his or her own level. Whether it is in the classroom, at the office, over afternoon coffee, at school board or PTA meetings, in reviews of textbooks, or in response to publications, the individual members of the Christian community need to stop looking to the experts alone to fight this battle. But if they are to become properly engaged, making the most of every opportunity, they will have to be trained and sent into battle with a certain degree of accountability that both encourages and rewards them in their individual skirmishes.

Finally, as a community we need to monitor the attacks of the materialist apologetic and to be prepared to respond wherever our adversary stands to further his devilish plans. Whether he mounts his claims in writing, in public, or on television, he needs to know that there are people who are prepared to stand up and challenge his heretofore unquestioned authority and to strike at his vulnerability with firmness and grace. What's more, when those who have thoughtlessly followed the teachings of materialism because they have never been led critically to analyze the evolutionary position come under the influence of a broad-based and persistent Christian counter-apologetic and begin to turn their backs on the materialist elite, then we will begin to see the kind of movement toward the truth of God that the Scriptures encourage us to look for in these latter days.

The challenge the materialist-science apologetic presents to evangelicals extends far beyond the classrooms of the nation's schools. We need to be prepared, and to prepare the people of God in the churches, to analyze, meet, and overcome this challenge wherever and whenever it raises its head. Δ

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# The Second Reformation of Scotland

## An Overview of Scottish Presbyterian History – Part Five

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**Charles I continued the state's battle against the Presbyterian church, yet, in the midst of these foreboding times, there prevailed extraordinary spiritual refreshing.**

*In the previous installment, Queen Mary had abdicated her throne (1567) to be filled by regents until her son James VI assumed it in 1587. Knox's spiritual successor, Andrew Melville, soon came into conflict with King James's absolutism. Tensions between James and the Presbyterians eased for a while following the re-establishment of Presbyterianism in Scotland (1592), but were soon ignited again when James ascended the English throne in 1603, thereafter exiling many leading Presbyterians (in-*

*cluding Melville) and re-imposing the rule of bishops. King James bequeathed his son Charles I a kingdom tensing for a fight.*

### A New Liturgy for Scotland

In 1625, Charles I assumed the throne of his father, James VI. Charles was like his father in many ways. Most importantly he shared his father's belief in the divine right of kings. Charles was a thorough-going Anglo-Catholic who despised the Puritans both religiously and politically. He was married to Henrietta Maria, daughter of Henry IV of France, who appears to have exercised tremendous influence upon her husband. She was a devout Roman Catholic and surrounded herself with Roman Catholic counselors concerned with their own schemes within the King's court.<sup>1</sup>

The Scottish people at first believed that the new king would be an improvement over his father, since James had created a sharp division between the people and the crown. Even though James believed he knew "the stomach" of the Scottish people (a phrase James used to tell Archbishop Laud that he understood what made the Scottish people tick), he was a despot who alienated the people through his circuitous dealings.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Burleigh, J.H.S., *A Church History of Scotland* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973) p. 210.

<sup>2</sup> Macpherson, Hector, *Scotland's Battle for Spiritual Independence* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1905) pp. 81-82.

In turn, Charles I wanted complete control of both the church and state, and this desire lead him, in his inaugural year 1625, to make one the most serious lapses of his reign. Charles I imposed the Act of Revocation. This act reclaimed for the crown all Church land given to the nobles since 1542. By this act Charles came into conflict with the Lords who held ancient church properties erected into temporal lordships and the nobles who now were suspicious of his every move.<sup>3</sup>

Charles I finally came to Scotland in 1635 to be crowned King of Scotland, nearly ten years after he had succeeded his father. The coronation was to take place at the Church of Holyrood. William Laud, the king's chief advisor for ecclesiastical affairs, accompanied the king to organize the ceremonial events. The city of Edinburgh was delighted over the series of events, and the king aimed to favor them for this response. At the prompting of a petition from the Archbishop of St. Andrews, Charles created a new bishopric of Edinburgh. Now Edinburgh became an episcopal city with its own bishop and St. Giles Church became a cathedral.<sup>4</sup>

As if this were not enough to raise the ire of the Scottish Presbyterians, Charles went on to push them even further. *The Book of Common Order* was distasteful to the King. So when many of the Bishops provided the king with a *Book of Canons* for his consideration, Charles passed this draft onto Laud asking him to revise it so that it would "be well fitted for Church government, and as near as conveniently may be to the Canons of the Church of England."<sup>5</sup> Laud's revision of the work was called *Canons and Constitution Ecclesiastical* and appeared in 1636. Charles approved it at once and ordained that it should be observed by clergy and all whom it concerned. These canons set forth an office of deacon and calls church ministers "presbyters," but there is no mention of elders, church sessions, presbyteries or a general assembly.

Even more, shortly after the new canons appeared, Laud under the direction of Charles, issued a book of common prayer. Though the text aimed to be the Scottish Book of Common Prayer, it was generally known as "Laud's Liturgy." Charles wanted the English prayer book accepted without change but was advised that a Scottish prayer book might win him some support.

Obviously, these actions did not please many in Scotland. Some Scots were willing to go along with these alterations as long as Charles would have them ratified by a General Assembly, but other believers resisted these alterations to the point of death. These who resisted were the spiritual heirs of Knox and Melville and would lead the Scottish people in what has come to be called the "Second Reformation of Scotland."

### Days of Spiritual Refreshing

The years of 1625-1638 were oppressively bleak, but they were also years in which the Spirit of God moved in amazing ways. Under the preaching and ministering

<sup>3</sup> Burleigh, *History*, p. 210.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 211-213.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 213.

of such men as David Dickson, John Livingstone, Robert Bruce, and Alexander Henderson, God blessed His people with extraordinary times of spiritual refreshing.

### David Dickson

David Dickson was ordained to the ministry and began to serve the Lord in the town of Irvine in 1618. It appears that Dickson was not settled in his mind at this time about the question of Episcopacy. When "The Articles of Perth"<sup>6</sup> were imposed by James VI, he began to seriously search the Scriptures on the matter. Through this study, he became convinced of Presbyterianism and when an illness brought him close to death, he began to preach openly against Episcopacy.<sup>7</sup> In January of 1622, Dickson was summoned to appear before the High Commission of Scotland for his teaching. After a trial, he was given the choice to recant Presbyterianism or be banished from his ministry at Irvine. The Archbishop of St. Andrews was so incensed at Dickson's attitude at the meeting that he rebuked Dickson: "These men will speak of humility and meekness, and talk of the Spirit of God, but ye are led by the spirit of the devil; there is more pride in you. I dare say, than in all the Bishops of Scotland."<sup>8</sup> What the Archbishop mistook as pride, however, was really Dickson's resolve and fortitude to serve Christ faithfully. He was ordered to be out of Irvine in twenty days.

From this time until July of 1623, Dickson was not allowed in Irvine. Due to the constant intercession of the Earl of Eglinton and the town of Irvine, Dickson was finally allowed to return to his pulpit until the King would rule otherwise. It was at this time that God's singular care was placed upon Dickson's ministry. Multitudes from all over Scotland came to Irvine to hear this man of God preach. In fact, so many were convicted and converted that the vintage of Irvine in Dickson's time was said to be nothing less than the gleanings of Ayr in Mr. Welch's time, where the Gospel triumphed in conviction, conversion, and confirmation.<sup>9</sup> Even more blessed than his Lord's day administrations was his week-day sermon in Irvine's market place. Satan tried to thwart this work by leading some into unbridled enthusiasm. Yet the Lord gave Dickson great wisdom and enabled him to withstand such unbridled enthusiasm and instead direct the revival so as to produce solid and serious Christianity among his listeners at Irvine.<sup>10</sup> Even under the persecution of Episcopacy and the King, Scottish Presbyterianism continued to flourish.

### John Livingstone

John Livingstone had been a Christian as long as he could remember. As a boy, he found that communion seasons were a special blessing to him. At his first communion, Livingstone writes that as he sat down at the table "there came such a trembling upon me that all my body shook, yet thereafter the fear departed, and I got

some comfort and assurance."<sup>11</sup> Livingstone was ordained in 1625 and almost immediately came under severe persecution, which required him to travel from place to place to work for the Savior. During this time he was invited to preach at many churches and was especially used to preach at communion services in Lanark, Irvine, Newmilns and Kinniel.<sup>12</sup>

Notably, in June of 1630 he was invited to proclaim God's Word at the communion services of the Kirk of Shotts. He had been there before and particularly liked the congregation. He was to preach at the Monday service following the Communion Sabbath. He had spent the night before with some fellow laborers in prayer asking for God's blessing, but when morning came, he believed he could not preach. He was so over-burdened with his own unworthiness and dread of the people that he wanted only to flee and be gone. Yet he could not desert his Master's call for he "durst not so far distrust God...."<sup>13</sup> He went to preach that morning and was powerfully anointed by the Holy Spirit as he taught from Exodus 36:25 — "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you." Livingstone preached that day for about more than an hour and claimed to have an unction Holy Spirit as he had never had before. In his own account he writes, "I was led on about one hour's time in one strain of exhortation and warning, with such liberty and melting of heart as I never had the like in publick all my life."<sup>14</sup> The windows of heaven had truly been opened. No less than five hundred persons were convicted and converted showing forth true change of life with real evangelical repentance.

The following Monday, he was to preach at Irvine but felt as if he had been so deserted by God that he decided to never preach again, but Dickson persuaded him otherwise, and the following Sabbath he once again was able to preach with freedom.<sup>15</sup> News travelled quickly about what had happened at the Kirk of Shotts. Almost immediately Livingstone was invited by Viscount Clanniboy to come to North Ireland and take a call to the Scottish mission of Killinchie. Livingstone took the call for about one year, until he was suspended, along with Robert Blair, for non-conformity.

### Robert Bruce

In 1587, Andrew Melville knew that the proper man to follow James Lawson in the pulpit of the Church of Edinburgh was Robert Bruce. The General Assembly agreed and forthwith initiated the ministry of one who would cause the rising and falling of many in Scotland. Robert Bruce would minister in the Church of Scotland until his death in 1631. During his life, he encountered both James VI and Charles I, who knew that this man was surely one to be seriously reckoned with. He was a man of public spirit and a heroic mind.<sup>16</sup> It was Robert Bruce who, for the Council of Regency in 1584, secured

<sup>6</sup> See *Antithesis*, Vol. I, Number 4, p. 13.

<sup>7</sup> Howie, J., *The Scots Worthies* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1775) p. 284.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.* p. 290.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* p. 291.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> Smellie, Alexander, *Men of the Covenant* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1975) p. 121.

<sup>12</sup> Howie, *Worthies*, p. 369.

<sup>13</sup> Smellie, *Covenant*, p. 121.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.* p. 122.

<sup>15</sup> Howie, *Worthies*, p. 370.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 144.



the vow of James VI to be a good husband and king. His greatest legacy to the church was his preaching ministry. Living through tumultuous times, he was called upon to be at the helm of the great master ship.

Bruce was a great man of prayer, and many admirers describe him as a faithful "wrestler" with God. People from all over Scotland would come so that this man of God could pray for them. It is even said that those who had incurable diseases were healed as a result of this man's praying for them.<sup>17</sup> At a point near the end of his life, Bruce prayed for the Scottish ministers, and a Mr. Wemyss of Lathocker reports "O how strange a man is this, for he knocked down the Spirit of God upon us all! This is said because Bruce in the time of that prayer, diverse times knocked with his fingers on the Table."<sup>18</sup>

In August of 1631 Bruce was very elderly and weak in body. At breakfast one morning having eaten his normal portion of eggs, he asked his daughter for more. As she went to prepare it, he called her to wait for his master was calling. After a short time of meditation he asked his daughter to get his Bible and open it to Romans 8. Having read the chapter he turned to his family and said "Now God be with you, my children; I have breakfasted with you, and shall now sup with my Lord Jesus Christ this night." He died shortly thereafter.

### Alexander Henderson

Robert Bruce was an Elijah to Scotland and in his passing God was pleased to raise another, Alexander Henderson, to take his place. Bruce knew this man and, in fact, had been the instrument in God's hand for Henderson's conversion. In 1615, the young Henderson was appointed as minister at Leuchars in the shire of Fife (this was a small village about six miles northeast of St. Andrews). He was an unconverted man and one who held to Episcopacy. The people of Leuchars did not want him to be their pastor. Robert Bruce had many times preached to these people and they had been soundly converted and did not want a hireling in their church. One morning when the young man was to arrive, the people locked all the doors so that he could not enter. The youth, annoyed and disgruntled, persisted and found an unlatched window by which to enter. Scarcely anyone came to hear him preach, though he still received his stipend anyway.

A while later news came that Robert Bruce would be preaching nearby at a communion service in the Church of Forgan. This young preacher decided to go and investigate as to why his congregation found this man so engaging. Henderson stole his way into the back of the church so as not to be seen. In a short time Robert Bruce came to the pulpit, and looking around the congregation, he hesitated to begin preaching. When Bruce finally began, he read his text, John 10:1. — "Verily,

I say unto you, he that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." This sermon hit young Henderson like a thunderbolt from heaven. The sermon was so searching and unsettling that Henderson attributes it to be his point of saving conversion. Thomas McCrie, the Scottish historian, writes "[h]e worshipped God and going away, reported that God was of a truth in those whose ways were so opposite to his own."<sup>19</sup> With a spiritual beginning similar to the Apostle Paul, and a mantle passed as spokesman for the Church of Scotland, Alexander Henderson would become "Chief of the Covenant."<sup>20</sup>

### The Second Reformation of Scotland

By 1607, King James VI had once again reversed the church from Presbyterianism to Episcopacy by refusing to call a General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and by forming a puppet parliament to carry out his wishes. When, in 1610, he felt that he had firm control, James finally called a General Assembly. This carefully orchestrated assembly fell right into line with the King's Episcopal wishes. The next General Assembly would not occur until 1616, after Alexander Henderson had been converted and espoused Presbyterian principles.

Henderson attended this assembly of 1616 as a representative of the Presbytery of St. Andrews. He was given opportunity to publicly declare his new allegiance to Presbyterianism, and the King now realized that he had a formidable opponent in this young man.

The subsequent assembly of 1618, held at Perth, was much more controversial since it, by means of the Articles of Perth, once again imposed degenerate (English) forms of worship into the Scottish church (as discussed in the previous installment in this series). These events inaugurated a struggle that would last for the next twenty years into the reign of Charles I.

Henderson was the leading spokesman for a minority group of Presbyterians at this assembly. As a result of his firm opposition and criticism of the Perth assembly, he and two others were charged with treason before the High Commission of St. Andrews. But because there was not enough evidence to convict these men of seditious acts, they were acquitted.

Some months later in St. Andrews, the Bishops and some preachers who refused to submit to the Perth articles held a debate. Henderson emerged as the chief spokesman of the group and vowed that he would not submit to the article because of his allegiance to King Jesus.

**Rutherford wrote to Henderson: "God hath called you to Christ's side, and the wind is now in Christ's face in the land; and seeing ye are with him, ye can not expect the lee-side or the sunny side of the brae."**

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Loane, Marcus L., *Makers of Puritan History* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980) p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

In 1621 James VI once again renewed his attack on all who opposed him, but this attack did not since he died four years later. Charles I, as we have seen, picked up where his father left off. This was especially true with regard to Henderson. In 1627 Charles I sought to demand that all ministers adhere to the Perth Articles. Henderson was unyielding, and at a conference in Edinburgh in 1627, he publicly came forward to stand for the truth of God's Word regarding this issue in the face of great mortal danger. Many at this time tried to get Henderson to take a pulpit at more influential churches in Scotland. Henderson refused to do so because of his great love for the people at Leuchars.

When, in 1635, Charles I and William Laud came to Scotland and tried to impose the new form of worship upon the Church of Scotland, it was evident that the day for peaceful change had passed. Henderson was ready for the occasion. The King had finally determined that on July 23, 1637 all Scottish congregations were to follow the Laudian order under penalty of death. The Scottish people assembled to withstand such an usurpation of authority. At St. Giles Cathedral in Edinburgh, the people filled the church to standing room only. When the new book was introduced, it is reported that one Jenny Geddes stood and flung her stool at the Bishop saying "Villain, dost thou says mass at my lug [ear]?"<sup>21</sup> The congregation bursted into an uproar and the war had begun.

Everyone looked to Henderson. Samuel Rutherford wrote to him at this time: "[a]s for your cause, my reverend and dearest brother, ye are the talk of the north and south; and looked to, so as if ye were all crystal glass. Your notes and dust would soon be proclaimed, and trumpets blown at your slips; but I know that ye have laid help upon One that is mighty....God hath called you to Christ's side, and the wind is now in Christ's face in the land; and seeing ye are with him, ye can not expect the lee-side or the sunny side of the brae....Let us pray for one another. He who hath made you a chosen arrow in His quiver and hide you in the hollow of His hand."<sup>22</sup>

Taking this exhortation to heart, Henderson, along with some leading men, sent a supplication to the King asking that the new liturgy be suspended. The King's reply was that all Presbyters in St. Andrews must buy and use the new liturgy within 15 days or suffer the consequences. Henderson openly refused saying he would buy the book but would not promise to it use in worship.

Henderson also filed a protest with the Privy Council to suspend the order because the book had not been approved by the General Assembly or the Scottish parliament. The Privy Council upheld his appeal and now Henderson would stand face to face with the King.

The King would not give into this "rebellious" Scotsman, and ordered, on October 17 1637, that all who refused to comply with the liturgy at once be found guilty of treason. In response, Henderson and his colleagues drafted a formal complaint and sent it to the Petitioners

of Scotland. Not only did they ask that the new liturgy be suspended but also that the Bishops who enforced it be tried for sedition by putting forth demands beyond their authority over the Scottish people. The Petitioners pressured the Privy Council to take further action to address the grievances. They did so by appointing four tables consisting of nobles, the gentry, ministers and the burgesses. Each table was to have four members for a total of sixteen.<sup>23</sup> The table of ministers consisted of David Dickson, Alexander Henderson, Archibald Warriston, and John Loudon.

The King was outraged by the acts of the Privy Council and declared that they were all traitors. Charles I also sent the Marquis of Hamilton as a commissioner to Scotland. He did this so as to give himself time to prepare for war north of the border.

Alexander knew he had to rally Scotland for the coming storm. He did this by calling for a renewal of the National Covenant. On February 25, a day of mourning was called for Scotland to lament their unfaithfulness to the original National Covenant. On the 27th, the National Covenant was presented to the people. February 28th was the day fixed for signing the National Covenant at Greyfriars Church, and on that day, multitudes of people assembled for hours to sign their names to the document, some even signing it in blood. The National Covenant was sent around Scotland so that all who desired to sign it could do so. It was then sent to the King to read, who when he received it called it a "damnable covenant" and refused to read it.<sup>24</sup>

The King did not have time to make war preparations as he had hoped — the Marquis of Hamilton had failed. Charles was now forced to call a General Assembly which was to meet at the Cathedral of Glasgow in November 1638. Henderson was elected Moderator. The Marquis of Hamilton called for the Assembly to adjourn in the King's name, but Henderson turned to the delegates to seek a vote, stating "all who are present, know how much power we allow to our sovereign in matters ecclesiastical."<sup>25</sup> The General Assembly voted to continue. The Glasgow Assembly reversed the work of all the General Assemblies since 1603. It also declared that the Episcopal form of Government was not consistent with the confessions of the Church of Scotland. It once again established Presbyterianism as the church government of Scotland and called for a complete reformation of the whole church in the realm. Scotland had once again been victorious. The Second Reformation was now underway. Alexander Henderson's parting words to the General Assembly, on December 20, 1638, were "[w]e have now cast down the walls of Jericho; let him that rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel the Bethelite."<sup>26</sup> Δ

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 35.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, p. 39.

<sup>21</sup> McFerters, J.C., *Sketches of the Covenanters* (Philadelphia: Second Church of the Covenanters, N.D.), pp. 77-78.

<sup>22</sup> Loane, *Makers*, p. 28.

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# The Biblical Antithesis in Education

## The enmity between Christian and non-Christian thought is central to the debate over public education.

Doug Wilson

One of the great ironies among modern evangelicals is the fact that many have higher and stricter standards for their children's babysitters than they do for their children's teachers. Is a babysitter needed? She should be a Christian, and a reliable one. She should be known to the family, or highly recommended by someone who is. And for what task? To keep Johnny

safe and dry until bedtime, and then to tuck him in.

But five years later, Johnny comes home from his first day of school. He bursts in the front door, full of news. His parents ask all kinds of questions. And one of them is this one: "Who is your teacher, Johnny?" The parents don't know the teacher's name. They don't know if the teacher is an atheist or a Southern Baptist. They don't know if she is a socialist or a conservative Republican. They don't know if she is lesbian or straight. And what is the teacher's task? Her task is to help them shape the way the child thinks about the world. Does God exist? If He exists, is His existence *relevant* to the classroom? And what is the nature of man? What is the purpose of society? How did man get here? Where should he go? How should he conduct himself on the way? None of these questions can be answered without certain worldview assumptions, and the parents in this example do not even know whether they share the worldview of their child's teacher.

