

ANTITHESIS

A Review of Contemporary Christian Thought and Culture

**WE BEGIN OUR
SECOND YEAR
OF PUBLICATION!**

INSIDE:

**J.I. Packer on the Beauty
of Puritan Worship,
Bergsma on Islamic Revelation,
and a Debate on Public Education**

"We need to make available the conclusion of all the world's great religions concerning the unity of humanity....We need a synthesis between science and religious or esoteric traditions.... This synthesis, this quasi-religion, could be called a new ecological ethic....The New World we envision involves a cycling back to an interdependence, not only with other people but with other organisms of the planet."

Paul Ehrlich

"Though there are very many nations all over the earth,... there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities,...one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God....To the City of Man belong the enemies of God,...so inflamed with hatred against the City of God."

Augustine

The Unchanging Character of God's Word

Steve Schlissel.....7

The Puritan Approach to Worship

J.I. Packer.....13

Contrasting Islamic Revelation

Derke Bergsma.....19

A Case Against Education Vouchers

Jack Phelps.....21

Wrestling With Wesley

Douglas Wilson.....27

Purging a Problem

James Sauer.....32

January/February 1991

Volume II, Number 1

\$4.00

SVTILHIS

I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.

Genesis 3:15

My covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; For I will make you the father of a multitude of nations...and kings shall come forth from you. And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you.

Genesis 17:5-7

Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Deuteronomy 6:4,5

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 1:7

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited us and accomplished redemption for His people, and has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of David His servant — As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets from old — Salvation from our enemies, and from the hand of all who hate us; To show mercy toward our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant — the oath which He swore to Abraham our father.

Luke 1:68-73

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations."

Matthew 28:18,19

We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

II Corinthians 10:5

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

I Corinthians 1:20

Though there are very many nations all over the earth,...there are no more than two kinds of human society, which we may justly call two cities,...one consisting of those who live according to man, the other of those who live according to God....To the City of Man belong the enemies of God,...so inflamed with hatred against the City of God.

Augustine

Without Christ, sciences in every department are vain....The man who knows not God is vain, though he should be conversant with every branch of learning. Nay more, we may affirm this too with truth, that these choice gifts of God — expertness of mind, acuteness of judgment, liberal sciences, and acquaintance with languages, are in a manner profaned in every instance in which they fall to the lot of wicked men.

John Calvin

Christ is exalted in his sitting at the right hand of God, in that as God-man, he is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father, with all fulness of joy, glory and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend his church, and subdue their enemies; furnisheth his ministers and people with gifts and graces, and maketh intercession for them.

Westminster Large Catechism

There can be no appeasement between those who presuppose in all their thought the sovereign God and those who presuppose in all their thought the world-be sovereign man....Rather than wedding Christianity to the philosophies of Aristotle or Kant, we must openly challenge the apostate philosophic constructions of men by which they seek to suppress the truth about God, themselves, and world,...so that we may present Christ without compromise to men who are dead in trespasses and sins, that they might have life and that they might worship and serve the Creator more than the creature.

Cornelius Van Til

The Christian cannot be satisfied so long as any human activity is either opposed to Christianity or out of connection with Christianity. Christianity must pervade not merely all nations but also all of human thought.

J. Gresham Machen

ANTITHESIS

Antithesis (ISSN 1049-8737), a review of contemporary Christian thought and culture, is published bi-monthly, six issues per year, by Covenant Community Church of Orange County, O.P.C. (4521 Campus Dr. #349, Irvine, CA 92715).

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscription rates for individuals are \$18.50 for one year, \$34.00 for two years. The special student rate is \$13.00 for one year, \$25.00 for two years. Foreign subscriptions are \$21.00 for one year, \$39.00 for two years. Institutional subscriptions are \$29.00 for one year, \$39.00 for two years. Individual copies and back-issues are \$4.00. Subscription requests and back-issue orders should be sent to:

Antithesis
4521 Campus Dr., #435
Irvine, CA 92715

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES

We invite readers to submit articles dealing with all aspects of Christian thought and practice. Articles should be typewritten or computer printed, and double spaced. Notes must contain full bibliographic data.

A writer's introduction for *Antithesis* is available upon request. Manuscripts not accepted for publication will be returned only if they are accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Editorial correspondence, reviews, and articles should be forwarded to:

Antithesis
P.O. Box 503
Pullman, WA 99163

Compuserve I.D. - 71621,3501

© by Covenant Community Church of Orange County 1990. All rights reserved. Permission to copy articles for personal or classroom use is hereby granted. No other reproductions are permitted, except by written permission of the publisher.

Articles appearing in *Antithesis* express the views of the respective authors and not necessarily the views of any other persons.

Editor

Douglas M. Jones III

Senior Editors

L. Anthony Curto
David G. Hagopian
Timothy J. Harris
Ellery C. Stowell
Greg L. Bahnsen

Contributing Editors

Douglas J. Wilson
Thomas Schirrmacher

Circulation Manager

Karien Cunningham

Technical Editors

Jamie Hagopian
Jolee White
Vicki White
Nancy Wilson

Production Assistants

Scott Lehart Mike Nelson
Teri Lehart Stacy Nelson
Paula Jones Willie Winnick
Carol Winnick

Contents

Feature Articles

- 7 **The Unchanging Character of God's Word**
Steve Schlissel

Surrounded by a great cloud of historical witnesses, the church currently faces a holy war in her midst for the truth, honor, and glory of God.

- 13 **The Puritan Approach to Worship**
J.I. Packer

The awe, depth, delight, and wholeheartedness of Puritan worship stands in stark contrast to contemporary Christian practice.

- 19 **Contrasting Islamic Revelation**
Derke Bergsma

Islamic revelation is grounded in an atomistic, ahistorical, and ultimately arbitrary theological context.

- 21 **A Case Against Education Vouchers**
Jack Phelps

Though deceptively appealing, voucher programs pose a serious threat to the religious autonomy of Christian schools.

- 27 **Wrestling With Wesley**
Douglas Wilson

Biblical integrity forbids a whitewashing of Wesley's scandalous practices.

- 32 **Purging a Problem**
James Sauer

The curious aesthetic attraction of the heresy of purgatory rests on a spiritual truth.

Departments

- 2 **Observing the Current**

Machen on Kuwait, the bankruptcy of Conservatism, the arrogance of Protectionism, and more...

- 5 **Second Opinions**

Readers speak out on previous issues.

- 6 **Christianity Yesterday**

A moving testimony of a Scottish Covenanter

- 38 **For the Record**

David Hagopian sketches the Biblical meaning and marks of the church

- 40 **Issue and Interchange**

Douglas Wilson and Robert Simonds debate the moral permissibility of public schooling

- 47 **Book Review**

History Through the Eyes of Faith by Ronald Wells reviewed by Paul Waibel

- 48 **Novelties, Nonsense, and Non Sequiturs**

Notable truths, fallacies, and arrogances making the rounds

Observing the Current...

J. Gresham Machen Was Right About the Gulf Crisis

When evangelicals such as Dean Curry (*A World Without Tyranny*) encourage us simply to absorb a Reagan/Bush-style foreign policy as properly Biblical, the heroic defender of Protestant orthodoxy, J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) highlights our sad captivity to the foreign policy status quo.

Machen is not only known for his passionate and principled defense of Biblical orthodoxy against Protestant apostasy but also for his intense concern for the public issues of his day.

Machen openly interacted with questions regarding state education, freedom of expression, and social progress. He spoke out against the "alarming bureaucratization of the United States" and Christianity's opposition to "soul-killing collectivism." He stridently opposed the proposed Child Labor Amendment — "a heartless cruelty masquerading under the guise of philanthropy" — and even testified before Congressional committees against the effort to establish a Federal Department of Education.

Given his strong commitment to individual rights ("Jeffersonian liberalism" as one biographer describes it), Machen also spoke incisively about the war which shook his time — World War I.

Though President Woodrow Wilson was a family friend of the Machens, J. Gresham disdained Wilson's use of war for idealist aims — to make the world safe for democracy (or, as in the current crisis, for corrupt monarchies and cheap oil). In a letter to his mother, Machen declared that, "An alleged war in the interest of democracy...does not appeal to me....This talk about British democracy arouses my ire as much as anything." After the war, he concluded that, "The war for humanity, so far as its result is concerned, looks distressingly like an old-fashioned land-grab."

Contrary to the utopian political rhetoric of his time, Machen clearly understood the more realistic motivations for war: "I am opposed to all imperial ambitions, wherever they may be cherished and with whatever veneer of benevolent assimilation they

may be disguised." Machen lashed out at a popular book defending British internationalism:

It is a glorification of imperialism....A very immoral purpose indeed!...Imperialism, to my mind, is satanic, whether it is German or English. The author glorifies war and ridicules efforts at the production of mutual respect and confidence among equal nations....[The book] makes me feel anew the need for Christianity,...what a need for the gospel!

Machen also despised the militarism and idolatrous patriotism which permeated his era: "Princeton is a hot-bed of patriotic enthusiasm and military ardor, which makes me feel like a man without a country."

He was horrified by the consequences of his nation's militarism:

The country seems to be rushing into the two things to which I am more strongly opposed than anything else in the world — a permanent alliance with Britain,...and a permanent policy of compulsory military service with all the brutal interference of the state in individual and family life it entails.

Four days prior to the U.S. declaration of war, Machen wrote to the New Jersey Representatives in the U.S. Congress:

In urging the defeat of measures involving a permanent policy of compulsory military service, I am not writing in the interests of "pacifism"....Compulsory military service does not merely bring a danger of militarism; it is militarism.

Despite Machen's outspoken opposition to the war and especially the draft, he ultimately volunteered for non-combat duties by serving as a Y.M.C.A. secretary — in his words, "a grocery clerk and nothing else." (He was reluctant to serve with the Y.M.C.A. fearing that they might re-

quire of its workers duties entailing, "desecration of the Sabbath in the name of Christianity and the like.")

While serving in this capacity he found, "opportunities of preaching the gospel when there are so few to do this work." This appears to have been his overriding motivation for participating in the war effort. He even remained in Europe after the war ended and ministered vigorously in numerous camps.

Upon returning to the U.S., Machen like so many other observers saw that many of the provisions of, "the Treaty of Versailles constituted an attack upon international and interracial peace....[W]ar will follow upon war in a wearisome progression."

As he had warned prior to the war, his own country faced, "the miserable prospect of the continuance of the evils of war even into peace times." Like so many other "temporary" government agencies in U.S. history, the war bureaucracies continued to grow, centralize, and strangle American culture. The effects were far reaching. Machen even mourned that when he turned from this collectivism for refuge in Christ's church,

I find there exactly the same evils that are rampant in the world — centralized education programs, the subservience of the church to the state, contempt for the rights of minorities, standardization of everything, suppression of intellectual adventure....I see more clearly than ever before that unless the gospel is true and there is another world, our souls are in prison. The gospel of Christ is a blessed relief from that sinful state of affairs commonly known as hundred percent Americanism.

Given his stated principles, Machen wouldn't have had much patience for our intervention in the Gulf. Wilsonian internationalism still reigns. President Wilson promoted the New Freedom and President Bush promotes the New World Order. What would keep Machen from still feeling, "like a man without a country"?

DMJ

The Bankruptcy of Conservatism

The collapse of the Iron Curtain has made at least one thing obvious — the bankruptcy of some forms of atheistic humanism — but it has not cleared up as many things as it should have. One of the disappointing features of all this has been the fact that it has not revealed the bankruptcy of modern American conservatism.

The conservatism we have afoot today simply tags along after the liberals, picking up the pieces of the latest boondoggle, trying to figure out a way to make it all work. Or, to change the metaphor, our car of state is driving toward an immense cliff. When liberals are behind the wheel they have the gas pedal to the floor; when conservatives wrest control of the wheel from them, they will occasionally tap on the brakes.

It is important for us to consider two features necessary to any successful movement among men — both of them lacking in the modern

conservative movement. Its adherents have to be willing to lose, and they have to know where they are going.

With respect to the first, R. L. Dabney identified the reluctance of conservatives to be martyrs long ago: "American conservatism is merely the shadow that follows Radicalism as it moves forward towards perdition...It is worthless because it is the conservatism of expediency only, and not of sturdy principle." And to the conservative pragmatist, we may echo the words of the Lord, "Worthless servant! With your own words I will condemn you..." By its own standard pragmatism stands condemned; *pragmatism doesn't work*.

With regard to the second, American conservatism has no marching orders, no foundation, no central cohesion. In short, it has no *telos*. So long as communism was a credible threat, with its frightening

telos of world conquest, conservatives here at least had something to bind them together. What will serve that purpose now? Opposition to adjustments of the minimum wage? We must always remember the Gadarene Swine Rule; just because the group is in formation doesn't mean they know where they are going.

Conservatism has no *telos* because it has no God. To be sure, conservatives are generally theists, but their god is *silent*. And to have a god who does not speak is the same as having the god of the socialists — *he* didn't know what was going on either. The explicitly secular humanism we have here in the United States shows no signs of following eastern Europe. They still control the government schools, the law schools, the medical schools, the seminaries, and so forth.

In opposing them, we do not need the God of the Lowest Common Denominator. We need the God of battles, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

DMJ

The Arrogance of Protectionism

1991 promises to bring us an explosion of anti-free trade actions. Conservative columnist Pat Buchanan has already acquiesced to the growing protectionist sentiment: "Worldwide, from Canada to Soweto nationalism is ascendant; men are putting tribe, culture, country, first."

Buchanan argues that "if recession hits hard, amid a perception that Uncle Sam has thrown open markets to foreigners who are closing theirs, the argument for efficiency will not carry the house. The arguments of the head will lose to the arguments of the heart: Let's take care of our own."

The mistaken assumption in Buchanan's scenario is that there is no moral case for free trade; apparently, the only justification for free trade is that it is more efficient than protectionism.

But advocates of free trade have always been quick with general moral arguments for free trade — all parties in the transaction benefit, jobs are created not lost, consumers benefit, trade cartels cannot last, and the historical motivations for war are

removed. These sorts of arguments do well for the already converted, but none of them effectively takes the legitimate moral high ground. These arguments are all relatively defensive in nature.

Advocates of free trade need to make the moral case for free trade by seizing the legitimate moral high ground and offensively dismantling protectionist sentiment. We can accomplish this by focusing on the genuine and utter arrogance of protectionism.

Protectionist arrogance resides in the fact that trade barriers always involve prohibiting someone from doing what they want with their own property — or as Christ rhetorically asks: "Is it not lawful for me to do what I wish with what is my own?" (Matt. 20:15 — an application of the prohibition of stealing — Ex. 20: 15).

Instead of defensively hoping for free trade to be accepted, we should point out protectionism's gross immorality — it violates the most commonly accepted notions of

property rights, those kind of simple notions regularly paraded through cartoons and adventure films.

We should challenge protectionists to justify their unearned claim to control another person's property without that person's consent. Why do we allow the state to control that for which it doesn't compensate? Why do we approve of lobbyists encouraging the leaders to sin in this way?

A clear understanding of the right to "do what you want with you own" will cut through the typical nationalistic fallacies of protectionism. Of course, in our day, neither Republicans nor Democrats can risk invoking such a principle since its implications reach most of their cherished pork-barrels. We may not see serious free trade in our lifetime, but the right to control one's own property is built into the prohibition of stealing, and the prohibition of stealing is inherent in proclaiming the whole counsel of God. So, while we keep up the short term battle for free trade, long term success rests in disciplining the nations.

DMJ

A One Day Plan for the Soviet Union

The recent resignation of the Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze is only the latest step in the internal destabilization of the Soviet Union. Shevardnadze's stated reason for leaving points to more ominous problems on the horizon: "In the end it became clear to me that if the destabilization of the country continues, and the process of democratization is halted, it will be impossible to follow the current course in foreign policy." Shevardnadze maintains that the chaos spreading through the coun-

try may very likely lead to an internal military crackdown.

Gorbachev's much touted "reforms" have so far produced no genuine economic improvements. Yuri Maltsev, former member of the Gorbachev reform team, summarizes the situation: "Now the West knows what we radical economists in the Soviet Union knew all along: perestroika was just another attempt to improve socialism."

None of the official Soviet reform proposals sufficiently approach the needs of the Soviet

economy. Such plans either fail to link private property with completely free prices or they establish monopolistic cartels. Whatever the case, the result of the Gorbachev agenda is not a free market economy but a destabilizing mixed economy which can only promise more unrest across the republics.

Yuri Maltsev, now a fellow of the U.S. Peace Institute and senior adjunct scholar at the Ludwig von Mises Institute has proposed the following "One-Day" plan to rescue the Soviet Union by genuine reform.

The Maltsev One-Day Plan

I. The economy shall be privatized.

(A) This includes all industry, agriculture, housing, construction, communication, the social infrastructure used by the Nomenklatura, and all other sectors of the economy.

(B) The public shall be able to homestead state-owned resources, with preference given to workers and farmers closest to those resources. Where this isn't possible, certificates can be distributed to the entire public which can in turn be exchanged for homesteading rights, as suggested by Czech finance minister Vaclav Klaus.

(C) In health care, education, and transportation, entrepreneurs shall be allowed to provide unregulated alternatives to the dilapidated state system.

(D) If the state needed revenue, it shall sell such remaining non-privatized assets as military and space equipment and buildings, as well as the private assets of the Nomenklatura (e.g., limos, summer residences).

(E) Publicly provided services, which will naturally be replaced over time by private provision, shall be the exclusive province of local government.

(F) All hospitals, clinics, and sanatoriums used by government officials shall immediately be given to the public.

(G) Revenues deemed necessary for funding remaining public services shall be collected and spent only at the local level. Their imposition shall be subject to local referendum.

II. The state budget shall be drastically cut.

(A) The cuts shall start with the elimination of such bloated and destructive bureaucracies as the committees on state security (KGB), planning, prices, foreign trade, wages, safety, science, and technology.

(B) Drastic cuts in military spending and foreign aid shall not be exempt from the process.

III. Prices shall be freed.

(A) Free prices will govern the distribution of consumer and capital goods and services, so that prices reflect relative scarcities and consumer demand.

(B) There shall be no controls on wages or other prices.

(C) No official distinction shall be made between staple and luxury goods.

IV. The monetary system shall be drastically reformed.

(A) All restrictions on the free exchange of currencies shall be eliminated, and currency speculation shall be legalized.

(B) Through the elimination of these restrictions, the ruble shall become freely convertible into other currencies.

(C) All currencies shall be legal for monetary purposes. The privatization of the capital stock, housing, land, etc., and the resulting growth in their value, will increase both domestic and foreign demand for rubles, helping to eliminate the ruble "overhang."

(D) The State Bank of the U.S.S.R., and other government bodies, shall be constitutionally prohibited from expanding the supply of money and credit.

(E) A new financial sector should be allowed to develop according to the dictates of interested private parties.

V. To secure this program, a judicial system shall be established based on the rule of law, the security of private property, and the enforcement of contract.

(A) The judiciary shall be independent of the state's legislative and administrative bodies, both of which shall be subject to judicial review.

(B) Private parties shall have the option to settle their disputes through private arbitration.

(C) Private courts shall be allowed as an alternative to, and check on, the state system.

Second Opinions

Dear Editors,

Congratulations on a magnificent job! For some time I have said there is more solid thinking going on among Calvinistic groups in this country than among all the liberals — theological and secular — put together. The quality of *Antithesis* is point number one in my offer of proof.

J. Robert Brame III
Richmond, Virginia

Dear Editors,

I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you how great I think *Antithesis* is. In an age when many evangelicals would rather avoid the realm of political and social issues (and, sadly, theological as well), your periodical affirms the lordship of Christ over all aspects of life. The spread and growth of *Antithesis* will surely mean the spread and growth of a Biblical world and life view in our confused, darkened century. Thank you for your commitment, and may God bless your work.

Phillip Palmertree
Macon, Georgia

Dear Editors,

I appreciate your publication. It is a refreshing, stimulating, and welcome contribution to the Reformed arena. May our Lord use it greatly for His Church and Kingdom!

Paul Murphy
Caledonia, Michigan

Dear Editors,

I'm impressed with your articles discussing present world problems in a spiritual light.

Joyce Timmer
Almond, New York

Dear Editors,

I have been very pleased with the issues of *Antithesis* that I have so far received. I would like to share the blessing with some missionary friends....Thank you for your help and thank you for your wonderful publication.

Ray Retzlaff
Troy, New York

Dear Editors,

I have thoroughly enjoyed the issues thus far and look forward to forthcoming issues. Thanks so much.

Michael Miles
Santa Clarita, California

Dear Editors,

I am very much impressed and pray for your success.

Paul Duggan
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Dear Editors,

The Issue and Interchange between Jones and Matatics was excellent. As an ex-Mormon, I am amazed at the essential agreement in argument that Mormon apologists and Mr. Matatics use in attacking *Sola Scriptura*. Both Mr. Matatics and Mormons have to justify their commitment to extra-Biblical authority.

Jack Kettler
Denver, Colorado

Dear Editors,

I suppose that when Jeffrey Tucker says (Sept./Oct. 1990) his conversion to Roman Catholicism was a step he shall never regret, he is telling us not to bother trying to refute his apologetic dissertation. He is convinced. If his small step involved throwing out 400 years of Protestant history, what would a large step entail? A larger step of some 1500 years would return him all the way to Eastern orthodoxy, which Rome left when it adopted the Nicene Creed. It seems to me that the invocation of historical roots and continuity has most often been the glue of crumbling tyrannies, rather than any real help in the discovery of truth....

Mr. Tucker rhetorically asks why Christ would allow His church to wallow in the mire of falsehood and heresy for so long. Mr. Tucker's all-or-nothing doctrine of the church cannot be sustained in light of Biblical anthropology. Must Christ's people as individuals be without corruption in order for them to claim to be His? Can the church be in Christ's hands and yet be in serious error? Paul's epistle to the Galatians and the first three chapters of Revelation indicate that Christ's church is not preserved from error....

To answer Mr. Tucker regarding Augustine, it has been said that the Reformation was the triumph of Augustinian soteriology over Augustinian ecclesiology. Roman Catholicism is the triumph of Augustinian ecclesiology over his soteriology, which direction was set by the second council of Constantinople....

James Plummer
Trenton, New Jersey

Dear Editors,

I am a Christian who expresses as a Catholic, and I want to thank you for your various reflections regarding Ca-

tholicism in the Sept./Oct. '90 issue of *Antithesis*. If I might offer a few remarks: First, I thought the scholarship (both Catholic and Protestant) was first rate. The analysis was light-years away from the strawmen contained in such works as Boettner's *Roman Catholicism* or Jack Chick's comics. Unfortunately, many non-Catholics obtain their facts concerning Catholicism through such works rather than repairing to Catholic works (as cited in *Antithesis*) and balanced Reformed works.

Regarding Hagopian's article on Catholic conversions, I can hardly believe that the steel-trap minds of Hahn, Howard, Reichert, Vanauken, Matatics, Kreeft, Hudson, Vree, and Neuhaus were convinced by the bells, smells, and whistles of the Catholic church. I was also intrigued by the name dropping passage — Augustine, Chrysostom, Aquinas vs. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli — are you serious? Why didn't Hagopian provide a more in-depth treatment of the intellectual odysseys of the converts?

I most enjoyed the exchange between Jones and Matatics. I was hoping Jones would answer Matatics' objection to *Sola Scriptura* — that is, "Did God inscripturate all things He wanted to preserve to replace oral tradition rather than be passed along as II Thessalonians 2:15?"

Joseph Gallegos
Fountain Valley, California

[Jones: For an answer to this particular objection, see the discussion on pp. 54 & 59, Sept./Oct. 1990.]

Dear Editors,

I am truly delighted with the clarity of scholarship that is shown in the Sept./Oct. issue of *Antithesis*. There is no doubt in my mind that you have a full understanding of *Sola Scriptura* and the whole Reformed Biblical position. It is also evident that you clearly discern the fundamental error of Rome.

Richard Bennett
[Former Roman Catholic]
Portland, Oregon

We welcome our readers to interact with material published in *Antithesis*. Letters are subject to abridgement for length and clarity. Send editorial correspondence to:

Antithesis
P.O. Box 503
Pullman, WA 99163

CHRISTIANITY YESTERDAY

Donald Cargill stands out as one of the most notable preachers among the Scottish Covenanters. He was born near Aberdeen in 1610 and later pursued studies at the University of St. Andrews. After his ordination, Cargill was called to serve in Glasgow, where he worked until the establishment of prelacy in 1662. About this time he began to earn the wrath of the Scottish state and thereafter lived in constant jeopardy. When he was finally apprehended in 1669, he was soon freed by friends and subsequently preached in the fields of Scotland. He is especially noted for having excommunicated the King and the King's officers in 1680. In October of that year, the state placed a bounty on his head, and he was captured in 1681. He was brought before the Council, tried, found guilty, and executed the next day. Below is his written testimony:

This is the most joyful day that ever I saw in my pilgrimage on earth; my joy is now begun, which I see shall never be interrupted. I see both my interest, and His truth, and the sureness of the one, and the preciousness of the other. It is near thirty years since He made it sure; and since that time, (though there has fallen out much sin, yet) I was never out of an assurance of mine interest, nor long out of sight of his presence. He has handled me, and kept me lively, and never left me behind, though I was oft-times turning back.

O, He has showed the wonderful preciousness of his grace, not only in the first receiving thereof, but in renewed and multiplied pardon! I have been a man of great sins, but he has been a God of great mercies. And now through his mercies, I have a conscience as sound and quiet, as if I had never sinned. It is long since I could have adventured on eternity, through God's mercy and Christ's merits; but death remained somewhat terrible, and that is now taken away; and now death is no more to me, but

to cast myself into my husband's arms, and to lie down with him.

And however it be with me at the last, though I should be straightened by God, or interrupted by men, yet all is sure, and shall be well. I have followed holiness, I have taught truth, and I have been most in the main things; not that I thought the things concerning our times little, but that I thought none could do any thing to purpose in God's great and public matters, till method, for them there had been fewer apostasies.

The religion of the land, and zeal for the land's engagements, are coming to nothing, but a supine, loathsome, and hateful formality; and there cannot be zeal, liveliness and rightness, where people meet with persecution, and want heart-renovation. My soul trembles to think, how little of regeneration there is amongst the ministers and professors of Scotland.

O, the ministers of Scotland, how have they betrayed Christ's interest, and beguiled souls! They have not entered in themselves, and them that were entering in, they hindered. They have sold the things of Christ, and liberties of his church, for a short and cursed quiet to themselves, which is now near an end; and they are more, one and at peace, with God's enemies, after they have done all their mischiefs, than they were at first, when they had put hand to them. And I much fear that though there were not one minister on all the earth, He would make no more use of them; but there will be a dreadful judgement upon themselves, and a long curse upon their posterity.

As to our professors, my council to them is, that they would see well to their own regeneration, for the most part of them has that yet to do; and yet let never one think that he is in the right exercise of true religion, that has not a zeal to God's public glory.

There is a small remnant in Scotland, that my soul has had its greatest comfort on earth from. I wish

your increase in holiness, number, love, religion and righteousness; and wait you, and cease to contend with these men that are gone from us, for there is nothing that shall convince them but judgement. Satisfy your consciences, and go forward; for the nearer you are to God, and the further from all others, whether stated enemies, or lukewarm ministers and professors, it shall be the better. My preaching has occasioned persecution, but the want of it will, I fear, occasion worse. However, I have preached the truths of God, to others, as it is written, "I believed, and so I preached;" and I have not an ill conscience in preaching truth, whatever has followed; and this day I am to seal with my blood all the truths that ever I preached: and what is controverted of that which I have been professing shall, ere long, be manifested by God's judgements in the consciences of men.

