

# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION



*An evangelical perspective on science and the Christian faith*

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## **IS THERE A CHRISTIAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM?**

**ASA Policy on Controversial Issues  
Scientific Beliefs and Social Stability  
Conservative and Liberal Contributions**

**Also . . . .**

**Cult and Occult**

**The Fat Furor**

**Poetry: Propitiation**

*"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom."*

Psalm 111:10

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# JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION

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## DOES THE ASA TAKE A "POSITION" ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES?

ASA officers and the editor of the *Journal* ASA periodically receive letters alleging that the ASA has departed from its original position and purposes. The correspondence file at the national office contains statements such as:

The Old ASA is gone. . . . Back in 1946 we were all Biblical and no one dared champion evolution.

If the ASA had remained true to the doctrines and principles on which it was founded, the Creation Research Society would never have been necessary.

The *Journal* ASA has published letters and articles containing similar statements, of which the following are examples:

Thus, in fifteen years we have seen develop within the A.S.A. a spectrum of belief in evolution that would have shocked all of us at the inception of our organization (11:26-27, 1959).

Thousands of high school and college students are losing their Christian faith on the strength of what they are taught in biology, geology and related sciences. The ASA was founded to prevent this tragedy. I, personally, have been in the ASA almost from the start. I can see a gradual drift towards the "intellectually popular" concept of biological evolutionary theory. We are losing our purpose for being and are getting into great confusion. Most articles in the *JASA* are now on a variety of subjects that have little pertinence to our purpose for existence (15:67-68, 1963).

We remember the days when the A.S.A. was first organized. We were all against evolution then (15:100, 1963).

The implication of these and similar statements is that the ASA originally took a definite stand in favor

of a given interpretation of the Scriptures and against the theory of evolution, and that it has since departed from that position. On the other hand, I have been assured by long-time members that these characterizations of the original position of the ASA are in error, and that the ASA has *never* taken a stand on controversial issues. I attempted to resolve the question to my own satisfaction by investigating Annual Meeting programs (which usually include abstracts of the papers), correspondence by ASA officers, statements by ASA officers and editors published in the *Journal* ASA, and two official publications of the ASA: *Modern Science and Christian Faith* (1950), and *Evolution and Christian Thought Today* (1959).

I want to make it clear that the question is not whether the majority of members at one time held to a given interpretation of the Scriptures, or whether there was almost unanimity of opinion against the acceptance of evolution. The crucial question is whether the ASA has ever taken an *official* position on controversial issues such as evolution.

### Annual Meeting Programs

At the third annual convention in 1948 Laurence Kulp discussed "The Antiquity of Hominid Fossils," in which he stated that there is considerable scientific evidence that man-like creatures have been on earth for at least many tens of thousands of years. There must have been some interesting discussions, for in "Some Basic Presuppositions of Evolutionary Thinking," Edwin Monsma presented four presuppositions of evolutionists "which cannot be accepted by Christian men of science because they believe in the Bible as the inspired word of God."

In 1949 Kulp gave two papers. In "The Carbon 14

Dating Method" he noted that Neanderthal Man is older than 25,000 years. In "Deluge Geology" he commented that it is unfortunate that flood geology has become the Christian view among fundamentalists because not only is it absurd to the educated non-Christian, but it gives apparent support to impossible interpretations of Genesis. It is interesting to note that Larry Kulp was elected to the Executive Council in 1948 after he had given at least one paper by which members could tell that he was *not* an anti-evolutionist. Furthermore, at the 1951 annual meeting a committee asked him to prepare a monograph on the age of the earth.

In 1950 Delbert Eggenberger discussed "Methods of Dating the Earth and the Universe," in which he concluded that several different methods of dating all point to a beginning on the order of several billion years ago, and that "the Scriptures themselves do not teach a short time-scale."

In 1951 J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. in "Creation Days" held that the days in Genesis 1 were figurative, and were not necessarily of anything like approximately equal duration. J. H. Shrader in "A Conservative and Consistent View of Biblical Cosmology" argued that the Bible is "an expression of lofty monotheism and a unique insight into man's divine nature," and that the Scriptures should be taken as "the expression of many men in the frame of language and knowledge reference that was current to the respective seers."

Papers in 1957 included "Glaciation and World-Wide Changes in Climate" by Wallace Broecker, "The Formation of Living Organisms from Non-Living Systems" by Walter Hearn, and "Radiocarbon Dating—A Tool in Fixing Chronology of the Last 50,000 years" by Edwin Olson.

These papers obviously constitute only a small percentage of those given over a ten year period. However, they certainly belie the claim that there was an official position on controversial issues during that period.

### Statements in Correspondence by ASA Officers

Statements by officers in the early years of the ASA also support the conclusion that there was no official anti-evolution stance. In April 1944 Alton Everest (one of the founders of the ASA and its President for the first ten years) wrote to the Executive Council members that Peter Stoner had been given permission to include the following brief paragraph on the ASA in an article written for *Moody Monthly*:

The American Scientific Affiliation is an organization of scientific men with absolute faith in God and His Word. It has no pet theories to prove but stands ready and is anxious to contribute its time in supplying the necessary scientific information to the churches.

In June 1944 Marion Barnes (ASA Secretary-Treasurer) wrote to "Members and Friends of ASA":

There is a lack of unanimity in even the conservative circles of the evangelical church of today concerning many topics such as the reconstruction theory, the flood, etc. It is not the aim of the Affiliation to espouse any particular theory, but it seems pertinent, in view of the requests for aid from Bible Institutes and authors of Sunday School literature for the Affiliation to serve as a factfinding body and to conduct a survey of the situation. . . . It is felt that a clearer understanding of the whole situation would result, enabling individuals to make their own decisions.

In October 1950 Alton Everest wrote to Executive Council members concerning an individual who had publicly condemned the ASA for failing to take the flood geology position:

As I have emphasized in the past, my feeling is that the ASA is not serving its highest purpose when it promulgates some "standard" interpretation. It may be that most of the members may incline to one belief, but the opinion of the few dissenters is an extremely valuable check and stimulus. The majority has been wrong too many times in the past to make it safe to take any other course. We should examine all sides, and allow any conclusions drawn to be those of individuals. For these reasons, I am still in favor of hearing the deluge side fairly dealt with, in our Journal, or in our meetings.

Harold Hartzler, therefore, was following the established precedent when he wrote in 1968 to a complaining ASA member:

The ASA has never taken a position on any scientific theory, contrary to what some may think. . . . We have never made a statement concerning scientific matters even though some think we should. . . . We as a group, do not believe in theistic evolution, neither do we believe in any other form of evolution. The whole problem [it] seems to me is of properly interpreting both scientific theory and the statements of Holy Scriptures.

### Statements in the *Journal* ASA by ASA Officers and Editors

We may possibly feel that statements published in the *Journal* ASA are more representative of the "official" ASA position than are informal statements such as those quoted above. Actually, there is complete consistency between the two sources.

An editorial in the December 1950 issue states that one of the main objectives of editorial policy is "to permit, within the framework of conservative theology a discussion of both sides of scientific questions on which many true Christians are known to differ." The editor also notes that "the publication of many papers in recent issues has demonstrated a striking difference in point of view."

The September 1951 issue included "The American Scientific Affiliation—The First Decade" by Alton Everest. A statement by Harley Barnes is quoted at length because Alton considered it to be "a fair expression of the prevailing attitude of the majority of the present Associates and Fellows of the ASA." That statement includes the following:

The essence of my attitude toward evolution and the Bible as a Christian geologist is that Christians should be non-evolutionary because the Bible does not give unequivocal grounds for being anti-evolutionary. . . . We are faced . . . with the realization that the Bible allows for numerous interpretations of the creation account, but our choice of "the" interpretation has been limited to those which do not conflict with accumulated scientific observations. . . . Let us not repeat the mistake of earlier Christians by forcing the Bible to speak in the language of current or recently current theory. . . . If it can be interpreted more than one way, let us admit it and when all pertinent facts are known rejoice in the Wisdom which has been revealed but until that time not understood. Perhaps the Bible suffers less from too much literal interpretation than from too much literal interpolation (3:36).

One final example will suffice. In the June 1952 issue Del Eggenberger's editorial dealt with plans for a dis-

cussion at the annual meeting on "Conflicts Within the A.S.A." He concedes that a number of members for some time had been suggesting that the ASA should have a united front on controversial issues. He responds that:

It has been the feeling of the Executive Council that this is not a proper aim of the A.S.A., rather we should attempt to present possible solutions on topics of interest to our group. We do not claim as a scientific organization to have the final answer on any given subject in the area of science and certainly we are not given to just one interpretation of Biblical statements.

After commenting that some members are inclined to accept flood geology, whereas others are wholly committed to the modern point of view, Eggenberger states:

Now it is not the policy of the A.S.A. to officially decide which is the correct point of view; rather we should investigate both as possible solutions to the subject. *The same principle holds in any other area of science (emphasis supplied).*

### Other Official Publications

In the Preface to *Modern Science and Christian Faith* (1950 edition), Alton Everest wrote that "The main function of the American Scientific Affiliation is to survey, study, and to present possible solutions. Ideas expressed in this book must not, therefore, be construed as representing the official view of the group" (p. vi). There was some uncertainty among Executive Council members as to whether the chapter on anthropology should be included, but the final decision was in the affirmative. Authors of the different chapters took very different approaches: Edwin Gedney's discussion of geology supported a progressive creationism view, William Tinkle and Walter Lammerts took an anti-evolution position in discussing biology, and William Smalley and Marie Fetzner's approach to anthropology included theistic evolution as *one possible way* of correlating human paleontology with the Scriptures.

In the Preface to *Evolution and Christian Thought Today*, Russell Mixter wrote:

the respective authors ask only that their presentations be judged without prejudice. Each of them is committed to the evangelical Christian doctrine that the world and its living members are the result of the activity of God as declared in the Holy Scriptures. They do not hold that their views are the only possible ones, but they do maintain that the information they submit is accurate, and that their interpretations are fair to both Christian and scientific principles. These principles, rather than any particular doctrine held by Christians of the past, have been their criteria of judgment (pp. 6-7).

Although probably none of the chapters can be characterized as being *completely* anti-evolutionary, James O. Buswell, III did argue against theistic evolution. The other chapters represent a wide range in the degree of acceptance of evolution as a possible mechanism used by God in the creative process.

### The Current Situation

I have been concerned here primarily with the early years of our organization because most of the statements implying an "official position" concerned that period of our development. Let us look finally at the current situation, because some of our members have

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insisted that the ASA is presently promulgating theistic (or some other form of) evolution. One member wrote to the *Journal* ASA editor and to Harold Hartzler that the *Journal* should be honest and admit that the ASA position is theistic evolution. Another person wrote that he was cancelling his membership because the ASA no longer provided a broad forum for views that were contrary to those of the *Journal* editor. However, if one reads the *Journal* at all regularly, he will know that Dick Bube has solicited dialogues between people holding contrary views. One member whose participation in such a dialogue has been solicited is unhappy with the breadth of views allowed. He has complained that his "partner" in the dialogue "cites repeatedly the literature of godless, unbelieving, materialistic scientists as the basis for his own conclusions."

The position of the *Journal* editor is shown by an answer he gave to a member who objected to the publication of a specific article with which he disagreed.

It is not a function of the *Journal* to propagate a crusade for any particular interpretation of many questions in which science and Christian faith are mutually involved. Any article, judged to be consistent with the Constitutionally-stated purposes and doctrine of the ASA and to exhibit sound scholarship in respect to factual basis and exercise of interpretation, is acceptable for publication in the *Journal*. If an author is guilty of gross scientific or exegetical error, we are confident that readers will quickly set the record straight, thereby increasing general understanding of the truth (21:93, 1969).

Further evidence that the ASA *does* provide a broad forum within the framework of our organization is the variety of papers presented at annual meetings. I referred earlier to abstracts printed in meeting programs to demonstrate that there was no official position (or even united front) in the early years of the ASA, and one can use the same method to show that there is currently no evidence of an official "pro-evolution" position.

At the 1968 meeting Robert Gentry spoke on "Cosmology, Radioactive Halos, and the Age of the Earth," and suggested that "creation by fiat should be considered as a valid cosmological model."

In 1973 S. Hugh Paine presented "The Origin of Life: A Fresh Look at What the Bible Reveals," in which he emphasized the acceptance of the Bible as a basis for understanding concerning the origin of life. "It becomes of primary importance, therefore, to examine it carefully to determine what God is trying to say to us through it."

Hugh Paine was also on the program in 1974, with a paper on "The Genesis Flood and Biblical Uniformitarianism," which dealt with the internal consistency of the Biblical record of diluvialism. He proposed a mechanism for global flooding—using data currently available in the geophysical sciences—and discussed the possible boundaries in time and space for such an eustatic ex-

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cursion. He concluded that the credibility of the Biblical record appears to be sustained by these studies, and that modification of the uniformitarian theory to include such events is needed.

In 1975 our Executive Secretary specifically invited Duane Gish to give one of the major presentations at the annual meeting, but he was unable to attend.

Certainly the evidence from materials published in the *Journal ASA* and papers presented at annual meetings contradicts a claim that the ASA currently takes any official position.

#### Summary

I am convinced that the above evidence shows unequivocally that the ASA has *never* taken an official anti-evolution (or any other) position, although there is abundant evidence that there has been considerable

pressure to do so. The only official ASA statement is the following:

(1) The Holy Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, the only unerring guide to faith and conduct. (2) Jesus Christ is the Son of God who through his atonement is the one and only Mediator between God and Man. (3) God is the Creator of the physical universe and he has made it to function according to certain laws which are the legitimate subject of man's studies and investigations. The scientific approach is capable of giving reliable information about the natural world (ASA Constitution, 1969 Revision).

I personally trust that we will continue to investigate all areas of the relationship of science to the Scriptures, and that we will never be guilty of judging a fellow Christian's commitment to Christ by that person's position on any issue about which Christians honestly disagree.

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## Scientific Theorizing and Societal Good



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*This paper discusses the problem of when to translate scientific theorizing into actual societal practice such that society will be in a state of psychological readiness and be willing to accept whatever results may come out of the scientific experimentation. One suggestion is for society to develop a system of scientific beliefs such that what is scientifically desirable is also that which is desirable for man/society. To the extent that a societal system of belief becomes thoroughly scientific, to that extent the problem of psychological readiness will be solved, for the ends of Science and Man/Society will be one and the same.*

*The problem of psychological readiness may be dissolved, but at a price that may well cost the meaning and significance of human life made in the image of God. If a society becomes thoroughly scientific in its total beliefs, it must not expect that convictions will be settled. Rather they will always be in a critical state that does not contribute to an individual/societal feeling of totality and well-being.*

## Introduction

A major question for most scientists is when to translate theory into practice such that the nature of its results is controlled and that society, to which such practices are to be applied, will be in a state of psychological readiness to accept such predicted consequences, especially if they involve changes in society's basic system of beliefs expressed in its conduct of life. To disregard societal feelings and human concerns over these matters is surely an immoral act. This question arises, perhaps, because society continues to hold beliefs which may be uninformed by knowledge (true scientifically/logically), which is the result of scientific theorizing. If society's beliefs were derived from such scientific knowledge, perhaps psychological readiness would not be a problem. Societal scientific beliefs would be supportive of scientific theorizing and of its attempt to find out if their theories are true and if true in what ways they may be considered desirable.