There are two reasons why many parents have allowed this to happen. The first is that the government has become the guarantor of "quality" in teaching. If something is "licensed" or "accredited," it is easy to assume the quality is good. We forget that licensing also means control. The government has not yet taken on a licensing role with regard to babysitting or parenting; when it does, no doubt there will be some who acquiesce. But God has placed the responsibility in one place, and to move it to another for the sake of "quality-control" is abdication. The second reason is related to the first. Neutrality is impossible; worldviews in education are

unavoidable. Jesus eliminated neutrality in all areas when He said, "He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad" (Matt. 12:30).

About a century before anyone was listening, R.L. Dabney described the impossibility of neutrality in education this way:

The instructor has to teach history, cosmogony, psychology, ethics, the laws of nations. How can he do it without saying anything favorable or unfavorable about the beliefs of evangelical Christians, Catholics, Socinians, Deists, pantheists, materialists or fetish worshippers, who all claim equal rights under American institutions? His teaching will indeed be the play of Hamlet, with the part of Hamlet omitted.<sup>1</sup>

Concerning the question of origins, he asked if a scientist could give the "...genesis of earth and man, without indicating whether Moses or Huxley is his prophet?"<sup>2</sup> The answer of course is that directionless, nonaligned education is by definition impossible. Certain worldview assumptions must always be made. They will either be based on biblical truth, or they will not. A certain direction must be chosen. It will either be the way God says to go, or it will not. There is no neutrality. There is a bumpersticker which says, "Everybody has got to be somewhere!" Applied to geographical location, we have a tautological joke. But if we apply it to worldviews in education, we have a profound truth — so profound that many miss it. Children are taught by missionaries of a rival faith, and some parents continue to slumber.

I once gave a presentation on Christian education to a group of parents. One of the parents took strong exception to the position I presented, and told how she had communicated her feelings about the celebration of Halloween at the public school where her child attended. She apparently considered this to be evidence that Christian parents can make a difference in the public schools. While many are certainly trying, I feel the effort is misguided. Such attempts at "reform" are almost always unsuccessful, and are a good modern example of straining at gnats and swallowing camels. Does it make sense to object to the *inclusion* of witches and goblins one day a year, and not object to the *exclusion* of God the rest of the year?

### The Difference God Makes

I was once instructing our seventh grade Bible class when I was interrupted by an objection from one of the boys in the class. "But that's a universal statement!" It turns out that in the previous science class the students had been taught about universal statements, and this student regarded with suspicion the appearance of one in Bible class. The student was attempting to apply in one class what he had learned in another. I

<sup>1</sup> R.L. Dabney, *On Secular Education* (Moscow, Idaho: Ransom Press, 1989), p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

answered the objection in class, but when the class was over, I took the student aside and praised him for attempting the application. Obviously, educators want to get the students to think in class. But the real goal should be to get them to think in the hallways *between* classes as well.

God is the Light in which we see and understand everything else. Without Him, the universe is a fragmented pile of incomprehensible particulars. Indeed, the universe can no longer be understood as a universe; it has become a multiverse. Christian education must therefore present all subjects as parts of an integrated whole with the Scriptures at the center. Without this integration, the curriculum will be nothing more than a dumping ground for unrelated facts. When God is acknowledged, all knowledge coheres. It is obvious that all aspects of this coherence cannot be known to us — we are finite creatures. But as the late Francis Schaeffer would put it, while our knowledge cannot be exhaustive, we can grasp what is true. We can understand that God knows what we do not, and therefore, the universe is unified *in principle*. Where God is not acknowledged, the pursuit of knowledge is just “one damn thing after another,” and the ultimate exercise in futility. The French existentialist philosopher Sartre understood this when he said somewhere that without an infinite reference point, all finite points are absurd.

Education is a completely religious endeavor. It is impossible to impart knowledge to students without building on religious presuppositions. Education is built on the foundation of the instructor's worldview (and the worldview of those who developed the curriculum). It is a myth that education can be non-religious — that is, that education can go on in a vacuum which deliberately chooses to exclude the basic questions about life. It is not possible to separate religious values from education. This is because all the fundamental questions of education require religious answers. Learning to read and write is simply the process of acquiring tools to enable us to ask and answer such questions.

Public education can approach this problem in one of two ways. The first is to refuse to address such questions. We have already seen that such an attempt is impossible. If any information is transferred at all, it will assume the truth of certain presuppositions. Every subject, every truth, bears some relationship to God.

**Lewis describes the power of the textbook writers, which “depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is ‘doing’ his ‘English prep’ and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are all at stake.”**

Every subject will be taught from a standpoint of submission or hostility to Him. The second alternative is the hidden agenda. The agenda is implemented when the state gives religious answers to the fundamental questions but hides the fact that it is doing so.<sup>3</sup> The religion is humanistic, and is taught with the power of the state behind it. Thus, a church has been established by law, but it is not a Christian church. Without realizing it, many Christian parents are requiring their children to attend.

In contrast to this, the apostle Paul teaches us that every thought is to be made captive to Christ (II Cor. 10:4-5). But how is this to be done, and how is this discipline of mind to be passed on to our children? There is no way to do it without a total teaching environment in submission to the Word of God. We cannot bring every thought captive by allowing some thoughts to aspire to autonomy. There is so much to learn about the biblical worldview that it is impossible to accomplish it with Sunday School once a week, or even with a daily devotional instruction in the home. Such daily instruction is rare to begin with, and even where it does exist it is not possible to undo in such a short time (15 minutes? 1 hour?) what took many hours to accomplish earlier that day.

### **Pious Propaganda?**

Teaching students to think in terms of a fixed reference point is not the same thing as indoctrination. It is more than devout propaganda. I was once speaking to a journalism class at Washington State University, when one of the students asked, rather pointedly, whether Christian education was anything more than fundamentalist brainwashing.<sup>4</sup> He didn't use those words, but the point was clear. I answered him by using the creation/evolution controversy as an example. I pointed out that the only school in our town where a student could receive accurate information about *both* sides of the debate was our school. Kids in the public schools are not taught what creationists believe, or what their supporting arguments are.

It is true that at our own school, Logos School, as in most Christian schools, we teach that creation is a fact. But it is that fixed reference point which enables us to present the arguments of our opponents as accurately as we can. We believe the Christian position can be honestly defended and are not afraid of our kids hearing what the other side has to say. For example, our science teacher once brought in a professor from the University of Idaho and gave him two class periods to

<sup>3</sup>The hidden humanist agenda in the public schools is a *transitional* tactic. Once power is consolidated, this agenda becomes overt. Thus, the current conflicts in the public schools were not caused by humanists attempting to enter the school system, they came about when the long-present humanism became obvious.

<sup>4</sup>The charge of brainwashing can also be answered by saying our brains are usually pretty dirty and could use a little scrub.

present the arguments for evolution to our ninth grade science class. A fixed reference point does not blind Christians to the existence of objections; it enables Christians to answer them.

I also pointed out to my questioner that in our Bible classes the students frequently challenge or question the Christian faith. This happens regularly, and when it does, the students are encouraged and their questions are answered. As iron sharpens iron, so students and teachers sharpen one another (Pr. 27:17). The students are taught to think in terms of the Christian faith. This is what makes it possible for them to *think at all*. It is not propagandizing when teachers give their students somewhere to stand. Relativism has only the appearance of openness; in the end, it always frustrates the one who wants to acquire knowledge.

There are some who realize how the public schools are failing, and yet do not recognize that ultimately the cause of the failure is theological. This causes them to dismiss Christian education as mere indoctrination. One example is Richard Mitchell, a trenchant and hilarious critic of what passes for education in the public schools today. In spite of his opposition to the type of "education" provided by government schools, Mitchell refuses to regard private Christian schools as a legitimate alternative. He admits they do a better job teaching the "basics" and yet he opposes their commitment to "a certain ideology." In his words, "No school governed by ideology — any ideology whatsoever — can

of the first rank. One could similarly argue that because counterfeit money exists, real money does not. As Samuel Rutherford used to say, "It followeth no way."<sup>7</sup>

Christians believe that Christ has been given a name that is above every name. "And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence" (Col. 1:17-18).<sup>8</sup> We are not to limit the light of Christ to our understanding of Christ. We must understand the world in the light of Christ; He is the light in which we see truth. Christians cannot understand the world in a Biblical way without reference to Jesus Christ. In him all things hold together (Col. 1:15-18). Without this understanding, "Christian education" is no longer *Christian*; it is little more than a baptized secularism. It is not enough to take the curricula of the government schools, add prayer and a Bible class, and claim the result is somehow Christian.

Humanistic education seeks to make man the defining principle for all knowledge. But man is too weak a glue to hold everything together. In himself, he cannot provide this integrating principle. In contrast, educators who are truly Christian understand that Christ should be acknowledged as having the supremacy. This means that every fact, every truth, must be understood in that light. History, art, music, mathematics, etc. must all be taught in the light of God's existence, and His revelation of Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ. Because

**Relativism has only the appearance of openness; in the end, it always frustrates the one who wants to acquire knowledge.**

afford to educate its students; it can only indoctrinate and train them. In this respect there is no important difference between the 'Christian' schools and the government's schools...."<sup>5</sup>

Later he defines the fruit of education as "a mind raised up in the habit of literacy and skill (it is one and the same thing of language and thought)."<sup>6</sup> But from a biblical perspective, this sort of definition is inadequate; what good does it do to advocate training in thought and then neglect the role of thought? As the open mouth receives food, so the open, reasoning mind should close on truth. In a world without truth, skill in thinking is a useless skill. What good is thirst without water, or hunger without food? In the same way, reasoning skills must lead to truth. Now it is true that some who claim to hold to Christian truth are unreasoning ideologues. But to argue from that fact to the position that all commitment to truth (by schools or individuals) must be unreasoning ideology is to be guilty of a *non sequitur*

the Scriptures occupy a central place in this revelation, they must also occupy a critical role in Christian education.

<sup>7</sup> Another problem in Mitchell's book is equally glaring. At one point the author quotes a William Seawell, a professor at the University of Virginia. Mr. Seawell stated, "Each child belongs to the state" (p. 272). This upset Mr. Mitchell, as well it should. A few pages later Mr. Mitchell writes, "To whom then will he turn in the great cause of excellence and reform of schooling? Plato? Jefferson? To anyone who understands education as the mind's strong defense against manipulation and flattery" (p. 277).

Those readers who follow Mr. Mitchell's advice about thinking should notice something here. On the question of children and the state, Plato and Mr. Seawell were kindred spirits. Why does Mr. Mitchell applaud the one and attack the other? Why does he put Plato and Jefferson together? They both had great minds, and they are both dead, and that is about the extent of the similarity.

Education is more than being equipped to read Plato, J.S. Mill or Jefferson. It involves teaching students to think about what they read. But thinking should include determining whether the author in question was right or wrong, and that involves commitment to a standard of truth.

<sup>8</sup> "It is this King, who, in the New Testament, is the God

<sup>5</sup> Richard Mitchell, *The Leaning Tower of Babel* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1984), p. 95.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.



This is not to say the Bible was meant to be read as a science or mathematics text.<sup>9</sup> It was not. It does, however, provide a framework for understanding these so-called "secular" subjects. Without such a framework for understanding, all subjects will ultimately degenerate into chaotic absurdity — with each subject a pile of facts unto itself.<sup>10</sup> Again, Dabney: "Every line of true knowledge must find its completeness as it converges on God, just as every beam of daylight leads the eye to the sun. If religion is excluded from our study, every process of thought will be arrested before it reaches its proper goal. The structure of thought must remain a truncated cone, with its proper apex lacking."<sup>11</sup>

The Christian educator's job is not to require the students to spend all their time gazing at the sun. Rather, we want them to examine everything else in the light the sun provides. It would be invincible folly to try to blacken the sun in order to be able to study the world around us "objectively." Because all truth comes from God, the universe is coherent. Without God, particulars have no relationship to other particulars. Each subject has no relationship to any other subject. Christian educators must reject this understanding of the universe as a multiverse; the world is more than an infinite array of absurd "facts." The fragmentation of knowledge must therefore be avoided. History bears a relation to English, and biology a relation to philosophy; they all unite in the queen of the sciences, theology.<sup>12</sup>

J. Gresham Machen, a leader in the fight against theological liberalism earlier this century, stated it this way: "It is this profound Christian permeation of every human activity, no matter how secular the world may regard it as being, which is brought about by the Christian school and the Christian school alone."<sup>13</sup> This is a strong claim, but Machen goes on to back it up. "A Christian boy or girl can learn mathematics, for example, from a teacher who is not a Christian; and truth is truth however learned. But while truth is truth however learned, the bearing of truth, the meaning of

truth, the purpose of truth, even in the sphere of mathematics, seem entirely different to the Christian from that which they seem to the non-Christian; and that is why a truly Christian education is possible only when Christian conviction underlies not a part, but all, of the curriculum of the school."<sup>14</sup>

As Machen states, truth is truth however learned. It is possible to teach students to balance their checkbooks without any reference to God. But this is not education; it is merely mental dexterity. Students are not being taught to think *thoroughly*. They are merely being trained to function in a particular way. When a student is taught to *think*, he will relate what he learns in one class to the information offered in another. But he can only do this when he has an integrating principle — something that will tie all the subjects together.

## Trousered Apes

C.S. Lewis wrote a provocative analysis of modern education entitled *The Abolition of Man*. The subtitle of the book is *Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools*. In the book, Lewis argues that what occurs in elementary instruction has a profound impact, whether or not that impact is recognized. He begins the book thus: "I doubt whether we are sufficiently attentive to the importance of elementary text-books."<sup>15</sup> Many Christians today would agree with his statement, but only because their children are being washed away in a flood of humanistic, anti-biblical teaching.<sup>16</sup> But when Lewis made the point, that flood was only a cloud the size of a man's fist.

It is a mistake to assume that the unbiblical nature of the curriculum must be *overt* before Christians oppose it. If we come to understand that a man's life is unified in his theology, whatever that theology is, then we will not be surprised to see what he affirms in one area surface in another. Lewis describes the power of the textbook writers, which "depends on the fact that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is 'doing' his 'English prep' and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are all at stake. It is not a theory they put into his mind, but an assumption, which ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all."<sup>17</sup> In other words, implicit assumptions picked up in English have an effect, years later, in a completely different area. The result will ultimately be "trousered apes," as Lewis puts it; men who look like men, but who have been robbed of an important part of their humanity. This is because God made the world, and men must

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and Father of Jesus Christ, who directs and guides all things toward the telos which he has determined for creation. And this telos is the uniting of all things in Jesus Christ, 'things in heaven and things on earth' (Eph. 1:10; see also Rom. 8:18-25; 11:36)." Benjamin Wirt Farley, *The Providence of God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), pp. 43-44.

<sup>9</sup> We must be careful with statements like this, however. There are many who state that the Bible is not a textbook of this or that, meaning that the Bible is unreliable at whatever point is under discussion. But while the Bible is not a history "text," all of its history is accurate. While it is not a science "text," it contains nothing in conflict with science.

<sup>10</sup> It would be easy to dismiss the charge of chaos in the curriculum as an overstatement. But the intellectual world is in a state of humanistic anarchy, and that anarchy is marching steadily toward kindergarten.

<sup>11</sup> Dabney, *Secular Education*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>12</sup> An understanding of theology as the "queen of the sciences" is more than just a pious truism, or a throwback to a more naive "age of faith." Before the intellectual world was shattered into its current fragments, theology was considered the queen of the sciences for a reason.

<sup>13</sup> J. Gresham Machen, *Education, Christianity, and the State* (Jefferson, Md.: Trinity Foundation, 1987), p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1947), p. 13.

<sup>16</sup> See Paul Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Ann Arbor: Servant Books, 1986), p. 4. When Lewis wrote *The Abolition of Man*, he was prophesying that no good would come of teaching which neglected objective values. When Vitz cited Lewis, the "no good" had already come, seen, and conquered.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

have a unifying principle even if their theology denies that one exists. Men must live as God made them, and not as they believe themselves to have evolved. Those with a fragmented worldview do not live in a vacuum; rather, in God they live and move, and have their being (Acts 17:28). Because they deny Him, their application of any unifying principle must be inconsistent with itself, and a cause of constant philosophical frustration. Nevertheless, what is learned is still applied, and the subjectivist assumption picked up as a child in English has its destructive effect.

And what was it that alarmed Lewis about the direction education was taking? His critique was prompted by two textbook writers who had recounted the story of Coleridge at the waterfall. Coleridge had overheard two tourists respond in two different ways; he had mentally applauded the one who said the waterfall was "sublime," and rejected with disgust the response of the other, who said it was "pretty." To this, the textbook writers commented, in contrast to Coleridge, that when we say something is sublime, we are saying nothing more than that we have sublime feelings. "We appear to be saying something very important about something; and actually we are only saying something about our own feelings."<sup>18</sup> Lewis describes what is happening here as "momentous," and thought the error of such subjectivism important enough to dedicate a book to the subject.

Lewis makes the same warning about hidden agendas in his response to another textbook writer. "That is their day's lesson in English, though of English they have learned nothing. Another little portion of the human heritage has been quietly taken from them before they were old enough to understand."<sup>19</sup> Richard Weaver, who taught English at the University of Chicago, also taught us that ideas have consequences.<sup>20</sup> We see now that because ideas are inter-related, they can have consequences in the most unexpected places.

### Our Golden Calves

In considering the necessity of a biblical integrating principle, there is an instructive passage in 1 Kings 12. The nation of Israel had split into two king-

doms, Judah and Israel. The king of Israel, Jeroboam, was concerned that if his people continued to travel south to Jerusalem to worship at the Temple, then their loyalty would ultimately revert to the king of Judah.

"And Jeroboam said in his heart, 'Now the kingdom may return to the house of David: if these people go up to offer sacrifices in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then the heart of this people will turn back to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah, and they will kill me and go back to Rehoboam king of Judah.' Therefore the king took counsel and made two calves of gold, and said to the people, 'It is too much for you to go up to

Jerusalem. Here are your gods, O Israel, which brought you up from the land of Egypt.' And he set up one in Bethel, and the other he put in Dan. Now this thing became a sin, for the people went to worship before the one as far as Dan" (1 Kings 12: 26-30).

Thousands of years before George Orwell, Jeroboam discovered the memory hole. If the facts of history conflict with the current agenda, then so much the worse for the facts of history. Jehovah God brought Israel out of Egypt with an outstretched arm. This historical fact was inconvenient for Jeroboam. The solution? Make some golden calves and *rewrite the history curriculum*. Notice, however, that this rewriting depends upon something else for its success. It depends upon an ignorance among the people of what really happened.

Jeroboam can get away with his lie because the people have not been taught the truth. But in what area is their understanding of the truth lacking?

The people were being enticed into idolatry. The application of the lie was in the field of religion and theology. They were being taught to bow down in worship to golden calves. But the refutation of this lie was *in the field of history*. "What really happened when our fathers came out of Egypt, and how do we know?" In order for the people to resist the lie, they had to understand that different fields of knowledge are connected, and that the connection was in the God of Abraham. Does history have a theological meaning? Is there any purpose to it? Do Christians believe that God acts in history?<sup>21</sup> A little closer to home, are there any facts in American history that are inconvenient to our

**Education is a completely religious endeavor. It is impossible to impart knowledge to students without building on religious presuppositions.**

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Weaver, *Ideas Have Consequences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).

<sup>21</sup> A cautionary note about "divine purposes" is needed here. As a firm believer in God's exhaustive sovereignty, I believe there is a divine purpose in *all* history. But apart from any revelation from God, we must be extremely cautious about our statements as to what that purpose is. Our lives are mist (Jas. 4: 13-16), and arrogant pronouncements about God's purposes in history are unbecoming. See also Dt. 29:29.

modern Jeroboams? When America was founded it was a Christian republic. This is an historical fact which is not widely accepted.<sup>22</sup> Does it make any difference whether Jeroboam or Moses writes the curriculum? Does it make any difference whether the teacher tells our children that Jerusalem is too far away, and that these are the gods who delivered us?

Suppose for a moment in ancient Israel there was a school run by the priests who served these golden calves. Suppose further that some Israelite worshippers of the true God thought that it would be possible to send their children there to receive a "neutral" education, and they would then "unteach" whatever bad doctrine came with it. This approach reveals an attitude which either trivializes the difference God makes, or overestimates its own ability to undo the damage. Now the critic may feel that this skirts the issue. "Yes, yes," he says, "I believe that every thought should be made captive to Christ, but I do not believe that  $2 + 2 = 4$  is part of the conflict between light and darkness. What difference could it make who teaches neutral subjects like mathematics?  $2 + 2 = 4$  is true whether you are a Christian or a humanist." Not quite. Even here the impossibility of neutrality can be clearly seen. How do we know that  $2 + 2 = 4$ ? Are we empiricists or rationalists? Are 2 and 4 mere linguistic conventions? Is our knowledge *a priori* or *a posteriori*? Do we remember this information from a previous life as Plato taught? Is there any epistemological foundation for mathematics?<sup>23</sup>

On a more practical level, should a teacher of young children drill them in their math tables, or should she simply seek to get them to understand the concept? Do these different teaching methodologies reflect differences in worldview? The answer is: they certainly do. At Logos, we require that the children memorize quite a bit of material, and that involves work — productive work with lasting value. We require this because of our biblical view of work. I have seen one result of this type of hard work around our dinner table. My children can beat me in answering questions like, "What is 8 times 7?" They have memorized their tables and I didn't! They are receiving a much better education than I received. Their learning of math is built on a different foundation than mine was, and it shows. Those who think that neutrality in mathematics is possible need to think again. To be sure, some of these questions will not be raised explicitly when children are learning how to add or multiply. But this does not mean that certain answers to these questions are absent from the classroom.