I had a sweet calmness of spirit, and great submission as to my taking, the providence of God was so eminent in it; and I could not but think, that God judged it necessary for his glory, to bring me to such an end, seeing he loosed me from such a work. My soul would be exceedingly troubled for the remnant, were it not that I think the time will be short. Wherefore hold fast, for this is the way that is now persecuted.

As to the causes of my suffering: the main is 'Not acknowledging the present authority, as it is established in the Supremacy and Explanatory Act.' This is the magistracy that I have rejected, that was invested with Christ's power. And seeing that power taken from Christ, which is his glory, and made the essential of the crown, I thought this was, as it I had seen one wearing my husband's garments, after he had killed him. And seeing it is made to the essential of the crown, there is no distinction we can make, that can free the conscience of the acknowledger, from being a partaker of this sacrilegious robbing of God, and it is but to cheat our consciences, to acknowledge the civil power, for it is not civil power only that is made of the essence of the crown; and seeing they are so express, we ought to be plain; otherwise it is to deny our testimony; and consent to this robbery. Δ

The foregoing testimony is reprinted from James Stewart's *Naphthali* (1667). A special thanks goes to Charles Roberts for his efforts in providing us with this material.

The Unchanging Character of God's Word

Surrounded by a great cloud of historical witnesses, the church currently faces a holy war in her midst for the truth, honor, and glory of God.

Steve Schlissel

The Christian Reformed Church is a 300,000 member denomination, mostly Dutch, with a noble history. Some of her notable sons are Cornelius Van Til, Louis Berkhof, and William Hendriksen. Formed in 1857, her faithful days appear to be numbered. She is plagued by a heavy bureaucracy that is supported through yearly quota payments of over \$500 per

family. Moreover, contrary to the faith of her constituency and her confessions, evolutionary theory is believed and taught at Calvin College, Calvin Seminary has a feminist agenda, Home Missions has become engulfed in "church growth" practices, even subsidizing trips for CRC ministers to be trained by Robert Schuller, and the Reformed doctrine of Scripture has been seriously undermined, to the point where this year her widest assembly (synod) opened all church offices to women (subject to ratification in 1992). The following is an edited transcription of an address delivered to Concerned Members of the Christian Reformed Church at their annual conference in 1988. Since the CRC's situation is a microcosm of the Western church today, the points raised in the address are relevant for all concerned Christians in these times of compromise.

I am here because you are heirs of the covenant that God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Someday the natural heirs, the Jewish people, my kinsmen according to the flesh, will have the veil removed from their eyes. Until then, the whole Word of God, which brings salvation, must be preserved. I am here to tell you that we have a fight on our hands to preserve the Word of God, and I charge you in the name of Christ to fight.

Make no mistake. We are engaged in a solemn and a holy war for the truth, the honor, and glory of God. This war is between those for the Word and those against the Word, and it has been raging since the beginning of time.

The Word of God is unchanging in its divisive character. As Calvin noted, "It is the native property of the divine Word never to make its appearance without

disturbing Satan and rousing his opposition." We see the divisive nature of the Word in the cross of Christ: on the one hand, there is the Word of salvation, and on the other hand, the Word of condemnation. Everywhere the Word is, there is division. God's Word is a separating word, and as a separating word, those who believe it are duty bound to protect it and defend it against all attacks. We must also recognize the simple historical fact that the church's greatest attacks have always arisen from within the church itself. We are not the first, nor are we alone in the fight.

I have a very simple message from Hebrews 12:1:

"Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us."

This passage from Hebrews 12, as P.E. Hughes notes,

uses the dramatic imagery of an athletic contest in which the competitors in the arena are surrounded by the crowded tiers of an amphitheater....[O]ur author pictures himself and his readers as competitors, who, as they contend for the faith in the arena of life, are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, namely, those champions of the faith of earlier generations....They have triumphantly completed their course, and we, who are now contestants in the arena, should be inspired by their example to give of our utmost in the struggle. I am inspired by their example to give of their utmost in the struggle.

In contemplating those who have gone before us, I am inspired by Phineas. When the Midianites threatened to compromise the covenant people, Moses said to Israel's judges, "Each of you must put to death those of your men who have joined in worshipping the Baal of Peor" (Num. 25:4,5).

Then an Israelite man brought to his family a Midianite woman, right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly while they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of the meeting.¹ When Phineas, son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand, followed the Israelite into the tent and drove the spear through both of them. Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped. But twenty-four thousand people died in the plague.

The Lord said to Moses, "Phineas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites, for he was as zealous as I am for my honor among them, so that in my zeal, I did not put an end to

¹This is analogous to the decision of the CRC synod to ordain women to the diaconate. While we were still reeling from that, evolutionist professor, Howard Van Till, introduced his new hermeneutic to be a norm for Calvin College -- right in the face of the faithful of the denomination. Those who have been entrusted with the sacred charge of teaching covenant youth have spit in the face of the Lord.

them. Therefore, tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites" (Num. 25:11-13).

If we do not stand up today and do more than wring our hands, our grandchildren will have no sure Word of God.

I am inspired by the Levites. Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and become a laughing stock to their enemies. So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the Lord, come to me." All the Levites rallied to him (Ex. 32:26).

The camp was divided because the enemies of God had arisen within the camp and had given themselves over to the lie.

Then [Moses] said to them, "This is what Jehovah, the God of Israel says, 'Each man strap a sword to his side, go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'" And the Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about 3,000 of the people died. Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers and He has blessed you this day" (Exod. 32:27-29).

I am inspired by these men who counted their personal relations with men as of no value compared to the glory of God and His commandments. I am even more inspired by the commendation given to these heroes in Deuteronomy 33:8-9:

Your Thummim and your Urim belong to the man you favor. You have tested him at Massah, you contended with him at the waters of Meribah. He said of his father and mother, 'I have no regard for them.' He did not recognize his brothers or acknowledge his own children, *but he watched over your Word and guarded your covenant.* He teaches your precepts to Jacob and your law to Israel."

Our battle is a covenant issue! This is the Word of God we are fighting for. This is not Dutch names. This is not friends and buddies. This is not status in the community. This is not political advantage. This is the Word of God!

I am inspired by Micaiah: In II Chronicles 18, Micaiah appeared before Jehoshaphat and Ahab when Jehoshaphat unwisely sought political alliance with Ahab, the king of the northern tribe. In that time Ahab asked, "Will you go to war with me, Jehoshaphat?" And Jehoshaphat told Ahab to consult some prophets who would tell them what they *wanted* to hear. The false prophets declared, "Go, for God will give it into the king's hand." Ahab's itching ears were satisfied. Jehoshaphat was a little too godly for this and said, "Don't you have a prophet of Jehovah nearby?" Ahab responded, "I have one but he never tells me what I like." Nevertheless, the

messenger called for Micaiah and said, "If you want to make it in the Christian Reformed Church, you had better tow the line. Everybody is telling them what they want to hear, and if you are smart, you'll tell the two kings what they want to hear or else the boards and agencies will come down on you."

We read Micaiah's response: "As surely as Jehovah lives, I can tell only what my God says." In verse 22, Micaiah declares: "So now the Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. The Lord has decreed disaster for you." Similarly, for some reason, God has put a lying spirit on the campus of Calvin College, a lying spirit in many of the faculty of the seminary. There is a lying spirit that teaches untruths, that perverts the Word of God, distorts it, twists it, and takes it away from our covenant youth.

Then Zedekiah, son of Kenaanah, went up and slapped Micaiah in the face, "Which way did the Spirit from the Lord go when He went from me to speak to you?" he asked. "Who made you a prophet?"

Micaiah replied, "You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room." The king of Israel then ordered, "Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon, the ruler of the city, and to Joash, the king's son, and say this is what the king says, 'Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.'" Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, then Jehovah has not spoken from me (II Chron. 18:23-27).

Micaiah knew a sure word of God.

I am inspired by Ezekiel, when God commissioned him:

"Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you," and as He spoke, the spirit came into me and raised me to my feet and I heard him speaking to me. He said, "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me. They and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn."

Say to them, "This is what the sovereign Lord says," and whether they listen or fail to listen for they are a rebellious house, they will know that the prophet has been among them. And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words, don't be afraid though briars and thorns are all around you, and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them though they are a rebellious house.

You must speak my words to them whether they listen or fail to listen for they are rebellious. But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you, do not rebel like that rebellious house. Open your mouth and eat what I give you (Ezek. 2: 1-8).

I am inspired by our Lord Jesus Christ, who, as it is recorded in John 2:

went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found men selling cattle, sheep and doves and others sitting at the tables, exchanging money. So He made a whip out of cords and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle. He scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves, he said, "Get these out of here. How dare you turn My Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume Me."

Where is the zeal for the Word of God as we have received it? Not hand-wringing, not preaching to the choir, not patting each other on the back for saying the right shibboleth for being Reformed. Where is the zeal in your heart for the Word of God? Does it burn within you? Is it life or death to you? Do you hate it in your bones when you see it corrupted and distorted and spat upon? Where is your zeal for God's honor?

I am inspired by the great apostle Paul, who did not seek to please men but wrote in Galatians 1: "Even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him go to hell!" "Oh, brother," I can hear someone say to Paul, "wouldn't you like to modify that statement? It seems divisive." So Paul says it again: "If anybody's preaching a gospel other than the one you accepted, let him be condemned in hell forever."

This is the unchanging character of the Word of God. It hasn't changed just because the canon is closed. Everywhere Scripture goes, there is a fight.

I am inspired by Jude, who says in his letter:

Dear friends, although I was very eager to write you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.

I am inspired by the very last chapter of the Word of God:

I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the city which is described in this book.

I am inspired by Athanasius, who in his struggle against Arianism, was willing to be banished and maligned in order to defend the truth of God's Word.

I am inspired by Augustine, who fought against Pelagianism and the error of free will and the doctrine that perverted the true doctrine of sin.

I am inspired by Luther who fought against Romanism.

I am inspired by Calvin, who fought against syncretism.

I am inspired by the fathers of Dort who fought against Arminianism, recognizing it as an enemy of the church.

These are the witnesses who are now surrounding us and looking into the arena and saying, "What are you going to do today in the face of the challenge that God has laid before you?" We are once again engaged in battle. Know your enemies. Today the church does battle against humanism, spearheaded by relativism, with feminism (egalitarianism) in the lead. The only thing that can vanquish these foes is an unchanging Word from God. A Word of God that can change is *no problem*, as I will demonstrate, but a Word of God that doesn't change, that will destroy them. Many fail to see the critical nature of our struggle: a struggle which Christ Himself calls us to.

In the 1920s and 1930s, J. Gresham Machen was involved in a painfully similar struggle against modernism in the Presbyterian Church in the USA. He wrote:

The plain man in the church has difficulty understanding the nature of the struggle. He does not yet appreciate the real gravity of the issue. He does not see that it makes very little difference how much or how little of the creeds of the church the modernist preacher affirms, or how much or how little of the This modernist preacher might affirm every jot and tittle of the Westminster Confession, for example, and yet be separated by a great gulf from the Reformed faith. It is not that part is denied and the rest is affirmed, but all is denied because all is affirmed merely as *useful* or as symbolic, but not as *truth*. A thing that is useful may be useful for some and not for others, but a thing that is true remains true for all people and beyond the end of time.

We would do well to familiarize ourselves with the struggle that occurred in that church that led to the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. There are those who remain saying, "We're going to just see what happens." But look at the PCUSA today and see what has happened.

We, too, have become a church that seems to echo Pilate's pitiful plaint, "What is truth?", when all the while, Truth was standing in front of him. The truth is in our hands and it is, as our Belgic Confession (Article 7) says,

unlawful for anyone, though an apostle, to teach otherwise than we are now taught in the Holy Scriptures. It is forbidden to add unto or take away anything from the Word of God. It does evidently appear that the doctrine thereof is most perfect and

complete in all respects. Neither may we consider the writings of any men of equal value with divine Scriptures. Nor are we to consider custom or the great multitude or antiquity or succession of times and persons or councils, decrees and statutes as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all. Therefore we reject, with all our hearts, whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule [whether they be teachings that are current at Calvin College or the philosophies that motivate some boards and agencies].

Do you reject them with all your heart? The dogmatic statements of our confession are very disagreeable to the modern visionary. He doesn't like them; he chokes on them, *although he might affirm them as useful*.

Perhaps even more disagreeable are the unchanging characteristics of the Word as is formulated in chapter one of the Westminster Confession of Faith. I wish I could spend all day and talk to you about chapter one, but alas. Ten sections are devoted to the doctrine of Scripture and every one of these sections is threatened by the relativists among us.

The Westminster Confession begins by declaring the necessity of Scripture. This section concludes by saying, "Scriptures are most necessary, those former ways of God's revealing His will unto His people, being now ceased." The necessity of Scripture is threatened by a universalism which suggests that people may be saved without the Word of God coming to them; that people may be saved, as we hear in the United States, without repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. These preposterous and heretical notions are entertained in the pages of the *Banner* (CRC's denominational magazine) as being legitimate options to consider, not necessarily confessional, but something that should be aired. Nonsense! It is crucifying Christ all over again. The Scriptures are most necessary and not in any way optional.

The Confession then discusses the Canon and the Apocrypha. Commonly, the Scripture itself is being "apocryphalized" — regarded as less reliable than reason and nature. The fourth section declares that the authority of the Holy Scriptures, "depends not upon the testimony of any man in our church, but wholly upon God who is truth itself, the author thereof, and therefore, it is to be received because it is the Word of God." I recently read an article in a book called, *Exploring the Heritage of John Calvin*. Over and again the author said, "Paul says, Paul says, Paul says..." for ten, twenty pages. Not one time "The Holy Spirit speaking in the Word of God says..." But the Bible and the Confessions tell us that God is the author of Scripture, every part. The unchanging character of Scripture as authoritative means that we allow Scripture itself to tell us how to regard it.

Anyone who denies the authority of Scripture at one point, has denied it at all points. If we assert that we can set aside the six-day creation doctrine, we have asserted our supremacy over Scripture. Our mind and our convenience now have a higher authority. Clearly, therefore, the question of authority is at stake in Genesis 1. Whose word is authoritative and final, God's or man's? Who has the last, as well as the first, word?

The Confessional doctrine of Scripture's self-attestation is threatened by those who subordinate God's testimony and Scripture to a contrary, yet allegedly more reliable testimony in nature. We can only believe Scripture, they say, when nature agrees with what we read in Scripture. But they have it exactly reversed. Any Reformed six-year-old should be able to tell you that. You interpret nature in terms of the Word of God, not vice versa. The Fall has had effects — noetic effects — effects on our minds that need to be corrected before we can understand things properly.

The sufficiency of Scripture is challenged on several fronts.² And what has happened to the perspicuity of Scripture? We are now told that we need a new elitist core of intermediaries, a new priesthood to stand between the "ignoramuses" in the pew and God. Have we even forgotten that there was a Reformation? I may have been in this denomination a short time, but I have been in this struggle long enough to have heard some of the attitudes that are present.

For example, the regional home missionary that I mentioned in *Messiah's Mandate*, Vol. I, No. 1,³ called me up and objected saying,

"I never gave a sermon entitled, 'God our Mother.'"

I said, "OK, I'll print a retraction. Do you believe 'God our Mother'?"

He said, "Oh, yes."

"Do you have any theological problem praying to Our Mother, who art in heaven?"

"Oh, no."

I said, "Have you changed the pronouns from the pulpit when you read the Scripture — 'he' to 'she'?" (Always, of course, 'he' to 'she', never 'she' to 'he').

He said, "No, I don't."

"Do you have a problem doing that?"

"No, of course not."

I said, "Then why don't you do it?"

"People aren't ready for it yet!"

Such people despise you. I mean it. These arrogant people really think that it's just a matter of time before they railroad you out of your possession and your inheritance. For as far as they're concerned, the battle is over and they have won. Now, only money and institutions are at stake. Who gets to control them? They have already made up their mind about the Scriptures. They are just waiting to train a generation of harlots and have the faithful die off, and it's all theirs. That is why we can thank Jesus Christ that Howard Van Till wrote *The Fourth Day* because now we have what we might call an accelerated epistemological self-consciousness. Now we can see more clearly than when they were playing the game under the covers. The covers are being pulled off.

At the root of many of the attacks upon the Word of God, we find research, writings, pronouncements, and policies founded on the presupposition of epistemologi-

² See Noel Weeks' excellent book, *The Sufficiency of Scripture*. (Banner of Truth).

³ Subscriptions to *Messiah's Mandate* are available from Messiah's Christian Reformed Church, 2662 East 24th St., Brooklyn, NY 11235-2610.

cal neutrality and a bastardization of the common grace doctrine that effectively subordinates the Word of God to sinful, autonomous reason and observation. Everything that you hear from Calvin College is justified in the name of common grace.

The epistemological question is this: How do we know? Originally or after God knows? The unbelieving doctrine of knowledge is: Nothing is known unless man knows it. It is a mystery until man knows it. The doctrine of our faith is that God knows everything, and He shares knowledge with us. Therefore, He is the original knower and we are analogical knowers — we know after the pattern of God. We are dependent knowers; He is the independent knower. Much of our denomination's thinking is committed to the epistemology of unbelief.

We have here a frightening parallel to what occurred in the Machen case. The modernists in the Presbyterian church had been drinking deeply from the fountain of the world. Their grumblings originated not exegetically, but from extra-Scriptural considerations which determined the way that they then handled Scripture. They were latitudinarian and anti-antithetical. The antithesis was obnoxious to them. I still meet Reformed people who tell me they were raised on antithetical preaching. They were taught there is an antithesis in this world. Now we are told that the antithesis is of the devil. Church leaders now want to tear down the antithesis so that they can have the respect and approval of the world.

The spirit of the modern world which threatens us is far more sophisticated and subtle than it was in the days of Dort and Westminster, even than it was in the 20s. But if we stand back a bit, we will hear the same question being asked now that was asked in the Garden of Eden and ever since — "Yea, hath God said?" This doubt was followed by denial — "You will not surely die." This is a word of possibility, a word of flux, a word of chance as over against God's certain word. *This is the basic issue.* Who speaks the certain word? Is it God or man? The modern compromisers still pay lip-service to the Bible. They say that it is indeed God's Word, but it's not the last word. This is the original temptation.

Sinners will always choose a word of possibility over against the word of absolute authority, even if it means their death. Rather to rule in hell than to serve in heaven. But God and man do not run on a continuum. God is uncreated, man is created. God is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. Man is finite, temporal, and changeable. Therefore, we are utterly dependent on God for our being, our ethics, and for our knowledge as well. That is why we always say, "What do the Scriptures teach?" Adam and Eve were tempted to determine knowledge and ethics for themselves, not according to a Word of God. "Look at the possibilities. Look

at the world opened up before you. All you need to do is to forget that other certain word about dying and just take and eat. All kinds of things will open up." That is what is being offered to us today. The effort amounts to the attempt to bring God down to our level of being, even though He remains higher up the scale, so they can pay lip-service to God.

Some assume the following: we are little fish, and God is a big, big, big fish, so He has a lot to offer us. He can protect us, we can talk to Him. He is very smart, but we are really floating around in the same sea of possibility. That is how radical the change is at the presuppositional level. A compromise here is the end of the faith in seed form. In their efforts to make their own rules, the visionaries must pay lip service to the confessions. They talk about unity and peace, but they want it on their terms. Recently, the *Banner* called for a truce about women in office, the new Psalter hymnal, and evolution. Should Paul have called a truce with the Galatian heretics? Should Jesus have made a truce with those who were occupying the temple and corrupting it? A truce in this battle is defeat.

Note the following:

The New Evangelicalism: 'A desperate desire to be accepted, not so much by the Lord as by others prominent in the visible church who deviate to some extent from the teaching of the Word as we understand it. In the interest of being accepted, the New Evangelical attitude is willing to sacrifice truth on the altar of ecumenical expediency.'

If our contention that the evolution hypothesis is part of an antitheistic theory of reality is correct, then we must do away with every easy-going attitude. The evolutionist is then a soldier in that great, seemingly all-powerful army of anti-theists that has from time immemorial sought to destroy the people of God. We must then prepare for a life and death struggle, if not in the courts of the

land, then in the higher courts of human thought.

Do you know where this was written? This call to action was written in the *Banner*, 1931. The 1931 *Banner* says evolution is an enemy to the people of God. The 1987 *Banner* has two weeks of Van Leewen laying the groundwork of three weeks of Van Till, without so much as a whisper that the man was under investigation, without so much as a hint that his views are considered heretical by everyone sitting here and by untold numbers in the rest of the denomination. What has happened? Has truth changed? If truth has changed, then I tell you, God Himself has changed. But the Bible says, "I am the Lord, I change not." The Bible says, "Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

Churches used to split about what was true, but now we're arguing about "what is truth?" We are seeing two radically different answers evident in this discussion. Some in the Christian Reformed Church, say that the truth we desire to explicate, preach, and live out is the truth that was once for all delivered to the saints. But others believe that the truth is found *in the search itself*.

We may simplify this as a conflict between two factions: those who believe that truth is in the content and those who believe that truth is in the process. Therefore, you see there is such a very great tendency to focus on style and not content. Of course, truth for the church involves process. There is history, time, and providence under our sovereign God as the Scriptures were compiled, distributed, studied, systematized and lived out. But those who have succumbed to the lie of seeking truth in process have elevated history, not as the realm of revelation and redemption, but as prior to and determinative of both revelation and redemption. Thus they tend to view all Scripture as an accommodation. Therefore, it is relative. Truth is behind, above, or outside of Scripture. We have people who view every portion of Scripture subject to cultural scrutiny. A careful reading of Bavinck would help these people learn that there is a difference between condescension, which is involved in revelation, and accommodation. God necessarily condescends to speak to us, but He doesn't necessarily accommodate Himself to our prejudices. For example, the accommodation view allows Jesus to speak about Lot's wife turning into a pillar of salt, and since the ignorant Jews of His day believed that and to make a spiritual point, Jesus accommodated Himself to their ignorance. That's accommodation. That's garbage! Because then you don't know what to believe. But condescension is necessarily involved with a God who is so transcendent as ours.

Viewing revelation as an accommodation puts it in our hands. It becomes anthropocentric, not simply anthropomorphic. Both God and man are seeking to find themselves in history. We and God become co-strugglers to attain truth. Only He is much further down the road. This is why we could read in a publication of the Committee for Women:

Changing sexist language did not come easy for me. Due to peer pressure I first began altering people words, you know chairperson, mailcarrier, and no more generic "he." These terms still provoke laughter and they felt awkward to me as well, with some more radical women addressing God as she. I just laughed some more. But God finally caught up with me. I had just heard that our pastor had once again failed to recruit any women to preach at our church during his vacation. Driving home that night I was screaming and crying with the car windows up, of course. It was unfair that God would never understand what it meant to be a woman. How could He help but be on the men's side? God broke into my rage with the thought, "But I am not on their side. I am not one of them. I'm at least as angry over this situation as you are." What? God was not He?

Slowly I began to explore my previous perception of God as male. It is hard to describe the depth of freedom I felt as I experimentally called God "She." Over time I gained a new vision of God and myself. No doubt about it, changing the way we talk about God and God's people will change us and change is hard. The National Council of Churches Inclusive Lectionary explored this issue where this is ex-

cerpted from and has changed traditional Biblical language. These changes are causing incredible controversy as we ponder the pros and cons of speaking inclusively. Let's be open to what the Spirit may be saying to the church today.

What the Spirit is saying where? In the Bible? Then it is an exegetical issue. The Spirit says nothing to the church that is not in His Word. If it is true, it isn't new, and if it is new, it isn't true. Is it in the Scripture?

The original temptation suggested that freedom was to be found in liberating oneself from the awful determinative Word of God, but such freedom always equals death. In the Arminian controversy, proponents sought freedom from God's decrees. They said of the God who decrees salvation and damnation, "I just can't live with that." A refuge was imagined in having God somehow made dependent on man's will. The argument was that freedom from man required a measure of independence. But even just a little "freedom" requires us to place ourselves outside a total sovereignty of God. But the Synod of Dort said that God alone is absolutely free. B.B. Warfield noted long ago that it is not predestination as such that bothers man, but rather predestination by someone other than himself, and particularly God. We don't want God to do it.

The women's issue is part of a worldview which doesn't see decrees and laws and God as ultimate, but potentiality itself. This is why you'll always see this language of potentiality and "becoming" and "struggling." These words are throughout their literature. It's a different motif. Freedom is not found in Psalm 1 or Psalm 119, "I walk at liberty because I keep thy commandments." Rather, these feminists view the law as a *springboard* to freedom. You leap to freedom from the Word, but you don't find it in the Word. Thus the character of the Word of God that is propositional, eternal, unchanging and normative is changed.

The God of Scripture did not speak to the feminist quoted above. It was a demon. For her, the Bible has become a mystical tool and a mere collection of principles. Her new view of reality is just really the old Greek view of Heraclitean flux, revived and dressed up in Biblical language. For feminists, a final word is anathema. They want a possible word, as do evolutionists.

Thus Howard Van Till finds it impossible to do what he considers to be true science under a sound exegesis of Genesis 1-11. For Howard Van Till true science requires an open universe. It must be *completely* open so that *any* hypothesis he offers to fit particular facts is to be regarded as possible. Openness.

At the same time, Van Till requires an absolutely closed universe which operates according to rules knowable to man. If God were allowed to unexpectedly come into Van Till's universe at any time, say, by a miracle, then all the hypotheses would be thrown off. They would become conditional upon God, who would retain the final word. This is why unbelief is at the same time rationalistic and irrationalistic. It requires perfect consistency and perfect inconsistency. It requires perfect order and perfect chaos at the same time.

Continued on p. 34...

The Puritan Approach to Worship

J.I. Packer

The awe, depth, delight, and wholeheartedness of Puritan worship stands in stark contrast to contemporary Christian practice.

It is sometimes said that evangelicals are not interested in worship. If by worship one means the technicalities of liturgical study, this may be true. But I do not suppose that I am the only evangelical who finds that the actual exercise of worship, the deliberate lifting of one's eyes from man and his mistakes to contemplate God and his glory, grows increasingly precious as the years go by, and brings solace and refreshment to the spirit in a way that nothing else can do. Certainly, this

was the experience of the great Puritans; and what I want to do is to allow them to share it with us, and lead us deeper into the enjoyment of it for ourselves. Hence my choice of the word "approach" in my title. We are to follow the Puritans in the *approach* to worship, which was, as we shall see, itself an *approach* to God. My main concern is thus not with the controversies about worship which divided the Puritans both from Anglican officialdom and from each other, but rather with the view of the nature of worship, and of the principles from practising it, on which in fact they were all agreed.

But their controversies about the formal and external aspects of worship were real and sustained, religiously motivated and passionately pursued, and to establish my right to pass them by in the body of my text I must first deal briefly with them now. I shall not trace their historical details, nor take sides (for I do not want to start them all over again!), but I shall try to bring into focus the problems which occasioned them, so that we see just how much — and at some points, how little — divided the conflicting parties. The problems themselves, as we shall see, remain living issues for us today.

Formal Disagreements

Three main questions lay at the root of all the arguing. They were as follows:

1. *In what sense are the Scriptures authoritative for Christian worship?*

It is usually said that, whereas Luther's rule in ordering public worship was to allow traditional things

that were not contrary to Scripture and seemed helpful, it was Calvin's rule to admit nothing that the Bible did not directly prescribe; and that the Church of England officially followed Luther's principle, whereas the Puritans within its ranks espoused that of Calvin. This way of putting it gives the impression that Luther and the Reformed Church of England did not regard Holy Scripture as constituting an authoritative rule for worship at all — which was, of course, the constant Puritan accusation right up to the Civil War. It also gives the impression that the Puritan critique of Anglican public worship represented a reversion to the principles and practice of Calvin at Geneva — which, to be sure, the Puritans themselves thought it was. But both impressions are misleading.