This paper inquires into two questions: (1) will the gap between scientific theorizing and that which is judged desirable be resolved if society holds scientific beliefs, and (2) will scientific social beliefs encourage a sense of societal stability and cohesiveness, assuming that this is a social good?

## Beliefs Based on Science

Let us envision a society where the basic beliefs are derived from scientific theorizing and knowledge. Obviously, not all beliefs would be acceptable scientifically and the task for society is to 'refine' its beliefs such that they meet the requirements of scientific knowledge. Whenever scientific theorizing is refined, such that its results are highly predictable, it is released to society for its application. The results of the applications are, of course, predicted to benefit society as a whole. Should the results, however, turn out to be wrong, even humanly destructive and undesirable, society interprets this to be characteristic of the process of theorizing—a trying and finding out with no promise of guaranteed certainty. Some risks necessarily remain, given that risk is a basic element in belief. For whether a belief is scientific or not, it never achieves apodictic certainty or else it is not a belief. But the risks involved in scientific beliefs are minimized and calculated on the basis of what is known as a result of scientific theorizing. (This calculation does not obtain where beliefs are inspired solely by the existence of a Divine Order or a personal theistic God, because His reality is independent of man.) The risks are understood and accepted by society if it is guided in its practical conduct by scientific beliefs. Society is, therefore, always ready to try out what science theorizes to be beneficial to man. Societal readiness or fear that the dignity of life might be threatened are no problems. For according to the scientific theorists, society accepts the view that it is the scientists' laboratory. When a new theory is tried out and its results are judged good by society, it itself having been a participant in the experiment, it is adopted and practiced as a part of the plan of life.

## Human Genetics

Huxley's speculation on how to improve the quality of human genetics, for example, could be tried out.<sup>1</sup> It is possible to divorce sex for love, from sex for mere

(1) *Will the gap between scientific theorizing and that which is judged desirable be resolved if society holds scientific beliefs?* (2) *Will scientific social beliefs encourage a sense of societal stability and cohesiveness?*

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procreation or breeding purposes. If such experiments indeed lead to a scientifically better genetic type of human species, and if there is also fulfillment of the human need for physical love, then it is socially adopted. Of course, the meanings of certain concepts, such as marriage, family, wife, etc. may have to be revised in order to fit new social practices. But for scientific purposes, the changes are justified and are, perhaps, insignificant when compared to the possible improvement of the genetic quality of the human race. With such improvement, new human possibilities could indeed be generated.

## Evolutionary Theory

Indirectly, perhaps, the influence of other scientific theorizing upon societal practices and human relationships is already evident. It is indirect because it cannot be shown that there is a one-to-one correlation between the scientific theorizing and new societal practices engendered by it, nor can it be shown that the particular scientific theorizing is the direct cause of such societal practices. The scientific theorizing referred to here is the biological evolutionary theory.

Grounded in scientific evidences, its practical implications for a way of life are easily accepted and implemented. Each one creates his own meaning, for life as such has no meaning in itself. The destiny of each largely depends upon one's self. The values of society are wholly man-made, hence, changing and primarily instrumental for the continuous search for the human good. Since human life shares the same basic elements as that of the lower forms of life, such as the amoeba, the paramecium, etc. somehow it is suggested that human life is not as sacred as when viewed as a creation of God, made after His own image. The sanctity of human life can be easily obscured if not missed altogether. This is not, of course, to suggest that there cannot be a totally humane attitude toward life, which may be also one of respect, of decency, of compassion for that which is human independent of a belief in God. There can be a kind of "sacredness," a "spirituality," in man which arises out of his human qualities. Nonetheless, there have certainly been those who drew, rightly or wrongly, implications from the biological evolutionary theory of life for new types of individual and societal human relationships. To repeat, this is not to say that such influences or changes can be *directly* attributed to the theory itself. But it is not impossible nor illogical to say that one's way of life, its meanings, and its activities may change when influenced by the evolutionary theory of life.

Once the theory is made the justification for certain social actions, practices, and reforms, then it ceases to be a theory. The biological evolutionary theory is not merely *believed that* but more important now *believed*

*in*. It becomes a scientific social belief which now operates as one of the principles that underlie basic practices of a way of life. The scientific belief, a necessary condition for actual practice, now displaces other beliefs that contradict it. Displaced beliefs are treated as inquiries, subjected to criticism or theorizing in order to find out if they are worth keeping, modifying, or testing. If they prove themselves acceptable to the standards of scientific knowledge, they are retained in the belief system. Now they have a right to be believed in, not because society feels deeply about them, but because they meet the demands of the rules of logic, of stubborn facts, and of human knowledge. As such, there is public agreement about them as beliefs because they are not relative to the believers but to the conditions of scientific knowledge which are independent of man.

### Refining Scientific Beliefs

Having been subjected to scientific scrutiny, the accepted beliefs form a part of the conditions of actual practice. Similarly, other beliefs will be the object of theorizing and criticism before their right to belong to the societal scientific belief system is ensured. Still other beliefs, however, failing to meet the standards of knowledge, are replaced by scientific theories which may have become beliefs or presuppositions for the purpose of action. The process of "refinement" of beliefs continues *ad infinitum*; theories are accepted as scientific beliefs, beliefs cease as beliefs and become theoretical inquiries and, in turn, are either accepted or rejected as beliefs once more, or, perhaps are rejected forever. On and on the process goes until society's belief system is completely "refined" and consists only of scientific beliefs. Such a societal belief system then is fully informed by scientific knowledge, to the extent that scientific beliefs become identical with scientific knowledge itself. What one knows is also what one believes in and is the basis of conduct in life. There are no irreducible elements and the original problem of psychological readiness stated in the beginning of this paper is now solved.

### Belief vs. Action

But, perhaps, this is too strong a claim to make. To say that there are now no irreducible elements is to say that the grounds for knowing (theoretical propositions), the grounds for believing in them, and the grounds for acting on them are identical. But, surely, this is not so. To say that society holds scientific beliefs is not to say that what society holds is scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is that which is true, and it is not a necessary condition for action. It simply is. Scientific beliefs, on the other hand, are a condition for action informed by scientific knowledge. The action, although based on scientific beliefs, is not shown to be either true or false, but is rather judged to be desirable or not, reasonable or not, etc. Likewise, saying that value judgments are scientifically informed is not to say that they are scientific statements. They remain as judgments and are assessed not as true or false statements but as sound, reasonable, sensible, meaningful, arguable, etc. judgments. The scientific theory, which is the basis of the beliefs/action, is a set of logically related propositions and is subject to questions of logic. The hypotheses it generates respond to questions of evidence. The practices drawn

from the theory or induced from the hypotheses, however, do not correspond to either logic or evidence, but to the question of desirability. The act of believing in the desirability of certain practices and practicing them are not matters of truth or falsity. One may insist that he believes in the truth of the practice because the practice is derived from a certain verified theory, for example, biological evolution (if it is verified). But saying this does not establish the truth of the practice, because truth refers to the theory, not to the practice. One asks: "Is the practice sound, reasonable, etc.?" but not "Is the practice true or false?" Of course, it is acceptable to say "Is the practice *based upon* that which is true?" Granting that scientific knowledge informs the question of the verifiability of the belief (is it true/false), of the feasibility of the practice (can it be carried out), such information, although necessary, is not sufficient to make a decision on the desirability of the practice nor does it lead necessarily to action on such a decision. The conditions for knowing, believing, and acting, (whether they be of the scientific kind or not) are not identical; the gaps between and among them remain and they must be reckoned with.

### Scientific Desirability

It may be argued that the notion of "desirability" is no longer a problem. It is also informed by scientific knowledge such that what is "desirable" is "desirable scientifically." But what does this mean? To say that an object is desirable to me means that the object has certain properties that please and satisfy me. Independent of me, such properties would not in themselves have desirable qualities. It is I, therefore, that determine what object is desirable and what object is not. Now, if we speak of "desirable scientifically," what are the desires of science? Obviously, we are not using "desires of science" in the same way as "desires of persons." Science does not have desires in the same way that people do. Rather to say that something is "scientifically desirable" is to say that something has qualities/characteristics that meet the approval of science or scientific thinking. For example, to hope that there can be different kinds of "banks" to house different human organs from which those in need of replacement of an organ may draw, may be repugnant to society, given its supposedly humane attitude toward the human person and his organs. Or, the human organs may be "farmed out" in "green houses" where they could be nurtured (kept alive) while waiting for the call of those in need of them.

There is nothing *basically* wrong about such ideas if they could be put into practice. Scientifically, the body is viewed as a machine, although admittedly complex, and its different parts, when worn out, can be replaced. Heart and kidney transplants could be only the beginning of a systematic, total program of human organ transplantation. Such a practice, if possible, is attractive to science and its purposes, among which are the continuous refinement of its techniques and methodologies such that a body of true propositions about the world, about society, and about humankind may be developed. Science has been successful, on the whole, with its attempts at knowing the world, but much less so at knowing human society and humankind. To conduct scientific experiments on the latter entities is, indeed, scientifically desirable.

Is this to say that we are treating the human person with disrespect in treating human organs like pieces of hardware that are easily replaceable or like plants that can be rooted or uprooted? Not at all. If anything, scientific knowledge teaches us to view the human body *as it is*, that is, *truthfully*, as an object that can be inquired into as thoroughly as possible such that its functions and malfunctions may be understood. With such an understanding, much of what we now know to be "incurable" diseases, even "old age," would be no longer a threat to those who want to live a long life. More important, such an understanding could possibly generate new types of human possibilities. But to view the human body, on the other hand, with scientifically false notions, with myths and superstitions, is to disrespect it. It is to encourage attitudes of physical inadequacies and frailties, thereby thwarting any notions for new potentialities for total growth.

Investing the human body with sentimental feelings prevents the study of science from knowing fully well what the human body is *all* about; hence some public "good" does not ensue. Science aims to correct societal beliefs about what is desirable and what is not. To say that something is "humanly desirable" is not to say that something is "scientifically undesirable." Rather, it is to say that it can also be "scientifically desirable." In the same manner, that something is "scientifically desirable" is not to say that it is "inhumane, degrading to the human person." "Science" and "human/humane" are not mutually exclusive possibilities. Wrong thinking has made them so.

To be scientifically desirable any practice must be in consonance with the canons and thinking of science. If a practice fails to meet the standards of science, such a practice must be either doubted, subject to further inquiry, or rejected. Any practice is justified on the ground that it is scientifically based, and, therefore, contributing to the inspirations of science. The goal is science and the fulfillment of its aims, which is nothing short of knowing everything that is true, empirically and scientifically, of the world, of human society, and of humankind. For purposes of experimenting with and testing some of its theories on problems of human society, science views society to be the *ideal* laboratory, with its members the objects of scientific experimentation.

Such a situation can, therefore, be envisioned, where the conditions of knowing, believing, and acting are completely reducible one to the other. It is a societal situation where the aim of life is to uphold science and the achievement of its goals, to the extent that life is not only scientific but, more important, science itself. "Life" and "science," implicated in each other, are one and the same.

Is this too much to ask of human society? Perhaps not, if the conviction of contemporary society is to develop and adopt a societal belief system that is thoroughly scientific.

### Scientific Belief and Societal Stability

What arguments may be made for societal scientific beliefs considering that the encouragement of a stable society is a social good? A scientific belief system is

*Scientific beliefs provide society with certain goods, but to stabilize societal beliefs is not one of them.*

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viewed as a form of human development in man's understanding of himself, his problems, and his environs, with no sanctions from an Absolute Truth or God. Scientific beliefs, like scientific knowledge, emphasize tentativeness, make no promise of being right, true, adequate for *all* problems for *all* times and for us *all*. Constant criticism and examination of them, their bases, evidences, and corresponding claims, based on new questions and forms of inquiries, are encouraged. As a result, a scientific belief system does not create a feeling of increasing stabilization of belief nor does it encourage total commitment. On the contrary, one's faith in scientific beliefs is constantly being undermined. There is only a theoretical attachment to them which could easily be suspended, replaced, or discarded altogether any time they are no longer functional or viable. One could ask: "Does it *really* matter what one believes in? Or, does it matter that one believes at all? All is uncertain and beliefs make no difference. What is the use?"

A scientific system of belief, more analytic than synthetic, leads to further questioning and criticizing, and not to the deepening of one's faith in the system. It does not lead to the cultivation of "settled convictions" or "solidarity of beliefs," but to the continuous settling and unsettling of them. Constant criticisms, which may lead to alteration of beliefs, create the loss of a sense of uniformity of sentiment which is the condition of social stability, the feeling of total well being.

Claiming justification or criterion in contemporary knowledge, scientific beliefs cannot claim a monopoly of truths/Truth. Such an orientation encourages the development of different systems of beliefs and life styles, different alternatives to values and truths, and different points of view. These differences can become extreme in their demands and radical in their insistence on certain kinds of values and behaviors which may be deemed disruptive of societal unity. After all, no one system of belief is strong enough to put down the claims of others or to show that they are completely and totally wrong, while it is completely and totally correct. Different systems of beliefs, each one threatening the viability and credibility of the other, could lead to societal divisiveness and disruptions.

The critical orientation of scientific beliefs leads also to practical doubts, suspension of action, hesitancy of conclusion, and other theoretical moods which are antithetical to the function of beliefs, which is to encourage action based on one's convictions. Scientific beliefs characterize the present academic posture which is judged by contemporary youth to be ineffectual, sterile, and irrelevant, a cop-out. Highly informed of knowledge and made critical by logic, it is impotent of action! In behaving like scientific knowledge, scientific belief fails to fulfill its function. Like scientific knowledge, it also says that because something is possibly the case, does not imply doing something about it. The motivation to

act is not a necessary condition of scientific beliefs.

Do we therefore arrive at the conclusion that societal beliefs must not be judged on whether or not they are informed by knowledge, sensible, or rational, but on whether or not they are able to maintain the stability and well-being of society? Is a stable form of life, grossly empty of reason and truth, justifiable? Not at all. The point is that a thoroughly scientific societal belief system may not be able to cope with all societal problems, the solutions to which may sometimes have to go against the rules of logic. Not all of life's problems are problems of science, although, admittedly some aspects of some of life's problems respond to the inquiries of science. To the extent that such problems in life do respond, to that extent life can be scientific. But total life, with its hopes, dreams, and aspirations, is not science. A societal belief system needs to be informed by reason and truth, but need not be thoroughly scientific to the extent that it is identical with scientific knowledge or science itself.