We can return to history for some more examples of how subjects must be tied together with this integrating principle. The Declaration of Independence was signed in 1776. Surely *that* is a bald historical fact, whether or not the teacher is a Christian. Yes, but did that action by the colonists begin a Revolution, or a War for Independence? A revolution occurs when the government established by God is toppled, there are mobs in the

streets, and lawful authority is rejected.<sup>24</sup> This did occur in the French Revolution, but not here. John Eidsmoe describes our War for Independence this way:

"Many in Britain, including Edmund Burke, recognized the validity of the colonist's case...At Independence Hall on July 4, 1776, they did not rebel against England; they simply declared that which was already an established fact — their independence."<sup>25</sup>

What role did the Christian faith play in this War for Independence? One Englishman recognized that role when he said "cousin America has run off with a Presbyterian parson." What relationship did the Great Awakening, and its greatest preacher, George Whitefield, have to the War for Independence?<sup>26</sup> And was it a mere coincidence that all but one of George Washington's colonels at Yorktown were Presbyterian elders? The answer of course is that Christianity in America at that time was very influential (as a result of the Great Awakening a few years before), and the Christian church supplied great support during the war.

These examples from history and mathematics are representative. There is no subject where similar questions cannot be raised, and all educators must assume the truth of certain answers to these questions.<sup>27</sup> They may do so consciously or unconsciously, explicitly or implicitly, but they must do so. And when they do, they have taken a side. They cannot be neutral. The truths of each subject are related to God in some way, and that relationship is understood in the light of the teacher's worldview. But if the education is Christian, not only will each subject bear this relationship to the God of the Bible, each subject will also be firmly related to every other subject. Because the Christian worldview is based on the Scriptures, the students can be given a unified education. That unity is only possible because of the centrality of the Scriptures in the educational process. Without that centrality, true education will wither and die. With it, all subjects will be understood and more importantly, they will be understood as parts of an integrated whole. Δ

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<sup>24</sup> Revolutions occur in violation of the Biblical instruction about civil authority in Rom. 13:1-7.

<sup>25</sup> John Eidsmoe, *God and Caesar* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1984), p. 35.

<sup>26</sup> See Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield*, Vols. 1&2 (Westchester, Ill.: Cornerstone Books, 1970). While reading this magnificent biography, I came to the conclusion that it would not be too far off to consider a second G.W. the father of our country as well (in a non-political sense). I mentioned this opinion about Whitefield to a student who was about to graduate from the university with a degree in history, and he said, "Who?"

<sup>27</sup> My wife teaches American Literature to our 10th grade. For just one more example of the importance of worldviews in education, the impact of evolutionary thinking on writers like Jack London was profound. My wife is able to communicate how important ideas are in the study of literature; to read literature as "mere literature," without regard to the worldview of the author, destroys the possibility of understanding it.

<sup>22</sup> In conservative Christian circles, America's Christian origin is often thoughtlessly accepted.

<sup>23</sup> Vern Poythress in Gary North, ed., *Foundations of Christian Scholarship* (Vallecito, Ca.: Ross House Books, 1979), pp. 159-188.

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# The International Monetary Fund: Pouring More Good Money After Bad

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**The IMF's attempt to fashion a global solution to the debt crisis primarily serves to fund regimes that are responsible for impoverishing their people.**

**Doug Bandow**

Michael Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), wants to help the world's poor. How? By doubling his organization's resources. At the annual World Bank-IMF meeting last fall he declared that hiking the IMF's capital from \$120 billion to \$240 billion would be "the cheapest way for taxpayers in the richer countries to come to the aid of the poor." If the U.S. and

other member countries were stingy and refused to go along with such a big increase, he warned, the IMF would have to borrow money to meet its needs and "that would be a pity."

For more than four decades the international bureaucrats at the World Bank and the IMF have been proclaiming their commitment to international growth and development. Yet the result of their lending is massive impoverishment and indebtedness around the globe. The money of Western taxpayers has gone to fatten the bank accounts of foreign rulers, pacify local interest groups, expand bloated bureaucracies, and underwrite projects whose only purpose is to inflate national egos. Even what were once thought to be the best of loan programs — roads, factories, and docks — are deteriorating and bleeding poor nations dry.

The World Bank, as "America's" institution (by tradition, the U.S. chooses the Bank president), has always received more press attention than the Fund. In contrast, the IMF, whose Executive Director is picked

by the European nations, has eschewed press attention. Although it has the distinction of being the only international organization that has regularly sparked riots in foreign capitals, it has kept a low profile in Washington.

Except when asking for money — In 1982 the IMF wanted a quota increase and it had to run a political gauntlet ranging from the Competitive Enterprise Institute on the right to several Naderite groups on the left. Only with strong support from the supposedly conservative Reagan administration did the House narrowly pass the funding measure, after which the IMF quietly faded back into the background.

The IMF is now making news again, however. Although its \$120 billion pool of gold currencies would hardly seem inadequate for worthwhile lending to the Third World nations that can't pay back their current loans, Camdessus wants to increase the Fund's activities. In particular, the organization wants to greatly expand lending to Eastern Europe; the IMF signed a \$710 million loan agreement with Poland last December, for instance. Another reason the Fund wants more money is that the IMF, like commercial banks, is having trouble collecting on its past loans. As of 1989 total arrears were \$3.6 billion, up more than 50 percent over the preceding year. Under these circumstances most people would suggest increased prudence in extending new credit, but an independent international bureaucracy able to tap the wallets of taxpayers around the globe sees the solution quite differently: increase lending.

The IMF was created as part of the Bretton Woods system at the close of World War II to help nations suffering balance of payments difficulties. When Richard Nixon closed what was left of the gold window in 1971, the original function of the IMF disappeared, but that had no impact on the organization's lending. Indeed, the IMF soon ended up providing more credit than ever before — the new IMF loans increased nearly sixfold from 1973 to 1974. Total outstanding credit went from about \$1.3 billion in 1973 to \$45 billion in 1985.

What does the IMF do with its money? In contrast to the World Bank, the Fund does not back individual projects, such as a power plant or urban redevelopment program. Instead, the IMF makes loans to governments, theoretically to assist them in promoting overall economic development. The Fund imposes a variety of policy conditions on borrowers that are supposed to improve the borrowers' economic performance and ensure that loans are paid back.

Once the World Bank began its massive expansions of the 1970s, the IMF's only plausible justification for existence was that it was the sole international institution concerned with borrowers' economic policies. By the mid-1980s, however, the Bank was providing billions annually in so-called structural adjustment loans and the Fund lost its last *raison d'être*. Not only does the Bank lend more than the IMF every year, but it uses much of its resources for the same purposes.

Unfortunately, the World Bank has achieved little with its annual lending in excess of \$20 billion,

and the IMF is equally ineffectual. For the Fund has had no more success in promoting real market-oriented policy reform than has the Bank. Instead, all the IMF has done is create yet another permanent subsidy for corrupt rulers of statist regimes, irrespective of the destructiveness of their policies.

The best test of the effectiveness of the IMF is whether any troubled developing country has ever "graduated" because of its Fund loan program. Alas, success stories seem nonexistent. South Korea has collected IMF loans, but it began using the Fund credit only in 1974, after that nation's economic miracle was underway. New Zealand and Great Britain have both borrowed on occasion, but they industrialized long before there even was an IMF.

In contrast, the Fund has been subsidizing the world's economic basket cases for years, without apparent effect. Since 1959, Egypt has never once been off the IMF dole. Ghana took its first loan in 1962 and wasn't a borrower for just three of the succeeding 27 years. India was one of the IMF's first customers and, aside for short intervals, has been on the IMF programs for more than 40 years.

Mali has been an IMF borrower for more than 25 years. Since 1959, the Sudan has owed the Fund for all but two years. Bangladesh, Uganda, Zaire, and Zambia all started borrowing in the early 1970s and have yet to stop. IMF loans to Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Peru, and Uruguay have helped turn those nations into permanent debtors without doing anything to solve their economic ills.

There are several problems with IMF lending. First, the IMF has often focused on narrow accounting data while ignoring the broad policies that have retarded development. As a result, the Fund's advice has often had perverse consequences. As a condition for a loan, the IMF will, for instance, demand that a nation reduce its current account deficit — so the borrower restricts imports. Insistence that a country cut its budget deficit may cause the government to raise taxes, slowing growth. (As Argentina moves toward more market-oriented policies, the IMF is demanding that the Menem administration increase the Value Added Tax, for instance.) Even where the budget deficit does not actually grow as the economy shrinks, the Fund has succeeded in reducing the budget deficit only by reinforcing the very borrower policies that block growth.

Moreover, the IMF, like the World Bank, does little to enforce its conditions. A country will violate its

agreement with the Fund, the organization will suspend the loan, and then the two will negotiate a new agreement. Money will start to flow again, the borrower will violate the new conditions, the IMF will hold up payments, the loan will be renegotiated, and the process will begin anew. How else can one explain continued lending to Brazil throughout the 1980s, 27 years of credit for Zaire, decades of assistance to India, and so on? At times it would appear that the more perverse the policies, the more generous the IMF.

Indeed, India borrowed prodigiously throughout the 1950s and 1960s as it was pursuing a Soviet-style industrialization program. The Mexican government was destroying its economy in the 1970s even as it was a regular IMF customer. Kenya, which borrowed roughly \$130 million in 1988 and owed more than \$380

million total at the end of last year is currently building a 60 story, \$200 million office building — complete with a larger-than-life statue of President Daniel arap Moi — in Nairobi. Shortly after its Marxist revolution, Ethiopia began borrowing from the Fund; yet it was the government's collectivization of agriculture that dramatically worsened the famine during the mid-1980s.

The loans to Ethiopia exhibit another damning aspect of IMF lending. The Fund underwrites any government, however venal and brutal. Naturally, the loans are not earmarked for repression. But the IMF extends credit directly to governments and money is fungible. Whether Ethiopia took its IMF cash and directly bought bombs for use against Eritrean rebels or shifted its accounts around in Addis Ababa first makes no real difference: in

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either case, the Fund was an accomplice to murder. Another good IMF customer was Romania, which finally paid off its debts in 1988 as part of Nicolae Ceausescu's autarchic policies. China owed the Fund \$600 million as of the end of last year; in January, the IMF held a seminar on monetary policy in Beijing. Burma, Pinochet's Chile, Laos, Nicaragua under Somoza and the Sandinistas, South Africa, Syria, Vietnam, Zaire — the Fund has rarely met a dictatorship it didn't like.

There is an even more insidious problem with the IMF lending. Countries such as Bangladesh, China, Mexico, Tanzania, and Vietnam have all moved unsteadily towards more market-oriented policies because they have felt the consequences of disastrous economic failure. For years they operated money-losing enterprises and bloated public bureaucracies and manipulated money, credit, trade, and prices for



the benefit of well-connected elites. Foreign money helped cover the resulting financial losses and sustain their economies, pushing off the day of reckoning. More loans and aid today, by reducing the pain of continuing bad policies, will only retard the adjustment process. Unfortunately, economic reform is politically painful, but it is also unavoidable. More IMF lending will only drag out the agony.

This is not to ignore the seriousness of the international debt-crisis, with Third World states owing roughly \$1.3 trillion to Western governments, multilateral institutions, and banks. The problem, however, obviously is not inadequate lending. Rather, much of the earlier loans have been wasted. Once borrowers have adopted the sort of reforms that will allow capital to be used productively in their nations, foreign credit and investment will flow in naturally. Until then, additional money will only be wasted.

In the meantime, U.S. officials should give up trying to fashion a global solution to the debt crisis. Countries and banks should be left to negotiate together; selective write-downs, extensions, and debt-equity swaps should be adapted to the countries involved. And Congress should reject any funding increase for the IMF (last fall, the Bush Administration

agreed to a 50 percent capital hike), World Bank, or other international financial institutions.

Michael Camdessus insists that increasing his organization's budget is the most effective way for the rich in the West to help the world's poor. But the poor are rarely in attendance at the lavish bank receptions that mark the annual World Bank-IMF meetings. Indeed, it is the one time of the year when Washington finds itself short of limousines, and luxury hotels are almost continuously gridlocked as finance ministers and bankers criss-cross the city.

What the world's poor really need are governments that no longer strangle and loot their economies. And as long as the IMF helps fund the regimes that are responsible for impoverishing their people, it will remain a large part of the problem. Δ

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# Chesterton Reformed: A Protestant Interpretation

**What is it in  
G.K. Chesterton's  
work that makes  
it so appealing,  
even to  
Protestants?  
Perhaps it is his  
evident  
Protestant  
streaks.**

**James Sauer**

I've got a problem with Chesterton. The problem is that I think he is a wonderful, wise, witty, and pious man; after reading his works, I never leave the page without feeling edified. Then what's the problem? Perhaps, the problem, if it is a problem, isn't in Chesterton, but in me. For I am a Protestant; but not just any Protestant. I am an American Evangelical Protestant. But there's more. I am a Conservative, Capitalistic, Bible thumping

American Evangelical Protestant. And hold on to your seats folks, just when you thought it couldn't get any worse; I must confess, I am also a Calvinist. We all have our crosses to bear. Anyone who is familiar with the writings of Chesterton will see the great irony in my situation.

I can only ask you not to blame me for this state of affairs, I didn't choose to be elected; it was irresistible grace. I was predestined for Presbyterianism. But since I have received this unmerited favor of God, I might as well enjoy it. I can only thank my Sovereign Maker for his predestination. Not only did he choose me to be among his chosen people, but he also destined me to be among that other elect who have had the privilege of meeting through literature the great mind and good heart of Gilbert Keith Chesterton. No doubt the ever volitional Chesterton would have pointed out that predestination had nothing to do with all this; he would have argued that I chose to pick his books up of my own free will. But I think he is wrong on this matter: I must respond that it is all of God, as all grace is.

All this leads to the question on which this paper is built; considering Chesterton's polemical and unflinching theological particularism to the Roman Catholic communion; and his equally pronounced revulsion from the Reformed Protestant Tradition, how is an American

Conservative Biblical Calvinistic Evangelical to approach Chesterton? It seems to me a good question; since he is certainly attractive and edifying to many Protestants like myself.

## **A Protestant Chesterton?**

I would like to begin to answer this question of Protestant interest in Chesterton with a paradox in the Chesterton tradition. The first point I wish to make about Chesterton the Catholic writer is to suggest that in some ways, Chesterton is very Protestant. Perhaps those were groans, I just heard; and you are thinking: "oh no, the man is a revisionist." Believe me I detest historical revisionism as much as the next fellow, and firmly believe that, after the mythic Revolution, revisionists should be placed against the proverbial wall, right alongside other useful idiots. Certainly, if Protestants are to understand correctly any "Protestantism" in Chesterton, then we must avoid any hint of remaking Chesterton after our image. Chesterton cannot be transformed into a Protestant writer; even in the earliest "Anglican period" of his writings, the hints of Romanism abound.

Nevertheless, I think that certain Protestant traits do exist in Chesterton; and those elements of Protestantism are at least fourfold:

First, I think there is his eccentric freethinking family life. It is not Catholicism which formed his early personality, but Protestantism in a state of theological rot. We have Chesterton's own words to guide us. In *Orthodoxy*, he says "the philosophy in which I have come to believe, I will not call it my philosophy; for I did not make it. God and humanity made it; and it made me."<sup>1</sup> This confession came from a man essentially raised by freethinkers, cultural Anglicans, and Unitarians. There is of course an even greater irony in this sentence; for it is the essence of the Calvinist Creed. At the heart of Calvinism is the notion that we are debtors to a Sovereign grace-giving God. He made us; not we ourselves.

The second element of Protestantism comes from his English personality. Chesterton is the first to admit the Englishness of his background: "If I made a generalization about the Chestertons, my paternal kinfolk...I should say that they were and are extraordinarily English."<sup>2</sup> In spite of the Bellocian myth of the intrinsic and essential Catholicism of England, it seems evident to any impartial observer that England is a Protestant Nation, with a Protestant Establishment, and a Protestant personality. English eccentricity, liberty, and theological pluralism all seem to display a Protestant ethos. Perhaps for a European a culture cannot be deemed fully Protestant if it has only been under the influence of Protestantism for a mere 450 years; most Americans, however, would concede this point immediately. Chesterton's England is a Protestant England; and Chesterton is wildly, almost absurdly English.

A third element of his Protestantism might be found in his Romanticism. The feisty Chesterton seems enamored by the politics of the underdog. His revolt

<sup>1</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *Orthodoxy*, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1908), pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *Autobiography of G.K. Chesterton*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1936), p. 35.

against "the powers that be" involves the questioning of their authority. He fights the wicked economic Anti-Christ of Capitalism and the Beast of Power Politics, Imperialism. There is a little of the Luther in Chesterton, a point which would probably have irked him no end.

And finally, the fourth element of latent Protestantism in Chesterton is his incredible faith in democracy. Hierarchical Catholicism is hardly the breeding ground of democracy. Democracy requires pluralistic tolerance. And in fact, the most successful democracies have all been Protestant nations: Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia; though indeed Catholicism is actively present in all these nations, it is a minority, and therefore functions as just another sect. Democracy, therefore, is a Protestant virtue; just as democratism—the belief that a 51% vote constitutes the voice of God—is a Protestant vice. Chesterton seems to have drunk deep from these democratic taps. The only other people I know who have as optimistic a view of democracy as Chesterton are all Baptists.

Now, none of these elements make Chesterton a "Protestant" writer; as I have said, I don't think such revisionism can be accomplished without damage being done to the persona of Chesterton. However, I mention these elements in order to suggest that he has brought into his Catholic life ways of looking at the world which had their origins in the Protestant milieu. I think this recognition of Chesterton's latent Protestantism can offer his Protestant readers an initial basis for appreciation. We see in Chesterton a little of ourselves. But this does not lessen the obstacle of Chesterton's Roman Catholic particularism; and it is to that wall of separation that I now turn.

## A Protestant Critique I: A Protest

As a Protestant I think it is my inherent duty to protest. So let me give notice that from a Protestant point of view, Chesterton's constant vilification of the Protestant and Reformed faith represents a twofold failure on Chesterton's part. Firstly, Chesterton fails to recognize the reformulative and evolving nature of Catholic doctrine itself, which has increasingly been able to accept and digest the Protestant worldview; and, secondly, he fails to display an objective understanding of Protestantism. His view of Protestantism is often skewed by a Crusader's spirit, and simply lacks rational balance.

Chesterton, it must be remembered, is not to be viewed as a contemporary Roman Catholic writer. Chesterton's Catholicism antedates Vatican II. It is a combination of Tridentine attitudes and the Conciliar Populism of Pope Pius IX. His was a fighting faith, medieval in spirit. The battles he fought with Reformation theology were alive to him, not mere academic jousts. His hatred of what he perceived as Calvinistic fatalism stemmed from a passionate demand for human accountability and freedom. So in one sense, Protestants have more in common with the current ecumenical crowd than they do with Chesterton the Church Militant who defended Old Rome. Chesterton would have been proud to be listed among those who had the faith of the medieval Everyman: trusting in Good Deeds to enter with him into paradise. He abhorred the Protestant's Biblical soteriology; in fact, he abhorred everything Protestant.

Chesterton's caricature of Protestantism does not wear well, his theological cardstacking grows old quickly. Chesterton seemed to have an inability to present Protestantism fairly or even present its doctrines correctly. When he grasps for a witty put-down for Shaw, he calls him a Calvinist, a Puritan—pejoratives in Chesterton's mind, they have no theological meaning when applied to Shaw. In fact, Chesterton found it almost impossible to say anything good about Protestantism, and when he did say something good, there was a Catholic connection. For instance, he admires the Anglican Book of Common Prayer; but his praise consists in that "it was written by apostate Catholics. It is strong, not in so far as it is a Protestant book, but in so far as it was the last Catholic book."<sup>3</sup> Or listen to this gratuitous insult to the Great Reformer: "on a great map like the mind of Aquinas, the mind of Luther would be almost invisible."<sup>4</sup> Amusing, no doubt; but is it accurate? One can only wonder what would prompt a man like Chesterton to feel it necessary to attack a man *ad hominem* centuries after his death. I am afraid we are examining a pathology.

This imbalance, this blindness concerning things Protestant; this reductionism to Protestant equals bad, Catholic equals good represents a major flaw in his thinking. I would call it a gigantic flaw, because he was a gigantic man. And I think we have tolerated the flaw because of his greatness. I wonder how long we would tolerate a mediocre Protestant writer whose constant refrain was a virulent Reformational aggressiveness against the Great Romish Babylon. Not long, I think.