German, Swiss, and English Reformers held common basic principles about worship. They agreed that Christian worship must express man's reception of, and response to, evangelical truth, and they were substantially in agreement as to what that truth was. They agreed in analyzing worship as an exercise of mind and heart in praise, thanksgiving, prayer, confession of sin, trust in God's promises, and the hearing of God's word, read and preached. They were in agreement also as to the nature and number of the gospel sacraments, and their place in the church's worship. They took the same view of the office of the Christian minister in leading the worship of the congregation. They agreed too that each church, or federation of churches ("every particular or national Church," as Article XXXIV puts it) is responsible for settling the details of its own worship in accordance with the apostolic principle that all must be done "unto edifying" (I Cor. 14:26), and that as a means to that end everything must be done "decently and in order" (v 40). Finally, they were all agreed that each church has liberty (the presupposition of its responsibility) to arrange its worship in the way best adapted to edify its own worshippers, in the light of their state, background, and needs; so that they all took it for granted that the worship of varied churches in varying pastoral situations would vary in detail.

The idea that direct Biblical warrant, in the form of precept or precedent, is required to sanction every substantive item included in the public worship of God was in fact a Puritan innovation, which crystallized out in the course of the prolonged debates that followed the Elizabethan settlement. It is an idea distinct from the principle that tainted ceremonies, which hide the truth from worshippers and buttress superstitious error, should be dropped, as both dishonoring God and impeding edification. On this latter principle all the English Reformers were agreed from the start, as the 1549 *Prayer Book* Preface "Of Ceremonies" shows; though they did not succeed in agreeing as to its application, which was why in 1550 Hooper clashed with the authorities over episcopal vesture, and why in the 1560s those who were first called Puritans felt obliged to campaign against the *Prayer Book* requirement of surplices, wedding-rings, baptizing with the sign of the cross, and kneeling at Holy Communion. But this new principle went further, declaring that no justification of non-Biblical rites and ceremonies in worship as convenient means to Biblically prescribed ends could in the nature of the case be valid

(in other words, that the line taken in the preface "Of Ceremonies" was wrong); all ceremonies must have direct Biblical warrant, or they were impious intrusions.

It should also be noticed that when the Puritans singled out some of the *ineptiae* of the *Prayer Book* as intolerable, when they challenged the principle that each church has liberty to ordain unbiblical ceremonies in worship where these seem conducive to edification and reverence, when they repudiated all set prayers, when they rejected kneeling in public worship, the Christian year, weekly Communion, and the practice of confirmation, they were not in fact reverting to Calvin, but departing from him, though, as Horton Davies says,¹ it is doubtful whether they realized this.

Even if they had realized it, however, it would not have affected their position; for their basic concern was not to secure Reformed solidarity as such (much though they made of this idea in controversy), but simply to obey God's authoritative Word. But the question at issue was, how should the sufficiency of Scripture be understood in connection with worship? The Puritans thought the official Anglican view on the point lax and wrongheaded; Anglican spokesmen like Hooker criticized the developed Puritan view as legalistic and irrational. Which was right? The question still presses today. Do we agree with John Owen that "God's worship hath no accidentals...all that is in it and belonging to it, and the manner of it, is false worship, if it have not a divine institution in particular"? The problem is not simple, and much can still be said on both sides.

2. *What regulations are proper for Christian worship?* There were, and are, three possible ways of ordering public worship: to have a set liturgy like the *Book of Common Prayer*, or a manual of general guidance like the *Westminster Directory*, or to leave it entirely to the individual minister or congregation to regulate its own worship at will. These alternatives are historically associated with Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Independents and Quakers respectively. Which now is preferable? How strong are the objections to each? Does liturgical worship necessarily breed formality and deadness? Is extempore prayer necessarily uneven in quality? Does it really make it harder for worship to be congregational than if it is a known form is being used? Does a regular order followed Sunday by Sunday quench the Spirit? Is it necessary, if a congregation would honor the Holy Spirit, for it to refuse to tie itself to an established pattern of worship, and simply at each meeting wait on the Spirit for a fresh leading? On these issues, evangelicals would differ now, as the Puritans differed in their day. Baxter, for instance, like Calvin and Knox, approved of liturgy with room for extempore prayer at the minister's discretion, but Owen maintained that "all liturgies, as such, are...false worship...used to defeat Christ's promise of gifts and God's Spirit." Which was right? Here again is an issue which is not simple, and cannot be regarded as dead.

3. *What discipline is proper in connection with worship?* No doubt there would be general agreement that the attempts made under Elizabeth and the Stuarts

to enforce strict national uniformity to the *Book of Common Prayer* were regrettable, and did more harm than good. Nobody, one hopes, would wish to defend the kind of discipline administered upon nonconformists, by the Courts of High Commission and Star Chamber before the Civil War, and by the judges and JPs of England during the years of the Clarendon Code. Yet a problem remains. Granted that the discipline we have mentioned was ungodly in its rigidity and disregard for tender consciences, is there to be no discipline in connection with public worship at all? Today, in some Protestant churches where set prayers are the rule, rituals and prayers from the Roman Mass are introduced, and in others where extempore prayer is practiced, ministers are heard basing their public intercessions on the heresy that all human beings are God's redeemed children. In both these instances worship is spoiled through the doctrinal aberration of the minister. Is there not need for discipline in such cases? But of what sort? What steps are appropriate today in face of such disfigurements as these? The problem exercised the Puritans in their day, and it will be well if it continues to exercise us in ours.

The Glory of Worship

But these problems concerned the forms and externals of worship only, and our present interest is rather in the inner reality of worship, as the Puritans understood it. Here, wherever else they differed, they were at one, and the written material they have left us is completely homogeneous, as we shall hope to show by a fairly wide range of quotations. What is worship? It is essentially doxology, a giving of glory, praise, honor, and homage to God. In the broadest sense of the word, all true piety is worship. "Godliness is a worship," wrote Swinnock:

Worship comprehends all that respect which man oweth and giveth to his Maker...It is the tribute which we pay to the King of Kings, whereby we acknowledge his sovereignty over us, and our dependence on him...All that inward reverence and respect, and all that outward obedience and service to God, which the word [sc.godliness] enjoineeth, is included in this one word worship.²

Usually, however, the Puritans used the word in its narrower and more common sense, to signify simply all our direct communion with God: invocation, adoration, mediation, faith, praise, prayer and the receiving of instruction from his word, both in public and in private.

Worship must be, as our Lord said, "in spirit and in truth" (Jn 4:24). The Puritans understood this as meaning that, on the one hand, worship must be inward, a matter of "heart-work," and, on the other, worship must be a response to the revealed reality of God's will and work, applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, they insisted that worship must be simple and Scriptural. Simplicity was to them the safeguard of inwardness, just as Scripture was the fountain-head of

¹ Davies, Horton, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Dacre Press; London, 1948), p. 48.

² Swinnock, George, *Works*, (Edinburgh: James Nichols, 1868), I:31.

truth. The austere simplicity of Puritan worship has often been criticized as uncouth, but to the Puritans it was an essential part of the beauty of Christian worship. This comes out in two sermons by Owen on Ephesians 2:18, entitled "The nature and beauty of gospel worship," in which the weightiest of all the Puritan theologians formulates to perfection the Puritan ideal of worship in scarcely veiled antithesis to the *Prayer Book* formalism of Laud ("the beauty of holiness" as Laud was pleased to call it).³ It is worth quoting from this exposition at some length. Owen begins by making the point that the true "decency," "order," and "beauty" of Christian worship lies in its trinitarian and evangelical character, as an exercise of faith on the worshippers' part.

It is a principle deeply fixed in the minds of men that the worship of God ought to be orderly, comely, beautiful and glorious.... And indeed that worship may be well suspected not to be according to the mind of God which comes short in these

properties. ...I shall add unto this, only this reasonable assertion,... viz, That what is so in his worship and service, God himself is the most proper judge. If then we evince not that spiritual gospel worship, in its own naked simplicity, without any other external, adventitious helper or countenance, is most orderly, comely, beautiful, and glorious, the Holy Ghost in the Scripture being judge, we shall be content to seek for these things where else, as it is pretended, they may be found.

...In the spiritual worship of the gospel, the whole blessed trinity, and each person therein distinctly, do in that economy and dispensation, wherein they act severally and peculiarly in the work of our redemption, afford distinct communion with themselves unto the souls of the worshippers. [Owen shows how this is set forth in his text, which speaks of access to the Father through the Son by the Spirit.] This is the general order of gospel worship, the great rubric of our service.... If either we come not unto it by Jesus Christ, or perform it not in the strength of the Holy Ghost, or in it go not unto God as a Father, we transgress all the rules of this worship. This is the great canon, which if it be neglected, there is no decency in whatever else is done in this way. And this in general is the glory of it.... Acting faith on Christ for admission, and on the Holy Ghost for his assistance, so going on in his strength; and on God, even the Father, for acceptance, is the work of the soul in this worship. That it hath anything more glorious to be conversant about, I am yet to learn....⁴

The idea that ritual pageantry in services and decoration of church buildings is of itself an enriching of worship appears as a ludicrous irreverence.

In similar terms, Owen from his text gives theological substance to the idea of uniformity in worship:

The saints... have all their access "in one Spirit": and this is the spring of all the *uniformity* that God requires. So the apostle tells us, that as the gifts themselves [sc. abilities for leading the church in corporate worship] there are diversities of them, and difference in them; 1 Cor. xii. 4-6. But where then is uniformity?... The apostle answereth, verse 11. ("All these worketh that one and self-same Spirit"). Here lies the uniformity of gospel worship, that though the gifts bestowed on men for the public performance of it be various... yet it is *one Spirit* that bestows them

all among them ...one and the same Spirit discovers the will and worship of God to them all; one and the same Spirit works the same graces for their king in the hearts of them all; one and the same Spirit bestows the gifts that

are necessary for the carrying on the gospel worship in the public assemblies... And what if he be pleased to give out his gifts... variously ... "dividing to every one severally, as he will?" Yet this hindereth not, but that as the saints mentioned, they all approach unto God by the one Spirit, and so have uniformity in their worship throughout the world. This is a *catholic uniformity*....⁵

Finally, Owen scouts the idea that ornate buildings and rituals have, or can have, anything to do with the "beauty" that God seeks and finds in the worship of his faithful people. He reminds us that Christians are themselves the temple and dwelling place of God, and that true worship, though done on earth in the body, is actually "performed in heaven," inasmuch as "those who have an access unto the immediate presence of God, and to the throne of grace, enter into heaven itself." (Owen appeals for the proof to Hebrews 5:20; 9:24; 10:19, 21; Revelation 4.) The idea that ritual pageantry in services and decoration of church buildings is of itself an enriching of worship thus appears as a ludicrous irreverence. "What poor low thoughts have men of God and his ways, who think there lies an acceptable glory and beauty in a little paint and varnish."⁶

Complementary to Owen's analysis is Charnock's anatomizing of worship in his sermon entitled "Spiritual Worship" on John 4:24.

Worship is an act of the understanding, applying itself to the knowledge of the excellency of God, and actual thoughts of his majesty.... It is also an act of the will, whereby the soul adores and reverenceth

³ Owen, John, *Works*, ed William Goold (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1850-53) IX: 53-84

⁴ *Ibid*, IX:56f.

⁵ *Ibid*, IX: 76f.

⁶ *Ibid*, IX: 77f.

his majesty, is ravished with his amiableness, embraceth his goodness, enters itself into an intimate communion with this most lovely object, and pitcheth all his affections upon him.⁷

Only the regenerate can worship God acceptably, says Charnock, for only they have hearts that truly go out to him in adoration and self-subjection. Therefore "we must find healing in Christ's wings, before God can find spirituality in our services. All worship issuing from a dead nature, is but a dead service."⁸

Charnock goes on to show that spiritual worship is performed only by the Spirit's active help, since it requires sincerity and singleness of heart ("unitedness," Charnock calls it; "concentration" would express his meaning). It involves acts of faith, love, humbling, and self-distrust, and must be an expression of the heart's desire for God. "A spiritual worshipper actually aspires in every duty to know God....To desire worship as an end, is carnal; to desire it as a means, and act desires in it for communion with God in it, is spiritual, and the fruit of a spiritual life...."⁹ Also, spiritual worship will be joyful:

The evangelical worship is a spiritual worship, and praise, joy, and delight are prophesied of as great ingredients in attendance on gospel ordinances, Is. xii.3-5....The approach is to God as gracious, not to God as unpacified, as a son to a father, not as a criminal to a judge....Delight in God is a gospel frame, therefore the more joyful, the more spiritual....¹⁰

In worship we must seek to reflect back to God by our response the knowledge that we have received of him through his revelation.

God is a Spirit infinitely happy, therefore we must approach him with cheerfulness; he is a Spirit of infinite majesty, therefore we must come before him with reverence; he is a Spirit infinitely high, therefore we must offer up our sacrifices with deepest humility; he is a Spirit infinitely holy, therefore we must address him with purity; he is a Spirit glorious, we therefore must acknowledge his excellency...he is a Spirit infinitely provoked by us, therefore we must offer up our worship in the name of a pacifying mediator and intercessor.¹¹

"That all true believers whose minds are spiritually renewed have a singular delight in all the institu-

tions and ordinances of divine worship is fully evident," writes Owen, and quotes Psalms 42:1-4, 63:1-5, 84:1-4 to prove his point.¹² That the saints love public worship is a constant Puritan theme. Why their delight in it? Because in worship the saints do not merely seek God; they also find him. Worship is not only an expression of gratitude, but also a means of grace, whereby the hungry are fed, so that the empty are sent away rich. For "there is in worship an approach of God to man."¹³ God's presence in his ordinances is a reality; God is essentially

present in the world, graciously present in his church. "God delights to approach to men, and converse with them in the worship instituted in the gospel."¹⁴ And men honor God most when they come to worship hungry and expectant, conscious of need and looking to God to meet them and supply it.

The ordinances of Christian worship, declares Owen, are "means of the communication of a sense of divine love, and supplies of divine grace unto the souls of them that do believe." They are "ways of our approaching unto God," and "we are always to come unto God, as unto an eternal spring of goodness, grace and mercy, of all that our souls do stand in need of." "To make a pretence of coming unto God, and not with expectation of receiving good and great things from him, is to despise God." An aimless, careless, casual, routine habit of church-going is neither rational nor reverent. Asks Owen,

with piercing rhetoric:

What do men come to hear the Word of God for? What do they pray for? What do they expect to receive from him? Do they come unto God as the eternal fountain of living waters? As the God of all grace, peace and consolation? Or do they come unto his worship without any design as unto a dry and empty show?....Or do they think they bring something unto God, but receive nothing from him?....To receive anything from him they expect not, nor do ever examine themselves whether they have done so or no?....It is not for persons who walk in such ways, ever to attain a due delight in the ordinances of divine worship.¹⁵

Owen's application of this is uncomfortably searching:

Many of the better sort of professors are too negligent in this matter. They do not long and pant in the inward man after renewed pledges of the love of God; they do not consider how much they have need of them...; they do not prepare their minds for their reception of them, nor come with the expectation of

**We complain
today that minis-
ters do not know
how to preach;
but is it not
equally true that
our congrega-
tions do not
know how to
hear?**

⁷ Charnock, Stephen, *Works* (Edinburgh: James Nichols, 1864), I:298.

⁸ *Ibid.*, I:299.

⁹ *Ibid.*, I:307.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I:308.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, I:315.

¹² Owen, *Works*, VII:430f.

¹³ Charnock, *Works*, I:319.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Owen, *Works*, I:319.

the communication unto them; they do not rightly fix their faith on this truth, namely that these holy administrations and duties are appointed of God in the first place, as the way and means of conveying his love and a sense of it unto our souls. From hence springs all that luke-warmness, coldness, and indifferency unto the duties of holy worship, that are growing among us.¹⁶

This, surely, is a word for our times.

The Elements of Worship

The Puritan lists of the parts and constituent activities of worship normally include the following: praise (especially the singing of psalms), prayer (confession, adoration, intercession), preaching, the sacraments ("ordinances"), and also catechizing and the exercise of church discipline. In all these activities, the Puritans maintained, God comes to meet his people met together in his Son's name, but most of all in preaching. Preaching is the most solemn and exalted action, and therefore the supreme test, of a man's ministry: "they [Puritans] hold that the highest and supreme office and authority of the Pastor is to preach the gospel solemnly and publicly to the Congregation by interpreting the written Word of God, and applying the same by exhortation and reproof unto them."¹⁷ For preaching in the church is supremely the ministration of the Spirit, in a way that (*pace* Richard Hooker) the mere reading of the Word to the Puritans' minds never could be; therefore it is the supreme means of grace. So Thomas Goodwin writes:

It is not the letter of the Word that ordinarily doth convert, but the spiritual meaning of it, as revealed and expounded....There is the letter, the husk; and there is the spirit, the kernel, and when we by expounding the Word do open the husk, out drops the kernel. It is the meaning of the word which is the word indeed, it is the sense of it which is the soul....Now, preaching in a more special manner reveals God's Word. When an ointment box is once opened, then it casts its savour about; and when the juice of a medicinal herb is once strained out and applied, then it heals. And so it is the spiritual meaning of the Word let into the heart which converts it and turns it to God.¹⁸

For congregations, therefore, the hearing of sermons is the most momentous event of their lives, and the Puritans pleaded with worshippers to appreciate this fact, and listen to the word preached with awe, attention, and expectancy. Baxter put the point thus, in the course of his "Directions for Profitably Hearing the Word Preached" in the *Christian Directory*:

Come not to hear with careless heart, as if you were to hear a matter that little concerned you, but come with a sense of the unspeakable weight, necessity, and consequence of the holy Word which you are to hear; and when you understand how much you are concerned in it, it will greatly help your understanding of every particular truth....

Make it our work with diligence to apply the word as you are hearing it....Cast not all upon the minister, as those that will go no further than they are carried as by force....You have work to do as well as the preacher, and should all the time be as busy as he....you must open your mouths, and digest it, for another cannot digest it for you...therefore be all the while at work, and abhor an idle heart in hearing, as well as an idle minister.

Chew the cud, and call up all when you come home in secret, and by meditation preach it over to yourselves. If it were coldly delivered by the preacher, do you...preach it more earnestly over to your own hearts....¹⁹

We complain today that ministers do not know how to preach; but is it not equally true that our congregations do not know how to hear? An instruction to remedy the first deficiency will surely be labor lost unless the second is remedied too.

Not, however, that the hearing of sermons is an end in itself, or that ardent sermon-tasting and preacher-hunting is the height of Christian devotion. Thomas Adams speaks sternly against the assumption that listening to sermons is all that matters, reminding us that preaching must lead on to prayer and praise:

Many come to these holy places, and are so transported with a desire of hearing, that they forget the fervency of praying and praising God....All our preaching is but to beget your praying; to instruct you to praise and worship God....I complain not that our churches are auditories, but that they are not oratories; not that you come to sermons (for God's sake, come faster), but that you neglect public prayer: as if it were only God's part to bless you, not yours to bless God....Beloved, mistake not. It is not the only exercise of a Christian to hear a sermon; nor is that Sabbath well spent that dispatcheth no other business for heaven....God's service is not to be narrowed up in hearing, it hath greater latitude; there must be prayer, praise, adoration....²⁰

Here, too, surely is a word for Christian people today.

The Spheres of Worship

There are, said the Puritans, three spheres of Christian worship: public, in the local church; domestic, in the family circle; private, in the closet. Of these three,

¹⁶ *Ibid.* VII:439.

¹⁷ Bradshaw, William, *English Puritanisme* (1605), p. 17.

¹⁸ Goodwin, Thomas, *Works*, ed J. Miller (London: James Nichol, 1861) XI:364.

¹⁹ Baxter, Richard, *Works* (London: George Virtue, 1838) I:473, 475.

²⁰ Adams, Thomas, *Works* (Edinburgh: James Nichols, 1861-62) I:103.

public worship is the most important. David Clarkson was entirely typical when, preaching on Psalm 87:2 under the title "Public worship to be preferred before private," he argued from Scripture that "the Lord is more glorified by public worship," "there is more of the Lord's presence in public worship," "here are the clearest manifestations of God," "there is more spiritual advantage to be got in the use of public ordinances," and "public worship is more edifying."²¹ Strikingly, yet characteristically (for many others made the same point), he reminds us that public worship is "the nearest resemblance of heaven that earth knows: for in heaven, so far as the Scripture describes it to us...all the worship of that glorious company is public....They make one glorious congregation and so jointly together sing the praises of him that sits on the throne, and the praises of the Lamb, and continue employed in this public worship to eternity."²² Similarly, Swinnock insists that on the Lord's Day church must come first, and everything else be built round it. "Esteem the public ordinances the chief work of the day, and let thy secret and private duties be so managed that thy soul may be prepared for them, and profited by them."²³

But family worship was also, to the Puritans, vitally important. Every home should be a church, with the head of the house as its minister. Daily and indeed twice daily, the Puritans recommended, the family as a family should hear the Word read, and pray to God. Sunday by Sunday, the family should seek to pool the profiting of its members from the public ordinances: day by day, its members should seek to encourage each other in the way of God. Parents must teach their children the Scriptures; all members of the household must be given time and a place to pray. Thus, informally, but conscientiously, the worship and service of God in the home must be carried on.

Reproducing the Beauty of Puritan Worship

Incomplete though this survey has necessarily been (we have said nothing, for instance, of the sacraments), it has at least sketched in the main outline of Puritan ideals for worshippers — reverence, faith, boldness, eagerness, expectancy, delight, whole-heartedness, concentration, self-abasement, and above all a passion to meet and know God himself as a loving Father through the mediation of his Son. This ideal was common to them all — to those like Sibbes and Archbishop Usher, who conformed to the *Prayer Book* liturgy; to those like Owen, who thought all liturgies unlawful; and to those like Baxter, who were happy to alternate between "free" and "set" prayers, and were equally at home in either. Here, in their conception of what the worshipper's spirit and goal should be, the Puritans were at one; and perhaps we may venture the judgment that their agreements here were more significant than their differences, and that it is within the area of their agreements that their teaching can help us most today.

But still one question remains. How do we begin to get from where we are to where the Puritans show us that we ought to be in our own practice of worship? How can we, cold-hearted and formal as we so often are — to our

shame — in church services, advance closer to the Puritan ideals? The Puritans would have met our question by asking us another. How do we prepare for worship?

Here, perhaps, is our own chief weakness. The Puritans inculcated specific preparation for worship — not merely for the Lord's Supper, but for all services — as a regular part of the Christian's inner discipline of prayer and communion with God. Says the *Westminster Directory*: "When the congregation is to meet for public worship, the people (*having before prepared their hearts thereunto*) ought all to come...." But we neglect to prepare our hearts; for, as the Puritans would have been the first to tell us, thirty seconds of private prayer upon taking our seat in the church building is not time enough in which to do it. It is here that we need to take ourselves in hand. What we need at the present time to deepen our worship is not new liturgical forms or formulae, nor new hymns and tunes, but more preparatory "heart-work" before we use the old ones. There is nothing wrong with new hymns, tunes, and worship styles — there may be very good reasons for them — but without "heart-work" they will not make our worship more fruitful and God-honoring; they will only strengthen the syndrome that C.S. Lewis called "the liturgical fidgets." "Heart-works" must have priority or spiritually our worship will get nowhere. So I close with an admonition from George Swinnock on preparation for the service of the Lord's Day, which for all its seeming quaintness is, I think, a word in season for very many of us:

Prepare to meet thy God, O Christian! Betake thyself to thy chamber on the Saturday night, confess and bewail thine unfaithfulness under the ordinances of God; ashamed and condemn thyself for thy sins, entreat God to prepare thy heart for, and assist it in, thy religious performances; spend some time in consideration of the infinite majesty, holiness, jealousy, and goodness, of that God, with whom thou art to have to do in sacred duties; ponder the weight and importance of his holy ordinances...; meditate on the shortness of the time thou hast to enjoy Sabbaths in; and continue musing...till the fire burneth; thou canst not think the good thou mayest gain by such forethoughts, how pleasant and profitable a Lord's day would be to thee after such a preparation. The oven of thine heart thus baked in, as it were overnight, would be easily heated the next morning; the fire so well raked up when thou wentest to bed, would be the sooner kindled when thou shouldst rise. If thou wouldst thus leave thy heart with God on the Saturday night, thou shouldst find it with him in the Lord's Day morning.²⁴ Δ

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:229f.

²¹ Clarkson, David, *Works* (Edinburgh: James Nichols, 1864) III:190ff.

²² *Ibid.*, III:194.

²³ Swinnock, *Works*, I:234.

Dr. J.I. Packer, educated at Oxford University, is currently Professor of Systematic and Historical Theology at Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia. His most recent book is *A Quest for Godliness: The Puritan Vision of the Christian Life*. A longer version of the foregoing article is included in *A Quest for Godliness* copyrighted © 1990, used by permission of Good News/Crossway Books, Westchester, Illinois 60154.

Contrasting Islamic Revelation

Islamic revelation is grounded in an atomistic, ahistorical, and ultimately arbitrary theological context.

Derke Bergsma

The subject of divine revelation ought naturally to begin the discussion of any significant doctrine in both Islam and Christianity. Both religions are revelational; that is, they both claim to be based upon divine revelation.

Initially, we must understand the Muslim idea of Revelation against the background of a thoroughly atomistic view of reality. The essence of

this view is that time is a succession of unconnected moments, and space is a series of unrelated atoms. These atoms come into being by the free, creative activity, of Allah and immediately cease to exist, being replaced by new atoms similarly called into existence. Thus, the illusion of motion, change, secondary causality, and apparent continuity are determined by the manner in which new atoms are created to replace the old.

This theory of reality has been developed into an elaborate system to explain the origin and working process of the universe and is accepted with minor variations by all orthodox schools. It serves well to uphold that most crucial tenet of the Muslim faith with reference to the idea of Predestination, namely, that the exercise of Allah's sovereign will is both free and arbitrary, unhindered by natural law or eternal necessity. Sensusi, a fifteenth century Muslim writer, presents the orthodox point of view, maintaining that apparent causes are temporal and have no effect on that with which they are associated either by their nature or by a power created in them. Speaking of the appearance of apparent causes he says,

God has created them as signs and indications of the things he wishes to create without any logical connection between them and that of which they are the indications. Thus God can break the accustomed order of things whenever he wishes and for whomsoever he wishes.¹

Such a view of reality, while it explains the

¹ Sensusi, quoted in Guillaume, A. *Islam* (Baltimore; Penguin Books, 1954) p. 141.

appearance of causality in the world and preserves divine freedom, allows no room for the responsibility of man or for secondary causality. Man, as a part of the created order of things, even if he is recognized as the highest form of creation, is hopelessly and passively dependent on the moment by moment creative will of Allah. Allah has created and is constantly recreating man so that nothing endures to serve as the basis for responsible human action. Nothing apart from Allah possesses any enduring quality apart from his creative activity.

In this emphasis we see the absolute qualitative difference which obtains between Allah and all creatures. Allah exists uncreated, eternal, transcendent and distinct from all. He is the only power, or energy, or actor, existing throughout the universe, and all other existence is pure passivity. From the simplest atom to the highest level of created being, all is characterized by complete inertia. W.S. Palgrave in *The Muslim Idea of God* sums up this system by calling it

the Pantheism of Force or Act, thus exclusively assigned to God, who absorbs it all, exercises it all, and to Whom alone it can be ascribed whether for preserving or for destroying, for relative evil or for equally relative good.²

This point of view is significant for the idea of revelation since even in revelation Allah remains aloof. He is never associated with creatures in any direct communicative sense. Man is never a partner in the revelational process. Even Allah's most specific commands are mediated through the angel Gabriel. Divine transcendence and human submission are everywhere maintained and the proper attitude and response of man is always quiescence.