### Conclusion

It is true that scientific beliefs provide society with certain human goods, for example, belief in medical science, belief in forecasts of climatic conditions, belief in the "uniformity of nature," etc., but to stabilize societal beliefs is not one of them. Given their orientation to constant criticism, evaluation, and clarification, everything, including life, can be dissolved under the scrutiny of truth and logic. "One begins to feel that his bread or the salvation of his soul hangs on the fortunes of scientific and theoretical arguments."<sup>2</sup> When criticiz-

ing is allowed to alter fundamental convictions to which most are committed, then, "it is like the trembling of a solid earth," and like "moving to a new planet and the work must be begun all over again."<sup>3</sup> But for society to maintain a temporal continuity and to advance "it is necessary that beliefs should be transmitted together with problems and opportunities. Unless the burden is to fall, the young must not only grasp what the old have let go, but they must obtain the same foothold."<sup>4</sup>

It is possible for contemporary society to desire to adopt a thoroughly scientific societal system of belief, such that every societal practice is adopted because it is scientifically based. Science then is the be-all and end-all of such a society. But before such a societal posture is adopted, the price that a given society must pay must also be known. And after it is known, society must decide whether or not it is willing to pay the price in the name of scientific theorizing, scientific knowledge, and Science itself.

### REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup>Julian Huxley, *Man in the Modern World: Selected Essays*. New York: Mentor Book, 1955. See chapter on "Eugenics and Society," pp. 28-61. In modern times, the attempt at "selective breeding" was actually carried out by Heinrich Himmler's programme known as *Lebensborn*. Needless to say, Huxley and Himmler had different motives and interests. Other matters relative to Huxley's point are discussed in *Journal of American Scientific Affiliation*. Vol. 26, No. 4, December, 1974.
- <sup>2</sup>Ralph Barton Perry, *Present Philosophic Tendencies*. New York: Longmans, Green, 1929, p. 21.
- <sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 12.
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### A New Look at Liberal-Conservative Tensions

## The Struggle of the Christian Immersed in a Scientific Culture



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*This article takes a look at the struggle Christianity faces with the total immersion of our culture into a scientific, naturalistic way of thinking and perceiving. Special emphasis is given to the liberal-conservative tensions so much in evidence in all denominations with the suggestion that this conflict is the wrong battle for the Christian to fight.*

What is going on? Within the last decades, something has happened to Christianity. Its authority and the certainty of its message is called into question by the profound changes that have taken place within our culture. Both the church and our culture are in the midst of a struggle to re-evaluate what is important in life. Basic to the struggle is the overwhelming effect a scientific way of thinking has had on the minds and lives of all of us!

It began a long time ago, but its main effects are relatively recent. The scientific method has provided natural explanation for events that were previously seen as God's hand at work among us. This gradual erosion of our faith leaves us all with a sense of anxiety. How can we see God in our daily lives when there is a natural explanation for everything? It is difficult to relate to a God who has been pushed into a corner called our "spiritual lives" and is given an hour or two on Sunday in our busy schedule! The anxiety we all have in our personal faith prompts us to look for those who are responsible for shaking our faith. Thus there is a natural tendency to blame "liberal influences" or "conservative blindness" for the problems of our faith instead of realizing the crisis we all face as we try to retain a living Christianity in our highly scientific age!

#### WE ALL SEE A NATURAL WORLD

As far back as the 17th century, Western man started turning his attention to the physical world for explanations of the mysteries of the universe. The "Copernican" revolution wiped away many previous beliefs about our world and its relation to other planets. Bacteria were seen for the first time, making it easier to conceive of sickness in physical terms. The human body was subjected to minute scrutiny and the resulting discoveries changed man's view of himself.

Gradually most of the questions that required "supernatural" answers were given "natural" explanations. One by one, the movements of planets, the coming of spring, thunder, rain, and earthquakes were taken out of the realm of the supernatural. Mother nature moved in where God and his angels had reigned before.

With the discoveries of bacteria, the nervous system of the body, movement of blood through the body, and the complex chemical changes that take place within the body, sickness and even death gained a more "natural" character. Instead of witchcraft, it became the virus; instead of voodoo, it became a heart attack. Cancerous tumors replaced visitation by the Spirit of Death. The passing of a curse from generation to generation gave way to genetics and the DNA molecule. Sickness no longer called for a magic potion or exorcism, but for an operation removing diseased tissue or a drug that would kill the virus.

Now, in 1977, the "natural way" of looking at our world is deeply ingrained in our daily lives. We thank vitamins for our health; we praise new forms of fertilizer and weed control chemicals for our good crops; we shake our heads knowingly when it rains because our TV has just shown us that a low pressure center has moved in. Natural explanation is so much a part of our thinking that our Christian faith—a faith rooted in the hope of God's Acts among us—is implicitly

*There is a natural tendency to blame "liberal influences" or "conservative blindness" for the problems of our faith instead of realizing the crisis we all face as we try to retain a living Christianity in our highly scientific age.*

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called into question. The anxiety is the same for all of us—conservative, moderate, or liberal alike. Even though methods of dealing with expressing this anxiety is different, it is important to realize that the root problem is the same for all of us—the struggle to witness a supernatural faith to a natural world!

Even though it is hazardous to use these labels, for the sake of becoming very pointed, I will try to show the special struggle of both liberal and conservative thinking to express the Christian faith while remaining immersed in scientific perception and thought.

#### The Liberal Is Sensitive To Our Modern Culture

The more "liberal" thinker has usually had to confront our modern culture (e.g., the professor, large city pastor, campus pastor, or missionary) in situations that demand understanding of the thinking and ways of our age. Demons, angels, heaven and hell are concepts that do not readily fit into the life of a business man or a college student. Today's college student, for example, can find meaning in the human struggles of the psalmist and of Christ Himself (e.g., *Jesus Christ, Superstar*), but finds it hard to identify with the miraculous events of Scripture or to the traditional lofty characteristics of Biblical stories and characters.

The liberal approaches Holy Scripture with an honest attempt to emphasize the humanity of God's people, thus making easier the application of His Word to our modern situation. The Christian message is thus communicated in terms of helping the struggles a person faces in his life. The Gospel can be presented as giving a person an "O. K." feeling about himself which can affect his present life relationships.

In the effort to make God's Word "come alive" to our "natural" age, however, there is the tendency to de-emphasize the supernatural elements of Scripture so that its message will fit better with the climate of our time. Demon possession is translated into a more "natural" term, mental illness. Jonah's miraculous 3-day stay in the belly of the whale is better seen as an allegory in which God expresses the truth of His control of our lives. Thus in the effort to communicate God's Word to our scientific culture, the liberal stands in danger of explaining away the supernatural elements of Scripture—to take away the mystery of the Bible to fit its message into the 20th Century world view.

#### The Conservative is Sensitive to our Tradition

The more "conservative" thinker faces the constant need to re-affirm faith shaken by the questioning of the modern age. Sensing the anxiety of persons who are puzzled and upset with the changes within the church, the "conservative" stresses the comforting message that God's Word does not change. In the face of

the naturalism in our culture, there is a necessary and deliberate focus on the truth of God's miraculous acts as recorded in scripture.

The conservative approaches Holy Scripture in an honest attempt to affirm the supernatural elements of God's Word. Such a person rejects "natural" explanations of the miracles recorded in the Bible and affirms the historicity of such "unnatural" events as the parting of the Red Sea and Jonah's life in the whale.

But in the necessary struggle to defend the factual character of miraculous events recorded in the Bible, there is the temptation to divorce God's Word from our 20th century life. The conservative also lives in a scientific world and constantly relies on "natural" explanation for the events of his daily life. With this comes the danger of seeing miracles as something that happened only in the Bible times, making the events of Scripture somewhat "unreal" to our age. Too often this makes it necessary to separate one's life into two schizophrenic parts—the spiritual (Sunday Morning) and the secular (the rest of the week).

We can believe that Christ's resurrection from the dead was a factual, historical event, but then find it difficult to see Him rise again, daily, in our own lives. Such a faith is in danger of becoming a lifeless doctrine with its expression limited to carefully worded documents and Sunday morning rituals.

### WE ALL MAKE DECISIONS BY "WEIGHING THE FACTS"

We are constantly faced with opposing viewpoints in our life, and we often must make decisions in the face of contradictory opinions. How does one decide what car or tractor to buy? Years ago, before we became so immersed in scientific thought, "common sense" answers were passed on by parents.

But now there is a different basis for common sense. How does one decide which hybrid is best? Common sense now tells us to examine the "facts". Scientifically controlled tests by "experts" provide the data that a certain hybrid will produce a 15% greater yield per acre. These are convincing data! TV ads play on this aspect of our "common sense" every day. How can we decide which toothpaste to use? The advertisement proclaims: "Laboratory tests show that Crest reduces tooth decay 37%." These are objective data, and we are convinced by these "facts". The scientific method with its formulation of hypotheses and performing controlled experiments is so much a part of us that we do not think twice as we "look at the facts" to determine what is true.

The scientific method is a part of our decision-making as we all, liberals, moderates, and conservatives alike are caught up in "looking at the facts" to determine what is true. Here again I will become more pointed by referring to the struggle the "liberal" and "conservative" face as both utilize unwittingly the scientific method in their search for the truth of the Bible.

### The Liberal Struggles To Understand Biblical Culture

The historical-critical method of approaching the Bible is based on the scientific method of hypothesis testing via data collection. Using this method is a valid way to better understand the meaning of God's Mes-

sage to the Israelites and other people of Biblical times. Certainly their culture is different from our own. Also, the Hebrew and Greek words and phrases can become much richer in their meaning by looking at their *Sitz im Leben*. To develop and test hypotheses about the cultural setting of the events recorded in the Bible is important for the on-going study of the Word of God.

The danger to the Christian lies in the scientific assumption that one can arrive at *truth* through this method—that one can uncover the real historical truth by getting the "facts" straight. In the struggle to get at the historical "kernel" of the event, God's message to us can get lost. Truth is defined by the validity of the evidence gathered to support the historical reality of an event recorded in Holy Scriptures. Estimates of probability, rather than the Holy Spirit, convince one of the "truth" of the events of the Bible.

### The Conservative Struggles To Affirm The Truth Of Scriptures

With the pressures of this age to question all authority, the conservative struggles to keep the Bible from coming under such attack. To affirm that the Holy Scriptures are God's Word and not to be treated lightly is essential for our faith. It is very important to constantly check our beliefs against the teachings of God's Word.

The method of establishing a doctrine of the Bible by putting together a series of "proof texts" is also highly influenced by the scientific method of data collection. To see God's Word as page after page of "facts" to be used as data to back up some venerable teaching of the church—as in the stance against ordination of women—is quite similar to a chemical engineer gathering evidence to back up the claims of his product!

The temptation of this approach to Holy Scripture is to make faith equivalent to carefully reasoned and documented statements. Again the Holy Spirit is not needed! It is important to affirm that Holy Scripture is the authority for our faith and life, but the source of our faith is not God's Word! The Word is a means of grace. The source is the Holy Spirit who works faith in our hearts through the Word and Sacraments.

### WE ALL STRUGGLE TO BE OBJECTIVE

Perhaps the most dangerous and diabolical effect a scientifically conditioned mind-set has in undermining our faith is its effect on our values. This effect is so subtle that it is hard to see the danger. It is so pervasive that it is related to everything that touches our awareness! The mind of Western man tries to separate what is "out there" from what is "in here." One can use the term objective consciousness to describe this phenomenon, and the term can be best explained by reference to scientific thought.

In order to run an experiment the scientist must divorce his own feelings and thoughts from the conduct of the experiment. Expressions like: "Well, I feel that this product is better" or "Just trust my instinct that . . ." are taboo. The personality of the scientist or his own feelings are not important and must be carefully controlled and eliminated. What is important are the "facts" or hard data that the experiment pro-

duces. With this approach to reality we learn to value "data" and "facts", and we tend to see events as realities in and of themselves.

Our view of history in 1977, therefore, is based on our style of "objective consciousness." As with an historical probe of Watergate, events that "actually happened" are the important "data". History is reduced to re-constructing the "facts." Anything that is non-factual (like the hopes, fears, feelings and visions of people) is judged inferior and unimportant in this view of history.

Such immersion into "objective consciousness" tends to divorce one's private feelings and personal faith from the events that happen in our lives. To go to church on Sunday (a "fact") can become more important than to have a deep trust and love for Christ (a feeling or hope). What a person writes down or what is tape recorded becomes more important than the total witness of his life and the ongoing personal statement of his faith.

Our view of the history of God's people is also affected by this objective value system. The recorded events in the Bible may be seen as important insofar as they are a record of "facts". This approach to Scripture is harmful because God's Word is reduced to objective events. Again, all of us, liberals, moderates, and conservatives, are caught up in this view of history. We all struggle to be objective.

### **The Liberal Responds To A Need For Good Scholarship Of The Bible**

Good scholarship has contributed to our understanding of Biblical times. Its value in giving us new insight into the meaning of the Bible should not be under-estimated. The process of good scholarship, however, is also a struggle to be objective—a struggle to eliminate personal bias and pre-judgment in one's approach to a text. The Bible must be seen as a book of objective history existing apart from the scholar's personal life and experience. The Bible can then be subjected to scholarly analysis to determine the "truth" of the events recorded there and at this point ceases to be the unique "living word."

Questions of authorship and the historicity of Adam and Eve, for example, become important questions to be decided in the same manner questions about the history of Watergate are decided—by objective scholarship. The Bible is inevitably subjected to questioning, and the "reality" of its history is determined by objective analysis. The faith of the analyst becomes less important than his scholarly arguments.

### **The Conservative Responds To The Need To Affirm The Authority Of The Bible**

The Bible is a unique book for Christians and its authority as a revelation of God is a necessary element of our faith. Any questioning of this authority is harmful to faith. The conservative responds to modern scholarship with the necessary caution that this is a *Holy* book.

It is, however, at this point that the argument of the conservative is bound up in modern consciousness that values objectivity. For anything to be perfect, it must not contain errors. An error, as anyone today knows, is a discrepancy in the facts! But inerrancy is

*Our struggle must be with anti-Christian forces in our thinking and our way of life and not with each other.*

a new term, originating within the last century, which signals the importance of "getting the facts straight." It is a term growing out of scientific thought and related to our modern struggle to be objective.

In scientific experiments, an error or contradiction calls the conclusion into question—its assertions are not seen as true. For those immersed in such a scientific view, truth is equated with inerrancy! To suggest that Jesus erred in ascribing authorship is to call the truth of God's word into question! The Bible is then no longer reliable to the modern "objective" mind.

But is the truth of the Bible to be judged by our modern values? Was it more important for Jesus to "get his facts straight" or to communicate His message to the non-scientific mind of that age? To suggest that the differences in Biblical records must be denied to preserve the validity of God's word is to subject the truth of Holy Scripture to our modern, objective value system. Differences in the synoptic accounts can be seen as different ways these authors had of expressing their faith with each "contradictory" account being true.

Facts in scientific experiments are unemotional, objective entities gathered to support a rational theory. Faith in Jesus is an emotional, subjective commitment based in the work of the Spirit and cannot be validated or rejected by scientific consciousness!

### **SIDE EFFECT — MORAL ISSUES**

Even though consideration of morality is not specifically part of the theological issues involved here, the effect of scientific values shows up there also. The basic temptation facing both liberals and conservatives is to define morality in such a way that their own actions are justified!