## A Protestant Critique II: Do We Agree?

Historically, the charge of Semi-Pelagianism has been leveled by Protestants against the traditional merit-centered, works-theology of Roman Catholic soteriology and practice. And I think the charge might stick against some of Chesterton's statements. His view of Reformed Calvinistic theology as a grotesque heresy, becomes ironic in this post Vatican II age of "separated brethren": and "ecumenical dialogue." Catholic congregations now sing Luther's "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," Catholic theologians question the authority of the Pope, some religious orders spew forth Marxism, and many Catholic families ignore Rome's teaching on birth control. Oh, it's a different world. Witness the following:

In the *Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission*, representatives of both communities said: "We rejoice together that the whole process of salvation is the work of God by the Holy Spirit. And it is in this connection that Roman Catholics understand the expression *ex opere operato* in relation to baptism. It does not mean that the sacraments have a mechanical or automatic efficacy. Its purpose rather is to emphasize that salvation is a sovereign work of Christ, in distinction to a Pelagian or semi-Pelagian confidence in human ability."<sup>5</sup> Notice the thor-

<sup>3</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *Well and the Shallows*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1935), p. 47.

<sup>4</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1933), p. 244.

<sup>5</sup> Meeking, Basil and Stott, John, *The Evangelical-Roman Catholic Dialogue on Mission, 1977-1984* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans/Paternoster, 1986), p. 58. ERCDOM offers a good tour of the issues which unite and divide our

oughly Protestant and Reformed language: "whole process," "work of God," "not...mechanical or automatic efficacy," "sovereign work of Christ," and no confidence in "human ability." Calvin could have written these words.

And how would Chesterton understand this Jesuitical explanation of the Roman Catholic/Evangelical understanding of justification by faith by Avery Dulles, S.J.: "I would say that really we do not disagree on the way in which the individual comes to justification: through the grace of Christ accepted in faith. That's pretty much common doctrine between our churches, even though it has not been recognized as common doctrine. Many Catholics are astonished to hear this—they think that Catholics are justified by their good works. But that has never been Catholic teaching."<sup>6</sup> Hold it boys, call off the Reformation; its all been a terrible misunderstanding. We've never really disagreed.

This would indeed have been news to Chesterton. Such sophistical dialectics would have proved burdensome for even his lithe mind to balance. Contrast the views I have just read with the Tridentine language of Chesterton; just a few examples will indicate his irreconcilability with the Reformers:

• "If almost any modern man be asked whether we save our souls solely through our theology, or whether doing good (to the poor, for instance) will help us on the road to God, he would answer without hesitation that good works are probably more pleasing to God than theology."<sup>7</sup> In true Chestertonian style he has relied on the man in the street—universal catholic man—for his jury. The Apostle Paul, speaking less democratically, is rather ignored: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works so that no one can boast" (Eph 2:8). Good works flow from faith, they can't precede it. They cannot help you on the way to heaven; because there is only One Way.

• Chesterton says: "It would probably come as quite a surprise [to the man in the street] to learn that, for three hundred years, the faith in faith alone was the badge of the Protestant, the faith in good works the rather shameful badge of a disreputable Papist."<sup>8</sup> But of course, the real shock would be for the Protestant. All this time he thought his faith was in Christ—and now Chesterton has discovered that it was actually faith in faith. *Sola Fides* never stood alone; it never had meaning except it was tied to *Sola Gratia*, and especially, *Solus Christus*. Consequently, if the "disreputable Papist" has been putting his faith in works, then in the Pauline sense just referred to, it was a shameful badge.

• Chesterton says again: "The genuine Protestant creed is now hardly held by anybody—least of all by the Protestants. So completely have they lost faith in it, that they have mostly forgotten what it was."<sup>9</sup> But who has forgotten? If the previous quotations from ERCCOM and Dulles are any indication, then some Protestant tenets

seem to be held by an increasing number of Catholics. This Chesterton quotation indicates that in his mind the mainline, established Churches represent Protestantism; and he is right in suggesting that many of them no longer preach the doctrines of Luther or Calvin. What he could not have seen is that whatever strength remained in Protestantism was borne by those who still held to the old ancient Biblical truths: the Fundamentalists, the Evangelicals, Conservative Reformed and Lutheran churches, and now, it appears, many Roman Catholics.

• Chesterton's obsession with the recognizably difficult doctrine of Biblical Predestination is another odd thing. Consider this statement from *The Thing: Why I am a Catholic*: "Of the idea of Predestination there are broadly two views; the Calvinist and the Catholic; and it would make a most uncommon difference to my comfort, if I held the former instead of the latter. It is the difference between believing that God knows, as a fact, that I choose the devil, without my having any choice at all."<sup>10</sup> Yet is this interpretation correct? The Calvinistic Westminster Confession says: "God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."<sup>11</sup> Again, "All those whom God has predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit,...renewing their wills...and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace."<sup>12</sup> Chesterton made a career of attacking the Westminster Confession's tautological statement of the doctrine of Predestination. In his hands, the Pauline doctrine seems radical and heretical.

Yet this belief came directly from the Bible and was reaffirmed by Augustine: "Therefore God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, predestinating us to the adoption of children, not because we were going to be of ourselves holy and immaculate, but He chose and predestinated us that we might be so. Moreover, He did this according to the good pleasure of His will, so that nobody might glory concerning his own will, but about God's will towards Himself."<sup>13</sup> It is Chesterton who has balked at the paradox of predestination, and the Calvinist who has embraced Biblical antinomy.

• Chesterton falsely pictures the Protestant God as evil: "The Puritan substituted a God who wished to damn people for a God who wished to save them."<sup>14</sup> How pithy, but how untrue. Does anyone besides the hyperbolic Chesterton believe that the Puritans did not preach a gospel of free grace in Christ through faith? They preached good news. They were also not afraid to preach bad news. They believed that it is, as the Puritan Edwards so forcefully reminded us, "a terrible thing to fall into the hands of an angry God." What the Puritans taught was that there indeed was a God who

multiple communions: but it is equally plain that agreement is not right around the corner on most doctrines.

<sup>6</sup> Dulles, Avery, interviewed by Donald Bloesch, "America's Catholics: What they Believe," *Christianity Today* November 7, 1986, p. 26.

<sup>7</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *The Thing* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co., 1946), pp. 58-59.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Westminster Confession (Philadelphia: Great Commission, n.d.), III, 1 (My emphasis added).

<sup>12</sup> Westminster Confession, X, 1 (Again my emphasis).

<sup>13</sup> St. Augustine, "On the Predestination of the Saints," in Norman L. Geisler, ed. *What Augustine Says* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1982), pp. 127-128.

<sup>14</sup> Chesterton, G.K., *Sidelights on New London and Newer New York*, (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Co., 1932), p. 146.

saved people who turned to him in faith; and they also preached that this same God damned those who did not turn to him.

In the end, a Protestant critique of Chesterton must merely be a criticism of particularist Roman Catholic doctrines which Protestants consider distinct innovations of Romanism beyond the apostolic tradition, which Protestants hold as embodied, not in the magisterium of the Church, but in the Bible. True Apostolic succession, if there is such a thing, involves more than having shaken the hand of the man who shook the hand of the man who shook Peter's hand; it involves obedience to what the Apostles proclaimed.

It might be fun for some to fight the Reformation once again, and I'm sure Chesterton would have enjoyed it; however, I am afraid it will not be very edifying for most of us to reargue the particulars that Protestants believe to be Papal usurpations of Apostolic authority and Romish emendations and perversions of Biblical truth. (Luther would have liked that phrase.) Suffice it to say that where Chesterton holds to extra-Biblical doctrines — Papal infallibility, indulgences, purgatory, adoration of Mary, justification through faith and works — there we must part company. The Roman Catholic Chesterton cannot be forced into compatibility with Protestants. This herculean task of reconciliation can only be performed by an omniscient God (or, if He is unavailable, perhaps a Jesuit). But I do believe that such reconciliation will come about — as all reconciliation — in the body and blood of the Man-God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

## Chesterton Reformed

In spite of the evident chasm which exists between Chestertonian Catholicism and Evangelical Christianity, I still think we can find areas for building a foundation of ecumenical appreciation for Chesterton.

1. Protestant Christians can relate to Chesterton as a "mere Christian" of the Lewisian variety. I think the early Anglican Chesterton needs no translation into the Evangelical idiom. There is in the Episcopal Church a broadness and convergence of traditions which allows High Church and Evangelical joint occupancy. It was this hallway between the rooms of our Father's house which allowed C.S. Lewis to be an effective witness to all communions. Large portions of Chesterton are in this category.

2. I think many Protestants will need a method for baptizing Chesterton's polemical Roman writing for ecumenical use. May I suggest as a simple rule of thumb that whenever Chesterton uses the word "Catholic" in a paragraph that the word "Christian" be substituted in our mind. If the sentence stands as applicable to all of Christendom, then it is truly catholic. It has achieved a universal application. If, on the other hand, the substitution of "Christian" makes nonsense out of Chesterton's meaning, then the section is, for the Reformed Christian, hopelessly Papist. We might appreciate the structure of the thought, the beauty of the rhetoric, but we stand outside the Cathedral. We cannot enter. There Chesterton stands. We must stand with the Titanic Augustinian: God help us, we can do no other.

3. It has been said that Chesterton looked at life sacramentally; that all reality formed for him a spiritual parable. I think this is another place where Protestants can

feed on Chesterton. As Chesterton says: "As compared with a Jew, a Moslem, a Buddhist, a Deist, or more obvious alternatives, a Christian means a man who believes that deity or sanctity has attached itself to matter or entered the world of the sense."<sup>15</sup> Some Manichean elements have infected both the Roman Catholic and the Evangelical Churches; following Chesterton's lead would go a long way in correcting this problem.

4. I think Chesterton provides Protestants with a first class foil on which to sharpen our less prodigious intellects. Chesterton, even in opposition, acts as a Mentor and paradigm of contentious argumentative Christian Charity. His defense of Pre-Vatican II Catholicism requires the Reformed Christian to defend Biblical Christianity against a most formidable mind.

5. Protestants have in Chesterton a model for literary Christian apologetics. There is much to be learned about living the Christian life, and defending it, by listening to Chesterton's use of reason, paradox, and verbal playfulness.

6. If conservatives are to politics what John Stuart Mill called the "stupid party," then Protestants fulfill a similar role in Christendom. We are the stupid party which has opened our mind to Apostolic witness, and closed it upon those fundamental truths. Especially upon one conception, that Divine Reason alone is the authority for life, and morals, and art, and literature. And it is with a dull persistence that we come back to the touchstone of *Sola Scriptura*. In the end, for the Protestant, it is this rule, this measure, this canon by which we "separated brethren" will judge G.K. Chesterton. Where he does not measure up, we will cut him off; for we believe that it is better to enter heaven having lost a paragraph of Chesterton here, or a chapter there, or an entire book or two, than to pass into darkness. But where he measures up to the Word of Life, we will embrace him, we will feed upon him, we will learn from him.

In conclusion, my Protestant interpretation of Chesterton is tripartite, almost — may heaven forgive me — Hegelian. First, thesis: there is in Chesterton enough residual Protestantism to appeal to the independent, democratic, and romantic strains in Biblical Christianity. Second, antithesis: Chesterton's pronounced Papism and strident Anti-Protestantism is a constant and irreconcilable barrier and irritant to the Reformed reader. And third, synthesis: there is in Chesterton more than adequate common ground for a "mere Christian" appreciation by even the most American, Capitalistic, Conservative, and Calvinistic of readers.

And this, I believe, is the way it should be; just as the Lord predestined it. Δ

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<sup>15</sup> Saint Thomas Aquinas, Chesterton, pp. 41-42.

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# The Character of Inflation

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**Inflation is a reflection of the heart of modern society and begins with the desire to gain some undue advantage.**

**Steven Samson**

God sets the standard of justice and righteousness by which individuals and nations alike are measured. Justice and injustice are manifested, first, governmentally in the character of individuals and nations, then economically in the character of exchange. And whether in reference to the character of individuals, or nations, or economic practices, the Bible frequently uses metallic metaphors to describe the quality of character, and how it is tried and purified in the refiner's fire.

"Character," in the Greek means "engraving" or "image." Our character is a mark of our ownership, a sign of our kinship or citizenship. In Genesis 1:26, God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." But rebellious, unrighteous men have long tried to erase the image of God from their lives, preferring to worship graven images of their own invention. As the Apostle Paul observed, "their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man..." (Rom. 1:21-23). No man can serve two masters.

Elsewhere, man is likened to clay, and his heart to a clay tablet. Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth that they were the epistle, or message, of Christ, written "not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart" (II Cor. 3:3). Jeremiah 2:22 notes how the iniquity of Israel was similarly "marked" or engraved. For good and for evil, our character is stamped upon our hearts. Jeremiah 17:1 is even more explicit: "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven on the table of the heart." These words might as easily describe the recording and playing of a phonograph disk.

Like an old Victrola, the life of a man articulates "his master's voice." The quality of the performance reflects the quality of the recording. Thus it is important

for God's people to be cleansed of all unrighteousness. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Malachi likened the Lord to "a refiner's fire" and "fullers' soap" (Mal. 3:2). Concerning the backslidden Judah, God said: "Behold, I will melt them, and try them" (Jer. 9:7). God in His holiness cannot abide impurity. The way God shapes our lives and "tests our mettle" is repeatedly illustrated by analogies to smelting of gold and silver.

The word "gold" in the Old Testament is often preceded by the word "pure." Gold is not found in a state of purity. Instead, it must be refined before it is fit, for example, to be fashioned as a "vessel unto honor" (II Tim. 2:20). The same is true of character. This may be seen in numerous Biblical accounts concerning a wide range of matters: Israel, the Church, natural events, as well as the lives of individuals. Isaiah 48:10 says that God chose Israel "in the furnace of affliction." In the New Testament, Peter warns of a fiery trial that faces the Church (I Pet. 4:12-17). This process of refinement extends even to the melting of the elements by fire under God's judgment (Ez. 22:18; II Pet. 3:12). But the focus is on individuals. "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold; but the LORD trieth the hearts" (Prov. 17:3).

As with the character of individuals and nations, so too with the character of economies. God blesses righteousness with prosperity. As Moses said to the people of Israel: "Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do" (Deut. 29:9). But economic injustice, like all sin, is a reproach to any people. It must be purged. "Take away the dross from the silver, and there shall come forth a vessel for the finer" (Prov. 25:4).

Fraud, in particular, strikes at the heart of society by destroying the common faith or trust that makes unity possible. Noah Webster defined fraud as "a stratagem intended to gain some undue advantage."<sup>1</sup> It debases the common currency of social exchange. Likewise inflation — a type of fraud — undermines faith in the economy by tampering with the medium of exchange. Inflationary practices depreciate money by removing its standard of value — that is, its backing in gold or silver coin (specie) — or by debasing the metals themselves.

Inflation, then, is a reflection of the character of exchange between men and nations. Like a phonograph disk, it accurately renders the true qualities of the recorded performance. It resonates from the depths of their hearts. Indeed, it is an epistle: a message concerning the character and loyalties of the people. For where our treasure is, there will our hearts be also. But a caution is in order. The same set of commandments that forbid coveting and stealing also forbid idolatry. Jesus makes the sequence of events clear: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10). The sinner ends by exalting his sin over God. Again, no man can serve two masters.

Inflation, like sin, begins with a desire "to gain

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<sup>1</sup> Webster, Noah, *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, reprint ed., (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1967 [1828]), Vol. I, p. 87.

some undue advantage." The sins of coveting and stealing may be recognized in such ancient practices as the clipping of coins and the abasing of metals. These early types of inflation have been succeeded by fiat money inflation.

Fiat money is unbacked paper currency. Because it lacks a fixed standard of value in gold or silver, it can easily be inflated — that is, depreciated or diminished in value — by the issuing agency. In the United States, this agency is the Federal Reserve Board, working in conjunction with the Treasury Department. Noah Webster pointed out that "the issue of a super-abundance of notes depreciates them, or depreciates their value.... A paper currency will depreciate, unless it is convertible into specie."<sup>2</sup> Such notes were once issued by private banks. Today it is the civil government, backed by the power of the sword, that enjoys a monopoly on the issuing of paper currency. Exchange has thus become deceptive and coercive, rather than voluntary, in nature. Furthermore, by requiring that paper money be accepted for payment of debts, legal tender laws provide the essential element of coercion that upholds current inflationary policies.

But there is nothing new about inflation in our country's history. Concerning colonial American inflation, Simon L. Adler observed that paper issued by Virginia in 1775 "soon began to depreciate and it was found before long that a piece of eight worth about five shillings, ten pence by proclamation would buy as much as six shillings in paper. But the paper was the legal money of the colony and the Legislature ordered that a piece of eight should pass legally at six shillings."<sup>3</sup> Colonial policy was guided by a desire to keep gold and silver coins of all kinds in the country because of their intrinsic value. The object was to stay as economically independent of Britain as possible. But the inflationary practices of the states during the War for Independence virtually bankrupted the new country.

The word "inflation" is misleading unless it is understood that inflation simply "puffs up" money, stretching it just as hot air stretches the surface of a balloon. It simply redistributes wealth without adding to it. Unfortunately, the wealth is generally lifted from the pocket of the taxpayer and slipped into the pocket of government. Inflation may be regarded as a hidden tax as well as a wealth transfer scheme. It fits hand and glove with the "buy now, pay later" philosophy that pervades our nation. Our economy is built on compulsive debt.

One type of inflation — the substitution of alloys and mixtures — is expressly condemned in Scripture. Isaiah 1:22 records the following about Judah: "Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water." The debasing or depreciating of a commodity, such as money, is the very opposite of the refining fire through which God tempers the character. Sometimes the corruption is irreversible: "The bellows are burned, the lead is con-

sumed by the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the LORD hath rejected them" (Jer. 6:29-30). And for what cause did God judge his chosen people? Jeremiah 6:6-7 mentions oppression, violence, and spoilage. The root problem, however, was covetousness (Jer. 6:13).

Ezekiel 22:13-31 contains reference to virtually all the problems and principles that have been examined up to this point. Jerusalem is described as being smitten for making dishonest gain (v. 13). The house of Israel had become dross: fit only to be melted in the fire of God's wrath (vv. 18, 21). The prophets, priests, and princes are each singled out by God (vv. 25-28). Finally, so are all the people: "The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy: yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully. And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none" (Ez. 22:29-30).

Those who seek dishonest gain through inflationary practices must likewise pay the inescapable consequences. One major effect of inflation is the stifling of investment. Inflation and other forms of economic injustice are decapitalizing our economy. Like Esau, we are despising our birthright, and selling it for pottage. Our industries are becoming less and less capable of competing on the world market because they are squeezed between unrealistically high and inflexible wages, stringent regulations, high interest rates, a scarcity of money for loans, and a general psychology of uneasiness, or malaise, that fosters a strong desire for security at the expense of an unwillingness to assume financial risks without a tax-subsidized safety net at hand. Inflation is one element — an important one — of a paternalistic mentality that concentrates power in the central government as it erodes the foundations that support the system. The result is a deliberate elevation — by citizens, politicians, and technical experts — of short-run gain above godly wisdom and justice. As Solomon observed, "the prosperity of fools shall destroy them" (Prov. 1:32).

Our works are a reflection of our character and the quality of our faith. Lawful gain is good. Prosperity is a blessing. But we must keep our priorities straight. "The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold" (Ps. 19:9-10). We must build on the true foundation with high-quality material that can withstand the refiner's fire. "Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by the fire; and the fire shall try every man's work what sort it is" (1 Cor. 3:13).

The works of inflation will not be counted among our treasures in heaven. Δ

<sup>2</sup> Webster, *Dictionary* reprint, Vol. I, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup> Adler, Simon, *Money and Money Units in the American Colonies*. The Rochester Historical Society Publication Fund Series, 1929, Vol. VIII cited in Hall, Verna, *The Christian History of the American Revolution* (San Francisco: Foundation for American Christian Education, 1976), p. 338.

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# For the Record

*This regular feature is an attempt to provide an elementary Biblical analysis of various topics in Christian theology/philosophy and practice. We anticipate that this and future contributions will be helpful in explaining fundamental theological issues to those who may be relatively unfamiliar with them.*

## What in the World is a Worldview?

**Norlan De Groot**

"Worldview" is one of those terms which is easy to use, but not quite as easy to define. When we hear someone using it, we get a sense of what he means. We understand that he is talking about a perspective, a way of seeing the world. But that is not much help in trying to define what makes up a worldview. It's like the first year theology student who defined "worldview" as "a way of viewing the world." That may be very true, but it is not very helpful.

Perhaps the best place to begin in our attempt to better understand the term "worldview," is to acknowledge that everyone has one. We all have a way of understanding the world. We all have a perspective from which we interpret life.

But as soon as we acknowledge that, we run into a rather difficult question: Just what are we trying to interpret? What questions are we trying to answer?