Muslim thought allows for no causality as operative in the world except the primary cause of Allah's creative will. Secondary causes are illusory, simply a name for the observations we make concerning the manner in which Allah chooses to call into being new atoms to replace the former which ceased to exist as quickly as they had been created. Nothing can be said to have any kind of separate existence or predictable continuity. History is therefore reduced to illusion. All activity and, consequently, all responsibility rests solely in Allah.

Biblical Revelation, by contrast, presents the created order as existing separately but always dependently in relation to God. It possesses an enduring reality in which secondary causes are real and in which moral creatures may enter into voluntary fellowship with the Creator. While God, as primary cause, has established and continues to uphold the universe, secondary causes must be recognized and man's responsibility maintained. In view of this position, the doctrine of Predestination, for example, is a much more complex issue in Christian theology than in Islam.

Special Revelation and History

Special revelation in Islam is non-historical. The Qur'an was not unfolded within a historical process, but

² p. 70.

was "handed down"³ from a supra-historical realm. This does not mean that the Qur'an was revealed whole to Muhammad at one time, for it was received by him over a period of time equal to one-half of his life. Individual sections and even individual Surahs were received on many scattered occasions. But for Islam, an historical event never has revelatory significance. Revelation is always an intrusion from a supra-historical realm.

In its emphasis upon the non-historical character of special revelation, Islam is simply being consistent with its atomistic view of reality in which Allah is the sole Cause. History, from this point of view, is illusion, simply the impression we receive of the manner in which Allah calls everything into being in rapid, successive, creative activity. The only means open for special revelation, therefore, is direct delivery of the eternal message. The eternal nature of the Qur'an is not threatened by historical transiency, since it is a deposit of Allah's speech from the heavenly realm.

In contrast, special revelation for the Christian has been gradually unfolded in the process of history. To be sure, it includes verbal communication in the law and the prophets, but it also includes revelation in the redemptive acts of God in the history of Israel, in the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and in the work of the apostles in the early church. History serves as the medium of disclosure through which God reveals himself.

The Nature of God as Revealer

Of crucial significance for the idea of revelation in Islam is its conception of the nature of Allah. In view of the Islamic emphasis upon the utter transcendence and wholly otherness of the deity, it is difficult to describe the Muslim conception of Allah's nature in positive terms with any measure of specificity.

The name Allah itself underscores and emphasizes the qualitative difference between creator and creation. Allah is a contraction of Al-Lah which, translated literally, means, "The Deity." The definite article emphasizes the absolute uniqueness of Him who is the only independent reality, who shares his likeness with no other. This is the keynote of Muslim theology and stands at the center of every believer's faith. The Shahade, the declaration of faith recited daily by all the faithful, begins: "There is no god except Allah." Thus there is impressed upon every mind, the absolute distinction between Allah and everything else. To blur the distinction between Allah and his creation is the ultimate blasphemy. No aspect of creation may be associated in any way with Allah as equal, nor even in the capacity of subordinate partner or assistant.

This awesome awareness of divine transcendence has the effect of developing a religious attitude of complete submission on the part of man. Unquestioning acquiescence to the divine will alone is the proper response. Absolute predestination is the logically consistent point of view from which only the heretic dares to retreat. Divine transcendence and human submission are consistently and intimately linked in Muslim thought.

³ The Arabic word for "Revelation" literally means "handed down."

Wensink in his book, *The Muslim Creed*, says, "The prevailing feature of Allah in the Qur'an is His absoluteness. His doing as he pleases without being bound by human rules."⁴ To this quotation we can add the observation that Allah exercises his will without regard to *any* rules, human or *divine*, and man is not to question him as if he is accountable to any established standard. There is no criterion outside of him to which his activity must conform *nor* within his nature with which his activity must be consistent. Everything is brought to pass by a sovereign will unmotivated by any consideration, and anything could have been willed in any other fashion or manner. Thus the Muslim conception of Allah's will is one of complete voluntarism. Wensink continues:

Thus immeasurable and eternally exalted above, and dissimilar from, all creatures which lie levelled before Him on one common plane of instrumentality and inertness, God is One in the totality of omnipotent and omnipresent action, and acknowledges no rule, standard or limit, save his own absolute will.⁵

The Reformed faith, of course, also speaks of God as Sovereign. But when it speaks of God as Sovereign, Calvinism reminds us that this should not be meant to imply that He is a being who is arbitrary in the exercise of His will, unmotivated by any considerations whatsoever. God always acts in conformity to the law of His own Being. Charles Hodge says, "The authority of God is limited by nothing out of himself, but it is controlled, in all of its manifestations, by His infinite perfections."⁶ His will is not blind, and the exercise of it is not indifferent or capricious. God has reasons for willing as He does, so that the means chosen as well as the goals accomplished are determined by him in harmony with his being. God cannot will anything that is contrary to this nature, to his wisdom or love, to this righteousness or holiness. God's attributes represent laws of the divine nature to which He is bound to conform. Herman Bavinck observes that we can seldom discern the reason why God wills one thing and not another, and that it is not possible nor even permissible for us to look for some deeper ground of things than the will of God, but we can, nevertheless, be assured that the exercise of his will is not arbitrary, but is in perfect harmony with his essential being.⁷

Hence, the activity of God as Revealer therefore, can be expected to be orderly, consistent, and uncontradictory because it is based upon the constancy and immutability of His own nature. He never denies his own essential being. Δ

⁴ p. 64.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Hodge, C. *Systematic Theology* Vol. I (New York: Scribners, 1923) p. 441.

⁷ Bavinck, H. *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* Vol. II (Kampen; Kok, 1911) p. 241.

Derke Bergsma is professor of Pastoral Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in California and author of *Redemption: The Triumph of God's Great Plan* (Redeemer Books).

A Case Against Education Vouchers

Though deceptively appealing, voucher programs pose a serious threat to the religious autonomy of Christian schools.

Jack Phelps

The push for education vouchers as an ingredient of school reform received a boost this past June when the Brookings Institution published *Politics, Market, and America's Schools* by John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe. Chubb and Moe, in common with Myron Lieberman, author of *Privatization and Educational Choice*, have identified the lack of competition as

a key factor in the failure of American public schools. These authors promote education vouchers as a logical way to foster competition between public schools and their academically superior counterparts in the private sector. Parents, including many Christian parents, have joined the chorus and are increasingly calling for tax revenues to be dispersed via tax credits or voucher programs to pay for their children's education. The Milwaukee Voucher Plan and Oregon's Measure Eleven are important examples. Though the Oregon Initiative failed by a two-to-one margin, supporters had gathered almost 130,000 signatures in the balloting process. Many voucher proponents are arguing that such programs are a good first step toward the disestablishment of government schools and the complete privatization of education.

Lieberman has enumerated five basic arguments in favor of educational vouchers. He claims that such vouchers would: 1) protect the religious freedom of parents and students, 2) result in taxpayer savings, 3) minimize social conflict, 4) better protect civil rights, and 5) improve educational services.¹ Though each of these points is worthy of discussion, I will focus only on the claim that vouchers would protect religious freedom. Contrary to Lieberman's claims, I contend that the various voucher and tax credit schemes present a serious threat to the religious autonomy of Christian schools and Christian home school parents.

The case I present against education vouchers is

deeply rooted in the Christian theology of the family. In short, Scripture calls upon Christian parents to provide an education for their children which is founded upon the revelation of the Triune God and serves His ends (e.g., Deut. 6:1-25; Eph. 6:1-4; II Tim. 1:5; 3:14-17). As such, education is primarily and finally the responsibility of the family and not the state and, given its prescribed goals, it obviously cannot be a religiously neutral activity. This Scriptural outlook is also well entrenched in western law. Blackstone, in his masterful *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, wrote that the duties of parents "principally consist in three particulars; their maintenance, their protection, and their education."² Blackstone further adds that it is the "duty of parents...[to] give them an education suitable to their station in life; a duty pointed out by reason, and of far the greatest importance of any."³ With this basic orientation in mind, I will turn to present a case against education vouchers.

Legal Considerations

The legal history of First Amendment religious education decisions focuses on traditional religious schools. The precedents regarding government aid, however, are certain to be applied to home schools as well. This is especially true in the twenty states that allow or potentially allow home schools to operate as private schools.

David Young has appropriately summarized the questions surrounding government subsidization and religious education as an "internal tension between the establishment and free exercise clauses" of the First Amendment.⁴ Similarly, Lieberman has argued that the

controversy emerges from conflicts between the establishment clause and the free exercise clause. This conflict is especially acute under compulsory education. If parents who regard the public schools as anti-religious cannot afford private education, compulsory education is an interference with the free exercise of religion. If the government provides vouchers which make such attendance possible, the vouchers may be deemed contrary to the establishment clause. This dilemma lies at the heart of religious conflict over educational vouchers.⁵

In *Smith v. Board of School Commissioners of Mobile County*,⁶ Chief Judge Brevard Hand made a bold and significant move. He ruled that the public schools were, in fact, teaching religion in violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment as applied to the states in the Fourteenth. I applauded this ruling because it was consistent with the facts and because it gave

² Blackstone, Sir William, *Commentaries on the Laws of England in Four Books* (Philadelphia: Rees Welsh & Co., 1898), Vol. 1, p. 419.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

⁴ Young, D. "Constitutional Validity of State Aid to Pupils in Church-Related Schools," *Ohio State Law Journal*, 38: 783 (1977).

⁵ Lieberman, *Privatization*, p. 195.

⁶ 655 F. Supp. 939 (S. D. Ala. 1987).

¹ Lieberman, Myron, *Privatization and Educational Choice* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 283.

expression to a very important conclusion, namely, that education is *inherently* religious.⁷ The morality and religious tenets of a teacher are inescapably communicated in the classroom situation. The same is true for textbooks, which was the particular point at issue in *Smith*. This truth constitutes the best argument, not only for the freedom to choose private education for our children, but also ultimately for a call to prohibit the public funding of schools in general. We should argue, therefore, that the inescapably religious nature of education makes the very existence of tax funded schools a violation of the establishment clause of the First Amendment.

But we cannot have it both ways, as a voucher system assumes, for if we accept the premise that it is legitimate for tax-generated revenue to be dispensed to Christian parents to fund the Christian education of their children, then we have forfeited the battle to prevent our own tax dollars from being used to establish a religion which is repugnant to our faith. Voucher proponents do not mitigate the issue by arguing that vouchers are only temporary or indirect subsidies. The court has frequently ruled that the indirect nature of government aid does not exempt it from Constitutional restrictions. For example, in *Committee for Public Education & Religious Liberty v. Nyquist*,⁸ the challenged New York statute provided tuition reimbursement to the parents of children attending private schools. The court said the fact that the payment was to parents rather than to schools had no singular effect in establishing the permissibility of the tax relief. In fact, the payments' "inevitable effect was to subsidize and advance the religious mission of sectarian schools;" therefore, it violated the establishment clause, "whether or not the actual dollars given eventually found their way into sectarian institutions."⁹

This approach has been affirmed even at the college level¹⁰ in spite of other rulings which made a distinction between the degrees of religious content at the college level compared with that at the elementary and secondary levels.¹¹

Another class of cases indicating the court's position with respect to indirect aid is found in *School*

*Districts of Grand Rapids v. Ball*¹² and *Aguilar v. Felton*.¹³ In both these cases, publicly funded teachers were teaching classes in private schools using materials provided by the public schools under Federal Title I provisions. In *Aguilar*, the court ruled, in an opinion written by Justice Brennan, that the program was "constitutionally flawed" because of the constitutional principle "that neither the State nor Federal Government shall promote or hinder a particular faith or faith generally through the advancement of benefits or through the excessive entanglement of church and state in the administration of those benefits."¹⁴ Justice Powell, in a separate concurring opinion stated that "the type of aid provided in New York by the Title I program amounts to a state subsidy of the parochial schools by relieving those schools of the duty to provide the remedial and supplemental education their children require."¹⁵ In each of these cases, one could produce an argument that the aid was indirect. But, as we have seen, the court has ruled consistently that such aid, except under the most limited of circumstances,¹⁶ fails the test of constitutionality under the establishment clause either by failing to have a strictly secular effect or by promoting excessive entanglement between church and state.

The precedent for government sovereignty through subsidy is found not only in the judiciary but also in legislative action. In the particular issue at hand, the U.S. Congress has plainly established Federal sovereignty for educational institutions receiving government funds. In 20 USC §1681(a), Congress determined that any educational institution which receives Federal aid must conform to Federal non-discriminatory policies. Furthermore, in 20 USC § 1682, Congress has directed the relevant Federal agencies to promulgate regulations to assure compliance with §1681(a).

These provisions have no trouble sustaining a Constitutional challenge.¹⁷ As far back as *Gibbons v. Ogden*,¹⁸ the Court ruled that "the sovereignty of Congress, though limited to specified objects, is plenary to those objects..." Furthermore, the court said, the power "vested in Congress, is complete in itself, may be exercised to its utmost extent, and acknowledges no limitations, other than are prescribed in the constitution." Similarly, in *Kentucky Whip and Collar v. Illinois Central Railroad*¹⁹ the court said that Federal power can neither be enlarged nor diminished by the exercise or non-exercise of state power. A 1917 case²⁰ that attempted to limit congressional power in similar matters was consid-

⁷ Phelps, J., "Editorial," *The Seventh Trumpet*, Vol. II, No. 2, Mar/Apr 1987.

⁸ 413 US 756 (1973).

⁹ *Ibid.* See also, *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 US 602 (1971), *Sloan v. Lemon*, 413 US 825 (1973), and especially *Wolman v. Walter*, 433 US 229 (1977).

¹⁰ *Grove City College v. Bell*, 465 US 555 (1984). Grove City College, a Presbyterian college in Pennsylvania, did not, as a matter of policy, accept federal funds. The government contended, however, that grants and scholarships given to its students made the college a recipient of federal funds. This was affirmed by the high court. The acceptance of the "subsidies" by Grove City College did not, it is true, result in the government's denial of that college's right to hold or teach religious doctrines because the college was not "pervasively sectarian," but it did bring the college under federal guidelines in areas that could potentially conflict with its religious faith.

¹¹ *Roemer v. Board of Public Works*, 426 US 736 (1976). See the argument in *Aguilar*, 473 US at 411.

¹² 473 US 373 (1985).

¹³ 473 US 402 (1985).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, at 414, (emphasis added).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, at 417.

¹⁶ See, for example, *Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing TP.*, 330 US 1 (1947), especially the dissenting opinions written by Justices Jackson and Rutledge. See also, *Committee for Public Education v. Regan*, 444 US 646 (1980) and *Meek v. Pittenger*, 421 US 349 (1975).

¹⁷ See, for example, *United States v. Jefferson County Board of Education*, 372 F 2d 836; *Grove City College v. Bell*, *supra*.

¹⁸ 9 Wheat. 196 (1824).

¹⁹ 299 US 334 (1937).

²⁰ *Hammer v. Dagenhart*, 247 US 251 (1917).

ered an aberration and reversed in *United States v. Darby* in 1941.²¹ That the cases cited here concern interstate commerce rather than education is of no consequence in the present discussion for three reasons.

First, these cases concern the exercise of congressional power in areas acknowledged to lie within the purview of Congress, of which education (correctly or incorrectly) clearly is one. Second, the courts have directly applied arguments developed in interstate commerce cases to other congressional powers. As a significant example, the court applied an argument of the interstate commerce case, *Wickard v. Filburn*,²² in *Everson v. Board of Education of Ewing TP*;²³ specifically, the court argued that it, "is hardly lack of due process for the Government to regulate that which it subsidizes." Third, the power to regulate interstate commerce has been construed so broadly, especially in many civil rights cases,²⁴ that it would hardly be surprising if the courts were to use an interstate commerce argument against a home schooling family who purchased curricular materials through the mail. The language of *Darby*, noted above, to the effect that Congress, "following its own conception of public policy," is free to exercise its powers as it sees fit, would seem to place virtually no limitations on what Congress may do to promote ends which it deems politically expedient.

Some private school advocates, such as those in recent Oregon efforts, have suggested amending state constitutions to protect educational subsidy recipients from federal controls attendant upon vouchers and tax credits. In light of the cases cited above, especially *Darby*, this strategy is unlikely to succeed. The aim of interposing a state government against federal encroachment has no successful precedent, and, on the contrary, the courts have repeatedly denied that state authority can overrule policies established by Congress.²⁵

All of the above help focus the crucial problem with voucher and tax credit proposals: to accept government aid is to surrender sovereignty to the State. This is true not only on the theological level, but it also carries

certain practical implications. When we pay our own way, we may call our own shots — to a point. We recognize that we are under the controlling Word of God Almighty. Moreover, the principle of debtor being servant to lender applies in this discussion as well. When we accept things from the hand of God (including our wages as the fruit of our labor), we acknowledge Him as the giver of every good gift. The payment of tithes on our increase confirms this. But if we accept that which the State claims, like the King of Sodom's offer to Abraham,²⁶ then it can also claim that it made us rich. We have acquiesced to its illegitimate claims.

The British Experience

The history of government-subsidized private education in England provides an instructive example of both the intentions and the result of such schemes. The Education Act of 1902 was largely the work of Sidney Webb and the Fabian Society. The Fabians had prepared the ground for the passage of the Act by publishing, in January 1901, a tract entitled, *The Education Muddle and the Way Out*. Copies of this tract were distributed by the Vice President of the Privy Council Committee on Education, Sir John Gorst, to every member of that committee. The purpose of the proposal was to break the authority of locally elected school boards and to provide tax revenue to denominational schools — a radical departure from existing practice. The proposal led to rather fierce internecine squabbles among the Fabians. After passage of the Act, which "bore a remarkable resemblance to the Fabian proposals,"²⁷ Graham Wallas, hitherto Fabian stalwart, resigned from the Society in disgust.²⁸ He believed that the Society had compromised progressive principles by including denominational schools in the subsidies. George Bernard Shaw, an ardent supporter of Webb's plan, rebuked Wallas privately for failing to see that the subsidies could be counted on, long term, to have anything but a salutary effect on the denominational schools.

Shaw later openly stated his goals for seeking to subsidize sectarian schools. Writing in 1928, he declared, "In the case of young children, we have gone far in our interference with the old Roman rights of parents. For nine mortal years the child is taken out of its parents hands for most of the day, and thus made a State school's

If we accept the premise that it is legitimate for tax-generated revenue to be dispensed to Christian parents, then we have forfeited the battle to prevent our own tax dollars from being used to establish a religion which is repugnant to our faith.

²¹ 312 US 100 (1941).

²² 317 US 111 (1942).

²³ 330 US 1 (1947).

²⁴ See, for example, *Katzenbach v. McClung*, 379 US 294 (1964); *Heart of Atlanta Motel, Inc., v. United States*, 379 US 241 (1964).

²⁵ See especially, *Kentucky Whip and Collar*, supra, and *Cooper v. Aaron*, 358 US 1 (1958). The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) is a case in point. The US Congress mandated action in Alaska that was held to be contrary to the Alaska State Constitution by the Alaska State Supreme Court. The situation is yet unresolved, but the Federal Government has taken over wildlife management on all Federal lands in Alaska (60% of the state) and will manage it contrary to the Alaska State Constitution (at an additional cost to the taxpayers of \$17 million per annum).

²⁶ Genesis 14:21-23 — "And the king of Sodom said to Abram, 'Give the people to me and take the goods for yourself.' And Abraham said to the king of Sodom, 'I have sworn to the Lord God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take a thread or a sandal thong or anything that is yours, lest you should say, 'I have made Abram rich.'"

²⁷ Cole, Margaret, *The Story of Fabian Socialism*, (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1961), p. 105.

²⁸ Ervine, St. John, *Bernard Shaw: His Life, Work, and Friends* (New York: Wm. Morrow, 1956), p. 370.

child instead of a private family child."²⁹ Shaw goes on to elaborate on the idea that it is necessary "to protect children against their parents."³⁰ Specifically,

The State has to protect the souls of children as well as their bodies; and modern psychology confirms common experience in teaching that to horrify a young child with stories of brimstone hells, and make it believe that it is a little devil who can only escape from that hell by maintaining a sinless virtue to which no saint or heroine has ever pretended, is to injure it for life more cruelly than by any act of bodily violence that even the most brutal taskmaster would dare to prescribe or justify. To put it quite frankly and flatly, the Socialist State, as far as I can guess, will teach the child the multiplication table, but will not only not teach it the Church Catechism, but if the State teachers find that the child's parents have been teaching it the Catechism otherwise than as a curious historical document, the parents will be warned that if they persist the child will be taken out of their hands and handed over to the Lord Chancellor, exactly as the children of Shelley were when their maternal grandfather denounced his son-in-law as an atheist.³¹

Again, the method of arriving at this desired result is most instructive.

There are doctrinaire Socialists who will be shocked at the suggestion that a Socialist Government should not only tolerate private enterprise, but actually finance it. But the business of Socialist rulers is not to suppress private enterprise as such, but to attain and maintain equality of income. The substitution of public for private enterprise is only one of several means to that end; and if in any particular instance the end can be best served for the moment by private enterprise, a Socialist Government will tolerate private enterprise, or subsidize private enterprise, or even initiate private enterprise.³²

Shaw clearly taught that it was entirely appropriate for government to support that which, ultimately, it sought to destroy. But he also knew the importance of strings attached to such aid. The "capitalists...are now persuading our Conservative governments into financ-

ing them at taxpayers' expense" but without the government receiving clear evidence of equity. So, Shaw argued, "For every £100 granted to private enterprise, the government should demand a share certificate. Otherwise, if and when it subsequently nationalizes the enterprise, it will be asked to compensate the proprietors for the confiscation of its own capital."³³ Shaw did not argue that the state lost its right to confiscate by failure to obtain title, only that it was creating additional difficulties which were avoidable with better planning. The idea that strings should not accompany subsidies was unthinkable: "To make private adventurers an unconditional present of public money is to loot the Treasury and plunder the taxpayer."³⁴ As Richard Mitchell put it in the February 1981 issue of the *Underground Grammarian*, "It is simply naive to imagine that our government, or any government anywhere, will construe tax credits or vouchers as a way of letting its citizens keep, and spend as they please, some of their own money."³⁵

Regardless which variety of statism currently prevails, it is crucial for the government in question to control the attitudes of its subjects. The future of the State is secured by young people growing up with "politically correct" thinking. What better way to insure this than to control the schools? Nevertheless, the religious question inevitably arises, as Shaw clearly saw:

George Bernard Shaw argued that, "the Government, when it is once committed to general compulsory education, either directly in its own schools or by subsidies to other schools, finds itself driven to devise some sort of neutral religion that will suit everybody, or else forbid all mention of the subject in school."

But when schooling is made a national industry, and the Government sets up schools all over the country, and imposes daily attendance on the huge majority of children...a conflict arises over the souls of the children. What religion is to be taught in the State school?...[T]he Government, when it is once committed to general compulsory education, either directly in its own schools or by subsidies to other schools, finds itself driven to devise some sort of neutral religion that will suit everybody, or else forbid all

mention of the subject in school.³⁶

The latter of course, "is not really a possible plan, because children must be taught conduct as well as arithmetic, and the ultimate sanctions of conduct are metaphysical."³⁷ No one, in other words, learns or lives without religion. There simply is no religiously neutral education any more than there is morally neutral living.

²⁹ Shaw, George Bernard, *The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism, Capitalism, Sovietism, and Fascism* (New York: Random House, 1928), p. 412.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 388, 389.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 389.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 390.

³⁵ Mitchell, Richard, "Voucher, Schmoucher," *Underground Grammarian*, Vol. V, No. 2, February, 1981.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 360, 361.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 362.

Houston Rabbi Robert I. Kahn has correctly argued that the "purpose of the parochial school is a total education in which every classroom is permeated with religious spirit. Why else have them? Ideally speaking, in a parochial school there are no truly secular teachers nor secular subjects."³⁸ The suggestion that Kahn's observation is true only in parochial and other church-related schools is, of course, a myth. The only true difference is that the religious faith of the state school is relatively covert.

The dichotomy usually presented, then, between public schools and religious private schools is false. The real issue, as the Fabians knew, was whether the doctrines of Christianity would prevail in the schools (any schools). They actively endeavored to promote an anti-Christian agenda in public and private schools, and one of the means to this end was to get private schools to receive government subsidies. The results have been disastrous and pervasive.

But regardless of the ideological combatants, the principles that come to play when private schools receive some form of government subsidy have historically worked against the interests of private religious education. Hence, if either the home school community or traditional religious schools invite the government to fund the education of their children through vouchers or tax-credits, they should expect that the result here would follow the tragedy of the English model. In fact, we already have evidence of this negative trend in the history of Catholic schools in the United States.

The Ordeal of American Catholic Schools

The schools of Detroit were at one time all Roman Catholic, having been developed by Rev. Gabriel Richard who was assigned to that city in 1798.³⁹ Father Richard was an educational pioneer, especially in the publication of textbooks. He was also instrumental in founding the University of Michigan which was established by the Act of 1817. By the early 1800's, Detroit had in place a network of schools which, "was really a public school system, although supported mainly by tuition fees and private contributions."⁴⁰ None of these schools was state-supported until 1830. Under the Act of 1817, primary and secondary schools were built in every county of Michigan. These schools were not all Catholic but all were denominational.⁴¹ The idea of undenominational or "non-sectarian" teaching found scant favor anywhere at that time. As Justice Jackson noted more than a century later, the concept of nonreligious schooling "based on the premise that secular education can be isolated from all religious teaching" is "a relatively recent development dating from about

1840."⁴² But, while the denominational nature of the Detroit schools was typical, their isolation from the problems of funding was not.

As early as 1806, Catholic schools, along with other denominational schools, in New York city received a portion of state funds. New York state, however, was also funding nonsectarian common schools.⁴³ By 1824, the Public School Society finally succeeded in excluding denominational schools from government funding. While troublesome, this was not particularly alarming to Catholics, since all denominational schools were similarly treated. For fourteen years, therefore, Catholic schools continued to provide sectarian teaching on private funds. Meanwhile, the nonsectarian schools, under the direction of the Public School Society, grew stronger by feeding on public funds.

During this time, the number of Catholic immigrants, particularly from Ireland, grew, though Catholics remained a minority in a predominantly Protestant country. Many American bishops and priests became disturbed that an increasing number of this growing Catholic population was attending common schools.⁴⁴ While professedly "secular," these common schools were predominantly Protestant as measured by the personal faith of the teachers and the content of the textbooks.⁴⁵ The Catholic clergy correctly viewed this situation as a threat to the children's Catholic heritage. To counter this, the Catholic church required Catholic parents to send their children to Catholic schools, unless they could secure a dispensation from their bishop.⁴⁶ The church incorporated into Canon law the requirement that, "Catholic children shall not attend non-Catholic, indifferent, schools that are mixed, that is to say, schools open to Catholic and non-Catholic alike. The bishop of the diocese only has the right...to decide under what circumstances, and with what safeguards to prevent loss of faith, it may be tolerated that Catholic children go to such schools."⁴⁷

This was the situation when, in January of 1840, Governor Seward of New York moved to restore public funding of denominational schools. The Catholics, under Bishop Hughes, petitioned to be included. In April of that year, the petition was denied.⁴⁸ Over the next several months, Bishop Hughes campaigned to secure public funds for his schools. These efforts finally culminated in a second petition which contained a remarkable compromise. In exchange for public funds, Hughes was willing to separate the religious teachings of the Catholic schools from the secular, to "confine the teaching of religion to after-school hours," and even "to turn the 'material organization' of Catholic schools over to the control of the board of aldermen or of the Public School Society."⁴⁹ Bishop Hughes clearly understood what

³⁸ Cited in Parmley, Helen, "War Rages Over Church School Aid," *The Dallas Morning News*, March 27, 1971.