### **Liberal Morality: Danger of Rationalization**

The liberal approaches moral decisions with the necessary concern for the persons involved. He recognizes that each situation is different and that to operate by the principle of love requires that one understand all of the elements of the dilemma facing the person. In short, he recognizes that moral decisions are usually not simple, black and white judgments, but require careful weighing of many considerations. One's decision must relate (be relative to) the unique characteristics of the situation.

One of the side effects of scientific thought is the constant questioning of authority in the quest for truth. In other words, just because Aristotle, Galileo or Dr. Spock said something doesn't make it true. The scientific mind will accept a statement only if it is backed up by "hard data". Such relativism shows up in all thinking and is expressed in liberal thought by suggesting that statements by Luther, Aquinas or St. Paul regarding moral actions are relative to their day. Hence, for example, the view that women should not be ordained is relative to the customs of the New Testament era. Putting women into positions of author-

ity over men truly might have caused offense and hindered the spread of the Gospel in that day, but such a view is seen as irrelevant today.

The danger of this relative way of thinking is its ability to justify any actions or life style! Extra-marital or pre-marital sexual activity can be justified as valid expressions of warmth and intimacy which are helpful to the other person. Drinking and drug usage can be "justified" as making it possible to relate better to others. Any thought or behavior can be rationalized in this manner and all of one's actions can be justified. *Sin is relative and forgiveness is not necessary.*

### Conservative Morality: Danger of Definition

The conservative approaches moral decisions with the recognition that the basis for our Christian life is in the witness of the Bible. Its guidelines and examples are the authority for our moral judgments. The conservative realizes how easy it is to stray from the source of our morality and constantly struggles to re-define and clarify God's will for our lives.

One of the side effects of scientific thought, however, is to suggest that there is a clear line between what is true and not true, what is real and not real, what is fact and what is fiction. The reality that exists "out there" is definable in concrete terms. The I.B.M. Corporation is either in the black or in the red.

This type of objective thinking lies behind the attempt to define morality entirely in terms of "right" and "wrong" actions. Abortion and homosexuality are judged as wrong *per se*. These and other issues are decided by reference to "data" (sufficient numbers of proof texts). The church's task is seen in terms of upholding the "right" definition of morality.

The danger of this approach to morality is *the same* as the danger of liberal thinking! Since I do not engage in homosexual behavior and have not had an abortion, I am not as sinful as those who do! I can justify my own actions by defining morality in terms of acts that I do not do. I am not brought to my knees in confession, and Christ's forgiveness loses its immediacy for me. I become good at pointing out the sins of abortionists, drug users, etc., but fail to see my lack of love and my own deteriorating relationship with Christ. Forgiveness is not necessary because I am "justified" by my own good life.

### STARTING POINT: ON OUR KNEES!

Our sinful human nature prompts us to define sin in such a way that we are self-justified and prompts us to see the danger facing the church in the erroneous theology of other persons. Perhaps the danger facing the church is not "out there" in the heretical or power-hungry actions of others, but is "in here" in the powerful anti-Christ forces that exist in our own minds because we live immersed in a scientific culture. The forces are subtle and pervasive, and even more diabolical because they are part of the structure of our consciousness, hence almost impossible to see.

In the face of this possibility, power politics, heresy hunting and rebellion against authority miss the root of the problem and may only serve further the Devil's purpose of splitting us apart from Christ and from each other as His children.

The starting point is the beam in our own eye! The

force that constantly succeeds in moving Christ from the center of our life is real! The Devil does all in his power to keep God's Word from affecting our lives—by calling its authority into question or by reducing it to a "fact book" that exists "out there." His attempt to nullify the work of the Holy Spirit is real and constant.

From this starting point and with clear recognition of our limitations, we can approach the twofold task of the Church in her on-going study of theology. The first task falls to the conservative mind: to keep strong and pure the witness and teachings of Scripture. To keep God's Word from becoming watered down as each new age struggles to relate to God's message takes conservative men who are not afraid to point to the dangers of new theological formulations. The conservative realizes how easily the "stumbling block" of the Gospel can be explained away by conforming God's Word to the theories and scholarship of the day! The church that loses the purity of her message and fails to stand in awe of the holy, transcendent, inspired Word of God will wake up to find that she no longer has a unique message to spread. Christianity becomes indistinguishable from other philosophies and religions. Pray for the strength and forcefulness of the conservative mind in its task to keep God's Word unique!

But there is also a second task that is essential for the Christian Church in each age, and this task falls to the liberal mind. Especially in our age of accelerated change, the words, thoughts and customs of our culture shift at an alarming rate. A church that ignores such change will find it difficult to confront the lives of people with a statement of the Law and Gospel. The task of the liberal mind is to gain an understanding of the changing world we live in and then speak God's Word to the people living in the changed age. The liberal mind must constantly test out new ways of expressing God's Word so that it can take root and bear fruit in the lives of Christians in 1977! Pray for the strength and creativity of the liberal mind in the task of keeping God's Word *alive*.

The education of ministerial students sharpens the need for both conservative and liberal thought. A thorough grounding in the study of God's Word, heightened by study of Greek and Hebrew, and a serious study of the Confessions and the traditions of the Church are the contribution of the conservative mind. A strong conservative thrust in his education gives the ministerial student a foundation for his faith and doctrine, making him stand in awe before the inspired Word and the Spirit-led confessions of this Word in the history of the church.

A thorough grounding in the liberal arts, with serious study of our changing culture is the contribution of the liberal mind. This thrust in his education gives the ministerial student a foundation for relating God's Word to the people of our day.

The conservative thrust by itself runs the danger of transcendence. God's Word is put into the box of pure doctrinal formulation and its truth remains "out there"—apart from the lives of His people. The liberal thrust by itself runs the danger of relativism. God's Word is re-formulated in the thought and custom of the culture with the loss of its uniqueness and "holiness."

In a sense, this tension is expressed in Christ him-

self. He is both true God and true man. When the church stresses too strongly the divinity of Christ, his transcendence makes it difficult for people to relate to Him. Ritual and proper doctrinal formulation become the major concerns. On the other hand, when the church stresses too strongly the humanity of Christ, its mes-

sage is reduced to humanism and social activism.

The Christian Church must live in this creative tension and ever seek new expression of its witness while keeping firmly rooted in the holy Word of God. Our struggle must be with the anti-Christian forces in our thinking and our way of life and *not* with each other!

### Dialogue

## Is There a Christian Economic System?



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In recent years we have found ourselves in the throes of one economic crisis after another and some pessimists suggest it may become as serious as the Great Depression of the 1930's. If we attempt to bail ourselves out by massive deficit financing, we may easily destroy the dollar through inflation, which may in the end be even worse than what happened forty or fifty years ago and all that followed therefrom. If the global tragedy called World War II was, even in part, the consequence of the economic blunders of the 1920's and 30's, the subject should be of interest, particularly, if we are moving toward "... some catastrophe corresponding, in effect if not in form, to the ruin of 1929 and all that followed from it to sour the very soil and to murder thirty million people."<sup>1</sup> Since this is not a new problem, it appears that we have been rather negligent in not focusing greater attention upon it long ago.

Yet any one who suggests laissez-faire capitalism as the Christian and constructive answer to our present dilemma will probably be laughed out of court. Was not Cain a capitalist and the Good Samaritan a socialist? Still it is my contention that the New Deal was a calamity and unnecessary, and that the philosophy of the Welfare State is fallacious in theory and has proven disastrous in practice (I do not blame F. D. R. for the

long years of Republican protective tariffs which finally destroyed our international trade and hence made "plowing under cotton and killing little pigs" seem necessary; I blame him only for not making a clean break with our tragic past and starting over right). As I write, we are teetering on the brink of disaster, and larger doses of New Deal economics will not deliver us, but hasten our ruin. Let us look back in history and see how other people handled their problems in brighter days when things went at least half way right.

As is well known, Adam Smith published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. It would no doubt be unfair to call this classic a textbook in Christian capitalism. It is also unfair to say, as did a prominent evangelical recently, that "... Adam Smith, optimistically holding to fixed natural economic laws, did not realize that sin would promote greed. . . ."<sup>2</sup> Even a cursory reading of *The Wealth of Nations* would convince, it would seem, anyone that Smith mistrusted just about everybody. For instance, he tells us that "People of the same trade seldom meet together, even for merriment and diversion, but the conversation ends in a conspiracy against the public. . . ."<sup>3</sup> He had no more confidence in big business than he did in tradesmen: "The government of an exclusive company of merchants is," he wrote, "perhaps, the worst of all governments. . . ."<sup>4</sup> Although

he didn't want business men running the government, he had little confidence in the politicians either: "The violence and injustice of the rulers of mankind is an ancient evil, for which, I am afraid, the nature of human affairs can scarce admit of a remedy."<sup>5</sup> While many of those today who are on the political "Right" are anarchists, often consciously and militantly so, it should be obvious that Adam Smith was not. He was convinced that the government should have three functions:<sup>6</sup> defend the frontiers with military force, if need be; provide police and administer justice within the state; and maintain a few services which could not easily be supplied by business. Perhaps the best way to explain what Smith really meant is to say that, if I were a farmer, I would have the right to produce any quantity of any legitimate commodity and sell it in any honest way—and the same goes for everyone else in his respective business, trade or profession. It is interesting to note that while we seem to regard the task of keeping us all prosperous as the primary assignment of government, Smith did not consider this proper. Nevertheless, he believed in government, although he thought it should be a "simple frugal affair," as Thomas Jefferson phrased it. It should be obvious that he believed in limited government, not out of an unbounded faith in human nature, but because he trusted no one very far, including the politicians. It would appear, that in practice at least, he was not very far from the Christian doctrine of natural depravity, although no one, to my knowledge, has classified him as an evangelical. I am sure he would be best described as a deist.

To understand "the obvious and simple system of natural liberty" which Adam Smith believed in and promoted, it is necessary to know something of the background out of which his thinking grew. Not too far in the past was Isaac Newton, who overawed his contemporaries much as Einstein did the last generation. As Bernhard<sup>7</sup> wrote, "The majesty of Newton's conception of a harmonious universe ruled by immutable, divine laws was expressed in Pope's couplet:"

Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night.  
God said, "Let Newton be!" and there was light.

Newton, of course, was a physicist and mathematician, but closer in time and subject matter to Adam Smith was William Blackstone<sup>8</sup> who introduced his famous *Commentaries on the Laws of England* with the assertion that human laws have no validity, if contrary to the Higher Law, "dictated by God Himself." Although these words were published in 1765, a little more than a decade before *The Wealth of Nations* appeared, the concept of a Higher Law, the Natural Moral Law, goes back to Cicero, the Roman orator, and the Greek Stoics before him (and, of course, Moses and the Prophets long before the rise of Greek philosophy). The related concept of a "harmonious universe," to quote Bernhard again, was popularized by William Paley in a book published just after 1800. To Paley design in nature presupposes an omnipotent and omniscient Designer; he and his enthusiastic disciples found evidences of God's handiwork everywhere. Indeed, the Royal Society<sup>9</sup> eventually produced a twelve volume study showing the marvels of God's creation in a universe "where all things work together for good." One would judge that these essays were mostly biology and re-

lated topics, dedicated to the proposition that the great Architect of the universe had done His work wisely and well. However, Frederic Bastiat,<sup>10</sup> a famous French economist, published a book, *Economic Harmonies*, in 1850 which sought to prove that there were no natural or necessary conflicts between individuals, classes, or nations, certainly not in the long run; that all things could work together for good, if we were wise enough, patient enough, and good enough to know and follow what the Lord intended for us. This was a far cry from Social Darwinism—"Be merciful and you die"—soon to be popularized by Herbert Spencer. It is interesting to note that the classic free trade era in Europe after 1850 was a remarkably peaceful period as compared with the last sixty-five years of human history. Was this coincidental?

Conservative Christians today are often accused of having a "do-nothing" social policy, but this was not true of evangelicals two centuries ago. In the midst of the half century of Wesley's popular ministry, an obscure Englishman, Granville Sharp, met an ailing and wounded slave on the streets of London. The unfortunate servant had been severely beaten and turned out to die. Out of this grew the abolition movement, which freed the slaves in England in 1772, stopped the slave trade in British ships after 1807, and freed the slaves on the plantations in English colonies in 1834 (this they accomplished without a war too). In spite of the attempts by contemporary economic determinists, such as Eric Williams,<sup>11</sup> to prove that slavery withered away rather spontaneously (with a little help from Wilberforce and the abolitionists) because it had ceased to be profitable, there is abundant evidence, as J. C. Furnas<sup>12</sup> points out, that slave smuggling into our South was common and very profitable up until the Civil War. Furnas, it should be added, had little sympathy for evangelical reformers, such as Sharp and Wilberforce.<sup>13</sup> The recent and highly controversial study, *Time on the Cross*,<sup>14</sup> suggests that slavery was a viable economic institution. It is interesting to note that during the great debates over slavery while the issue was being fought out, first at the King's Bench (the British "Supreme Court" freed the slaves in England in 1772) and later in Parliament from 1787 to 1833, the question of profit did come up, but the abolitionists insisted that "a Christian country should be glad to give up profits which are made out of human shame and misery."<sup>15</sup> This is capitalism with a conscience; making money is legitimate, but when profit making and God's Law are in conflict, as they may be in the short run, choose the right, "For what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world . . ." (Mark 8:36).

When the English reformers were finally finished with slavery in British territory in 1834, they found plenty more that needed fixing. Perhaps the most conspicuous change in the next dozen years, and one that had profound economic consequences, was the famous Repeal of the Corn Laws. The Corn Laws were the British "farm program," a complicated scheme to keep out foreign grain and maintain higher agricultural prices than a free and open market would provide. There was nothing new or unusual about these economic interventions by the government; the several European nations had long been rigging their markets in favor of powerful pressure groups, a practice that Adam

Smith had condemned as being detrimental to the public welfare. A word of explanation is probably necessary at this point: many Americans, knowing that life was less complicated in the 1890's, extrapolate backward in time and assume that things must have been quite free and easy a few hundred years ago. Quite the contrary was true. The French and Spanish governments, for instance, were past masters at the art of controlling the economy a few centuries ago and James Michener,<sup>16</sup> for one, believes the mighty power of Spain was destroyed in this way, that Spain committed suicide—a proposition we in the United States would do well to ponder. It was to the British version of these same economic interferences that English reformers now addressed themselves. The Anti-Corn-Law League was organized and the propaganda war quickly went into high gear. From the beginning the League tried to make it clear that their "organization was established on the same righteous principle as the Anti-Slavery Society."<sup>17</sup> The campaign became a holy war: how could anyone seek to keep food needlessly scarce and expensive when people were hungry and even starving? "A great conference of ministers of religion at Manchester . . . led to a diffusion of repeal ideas from scores of pulpits."<sup>18</sup> The conspicuous leaders of the movement were Richard Cobden and John Bright, both textile manufacturers and evangelical Christians. Bright, a devout Quaker, "refused to separate the spheres of morality and politics,"<sup>19</sup> and got his free trade principles from the Bible. It was this moral earnestness in an England which still took the Scriptures very seriously—plus the massive tragedy of the Irish Potato Famine—which brought the Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and free trade in general in the next decade or so. It is interesting to note that the French economist, Frederic Bastiat, became the philosopher of the League during the campaign. Bright and Cobden liked his harmonious economics better than that "dismal science"<sup>20</sup> inherited from Thomas Malthus. His doctrines fit in better with their ideas of the goodness and wisdom of God. Cynical economic determinists have dismissed Bright and Cobden's pious pretensions as hypocrisy (or self delusion); after all, manufacturers stood to gain by open markets. This they knew and proclaimed loudly during the controversy, but the accusation of bad faith is unfair. When the Crimean War came, both opposed it bitterly and on principle, although they knew the war was popular and that this would mean political suicide for them. During the American Civil War, Bright favored the North and worked mightily to keep England neutral, although, as a cotton manufacturer, he knew his self interest lay with the South.<sup>21</sup> Although he objected strongly to Northern protective tariffs, he felt that human freedom was more important than free trade. And much more could be said, if space permitted. It is a pity that

we know so little about the accomplishments of these Christian statesmen. We could learn much from them too: they believed in freedom under law (God's Law), Christian stewardship and personal responsibility. They were also men of compassion and were concerned for their fellow men.