One early twentieth-century professor of missiology at the Free University in Amsterdam, proposed a solution. In his book, *The Riddle of Life*, J.H. Bavinck states:

When a person looks at the world round about him for the first time, a multitude of questions throng in upon him from all sides. For the questions that we are concerned with in our lives are innumerable and most of them are so insoluble that, after once having come to grips with them, we seem to feel unable to withdraw from the contest. Indeed, it is not strange that all the people of history have voiced their vexation at being confronted by the very questions which at the moment confront us and which we cannot shake off. Among the vast throng of such questions are a few which particularly occupy our attention and which come back with a monotonous regularity.<sup>1</sup>

Bavinck may have something here. If we want to understand what makes up a worldview, we must begin by understanding what questions a worldview is trying to answer, and particularly what questions come back with, as Bavinck states, "monotonous regularity."

Though the questions we ask are many and varied, they can be concentrated into five distinguishable categories. In another book, *The Church Between Temple and Mosque*,<sup>2</sup> Bavinck does just that. He calls these categories five magnetic points because men are drawn to them like iron filings to a magnet. These five points cannot be avoided. They are five fundamental questions of life, and as such they make up five fundamental portions of a well developed worldview. Bavinck calls these points: I and the Cosmos, I and the Norm, I and the Riddle of My Existence, I and the

Supreme Being, and I and Salvation.

While these questions do not make up any sort of natural religion,<sup>3</sup> they do clearly mark differences in perspective, differences in the way one views the world. By understanding these five magnetic points, we not only come to a better understanding of our own and other's worldviews, but we can also see more clearly the distinct line — the distinct antithesis — between a Christian worldview and a non-Christian one.

Bavinck understood the five points in this way:

### **I and the Cosmos**

Every man feels a sense of relationship with the cosmos. He understands himself to be but a particle, an atom in the whole of the universe. But he also knows that he is intimately connected to the universe. He senses that there is no distance between himself and his environment.

A Christian recognizes this as part of his created nature. Certainly, man is the head of creation, but he is still a part of that creation.

### **I and the Norm**

There is some vague sense in man that warns him not to follow his own desires. He senses that there are certain results and a certain order which can only be broken with dire consequences. Paul deals with this in Romans 2:14,15: "Indeed, when Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature things required by law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and

<sup>3</sup> Bavinck puts it this way: "These are the five magnetic questions to which man is inevitably drawn. We cannot speak of them as innate ideas, because they are not a sort of natural religion. They are just questions with which man is confronted through the mere fact that he exists and that he finds himself in a world full of riddles and mysteries. These five questions keep him busy whether he likes it or not." (*Ibid.*, p. 33.)

<sup>1</sup> J.H. Bavinck, *The Riddle of Life*, (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> J.H. Bavinck, *The Church Between Temple and Mosque*, reprint ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1981).

their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them."

### **I and the Riddle of My Existence**

Man is conscious that he is a living, active being. He plans; he acts; he has goals. But he also senses an indefinable something which he is inclined to call fate or destiny. He wavers between understanding himself as a mere particle in the universe determined by the winds of fate and as a free, active being who determines his own destiny, one who is not shaped by the world, but rather, shapes it to his own desires. He stands both within the world and above it.

### **I and Salvation**

Man is continually overcome with the feeling that the world (reality) is not as it should be. It may be hard to define just what exactly is wrong with the world, but there is no question that something is wrong with it. And not only that, but something is wrong with man, himself. Man is not as he ought to be.

Man continually dreams of a better world and a better existence. He longs to be "saved" from what he perceives reality to be.

### **I and the Supreme Power**

As Calvin put it, every man is endowed with a *sensus divinitatis* which, though not enough to save him, is enough to convince him that there is a Power above and beyond him and also to condemn him for rebelling against this power. Again, we can go back to Romans: "...since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse" (1:19-20).

While Bavinck does not specifically say that these five points make up the fundamental parts of a well-developed worldview, he comes close:

The answer which (man) gives to these questions determines his entire conduct and his attitude

to life. Even when he never takes the time and trouble deliberately to ponder on them and to penetrate into them, still his whole way of living already implies an answer, and is an answer. That is why we find these five focus points in every religion and in every human life, even in that of the so-called nonreligious man.<sup>4</sup>

But one must still ask what practical use Bavinck's Five Magnetic Points can be in understanding worldviews. These five points may be fine for helping us acquire a neat, academic understanding of the term "worldview," but what use is this for us in our day-to-day activities and functions with Christians and non-Christians around us?

The most significant help is that they assist to distinguish the spirit of the age. Let's take an obvious example. The New Age movement is a conspicuous, current example of a non-Christian movement. But Christians have been far from unified in their approach and critique of it. Some see it as a well-developed conspiracy, the precursor to the antichrist. Others see it as a somewhat benign fad. Still others see it as definitely unchristian, but nothing worth getting terribly excited over.

How should we approach the New Age? I believe we should start by examining its worldview in light of Bavinck's Five Magnetic Points. That will give us the perspective necessary to know how to deal with New Age and its advocates.

*I and the cosmos:* Fundamental to the New Age movement is the idea that all is one. Man is not merely connected to the cosmos, man is one and the same with it. Ultimately there is no difference between a man, a dog, or a rock in the field. They are but different manifestations of the same reality.

*I and the norm:* Many New Age celebrities have beckoned society to a revolution in consciousness. We must not try to go against reality, but must instead enlighten ourselves to the power within us. We cannot ignore this reality without grave

consequences. It is a norm that is found within ourselves, but it is a norm, nonetheless.

*I and the riddle of my existence:* The New Age answer to the riddle of our existence is not that we are created by God, but that we have always existed, and that we always will. We are but manifestations of one continuous reality.

*I and salvation:* Neither the world nor man is as it should be, but that is not a fault of reality. It is simply due to the fact that we are not as enlightened as we should be. Salvation, for the New Ager becomes a matter of seeking a greater harmony within himself and with the world around him.

*I and the Supreme Power:* As Shirley MacLaine said so succinctly in her 1987 miniseries, *Out on a Limb*, "I am God!" The Supreme Power does not exist in a being outside of oneself, but rather it is oneself.

That, then, is the New Age movement in terms of Bavinck's Five Magnetic Points. Certainly there are more and different aspects to the New Age movement. But if you want a basic understanding of a New Age worldview, these Five Magnetic Points can be of great help, and if you want to know just how distinctly opposed to Christianity a New Age worldview is, look at these five points. There is no common ground between a Christian worldview and a New Age worldview. The antithesis is wide and deep.

This is but one example of how Bavinck's Five Magnetic Points can be helpful in understanding and critiquing worldviews. They can be just as helpful in dealing with humanism, materialism, Buddhism or any other "ism" currently in vogue today. These five points may not always give us a perfect basis for a critique. But they are a start, a beginning in understanding worldviews as something more developed than simply "a way of viewing the world." Δ

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<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

# ISSUE AND INTERCHANGE

The goal of this regular feature is to provide our readers with opposing arguments on topics pertinent to the Christian life. Due to the power of party spirit, personal credibility, credentials, etc., we have asked all the authors writing for this fea-

ture to publish their brief statements anonymously. By doing this, we hope to encourage the reader, in some small way, to focus on the arguments involved in each position rather than on personal factors.

The authors selected for the re-

spective sides in the debate are outspoken supporters of their viewpoints.

The burden of proof in the interchange is placed on Advocate One. For that reason, Advocate One opens and closes the debate.

## ISSUE: Is Gambling Morally Permissible?

### ADVOCATE 1: Gambling *Per Se* Is Permissible Within Certain Biblical Limits

The Jewish rabbis of the middle ages forbade it. So did Confucius and Mohammed. And through the years, many well-intended Christians have done so as well. What have they all forbidden? Gambling. That's right. From chipping in a buck for the World Series pool at work to playing with the big spenders at the highfalutin casinos of Monte Carlo, we are told that gambling is sinful. "For followers of Jesus Christ," writes one Christian author, "gambling is an insidious form of worldliness."<sup>1</sup> Yet another author continues in the same vein by bringing down the gauntlet: "Gambling is wrong; the Bible is clear on that point.... Don't gamble — ever!"<sup>2</sup>

Some stern warnings, to be sure. But are they accurate? Does Scripture really condemn gambling *per se*? Hardly. After examining some foundational principles, articulating some important limitations, and answering some common but fallacious objections, we will see that far from condemning gambling *per se*, Scripture actually permits it within carefully prescribed limitations. Hence, to those who say "Don't bet on it!" we simply respond by asking, "Wanna bet?"

#### LAYING A FIRM FOUNDATION: SOME INTRODUCTORY PRINCIPLES *Lord of All*

Because Christ alone is Lord of all, He has given us directives in His Word which apply to all of life. To say that Christ is Lord of all is simply to say that no area of life is outside of His lordship, dominion, or control. We are to consecrate every area of our lives to God so that whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we do all in His name and to His glory (1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17).

Living to the glory of God, though, doesn't require us to enroll in a local monastery and spend the rest of our lives chanting in candle-lit rooms (as though Christ were not Lord of all vocations and we were not His royal priests on Wall Street — 1 Pet. 2:9). Nor does it require us to denounce marriage or

certain foods (as though Christ were not Lord of all things and the One through whom God made all things "good" — Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25, 31; 1 Tim. 4:4; Jn. 1:3). And it certainly doesn't require us to beat and flog our "flesh" and engage in other acts of self-abasement (as though Christ were not Lord of our bodies and we were not the temples wherein His Spirit dwells — 1 Cor. 3:16).

What, then, does living a truly God-glorifying life require? It simply requires us to submit to Christ alone as Lord (Jn. 4:12), and to order our lives according to His Word which is the final authority for all that we believe and do (Acts 17:11). If Christ alone, speaking through Scripture, is our final authority, then He alone can bind our consciences. Simply put, when it comes to living a godly life, we must speak when Scripture speaks and remain silent when Scripture is silent.

Strange as it may seem, however, many Christians have it all backwards: they are mute when Scripture speaks and they blurt out when Scripture is silent. That is, either (1) they ignore true godliness by rejecting the plain teachings of Scripture (only to end up wallowing around in licentiousness) or (2) they invent rules and restrictions for achieving "true" godliness by condemning what Scripture doesn't condemn or by adding to the plain teachings of Scripture (only to end up wading through legalism). As Christians, though, we are called to steer clear of both licentiousness and legalism.

Instead, we are called to exercise both liberty and responsibility. Paul put it well when he told the Galatians that though we have been "called to freedom" we are not to "turn our freedom into an opportunity for the flesh...." (Gal. 5:13).

#### *Free at Last?*

How do we tell the difference between what we are free to do and what is an opportunity for the flesh? Obviously, we must do what God has commanded (e.g. loving one another), refrain from doing what He has prohibited (e.g. committing adultery), and are free to enjoy what God permits (e.g. getting married). So much for the easy cases. What about the seemingly difficult cases like drinking, dancing, or even gambling? No one would contend that God commands us indi-

vidually to drink, dance, or gamble. So, when it comes to activities like gambling, the payoff question is: Does God prohibit us from gambling or does He permit us to do so within certain prescribed limits?

Aside from the evils of licentiousness and legalism, there are two diametrically opposed ways to approach and answer this payoff question: what we shall refer to respectively as the Fundamentalist view and the Reformed view.

According to the Fundamentalist view, whatever is not permitted in Scripture, either explicitly or implicitly, is prohibited. In other words, we can't do anything unless Scripture says we can do it. On this view, the proponent of gambling bears the burden of proving that Scripture permits and does not forbid gambling. Until and unless he does so, the Fundamentalist view maintains that gambling is forbidden.

Over and against the Fundamentalist view, stands the Reformed view, which holds that whatever is not forbidden in Scripture, either explicitly or implicitly, is permitted. Put simply, we can do anything that Scripture doesn't prohibit. On this view, the opponent of gambling bears the burden of proving that Scripture prohibits gambling. Until and unless he does so, the Reformed view maintains that gambling is permitted.

Is there a way to resolve this supposed impasse between the Fundamentalist and the Reformed views? Fortunately, Scripture itself is very clear on this point: only the Reformed view finds warrant in Scripture. Consider, if you will, the following passages:

Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.... For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these things proceed from within and defile the man (Mk. 7:14-15, 21-23).

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in and of

<sup>1</sup> Watson, Tom Jr., *Don't Bet on It*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1987), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Hocking, David, *The Moral Catastrophe*. (Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1990), p. 245.



itself.... All things indeed are clean...(Rom. 14:14, 20).

All things are lawful for me, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be mastered by anything.... All things are lawful, but not all things are profitable. All things are lawful, but not all things edify.... For the earth is the Lord's and all it contains (1 Cor. 6:12, 10:23, 26; Ps. 24:1).

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods, which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer (1 Tim. 4:1-5).

If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourselves to decrees, such as, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" (which all refer to things destined to perish with the using)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence (Col. 2:20-23).

If we know and can be convinced that (1) Christ alone is Lord over the earth and all it contains, (2) God created all things good, (3) nothing is unclean in and of itself, (4) nothing can defile a man from without, (5) nothing is to be rejected if it is received with gratitude and is sanctified by means of the Word of God and prayer, (6) man-made rules, while appearing outwardly religious, are of no value whatsoever against licentiousness, and (7) all things are lawful, then the Reformed view prevails. It is up to the opponent of gambling or any other activity to prove that Scripture forbids such behavior.

Given the truth of the Reformed view, it is helpful to see life as a playground. God has created a playground and has given His children liberty to play to their fill as long as they do so to His glory. Just as assuredly as God has created a playground and given us liberty therein, He has also built a fence around that playground and prohibits us sternly from wandering beyond that fence. But a playground wouldn't be a playground if it didn't have its own internal rules. Our playground is no exception. We must seek to understand those rules in light of our personal backgrounds (e.g. our motivations, capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, etc.) and in light of our circumstances (e.g. the short and long term consequences of our actions). In other words,

some of us may like the swings while others get dizzy on them and avoid them. This, of course, is just another way of saying that though something may be permissible in and of itself (e.g. drinking in moderation), it may not be good or desirable for everyone (e.g. a former alcoholic or someone who simply dislikes the taste) or under every circumstance (e.g. before driving).

My opponent and I believe that only the Reformed view safeguards both liberty and responsibility and simultaneously steers clear of licentiousness (which is based on a distorted view of liberty) and legalism (which is based on a distorted view of responsibility). Even though we agree as to the Reformed view, however, we disagree as to how it is to be applied to the case of gambling. I contend that gambling *per se* is within the playground subject only to the internal rules of the playground, whereas my opponent contends that gambling in and of itself is outside of the playground.

### DRAWING THE BATTLE LINES: SOME IMPORTANT LIMITATIONS

Gambling is playing a so-called game of chance for money or other stakes; wagering money or other stakes on an allegedly uncertain outcome or contingency; betting, wagering, or speculating.<sup>3</sup> Gambling, then, involves (1) putting up money or other stakes (2) on an so-called game of chance, uncertainty, or contingency.

While we have claimed that gambling *per se* is within the playground (i.e. is generally permissible), we have also admitted that gambling, like any activity, is subject to certain playground rules (i.e. Biblically prescribed limits). What follows, then, is a brief list of attitudes and/or actions which Scripture forbids whether they be associated with gambling or any other activity.

1. We cannot involuntarily take or misappropriate property which rightfully belongs to God or others. Consequently, we cannot (a) rob God by gambling our tithe (Mal. 3:8); (b) steal money from family, friends, or associates to bet at the races (Ex. 20:15); or (c) fail to provide for those reasonably under our care (1 Tim. 5:8). In other words, we must be good stewards of what God has given to us and those around us.

2. We cannot allow ourselves to become mastered by or addicted to anything such that we neglect our duties toward God, our families, churches, employers, and neighbors (1 Cor. 6:12).

3. We cannot worship anyone or anything other than the one true God (e.g. we cannot worship lady luck, fortune, or happiness) (Ex. 20:3, 34:14).

4. We cannot allow ourselves to be motivated by greed, covetousness, or discontent (Ex. 20:17; Prov. 11:28; 15:16; 23:4-5; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:3-5; Phil. 4:11-13; Col. 3:5; 1 Tim. 6:6-11, 17-19).

5. We cannot disobey lawful authorities if such authorities have forbidden

<sup>3</sup> Gove, Philip Babcock, ed., *Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Unabridged), (Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1976), p. 932.

us to gamble since we would not be forced to choose between obeying God or man (i.e. a law forbidding gambling would not forbid us to do what God commands or command us to do what God forbids) (Acts 5:29).

6. We cannot perpetrate crimes or acts of fraud and deceit on others (Lev. 19:13; Ps. 15:3; 24:4; 1 Cor. 6:8; 2 Cor. 7:2).

7. We cannot offend a weaker brother by forcing or cajoling him to gamble when he has scruples against gambling (Rom. 14:1-23; 1 Cor. 8:9-13).

### PARRYING THE BLOWS: SOME COMMON OBJECTIONS

Having examined some foundational principles and articulated some important limitations, we are now in a position to answer some common objections to gambling which have been raised through the years. As we will see, however, each objection misunderstands the nature of gambling and the nature of the Biblical limitations discussed above, since each objection assumes that gambling necessarily involves a violation of one or more of the Biblical limitations discussed above. Put another way, each objection misconstrues the Biblical limitations on gambling as outright prohibitions of gambling *per se*.

#### 1. What A Steal

In his magnanimous three-volume *Systematic Theology*, the great Reformed theologian, Charles Hodge, claims that gambling violates the eighth commandment because it necessarily involves taking property which belongs to others. Because "gambling falls under the same category where advantage is taken of the unwary or unskillful to deprive them of their property without compensation," it is sinful.<sup>4</sup> And Hodge isn't alone. The masterful southern theologian, Robert L. Dabney, concurs with Hodge by asserting that gambling plunders our neighbors' estate; accordingly, he includes gambling with vices such as robbery, theft, stealth, swindling, wastefulness, extortion, and embezzlement.<sup>5</sup> Thus, both Hodge and Dabney believe that gambling necessarily involves depriving others of their property. G.I. Williamson, whose tremendously insightful books on the Westminster Confession and Catechisms have tutored many in the Reformed faith, gives us a better understanding of the traditional Reformed position ("TRP"). After claiming that God ultimately owns all that exists, that God sovereignly determines what property is given to man, and that the right of private property is an ordinance of God (with which we heartily agree), he claims that there are only two legitimate ways for Christians to acquire

<sup>4</sup> Hodge, Charles, *Systematic Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., reprinted 1982), vol. III, p. 437.

<sup>5</sup> Dabney, Robert L., *Systematic Theology*, (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1985 [1878]), p. 415; see also, Dabney, Robert L., *The Practical Philosophy*, (Harrisburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1984 [1897]), p. 485.

property: by gift/inheritance and by labor.<sup>6</sup> He proceeds to define stealing as obtaining property unlawfully (by which he means property not acquired as a gift or as a result of labor), and then moves from this definition to his punchline by claiming that gambling "always involves the element of stealing because the motive is to get money without labor, and without it being given as a gift."<sup>7</sup> Admitting that great Reformed minds have classified gambling as stealing, we must nonetheless take the TRP to Scripture — as did the noble-minded Bereans with the teachings of the apostles themselves — to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11). By so doing, we will see that the TRP is mistaken for four reasons.

(1) The TRP begs the question by assuming (a) that gambling necessarily involves either the acquisition of property (which, as a matter of fact, it usually doesn't!) or (b) that everyone gambles primarily in order to acquire property (which is a hasty generalization!).<sup>8</sup> Would gambling *per se* still be wrong if the gambler had no desire to acquire property and returned all property so acquired?

(2) Even if gambling necessarily involves the acquisition of or motivation to acquire property, the TRP reduces to a false dilemma since Scripture nowhere says that we can acquire property only by means of gifts or as a result of labor. This definition arbitrarily and conveniently excludes a third alternative: acquiring property by means of a voluntary exchange.<sup>9</sup>

(3) Since the TRP defines stealing as acquiring property other than by gifts or by labor (i.e. since the TRP omits voluntary exchange as a legitimate way to acquire property), the TRP trips when it classifies gambling as stealing. Contrary to the TRP, stealing should properly be defined as taking or misappropriating the property of others without their consent. To avoid begging the question, therefore, the advocate of the TRP needs to prove that gambling necessarily involves (a) taking or misappropriating the property of others, and (b) that such taking or misappropriation is involuntary (no paternalism please!).

(4) Even if the advocate of the TRP is adamant in clinging to his arbitrary view that the Christian can only acquire property by means of a gift or by bestowing labor, it is entirely possible to characterize property gained by gambling as constituting a gift or as resulting from labor. (a) The TRP assumes that property acquired by gambling does not constitute a gift. In the process, however, the TRP becomes impaled on the horns of a serious dilemma. The catalyst for

generating this dilemma is the test case of "prizes". Would the TRP, if consistently applied, condemn all prizes? If the advocate of TRP says "no" then he must offer criteria for distinguishing other prizes (which he would allow) from property acquired by gambling (which he doesn't allow). If, on the other hand, he says "yes" then he must offer criteria for distinguishing prizes (which he wouldn't allow) from other gifts (which he does allow). (b) The TRP also assumes that gambling, in at least some cases, does not result from skill or labor (apparently because that skill or labor is staked on an apparent contingency beyond the control of the gambler).<sup>10</sup> But isn't the same thing true with other kinds of investments or business transactions? Would the TRP also condemn other such investments or transactions? If the advocate of TRP says "no" then he must offer criteria for distinguishing gambling from other kinds of investments and transactions. If, on the other hand, he says "yes" then he must distinguish what he means by "labor" from the obvious skill and labor investors and businessmen bestow.