³⁹ Burns, J.A., *The Principles, Origin, and Establishment of the Catholic School System in the United States* (New York: Benziger Bros., 1912), p. 179.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 194.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, In fact, the first president of the university was a Presbyterian minister.

⁴² *Everson v. Board of Education*, 330 US at 23.

⁴³ Burns, *Principles*, p. 361.

⁴⁴ Pfeffer, Leo, *God, Caesar, and the Constitution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975), p. 228.

⁴⁵ Burns, *Principles*, *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Pfeffer, *Caesar*, p. 229.

⁴⁷ Canon 1374, cited by Jackson in *Everson*.

⁴⁸ Burns, *Principles*, p. 363.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 366.

history has confirmed repeatedly in the century and a half since his time: Any commingling of religious schools and government funds ultimately requires that the interests of the religious school be compromised by the separation of its religious premises from academic instruction. As noted earlier, such a separation between "religious" and "secular" is in fact a substitution of faiths. For Hughes' schools, Catholic faith was substituted for some type of Protestant faith; today, we exchange Christian for non-Christian faiths.

Recent trends in the Catholic school community are no better. In the wake of changes in the Catholic church brought about by Vatican II and the ascendancy of Pope John XXIII, "a process of secularization began to set in and progressed with increasing intensity."⁵⁰ Catholic schools have been increasingly willing to submit to government controls that follow government funds.⁵¹ In fact, Pfeffer appears to understate the situation by noting that, "many schools chose to receive public funds even at the cost of some secularization."⁵² Indeed, secularization is the inevitable result of "receiving public funds."

Conclusion

This brief overview of the theological, legal, and historical case against government subsidization of religious education is at least worthy of response before the traditional religious and home school community plunges into a suicidal swim in government invested waters.

Finally, some may argue that the government may well usurp parental authority regardless of their acceptance or rejection of educational subsidies. This is

true; it might. But in response to this appeal, let me suggest an analogy. If a marauding band of outlaws breaks down a householder's door, beats the householder and his sons senseless, abuses his wife and daughter, and plunders his goods, what do we say? We would condemn such action as an horrible felony and cry out for vindication against the perpetrators. And well we should, for a great evil would have been committed. But what shall we say of the householder in such a situation who *invites the brigands in*? Is not his crime greater still who, being obligated to protect his family, instead throws open the doors to the attackers? We justly recoil from the parallel, but is this not what is being proposed? The fact that the "crimes" in question are not the physically violent deeds of the brigands in the analogy is irrelevant. The tender minds and precious spirits of our children are at stake, and we dare not subject them voluntarily to the destructive forces of contemporary statist pillage. We risk the wrath of Almighty God if we do.

There is a better way — the way of obedience. We must come to terms with the fact that the troubles we currently face are the result of national and ecclesiastical sin. God is calling His people back to obedience, and we will only find restoration through obedience. To surrender sovereignty to the god-state would be to run, like Jonah, in the opposite direction.⁵³ Instead, what we must do is to continue to carry a double burden. This means we must continue to pay for the maintenance of the "public" school system, while fully financing our own children's private education. Only in this way can we retain the independence that allows us to provide quality education harmonious with our own beliefs. It is neither easy nor just, but in the short run there is simply no other way. Δ

⁵⁰ Pfeffer, *Caesar*, p. 237.

⁵¹ See, for example, the 1969 Salary Supplement Act in Rhode Island which was at issue in *Earley v. DiCenso*, 316 F. Supp. 112 and Pennsylvania's Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1968 which was at issue in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 US 602. In both cases, Catholic school teachers were willing to accept conditions amounting to secularization in exchange for state funds. The courts eventually struck down both statutes on the grounds of excessive entanglement.

⁵² Pfeffer, *Caesar*, *Ibid.*

⁵³ Phelps, Jack, "The State as God," *The Seventh Trumpet*, Vol. V, No. 2, Mar/Apr 1990.

Jack Phelps is the current president of the Alaska Private and Home Educator's Association and editor of *The Seventh Trumpet*, an international Christian world-and-life-view periodical.

A Few of the Topics in Forthcoming Issues of Antithesis:

Energy Policy

The "Problem" of Evil

Biblical Criticisms of Just War Theory

Literary Deconstructionism

Calvin on Real Presence

The Follies of Thomas Aquinas

Christianity and Epic Poetry

American Wars

Morbid Introspectionism

More on Scottish Presbyterianism...

Debates On:

- The Inescapability of the Christian Worldview
- Beverage Alcohol Use
- Immortality
- Drug Policy

Continuing:

Editorials, Summaries of Basic Theology, Book Reviews, Current Nonsense, and Much More

Wrestling With Wesley

Douglas Wilson

Biblical integrity precludes a whitewashing of Wesley's scandalous practices.

When painting the portraits of great figures in the history of Christendom, we have a distinct tendency to airbrush the warts. Hagiography is the perennial and natural temptation of the devout historian. When it comes to church history, the love that "believes all things" (I Cor. 13:7), does not always exhibit the serpentine wisdom enjoined by Christ (Matt. 10:16).

The problem is complicated by the secular myth surrounding the study of history, i.e., that it is a value-free, neutral discipline. Under the cover of this myth, the secularist historian debunks various popular heroes from the past. This type of debunking complicates the issue because a good many of our popular heroes *deserve* the debunking, and devil take the hindmost.

But at the same time, we must recognize that there is a difference between revisionist history, which is sometimes desperately needed, and painting warts in, which can be done by the most sophomoric historian. By failing to recognize this distinction, godly historians have frequently imposed their agenda onto the past. The "good guys" are defended against the secularists, and the "bad guys" are attacked. We should expect this tendency since history is not a neutral endeavor. But it is not good to blur the edges of our ethical standards when applied to our heroes who lived in the past; for the sake of standing up for the truth in the present, we ought not to sacrifice it in the past.

Such confusions warrant a case study; nowhere are such complications more evident than in the popular treatment generally accorded to John Wesley, the great founder and organizer of what is now called Methodism.

Overview

John was the fifteenth child of the Rev. Samuel Wesley and Susanna his wife.¹ John was born in 1703,

¹ A brief look at Samuel Wesley's life illustrates a possible problem with the indiscriminate use of titles like "reverend." See Arnold Dallimore, *A Heart Set Free* (Weschester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1988), pp. 12-19.

and lived until 1791. He went to Oxford in 1726, where he formed a group of devout and religious souls variously called the "Methodists," "Bible Moths," and the "Holy Club." The group included George Whitefield and John's younger brother Charles.

In 1735, John went as a missionary to Georgia, an endeavor which was singularly unpleasant. His behavior there was not winsome,² and he was soon forced to return home (1737). As a result of his contact with Peter Bohler, a Moravian, John became convinced that he was not yet regenerate. His subsequent conversion is usually placed at a meeting in Aldersgate Street, while listening to a reading of Martin Luther's Preface to the Epistle of Romans.

In the meantime, his friend George Whitefield had been both ordained and converted. A happy combination! His preaching caused a sensation almost immediately. Soon, the established church began to oppose Whitefield, and he was forced to take his message out of doors. Within a short time, Whitefield had a large following, and when he resolved to go to America to preach, he turned to his old friend John Wesley and requested that he fill in for him in England.

The reluctant Wesley was finally persuaded to preach outside the walls of the Church of England, and the rest, as they say, is history. Or is it? Because of certain widely-accepted assumptions about Wesley, many Christians would have no problem with the following assessment: "His personality was magnetic, his piety and charity uncontested."³ Most Christians know that Wesley endured a great deal of opposition and persecution from the unregenerate for his Christianity, and they rightly respect him for it. Less well known is the fact that he received a tremendous amount of opposition from fellow evangelicals for certain deficiencies of character. It appears that Wesley's piety and charity were not uncontested; they were contested vigorously, and that by evangelical Christians.

Questions about Honest Representation

Unclear thinking in theology is not necessarily a sin. Academic rigor and precision is not mandatory for all those in the pew, but it is essential for those who preach and teach. The Scriptures tell us that to whom much is given, such as teachers, much is required (Luke 12:48). We know that teachers will be judged more

² This is putting it mildly. "Their general frustration was further complicated by John Wesley's falling in love with Sophie Hopkey, the eighteen-year-old niece of the bailiff of Savannah. It was a preposterous and pitiful affair in which Wesley was torn between his long-standing inhibitions and his new-found affections. It was resolved by Sophie herself, who finally eloped with a rival suitor. Her jilted lover then barred her from Holy Communion and was in turn sued for defamation of character by her new husband. The result was a furious turmoil, climaxed by a formal grand jury indictment of Wesley on twelve separate counts. The trial was dragged out, and after six months of harassment, Wesley fled the tragic farce in disgust and high dudgeon." Albert Outler, ed. *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 12.

³ F.L. Cross, ed. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 1467.

strictly than others (Jas. 3:1). When this higher standard for teachers is applied to John Wesley, I believe that an honest examination reveals him to have been sorely deficient.

Wesley believed that he had a gift for controversy. Consequently, he refused to bury even such a talent as this in the ground.⁴ Tragically, when it came to certain topics, Wesley was also gifted with an extraordinary, and culpable, sloppiness of mind. He seemed to have an especial difficulty with Reformed theology as it stood in history; he insisted on tilting at the windmill Calvinism of his own imagination. This tendency made it exceedingly difficult for him to represent his opponents accurately. Take, for just one example, his representation of the Synod of Dort. Wesley prefaces his rendition of Dort this way:

Their words are (Art. 6, et seq.): Whereas, in [the] process of time, God bestowed faith on some and not on others, this proceeds from his eternal decree, according to which he softens the hearts of the elect and leaveth them that are not elect in their wickedness and hardness.

And herein is discovered the difference put between men equally lost, that is to say, the decree of election and reprobation.

Election is the unchangeable decree of God by which, before the foundation of the world, he hath chosen in Christ unto salvation a set number of men. This election is one and the same of all which are to be saved.

Not all men are elected; but some are not elected, whom God, in his unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery and not to bestow saving faith upon them; but leaving them in their own ways, at last to condemn and punish them everlastingly for their unbelief and also for their other sins. And this is the decree of reprobation.

The following editorial comment on Wesley's rendering is to the point: "It is worth comparing Wesley's severe abridgement here (which amounts to garbling) with the full text."⁵ The original text reads as follows. (I have put in bold those portions which Wesley omitted or changed significantly and have put his insertions in brackets):

ART. VI. [Whereas in [the] process of time] **That** some receive the gift of faith from God, and others do not receive it, proceeds from God's eternal decree. **"For known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 25:18; Eph. 1:11).** According to which decree he **graciously** softens the hearts of the elect, **however obstinate, and inclines them to believe; while he** [and] leaves the non-elect **in his just judgment to** their **own** wickedness and obduracy. And herein is

especially displayed the profound, the merciful, and at the same time the righteous discrimination between men, equally involved in ruin; or that [that is to say, the] decree of election and reprobation, **revealed in the Word of God, which, though, men of perverse, impure, and unstable minds wrest it to their own destruction, yet to holy and pious souls affords unspeakable consolation.**

ART. VII. Election is the unchangeable purpose of God, whereby, before the foundation of the world, he hath, **out of mere grace, according to the sovereign good pleasure of his own will, chosen from the whole human race, which fallen through their own fault, from their primitive state of rectitude, into sin and destruction,** a certain number of persons to redemption in Christ, [This election is one and the same of all which are to be saved] **whom he from eternity appointed the Mediator and head of the elect, and the foundation of salvation...**

ART. XV. What peculiarly tends to illustrate and recommend to us the eternal and unmerited grace of election is the express testimony of sacred Scripture, that not all, but some only, are elected, while others are passed by in the eternal decree; whom God, out of his **sovereign, most just, irreprehensible and** unchangeable good pleasure, hath decreed to leave in the common misery **into which they have willfully plunged themselves,** and not to bestow upon them saving faith **and the grace of conversion;** but permitting them **in his just judgment** to follow their own way; at last, **for the declaration of his justice,** to condemn and punish them forever, not only on account of their unbelief, but also for all their other sins. And this is the decree of reprobation **which by no means makes God the author of sin (the very thought of which is blasphemy), but declares him to be an awful, irreprehensible, and righteous judge and avenger.**

I leave it to the reader; did Wesley quote this passage accurately or fairly? Remember that Wesley begins with "Their words are..." Does the reader detect, with me, any culpable distortion of his opponents' position? I think a simple application of the Golden Rule is sufficient to determine the question. If I were to quote John Wesley in this article, introduce the quote by saying that these are *his* words, and then mangle his words similarly to his citation of the theologians of Dort, I know that I would be guilty of *sin*. I would not just be differing with him; I would be misrepresenting him. And that is called lying. Note: the point here is *not* whether this passage of Synod of Dort reflects the teaching of the Bible (although I believe it does). The question is whether an honest and godly Arminian scholar should be embarrassed by Wesley's citation. The answer is affirmative.

One cannot justify Wesley's misrepresentation by saying that the words were penned in the midst of controversy. Godly controversialists are required to work with greater precision, not less. The greater the contro-

⁴ Stanley Ayling, *John Wesley* (Cleveland: William Collins Publishers, Inc. 1979), p. 270.

⁵ Outler, *Wesley*, p. 428.

versy, and the more important the issue, the greater the necessity for accuracy.

Now this kind of garbled quotation occurred either because Wesley was *intellectually* incapable of understanding these issues (which is false; Wesley was extremely intelligent and gifted), or because he was spiritually unequipped to understand them (which I believe to be the case). In other words, the mistakes in his rendering were not honest mistakes; it seems evident he was making them as a result of and on account of his well-known rebellion against a particular truth contained in the Word of God. He had a great theological enemy, and that enemy was the Bible's teaching on predestination. He was not willing for it to be true, and his enmity was such that it affected his ability to deal with the subject.

I emphasize again that I am not saying that Wesley was culpable because of the position he took. There have been and will continue to be, godly and pious evangelicals who are evangelical Arminians, and there have been, and will be, scoundrels who are Calvinistic in theology. The problem with

Wesley was that he did not engage honestly with those who differed with him on this issue.

A sympathetic biographer presents Wesley's encounter with the subject of God's sovereignty in the Biblical text: "In his sermon *On Predestination* he plunged his head boldly into the lion's mouth, preaching from the most explicit of all the Pauline texts of the subject, Romans viii. 29,30....It might well be thought, if it was not quite severed, his head was not extracted unscathed from the lion's mouth."⁶ I believe that a sober assessment of Wesley's work on this issue reveals a man, contrary to the spirit of the Bereans (Acts 17:11), who was unwilling for the Bible to teach certain things. And this sort of unwillingness is not consistent with submission to Scripture, which is the foundation of all holy living.

Questions about Plagiarism

Wesley's ministry included the time prior to and during the American War for Independence. How to respond to colonial demands was a hot political issue in England, and Wesley waded right into the middle of it.

⁶ Ayling, *John Wesley*, pp. 276-277.

John Wesley was not quite the saint he is portrayed to be in popular evangelical histories of that era....Our love for the truth must be irenic in character. We must never sacrifice the truth for the sake of peace, but we must never, even in the midst of controversy, forsake our love of peace.

Reversing an earlier position, Wesley came out in strong support of the legitimacy of taxing the colonies. His position was put before the public in an address entitled *A Calm Address to Our American Colonies*. The tract caused a sensation in England (but not in America, where a friend of the Methodists destroyed all the copies, lest the Methodist preachers be persecuted⁷).

The problem with the pamphlet was that Wesley did not write substantial portions of it. In the course of approximately ten pages, Wesley used numerous sections taken verbatim from Samuel Johnson's *Taxation No Tyranny*. In the first edition of *Calm Address*, Wesley did not indicate in any way that he had borrowed text from Johnson — Wesley represented the work as his own. This laid him open to the just charge of plagiarism, and those charges were not long in coming. In a preface to the second edition, Wesley acknowledged his indebtedness to the other pamphlet, but this was too late. A plagiarist does not cease to be a plagiarist because he admits the obvious after he has been caught.

Compare the following samples. The first section is from *Taxation No Tyranny*.

An English colony is a number of persons, to whom the king grants a charter, permitting them to settle in some distant country, and enabling them to constitute a corporation, enjoying such powers as the charter grants, to be administered in such forms as the charter prescribes.⁸

Now here is the same paragraph as it appeared in *Calm Address*. I have italicized that which Wesley altered and bracketed what he omitted. It isn't much.

An English colony is a number of persons, to whom the king grants a charter, permitting them to settle in some *far country* [, and enabling them to constitute] as a corporation, enjoying such powers as the charter grants, to be administered in such *a manner* as the charter prescribes.⁹

There are many other sections like this. Now, what would we call this if we did not know the names of the principal individuals involved? We would identify it by its proper name — plagiarism — and recognize it as a species of theft. Should we refuse to call it by its proper name because the reputation of Wesley is such that such charges will only recoil on those who make them? That has a name too — cowardice.

We must also guard against another temptation. When the world recently learned that Martin Luther King, Jr. was a plagiarist, those who had a vested interest in keeping him up on his pedestal immediately began talking about feet of clay, the human condition, and we

⁷ Herbert, T., *John Wesley as Editor and Author* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1978), pp. 107-108.

⁸ Samuel Johnson, *Political Writings*, Donald Greene, ed. (New Haven: Yale Press, 1977), Vol. X, p. 423.

⁹ Wesley, John, *Wesley's Works*, Vol. VI (New York: Mason and Lane, 1839), p. 294. Incidentally, it is also worth comparing how accurately Wesley copied this material, as opposed to his treatment of the material out of the Synod of Dort.

¹⁰ Toplady, Augustus, *The Complete Works of Augustus*

all struggle, do we not? In other words, Dr. King was a scoundrel, but we will admit no evidence that supports the claim and treat as a scoundrel anyone who dares to present the evidence. When confronted, against our will, with indisputable evidence that our hero was not foremost among the saints, the automatic response is to interpret it as evidence that King had a "weakness" or a "failing." But never is it called by its Biblical name — sin.

Such an option is not open to us. As Christians, we have to take into account what God's Word requires of us. The qualifications for fellowship are different than those of leadership. In Titus 1, and I Timothy 3, God's requirements for leadership are strict — and clear. According to those requirements, John Wesley was not qualified to be a leader of God's people; he was not "blameless" in the text's sense. He stole the words of another and did not acknowledge that he had done so. As mentioned above, he acknowledged his debt to Samuel Johnson in the second edition, but even then he did not acknowledge that he had done any wrong in the silence of the first edition.

Questions about Slander

In 1769, a young man named Augustus Toplady ("Rock of Ages") published a book entitled *The Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted*. It was a translation "in great measure" from the Latin of Jerom Zanchius.

In a polemical response, John Wesley took the liberty of abridging the book down to tract size, to which he attached the following ending:

The sum of all is this: One in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate will be damned, do what they can. Reader believe this, or be damned. Witness my hand,

A.....T.....

The problem was that Augustus Toplady ("A.T.") had written no such thing. In this paragraph, Wesley was not only guilty of a grossly inaccurate summary of Toplady's thinking, he attempted to represent that inaccurate summary as Toplady's own words. This is evident through the misleading and slanderous use of "witness my hand."

Toplady, needless to say, was not pleased. "Why did you not abridge me faithfully and fairly? Why must you lard your ridiculous compendium with additions and interpolations of your own; especially as you took the liberty of prefixing my name to it?"¹⁰ He continues, "And is it thus you contend for victory? Are these the weapons of your warfare? Is this bearing down those who differ from you with meekness? Do you call this binding with the cords of love? Away, for shame, with such disingenuous artifices."¹¹

Toplady (Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Publications, 1987), p. 720.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 721.

¹² Ayling, *John Wesley*, p. 270.

Now one biographer of Wesley interprets this exchange, not as slander on Wesley's part, but rather as Wesley picking a fight: "This was undoubtedly neat; but it was asking for a fight, and it certainly got one. Toplady rushed in again with an attack on Wesley in which no venom was spared. He had a legitimate grievance..."¹²

This provides us with an outstanding example of how our common assumptions about Wesley's saintliness affect how we read the history of his life. The events are these:

1. Wesley dishonestly abridges another man's work. (There were more problems with Wesley's abridgement than just the concluding paragraph.)

2. Wesley attaches a slanderous invention of his own to the conclusion of that abridgement.

3. Toplady replies in print, identifying Wesley as dishonest for so doing.

But how are these events *interpreted*? Notice how Toplady's response is understood in the quotation above, i.e. "no venom was spared." And this from someone who recognizes Toplady had a legitimate grievance! Now it is true that Toplady does give Wesley a drubbing on a number of separate occasions. "Rock of Ages" notwithstanding, was it because Toplady was a volatile and acrimonious hothead? No, in one of his responses to Wesley, we read this: "To those who know me not, it may seem needful to declare that, much as I disapprove Mr. Wesley's distinguishing principles, and the low cunning with which he circulates them, I still bear not the least ill-will to his person. As an individual, I wish him well, both here and ever....I make, however, no scruple to acknowledge that manuscript of the following sheets has lain by me some weeks, merely with a view of striking out from time to time, whatever might savour of undue asperity and intemperate warmth."¹³

Was it because Mr. Wesley was Arminian, and Mr. Toplady could not abide Arminians? No: "Observe, I speak not of all Arminians. Many there are, who, notwithstanding their entanglement in that net, stand entitled to the character of pious, moderate, respectable men."¹⁴

Perhaps, and I speak with some hesitancy, he spoke this way about Wesley because Wesley was not honest. The hesitancy comes from the knowledge that those who raise questions such as this do so at their own peril. If a man calls popular and universal judgments into question, he had better be prepared for the reaction. And part of the preparation consists in knowing that whether you have proven your case has nothing at all to do with the anticipated reaction. The saintliness of someone like John Wesley is not something many Christians are prepared to question. But perhaps it is necessary to rethink some of our assumptions, i.e. perhaps John Wesley was not quite the saint he is portrayed to be in popular evangelical histories of that era.

This is not an abusive *ad hominem* argument directed at evangelical Arminianism; it is necessary to

¹³ Toplady, *Works*, p. 730.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 730.

say again that there have been hypocrites on both sides of this particular theological divide. The imperfections of individuals, by themselves, do not constitute an argument against any particular theology. Rather, this is a plea against distortions of history for the sake of a particular party or faction. In this case, I believe there has been a whitewash of history, and I believe the interests of truth demand that we all quit playing the game.

Conclusion

The apostle Paul was once confronted by the spectacle of preachers who preached the gospel simply to get Paul into greater trouble. Here was his response:

Some indeed preach Christ even from envy and strife, and some also from good will: The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains; but the latter out of love, knowing that I am appointed for the defense of the gospel. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and *in this I rejoice*, yes, and will *rejoice* (Phil. 1:15-18).

It is obvious from Paul's writings that he was not at all tolerant of those who would preach another gospel (Gal. 1:8). John Wesley did not fit in *that* category; although he preached a muddled and deficient gospel, there was nevertheless more than enough truth for the Holy Spirit of God to use in the salvation of many. And that is precisely what God (sovereignly) did. Interestingly enough, Augustus Toplady himself was converted in a Methodist barn meeting.

So the recognition of Wesley's various character deficiencies discussed above does not *at all* take away from the Pauline injunction to rejoice in the work that

was done by him. Rather, it is a prime opportunity to apply this teaching of the Word of God. We should regret that more of Wesley's honest (if sometimes harsh) opponents did not see in this situation an opportunity for submission to and application of God's requirements.

Our love for the truth must be irenic in character. We must never sacrifice the truth for the sake of peace, but we must never, even in the midst of controversy, forsake our love of peace. When it is necessary to question someone's public character, even someone who has been dead many years, it is necessary to do so with sadness. The apostle Paul was not gleeful over the fact that there were many enemies of the cross of Christ; he recognized that fact with tears (Phil. 3:18).

I can think of no better way to conclude this discussion than by considering a warning written by John Newton: "There is a principle of self, which disposes us to despise those who differ from us; and we are often under its influence, when we think we are only shewing a becoming zeal in the cause of God."¹⁵ My prayer is that all our discussions about truth — the truths of church history included — be motivated by a sincere love for the One whose Name is Truth, along with a love for all His children. Δ

¹⁵ Newton, John, *The Works of John Newton*, Vol. 1. (Carlisle, Penn.: Banner Truth Trust 1985), p. 272.

Douglas Wilson, M.A. (philosophy; University of Idaho) is a teaching elder of Community Evangelical Fellowship, Moscow, Idaho, editor of No Stone Unturned, author of Persuasions, Law and Love, and Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning (forthcoming, Crossway Books), and a Contributing Editor of Anithesis.

ANTITHESIS STOP HOGGING IT. SHARE IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

\$18.50 for the first one-year gift subscription

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

\$14.00 for a second one-year gift subscription

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

\$12.00 for a third one-year gift subscription

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

\$10.00 for a fourth one-year gift subscription

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please send a gift
notice in my name:

NAME _____

Mail to: ANTITHESIS, 4521 Campus Dr. #435, Irvine, CA 92715

Purging a Problem

James Sauer

The curious aesthetic attraction of the heresy of purgatory rests on a spiritual truth.

Purgatory presents a problem. Why is it that such a fanciful doctrine should have a following? Why does the Roman Catholic Church hold to a doctrine which cannot be found in the Biblical apostolic tradition? Why is it that even the most conservative Protestants feel happy in using Purgatory as an image of jest

or as a descriptive example about the problems of life? Why does it form such a perfect framework for witticism?—as one wag said, "England is the paradise of women, the purgatory of men, and the hell of horses." And why does it have such a profound effect on us artistically? How can a false idea seem so aesthetically true?

I think the answers lie in the fact that the Purgatorial Idea, though doctrinally a heresy, contains a spiritual truth when applied to the human situation. There is something in this false doctrine which reminds us of life. And there's the key.

There is very little, almost a non-existent Biblical case for Purgatory; and there is a most substantial Biblical case against it. Biblical soteriology and eschatology know nothing of it. Even the *Catholic Encyclopedia* admits: "In the final analysis the Catholic doctrine of purgatory is based on tradition not Sacred Scripture." So be it. The Biblical Christian must concur with *The Anglican Thirty-Nine Articles*, on this and like doctrines, that: "The Romish doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worshipping and Adoration, as well of Images as of Relics, and also the Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather is repugnant to the Word of God." It is a negation of the Scripture itself to hear a Roman pontiff express the following reprieve: "An indulgence of three years is granted to the faithful who read the Books of the Bible for at least a quarter of an hour, with the reverence due to the Divine Word and as a spiritual reading. To the faithful who piously read at least some verses of the Gospel and in addition, while kissing the Gospel Book, devoutly recite one of the following invocations...an indulgence of 500 days is granted." The man who penned these words was ignorant of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

All these doctrines and practices are tied to a heterodox way of looking at the process of salvation. Human effort and merit are somehow made part of Christ's work on our behalf. Purgatory is a negation of the doctrine of grace; it is a monument to a theology of works. And that, after all, is the way fallen man likes it. But why, we keep asking, the aesthetic attraction?

Three literary examples readily come to mind when talking about Purgatory; they will help explain this theological error's imaginative power and appeal as an idea.

In Dante's *Divine Comedy* we find a tremendous treatment of Purgatory as an artistic, theological, and even political concept. It forms a hierarchical framework for medieval reality. It is a travelogue of the spiritual realms; a marvelous epic that takes one over the scenic road map of Catholic theology and Renaissance politics. It blends the classical with the Christian, giving guides for both worlds through Virgil and Beatrice. Its complexity is to art what Aquinas' *Summa* is to theology. Factual or false, the reader knows he is in the presence of artistic greatness—because he is in the presence of myth.