Perhaps the best way to sum up the accomplishments of these Christian statesmen is to take a wee glimpse at their age as it appeared in 1882 in the *Spectator*: "Britain as a whole was never more tranquil and happy. No class is at war with society or the government; there is no disaffection anywhere, the Treasury is fairly full. . . ." <sup>22</sup> Now substitute "today" and "the U.S.A." for "Britain" and "1882" in the above quotation. If "the proof of the pudding" is at least partly "in the eating," just perhaps our rude forefathers could teach us something, if we would but listen.

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Many Christians wholeheartedly endorse the position that capitalism is a form of economics whose precepts are in accordance with biblical teaching. They contend it is the force that made America the great nation she is today, but unfortunately we are abandoning the economic principles of our founding fathers for the seductive allurements of socialism. As evangelical publicist James Hefley laments: "The cherished American free enterprise system and its ideological ally, the Protestant work ethic" has received "the biggest black eyes" for our current economic ills. College students are being led astray by professors and textbooks that "acclaim socialism as a better system" and "argue the advantages over capitalism, of a socialistic system."<sup>1</sup>

The now defunct magazine *Christian Economics* has perhaps been the most forthright spokesman for the position that laissez-faire capitalism (more accurately, economic individualism) is Christian. Editor H. Edward Rowe once wrote: "The right to private property is established by all Biblical prohibitions against coveting and stealing. . . . Where the Scriptural concept of private property is upheld, men are economically free and capitalism exists."<sup>2</sup> Brushing aside objections by an evangelical critic, Rowe asserted:

Those who make light of capitalism, even in subtle ways, are undermining freedom. Men who do not have the privilege of free exchange in the market place are not free men. In a very profound and meaningful sense, Jesus Christ died to purchase freedom for enslaved men. . . . The spiritual freedom which is available through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is the basis of all freedoms in the social and economic realm.<sup>3</sup>

In a persuasive manner the advocates of laissez-faire capitalism read their principles into the Ten Commandments.<sup>4</sup> The First Commandment "you shall have no other gods before me," it is said, downgrades the state and its responsibility to maintain community. The only alternative to individualism is collectivism, where man is exploited by his fellows. The Mosaic injunction against stealing makes "the power of ownership" absolute—black or white, "I own a thing or I don't." Any attempt at redistributing wealth in an equitable fashion through government action or taxation procedures is "Robin Hood justice, in which the rich are robbed and the poor share in the loot."<sup>5</sup>

Such people have their biblical proof texts. The Lord your God "is he who gives you power to get wealth" (Deut. 8:18) sustains the right of the rich to be rich. "You always have the poor with you" (Mt. 26:11) and "Blessed are the poor, for yours is the kingdom of God" (Lu. 6:20) affirm poverty as a part of God's moral order and suggest he will take care of their needs in due time. The debacle of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 4:32–5:11) proves the early church had missed the will of God in attempting to establish a collectivist economy. Paul's statement, "If any one will not work,

let him not eat" (II Th. 3:10) is a condemnation of the welfare state idea.

Some claim the parables illustrate a capitalist conception of economic life. The sower of the tares (weeds) committed the immoral act of devaluing another's possessions. (Mt. 13:24-30) The treasure hidden in the field portrays a person motivated by profit to expend freely his existing wealth in order to acquire a larger amount. (Mt. 13:44) The account of the laborers in the vineyard acknowledges the right of a person to do as he wishes with his property. Since the master had "contracted" to pay the going wage, those who worked all day suffered no injustice. (Mt. 21:33-41) The story of the talents teaches that ability is the reason for inequality in personal possessions. (Mt. 25:14-30)<sup>6</sup>

Such an effort to establish a Scriptural basis for laissez-faire capitalism is bound to be self-defeating. One can just as easily argue that capitalist values are condemned by the Ten Commandments. Substantial portions of the Pentateuch, poetic literature, and prophetic writings of the Old Testament deal with the just treatment of the economically disadvantaged. The teachings of Jesus and the exemplary actions of the early church underline the importance of human compassion and concern for others.

In actuality, many features of the system run at cross purposes to Christianity. Let us look at these more closely. The capitalist emphasis on *individualism* is much at odds with the biblical teaching, stressing community and the individual's role as a part of the larger group. The Old Testament conceives of God and man in a social relationship, and the covenants between Yahweh and his people underscore this theme of community. The dangers of individualism with its glorification and isolation of self can be seen in the repeated urgings for Israel to turn away from the pursuit of personal wealth and power and to renew the covenant of social justice and communal obligations. In the New Testament we see the selfless Jesus dedicating himself in suffering love to the formation of a new people and the Apostles establishing and nurturing church communities where the common good in all aspects of life was promoted.

Contrast this with the practice of modern capitalism which fosters the kind of individualism interested only in maximizing profits instead of that which resists group tyranny and is concerned with personal welfare. Rather than arguing that the abuses of society should be corrected so underprivileged people could also experience individual freedom, the capitalist retreats to the logic of social Darwinism. Although American businessmen usually have explained their success in terms of self-help, hard work, and Christian virtue rather than the Darwinian struggle for existence and survival of the fittest,<sup>7</sup> Richard Hofstadter ably demonstrates that entrepreneurs "accepted almost by instinct"

## IS THERE A CHRISTIAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM?

the Darwinian concepts that seemingly portrayed the condition of their existence. In 1889 Andrew Carnegie wrote concerning the "law of competition" that however much we may object to its apparent harshness: "It is here; we cannot evade it; no substitutes for it have been found; and while the law may sometimes be hard for the individual, it is best for the race, because it insures the survival of the fittest in every department." Or there is the revealing remark once made by the prominent Baptist layman John D. Rockefeller before a Sunday school group:

The growth of a large business is merely a survival of the fittest. . . . The American Beauty rose can be produced in the splendor and fragrance which bring cheer to its beholder only by sacrificing the early buds which grow up around it. This is not an evil tendency in business. It is merely the working-out of a law of nature and a law of God.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, capitalism places far too much emphasis upon *materialism*. The goal of life is to make money and accumulate possessions. The market place is deified as the controlling force in economic relationships, and people have no value as created beings apart from their economic functions. The biblical mandate to seek first the kingdom of God is replaced by the quest for a complacent, comfortable life with little or no regard for the needs of others or the cultivation of spiritual values.

Lacking in *laissez-faire* capitalism with its impersonal free market mechanism is a genuine concern for human beings as people. The Scriptures teach that "the laborer deserves his wages" (Lu. 10:7), but according to an articulate free enterprise spokesman, Southern Presbyterian minister John R. Richardson, this means:

The only just standard that men have to determine the worth of a man's labor is the market's demand. In a free society reward is based upon production, and production is evaluated by the market. . . . His service to mankind we can only determine by the market, while his service to God will be fully rewarded at last only by God.<sup>9</sup>

This would harmonize well with the "iron law of wages" popularized by the early nineteenth century classical economist David Ricardo which held that a laborer's actual pay could not rise above the minimum subsistence level for any prolonged period because the usual increase in population and the price of foodstuffs would force wages back to the "natural" level. In other words the *laissez-faire* system doomed a person to perpetual poverty.

Do not forget that the same advocates of *laissez-faire* in Britain who secured the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 were also responsible for the New Poor Law of 1834. This measure was based on the capitalistic principle that anything, including public charity, which interfered with the natural law of supply and demand was undesirable. The result was the establishment of prison-like workhouses for paupers where families were separated, men assigned to petty, menial tasks, and the barest minimum of food, clothing, and shelter provided. It was assumed that pauperism was in most cases culpable, and indigency was due to personal weakness. Improvement could be effected by individual effort, if the person only had the necessary will and determination.<sup>10</sup> The grim, forbidding atmosphere of the work-

house was designed to provide that motivation. Yet, this inhuman secular approach to the desperate situation of the victims of industrial society hardly misses the mark any farther than the opinion expressed by Carl McIntire and shared by a great many evangelicals who otherwise reject his controversial political views: "The best remedy for poverty is the Word of God."<sup>11</sup>

Capitalism can also be faulted for its *selfishness*, that is, people are free to do with their wealth and property as they see fit. As the well-known Christian philosopher Rousas Rushdoony puts it: "The right to property is a God-given right. Ownership is evidence of work and character. Property gives power to man and the family. It is God's will, clearly declared in Scripture, that man possess, develop, and use land and personal property, under God."<sup>12</sup>

This ignores a large body of biblical teaching that wealth is given so that it may be used responsibly, for the benefit of one's neighbor. Ownership is relative, not absolute, and the poor have a claim upon the affluent person's possessions. (Deut. 15:7-8) The prophet Amos' incisive critique of the abuses of riches underscores the point that it is not so much the amount of one's wealth that matters as the method in which it is acquired and utilized. Passages like Proverbs 30:8-9 suggest that the best thing in life is a modicum of this world's goods, since affluence and poverty alike carry the danger of idolizing material possessions.

The experience of the industrial revolution makes it quite clear we should not expect a person of means to look out for the interests of both his neighbor and society in general. The noted British public figure and evangelical layman, Sir Frederick Catherwood, reminds us that the government of necessity had to undertake the regulation of business.

Though the tremendous power which was being developed by the Industrial Revolution could and did work for the good of humanity, there could be no security that that was what it would do unless it was brought under conscious discipline, and that discipline could only be imposed by the assumption by the public of constantly increasing discretionary powers.<sup>13</sup>

This selfishness is revealed by the amazing disparities in personal income that exist in countries with capitalistic economic systems in spite of the great wealth they produce. For instance, the top 20% of families in the United States receive 42% of the national income and the upper 5% get 19.6% of the total. The bottom 20% receive only 5%.<sup>14</sup> Free market economists bitterly protest all expansion of social services as a socialistic redistribution of wealth, yet the amount allocated for defense and national security matters in the federal budget consistently is four to five times that laid out for items like education, programs for the needy, housing, and health. And then there is the global aspect of income maldistribution—the difference between the industrialized nations of the northern hemisphere and the developing countries of the south.

It is apparent that *laissez-faire* capitalism, although its contributions are numerous, significant, and often meritorious, must be modified or even replaced by a kind of system that will insure a wider measure of social and economic justice. Perhaps this will require some form of democratic socialism, or maybe it can be done through a substantial revamping of our present

political and economic order. I would suggest guidelines for Christian action in this regard.

First, Christians should do all they can to *make society more righteous*. They should insist that there be an adequate minimum standard of care for those unable to support themselves—youths, the infirm, mothers with dependent children, the elderly. The absolute right of every able-bodied, adult man and woman to gainful employment should be guaranteed. Equality of opportunity must also be upheld. All the wonderful virtues of hard work, integrity, honesty, and thrift are meaningless if the social system blocks an individual's movement at the very beginning just because of race, sex, or social class standing. In other words the Christian is obligated to take a stand on the side of *justice* for all people.

Second, believers *must view the government as a positive force* for the achievement of social and economic justice. It is the only agency with enough power to counteract the giant combines which characterize modern capitalism. It can force businesses to pay more attention to the human needs of their employees, prevent them from plundering the environment for the sake of quick, short-run profits, and guarantee the protection of consumers' rights. Government action is needed to insure minimum living standards and to bring about a more equitable distribution of income.

It is not enough that Christian citizens actively participate in public life, because even status quo conservatives advocate that. Rather, Christians must bring to their involvement the proper kind of values—above all, a radical commitment to justice for all people and the recognition that “human rights” must at times take precedence over “property rights.” They must be flexible and innovative, willing to experiment with different political and economic schemes, as they search for one that might benefit larger segments of the population than the present order seems to be doing.

We should not ignore the risks that exist in this. There are powerful vested interests who will resist any sort of change that jeopardizes their preeminent social and economic standing. It will be difficult to

sidestep the cumbersome governmental bureaucracies which grow like cancers on the body politic, throttling and choking out imaginative approaches to helping people. There is always the danger of swinging too far toward the opposite pole of a depersonalizing collectivism that submerges and tyrannizes the individual in a manner similar to what capitalism does to the poor. Still, if we wish to “let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everlasting stream” and to show forth our faith by our works, we must go forth in trust, letting our lights so shine before men that they may see our good works and give glory to the Father in heaven.

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## WHERE AMERICA MISSED THE WAY

Edward Coleson

In the spring or summer of 1933 a minister whom I know got up behind the pulpit one Sunday morning and condemned the new “farm program” of the Secretary of Agriculture, Henry A. Wallace. He said that in a world where millions of people were cold and hungry that the policy of “plowing under cotton and killing little pigs” was wicked. One of the members who was busy helping FDR with the New Deal severely reprimanded his pastor. He told him to “preach the Gospel and stay out of politics.” Yet, if the practice of artificially reducing the production of food in a hungry world is not a moral question, there are no moral questions. I wouldn't want to defend this policy

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The powerful National Association of Manufacturers declared some years ago that our “private enterprise system and our American form of government are inseparable and there can be no compromise between a free economy and governmentally dictated economy without endangering our political as well as our economic freedom.”<sup>1</sup> The assumption here is that individual freedom is being squashed by the growth of a hierarchical, bureaucratic state and thus we need to return to an earlier day when government seemingly was restricted to those few functions which were necessary to preserve the greatest measure of individual freedom. This evokes, nostalgically, the Jeffersonian imagery of

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before the Judge of all the earth. Would you? Nevertheless, the Christian socialists in our midst have been so busy denouncing capitalist sins, ancient and modern, that they have found no time to consider their own shortcomings.