## 2. The Gambling Bug

Many Christians condemn gambling because some people become addicted to or abuse it.<sup>11</sup> Four problems inhere in this objection. (1) By condemning legitimate use because of potential or actual abuse, this objection can easily be reduced to absurdity: should we also refuse to drink alcohol or take prescription drugs because there are many alcoholics or drug addicts who abuse alcohol or drugs?<sup>12</sup> If the potential for addiction or abuse is a reason to condemn an activity, then, in order to be consistent, we would have to jettison many otherwise legitimate and permissible activities. (2) Advocates of the "gambling bug" objection attribute the problem of some people to all people (usually by arguing that we all have a hidden potential for abuse). "Gambling bug" advocates then move from what "is" the case to (the addiction of some) to what "ought" to be the case (prohibition); that is, they commit the naturalistic fallacy by moving from the descriptive to the normative without providing adequate Biblical warrant. (3) The "gambling bug" objection, as articulated by some opponents of gambling, assumes the truth of the medical model (i.e. that addiction is an illness or a disease) which undermines Biblical responsibility. (4) And aside from the three criticisms offered above, this objection is

<sup>10</sup> One logician claims that a "thoroughly practised gambler" with more than usual skill "must be regarded as following a profession." Venn, John, *The Logic of Chance*, New York, NY: Chelsea Publishing Co., 1962 [1888], p. 377.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Watson, *Don't Bet on It*, pp. 18-19.

<sup>12</sup> Hocking actually condemns alcohol because of its addictive potential. He may be consistent, but he is consistently wrong. While Scripture condemns abuse of alcohol (drunkenness), it does not condemn legitimate use of alcohol. As with gambling, we are at liberty to drink within certain prescribed limitations.

especially pernicious because its advocates pretend to know better than God what is best for His people!

## 3. Chances Are

Dabney writes that gambling is a sin, because, among other things, gamblers insincerely and profanely appeal to chance as a cause when "the real cause is Divine Providence."<sup>13</sup> Indeed, if gamblers worship, adore, or otherwise believe in "lady luck", then gambling is sinful for them. But this objection doesn't militate against gambling *per se* for three reasons. (1) This objection begs the question that gambling necessarily involves idolatrous appeals to chance. Isn't it possible for a Christian to realize that the "lot is cast in the lap, but its very decision is from the Lord" (Prov. 16:33)? Christians can speculate on an alleged contingency, knowing full well that even seemingly chance-random events happen only by divine providence (1 Kg. 22:34). (2) As with the "gambling bug" objection above, this objection moves from rightfully condemning abuse to fallaciously condemning legitimate use. (3) If consistently applied, this objection would condemn otherwise legitimate investments or transactions<sup>14</sup> as well as insurance policies,<sup>15</sup> since, from a human point of view, investments, transactions, and insurance policies typically involve apparent contingencies. After all, the "secret things belong to the Lord our God..." (Deut. 29:29).

## 4. The Greed Factor

Most Christians who oppose gambling, argue that gambling is wrong because it springs from and fosters greed, covetousness, and discontent.<sup>16</sup> This objection is wrong for three reasons. (1) This objection begs the question by assuming that those who gamble are doing so based on greed, covetousness, and discontent. Just because gambling may be financially profitable doesn't mean that gambling necessarily entails greed, covetousness, and discontent. (2) Taken to its logical conclusion, this objection would condemn all profit-seeking activity (includ-

<sup>13</sup> Dabney, *The Practical Philosophy*, p. 485.

<sup>14</sup> Venn has written that while there are some differences between gamblers and investors/businessmen, there is an important respect in which they are alike: "insofar as chance and risk [are involved in investments and business ventures, investors and businessmen] may be fairly so termed [as gamblers], and in many branches of business this must necessarily be the case to a very considerable extent." *The Logic of Chance*, p. 386.

<sup>15</sup> Venn writes that insurance "is simply equivalent to a mutual contract amongst those who dread the consequences of the uncertainty of their life or employment, that they will employ the aggregate regularity to neutralize as far as possible the individual irregularity." *The Logic of Chance*, p. 373. Thus, to condemn gambling because it involves apparent contingencies is to condemn insurance policies as well.

<sup>16</sup> See, e.g., Hocking, *The Moral Catastrophe*, pp. 235-246.

<sup>6</sup> Williamson, G.I., *The Shorter Catechism*, (Phillipsburg, PA: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1970), vol. 2, p. 68.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> For a more detailed refutation of this objection, see my refutation of "The Greed Factor" objection below.

<sup>9</sup> A voluntary exchange may include an exchange of money, goods, labor/services, entertainment, etc. in any combination.

ing our occupations) since our salaries could foster greed as well. How absurd! The sinful attitude of greed doesn't necessarily inveigh against an activity just because that activity produces a profit. Scripture nowhere tells us that financial profit in and of itself is to be eschewed since it is the love of money and not money itself that is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10). (3) This objection, like the "gambling bug" objection, fallaciously moves from rightfully condemning abuse to condemning legitimate use without providing adequate Biblical warrant.

### 5. The Long Arm of the Law

Some argue that Christians shouldn't gamble because gambling is illegal in many jurisdictions. Indeed, where gambling is illegal, Christians must obey lawful authorities. But this argument doesn't tell against gambling *per se* for two reasons. (1) Just because something is illegal doesn't make it immoral *per se* since not all crimes are sins. A law criminalizing gambling doesn't make gambling evil in and of itself. Were the Christian to gamble in a jurisdiction that outlaws gambling, the sin would not be gambling; the sin would be violating the law and lawful authorities without abiding by the Biblical criteria for such disobedience. (2) This objection doesn't prove that gambling is morally wrong for the Christian if his particular jurisdiction permits its citizens to gamble which is the case in many jurisdictions.

### 6. Crimes and Misdemeanors

Dabney argues that the "practical proof of the immorality of gaming is, that all habitual gamblers proceed from 'fair gaming'

sooner or later, to tricks which even their own code condemns as frauds."<sup>17</sup> Still others argue against gambling by contending that gambling breeds crimes such as drug trafficking, prostitution, and theft. This objection falls prey to several blunders. (1) This objection is based on a slippery slope which is unproven. Until and unless those who voice this objection can prove (a) that there is a slope and (b) that it is slippery, they have not met the burden of proof that rests on their shoulders. (2) Even assuming that the slippery slope exists, this objection moves fallaciously from rightfully condemning abuse to condemning legitimate use.<sup>18</sup> It simply isn't true that all gamblers perpetrate frauds or sell drugs or prostitute themselves. (3) Undesirable social consequences may be prevalent in and around gambling establishments, but such crimes do not necessarily constitute an argument against the morality of gambling any more than crimes committed in and around bars would be an argument against drinking,<sup>19</sup> or any more than crimes committed in and around movie theaters would be an argument against the morality of attending a movie!

<sup>17</sup> Dabney, *The Practical Philosophy*, p. 485.

<sup>18</sup> Note how Dabney argues from habitual gambling to gambling itself — a rhetorically effective, but nonetheless fallacious category shift.

<sup>19</sup> During the so-called temperance movement, many teetotalers argued against drinking in this way. Their descendants are still around today; see, e.g., Hocking, *The Moral Catastrophe*, p. 201.

### 7. Oh Brother!

Some, as a last ditch effort, argue against gambling by contending that we shouldn't gamble because we may cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble. In order to properly apply the weaker brother passages to the case of gambling, however, we must understand (1) that the weaker brother is the one with the scruples and (2) that causing him to stumble means forcing or cajoling him to do that which he believes is wrong.<sup>20</sup> Thus, this objection doesn't prove that gambling itself is wrong; it only proves that we shouldn't force or cajole someone who thinks that gambling is wrong to gamble. Why? Because doing something you think is wrong is sinful, even if it is actually permissible (since the weaker brother would be doing it with the wrong motivation). God not only looks at our actions; He also examines our hearts (Prov: 21:2).

### SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Reformed view of Christian liberty holds that we are permitted to do anything that God doesn't forbid. While many Christians try to argue against gambling *per se* by contending that it is forbidden, their arguments simply don't stand up to scrutiny. Within Biblically prescribed limits, gambling *per se* is permissible. You can bet on it!

<sup>20</sup> Many wrongly think that causing a weaker brother to stumble means doing anything that offends him. Were this the case, we probably couldn't do anything since some brother out there would be offended.

## ADVOCATE 2: Gambling *Per Se* is Inconsistent With the Biblical Ethic

Before refuting the specific arguments of the Christian Gambling Advocate, I will sketch the case against gambling under the headings of three Biblical principles. I will refine the understanding of these principles under three further headings. Finally I will rebut several specific arguments of my opponent, even while stipulating agreement with several others.

**Principle #1:** *Gambling places our property under unnecessary and foolish risk, thereby violating the principle of stewardship which God requires us to exercise with respect to all the property which has been entrusted to us.*

That the risk is unnecessary is obvious. That it is foolish follows from the fact that in games of chance, losses might begin from the very first game, and are virtually guaranteed in the long run if playing against a "house" whose resources greatly exceed those of the gambler. Indeed, if one continues to stake bets on a chance outcome indefinitely, it will eventually lead to bankruptcy. The eventual ruin of one player or the other is a mathematical certainty, unless one party or the other quits before it happens (see, e.g. W. Warren, *Lady Luck: The Theory of Probability* (NY: Dover, 1963) pp. 330 ff.). Even the gambler who sincerely believes he can win must admit that he might not win:

his property, too, is subject to instant loss.

The objection, that it may be a legitimate use of money to risk small amounts of property for the "recreational" benefit of a game, is negated by the simple consideration: why not simply play the game without a stake of property? But in case this objection still seems to have some merit, it will be addressed in greater detail later on.

**Principle #2:** *Gambling is wrong, for it involves a desire to gain the property of one's neighbor without quid pro quo — that is, without an equitable exchange of value.*

This can be seen most clearly by realizing that gambling, unlike proper economic exchanges, is a "zero-sum game": the gain of one party is precisely equal to, and entails, the loss of the other party. Hoping to win, therefore, entails the simultaneous hope that your neighbor will lose. C.S. Lewis instinctively recognized this connection (though his preceding analysis faltered) when he said, "If anyone comes to me asking to play bridge for money I just say: 'How much do you hope to win? Take it and go away.'" For the Christian, then, this kind of activity is unacceptable, for it puts him in a position of desiring his neighbor's loss rather than his neighbor's prosperity: this violates the law of love (cf. Westminster Larger Catechism #114: "The duties required in the eighth command

[include].. to endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.")

Note carefully that the implied desire for your partner's loss is not entailed by a proper economic exchange, unless fraud is involved. If I trade my car for my neighbor Jack's horse, and we each enter the trade without compulsion, it is because my ends are better served by the horse, in my estimation; and Jack's by the car in his. I profit from the trade by gaining a horse at the expense of a car, and Jack profits from it by gaining a car at the expense of a horse. Though at first it seems paradoxical, in fact we can both profit from the transaction, for our ends and resources are different.

The objection, that the risk of loss was freely offered by both parties to the gambling "transaction", and specifically by the loser, is irrelevant; for my partner has no more right to make such an offer than I have. We have seen that my participation in the gamble involves immorality in two ways: my willingness to risk the uncompensated loss of a part of my estate, which is foolish, and my desire or willingness to deprive my neighbor of his, uncompensated, which violates the law of love. The immorality is deduced logically prior to the specification of

the transaction as voluntary or involuntary. Its voluntary nature cannot, then make it legitimate, any more than the handshake of duelists sanctifies the subsequent murder which takes place.

**Principle #3:** *Gambling is wrong in that it appeals to Chance for a favorable outcome, rather than God's Providence.*

One cannot in good faith pray for a favorable outcome of the game; but we are to pray without ceasing, and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. First, one would be praying for a loss on the part of one's neighbor; but we are to pray for the good of even our enemies. Second, it would be tempting God to beseech Him to grant an outcome based on a condition we have arbitrarily set up and for which we have no legitimate basis for invoking His aid.

Look at it another way: God's Providence is the ultimate controlling force of all events. But to place one's hope for gain on an arbitrary supposition of what His Providence will cause to fall out, when there is no reason to expect that He will do so, is presumptuous.

### **WE TAKE ACCOUNT OF BOTH BASIC TYPES OF GAMBLING IN THIS ANALYSIS**

The discussion so far applies most clearly to those gambles which involve pure chance — the roulette wheel or craps, for example. (Betting on sporting events falls into this category as well: the spread, if done skillfully, equalizes the chance of either selection winning.) Other kinds of games involve elements of skill which, by virtue of reducing the "sovereignty" of chance, might seem to change the morality of the games for the better. We are not talking about that knowledge and finesse which is presupposed for a game to be "fair" — knowing the ranking of poker hands, for example. We are referring to two kinds of skill which go beyond this. (a) In games such as bridge or poker, part of the strategy is to use bluff or other forms of deception to gain an advantage over one's fellow players. (b) In games such as blackjack, some players have devised ways of keeping track of past event (e.g. cards that have been dealt) in order to increase their odds when betting on future events (e.g. cards that will be dealt). They do this by exploiting the theory of conditional probabilities. Neither of these cases, however, mitigates the immorality of gambling. In the first case, why should the immorality of appealing to Chance in order to strip my neighbor of some of his property be lessened, simply because I add to the process my concentrated powers of deception? The second case is only an anomaly: by changing the presuppositions of the game, in effect the odds should be recalculated to restore the game to its status as "fair". The practical proof is this: no casino will allow any such person to play on once discovered. The market has a way of squeezing these anomalies out of action, even if the terms of the game must be changed. Also, we would be irked if the casino used such tactics: but in a hypothetical Christian setting (i.e., no "spoiling the Egyptians" allowed) why should there be a double standard?

### **ANALOGIES TO BUSINESS VENTURES, INSURANCE, ETC. ARE FALLACIOUSLY CITED**

My adversary claims that rejecting gambling because of its relation to chance would imply that one should also eschew business deals involving an element of risk. The implied argument appears to be that as this would be an unacceptable conclusion, the antecedent must be false; consequently, gambling properly so-called cannot be condemned on the ground of its appeal to uncertainty or the risk of loss.

In passing, I note that if the argument from the analogy to business ventures were actually valid we should be able to follow the analogy through, and it should be as permissible to devote a significant portion of one's life savings to the investment of "gambling" as it is to business ventures. My opponent, then, should not limit the application of his thesis to things like one-dollar football pools, but should come right out and declare that he would have no moral counter-advice to persons proposing to gamble, say, 30% of their life savings, provided of course that they were confident that they would win.

Second, even if it were necessary to concede the argument implied by the analogy to investments, it would not lead to my opponent's conclusion, for there still would remain the argument of Principle #2 — *no quid pro quo* — against his position, but which does not affect business ventures, insurance, etc.

Be this as it may, a close examination shows that the analogy of gambling to investments fails anyway. It is based on a failure to distinguish between uncertainty and randomness.

All events in creation are contingent upon certain other events occurring as a precondition, and are, therefore, uncertain (from a human standpoint). In this strict sense, we can say that everything from the rising of the sun tomorrow to the outcome of the dice I roll is "uncertain". The difference between the two extreme cases is seen by the crucially different way that we relate to them as we reflect on God's Providence. On the one hand, there is every reason to believe that, in God's Providence, the sun will rise tomorrow. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that, in God's Providence, I will roll "snake-eyes".

This difference of attitude will provide a sound litmus test for distinguishing between righteous and unrighteous risking of loss. When considering an investment, we should ask: "Is there a rational expectation and hope for increasing our outward estate by means of the venture, after carefully considering all factors of God's Providence known to be relevant?" The Christian investor should only move affirmatively if the answer to this question is Yes. The element of chance in gambling differs from the uncertainty entailed in a investment, in that there is in gambling no rational basis for hoping or expecting *not* to suffer loss.

An investment might fail, but this may not be read back to the automatic conclusion that making the investment was wrong, any more than getting lucky at gambling proves that the act of gambling was

right. Otherwise, we would be saying that the end justifies the means. Instead, the attitude of the heart, judged by the norm of Scripture, is the key to judging an action righteous or unrighteous. Finally, we need to remember that pursuing our calling on earth is a divine command which we may no more avoid than we may shirk getting out of bed in the morning — despite the risk and uncertainties. Even a failed business need not be a cause of shame.

### **CASES IN THE GRAY AREA**

Having laid the groundwork, we are now in a position to evaluate the cases of gambling that seem to be benign and acceptable. The most plausible instances seem to be cases where minor amounts of money are spent, and the loss is chalked up to either entertainment or social camaraderie. Now, it is not the thesis asserted here, that spending money for entertainment is always wrong, nor that the playing of games of chance *per se* is wrong. The cases in the gray area are difficult because we do not see the essence of gambling revealed in unmixed form: we see instead a mixture of several classes of behavior, making the analysis complex.

All ethical judgments pertaining to an individual's actions must include the intent of the individual in performing the action. For example, if an involuntary nervous twitch caused someone's arm to jerk, hitting a wall which dislodged a brick which fell and hit some people on the head, killing them, it would not count as murder, though the same action properly would count as murder had it been done with the intent of killing. I submit that it may be possible for an individual to participate in a game which others are using as an occasion for gambling (and therefore subject to the criticisms outlined above), yet do so from a matrix of intentions such that, for him, it is not gambling at all. In particular, I suggest asking the following questions in the course of examining one's heart on this issue of the legitimacy of seeking entertainment in games that are used for gambling.

1. Am I limiting my total expenditure (including the cost of the trip, if any) to the amount that I can, with a clear conscience before God, devote to mere entertainment?
2. Do I either hope or expect to win anything?
3. Do I find myself praying for a "win"?
4. Would I be equally enamored of the game if participation were free of charge?
5. Do I regard the bet as a "user fee" (rather than a stake in hope of winning my neighbor's property)? Do I always place the minimum permitted bet?

If the answers to these questions are "yes, no, no, yes, yes", then it is probably okay to play. But then, answering in this fashion proves that you are not, by intention, gambling at all, but rather paying to play a game that you find recreational or entertaining. This, then, is the resolution of the gray areas cases, which does not require compromising Biblical principle. Nevertheless, so inclined is the human heart to self-deception and rationalization, that I am in-



clined to recommend against participation even in this restricted sense. A little leaven leavens the whole lump — make certain there is not even a grain of it!

### BLUNDERS OF THE CHRISTIAN GAMBLING ADVOCATE

Most of the errors made by my opponent should now be obvious. For the sake of completeness, however, I will quickly run through them, starting with the numbered reasons under the section "What a Steal".

1.1 "Would gambling *per se* still be wrong if the gambler had no desire to acquire property and returned all property so acquired?" First, was this attitude and intent present at the commencement of the game? If "No", then the evasion has no force with respect to evaluating the moral stance of the individual at the moment of the game. If "Yes", then the game, as intended by the participant, was not gambling at all: the money was simply functioning for him as a cipher to keep track of winners and losers — not different really from the play-money of Monopoly.

1.2.1.3 Gambling cannot be classed a legitimate "voluntary exchange" for the reasons listed under Principle #2 above. The desire to acquire my neighbor's property to his net loss reflects a covetous spirit. The fact that he is willing to submit to the possibility of loss for the chance to do the same to me only adds to the viciousness of the situation.

1.4 Gambling is not an instance of gift-giving, since a gift ceases to be a gift if it is conditional. Like grace, there may not be strings attached. May we think of gambling as the awarding of a prize? Of course one could *define* the result of gambling as a prize, in which case we would have to say that some kinds of prizes are right and some are wrong.

The objections to gambling are not affected by defining it into a new category: conversely, prize-giving in general need not be susceptible to the moral criticisms defines above. The offerer of a prize is not subjecting his estate to potential uncompensated loss in exchange for the hope of gaining possession of someone else's property. On the contrary, he may be deriving advertising exposure from the event, or he may, out of generosity, wish to advance a good cause or stimulate achievement in some area of worthwhile endeavor. Against this there is no law. Sneaking in the notion of "labor" involved in skillful gambling makes exactly as much sense as suggesting that the professional burglar's intricate and demanding labors grant legitimacy to his gains. What makes the labor involved in a business morally exemplary, if it is, is not the mere exertion of effort, but rather the fact that it involves worthwhile service, and fulfillment of the obligations of a life calling, and does not involve moral turpitude. Other moral differences between business and gambling, both in the nature of the transaction, and in the relation to uncertainty, were described earlier. The favorable citation of footnote number 10 by our Christian gambling advocate seems to indicate that he holds forth the possibility of going into gambling as a profession. We challenge him to show on what basis he would try to dissuade a young man from entering the "field" of gambling as a life calling (provided of course that the young man intended to tithe, provide for his family, etc.).