In C. S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce*, visitors from the Gray City take a day trip to Heaven. For those who stay, the visit is a kind of Purgatory; for those who return, heaven is just another part of Hell. Lewis's literary Purgatory was not intended as a doctrinal explanation of the afterlife. In his introduction he says of the tale: "I intended it to have a moral. But its transmortal conditions are solely an imaginative supposal." While he has his Virgil-esque mentor George MacDonald say: "And if ye come to tell of what ye have seen, make it plain that it was a dream. See ye make it very plain. Give no fool the pretext to think ye are claiming knowledge of what no mortal knows." Though Lewis was a believer in some form of purgatory, as allusions in *Reflections On the Psalms* indicate, he was not fighting for its inclusion as a tenet of mere Christianity. Although he used a purgatorial notion as the basis for his spiritual character studies, he recognized that reality was becoming more focused, more bifurcated, that in fact, a great divorce separated heaven from hell, and that this separation was widening.

The third piece which sheds some light on the sufferings of life is the non-purgatorial, puritanical *Pilgrim's Progress*. This primitive epic, like Dante and Lewis, sees life as a journey. It is a movement from spiritual death to spiritual life. We have in Christian's journey to the Celestial City, with all its pitfalls, snares, sloughs, dungeons, vain fairs, and adventures a picture of redeemed perseverance.

Now the *Comedy* is superior to *Pilgrim's Progress* as a myth and as a piece of art, just as a Cathedral is superior to a little Baptist chapel. And if we were to judge truth on the basis of architecture, as some people do, we might be all Romans, Orthodox, . . . or for that matter, Buddhists or Hindus—they've got wonderful pagodas. And the Mormons have neat temples too. But if we judge the art of Bunyan and Dante doctrinally, and effectually, then we have a different comparison. Bunyan in all his roughness is superior to Dante as the Bible is to Scholastic dialectic. The comparatively unlettered Bunyan towers over the urbane Dante; not by any worldly standard, but by every eternal standard. There will be few

men in Heaven who have been led there by Dante's work, regardless of its obvious artistic superiority. There will be throngs in Heaven who will bless Bunyan the Evangelist, albeit the inferior artist, for leading them to the Narrow gate. Lewis, like a true Anglican—half Catholic, half Reformed—stands between them both.

Whatever truth there lies in Purgatory comes from its imaginative projection of the Christian life. For the Christian, life is a Bunyan-like sojourn, a Dantesque cathartic experience, a Lewis-like movement from reprobation to salvation. It is suffering; it is cleansing. This is the fundamental Roman truth. Every piece of art is a little Purgatory: a place of spiritual battle, a time of playful suffering, a projection of human healing. It is in these artistic purgatories where we try to live out our metaphysical realities. It is one thing to use purgatory as an artistic platform; it is quite another thing to proclaim it as a doctrine.

The fundamental Roman error is the transference of this image, this imaginary doctrine, into the eternal realms. Purgatory is the here and now: Today is the day of damnation, today the day of cleansing, today the day of salvation. The doctrine negates the atonement, empties the gospel, encourages antinomianism, institutionalizes a system of works, and opens the door to work upon work of supererogation.

The failure to preach the true nature of the gospel results in the creation of untold spiritual miseries. Men fail to turn to God for their present salvation, since they know it can be purchased later; they fail to live a holy life now, since they know that their sins can be expiated by later efforts. They labor in spiritual solidarity with the dead through senseless devotions, masses, candles, prayers, pilgrimages, and rites, hoping to transfer merit to those who are either beyond hope, or who are presently in bliss. And they are unaware, that bankrupt in their own sins, they have no merit to transfer. They blaspheme the gospel with their indulgent works of supererogation; they attempt to buy the Holy Spirit's gift through pious effort. Purgatory produces a gospel of works extended into the afterlife. Not content to live a life of Semi-Pelagian heresy in this world, they extend it into the next. "The moment a coin in the coffer pings, out from purgatory a sinner springs." No wonder Luther penned his angry theses.

The value of purgatory is that of all creative fiction; it forms a framework for a Christian parable. It is not to be confused with Christian doctrine, wherein it forms the framework for damnation—as all heresy ultimately does. Purgatory must lead men away from God

because it leads men away from the cross.

But do not let it be said that we are not imaginative men. Perhaps there is a purgatory. Perhaps there is this intermediate place "where the souls of those who die in the state of grace, but not free from all imperfection, make expiation for unforgiven venial sins or for the temporal punishment due to venial and mortal sins that have already been forgiven. . . ." Perhaps being forgiven of our sins does not really mean that we are forgiven by Christ at all. Perhaps Christ's work on our behalf wasn't enough. Perhaps there are a hundred strange, absurd doctrines not found in the Bible. Perhaps all people who purposely sing off key will be ushered into heaven at the Second Coming. Perhaps the wearing of a piece of blessed brown cloth around your neck will entitle you to

special treatment from the Almighty—you know, a kind of "This coupon entitles you to Eternal Life" special. Perhaps giving money, or lighting candles, or buying indulgences, or saying prayers, or making pilgrimages can work off a debt to God. Perhaps God accepts a line of credit: just make your easy monthly payments to the Bank of the Rock, and all will be well. Perhaps all this is true and our ancient Biblical faith is false. For if this is true, then clearly the Bible is in error. Call this new faith whatever you want, but don't call it Christianity. Call this ancient error what you will; but don't call it the Apostolic tradition.

As for those who do not follow the Purgatorial

faith, we will continue to gather wisdom from the paradigm of the *Divine Comedy* and enjoy parabolic truth from *The Great Divorce*. For our lives are, indeed, "living sacrifices" and our journey is a *Pilgrim's Progress*. Dante for us is a poet; Lewis a teller of parables; Bunyan a preacher. In its fictive form, the Purgatorial idea — like any piece of science fiction — gives the artist the ability to clothe spiritual truth. As Lewis says: "Do not ask a vision in a dream more than a vision in a dream can give."

As for spiritual purification, we will be content with the cleansing of the Cross. Δ

**There will be few men in Heaven
who have been led there by
Dante's work, regardless of its
obvious artistic superiority.
There will be throngs in Heaven
who will bless Bunyan the Evangelist,
albeit the inferior artist,
for leading them to the Narrow
gate. Lewis, like a true Anglican
— half Catholic, half Reformed
— stands between
them both.**

James Sauer is Director of Library at Eastern College, author of over one hundred published articles, reviews, and poems, and an elder in the Presbyterian Church in America.

...Schlüssel, "Unchanging Word," Continued from p. 12

The faculty at Calvin College are offended when people use the Bible to "shackle academic freedom," because academic freedom, they say, requires openness. We have to be open to where we are going. The *Banner* chafes at an orthodoxy which believes it has found the truth, for truth is in the search and requires openness. Home Missions has visions that are aided by continuing revelations. They have conferences that call for "openness." They should read their own literature. In one issue, there is a little cartoon of a guy opening his head with a zipper. It says "Don't have such an open mind that your brains fall out."

All the struggles we face today can and must be seen in light of this hatred of a final and unchangeable Word of God and willingness, if not a lust, to cash it in for a few thrills and some possibility. Everyone pays lip service to the Word in confessions. Please, don't think that just because someone says "I believe the confessions" that they, therefore, believe them. You have to watch how they are put into practice. In Ezekiel it says:

Son of man, my people come to you as they usually do and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy. Indeed to them, you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words, but they do not put them into practice.

Why do they call Christ, "Lord, Lord" yet they do not do what He says? Not everyone who says "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom. Merely listening causes no pain, but doing often does. When I became a Christian in my mid-twenties, I realized I must be baptized. When I first told my parents about my belief in Christ, they did not mind it so much. They thought there was room in the Jewish world for people who had high views of Jesus. When I told them I was going to be baptized, my father said, "If you do this, you are never welcome in my home again."

I found courage in Matthew 10 and Luke 6 where Christ tells me what it costs to be a Christian. I don't think there is a trade involved. You just do what God says. I told my father this, and he came that night and gave me a few things that my wife had left at his house. He hugged me, and he was prepared never to see me again.¹ Doing something means you *really* believe it. Without doing it, you don't believe it at all.

Belief that doesn't *do* isn't Biblical belief. We have teachers and ministers who want the name but won't play the game according to their rules. This is their version of I Timothy and Galatians: "God says no women are allowed to rule, that is very clear. God says women are utterly equal, therefore they are allowed to rule, that is perfectly clear. They both can't be wrong because they are the Word of God. That is perfectly clear. They can't be both unchangeably correct because they contradict, so how do we resolve these seemingly conflicting passages

of I Timothy 2 and Galatians 3? One will give way to the other in time. One will become history and the other will bring us into the fullness of the revelation." That is such cheap handling of the Word of God. There is a better way, a faithful way that does not produce contradiction.

I Timothy 2 says: "I do not permit a woman to teach or have authority over a man. She must be silent, for Adam was formed first, then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived, it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner."

Galatians 3:28: "If you belong to Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greeks, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

In the book of Galatians, Paul was arguing that you are justified by faith and not by works of the law. The Jews, in their daily prayers, pray: "Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a Gentile. Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a slave. Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the Universe, who has not made me a woman." I want to remind you that that is in precisely the same order as you find in Galatians.

In the Jewish religion you are righteous if you keep the law. The more law you keep the more righteous you are. Paul says that is not why you are righteous. But the Jews thank God that He gave them the law instead of the Gentiles so they can reckon themselves as more righteous than other people. Because they are not slaves, they can keep all the Sabbath commandments so they can be more righteous. One Jewish tradition denies that all of the commandments are obligatory for women. Men alone are required to fulfill all the Mitzvah, and all the commandments, such as traveling to Jerusalem three times a year. The men thank God that they were made men so that they would have more opportunity to be self-righteous. And that's all Paul is addressing.

Paul says that when it comes to our righteousness before God, there is no advantage to being a Jew over a Gentile, or slave or free, or male or female. That is the whole nine yards. Feminists have so beaten this passage into delirium that the heads are swimming in our denomination. You ask a feminist about I Timothy 2, and they respond, "Galatians 3:28!" By all means Galatians 3:28! Only, interpret it correctly. The devil also quoted Scripture out of context to our Lord. Jesus' response was based on his view that Scripture can neither be broken nor self-contradictory.

If you can change the Word at one point, you can change it at all points because God's Word is one. It has an unchanging character. The Reformed faith is an organic system of truth. God's Word is not unclear; it's too clear. But they don't like what they hear. The people at Calvin College and elsewhere, their scattered lackeys, are not as honest as a particular United Church of Canada minister. He just comes right out and says, "The Bible's view of women is invalid." Something honest — a guy who says what he thinks. He claims: "As churches struggle with this issue of equality in the sexes, Christians have to look beyond the Bible to reason and experience for guidance. The Bible is clear with respect to the status of women. There is no possibility of misunderstanding the Bible." He just doesn't like what it says.

¹ My father and I have since renewed communication. Though Christ stands between us, our love for each other is strong and expressed. You know my heart's desire and prayer.

and he's not going to follow what it says. He says that we have to understand God's Word for our times. His authoritative base is not *Sola Scriptura* but Scripture, church tradition, reason, and personal experience. That is the standard he and others advocate. But any change in our responsibility to obey one word from God is contingent upon another Word of God that explains, modifies, expands, or rescinds the first word.

If you give a command to your child: "Don't go outside." They have to listen to you until you change the commandment. "You can go outside now." Or if it's manifest that there was a condition (four feet of snow), and when spring comes around and the snow disappeared, and they still haven't gone outside; then when they go outside, they are not disobeying your command because the condition has been fulfilled that required the obedience. Scripture has some commandments like that, when there is a change in circumstances which form, at least in part, the reason for the command. So, for example, Levitical sacrifices are no longer obligatory, nor are the dietary commandments, but the important part to note is that the New Testament explains this to us. We have a complete book that tells us what we are to obey and what we are not to obey. God can tell us to do something today, and tomorrow He can tell us to do the opposite. He is God and can do whatever He wants.

The point that we must maintain as Reformed Christians is that He has already completed what He has to say. If God reveals a new word, then we could go away from the Bible. That is why feminists and evolutionists are listening to hear what "the Spirit" may be saying to the churches. That is why, when push comes to shove, we see an ever-widening embrace of other revelation, whether it is from nature or private spirits or the charismatic movement. They are trying to find another Word of God that will free them from this Word of God which they believe shackles in their agenda. And it does shackle. Evolution fits their purposes so nicely. The appeal that Paul makes in I Timothy 2 is that Adam was formed first and then Eve. If evolution becomes accepted as dogma, the foundation of the commandment in I Timothy 2 goes with it. Everything is up for grabs. Each man does that which is right in his own eyes.

We're not faced here with merely a different preference. Some try to compare this to other historic struggles in the Christian Reformed Church. But this issue is not whether you are going to have a service in Dutch or English. This is a much bigger issue. This is not "I'll have vanilla, you'll have chocolate." We are not even looking at the same menu. We are not even in the same restaurant, but they still expect us to pay the check!

There are two very different kingdoms being constructed by and in the same denomination, and they are not compatible. Someone has got to leave the Christian Reformed Church. Abraham Kuyper rightly said,

Satan knows that he can undermine the structure of the church by slyly removing just one fundamental doctrine at a time. He frequently loosens a large foundation gradually, chiseling it away bit by bit. That is why tolerance for the sake of peace may be dangerous. By giving in, one step will lead to a next step; and will not God visit us with blindness if we

deliberately darken the truth He has graciously entrusted to us? How shall we justify ourselves if we permit even a little of the truth to be laid aside? Is that ours to do? When peace is injurious to the truth, peace must give way. Peace with God is of greater value than peace with men.

We have a war on our hands, and it won't go away — a cancer that begs to be cut out. Popular author Tom Wolfe commented on the criticism that he receives when, as a journalist, he writes about other journalists. If they don't like it, Wolfe said, "You are called a neo-conservative. If they really don't like it, they call you a reactionary." But, he says, "I'd much rather be called that than 'liberal.' That just means you are orthodox, which means you have nothing interesting to say." Well said, Mr. Wolfe, but one man's boredom is another man's excitement. The *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, to use the vernacular, turns *me* on. But one man's heresy is another man's orthodoxy. Wolfe's point is that when you just say what is already true and what has already been believed, people don't want to listen to you. It is not interesting. But God has solved that problem for us by giving us children. They have never heard it before we tell them. So it is interesting to them. That is the way we keep interest in the CRC: process and content. Make no mistake, a new orthodoxy is emerging, and if it's not cut to death now, it will emerge triumphant in our denomination. The orthodoxy of egalitarianism, hermeneutical elasticism, and humanism.

While the troublemakers among us are bored of being accepted by us as orthodox, they do not therewith lose their desire to be accepted. Not at all. They are lifting their skirts at the highway, hoping to catch a ride with those moving away from Biblical orthodoxy. Dr. John Whitcomb has described this attitude as the New Evangelicalism:

A desperate desire to be accepted, not so much by the Lord as by others prominent in the visible church who deviate to some extent from the teaching of the Word as we understand it. In the interest of being accepted, the New Evangelical attitude is willing to sacrifice truth on the altar of ecumenical expediency.

The visionaries in Grand Rapids are like bored girls who can't wait to get out of a small town for no other reason than because it is small. They are trying every way to make an escape, trying to do away with the wooden shoes. Only the escape has this twist: they haven't the guts to really leave because Daddy still pays the bills. So they stay at home, and they bring their lovers into our town and into our home in the hope that we will get used to them and that someday we will get tired of arguing. Finally, we will just give in. "Alright, alright, alright — Have your stinking heretics at the college. Have your whores at the seminary. Have your double-talkers and deceivers in boards and agencies." Eventually, they expect to convince a generation to forsake the stuffy, limited and boring village that we call Orthodox Junction. They really believe that they have found the better way and they want us to follow them with their lovers to Broadway.

We are at a crossroad. The Siren's Song calls us from the narrow, the particular, the well-defined and the precise to the broad, the general, the sweeping, "to go with the flow" — to the blurred from the distinct.

The drift toward indistinctiveness was seen in the recently adopted Contemporary Testimony, a modern quasi-confessional document adopted by the synod. It is not so much that it contained anything particularly harmful, but it contains nothing particularly helpful. A statement of the great theologian William Shedd is most pertinent in helping us understand the trouble with this approach: "When the popular feeling of a period is becoming less correct and healthy, nothing in the way of means does so much toward a change and restoration as strict accuracy, which is the same as strict orthodoxy in the popular creed." This is true, yet we find ourselves floating in the very opposite direction. Like Jonah we have been called to preach against the specific sins of our generation to our generation, but we have taken a ship called *Vague* in the direction away from our calling. No one wants to say anything specific. The last analysis is not just a matter of a New Evangelicalism, a new reformation or a new hermeneutic; it is the Word of God in the balance. It is the world in the grip of an idea: time versus God's Word. The questions are: Who is God? How do you know it? And where does it say so?

I want to suggest that we have answered these questions in our confessions which serve the function of skin. Skin keeps in what you want in and out what you want out. Our confessions should form the basis of who is allowed to stay in and who must go out. Scripture is unchanging in its character precisely because its author is unchanging. Here we must stand. But I am afraid that the Christian Reformed Church has contracted Ecclesiastical Aids. We seem not to have the will to fight those microbes that are invading the body. Be they ever so insidious, calculating, dishonest, arrogant or destructive, above all, we want comfort. We do not want the truth; we want to be polite. We are polite-ing ourselves to death. Along with a loss of the will to fight, many have lost the will to live. Where, my brothers and sisters, is your heroic Dutch blood, and why is it not boiling? I do not know.

I would like to offer a twelve-point program—one for each tribe! We are not the ones who ought to leave, but we dare not promote decay. We had best fight it as this cloud of witnesses looks on.

1. Cancel subscriptions to the *Banner*. It doesn't measure up. "Whatever is true, noble, pure, profitable...." The *Banner* fails. We must recognize that the *Banner* is the mosquito which carries the virus to the body. It gives us feminist poems ridiculing the godly opposition to women's ordinations; calls those "simple-minded" who believe that God regards homosexuality as an unqualified abomination; promotes birth control, hinting at more occasions for abortion than saving the life of the mother, and on and on.

The latest abomination is a column on family affairs by an associate pastor of the Crystal Cathedral, the biggest little whorehouse in Southern California. The Crystal Cathedral is not the Church of Christ because it preaches another gospel. Why is a denominational magazine getting someone from that church to write a weekly column in our newspaper? Why not Jay Adams? Or someone whose credentials and fidelity to the Word of God are unquestioned? The *Banner*: vague, open...cancelled!

2. Expand and improve the *Christian Renewal* and *Outlook*. Get these journals into the hands of all consistory (session; board of elders) members. I have heard of and from, consistory members who hadn't heard of Howard Van Till until very recently. One individual called me about something I had written and told me that he had never heard of the man. This is inexcusable. We have to get this information into the hands of council members (elders and deacons). In articles in these journals, let's aim at providing more names, dates, and witnesses so that the factuality of our concerns will be self-evident and thus accelerate the self-consciousness of our denomination. I still must believe that the body at large is faithful and sound and we have to inform them.

3. Provide solid and simple expositions of our confessions, especially Belgic Confession articles 27-32 on the Church, to all consistory members. We need to clarify holy obligations on particular issues of moment. We need to provide guidance for them.

4. Compel your consistories to take stands on issues in writing. Don't accept double-talk and equivocation. Exercise your confessional rights as a congregant. Require Biblical justification from your council and consistory for important decisions and policies. Watch the form of subscription (in which all office-bearers swear to God to defend the truths of the Bible as summarized in the confessions), and keep it fresh in everybody's minds.

5. Plan and strategize like Joshua. Do it before and at classis (presbytery meetings; regional meetings of elders) and synod. We have been outmaneuvered so many times that it's nauseating. At the synod of 1986, the *Banner* editor was approved on the floor of synod for another four-year term without one single question from the floor by any elder or minister. Not one comment. Everything is done in committee, buried and rubber-stamped on that floor. There is so much opportunity, but we get outmaneuvered. Let's get smart. Let's learn how to play the game. It's unfortunate that we have to do it, but it must be done. Use church order. It's used against us, so let's use it against the forces of compromise.

Provide a speakers' bureau like the Committee for Women has. They send a list to every consistory in the denomination, saying they have all these speakers who are willing to speak on these subjects. Moreover, we too should have a lot of conferences around the country and in Canada.

**...they bring their lovers
into our town and into
our homes in the hope
that we will get used to
them and that someday
we will get tired of
arguing. Finally we will
just give in. "Alright,
alright, alright — Have
your stinking heretics at
the college."**

6. Watch boards and agencies and get written answers to specific questions. Home Missions is especially manipulative and avoids adequate accountability. I am not referring to missionaries, but to the company boys. Calvin Seminary lies through its teeth, and it has a feminist agenda that is so manifest that it is unbelievable to me that they can deny it. We have to sit on these guys and let them know that the denomination is watching. We are not going to accept it.

7. We ought to engage an investigative reporter to chronicle the near demise of our denomination, to expose the politicking, to expose the double-dealing, that has gone on in the last fifteen years or so. Get a graduate student at a school of journalism whose Reformed credentials are excellent. Let them do it as a project for the salvation of our denomination. Let them bring the truth to light so that what has gone on can be known.

8. Explore alternatives to Calvin College. Even better, let's clean house there and at the seminary. Let me inform you, the Missouri Synod Lutherans had trouble and exercised stringent discipline in their main seminary, Concordia, in St. Louis. They dismissed every unorthodox teacher and instructed all students who were sympathetic to them to leave within one week. That was one of the most dramatic, drastic, and successful examples of institutional church discipline that this writer was aware of in the history of the church. The theologically radical groups, students as well as faculty, all left and started their own seminary, Seminex (Seminary in Exile), in another part of the city. They actually marched out under banners as if they were Moses and the children of Israel leaving Egypt, and they gained great sympathy in the media. Nevertheless, in twenty years, their school, having no solid doctrinal position, finally collapsed. In the meantime, Concordia Seminary, under the Missouri Synod Lutheran Church, quickly regained its size. The rest of the evangelical world noted with amazement how these Lutherans handled the New Evangelical invasion of their main training center. Clean house. Let's get these guys out, however we can do it. This is life and death we are talking about.

9. Ordain qualified men from Westminster Seminary, Reformed Seminary, and Mid-America Reformed Seminary without a fifth year at Calvin. That requirement is unbiblical, and, therefore, cannot be made a requirement for office. Ordain qualified, holy men, even if we need to gather an ordination council from beyond the boundaries of a single classis. Let's get people together while we remain in the church and ordain men that are recognized as preaching the Word of God. We ought not be dependent on agencies that do not serve Christ.

10. Quota is acceptable only when there is heartfelt and justified confidence in the integrity of an agency. It is foolish to pay for the knife that would stab us. Forget about being good little quota payers or forget the Christian Reformed Church. If we continue to fund them, we could never defend the faith. It's defend and defund. We don't realize that they are depending on us just to continue to be good little boys and girls and to do what we're told. If your consistory tries to whittle away around this by saying, "You don't pay your quota, we're going to make it up with somebody else," then don't give

money to your church at all. Send it to another Christian Reformed Church. You may not subsidize wickedness and sin. God will hold you accountable for that. We have a cloud of witnesses who are looking down to see how we are doing in this struggle.

11. Repent, not of conservatism, but of an unwillingness to examine yourselves and your practices in light of the Word alone. Repent because there are valid points brought up, even by our adversaries, concerning particular beliefs and practices that may not stand the test of Scripture. We sin when we refuse to recognize any of them, saying, "We don't want to go to the Word. We just want to do what we've always done. But if you're going to say, *"Sola Scriptura,"* you had better practice it too. Repent of the timidity and self-interest which permitted things to get this bad, this gangrenous relativism which has spread so far. Repent of a lack of zeal in sharing with others your confessional treasures and thus giving opportunity to the enemy to get a foot in the door and slander us with justification.

12. Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. This is a battle but in I Chronicles 5:18-22 we read:

The Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh had forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty men ready for military service, able-bodied men who could handle shield and sword, who could use a bow and who were trained for battle. They waged war and they were helped in fighting. God handed over their enemies because they cried out to Him during the battle. He answered their prayers because they trusted in Him. They also took a hundred thousand people captive and many others fell slain because the battle was God's! They cried out to God in the battle and He was with them.

We are in the arena. Many have gone before. The battle is tough, and it will get tougher, but God is able. We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Is the Spirit of Phineas among us today? Has the zeal of the Levites been handed down to you as well as the Word that they carried? Is Micaiah in the audience today? Too many are telling us that the battle is over, but I want to call two witnesses from the pages of Scripture: What say you, Joshua and Caleb? Should we fight or should we run away? Hear their testimony: The land we passed through and explored (even this Christian Reformed Church), is exceedingly good. If the Lord is pleased with us, He will lead us into that land, a land flowing with the milk of the Word and the honey of the heritage of confessional truth and many faithful sheep. Only do not rebel against the Lord. Do not be afraid of the relativists because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone but the Lord is with us. Do not be afraid of them. We should go and take possession, for we can certainly do it. That is from the Word, which like our God, changes not. Δ

Steve Schlissel is pastor of Messiah's Christian Reformed Church in Brooklyn, New York and co-contributor to the recently released book Hal Lindsey and The Restoration of the Jews (Still Waters Revival Books).

For the Record

This regular feature is an attempt to provide an elementary Biblical analysis of various topics in Christian theology 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.

The Meaning and Marks of the Church

David Hagopian

I'll never forget Carl, an elderly gentleman who often wandered up and down the streets of my neighborhood proclaiming his version of the gospel. What comes immediately to mind when I think of Carl, however, is not the fact that he was rarely, if ever, seen evangelizing without his five dogs tugging at their respective leashes — though admittedly they do come to mind. What immediately comes to mind is a conversation I once had with Carl during which I asked him what church he attended. I wasn't quite ready for his response. "Church," he quipped, "who needs it?!" Then, with a profane gesture and a host of expletives, he blasphemously denounced the church as an unnecessary human institution.

While many Christians would never say what Carl said, they nonetheless act or behave as though

the church were indeed an unnecessary human institution. But is that what Scripture teaches about the church? Hardly. In this brief, introductory survey, we will see that had Carl understood what Scripture says about the meaning and marks of the church, he would have realized that he could not denounce the church without also denouncing her Lord.

The Meaning of the Church

Both the Old and New Testaments refer to the church as the congregation or assembly of those who are "the called" — those who are called by God into a covenantal relationship with Him (compare Ps. 22:22 with Heb. 2:12, and Ex. 32 with Acts 7:38; see also I Cor. 1:2, 24). In fact, one of the Greek nouns which we translate as "church" in English is derived from the Greek verb used to express the effectual call of the Holy Spirit by which He brings dead souls to life by means of regeneration (Rom. 8:28-30; I Cor. 1:2, 24; I Pet. 2:9, 5:10; Rev. 17:14).

While Scripture refers to the church as those called by God into covenantal union with Him, Scripture also employs a rich array of metaphors to refer to the church: the body of Christ (I Cor. 12:27; Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:18), the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2, 9), the fullness of Christ (Eph. 1:23), the household of God, the pillar and ground of the truth (I Tim. 3:15), and the heavenly Jerusalem (Heb. 12:22). When we speak about those whom God has called in this way, we are speaking about the invisible church which, as *The Westminster Confession* (XXV, 1) says, consists of the whole body of believers, in heaven or on earth, who have been (past), are (present), and shall be (future) united to Christ (Eph. 1:22; 3:10, 21; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18, 24; Heb. 12:23).

But Scripture not only speaks of the invisible church; it also speaks of the visible church, that is, those who, in a particular place (or places) and at a given point in time, profess faith in Christ (Acts 5:11; 11:26; Rom. 16:4-5, 23; I Cor. 11:18; 14:19, 28, 35; I Cor. 16:1, 19; II Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2; Col. 4:15; I Thess. 2:14; II Thess. 1:1, Philemon

2; Rev. 2:1), along with their children (Matt. 19:14 and Luke 18:16 together with Matt. 3:2 and Matt. 13:47; also compare Eph. 1:1 with Eph. 6:1-3 and Col. 1:1-2 with Col. 3:20; see also I Cor. 7:12-14).