What we see with Mr. Roosevelt's New Deal is a dramatic revival of the ancient system of mercantilism which ruined Spain and France a few centuries ago. All the regulations, controls, subsidies and restrictions which had once throttled Western Europe were back and with a vengeance. Actually, the United States has never been truly free enterprise in all its history; as James Truslow Adams<sup>1</sup> so eloquently told us, Alexander Hamilton started us off in 1789 with a policy of protective tariffs and favors for the few. This mistake nearly precipitated the Civil War a generation before it happened and was an important cause of the coming of that tragic conflict in 1861. In spite of our aversion to imports we did build up a vast export trade over the years (we did not see that international trade is simply "swapping"—that imports must equal exports over time, if everyone is going to get paid.) Yet in the first three decades of this century we did export about a fourth of our wheat, nearly two thirds of our cotton, and more than a third of our tobacco.<sup>2</sup> After the Crash of '29 the Republicans passed the Smoot-Hawley Tariff, which killed our foreign trade and the "agricultural surplus" began to pile up. Mr. Roosevelt did the obvious: he simply plowed it under (anyone who thinks that is only my bias needs only to read Henry A. Wallace's *New Frontiers*, copyright 1934). F.D.R. also started an expensive system of government controls, subsidies, welfare and all the rest which has driven this country to the brink of ruin and will no doubt push it over into the abyss. Yet there are pious people—and intelligent ones too—who believe the New Deal and modern versions thereof are Christian. Something needed to be done in '33, but F.D.R., like Hoover before him, did all the wrong things.

It is unfortunate that we have made so little effort to understand the Great Depression and why it came. Of course, Robert L. Heilbroner<sup>3</sup> tells us that the Crash was "an absolutely numbing intellectual shock . . . since . . . no one could explain why the economic mechanism was not working." This is needless ignorance. In January of 1933, a few weeks before Mr. Roosevelt took office, a number of prominent university economists in America wrote an open letter to F.D.R., urging him to stay on gold and reduce tariffs. Benjamin M. Anderson,<sup>4</sup> who was one of the signers of that letter, insisted that freer trade would have brought immediate recovery to the nation and relief to our impoverished farmers. It would also have saved the "have-not" nations the virtual necessity of going to war to secure food for their peoples. His contention that open markets and free enterprise would have brought instant prosperity may seem an overstatement, unless one remembers the spectacular German recovery after World War II, the Economic Miracle under Ludwig Erhard.<sup>5</sup> No one has called what happened during New Deal days the Roosevelt Miracle (actually prosperity returned on December 8,

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a republic composed of self-sufficient, self-reliant small farmers and craftsmen, where everyone maintained their autonomy and at the same time participated in the process of government.

Actually this ideology of economic independence as the basis of the American political order has been effectively negated, not so much by the growth of big government as by the emergence of large-scale corporate enterprise.<sup>2</sup> The natural right to the private ownership of productive property which is implicit in the founding documents of the American nation was strongly emphasized by early thinkers like Jefferson as being the essential economic basis of a free citizenry. But, modern corporate capitalism has expropriated the property and independent livelihood of the vast majority of farmers, artisans, and merchants, and they have been transformed into wage-earners who are at the mercy of vast structures over which they as individuals can exercise no control. The supermarket has displaced the corner grocer, the factory has absorbed the skilled craftsman, and corporate agriculture has virtually wiped out the family farm. This destruction of the small individual entrepreneur took place under the guise of "free enterprise" and with the overt collusion of the government which provided the large firms with tax advantages, subsidies, tariff protection, and various other favors.

At the same time political power became concentrated in corporate hands and until recently it was seldom subject to any kind of accountability. One need only look at our ravaged environment—the rivers that are open sewers, the moon-like landscape resulting from strip mining, the smoke pall hovering over our cities—and be reminded of the rapacious unrestrained individualism of American business enterprise. Economic considerations take first place in political decisions, and the guiding principle is that private profit is the public good. The general welfare is not a priority consideration for the great corporation—only the maximization of profits.

The dehumanizing nature of modern American corporate capitalism ought to compel Christians to cry out in protest. It forces the individual into the mold of conformity (do you remember the company that required its male employees to wear white shirts and ties—the "image"? ) and places the free worker in the chains of wage slavery. The average citizen is manipulated by unscrupulous advertising and thrust into the never ending cycle of consumerism that keeps him spiritually and economically impoverished. The political crises of the Nixon-Agnew Administration and Ford's continued insensitivity to human needs hammer home the reality that in spite of the real gains made in the last forty years, our political system is still very much beholden to the great corporate power interests.

It is clear to me that the socially conscious disciple of Christ must demand fundamental changes in our political and economic order from the top on down, and I would suggest that the guidelines set forth in the National Urban Coalition's intriguing *Counterbudget* provide a useful starting point.<sup>3</sup> This proposal

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1941—the day after Pearl Harbor). Just perhaps a correct economic policy in America would have saved us those long years of depression and the second World War.

Today a battered and bankrupt nation must do what we should have done long ago. First of all, we need to repent of our sins and get right with God. Secondly, we need to revise our theory of law: our laws should be simple, direct, and a modern interpretation of the moral law (God's Law). Then we should all go back to work, including millions of Americans who should be eased off welfare (a few should be left on relief). We also need to stop our global give-aways, except "ambulance operations" in times of disaster; if people want our stuff, they should pay for it. It just cannot be Christian to pauperize people. Then the "haves" in America should stop striving for ridiculously high profits and wages, quit "featherbedding" and stop limiting entry into every trade and profession. Let's get back on sound money. Let's fire millions of bureaucrats and reduce taxes to a fraction of the present level. I could go on, but I'm sure the reader is convinced already that the proposed program of reconstruction is impossible. Yet much of this is what the British did in the early years of the last century. The alternative today is revolution with dictators of the Hitler and Stalin variety. Does America have the moral fiber and the Christian good sense to do what must be done? I pray that we may.

If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.  
11 Chron. 7:14.

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- <sup>4</sup>Benjamin M. Anderson, *Economics and the Public Welfare* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1949), pp. 301-307.
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### REBUTTAL

It should be obvious to the reader by this point in the discussion that Pierard is a pious pragmatist; he believes in "playing it by ear"—in a Christian way of course. He insists that the "British evangelicals who worked for the abolition of slavery" were confused. The confusion is in the minds of modern Christians. We have so completely forgotten our past that we do not know that there once were people who insisted that the laws of men must be based on the moral law. If Adam Smith and William Blackstone were not that devout, it is well to remember that John Wesley said the same thing: "Notwithstanding ten thousand laws, right is right and wrong is wrong still." It is possible

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calls for increases in federal expenditures for health care, social security, income support for poor families, education, law enforcement, improvement of public services at state and local levels, housing and urban development, improvement of mass transit facilities, environment protection, and foreign development aid. Significant reductions would occur in such areas as highway construction, agricultural subsidies, and above all national defense and military assistance. Through more equitable taxation and reallocation of budgetary expenditures much could be done to improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

We Americans have put too much weight upon the acquisition of material possessions at the expense of spiritual, aesthetic, and cultural values. In a way we have been "conned" by the system through high wages and the lavish production of consumer goods into believing that we live in the best of all possible worlds. The current political scandals, the Vietnam debacle, and the energy crisis are hopefully serving to shock us out of our complacency. They may bring us to the realization that we live in a mutually interdependent world and that rugged individualism is not a viable option either for personal or national survival. Our acquisitive society with its stress on the relentless pursuit of profit and wealth must be modified by a reassertion of the importance of community and concern for each other. Possibly this type of repentance will enable America to find her way back to the path of national righteousness which she has missed.

For the day of the LORD is near upon all the nations.  
As you have done, it shall be done to you,  
your deeds shall return on your own head.

Obadiah 15

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- <sup>1</sup>National Association of Manufacturers, *The American Individual Enterprise System: Its Nature, Evolution, and Future* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1946), II, 1021.
- <sup>2</sup>Robert N. Bellah ably demonstrates this in his new book *The Broken Covenant: American Civil Religion in Time of Trial* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), ch. 5.
- <sup>3</sup>Robert S. Benson and Harold Wolman, eds., *Counterbudget: A Blueprint for Changing National Priorities 1971-1976* (New York: Praeger, 1971).

### REBUTTAL

A well-known Christian scholar, John H. Redekop, reminds us that the creed of individualism must not be confused with a concern for individual welfare. "There is little indication of any desire that the abuses of society should be corrected so that underprivileged individuals might also learn what individual freedom means."<sup>1</sup> That in a nutshell is the greatest defect of the position advanced by Coleson.

Laissez-faire capitalism, based as it is on the rationalist premises of the eighteenth century Enlightenment, does not adequately take into account the human propensity for sin. Will businessmen, each pursuing their own interests unhampered by any external force other than the exigencies of the market and a state functioning merely as a passive policeman, conduct

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to build a system on principle, Christian principles, at that.

When we stand with Joshua and the Hebrews at the Mountains of Blessing and Cursing, it is obvious that the Bible teaches that the moral law is a sufficient guide for the conduct of the affairs of men and nations (Deuteronomy, chapters 27 through 30 and Joshua 8:30-35). Christ also was emphatic that He was not "come to destroy the law" (Matt. 5:17). Therefore take your Bible and your history book and review the New Deal and much that has happened since. Would the farm program, NRA codes, the prohibition on ownership of gold and a multitude of other devious arrangements stand close scrutiny in the light of Scriptural principles? They were pragmatic makeshifts and have created more problems than they solved. That is why New York City and the rest of us are faced with today's dilemma.

Those British evangelicals, who laid the foundation for Victorian prosperity and power, were a long way from "social Darwinism." They believed that God had created a harmonious universe where all things could work together for good, if we would only obey Him. They were men of compassion with a strong sense of community. The "Good Samaritans" today may be socialists, but it has not always been so. Before our left-wing Christians help push us over the brink, they would do well to examine the record. They might even help to save us from the equivalent of the French Revolution, just as those English evangelicals saved their country in their time of crisis.

Their achievements are not a figment of my imagination. An impressive list of authorities, Christian and secular, can be cited to support my view. Professor Cairns<sup>1</sup> of Wheaton College, for one, tells us that the political arm of the Wesleyan Revival accomplished more than any reform movement in history. Would that we could do as well.

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- <sup>1</sup>Earle E. Cairns, *Saints and Society* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1960), p. 43.

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themselves in an "honest way" and insure the welfare of the total community? I think not. Each will look out for "Number One" and if "getting ahead" means that others will be crushed in the process, so it will be.

It is noteworthy that those British evangelicals who worked for the abolition of slavery went against the cherished principles of laissez-faire. They placed the "human rights" of the Afro-American slaves above the "property rights" of the plantation owners. By obtaining legislation halting the traffic in slaves, they interfered with "free trade." They utilized the power of the state to eliminate a social abuse. To identify this radical departure from laissez-faire as "capitalism with a conscience" makes about as much sense as talking about "communism with a human face."

I contend there is no such thing as a Christian economic system, but only practices and approaches in the social and economic realm that may be in harmony with biblical principles. The moment we pin the label "Christian" on a system, we have limited God and merely sanctified our own economic views. It is extremely difficult to draw distinctions between ordinary concerns of self-interest and genuinely Christian motivations in a person's behavior. So, to endow something so solidly grounded on self-interest as laissez-faire capitalism with the exalted status of a Christian system is peculiarly unwarranted and fraught with perils.

What we need instead is an approach which contributes directly to the economic and social well-being of all people, not one where the benefits accrue largely to the possessors of wealth and hopefully some "goodies" trickle down to the impoverished masses. Certainly that would be more "Christian" than laissez-faire capitalism.

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*We are all aware that this nation and the world are beset by numerous societal problems: poverty, crime, racism, pollution, unemployment, inflation, drug abuse, social disruptions, famine, the threat of nuclear war, and the like. We are equally aware that direct measures for dealing with these problems have, on the whole, been unsuccessful and have often led to unanticipated and undesired consequences. Thus, price and wage controls offer temporary relief from inflation, but in the end tend to leave us in a worse position than before. Urban renewal programs designed to improve housing conditions for the poor often leave them with their old neighborhoods destroyed and unable to afford available alternatives. Welfare regulations instituted to improve the lot of ghetto children have contributed to family breakdown by making it economically advantageous for mothers to raise their children in a fatherless home. Minimum wage laws intended to aid unskilled workers have actually made it more difficult for many to find employment; at the higher rates of pay, employers find it more economical to replace people with machines or to eliminate jobs. Legislation and programs dedicated to the reduction of inequalities of opportunity between races (such as the busing of schoolchildren) have instead heightened interracial tensions.*

Willis W. Harman

*An Incomplete Guide to the Future*, Stanford Alumni Association, Stanford, California (1976), pp. 21, 22

## Pseudo-Science and Pseudo-Theology: (A) Cult and Occult



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The prefix "pseudo" means counterfeit. The evaluation of authentic science and authentic theology cannot be made fully unless it is realized that there are counterfeit forms in the world, and unless the characteristics of these counterfeit forms are recognized. An investigation of pseudo-science and pseudo-theology reveals an intimate relationship between them.

### Pseudo-Science and Pseudo-Theology

Pseudo-science is an activity that looks like science, uses the terminology of science, claims the authority of science, but at a fundamental level violates the basic integrity of a scientific activity. The mark of a counterfeit is that it closely resembles the authentic. So also pseudo-theology is an activity that looks like belief in and worship of the true God, uses standard or invented theological terms and categories, claims to fulfill the needs and to take the place of authentic theology, but at a fundamental level violates the basic integrity of theology and turns out to be only a human enterprise. Since "theology" cannot be discussed in this context in abstract terms, I state as my own definite presupposition that authentic theology is to be identified in terms of the Christian faith as defined by the Biblical revelation. It is in terms of this presupposition that I work out the remainder of this installment. "Authentic science" has been described in previous installments.

The judgment that a particular activity is one of pseudo-science or pseudo-theology is not one easily made by a person who is not intimately conversant with authentic science and Christian faith. The intricacy and ingenuity of the counterfeit in these fields is no less than the misdirected artistry devoted to the production of counterfeit money. It is often not possible, given limited resources and time, to demonstrate in detail the fallacies and aberrations of the counterfeits in the fields of science and theology. I have received, for example, from time to time whole books of mathematical

argumentation seeking to prove all kinds of things from unorthodox theories of cosmogony, to basic errors in Einstein's theory of relativity, to simple and classical substitutes for quantum mechanics, to grandiose models for description of the world in terms of concepts and models imported from philosophy, politics or religion. To sit down and attempt to unravel the errors in these arguments would take an immense effort. There is, however, a basic flavor to pseudo-science or pseudo-theology that one deeply involved in authentic science or theology can usually detect without detailed analysis of the argument. There are certain critical test points that pseudo-science or pseudo-theology always fail to match.

In scientific circles practitioners of pseudo-science are called such things as "crackpots" or "quacks." In religious circles practitioners of pseudo-theology are called "fanatics" or "heretics." The connotations of the terms are quite similar in both fields. Generally the heretic is one who departs from the orthodox position by departing from the faithful exercise of the discipline that guides and guards orthodoxy. Historically occasional cases exist where men labeled "crackpots" and "heretics" have later been accepted as men of vision ahead of their times, but these are the exceptions that prove the rule: for every one of them there are thousands of pseudo-scientists and pseudo-theologians whose ideas have no validity beyond their own conceptions. The major breakthroughs in scientific and theological understanding have come from men and women who had a thorough grasp of the fundamentals of their discipline;

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seldom if ever do such breakthroughs come as the result of the efforts of amateurs or dilettantes.