2. The Gambling Bug — *Nolo contendere*.

3. Chances Are — We need not imagine a pagan lying prostrate before an idol of "Lady Luck" to realize the difficulty for the Christian in the relation to chance created by gambling. My opponent spindles

himself on the horns of a dilemma here. One may only look to Chance or God's Providence as the ground for any future random event. On the one hand, there is a sense in which it is unavoidable to "appeal to" Chance if one gambles with the hope of winning. Indeed, we could take as the very definition of a "random event" an event for which there is no more reason to expect, in God's Providence, its occurrence than the occurrence of an alternative. (Though His Providence determines the result of a flipped coin, there is no reason, based on what we know of the initial conditions of the flip, to expect His Providence to favor one side or the other: hence, an *a priori* 50-50 probability). Thus, some appeal to Chance is inherent in the nature of the case: the Christian is forced to desire a specific outcome for which there is no basis for trusting God's Providence to provide, nor for praying for a favorable outcome. On the other hand, the alternative is worse yet. He must then look to Providence for the implied hope of his neighbor's loss.

I willingly stipulate agreement with my opponent's position in sections 4-7, only pointing out, in connection with "Crimes and Misdemeanors", that once having seen the immorality of gambling, it is not surprising (though not a proof) to find it almost universally associated with organized crime and a debauched and thieving people; that the same state which is famous for its extensive and legal network of casinos also permits counties to legalize prostitution; and other such observations. Contrapositively, it is not surprising that we do not find roulette wheels at church picnics, to allow sporting brothers to bet against each other for fun and fellowship. The Christian ethic is a seamless garment, and we see its norms confirmed both in the observance and in the breach. For the Christian, then, all bets are off!

## ADVOCATE 1 Response

By focusing on the big picture, we can see that, so far, Advocate 2 (A2) has granted the (1) Reformed view of Christian liberty, (2) my seven Biblical limitations on gambling, (3) my responses to five common objections to gambling, and (4) the permissibility of gambling as a form of entertainment (no matter what he wants to call it).

Because A2 has practically given away the farm, our dispute has been narrowed considerably. In this response, I will identify a hidden premise which lurks behind A2's case, refute that premise and his principles which ride piggy back on it, and critique a few of his subsidiary arguments.

### COME OUT, COME OUT WHEREVER YOU ARE

Debating A2 is like playing a game of hide-and-seek: long after all of his arguments have been caught or have surrendered, there is one lone holdout — a hidden premise which undergirds much of his case: A2 implicitly assumes that gambling not only involves (1) putting up money or other stakes (2) on a so-called game of chance, contingency, or uncertainty (the two ele-

ments I noted); according to A2, gambling must also involve (3) a covetous intent to plunder one's neighbor.

### IT'S A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE *Quid Pro Quo*

The only way A2 can even argue that gambling necessarily involves a covetous intent to plunder one's neighbor is if he buys into the mistaken notion that gambling doesn't involve a *quid pro quo* — that is, an equitable exchange of value. No problem for A2 who plunges ahead and, with a straight face, argues that gambling is a "zero sum game" whereby the winner's gain is "precisely equal" to the loser's loss. A2's argument is mistaken for at least three reasons.

(1) The vast majority of gambling transactions are not limited to two parties such that one's gain is equal to his counterpart's loss. When, for example, parties A, B and C all "lose" nickels in a given slot machine and Party Z wins a nickel, who "lost" the nickel? Did the nickel come from A? from B? from C? or from someone else? Or — and this is the clincher — did the nickel come from the casino in which case it is not

even really proper to speak of it as a "loss" (since it is really a cost of doing business)? By assuming that gambling always involves a situation whereby the winner's gain is precisely equal to the loser's loss, A2 builds his case on a mistaken factual premise.

(2) Even assuming that gambling only involves a two-party transaction, A2 can only argue that the gain of one is equal to the loss of the other if he holds that economic value is something tangible (objective). The fatal flaw in A2's argument is the fact that, at this point, A2 doesn't account for intangible (subjective) values such as entertainment, and when he later does so, he refutes his own spurious notion of value. Suppose Party B was willing to part with his nickel as a "user fee" (A2's own words!) for the sheer enjoyment of it all. B's nickel, then, isn't a loss at all; it is simply the price he paid for what he gained in entertainment value. Thus, A2's own entertainment model refutes his spurious notion of value and the zero sum fallacy upon which it is based.

(3) By arguing that he need not address the fact that gambling transactions are voluntary, A2 commits two blunders. (a)



He simply begs the questions he is supposed to be proving at this point (i.e. that gambling necessarily violates Biblical stewardship and fails to involve a *quid pro quo*). (b) He then wraps up his question begging epithets in the garb of a false analogy by claiming that the voluntary nature of gambling no more justifies gambling than a handshake justifies duelling. Though A2 may wish that gambling is as much a violation of the eighth commandment (thou shalt not steal) as duelling is a violation of the sixth commandment (thou shalt not kill), A2 has yet to prove that such is the case. In the meantime, A2's argument, like a roulette wheel, goes round and round!

### Chances Are

A2 argues that gambling necessarily appeals to chance as opposed to the providence of God since the Christian cannot pray to win without praying for his neighbor's loss and since praying to win in such a situation is presumptuous. This argument is flawed in two respects.

(1) To the extent that gambling doesn't necessarily involve a win/loss situation (as shown above) is the extent to which we are not forced to pray for our neighbor's downfall.

(2) On A2's reasoning, a student taking a final exam which is graded "on the curve" couldn't pray for his success since, by definition, his success would entail the failure of another student in the class. A lawyer couldn't pray for a verdict since that would entail his opponent's loss. A mother couldn't pray for her son to hit a homerun to win a game since that would entail the loss of the other team. Indeed, we are commanded to pray ceaselessly, and we can pray that we succeed as long as we pray according to the will of God. This, of course, spins us right around to the question of whether Scripture permits us to gamble in the first place. Make no mistake about it: we are to pray that God's will be done. And there is nothing presumptuous about that!

### Stewardship

A2 argues that gambling violates Biblical stewardship by putting one's prop-

erty at unnecessary and foolish risk since gambling, if unabated, would eventually lead to bankruptcy. This argument runs into two difficulties.

(1) A2 simply asserts that money spent on gambling is spent unnecessarily and foolishly; he also shirks his burden by failing to provide definitions or guidelines for determining when a particular expense or investment is unnecessary and/or foolish. Until he does so, his argument is all bark and no bite.

(2) A2 fallaciously condemns use because of the potential for abuse (bankruptcy). Yet, on A2's reasoning, investing in real estate ventures would be intrinsically immoral since an investor who invests in risky ventures again and again would eventually bankrupt himself.

To be sure, we are commanded to be wise stewards of what God has entrusted to us, and several of my Biblical limits are designed to foster a sense of Biblical stewardship. But Biblical stewardship doesn't require us to cower in the corner of savings accounts (which, by the way, also involve a modicum of risk). Christ taught us parabolically that burying our "talents" in the ground (i.e. avoiding risk) is even more foolish than taking risk. A2 better stop digging.

### ODDS AND ENDS

#### Business is Business

A2 argues that my analogies to business ventures and insurance are flawed by first contending that such reasoning would justify significant wagers. How absurd! Both business ventures and gambling wagers are subject to the same Biblical limits. In his better moments, A2 would admit such.

Second, A2 valiantly tries to press his now-limping *quid pro quo* argument into service again, despite the fact that it has been beaten to a pulp above. It's time we all bade farewell to good ol' quid.

Third, A2 argues that analogies to business ventures fail to distinguish between chance (where there is no rational basis for hope) and uncertainty (where there is a rational basis for hope). A2's argument, though, misunderstands the nature of odds which exist precisely to inform us about the

rationality of various speculations. Suppose, for instance, that a business man has a one in six chance to get a return on a thousand dollar investment which otherwise abides by Biblical limits; suppose further that the same businessman can place the same amount of money and get the same return on a pure game of chance such as craps by betting on "seven" which also boasts a one in six chance. Exactly how is the former based on uncertainty and the latter on chance? Johann von Goethe put A2's predicament so well when he once wrote that "[w]hen an idea is wanting, a word can always be found to take its place."

Fourth, when A2 is not inventing words to cover the holes in his case, he tries to chide me by challenging me to say upon what basis I would dissuade a young man from entering "the 'field' of gambling" as a profession. Surprising as it may seem, I would not dissuade such young men. On the contrary, I would and do encourage them to become businessmen, entrepreneurs, real estate developers, etc.

### Crimes and Misdemeanors

A2 appears to cede my argument that crimes and other misdeeds committed in and around casinos no more prove that gambling is intrinsically immoral than crimes and misdeeds committed in and around movie theatres prove that attending movies is intrinsically immoral. While saying that such crimes are "not a proof" against gambling, A2 then proceeds to appeal to such crimes in a futile attempt to bolster his case (by means of guilt by association). If it looks like a proof and smells like a proof, then it must be a proof! Only one problem: it's not a good proof.

While A2 may not typically find roulette wheels at church picnics, he won't typically find alcohol, dancing, or "secular" music either! What we have here — thanks to A2 — is a new logical fallacy: *argumentum ad picnicum*, which is simply a variant of the *ad populum fallacy*. Face it: much of the so-called Christian ethic A2 speaks of is governed more by Fundamentalist taboos than by the Word of God. That's A2's real problem. You can bet on it!

## ADVOCATE 2 Response

One way the weakness of my opponent is evident, is that he refuses to endorse an example of gambling that does not have either entertainment or "business" as an underlying motive; yet neither his definition of gambling nor his list of restrictions drag these elements into the picture by necessity. Like a skillful Impressionist painter, my opponent stippled his coloration of gambling so that, depending on the angle of viewing, it looks now like an investment, now like recreation, and occasionally — but only from a distance — like gambling. One minute there may be the intent to return the money won; next moment, the money is merely a "prize" anyway; all of a sudden, it is merely a user fee; and on it goes. Put the qualifications all together at the same time, and you have an odd assortment of intentions that adds up to

anything but gambling. Thus, though the Christian Gambling Advocate (hereafter CGA) claims to defend the notion that "gambling *per se*" is in the domain of Christian liberty, he has failed to isolate the element of "gambling *per se*" in the situations which he wishes to endorse.

### An Essential Premise Elucidated

In all of this discussion, it is important to realize that there is indeed an implied premise in the definition of gambling, namely, that the reason for placing the (1) "stake" on a (2) chance outcome is the (3) desire and hope to receive back a quantity of value greater than that of the original stake. The third element is implied by the first and therefore need not be spelled out. It is the very nature of a "stake" to be born in this

context; else it would simply be called a price or admission fee. To deny that the third element is entailed in the placing of the gambler's stake would be to reduce gambling to the same level as pinball, bowling, or golf. Try asking any gambler if, in placing the bet, he hopes to win back the bet and more — he will assume you are being facetious.

### Shaking out the Guiddities

CGA's cavil, that the analysis of gambling as a zero-sum game fails to account for multiple-party scenarios, is trivially false. It is a zero sum game judged in terms of the set of all participants, however large that set may be. The soundness of the simplification to two players for discussion purposes is readily apparent. Pick any player from the set of participants and call his

winnings  $X$ . Now, the sum of the winnings of all other participants is  $(-X)$ , for a total of zero. The implications are the same as for the case of two players with a respective win and loss of  $X$  and  $-X$ . The slot machine, similarly, only spreads the transaction out over time — again, the essential economic relation is the same. Of course the casino or “house” is one of the players as well: other than the fact that the odds are tilted slightly in the house’s favor (thus making its continued viability possible), there is no ethical difference between the house and any other player.

Here is yet another index that gambling does not involve *quid pro quo*: after the “transaction,” the loser would prefer that he had won, and the winner is glad he didn’t lose. But in free economic exchanges, each party goes away glad to have made the exchange — preferring his final state of affairs to the state of affairs obtaining prior to the exchange.

CGA seriously misconstrues my contrast of the zero-sum game to proper economic exchange when he latches onto the *tangibility* of the things exchanged in my illustration. (Incidentally, all economic value — whether in reference to tangible or intangible objects — is subjective [not objective], which is simply to say this: people rank the relative desirability of things to them based on purely individual considerations.) The propriety of spending money for the privilege of playing an amusing game is not under dispute. We must restrict the discussion to the morality of that expenditure of property staked, or placed in hock, in exchange for the right to gain more than the amount staked, based on a chance event. Otherwise, we are arguing about bowling and golf — something I at any rate did not sign up to do.

### Separating the “User Fee” From the “Gamble Per Se”

It is not hard, in principle, to draw a sharp distinction between that amount of money which is spent for entertainment, and that which is going into the gamble as such. Imagine a graph with the horizontal axis labeled “PAYOFF” and the vertical axis labeled “Price I am willing to pay to play”. Starting at zero PAYOFF and increasing, plot the price you are willing to pay for the privilege of playing the game. The value plotted at PAYOFF=0 is the amount which is spent as pure “user fee”. If the plotted line is perfectly flat, then there is no value being staked purely in hopes of gaining a return — it is not a gamble, by intention, at all. On the other hand, if the line slopes upward as the PAYOFF increases, the amount of its upward movement is the amount which may be considered pure “gamble”. All my arguments apply to the latter only.

If “B’s nickel” (or B’s broken toothpick for that matter) is payment for the fun of watching a wheel spin, with no implied hope of gaining someone else’s nickel, then B’s intent is to spend, not gamble. If this seems like a fine distinction, let us remember Murray’s apt comment: “at the point of divergence, the difference between right and wrong is not a chasm but a razor’s edge.”

### Are All Actions Between Consenting Adults Innocent?

To spend or to gamble. The voluntary nature of the former is *essential* to its legitimacy, because of the subjective nature of value and the unlawfulness of theft. The impure desire giving rise to the latter — the desire to gain my neighbor’s property, to his net loss, in “exchange” only for my giving him, in gentlemanly fashion, the “right” to gain mine in like manner — is *assumed* to be voluntary (how could it be coerced?), and thus its “voluntariness” is irrelevant to its ethical standing. The world is full of examples of things assumed to be voluntary, and whose moral bankruptcy is not reduced by virtue of being voluntary: prostitution, duelling, etc. The burden of proof therefore falls squarely upon CGA to show how the voluntarism of gambling is sufficient to secure its moral soundness.

### Given Many Examples, “Chances Are” at Least One Will Be Right

But alas, it is not so. Grading on a curve would be unjust if its effect were to downgrade students for statistically insignificant variations in performance — but the injustice would not be on the part of the excellent student. A lawyer had better not pray for a verdict that he knows would be unjust. Losing the ballgame only “costs” the boy a bit of pride — and hopefully stimulates greater effort next season.

### Jesus Commands us to Gamble?

Bankruptcy is not an “abuse”; it is simply an inevitable consequence of a certain practice if persisted in indefinitely — which practice may, therefore, rightly be called foolish. Repeated investment in real estate, or in business ventures entailing an element of risk, is not guaranteed to lead to bankruptcy — or if it is, CGA has not given us any grounds for believing it.

### Some Unfinished “Business”

CGA equivocates between gambling (in the Las Vegas sense) and “gambling” (in the sense of being an entrepreneur) as regards the advice he would give a young man starting his career: this simply begs the question. Let us imagine the hypothetical case of a gambler who gets no particular pleasure from gambling, nor does he do it as a calling. He is going to Las Vegas with the intent of gambling his *entire nest egg*. He hopes to win big; if he does, he will tithe; if he loses it all, he will continue living off his normal wage. Now, without entertainment or business venture to hide behind, on what ground would CGA seek to dissuade this individual from his plan?

### Uncertainty, Randomness, and the Sovereignty of God

Sounds awfully metaphysical. But there seems to be enough confusion here about the nature of probability as it pertains to random events, and probability as it is referred to by investors, to warrant a slight digression.

When we speak of the probability of a random event  $X$  occurring, we mean the ratio of the number of events which can be classed as “ $X$ ” to the total number of possible

events. For example, list all possible hands that can be dealt to a player in a game of poker. Let this number of possible hands be  $N$ . Now, count the entries in this list containing exactly three matching cards. Let this number be  $T$ . The probability of being dealt “three of a kind”, then, is  $T/N$ .

What does it mean, however, to say “there is a one-sixth chance of this business succeeding”? There is no *a priori* meaning to this statement, for you can’t count the possible outcomes. There is no *a posteriori* meaning, for you can’t repeat the experiment a large number of times. In short, if businessmen speak this way, it is only as a heuristic to try to quantify their level of confidence of various outcomes; this confidence, in turn, is really only an intuition derived from experience and “sixth sense.”

The probability which one imputes to human action is intimately related to the extent of one’s knowledge of the persons. Someone who does not know me at all, would have to assign equal probabilities to my driving north, south, east, or west, when I get into my car for the first time each morning. Someone who knows me well, on the other hand, would assign a very high probability of my driving south — the direction I must go to get to my place of work.

We see, then, that there is a fundamental difference between the “uncertainty” of games of chance — which can be calculated from the ratio of possible events — and that of human events, including investments, which vary considerably with the extent of knowledge of the “players”. As knowledge of the “players” grows, the quantity of relative probabilities changes.

Consequently, it is only loosely speaking that we speak of quantifiable probabilities when it comes to investments. Superior knowledge of markets, trends, management, labor relations, etc. will, on the average, pay a dividend. The nature of uncertainty is fundamentally different in the cases of gambling and investment: this reinforces the argument regarding the relation of chance to our view of God’s Providence given in my first piece. Moreover, this doesn’t prove that repeated investments will lead to bankruptcy. Indeed, there is no contradiction to the thought that a society could exist where no investor ever suffered actual loss (though of course there would be the *potential* for loss). In gambling, however, loss, if not bankruptcy, on the part of someone is guaranteed. The gambler forces the issue: either he or his neighbor will certainly lose.

### Theological Misdemeanors

CGA rails against my observations of things often associated with gambling, even though I stated that the observations were not a proof. I submit that the underlying problem with CGA is his model of life as a playground. In contrast, the Biblical model, which we take from the creation account, is a garden. The garden was fundamentally a place of work, rest, fellowship, and worship. The longing for easy money, let alone the desire to trick some money from your brother by exploiting his similar desire, is something one can only imagine occurring after the fall. Let us move forward in redemptive history and pull this weed out at the roots!

# ADVOCATE 1 Concluding Remarks

## BACK TO THE BASICS

A2 has got it all wrong. Far from punishing Fundamentalism for A2's errors, I sought to admonish A2 for his Fundamentalist errors. Although I thought we shared a basic commitment to the Reformed view of Christian liberty, A2 has shown his true Fundamentalist stripes. Not only has he simply assumed that gambling is guilty until proven innocent; he has also proudly worn the crown as a literalist's literalist by attempting to impugn my obviously metaphorical reference to life as a "playground." A2 contends that life is like a "garden." Fine. Why don't we just say that life is like both a "playground" and a "garden" — a "park" if you will — and move on to more significant areas of dispute?

## A MATTER OF SEMANTICS?

At the most fundamental level, A2 and I have radically different conceptions of the definition of gambling. Though I provided adequate lexical support and defined gambling as (1) putting up money or other stakes (2) on a contingency, A2, by contrast, simply asserts — without any proof — that gambling must also involve (3) a desire to "receive back a quantity of value greater than that of the original stake."

What is lurking behind this third element? According to A2, Christians are prohibited from putting up money on a contingency if they have the desire to gain more than they put up because by so doing, Christians plunder their neighbors.

## THE RETURN OF QUID

Of course, one can only plunder his neighbor by involuntarily taking or misappropriating what rightfully belongs to his neighbor. A2's third element, then, is just good ol' quid in another guise. A2's attempt to resuscitate quid, however, is fatally flawed.

## On the House

If, as A2 admits, there is no difference between the "house" and any other player, then A2 fails to account for the fact that any money paid out by the house is simply a prize. A2 never provided adequate reasons for allowing some prizes and not others. Until he does so, his digital win/loss scenario doesn't adequately account for transactions involving the house.

## Don't Worry, Be Happy

Even assuming a two-party transaction, A2 is still mistaken when he argues that the way to distinguish "free economic exchanges" from gambling is that with free exchanges, the parties are happy in that each party prefers his post-exchange state to his pre-exchange state. This "be happy" distinction is hardly a sound litmus test for assessing the propriety of economic exchanges. On A2's reasoning, any time "buyer's remorse" sets in (i.e. when a buyer prefers his pre-exchange state to his post-exchange state), the moral propriety of an exchange would be in jeopardy. Contrary to A2's artificial and mistaken litmus test, a buyer's state of mind after a given transaction is irrelevant.

## Beyond Good Intentions

From the outset, I have argued that opponents of gambling in general and A2 in particular wrongly assume that people gamble necessarily to acquire money. A2 has insisted that as long as the money one puts up is put up solely as a "user fee" one is merely spending (which is permissible) and not gambling (which is impermissible). But does A2's distinction really hold up?