The difference between the invisible and the visible church, therefore, is really a matter of perspective: since the secret things belong to the Lord our God (Deut. 29:29), and since only the Lord knows those who are His (II Tim. 2:19), only God ultimately knows each and every member of the invisible church. Thus, from the vantage point of the divine perspective the exact members of the invisible church are known. From the vantage point of our human perspective, by contrast, the exact members of the invisible church will never ultimately be known on this side of eternity (which is simply to say that it is invisible to us). Put simply, *the invisible is invisible to us but not to God*. There are three reasons why this is the case.

First, some who are members of the invisible church may never become members of the visible church because it would be *physically impossible* for them to do so (e.g. someone who finds a Bible on an uninhabited island, comes to faith in Christ, but never again comes in contact with civilization so as to be able to join the visible church).

Second, some true believers (i.e. actual members of the invisible church), due to *personal inconsistency*, may, at times, betray their espoused faith thus obscuring the fact — from a human vantage point — that they are really members of the invisible church. They may act inconsistently with their espoused faith either by failing to join the visible church or if they do join the visible church, by simply acting as though they were unbelievers.

Third, unbelievers (those who are not actual members of the invisible church) may be *parading impostors* who, from every human appearance, act as though they were believers (members of the invisible church), when, in fact, they are not. In the words of Christ, such unbelievers are tares among wheat, bad fish among good fish, foolish virgins among wise virgins (Matt. 13:24-30; 47-50; 25:1-13), and will — at the

appointed time — be separated from true believers (Matt. 13:30, 50).

Thus, the members of the visible and invisible church are not necessarily identical; that is, not all members of the visible church may be members of the invisible church and vice versa. To say that the membership of the invisible and visible church is not identical, however, doesn't change the fact that God has always preserved a true remnant of those who are truly His (I Kg. 19:18) and that the gates of hell cannot prevail against the church (Matt. 16:18). Because the true church actually manifests itself "through those who are living in the world at a particular time and place" (Williamson, G.I., *The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes*, p. 187), the true visible church is not one whose members are identical to the members of the invisible church. Rather, the true visible church is one that manifests the marks of the church.

The Marks of the Church

We can get a glimpse of the marks of the true church, by examining the church not long after Pentecost: "And they were continually devoting themselves to the apostle's teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer" (Acts 2:42). On the basis of Acts 2:42, at least four such marks are readily discernible: (1) studying apostolic doctrine, (2) administering the sacraments, (3) fellowshiping, and (4) praying. As concerns these four marks, we must make four brief observations.

First, each of these marks is ever and always to be subordinated to and judged by the supreme standard of Scripture — even apostolic doctrine (Acts 17:11). Hence, the true church is really characterized by one supreme mark (true submission to Scriptural authority) which, in turn, manifests itself in adherence to apostolic doctrine, proper administration of the sacraments, genuine fellowship, and heartfelt prayer.

Second, submission to Scriptural authority and the four marks enumerated in Acts 2:42 imply yet another mark: church government and discipline. After all, Scripture itself informs us (a) that elders are the ones who are given charge to exhort the fold in sound doctrine (i.e. truly Biblical and apostolic doctrine) and to refute those who contradict such doctrine (Tit. 1:9); (b) that the sacrament of communion, in order to be administered properly, must be given only to those who examine themselves and thus cannot be administered indiscrimi-

Many Christians...behave as though the church were an unnecessary human institution. But is that what Scripture teaches about the church? Hardly.

nately (I Cor. 11:27-34); (c) that we are to identify, judge, withhold fellowship from, and excommunicate so-called believers who unrepentantly persist in sin (I Cor. 5:1-13); and (d) that we are to pray for our elders so that they may lead us with godly wisdom (Col. 4:2-3), and that elders are, in turn, to shepherd their flock, by, in part, praying for each member of the flock (I Pet. 5:1-11).

Third, just as the four marks enumerated in Acts 2:42 imply a fifth, so each mark implies the others such that when one is truly present, the others should be as well (Acts 2:42). By the same token, however, breakdown in one mark entails breakdown in the others as well. Note how, in I Corinthians 11, a defective doctrine regarding communion lead to discord (lack of fellowship) and an absence of self-examination (lack of prayer). Thus, when one mark is absent, we may rightfully question whether the others are really present in the way that Scripture requires.

Fourth, while each of the marks entails the others, no visible

church will ever perfectly display each of these marks since the "purer of churches under heaven are subject both to a mixture and error" (Confession, XXV, 5). Contrary to romanticized notions, even the apostolic church saw its share of both truth and error: the visible churches of the apostolic era experienced (a) heresies and doctrinal aberrations (I Cor. 11: 18, 19; Gal. 3, etc.); (b) desecration of communion (I Cor. 11: 20-31); (c) complaints, contentions, and disharmony (Acts 6:1; I Cor. 10, 11; Phil. 4:2); (d) marital disharmony which prevented prayers from being answered (I Pet. 3:7) and prayers without proper coverings (I Cor. 11:5); and (e) lack of discipline resulting in scandalous lives (I Cor. 5).

But just because a church may fall short of perfectly demonstrating these marks doesn't necessarily mean that it's not a true church. Even though the church at Corinth, for instance, fell shorter than perhaps any other church during the apostolic era, nonetheless, Paul still refers to it as a "church" (I Cor. 1:2, 24). God had his remnant in Corinth. Hence, what characterizes true churches from false churches is not visible perfection, but whether such churches adhere to Biblical authority and strive to manifest these marks as much as possible to the glory of God. The visible imperfection of the visible church is no excuse for anyone to withdraw from it altogether, since we are never to forsake the church (Heb. 10:24-25).

I will never know this side of eternity whether Carl was a member of the invisible church. And I will never know what made him forsake the visible church as a whole. But I do know that he woefully failed to understand what Scripture teaches about the church and her Lord.

Make no mistake about it: Carl's understanding of the church was for the dogs! Δ

David Hagopian, B.A., J.D., is an attorney with a leading Los Angeles-based law firm and a senior editor of Antithesis.

ISSUE AND INTERCHANGE

The goal of this regular feature is to provide our readers with opposing arguments on topics pertinent to the Christian life. We hope to encourage the reader to focus on the arguments involved in each position rather than on personal factors.

The authors selected for the respective sides in the debate are outspoken supporters of their viewpoints.

Douglas Wilson opens the debate by arguing that Scripture forbids Christians to educate their children in

public schools. Mr. Wilson, M.A. (philosophy; University of Idaho), is a teaching elder of Community Evangelical Fellowship, Moscow, Idaho, and author of numerous published essays and books, including the forthcoming Turning Point series text on education, *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* (Crossway Books).

Taking an opposing position is Dr. Robert Simonds Th.D., president and founder of the National Association of Christian Educators and Citizens for

Excellence in Education. Dr. Simonds served on President Reagan's "Forum to Implement the National Commission on Excellence in Education Report: A Nation at Risk" and is the Southern California Chairman of the National Association of Evangelicals.

The burden of proof in the interchange is placed on the person opening the discussion, and so Douglas Wilson will open and close the interchange.

ISSUE: Is It Morally Permissible to Educate Our Children in the Public Schools?

Wilson: Scripture Forbids Us to Educate Our Children in the Public Schools

Is a Christian education something which Christian parents are morally obligated to provide for their children? In what follows, I argue the affirmative and seek to place the ground of this obligation in the plain reading of Scripture. For if a prohibition or requirement is not based on Scripture, there is obviously no true moral obligation involved.

As Christians, we must begin with the assumption that there is no area of life where Biblical principles are irrelevant. So even though the Bible does not directly address every problem in the modern world with our terminology (including the public schools), nevertheless, the Scriptures do address the problem directly. God has revealed in His Word how He wants us to rear and educate our children.

To ensure that we are talking about the same thing, I will begin with a definition of "public schools." For the purpose of my discussion here, a public school is an officially agnostic, tax-supported institution of education for dependent children. Frankly, quite aside from the following arguments, I believe any Christian who grants this definition will immediately concede that a strong case has already been made. And anyone who denies the definition will have trouble with his case because the definition is so obviously descriptive of what we call the public schools here in America.

There are a series of arguments on the necessity of Christian

education that can be made from Scripture. They are:

1. Christian parents are morally obligated to keep their children out of public schools because the Scriptures expressly require a non-agnostic form of education. Consider this passage in Deuteronomy on the instruction of children.

"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart; you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Dt. 6:4-9).

It is important to remember that this required instruction in the law was not limited to "spiritual truth." It involved agriculture, economics, history, sex education, etc. — what we call education. The Biblical mentality is not compartmentalized into two distinct areas of thought: secular and sacred. All of life is under the authority of God's revealed Word, and children were to be taught in terms of this comprehensive authority all the time.

The same mentality about the instruction of children can be seen in the New Testament: "Children, obey

your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with a promise: 'that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.' And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:1-4).

Notice that in the Deuteronomy passage the requirement is that children live in an environment pervaded by Scripture. A thorough and Biblical instruction can only be provided successfully if it is happening all the time. Teaching in terms of God's Word must occur when walking, driving, sitting, and when lying down. Nothing could be clearer — God wants the children of His people to live in an environment conditioned by His Word. In Ephesians, we see the same thing, although stated less directly. Children are to be brought up in something; that something is the Word of God.

Pose the question another way. What area of life has God declared to be neutral, in which it is permissible to ignore Him, and His Word, while we instruct our children? The answer is that there is no such neutral zone.

2. Christian parents are morally obligated to keep their children out of the public schools because of the requirements of the greatest commandment. Jesus requires His people to love the Lord their God with all their minds (Mt. 22:37). This means

that the command to be teaching your children all the time must not be interpreted as simply applying to religious instruction, set off by itself in an airtight compartment. If our children are not taught to think like Christians when they study math, history, or science, then they are not obeying the command to love God with all their minds. And if they are not obeying the command, the parents are held responsible. This is because parents are responsible to instruct their children in what God requires of them. And it must be remembered that Jesus taught us that this is the greatest command. It is clear that God's people, and their children, are required to love the Lord their God with all their brains. This involves more than a general acquaintance with David, Goliath, Samson, Noah, *et al.* Sunday School once a week will not get this job done. Nor will family devotions do for a few minutes each night.

This second argument is obviously related to the first argument presented above, although there is a difference of emphasis. Deuteronomy 6 requires instruction in all of God's standards, all of the time. The greatest commandment requires the child to receive and love this instruction with all his mind. Because parents are responsible for bringing up children in such a way that they will obey the requirements placed on them by God, it is obvious that the education they provide for their children must teach them to love God in all subjects.

3. Christian parents are morally obligated to keep their children out of the public schools because God expects parents to provide for, and protect, their children. It is truly odd that one of the most common charges made against parents who provide a Christian education for their children is that they are "sheltering" them. *O tempora! O mores!* What is our nation coming to? Parents sheltering children!

Because pluralism (with regard to worldviews) is a false theology (it is institutional agnosticism), Christian parents are required to protect their children from this lie. Because the public schools are an established institution, required by law to teach and practice agnosticism, Christian parents are obligated to protect children from exposure to this false teaching. The principle is acknowledged by all Christians; it is simply not applied to the issue of public education by some. I cannot imagine us having this debate about Christian kids in Vacation Bible

Schools run by the Jehovah's Witnesses. So why do we treat agnosticism as a preferable heresy?

Christianity is not the only worldview that pervades all subjects; false teaching is also pervasive. If a Christian parent attempts to neutralize the false teaching, it means he has to spend many hours every night countering what the children learned that day in school. This is impossible because the parent doesn't know exactly what the children learned that day. And the children themselves have not been equipped to come back and report on what was unbiblical in what they heard. This makes responsible oversight extremely difficult, and I would argue, impossible. The only alternative is a private Christian education, which a Christian parent can provide, or monitor.

Christian parents are morally obligated to keep their children out of the public schools because sending children into an intellectual, ethical and religious war zone without adequate training and preparation is a violation of charity. In a physical war, we know that a country is desperate when they send their children to fight. In the same way, the saints in this country are in pretty sad shape. We send our kids off to be warriors, instead of training them to be warriors.

My children are being educated privately. They are being trained to hold and apply a Christian worldview. I am not trying to keep them from encounters with those who hate God; I am trying to train them and prepare them for it. We don't send adults to the mission field without training and preparation. During that time of training, they must be protected. What makes us think that sending unequipped seven-year olds off to be "salt and light" in an officially agnostic institution, without training and preparation, is consistent with charity?

Means for such preparation exist; such preparation is called a Christian education. Once such an education has been provided by the parents, and if the child is truly equipped, he may then be sent into the world. If the parents have done their job, the young adult will be more than a match for anything he meets.

4. Christian parents are morally obligated to keep their children out of the public schools because of the declared intellectual goal assigned to the Church in Scripture. Paul says, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for

pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ... (II Cor. 10:4-5).

Question: Are there any strongholds in the public school system against the knowledge of God? Any such rebellious arguments? Is there any high thing that exalts itself in defiance of God? Our goal as Christians must therefore be to pull them all down. Christians who content themselves, in the educational sphere, with anything less than absolute obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ are compromising this goal given to us in Scripture.

I know of no Christian reformers of public education who have vowed that they will settle for nothing less than explicitly Christian public schools. Christian reformers generally would settle for a piece of the action, or a "say" in the great pluralistic discussion. Thus, they do not have conquest, which is the goal of II Cor. 10:4-5, in mind.

Pluralism is an attempt to make everyone leave everyone else alone; it seeks to make evangelism an offense. But if Christianity is an evangelistic religion, and it is, then pluralism is an attempt to make Christianity an offense. Christians who agree to the truce which pluralism attempts to impose are being unfaithful to the mission of the Church.

But what if some Christians do adopt such a goal of "conquest," i.e. they want the public schools to become tax-supported Christian schools? Then their attempts should be resisted for a different reason; God does not assign educational responsibilities to the civil magistrates, even if the magistrates are godly. It is not their job.

5. Christian parents are morally obligated to keep their children out of the public schools because not to do so subsidizes a lie. Every time the public school doors open, they declare their independence from God in all things. They, officially and on the record, claim the right to teach all their subjects without any submission to God and His Word. Christians who send their children to such schools are subsidizing, with their children as the payment, this particular lie, which we have already discussed.

If every Christian parent pulled their children out of the public school system, that school system, along with the lie, would collapse. I mean, the public schools would collapse if only the Southern Baptists

pulled out. This means that Christians are keeping an institution dedicated to false teaching in existence.

In summary, I have argued that Christian education is not a luxury, or an option. It is part of Christian discipleship for those who have been

blessed with children. Christian education is a necessity because the Bible requires non-agnostic education, because the greatest command includes loving God with all our intellectual capacity, because Christian parents should protect their children from lies,

because the goal of the Christian church must be nothing less than intellectual conquest, and because this officially agnostic institution depends for its continued existence on the attendance of professing Christians.

Simonds: It Is Permissible to Educate Our Children In Public Schools

A Biblical definition of morality would be: to know right from wrong and to do what is right. For the Christian, the Bible is the only infallible book of right and wrong. It is also the Bible which guides a true Christian in "how" to do what is deemed to be absolutely right — or moral.

It is my belief that parents can (not necessarily should) morally send their children to public schools. I have five children. All have gone through our public schools (one is still in the seventh grade) from Kindergarten through medical school. They have been outstanding witnesses and evangelists through school. All are walking with Christ. All adore Jesus and live from their Bibles daily. They are all grown (except our darling little twelve-year-old tag-along) and established in Christian professions or ministry. How did this happen, when according to my learned brother Doug Wilson (whom I deeply respect and largely agree with), I have been committing *sin* by sending them to public schools? Granted, what works for one Christian family may not be recommended for all, and granted that what works is not necessarily right (bribes work, but the Bible says they are not right). So let us analyze the reasoning and morality of the thesis and antithesis.

First, there are basically three ways to educate your child: (1) *Home Schooling* — and this is the only clearly explicit method of educating children mentioned in Scripture; (2) *Christian* (or other private) *schooling* — which in our day and age of corrupt public schools, is still the second most preferred method of educating our children; (3) *Public schools* — which is the least desirable of the three options but most used.

Therefore, I would argue for the only purely scriptural method of educating our children to be home schooling. Not only do you control the curriculum, the reading materials, and the moral and spiritual worldviews your child would learn, but you control the pedagogy (methods) used to teach them.

Naturally a home school is a "Christian school," but that is not the environment implied in Mr. Wilson's

thesis. Therefore, if we hold to a strict Biblical directive, home schooling, by Mr. Wilson's own definition, would be the only option. However, while contending only for Christian schools, he skips over the only purely Biblical option — home schooling — which severely undercuts his general rationale.

The Christian school is the more practical option for most Christian parents, because of many parents' feelings of inadequacy for handling home schooling or perhaps both parents may be working.

In any case, *parents* still have the primary responsibility for educating their children — whether at home, in Christian schools, or public schools. As good as Christian schools are, generally, we constantly find many using atheistic public school materials and even textbooks. Children are not necessarily safe there. Some home schooling is the only true safeguard.

After all our promotion of Christian schools to Christian parents, only ten percent of our church children attend Christian schools. Ninety percent of all church children today attend public schools. Of 44,000,000 K-12 children, only ten percent attend private schools and only five percent of those go to Christian schools (2.5 million), according to the U.S. Department of Education.

Statistics do not prove that something is right or wrong, but they point out where we are. Public schools are most used because they are free, convenient and (mistakenly) trusted. Christian schools are less used by Christians because of cost, inconvenience, and lack of information.

Let us analyze our brother's rationale, which would leave Christians who choose to send their children to public schools with a very big guilt trip. Not that guilt is not proper concerning sin. But to imply or explicitly state that it is immoral to send a child to public school may indicate an unscriptural attitude of judgment in an area of choice for Christians.

Now a brief look at Doug Wilson's rationale. First, Mr. Wilson defines public schools as "an officially

agnostic, tax-supported institution of education for dependent children." And he rests the greatest weight of his argument on this presupposition and says, "any Christian who grants this definition will immediately concede...." Please note that this statement is inaccurate. That then weakens his entire thesis. Officially, public schools exist "to provide education to all America's children. The schools must remain neutral on teaching 'of' religion, but not be inhibited in the teaching 'about' religion."

In most cases, teachers try hard to follow this dictum. Of course, not always — and we hear more about those who don't than those who do.

Secondly, the author says the "Scriptures expressly require a non-agnostic form of education." Agreed! But the Scriptures do not explicitly say where the theistic (Godly) education must come from. Obviously, though, the Bible makes it clear that it must come from the Christian home. The Scriptures admonish us to train up our own child — not someone else's child. The schools may "teach" a child — only a parent can "train" up a child. Teaching is only the first half of training. Teaching may cover the "about" portion of religious training, but training is the second and higher plane of indoctrinating a child into an *automatic response* action.

A pilot may be *taught* how to fly an A-15 jet fighter airplane. But if he is not *trained* before flying it he will surely die. Even so, Christians must learn the difference between teaching and training.

Every parent must accept the moral responsibility to teach and "train-up" their own children in their own home — no matter where they may attend day school — public or private. To do otherwise would not fulfill God's law. We would miss the mark. It would then be sin and not moral.

It should be pointed out that Daniel grew up in an environment of a hedonistic, occultic culture — Babylon. His home training completely protected him. Mr. Wilson argues that parents can't help their children at night be-

cause they don't know exactly what their children learned that day. Really? Why not? We question our own children thoroughly. We read every single text and reading assignment. We provide them with overview, Scriptural truth, and point out errors. Christian parents' real moral obligation is to be available to help them as "you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up" (Deut. 6:8-9). Those are all done in the home.

In II Corinthians 10:4-5, we have a call to Christians to bring down the strongholds of the enemy — not by keeping our kids out — but by exercising good citizenship and being "salt" and "light" in our schools. We should be taking the entire system back to the control of Christian parents, not abdicating our moral and spiritual obligation to protect our own children and all of America's 44,000,000 K-12 students.

We have been copping-out for thirty years now. And what has it gotten us? From 1979-89, one third of all church children have dropped out of church — largely because of an atheistic, no-value system in our public schools. Now that makes a great point for Mr. Wilson's thesis to put our children in Christian schools, right? Wrong. Why?

Because Christians are *not* putting them in Christian schools, in spite of our urging them to do so. Why not take another approach to this dilemma and make our public schools and our children's education the number one priority in every church. We could elect a majority of school board members in every one of America's 15,700 school districts.

Christian parents could then

control all curriculum, textbooks, reading, teaching, and administration in just three short years. A dream? Hardly. We are already doing it by organizing a Citizens for Excellence in Education chapter in all 15,700 districts. The only thing stopping us from complete victory is a lack of funding. It can be done if we believe in God.

Why aren't all churches jumping in and making this total victory possible? Because we are still holding on to this archaic philosophy that it is immoral to send your children to public schools — or even to be involved with public schools. Thank God that is changing. We have 75,000 Christian parents now involved with over 600 chapters and 1500 school districts now under local Christian influence.

And shouldn't Christian parents be trained to protect their children from bad education, no matter if it's in public or Christian schools? I could write a nice little book just on first hand counseling I've done with Christian parents with children in Christian schools, whose children have been taught everything from "values clarification" (no values — all things are relative), to the occult — and even child molestation. Are all Christian schools safe? Certainly not. Is a Christian "immoral" to send his child to those Christian schools? No! They should work to correct the problem, not run away and hide. This is true also in the public schools.

If it is "immoral" to send our child to a public school, then we must ask ourselves some very serious question. Is it "immoral" for a Christian to work for a secular company — an un-

godly and worldly bunch? Is it immoral for a Christian to vote for a person who is not a thoroughly born again, godly, Christian? Do we opt for the lesser of two evils or do nothing and thereby often *choose* the most evil of all? Shall we never use public facilities of any kind which are financed by taxes or run by civil authorities? Shall we stop paying taxes which are subsidizing public schools?

Our dear brother says that when we send our children to public schools we are subsidizing evil by our own taxes. But do you not pay those taxes whether you use the schools or not? Does not a Christian who pays taxes for his child's education get *double-taxed* when he must pay for his child's Christian school education? Is that good stewardship? Is it justice? No!

Mr. Wilson calls Christians to conquest: "The goal of the Christian church must be nothing less than intellectual conquest." I agree! Then why should we try to put a guilt trip on Christians as "immoral" for doing exactly that — teaching their children to "conquer" evil in their own lives and resist the world's sins. If that kind of Christian reasoning long endures, you will see the demise of the church in our nation in just two more generations. May our loving Lord and Savior Jesus Christ help us all to be rational, accurate, loving, patient, and kind to one another. How I love God's dear people! May we all commit ourselves to loving all innocent children who need our love, hard work, and victories in their behalf. Selah!

Wilson Responds

It is a distinct pleasure to debate with a Christian gentleman. I trust that in the exchange which follows I will be able to express myself as graciously as Dr. Simonds. I am afraid, however, that all the graciousness in the world will not be able to paper over the fundamental difference here. And, because this is a debate, to the differences we go!

First, Dr. Simonds contends that I skipped over the only purely Biblical option, which he identifies as home-schooling. The reason I skipped over that was because it was not the subject of the debate. (I also skipped over the dissolution of the monasteries under Henry VIII.) It is true that nowhere in my piece do I say anything about home-schools vs. private Christian institutions. The debate between them is

important, but it is primarily pedagogical, not ethical. All my arguments were geared to whether Christian children should be in *public* schools, and they are arguments with which both home schoolers and Christian school advocates can readily agree.

Dr. Simonds also pointed out that not all Christian schools are good. "Children are not necessarily safe there." This is quite true, but it is also not the subject of the debate. The question is *not* whether it is morally required to send your child to any and every institution bearing the name Christian school.

Closer to the heart of the debate, Dr. Simonds challenges my definition of the public schools. The part of my definition he appears to question is

the claim that public schools are "officially agnostic." He says, "Please note that this statement is inaccurate." He then goes on to say, "The schools must remain neutral on the teaching 'of' religion, but not 'about' religion." He then goes on to argue that a "non-agnostic" form of education can be provided by godly parents as a result of a combination of the base education provided at school, mixed with the particular doctrines and beliefs of the parents at home. The picture that comes to my mind is the one of how paints are mixed at a paint store. The base paint is neutral, and various colors are added to suit the customer. Only in this case the customers mix in their own colors at home.

Now if the schools must re-

main neutral on the teaching of religion, how is this not official agnosticism? They are allowed to teach about religion, true, but does this include the permission to say which one is right? Or is that a detail? And where does Scripture allow us to believe that truth can be learned this way, with a certain percentage of basic, neutral facts, which are then mixed with the truths of Christianity? The Bible teaches that all truth is God's truth, and none of it is neutral. *There is no such thing as neutrality.*

On a personal note, I was frankly impressed when Dr. Simonds said that he and his wife read every single assignment. It is good that he and his wife discuss with their kids what they heard during the day. And apparently the degree of their commitment is reflected in the character of their children; we all rejoice that they are walking with the Lord. But I have direct experience with this sort of thing too; I am one of four children, all of whom went all the way through the public schools system, and all of whom are still Christians. Whenever I was taught something which I understood to be in conflict with the faith of my parents, I rejected the lie. But the key phrase here is *which I understood*. There were many lies which got by my childish defenses. I am now thirty-seven, and I am still unlearning my public school education.

Dr. Simonds agreed with an application of II Cor. 10:4-5 to education, but said that Christian parents ought to be taking control of the entire public school system, instead of abandoning it. But this creates two questions: First, why should we have to do all this if it is possible to provide a godly education for our kids by combining Christian ed at home with neutral ed received during the day? If it is true that "in most cases teachers try hard" to follow the dictum that requires the public schools to be neutral in the teaching of religion, and Dr. Simonds says that it is, then why do we have to take over anything? Why do we not simply concentrate on mixing in our own colors at home?

Secondly, if we answer this call to conquest, do we take the schools back in order to make them *explicitly* Christian, or do we take them back because the secularists cannot be trusted to keep them neutral, while we Christians can keep them neutral?

If the former, then are we not

formally establishing the Christian religion in a tax-funded institution? Are we not requiring the non-Christians to pay for the propagation of a faith they do not believe? And is this not doing unto them what we do not like done unto us? Is Dr. Simonds making this a debate between advocates of different kinds of Christian education, i.e. tax-supported vs. privately-financed?

And if it is the latter option, I would ask for the Scriptural imperative which requires us to fight to maintain a neutral institution, with a mission to propagate neutral facts.

Dr. Simonds then says that

Simonds: "Can we restore to our public schools this Western culture of Judeo-Christian core values as that base of all positive productive education? The answer is a resounding, Yes! We are doing it. Many of our school districts are now coming closer to our ideal for education. To do less would be aiding in the demise of our Western (Christian) culture."

33% of all church children have dropped out of church, largely because, he says, of the atheistic no-value system in our public schools. He then offers this argument, which I frankly find quite baffling. But perhaps I have misunderstood. He says, "Now that makes a great point for Mr. Wilson's thesis, to put our children in Christian schools, right? Wrong. Why? Because Christians are *not* putting them in Christian schools in spite of our urging them to do so." Let us apply this argument elsewhere. People who smoke 22 packs of Turkish cigarettes a day are dropping like flies. Mr. Wilson has urged them to quit. Now if they do not quit, and they continue to assume room temperature, can we reason from this that they ought *not* to quit? I don't think so.

He then argues that if churches made the public schools a high priority, we could elect Christians to school boards all over the country. We could then control "all curriculum, textbooks, reading, teaching and administration in just three short years."

Again, control to what purpose? Explicitly Christian public schools? Or schools run by Christians to be neutral?