In his book *Physicist and Christian*, William Pollard<sup>1</sup> describes the intuitive apprehension of pseudo-science in the area of physics.

In my own field of physics it is a common experience to receive privately published papers which develop all kinds of strange and bizarre theories about everything from the electron to the universe as a whole. . . . To the non-physicist they have as bona fide a ring as a paper in the *Physical Review*. But to physicists they are immediately recognized as fundamentally different. They constitute in the strict sense of the word unorthodox or heretical physics. In subtle ways impossible to describe clearly to the world at large, they violate everything which has given the physics community power to slowly and painfully acquire real and dependable insights into the nature of things.

Such practitioners of pseudo-science or pseudo-theology generally believe that they have discovered or been provided with some special key to understanding, unshared by members of the "establishment." They are not willing to enter into careful and scholarly discussion with representatives of orthodoxy, but separate themselves into self-contained and carefully guarded enclaves where support for the pseudo-position can be constantly reinforced by elaborate publication and educational procedures. (As a peripheral observation, I have noted that almost every writer in extreme pseudo-science or pseudo-theology is prone to the capitalization of many words in the attempt to emphasize the "key" nature of his position.)

If practitioners of pseudo-science frequently neglect all areas of evidence or physical laws that would contradict their conclusions if considered properly, practitioners of pseudo-theology are essentially unanimous in their rejection of the Biblical doctrine of the Trinity and of the deity of Jesus Christ. (I address myself here particularly to cults which claim a Christian heritage but have forsaken Christian integrity.) I cannot say that there are *no* cults that are faithful to these cornerstone Biblical teachings, but certainly every major cult can be characterized immediately by the formulation invented to avoid these fundamental doctrines. Likewise every major cult is in agreement, contrary to Biblical teaching, (and here we can include most of the world's great religions as well) that "salvation" is ultimately through knowledge and by "right action" based on that knowledge. To include Eastern religious thought, one may wish to substitute the word "enlightenment" for "knowledge," but the thrust is the same.

In the remainder of this installment, I consider some of the characteristics of specific cults in order to illustrate and develop these concepts of pseudo-science and pseudo-religion and of how they are frequently used to reinforce one another.

### Sampling the Universe: Forms of Fatalism

One set of cults claims to be neutral with respect to worldview, philosophy or religion, and claims therefore that it is possible to hold any religious or philosophical position at the same time that one is a faithful cultist. The members of this set of cults that essentially sample the universe for guidance are as ancient as human records. They have apparently existed at all times of recorded history.

*The mark of a counterfeit is that it closely resembles the authentic.*

These cults believe that the disposition of our lives is partially or totally determined by forces beyond our control, but that the fate determined by these forces can be known to us through apparently unrelated observations. By knowing our proper place in the universe, we may then take what advantage is possible of this special knowledge to improve our lives and situation in the world. The forces beyond our control may be wholly impersonal, as in astrology, palmistry, reading tea leaves, casting sticks or coins in I Ching, or various forms of the ancient arts of discerning the future by inspection of the entrails of birds or the livers of animals (hepatoscopy). Or these forces may have aspects of personality as in spiritualism, witchcraft and Satanism. These latter do involve religious expressions of their own, whereas the former *could* be religiously neutral.

Consider astrology as a specific example of an ancient and currently repopularized cultic expression. The evaluation of astrology depends upon what one really believes that it is; although it is not essential that astrology be intrinsically anti-Christian, it seems in practice to become so in most cases. For most devotees, astrology assumes the form of both a pseudo-science and a pseudo-religion. Certainly the Biblical assessment of astrology is negative in that historical context (e.g., Daniel 2:27; Isaiah 47:13,14).

If astrology had a basis in fact, it *could* be an indicator of human characteristics and potentialities such as are given by studies of the effects of heredity and environment on human beings, or by studies of psychological preferences and facets of human personality. If astrology had a basis in fact, therefore, Christians *could* regard it properly as one more way to understand the nature of the created world, and it would of necessity have no more anti-Christian impact than the study of genetics. For those who accept astrology, on the other hand, it seems empirically that such a neutral approach is seldom followed. It seems much more common for astrology to become the principal focus of life, with "traditional religion" relegated to a secondary and peripheral role in deciding choices and actions. It is necessary, therefore, to distinguish between what *might* be the case if astrology were a real science, and not a pseudo-science coupled with a pseudo-religion, and what is the case with devotees of astrology.

On the other hand, if astrology has no basis in fact, it is nothing short of foolish to pay any attention to it, or to regard it as indeed supplementary to understanding gained from genetics and psychology. As to whether astrology is an authentic science or a pseudo-science, I must personally conclude that it is an eminent case of the latter. To argue that the planets have dominant effects on our personality, metabolism, and health, not to mention our success, wealth, sex-life, wish-fulfillment etc., and to couple this argument with the admission that we really don't know how they have this effect, adds up for me to a position that can be accepted only on faith with little regard for any objective evidence. Not only is the position non-rational, but it is basically irrational since its conclusions frequently contradict

other available evidence. Its popularity is correlatable with a modern infatuation for the irrational in reaction against excessive rationalism, as discussed earlier in Part 2. When I couple the irrationality of astrology with the admitted uselessness of daily newspaper horoscopes and the realization of the vast business potential in the astrology area, I am confirmed in the conclusion that astrology is a pseudo-science. When I recognize in addition the subtle ways in which faith in astrology can replace faith in the living and loving God, I feel justified in regarding it as a pseudo-religion as well as a pseudo-science. Actually, an investigation into the religious perspectives of astrologers usually reveals a dimension of pantheism or Eastern mysticism regarding the Unity of all things, of which the planetary motions may be only a relatively unimportant manifestation.

### The Key to Health and Success: Neo-Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a philosophico-religious movement that pre-dated Christian times but continued on afterwards, in which the main conviction was that "salvation" or "emancipation" came through knowledge (Greek, *gnosis*) which was able to deliver the special possessor of this knowledge from the constraints of matter.

A second group of cults share the claim that their particular founder had insights that prove to be the key to a healthy and successful life; these cults may therefore be considered to be modern examples of gnosticism, or of neo-gnosticism. In each case the founder has lived in the past 200 years and has written prolifically. Each stresses in its own way that "salvation" comes through knowledge; knowledge of that particular key which had been hidden and is hidden still from all who do not participate in the cult. L. Ron Hubbard (1911- ) discovered the principles of "dianetics" and his discovery has grown into the Church of Scientology. The teachings and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses are based to a large extent on the writings of Charles T. Russell (1852-1916) and his style of biblical interpretation and extrapolation. Christian Science is founded on the book by Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910) whose textbook dominates Christian Science thought: *Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures*. Mormonism came into being with Joseph Smith (1805-1844) who claimed to translate the golden plates delivered to him by an angel and produced the "keys" of the Latter Day Saints: the *Book of Mormon*, the *Doctrine and Covenants*, and *The Pearl of Great Price*.

Of this group of four cults of the neo-gnostic type, the Church of Scientology is the most openly non-Christian. At its best Scientology advocates and practices a number of techniques that may have a practical psychological effect; at its worst Scientology is a false religion incompatible with the Christian faith, exhibiting a mixture of pseudo-science and pseudo-religion. Scientology exalts the role of knowledge, assumes that knowledge leads to wisdom, and that wisdom leads to salvation. Scientology openly presents itself as being in a long line of "wisdom" religions: religions that claim special insight able to deliver the initiated. In Scientology the claim is made for the application of the scientific method: what works is right. This pragmatism is both appropriate and useful for the application of the sci-

tific method, but it is also one of the chief limitations of that method as a universal principle of life, as we have discussed in Part 1. The truth is pragmatic, but what is pragmatic in the short range need not be the ultimately true.

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*It is unfortunate that the cult insistence on the primacy of the cult "key" and the cult community makes it virtually impossible to appreciate authentic science and theology rather than their pseudo counterparts.*

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Scientology also grasps at the criterion of "good" provided by evolutionism, i.e., good is determined by its survival value. But on what kind of scientific basis is such a definition derived? It cannot be scientifically established. Rather it is a faith assumption that converts what is (what survives) into what ought to be (what is good). This is no definition of "good" at all, and men are unable to agree on what survival (or the greatest good for the greatest number) really means in the absence of more basic and more ultimate value presuppositions.

Scientology claims to be compatible with any religious beliefs, and to interfere with no religious practice. This can be true only if one's religious beliefs are wholly subjective. It seems to be clearly impossible to me to be a Biblical Christian and an advocate of Scientology. Scientology teaches that man is innately good (the basic fallacy of every idealistic neglect of reality); the Bible teaches that man is by nature in rebellion against God. Scientologists admit that Scientology is based primarily on Buddhism, believe that soul or spirit is "that part of man that is part of God," and define sin as "that action or omission of action that causes the greatest harm to the greatest overall portion of life."

Although Scientology is problem oriented and prides itself on producing solutions for problems, it is unable to respond to the deepest problems of life except on a superficial level. The problem of death, for example, is left essentially up to the individual to work out in his own "religious" way. The problem of guilt cannot be met by divine forgiveness, for Scientology is "open" enough to permit whatever "God and/or Gods or the principle of a first or prime cause" one might care to believe in. In addition to its religious errors, the practical danger of Scientology appears to lie in the financial as well as the spiritual bondage in which its followers may find themselves entrapped. With respect to the high costs of achieving the upper grades of Scientological standing (grades of "clearness"), frequently reputed to be in the thousands of dollar range, Scientologists reply that they attempt to compress all the benefits of religion into two years rather than a whole lifetime, and that therefore the actual cost is only apparently high; the same amount of money contributed to the institutional church for a lifetime is required within just two years, but with guaranteed

results by Scientology.

Remarkable resemblance can be detected between Scientology and Christian Science in spite of the historical differences in their origin and formulation. Christian Science is of course much more biblically oriented, but only insofar as the Bible agrees with the system of Mary Baker Eddy. Accepting as the Principle *par excellence* that a perfect Cause must bring forth a perfect Effect, the creation account of Genesis 1 is taken to demand that since God is perfect, man must be perfect—not only in creation but today as well. Since Genesis 2 and 3 (and the rest of the Bible) provide the reasons why man as he now is is not perfect, Christian Scientists have no hesitation to dismiss Genesis 2 and 3 as inferior to Genesis 1. The “key” to health and success in Christian Science is the attainment of spiritual unity with God and the realization that man is only spiritual and not material. But the God referred to is not the God of the Trinity or of the Bible, but a Divine Principle which is impersonal. Jesus, in his “material manhood,” was not the Christ. Evil is not real but is the result of our faulty apprehension of reality. Here Christian Science shows wide overlap with the emphases of Eastern religions, as discussed below.

The “keys” to the Scriptures of Mormonism, provided in the writings of Joseph Smith and of the proclamations of the leader of the Church of Latter Day Saints to this day, openly claim to be revelation which corrects and clarifies the older revelation of the commonly accepted Bible. Mormon study of the Bible *per se* is made all but impossible by an insistence on looking for evidence of missing portions, altered texts and variant readings in order to justify the works of Joseph Smith as essential portions of the whole Scriptures. Without consideration of the severe scholarly problems in arguing for the authenticity of the Smith writings as revelation given in “reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics,” or of frequent quotations in these writings from the Bible in its word-for-word King James translation (including the errors in that translation), it can be noted that Mormons reject the Trinity and regard Jesus and the Devil as spiritual brothers, and they also consider God to be an exalted man with a physical body. The Mormon doctrine of salvation involves not only faith in Jesus, but also baptism by immersion, obedience to the teachings of the Mormon church, good works, and the keeping of the commandments of God as Mormons

which the highest category is Godhead, reserved for the faithful Mormons who have fulfilled all the requirements.

Jehovah's Witnesses not only have taken the writings of Charles T. Russell as guides to interpreting the Bible, but have published their own translation of the Bible (the New World Translation) with such variants in translation as may be used to support the Witnesses' doctrines. Jehovah's Witnesses also reject the Trinity and the deity of Christ. The atonement of Christ provided the foundation upon which the work and obedience of the faithful can be built to enable them to be among the literal 144,000 of Revelation 7:4; 14:1,3 to enter the established kingdom. Christ has already returned secretly and invisibly in 1914 and is presently about the business of setting up his kingdom.

All of these four cults maintain fairly closed communities and are not open to genuine scholarly interchange or debate with either the scientific community or the Christian community. They involve many sincere and well-intentioned people who are desperately seeking for some source of security and assurance in our tension-ridden day. It is unfortunate that the cult insistence on the primacy of the cult “key” and the cult community makes it virtually impossible for these people to appreciate authentic science and theology rather than their pseudo counterparts. The obvious hard work of many dedicated cult devotees can be associated with the cult consciousness that man's work is the basis for his ultimate position, both in this life and in the life to come.

### Becoming One with the Universe: Eastern Religion

Since the Eastern religions in their classical forms make little pretense at being scientific, it may seem inappropriate to include them in a discussion centering around pseudo-science, or it may seem presumptuous to treat such religions with their long history and millions of adherents under the category of pseudo-religion. On the other hand, we have already seen above the influences of Eastern religious thought on astrology, Scientology and Christian Science. We are also living in a day in which interest in the Eastern religions is at a new high in the Western world, and many cultic forms do manifest aspects of pseudo-science and pseudo-religion of relevance to us.

Not only do the Eastern religions agree with other cults in rejecting the Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ, and the biblical revelation of reconciliation with a personal God by grace through faith, but they reject even the biblical doctrine of Creation, which forms the implicit base for so much of Western thought. Unless this rejection of the doctrine of Creation is realized to be at the heart of Eastern religious thought, any understanding of it is impossible. Eastern thought fairly generally treats the acceptance of matter as the cause of evil, and the effort to preserve the individual as the cause of moral failure. Man does evil according to Eastern thought because he is finite, limited, individual and conscious of self as reality; he can be delivered from this bondage only by withdrawing from finiteness, limitations of space and time, handicapping illusions of individuality, and destructive self-consciousness into the great Unity of unindividuated reality. The method of withdrawal usually involves some form of meditation and obedience to discipline: to the ac-

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*Cultic advocates often speak of the scientific demonstration of the validity of a spiritual nature to man. Although this may sound like good news for the religious person, it is usually an extremely dangerous pitfall.*

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interpret them. Thus the atonement of Christ is not sufficient, but is only a first step which must be supplemented by human works. Actually all men, regardless of beliefs or works, will enjoy some degree of “salvation” in a hierarchically structured heaven of

*Scientifically demonstrable results described in a particular religious context cannot be taken as evidence that that context is thereby verified.*

quisition of knowledge, not by the Western method of "study," but by the Eastern method of "satori," sudden nonrational enlightenment. The biblical doctrine of creation takes seriously the pronouncement of God that the universe, according to his creation purpose, is good, and that evil which we see around us today is not the inevitable consequence of the structure of the created universe (with its finite, limited, self-conscious individuals), but is the result of human moral rebellion against God. Moral rebellion has little meaning within Eastern thought; unless we perceive that God is us, and that we are God—that all is God and that we are all, we are blinded by the limitations of appearances and fail to grasp the Unity of reality.