Suppose that Party B deposits a silver dollar into a slot machine solely as a "user fee" (i.e. he meets A2's test by not having an intent to acquire any money in return). Suppose further that B wins \$100.00. Is B obligated to return the \$100.00? If A2 says "no" then he has abandoned his *quid pro quo* argument because the money B "won" — on A2's reasoning — still came at the "loss" of others. If, however, A2 says "yes" then he has abandoned his intent test (which A2 has consistently held to be a sufficient test for determining the moral propriety of putting up the "user fee"). A2's case is hopelessly divided against itself — graphs and all!

## Drawing Straws

A2 claims that I need to prove that the voluntary nature of gambling is sufficient to prove its moral soundness. By arguing that the propriety of X doesn't necessarily depend on whether X is done voluntarily (with which I wholeheartedly agree), A2 is knocking down a straw man. Again and again he begs the crucial question by offering examples which Scripture clearly forbids (e.g. prostitution, duelling). What A2 has consistently failed to do is to prove that gambling necessarily involves plundering (i.e. stealing from) one's neighbor. In my opening remarks, I defined stealing as taking or misappropriating the property of others without their consent (involuntarily). A2 has been unable or unwilling to prove that gambling necessarily (1) takes or misappropriates the property of others (2) without their consent. Until he does so, he has not even made out a *prima facie* case that gambling is stealing. From the outset, my position has been that voluntarism is a necessary though not sufficient condition to prove the propriety of gambling. A2's problem is that he has failed to prove that gambling is necessarily involuntary. The buck stops with A2.

## CHANCES ARE

A2 claims that gambling requires appeals to chance since praying for success necessarily would entail praying for the failure of your neighbor. I responded by noting that A2's argument depends upon his appeal to quid which has been rendered futile. I also pointed out that A2's reasoning would forbid praying for success on an exam graded on the curve, a trial verdict (not an unjust verdict!), or a homerun since success in each scenario entails the failure of another. A2's response skirts the real issue: Christians can simply pray that God's will be done. There is nothing presumptuous or idolatrous about that!

## NO ONE'S BUSINESS?

In his first response, A2 challenged me to say upon what basis I would encourage

a young man to enter the field of gambling as a *life-calling* "provided of course that the young man intended to tithe, provide for his family, etc." After I satisfactorily answered that hypothetical, A2 now wants to change the terms of the hypothetical to involve one who is not called to gamble and who wants to gamble his entire nest egg. No problem. Such an individual would not be abiding by the Biblical limits both A2 and I share in common. What's the point A2?

The only way A2 can even argue that I equivocate on the meaning of "gambling" and beg the question by arguing that I would and do encourage young men to become businessmen, entrepreneurs, and developers is if he first begs the question in the opposite direction. While A2 has made many rhetorical overtures, he has done little to jostle my analogy to business investments since most business investments involve putting up money or other stakes on a contingency (and even on A2's definition, the vast majority, if not all, business ventures involve the desire to gain more than what was put up!).

The stock market, for example, provides one of the strongest analogies to gambling. Aside from his rhetorical flurries, then, A2 has not even come close to refuting the analogy to business investments.

## WORSE THAN AN INFIDEL

While A2 and I have sought to explore gambling in a thorough, yet light-hearted fashion, I must confess that this topic really is no joke to me. My own life has been tragically scarred by a father who was a compulsive gambler. Not only did he gamble paychecks, jewelry, and automobiles without blanching an eyelid; he even went so far as to steal from my piggy bank. Needless to say, by stealing practically anything and everything he could get his hands on, he failed to provide for even the basic needs of his family. He also worshipped lady luck, was motivated by deep-seated covetousness, disobeyed lawful authorities, and perpetrated acts of fraud on others.

My story is not unique. Others, no doubt, could tell similar — perhaps even more horrific — stories if not about gambling, then about drinking or a host of other activities. So horrified was I that as a young child, I made it my mission (as Fundamentalists are prone to do) to condemn gambling outright and other activities such as drinking. If ever there were a person who would have every reason to stand in A2's shoes!

But praise be to God who has taught me in spite of my personal background that ever and always I am to be constrained by Scripture alone which clearly teaches that we are free to do anything that God doesn't forbid. Though my father's excesses were clearly forbidden by God, I have learned that I cannot condemn gambling *per se*. Indeed, we should rightfully condemn abuse; but we should also be wary of those who, like A2, condemn legitimate use within proper Biblical limits.

Scripture alone is our standard. Not traditional wisdom. Not public opinion. And not the commandments of men. Δ

# Book Reviews

## Mugged By Biology

***Enemies of Eros* by Maggie Gallagher**

**Bonus Books, 1989**

**Reviewed by James Sauer**

Battle lines are being drawn in Evangelicalism on the "Women's issue." Last year the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood put out the "Danvers Statement"—a manifesto of Traditionalist and Conservative doctrine on the roles of the sexes. This year's entry from the progressivist Social Evangelicals comes from Christians for Biblical Equality — and offers an equalitarian view of the Scripture. While the inerrancy controversy took place in our seminaries and pulpits, feminism hits us exactly where we live: in the pocketbook, in the nursery, and in the bedroom.

Though feminism is on the ascendance among the Evangelical power groups, theological progressives seem oblivious to the raging battle taking place in the culture at large. While feminism is the official creed of the Humanist elites, a significant group of authors and scholars are breaking with the New Feminist World Order. These Neo-Conservative writers — Gilder in *Men and Marriage*; Michael Levin in *Feminism and Freedom*; Brian Mitchell in *Weak Link*; and now Maggie Gallagher in *Enemies of Eros* — have been battling the Amazons of the Androgynous State with naturalistic, empirical data.

The message is simple; Men and women are not the same. Women have babies; men don't. Gallagher makes it clear: "None of the very real problems facing women today, from finding ways to combine fruitful work with a nurturing family life, to rescuing women from the economic disaster of divorce, can be resolved without abandoning the failed doctrine of sexual androgyny." But it is just that doctrine that can-

not be abandoned without a full admission of feminist bankruptcy.

The feminist mission, therefore, is to make war on biology — and to do it they must make war on traditional women. As Miss Gallagher says: "The lie of androgyny was invented, as it were, to give a rationale for reshaping our social institutions so that women could not safely choose family over career." And family cannot be safely chosen. In its place we are forming

**None of the very real problems facing women today...can be resolved without abandoning the failed doctrine of sexual androgyny**

a gender-free Collectivist society supported by daycare centers, birth control clinics, abortion mills, career workshops, porn shops, singles bars, and divorce ceremonies. To oppose the Way Things Are is to risk social stigma and financial ruin. To submit to the Unisex Order is to risk the judgment of God.

The effects of the Androgynous Experiment have never been more stark. With every new social demographic survey, we wonder if things can get much worse for family life in America. Gallagher summarizes the dissolution:

And all the while women are getting poorer, as the fabric of our family life which restrains the untutored aggression of men and binds them to us unravels. Our children are fewer in number, too few now even to replace the population. Those that remain are more often battered, beaten, neglected, isolated, sexually-used, or simply ignored. More girls, seeking love,

end up pregnant and abandoned. More boys (seeking gender) end up as thugs and beasts, or as accident and suicide statistics. Brutalized by divorce and paternal abandonment, children long for stable family life, for erotic attachment, but are unable to achieve it. The cycle repeats, spiralling progressively downward, all because of our determined ignorance of a few basic facts of life.

Meanwhile, the social Evangelical Churchocrats, ignorant of the basic facts of life, trundle out the Feminist blather and project a vision of egalitarian marriage, church life, and society. Ignoring the biological needs of our humanity; they begin with abstractions, perversely twisting Scripture in the fundamental areas of family and church polity. Clearly, when Paul said that women should not hold authority over men in the Church — he meant something by it. When Paul told wives to submit to their husbands — he meant submit, and not lead.

Maybe, and just maybe, God understood our male and female psychologies better than Phil Donahue.

As for arguments in marriage, the Christians for Biblical Equality believe such tiffs are to be resolved like good middle-class professionals by seeking "resolution through biblical methods of conflict resolution rather than one spouse imposing a decision on the other." Well, it works great on paper.

This so-called Biblical Feminism is all very nice for highly educated, well paid women of the Evangelical Elite; unfortunately, it results in bitterness, poverty, sterility, abuse, loneliness, and divorce for their less privileged sisters. They must pay, and pay bitterly, for making war on their biology.

Maggie Gallagher, and millions of other women, have been mugged by reality. Perhaps if Christians will not listen to the Bible, the Word of God Almighty Himself, they might at least believe in reality when it slaps them in the face. Maggie Gallagher has. Δ

# Exegetical Cats on Hot Textual Bricks

***The Grace of God, The Will of Man* by Clark Pinnock, Gen. Ed.**

**Academie/Zondervan, 1989**

**Reviewed by Doug Wilson**

*The Grace of God, the Will of Man* is a volume of essays presenting "a case for Arminianism" edited by Clark Pinnock. Because of the different nature of the various essays, and because of their somewhat erratic quality, the book is a difficult one to review.

It may be best to make a few general comments about some of the book's more obvious shortcomings, and then respond in more detail to the strongest point of the book, which is the recognition that in the Bible the atonement is frequently presented as universal in scope. The book misapplies the point, but it is misapplied with sufficient effectiveness to require an answer from those Christians who acknowledge the exhaustive sovereignty of God.

## Problems

1. The front cover of the book says that it is a case for Arminianism. Actually, it is quite a few cases for Arminianism. The theological positions represented appeared to be neo-evangelicalism, a more traditional Arminianism, Seventh-day Adventism, anti-classical theism, and so on. Consequently, a number of the arguments presented applied as much to fellow-contributors as they did to the Reformed position. In short, the bugle here was blowing indistinctly.

2. There was not enough common ground assumed in order to engage effectively in debate with conservative "Calvinists." For example, I. Howard Marshall's essay treats as an open question whether or not Paul wrote the Pastoral epistles. "...the author of the Pastorals (whom I shall call the Pastor without any prejudice to the question of whether he could also be called Paul)..." (p. 54). The question of God's sovereignty is difficult enough when there is a common commitment to the authority, ve-

racity, and inerrancy of the Scriptures. When it is allowed that the clear claim of Pauline authorship made in the Pastorals could be wrong, then why couldn't other claims be also wrong?

3. Some of the contributors seemed unsure of themselves. For example, when Grant Osborne, in his essay on the Gospel of John, refers to John 5:21, he says, "There is no denying the strong predestinarian thrust of this verse. Yet how absolute is the statement?" (p. 247). And in responding to an argument by Carson, he says, "Certainly there is a lot to be said for this view." (p. 248). In some cases, there appeared to be a desire not so much as to refute Reformed theology, as to tone it down.

## Postmillennialism and the Doctrines of Grace

The strongest point made in the book concerns the universality of the gospel. The teaching on this in the Scripture is so clear that Arminians can use this argument with devastating effect against certain enclaves within Reformed circles. Unfortunately, Arminians tend to think that the argument applies across the board. For example, Terry Miethe writes, "In 1 John 2:2 we read, 'He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.' How could it be put any plainer? The contrast here is clear. Jesus is the 'atoning sacrifice' for the sins of the church, but 'not only for ours': Jesus paid the price of sin for all people." (p. 82)

Reformed Christians would agree that this is a mishandling of the verse, but they do not agree among themselves as to *why* it is a mishandling. And to be frank, I believe there are Reformed interpretations of it which do not do justice to the universality to be found there.

All Reformed Christians believe that the atonement is definite, or particular (or put another way, *substitutionary*), and that it is efficacious. Jesus laid down His life for the sheep. But how many sheep are there?

Reformed Christians who hold to a pessimistic eschatology believe that Jesus died for the elect (true), but that the elect are comparatively few in number (false). This puts them in an unenviable position in the debate with Arminians. "World" means the "few elect?" "All men" means "few men?"

The Reformed Christian who has an optimistic eschatology, on the other hand, can assert the particularity of Christ's redemptive work, and also assert that it is for the world. Why? Because in the postmillennial view, *the world is elect*.

The postmillennial perspective is acknowledged in just one place in this book, in a footnote. In addition, the way it is acknowledged seems to indicate a real unawareness of the tenuousness of Arminian universalism. The reference concerns B.B. Warfield's "rather pretentious" treatment of 1 Jn. 2. Terry Miethe quotes Douty in the footnote thus: "Here the former president of Princeton Seminary puts forth an altogether novel view of John's words, but with all the assurance in the world. Even a great scholar is not warranted in advancing an interpretation never heard of without some diffidence. He tells us that the Apostle was not an 'each and every' universalist (that Christ is the propitiation for the sins of all human beings), but that he was an 'eschatological' universalist (that, in the end, Christ will have a saved world to present to the Father, when the Gospel shall have subdued it." (p. 94).

If a debate on the atonement were to be conducted between an Arminian and an eschatologically pessimistic Calvinist, the Arminian would appear to have the advantage. There *are* many passages which describe Jesus dying for the sins of the *world*. If we consider the biblical data that God loves the world (Jn.



3:16), the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world (Jn. 1:29), that Jesus was the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (I Jn. 2:1-2), that Jesus in His death would draw all men to himself (Jn. 12:32), and that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself (II Cor. 5:19), the advocate of *limited* atonement has a problem. How can the belief that Christ died for a *few* be reconciled with the clear teaching that He died for the *world*?

There are three positions we may consider here in the light of this.

1. There is the Arminian, who retains the universal sweep or extent of the universal passages, but who does not retain the power evident in them. His atonement is *extensive*, but not *efficacious*. He *limits* the atonement with regard to its power to save. This was seen clearly in Miethe's treatment of I Jn. 2:1-2 quoted above. He waters down the statement of John. John says that the death of Christ was an atoning sacrifice, or propitiation for the sins of the world. What does propitiation mean? It means to *turn wrath aside*. God, in Christ, has turned His wrath away *from the world*. Miethe turns this into "paying the price" for all people. The passage declares propitiation for the world, and an Arminian *limits* this to mean potential propitiation.

2. Then there is the eschatologically pessimistic Reformed Christian, who retains the efficacy of the passages, but who neglects the sweep, or extent of them. I remember one time, before I understood the doctrines of grace, picking up a book by a well-known Reformed writer to see what he "did with" John 3:16. What he did was inexcusable exegetically; he said that "world" meant the "elect." Coupled with this was the assumption that the elect are few in number, so all I saw was a mangling of the word "world." Sure, "world"

doesn't mean every last person, but neither does it mean "just a handful." He *limited* the atonement in its extent.

3. And last, there is the eschatologically optimistic Reformed Christian, who holds to a view which our footnote says was "never heard of." Well, I suppose *that* depends upon what you read. While this position has not been common in this century, in prior

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In other words, He did not  
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eras it has been very common indeed. I would refer the reader to *The Puritan Hope* by Iain Murray for a fine introduction to the subject. The optimistic Reformed position cannot be touched by the potential universalism of the Arminian ("everyone could be saved, *if...*"). Why would he trade in actual salvation for the world for a potential, and highly unlikely salvation of the world?

Reformed postmillennialism holds that *the world is elect*. This does not mean that every last person is elect, but that the world certainly is. This is the one position that does *not* limit the atonement. It is unlimited in its power to save (*contra* Arminianism), and it is unlimited in that it is worldwide in scope; the world will be successfully evangelized (*contra* pessimistic Calvinism).

To illustrate:

Suppose, in anticipation of a major sporting event, I said, "The whole city will be there!" Now let us interpret this statement the three ways discussed above:

1. The Arminian believes that the whole town *could* have been there. The stadium is big enough, and there are free tickets for every last person at the door. But this response is lousy, and we all know the stadium will be virtually empty.

2. The pessimistic Calvinist believes that only twenty people will really be there, those twenty were required to come, and that is all the management of the stadium wanted anyway. We are allowed to say that the "whole city" was there because these twenty are obviously the ones who counted the most.

3. The Reformed postmillennialist requires that the whole town will actually be there, the stadium will be full, although a few people will be at home sick, and there were some others who did not want to come.

Obviously, the only position which does justice to the phrase "the whole city will be there" is the Reformed postmillennialist position.

And what is our job? To preach the gospel in all the world, with the confidence that Jesus, lifted up, *will draw* all men to himself. It is our job, enabled by the Holy Spirit, to fill the stadium.

We pray and preach and write with confidence because we know that Jesus did not come into the world to condemn it but to save it. In other words, He did not come to give saving the world the old college try.

In conclusion, the best argument presented in this book against the Reformed faith has no force at all when its defenders stand upon the electing grace of God as the only sure hope for the salvation of a lost and sinful world. Δ

# Novelties, Nonsense, and Non Sequiturs

## What About the Rights of Animals Kidnapped by Other Animals?

*Scientific American* reports that two scientists, McClintock (Univ. of Alabama) and Janssen (Loyola, Chicago), conducting research in Antarctica "have discovered that a shrimplike crustacean the size of a small match head holds an even smaller snaillike mollusk hostage....The kidnapper, which is known as an amphipod, abducts the tiny mollusk, or pteropod, because it produces a noxious chemical that wards off predatory fish.

The fish, which normally gobble up amphipods but avoid pteropods, 'would swim up to the [pair] and stop — clearly looking at the object — then turn and swim away,' McClintock says. Fish that were hand-fed the duo quickly spat them out....

Pteropods do not seem to enjoy the ride. They retract tightly and do not feed while in captivity — which may last more than a week. Because the researchers have never found any dead pteropods on an amphipod, they conclude that an amphipod probably releases the hostage before it starves, then grabs another one."

The pressing question is: should the pteropod's court-appointed attorney seek restitution from the amphipod or ask the state to provide rehabilitation?

## Now We're Talking Ethics

R. Emmett Tyrrell, editor of *The American Spectator*, notes "that a high rabbinic court in New York city had excommunicated Rep. Barney Frank (D.-Mass.) for 'desecrating the name of G-d and the Jewish People, for bringing dishonor and disgrace upon the high office of congressman, and for promoting and encouraging the moral corruption of society.'

Not a body to be outdone, the House Ethics Committee found Rep. Frank guilty of fixing parking tickets for Mr. Stephen L. Gobie, his former housekeeper and driver."

## Truth-in-Labeling Should Be Expanded

The U.S. Congress recently passed the first comprehensive revision of nutritional "truth-in-labeling" laws in 17 years. The bill's chief sponsor, Ohio Democrat Howard Metzenbaum, complained that consumers "have been besieged by inaccurate nutrition claims...[but now] a bold health claim on the front of the package won't be contradicted by the fine print on the back."

Now if we could only apply the same standards to the U.S. government which has given us such "truth-in-labeling" delights as Social Security insurance, taxation as revenue enhancement by means of voluntary compliance, public education, and the Orwellian *Operation Just Cause*.

## Two Cheers for Medieval Presbyterian Dogmatism

In a recent *Free Inquiry* testimonial, "Why I am Not a Presbyterian," Hilliard Bennett writes that "[t]here is no doubt in my mind that there exists some sort of supreme management in nature. If there were no such management, the planets would crash into one another, goats might breed monkeys,...but I would not call this management of the universe 'God,' because the word 'God' gets fouled up in semantics...."

This unquestionable orthodoxy surprisingly landed Bennett in conflict with his elders. He explains, "I allowed myself to be voted in as an elder... [but] being a new elder I was required to make a statement about my Christian experience. Certain influential elders found my tale incompatible with Presbyterianism and prevailed upon the other elders to join in booting me out. That did it. My cocoon was breaking, and with Presbyterian help. Previously I was quite comfortable...because I had presumed that Presbyterians didn't take medieval dogmatism seriously anyway." The gall of it! The horror! Presbyterian elders being required to believe in God! What's next?

Bennett continues, "[t]he realization that I had been so naive about Presbyterian orthodoxy was a blow....I was in a state of crisis. At this point I needed a book on secular humanism to replace the Holy Bible, and a secular humanist establishment in which to find a haven for my battered spirit." How do we Christians miss such obvious inferences? These new-found humanists are just too sharp.

## A Little Latent Legalism from a Leader?

In a *Christianity Today* editorial, Kenneth Kantzer offers his justification for writing the foreword to the new edition of Sider's *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*. Kantzer says that though he has been a critic of the book, Sider is right in identifying "the most serious problem facing the Christian church today...[as] materialism not as a philosophical theory but as a way of life."

In opposition to the predominant "materialistic-lifestyle," Kantzer says, "[w]ithout suggesting for a moment every Christian must do the same, I know certain things are right, and I can do them. I can live my lifestyle a mite below the average in my community."

So, not only can some action — a simple lifestyle — be "right" in some circumstances but not obligatory for others in the same circumstances (as Kant spins in his grave), but where is this "non-universal obligation" for a simple lifestyle found in Scripture? The Book of Ezekiah? Psalm 151?

## More Anti-Human Eco-Mysticism

Chris Kopzynski, a climber with "international climbing credentials" recently explained to a Gonzaga University audience that "[t]he world has a population of 5.3 billion and it's increasing dramatically." [yawn]

"The problem is, we've been given a 12-month breeding season. Really, what we need is a one-month breeding season like elk."

Speak for yourself.

Δ

# End Your Frantic Desperation

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