The hindrance, he says, to this conquest of the public schools is that we "are still holding onto this archaic philosophy" that it is immoral to send your children to public schools. Now even if what I argue here is wrong, it is hardly *archaic*. The Christian school movement in America is very young, and the home school movement is even younger. Those Christian parents whose kids are in the public schools are the current establishment; the reformation, the change, comes from those parents seeking to provide a Christian education.

Dr. Simonds concludes by asking whether, given my reasoning, it is immoral for a Christian to be in the world, rubbing shoulders with all the pagans out there. The biblical answer to this is that we are supposed to be in the world (see for example I Corinthians 5:9-10). But we must be constantly vigilant to see that the world stays out of us, and we must take particular care to keep the world *out of our children*. We must train our children to go into the world; we must not help the world go into our children.

At one point in his conclusion, I am afraid Dr. Simonds misinterpreted my argument. He says, "Our dear brother says when we send our children to public schools we are subsidizing evil by our taxes." What I said was, "Christians who send their children to such schools are subsidizing, with their *children* as the payment, this particular lie..." About half my property taxes go to support the public school system, and I submissively pay those taxes; they are God's chastisement. I am biblically allowed to pay this tax, because Caesar's image is on what I send them. But *God's* image is on my children, and I am forbidden to render *them* to Caesar (Matt. 22:21).

In conclusion, I appreciate the tone of Dr. Simonds' arguments. I am grateful for his commitment to his children. I am glad that we can agree that atheistic no-value education is harmful to children. But after that point, we part company. I believe that *all* the education of Christian children should be thoroughly, consistently, and explicitly Christian, and that it should be financed voluntarily by Christians. In contrast, Dr. Simonds believes *part* of the education need not be explicitly Christian, and that Christian parents should provide the Christianity at home.

Simonds Responds

The argument that it is immoral to educate a child in public schools certainly has the high moral ground of Scripture, when evaluating the immorality children are exposed to in our public schools today.

However, we must be careful to keep our thinking clear and unclouded by our own beautiful Christian prejudices. Public schools are, at present, such an immoral and academically bankrupt system that we would find it difficult to recommend the public schools as a solution to educating our own or our nation's children. I have never recommended that anyone send their children to public schools. However, ninety percent of our church children still go to public schools.

We must clearly differentiate between an immoral school system and an immoral parent. Nothing could be more immoral or academically and politically bankrupt than our college and university system today. However, please observe how many of our Christian college professors and even our pastors have received a good portion of their education in these secular institutions of corruption. Are they all immoral because of it? The truth is, sadly, that you are "distinguished" if your degrees are secular.

Most of our Christian colleges and day schools accept and honor secular degrees over Christian college degrees, sad as that may be. The Christian colleges urge all Christians to send their children to them for a Christian education. But do they only hire professors with Christian college degrees? Hardly. They are almost an exception in some Christian colleges and day schools. So we are not too consistent in our argument for "only" Christian school education.

A hundred years ago education was for the soul and character of a child. George Roche's *A World Without Heroes* describes the need to educate Christian heroes who rise above their conditions to transcend even selflessness. Those were the days! Today we are struggling to produce literate graduates among our general student population.

Real education, with Scriptural morality, will civilize the "fallen nature" of man's proclivities. It will not save it or transform it. That is quite personal and individual. We must get back to this in the public schools. We can. Almost everyone you talk to wants to return to a fundamentally cohesive value-system based on the Christian (Biblical) ethic. Those controlling the system do not.

Francis Schaeffer and other

solid Christian thinkers advocate that Christians infiltrate all areas of our culture and society — the arts, education, and government. They believe in Christ's gospel of salting the earth and the power of light to dispel darkness. We and our children can do this, together, as God directs.

I'm not saying that Christian schools are a cop-out. I advocate them to all parents. If your children are in public schools, however immoral the system, neither you nor your children are made immoral by going there. You can change them and completely turn them around.

We do not advocate making Christian schools out of our public schools. We do advocate restoring our Western culture of traditional values (Christian) and academic excellence to our public schools. All 44,000,000 K-12 children will be evangelized by this process of morally civilizing the human spirit to a receptive plane of moral consciousness capable of receiving the incredible experience of "faith" — producing the new birth in Christ Jesus. I call this "Impact Evangelism."

Our public schools are an old world institution relying on a "consensus" of values. That consensus is now lost in the fragmented public arena. The withdrawal of Christian influence has allowed every cult, religion, and philosophy that is foreign to our faith and culture to flood in. Christians have abdicated their mandate to be salt and light. We must not "sacrifice" our children — we must nurture and train them in our homes, while they receive their formal education.

We have slowly merged into a Christian ghetto mentality. Blacks cry out for all black schools and colleges; gays and feminists want to rewrite the curriculum; Christians want their Christian agenda. In a word — fragmentation is now a reality.

Can we restore to our public schools this Western culture of Judeo-Christian core values as that base of all positive productive education? The answer is a resounding, Yes! We are doing it. Many of our school districts are now coming closer to our ideal for education. To do less would be aiding in the demise of our Western (Christian) culture. Every Christian parent should be involved in this process — not only to protect their own children (our number one priority) but to affect our entire society. The same is true for all Biblically based churches. Ironically, the non-Biblically based churches are the

ones most involved. May God awaken and unify all evangelicals to "faith" not "fear." We can conquer the forces of evil and save our church children. But we must believe God. "For the wicked shall not rule the godly, lest the godly be forced to do wrong" (Ps. 125:3).

Christians today are condemned enough by the world. Let's not perpetuate the spirit of condemnation to one another by saying that we are immoral to send our children to public schools. Let us say that our public schools are immoral — not parents (Christian or non-Christian) who send their children there. It is not immoral to send a child to public school, but it may not be the wisest thing to do, if another alternative is available.

We are all "in" the world (society), but we are urged in Scripture to be not "of" the world. Our children must learn that and live it. We must train them in that daily, in our homes, no matter where they go to school.

In summary, let me congratulate my brother colleague for his commitment to Biblical education for all children — especially all Christian children. It would be more comfortable for me to be debating his side of the issue. But, nothing so important is simple.

My hope is that we Christians will be charitable to each other's views and totally committed to restoring good education to our public schools. It's the largest mission field in the world today. What a great victory it will be to win them back to Christian control (it only takes three out of five school board members to control an entire local system).

For that very large majority of Christians (ninety percent of all Christian families) who have their children in public schools, I would suggest: (1) Home school your children if you feel competent, both parents do not work, and you want the safest method for your children's education; (2) Put your children in a private school if it is available and you can afford it. But monitor everything carefully; (3) Keep your children in a public school, but go over every assignment and textbook, pointing out errors or misleading information. Train them in Christ's way at home and in church. Spend more time than most with your children. Keep your conscience clear! Walk in holiness. In His light may the joy of *faith* overcome your fears. Pray for every church to open a Christian school, if possible. Pray for God's blessing on all innocent children. Pray that men of God will weep for our fallen nation.

Wilson's Concluding Remarks

As much as I appreciate the gracious manner in which my brother has conducted himself in debate, I cannot say that he has effectively engaged with my arguments. Nevertheless, he did clearly answer one of my questions. With the reader's kind permission, I will respond to that answer in some detail: in the second part of this essay, I will make a series of brief responses to other miscellaneous points.

Dr. Simonds was clear that he did not advocate making the public schools into *Christian* schools, but rather that he was advocating a return to the traditional values of our Western culture, along with a return to academic excellence. To this proposal, I have a series of questions and responses.

First, where does the Bible tell us to fight to reestablish Western culture or traditional values? Obviously, the Bible is silent when it comes to any such mission. If II Cor. 10:4-5 contains our marching orders, and we agree it does, then we must note that every thought is to be brought into submission to *Christ*. We are commanded to bring nothing into submission to Western culture. In the Great Commission, we were not commanded to go into all the earth and make Aristotelian-Platonic-Judeo-Christians, baptizing them in the name of art, music and literature.

So, again, if we go into the public schools, and fight for certain "core values" do we do so as *Christians*, or as plain and ordinary Decent Folks? And what are these core values? Do they include the greatest commandment, i.e. that we love the *true* God with everything we have? If so, then we are fighting for tax-subsidized Christian schools. If not, then we have abandoned the core of our core values. I believe this dilemma illustrates a central problem in our debate: some of our definitions are not the same. I would argue that "core values" are those which are at the core of Biblical revelation. Dr. Simonds appears to be arguing that Christians should understand "core values" as those which Christians share with decent non-Christians.

Secondly, even if the reintroduction of traditional values were our mission, how is it possible to fight

for the fruit without fighting for the tree? The Western culture which Dr. Simonds rightly wants to protect did not arise in our midst *ex nihilo*. It was the result of an explicit affirmation of Christianity proper. I have no problem with Dr. Simonds' desire to protect our great heritage; we part company on the appropriate means to that end. The tree is the Lord Jesus Christ, and not a traditional morality which is consistent in a general way with Christian morality.

Thirdly, how is it possible to think that such a civilizing of the public school kids is a precursor to evange-

high standards of discipline. We must never forget that prostitutes are closer to the kingdom of God than theologians; this is because prostitutes know they have a problem. It is easier to be misled by a false Savior before he has fallen on his face. In the same way, it was easier to be misled by public education before the fruit of the lie became so evident, as it has in the last few years. Public education in America in the past had high standards of discipline, etc. Consequently, more Christians were deceived at that time than are deceived now. The public schools *then* were more of a threat to the Christian faith.

My colleague appears to agree with David Hume that one cannot derive *ought* from *is*. In his second response, he acknowledges that statistics "do not prove something right or wrong, but they point out where we are." Nevertheless, Dr. Simonds appears to be trying to make *some* point with such statistics; they keep coming up. In his last response, he says, "However, ninety percent of our church children still go to public schools." I am quite pre-

pared to grant the figure. But this simply means that we have persuaded a tithe, and have a lot of work before us.

Dr. Simonds says this: "Let us say our public schools are immoral — not parents...who send their children there." But if the schools are immoral, then does no responsibility fall on parents who continue to send their kids? And if our goal is to turn things around, is it right to expose our children to such immorality in the meantime?

And lastly, congratulating the reader on his sight of land, I would argue that to say Christian parents are morally obligated to provide a Christian education for their children is not necessarily to perpetuate a "spirit of condemnation." I have argued my case without a legalistic spirit; my desire is to help parents with their awesome responsibilities, not to weigh them down with extraneous guilt. But to those parents who are working through this crucial issue, I say this: If these arguments are Biblical, then it is necessary to obey them. If not, then it is necessary to answer them. Δ

Wilson: "Dr. Simonds concedes that the current moral tone in the public schools is horrendous, but this is not what makes them dangerous. I would object just as strongly to officially agnostic public schools which maintained high standards of discipline."

lism? I am afraid that Dr. Simonds has it backwards. Evangelism results in civilization, and not the other way around. Dr. Simonds' words are worth studying closely. "...children will be evangelized by this process of morally civilizing the human spirit to a receptive plane of moral consciousness capable of receiving the incredible experience of 'faith' — producing the new birth in Christ Jesus." But moral instruction of this kind will not prepare the ground for saving faith. Even if successful, it is more likely to produce self-righteous moralism than a realization of sinfulness, and need for a Savior. The Bible teaches that sinners are *dead* in their trespasses and sins. Civilizing "improvements" do not prepare a corpse for life any more than make-up applied by an undertaker prepares a man for the resurrection.

And now for some brief scattershot: Dr. Simonds concedes that the current moral tone in the public schools is horrendous, but this is not what makes them dangerous. I would object just as strongly to officially agnostic public schools which maintained

Book Review

History By Faith

***History Through the Eyes of Faith* by Ronald Wells**

New York: Harper & Row, 1989, 262 pages, \$9.95

Reviewed by Paul Waibel

If a photographer had been present along the road to Emmaus, "and if a picture had been taken of Jesus and his two walking companions, would that picture have shown Jesus of Nazareth, whom most people in Jerusalem knew?" This question of the objective nature of historical reality is critical to both the truth of the Christian faith and a Christian view of history. Professor Ronald A. Wells of Calvin College repeatedly calls the reader's attention to that fact in *History Through the Eyes of Faith*, a survey of history, meant to provide "a Christian perspective on the history of Western Civilization."

As a Christian view of history, Wells' volume is "revisionist," in that he rejects most of what would normally be regarded as characteristic of a Christian, as opposed to a secular, approach to the study of history. Indeed, Professor Wells insists that there is no distinctively Christian approach to the study of history. "In order to have an acceptable dialogue," he writes, "all historians must discuss the same reality." That "reality" rules out seeing any divine providence in history, for "we historians study humans, not God."

The Bible, writes Wells, "while surely trustworthy, is not without its difficulties." Problems associated with its human authorship render it unreliable as a source of historical facts. It cannot be used either to derive the distinctive characteristics of a Christian view of history, or as evidence for the historicity of, for example, the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The New Testament was written to fill the need to tell the story of Jesus to the generations after the death of the apostles. Because the Gospels and Epistles were written after the fact by "people with an 'Eas-

ter Faith'...who may or may not have been witnesses to the actual events and who, in any case, had an interest in perpetuating belief in the claims surrounding those events," they cannot be appealed to as evidence for "the historicity of Jesus as the risen Lord." The most that an historian can say with intellectual honesty, concludes Wells, is that "Jesus of Nazareth is historical," but Jesus Christ, the risen Lord, "is a belief, founded in a faith, not a conclusion

Rather than provide the student with a Christian interpretation, ...Wells insists that there is no distinctively Christian approach to the study of history.

induced from indisputable 'facts.'"

Because Professor Wells rules out any providential interpretation, his history of Western Civilization is also revisionist, as viewed from a more traditional Christian perspective. Wells correctly sees that the real break with Christianity as the dominant worldview in Western Civilization came not with the Renaissance, as often assumed by Christians, but rather with the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. It was the Enlightenment that toppled God from his position as the Lord of history, and relegated him to the role of "God of first and last causes."

The ideology of the Enlightenment became a secular religion, a Christian heresy, that has largely supplanted Christianity as the dominant religion in the West. As such, it is theoretically incompatible with Christianity. Most Christians can agree with Wells thus far, but many, particularly among conservative

evangelicals, will disagree with Wells' assertion that many of their most cherished values arose from the Enlightenment, and, therefore are without a Biblical basis and at odds with true Christian values.

Wells concludes that "all modern thinking stands on an Enlightenment base." This includes all modern economic systems, whether "capitalist, socialist, or 'mixed,'" for they are all materialistic. Whether east or west of the Iron Curtain, all economic and social systems are, according to Wells' analysis, equally unacceptable for Christians.

Enlightenment thought gave rise to a great hope, grounded in a firm belief in the inevitability of progress and the perfectibility of man. That hope was a kind of secular salvation, a heaven on earth, the chief embodiment of which is to be found in the American Revolution and the American Dream. The American system, political as well as economic and social, is a product of the Enlightenment. Its roots, according to Wells, are not only not Christian, but are firmly planted in an ideology thoroughly at odds with true Christianity. In this too, Wells is a revisionist, challenging the conclusions of many leading Christian writers (e.g., the late Francis A. Schaeffer).

History Through the Eyes of Faith is an interesting and thought provoking volume for thinking Christians. Professor Wells writes in a clear and very readable style. The Index is very good, and the Bibliography, although limited, will help the reader understand from whence come many of the book's ideas. But as regards the purpose for which the book was written, that is, to supplement the traditional textbook in Western Civilization history courses at Christian colleges, it falls short of its goal. By his own admission, Professor Wells offers no distinctive approach. Rather than provide the student with a Christian interpretation to offset the secular bias of the text, *History Through the Eyes of Faith* is likely to reinforce that bias. Δ

Paul R. Waibel is Associate Professor of History at Liberty University.

Novelty, Nonsense, and Non-Sequiturs

Oh, That's What You Meant

In "The Return of Franky Schaeffer" (*Christianity Today*, November 1990), CT commented in an interview with Franky Schaeffer, "Several years ago there was a rumor that you were going to become a Roman Catholic." To which, Schaeffer replied: "I'm not becoming a Roman Catholic. However, I have a great interest in Catholicism, which did not begin theologically but practically."

In *World* magazine (December 1990), we read, "Franky Schaeffer, filmmaker son of...the late Francis Schaeffer has associated himself with Eastern Orthodoxy....Ceremonies for his chrismation (the rite of receiving a believer from non-Orthodox background) were conducted last weekend in a Greek Orthodox parish near his home."

I Think I Would Like an 'X' on My Chest

Amidst perennial Congressional claims to the effect that the budget has been cut back as far as possible, the National Taxpayers Union recently noted that, among other things,

"The Army spent \$201,000 to refurbish 13 buildings at Fort Knox, Kentucky. Unfortunately, the buildings had already been earmarked for demolition.

\$160,000 was spent by the National Institute of Neuro and Communication Disorder (tax money, of course) to study, in part, whether you can hex opponents during a strength contest by drawing an X on their chests.

\$1 million was spent to preserve a Trenton, N.J. sewer as an historical landmark."

Ingrained Explanations

The Soviet literary periodical *Literaturnaya gazeta* reported:

On Jan. 22 1969, Soviet Army Second Lt. Viktor Ilyin broke through the cordon near the Kremlin's Borovitsky Gates, pulled out two Makarov pistols and began firing at the Chaika limousine that was the second car in a motorcade....According to established court testimony, the General Secretary, Brezhnev, was supposed to be riding in the second car.

The Moscow magazine *Smena*, ran an article, 'Assassination Attempt,' setting forth everything that happened....In brief, the basic idea of the article is: Ilyin is a sick man. Strictly speaking this is not news to us.

'He was abnormal, of course,' says Aleksei Vasilyevich Melnik, his former Deputy Commanding Officer for Political Education. 'At political education classes, he asked such questions, why did we occupy Czechoslovakia in 1968? Then at the next class he started saying things to the effect that the Young Communist League had outlived its usefulness, or why do we have a one party monopoly in the country?'

Nowadays, anything at all can be said about

Czechoslovakia, the Party, or the YCL. But can it be that some adjustments should be made for the times. Could a normal person in fact have asked such questions at political education classes *then*?"

CT Nearly Steps Out on a Limb

In a review of *The Agony of Deceit*, *Christianity Today* (Oct 1990) published photographs of numerous televangelists, including one of Robert Schuller of the Crystal Cathedral, all under the heading, "TV's Spiritual Outlaws."

In response, Bruce Larson, co-pastor of the Crystal Cathedral wrote, "I am appalled at the book review....I want you to know that my long-time friend and current senior pastor, Robert Schuller, in no way deserves to be so labeled. Unlike so many TV evangelists, he is a respected member of a respected denomination and is the pastor of a very wonderfully Christ-centered and biblically based church. The unfortunate layout on the page makes him guilty by association."

Schuller himself responded, "None of the other ministers collected in the photographs...have lived under the eye...of a denomination as old and as historic in its commitment to historic Christianity as I do. Surely that outlaws the label *outlaw*!"

Not to be outdone, CT editors declared, "We regret that publishing their phrase [the author's of *The Agony of Deceit*] and the pictures of other evangelists along with Schuller's may have left the impression that CT believes him to be heterodox."

The Joys of Ecumenical Freedom

Jamie Kellam Dodge is a witch. She also worked for the Salvation Army. *Church and State* magazine reports that Dodge's employers found this a poor combination and dismissed her, but "Dodge, whose salary was paid entirely from public funds, believed her religious freedom had been violated, and she took her case to federal court." Both sides signed a financial settlement in 1989.

At first, Dodge denied that she was a Wiccan but later admitted it. "It was awful, Dodge said. 'They [her employers] said they were concerned about me, that I was mentally ill and should call a psychiatrist. They tried to get me to call a Catholic priest for an exorcism....'

'At the time I started I had been attending a Catholic church because I like the ritual and nobody screamed at you from the pulpit....Wiccans don't object to attending different churches....If I wanted to go to a Catholic church or a Methodist church, I could and still be a Wiccan."

Who Said Socialism is Intellectually Bankrupt?

Building upon a century of theoretical insights, the Socialist newsweekly, *The Militant*, recently recommended in an editorial (Dec. 1990) that, "to combat growing unemployment, we must mount an effort to fight for jobs for all through a worldwide campaign to radically reduce the workweek -- with no reduction in pay. A shorter workweek would immediately open up jobs for millions of workers."

We invite readers to submit items for this department.

Clear Off Your Trophy Shelf

Fill It With Back Issues of ANTITHESIS

January/February 1990, Vol. I, No. 1

- At War With the Word:
 - The Necessity of Biblical Antithesis -- G. Bahnsen
- The Dawning Light: Reformation in Scotland
 - Overview of Scottish Presbyterian Hist. -- 1 -- L. A. Curto
- Vietnam: Biblical Reflections on National Messianism -- R. Wagner
- Behind the Scenes of an Abortion Clinic:
 - An Ex-Director Speaks -- C. Everett
- Puritan Jurisprudence:
 - A Study in Progress and Inconsistency -- J. McClendon
- The Biblical Offense of Racism -- D. Jones
- Social Security and Its Antidote -- T. Harris
- So Help Me God: A Biblical View of Oaths -- D. Hagopian
- For the Record:** Church Government Briefly Considered -- G. Bahnsen
- Issue & Interchange:** Tithing on Gross or Net?

March/April 1990, Vol. I, No. 2

- Environmentalism: A Modern Idolatry -- K. Clauson
- John Knox: The Years of Preparation
 - Overview of Scottish Presbyterian Hist. -- 2 -- L. A. Curto
- Has Roman Catholicism Changed?
 - An Examination of Recent Canon Law -- T. Schirmacher
- Helping the Poor Without Feeding the Beast -- G. Bahnsen
- Cancel the Postal Monopoly -- L. Rockwell, Jr.
- Reformed Royalty: Queen Jeanne d'Albret -- M. Manzer
- For the Record:** The Obligation to Attend Church -- G. Bahnsen
- Issue & Interchange:** Exclusive Psalmody

May/June 1990, Vol. I, No. 3

- Forgive Us Our Trespasses? A Biblical View of Civil Disobedience and Operation Rescue -- D. Hagopian
- John Knox: The Watchman of Scotland
 - Overview of Scottish Presbyterian Hist. -- 3 -- L. A. Curto
- False Antithesis: A Critique of the Notion of Antithesis in the Apologetic of Francis Schaeffer -- G. Bahnsen
- The Challenge and Beauty of Church Discipline -- T. Harris
- Is Christianity Unintelligible? -- D. Jones
- Homelessness, the Poor,
 - and Local Property Regulation -- J. Rogers
- For the Record:** The Priesthood of All Believers -- D. Hagopian
- Issue & Interchange:** The Permissibility of Deception

July/August 1990, Vol. I, No. 4

- Samuel Adams:
 - Re-evaluating a Journalistic Calvinist -- M. Olasky
- The National Covenant: Lifeblood of Scotland
 - Overview of Scottish Presbyterian Hist. -- 4 -- L. A. Curto
- Population Growth as Blessing or Blight? -- E. C. Beisner
- The Rhetoric of Rescue -- D. Hagopian
- Apologetics and the Heart -- D. Wilson
- For the Record:** Unlimited Atonement -- G.I. Williamson
- Issue & Interchange:** The Permissibility of Birth Control

September/October 1990, Vol. I, No. 5

- The Three Kinds of Illiteracy -- R. Nash
- NATO's Disappearing Mission -- D. Bandow
- REFLECTIONS ON ROMAN CATHOLICISM
- Romeward Bound: Evaluating Why Protestants
 - Convert to Catholicism -- D. Hagopian
- Addendum: Why I Left Protestantism for Catholicism -- J. Tucker
- New Confusions for Old:
 - Rome on Justification -- R. Wagner
- Enduring Anathemas of the
 - Roman Catholic Eucharist -- D. Jones
- For the Record:** The Nature and Scope of the Canon -- G. Bahnsen
- Issue & Interchange:** *Sola Scriptura*: D. Jones vs. G. Matatics

November/December 1990, Vol. I, No. 6

- Beyond Creation vs. Evolution: Taking the Full Measure of the Materialist Challenge -- T.M. Moore
- The Second Reformation of Scotland
 - Overview of Scottish Presbyterian Hist. -- 5 -- L. A. Curto
- The Biblical Antithesis in Education -- D. Wilson
- The IMF: Pouring More Good Money After Bad -- D. Bandow
- Chesterton Reformed -- J. Sauer
- The Character of Inflation -- S. Samson
- For the Record:** What in the World is a Worldview? -- N. DeGroot
- Issue & Interchange:** The Permissibility of Gambling

Please send me the back issues of ANTITHESIS designated below. Each issue is \$4.00 plus shipping

- ☐ January/February 1990, Vol. I, No. 1
- ☐ March/April 1990, Vol. I, No. 2
- ☐ May/June 1990, Vol. I, No. 3
- ☐ July/August 1990, Vol. I, No. 4
- ☐ September/October 1990, Vol. I, No. 5
- ☐ November/December 1990, Vol. I, No. 6

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____

SUB-TOTAL _____

SHIPPING \$2.00

TOTAL _____

Mail to:

Antithesis

4521 Campus Dr. #435

Irvine, CA 92715

The New Vanguard of Christian Thought and Culture

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

Beyond Creation vs. Evolution:

Taking the Full Measure of the
Materialist Challenge

T.M. Moore..... 5

The Second Reformation of Scotland

An Overview of Scottish Presbyterian History - Pt.5

L. Anthony Curto..... 11

The Biblical Antithesis in Education

Douglas Wilson..... 15

The International Monetary Fund:

Pouring More Good Money After Bad

Doug Bandow..... 21

Chesterton Reformed: A Protestant Interpretation

James Sauer..... 24

The Character of Inflation

Steven Samson..... 28

November/December 1990

Volume 1, Number 6

\$4.00

ANTITHESIS

"'Christianity come into its own' finally has a voice in my generation."

John Owen Butler

"One of the more exciting projects in quite some time."

Journey Magazine

"Conservatives of all stripes will find *Antithesis* an interesting journal applying Biblical theology in non-utopian social practice"

New American

"We look forward to future issues of *Antithesis*. It promises to become one of the main vehicles for an intelligent explication of the Reformed tradition."

Karl Keating, Catholic Answers

SAMPLES FROM THE PAGES OF ANTITHESIS

Marvin Olasky on Samuel Adams:

"A close look at Adams throws doubt on the conventional historians' cartoon version of him.... What Adams would have stressed, was his orthodox belief in the God of the Bible."

Ronald Nash on Education:

"Whatever choice the state makes will only establish one person's set of ultimate concerns at the expense of others. An education that pretends to be religiously neutral is a fraud."

G.I. Williamson on Christ's Atonement:

"Is it an atonement of limited power, which saves some men when they add their part to Christ's part? Or is it an atonement of unlimited power which saves some men because that is precisely the effect that Christ intended?"

E. C. Belsner on Overpopulation:

"Contrary to what seems common sense, we get more land, food, and other resources, and less pollution per person, as the world's population grows."

Douglas Jones on Atheism:

"Atheism claims to provide a basis for knowledge, when in fact it destroys the very foundations of rationality, logic, science, and ethics."

Roger Wagner on Vietnam:

"...the history of America's international involvements in the twentieth century has been largely one of misguided messianism. It has led to major involvements in the affairs of foreign nations...and to the tragic loss of life and military forces in quarrels which were essentially not our own."

**Don't Miss Out.
Subscribe Today.**

Please enter my subscription
to *Antithesis* at the

Regular rate

☐ One year \$18.50

☐ Two years \$34.00

Student rate

☐ One year \$13.00

☐ Two years \$25.00

Foreign rate

☐ One year \$21.00

☐ Two years \$39.00

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____

State/Prov. _____

Zip _____

Enclosed is my check or money order ☐ OR Please bill me ☐

Mail to: *Antithesis* 4521 Campus Dr. #435
Irvine, CA 92715