The methods of meditation and discipline may cover a wide range within Eastern thought from the devotion to the eightfold way of conservative Buddhism, to the short-cut through meditation alone of Zen Buddhism, to the pop meditation of Transcendental Meditation for which only a single meaningless word (a *mantra*) provided by a guru needs to be repeated for 15 minutes twice a day to achieve satori, health, peace, success and ultimate enlightenment. While recognizing the fallacious theological foundation of these claims, we should, however, be willing also to recognize the possibility of useful natural body and even mind training through such methods. Eastern religious thought has roots in antiquity and an association with folk-science and pseudo-science through the years. Just as folk-science often provided medical aid long before medical science understood the cause, and in such cases based its argument upon fallacious pseudo-science and pseudo-religion, so we may expect it to be possible that methods of disciplining body and mind advocated by Eastern religions may be effective without confirming the religious premises associated historically with them. As the treatments of chiropractic may often be useful for particular ailments (and even more useful than available medical treatments) and yet no confirmation is thereby given of the basic philosophy of chiropractic, so also we may expect some positive results to be achievable by the practice of yoga, acupuncture, Transcendental Meditation etc. without providing any confirmation of the religious superstructure on which these practices are historically hung. If we do not make this distinction between the possible beneficial results of physical and mental discipline and the religious framework within which their devotees present them, we may well find ourselves in the embarrassing position of denying scientifically demonstrable results in an effort to avoid supporting pseudo-religious concepts. This is the kind of dilemma that Christians have long been in with respect to the biological theory of organic evolution, and it is time that lessons learned in that encounter be applied to this field developing from the background of Eastern religions.

Today a large field is developing on the borderline between pseudo-science and authentic science with

renewed interest in parapsychology, paramedicine, extra-sensory perception, clairvoyance, psychokinesis and related phenomena. Although these areas could be investigated purely in terms of natural science (and should be so investigated), they are most frequently conceptually tied to a mode of thought derived from the Eastern religions. While disagreeing in detail, they agree in general with the claims of Scientology and Christian Science that a person in full tune with the universe (a "clear," or one united to the divine Principle) has within himself the ability to transcend the limitations of space and time, to burst the bonds of finiteness and individuality, and to propel himself into the All with the ability to exercise the powers thereof. Thus the Christian Scientist argues that only failure to achieve the ultimate apprehension of reality causes Christian Scientists to experience death; the Scientologist says, "A person who is Clear has gone beyond the ordinary. He knows himself. He understands himself and can fashion his own happiness at will. He is 'cleared' of all the obstacles that prevented him from reaching his highest aspirations."<sup>2</sup>

Advocates of these positions often speak of their scientific demonstration of the validity of a spiritual nature to man. Although this may sound like good news for the religious person, it is usually an extremely dangerous pitfall. For what the advocates of these positions mean is a spiritual nature of man constructed according to human expectations and not in accord with the biblical revelation. Dr. James Pike claimed that he had found such scientific evidence for the existence of an afterlife through his seance contacts with his dead son, but it was an afterlife fashioned after the thoughts of autonomous man and not after the clear word of biblical revelation. These combinations of pseudo-science and pseudo-religion, like the others, are an attempt to construct a religious view over which man has control, rather than encountering the religious reality over which God has control. Christians must be aware, as the biblical record makes clear from the magicians of the court of Pharaoh (Exodus 7:11,22; 8:7) to the Beast of Revelation (Revelation 13:13-15), that simple performance of an extraordinary feat does not authenticate the philosophy and religion of those who perform it.

## Transcendental Meditation

Transcendental Meditation has become a particularly well-known version of popularized Eastern religious practice, distinguished by the fact that so many practitioners of TM deny that there is any religious content involved. It therefore becomes an interesting test case of the way in which Christians should deal with such phenomena. In order to answer the question of whether TM is a science, a religion, both or neither, answers to a variety of questions must be sought.

1. Are there observable phenomena that are real and reproducible?
2. Are these phenomena beneficial or harmful? What criteria should be used to decide?
3. Do these phenomena have natural causes? Can they be scientifically described?
4. Do these phenomena have supernatural causes? Is it impossible to describe them in natural categories?
5. What is the belief system out of the matrix of which TM arises?

6. Does the belief system in which TM originates necessarily bind the practitioner?
7. Can TM be regarded simply as a healthy exercise (like sleeping or jogging) or as an unhealthy exercise (such as holding one's breath)?
8. If the phenomena observed have supernatural causes, what is the agency?
9. Can there be spiritual danger in practicing TM?

An analysis of answers to these questions suggests that TM *could* be a science, a religion, both or neither. It *could* be a science if certain physiological activity led to demonstrable and reproducible results. The question is, Does it? There appear to be definite results but it is not clear that they are uniquely different from deep rest or sleep. A recent report in *Science*<sup>3</sup> directed toward detecting physiological and biochemical effects of TM concludes that "meditation does not induce a unique metabolic state but is seen biochemically as a resting state." Still, TM *could* be a neutral technique for relaxation.

TM *could* be a religion if Maharishi's overall perspective and claims for TM are accepted, and if it is appreciated that initiation into TM and the receiving of a *mantra* occur at a religious ceremony, however hidden this may be from the initiate not acquainted with the language used.

TM *could* be both religion and science, if physiological disciplines with scientifically describable results were considered to be the ways in which such religion should be expressed. There are many testimonies from Christians that their Christian perception has been deepened by practicing TM.

TM *could* be neither science nor religion, if it were simply subjective delusion or deliberately perpetrated fraud.

What then should the Christian learn from all this? Essentially three things.

1. The religious context of TM cannot be overlooked or forgotten if TM is being advanced for instruction of the general public. In its present practices, TM does require a religious initiation ceremony and is based upon a monistic religious view of reality.

2. Scientifically demonstrable results described from a particular religious context cannot be taken as evidence that that context is thereby verified.

3. Rejection of a religious context for a variety of non-scientific reasons cannot be taken as the basis for rejecting the reality of scientifically demonstrable results coming from that religious context.

If non-Christians are most often guilty of violating 2., Christians are most often guilty of violating 3. TM (or something analogous to TM) *could* probably be just healthy "exercise." Unfortunately, the probability that people in general practicing TM would regard it as simply healthy "exercise" is not large.

### Other Contexts

Although we have been concerned in this installment primarily with those cases where pseudo-science and pseudo-theology are combined, it should be recognized that pseudo-science or pseudo-theology can arise also in other contexts. It is possible, for example, for those who profess an authentic Christian position to become entrapped in pseudo-science; likewise it is possible for

### Mystic Cult Disrupts Christian Community

A mystic cult has sprung up in the last year to rock the Christian community with uncertainty and dissension. The cult is derived from the ancient mystic practice of *j'ugoi*, the origins of which are hidden in antiquity, although there is good reason to believe that it is related to the pagan festival of pressing juice from the grape by stomping barefoot on the ripe grapes. According to its principal teacher J'uogi Jala (meaning, master of *j'ugoi*), the practice of *j'ugoi* is an effort to bring the individual self into resonance with the universal frequency of the cosmos. This is accomplished by rhythmic movement of the feet in a motion producing slow running, while the participant pays particular attention to the rhythm of his breathing and of his footsteps on the ground. It is claimed that masters of *j'ugoi* experience a wide variety of physical benefits including lowered blood pressure, lowered rest pulse rate, greater utilization of oxygen and general physiological well being. J'uogi Jala stoutly denies any specific religious or philosophical content to *j'ugoi* (often corrupted to "joggi" or "jogging" in the western world), but does say that its practice inevitably leads to clarity of thought, improved mental ability, enhanced self-awareness, and freedom from guilt fixations.

The increasing popularity of *j'ugoi* has caught the Christian community by surprise. Church members are arriving late at church so as not to miss the regular practice of *j'ugoi*, claiming that it makes them better able to be daily disciples of Christ, and there is talk of introducing *j'ugoi* into the physical education classes of the public schools.

One well-known biblical scholar has condemned all practice of *j'ugoi* by Christians, as equivalent to participation in a pagan religious rite. In a speech recently, he said, "Although they claim that this is not a religious practice, how is it possible to separate 'resonance with the universal frequency' from a pagan religious worldview?" When asked about the well documented beneficial physiological and even psychological benefits of *j'ugoi*, he replied, "We know only too well that the Devil can imitate the work of our Lord."

*If you miss the point of this fictitious "news item," read the accompanying discussion of cult and occult.*

those who are engaged in authentic science to become entrapped in pseudo-theology. The Christian, therefore, needs also to be aware that an orthodox religious position does not automatically establish an orthodox scientific understanding, any more than an authentic practice of science guarantees an authentic religious interpretation. Again discrimination is essential. To attack one engaged in pseudo-religion and authentic science by attacking his science is disastrous; so also is the attack on one engaged in pseudo-science and authentic theology by an attack upon his theology. Christians have frequently been guilty of the former, and the world has often been guilty of the latter. Hopefully Christians will have learned from the past not to fall into the same kind of pitfalls as the world.

### Summary

Any evaluation of authentic science and theology must recognize that there are many counterfeit pseudo-sciences and pseudo-theologies in the world. Although proponents of such pseudo-science and pseudo-theology may be sincere and dedicated people, they are guilty of missing the essence of what it takes for science and theology to be authentic. Unfortunately the culture out of which the pseudo-science or pseudo-theology comes is a closed culture, seeking primarily to reinforce the characteristic doctrines and to close off openness with

*Rejection of a religious context for a variety of non-scientific reasons cannot be taken as the basis for rejecting the reality of scientifically demonstrable results coming from that religious context.*

respect to alternatives.

Often pseudo-science and pseudo-theology appear in a context in which one is used to reinforce the other. Such efforts can be separated into at least three basic categories. First, there are forms of fatalism, in which knowledge of the universe and its future by means of pseudo-scientific approaches often turns ultimately into a pseudo-religion. Second, there are forms of gnosticism, in which secret or hidden knowledge is held out as the "key" to health, success, happiness, and "being right with God;" this hidden knowledge is obtained sometimes by pseudo-science, sometimes by revelation, and sometimes by a combination of both—in any case it is the knowledge itself which "saves." Finally, there are variations of the theme of the Eastern religions, in which self-induced transcendence over matter, finiteness, individuality, space and time, is achieved by discipline and meditation; such transcendence returns the separated self to the unity of the All and hence "saves."

One of the most significant lessons to be learned is that the practice of science by an individual *need* not be intimately related to his religious understanding. Authentic science and religion should go together; pseudo-science and pseudo-religion are often joined. But an authentic religious view can appear to be supported by pseudo-science, and a pseudo-religious view can appear to be supported by authentic science. Discrimination is essential.

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- <sup>2</sup>*Perhaps Happiness: A Scientology Handbook*, p. 5 (1973)
- <sup>3</sup>R. R. Michaels, M. J. Huber and D. S. McCann, "Evaluation of Transcendental Meditation as a Method of Reducing Stress," *Science* 192, 1242 (1976)

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. *Perhaps Happiness: A Scientology Handbook* defines "Operating Thetan" (p. 46) in the following way:  
Operating Thetan: a Clear who has been familiarized with his environment to a point of total cause over matter, energy, space, time and thought, and who is not necessarily in a body.  
Compare with similar ideas in Christian Science and Eastern religions. Is the concept of "Operating Thetan" a scientific one?
2. Why is the rejection of the Trinity and of the deity of Jesus Christ one of the hallmarks of every pseudo-Christian cult?
3. If fatalism were really authentic so that "reading the signs of the future" could be done to tell what must inevitably happen, what would be the point in reading these signs in order to be able to change the future? If the future

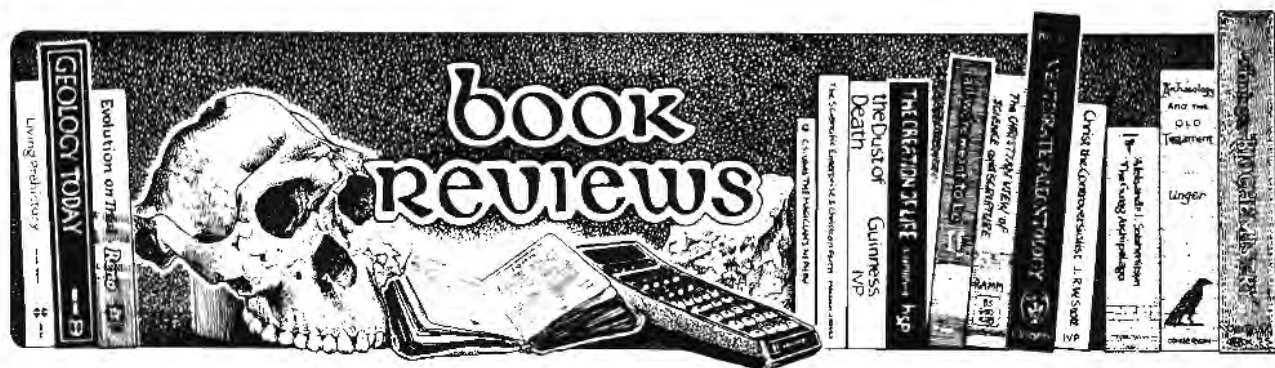
could be changed by deliberate action, then what "future" was being read?

4. There are many reasons for arguing that *ultimately* all things in the universe are related. Some fraction of my weight for example is determined by the furthest galaxies of the universe. In modern quantum physics we speak of the state of an entire system, recognizing the interrelatedness of the parts. Does this mean that all things are *equally* interrelated? In fact, does not our everyday ability to describe events depend crucially on the fact that only a few interrelations are sufficiently large to be non-negligible?
5. Trace the relationship between Gnosticism, idealism, Utopianism, and disillusionment. Discuss the importance of a critical realism to both authentic science and authentic religion.
6. Examine the following logical argument:
  - a. God is perfect.
  - b. Everything that God does is perfect.
  - c. God made man.
  - d. Man must be perfect.
  - e. Man appears to be imperfect.
  - f. Man's imperfections must be an illusion.
7. Is Buddhist science possible? On what grounds?
8. An article in *Scientific American* (February 1972) by R. K. Wallace and H. Benson claims scientific evidence that Transcendental Meditation reduces oxygen consumption, causes a rapid decline in the concentration of blood lactate produced by anaerobic metabolism mainly in muscle tissue, produces a rapid rise in the electrical resistance of the skin, causes an increase in intensity of "slow" alpha brain waves, and produces a decrease in respiratory rate and in volume of air breathed. TM's proponents often claim that it is related to neither philosophy nor religion. On the other hand, TM is practiced by the repetition of a "personalized" *mantra*, which the subject is never permitted to reveal; is alternatively called "The Science of Creative Intelligence," which is based on "the major discovery that there exists in every human being the constant source of intelligence, energy and happiness;" and its founder Maharishi Mahesh Yogi has been quoted as saying that "theoretically, if everyone practices TM, the problems of stress, war, and man's inhumanity to man would be non-existent." Given this kind of evidence, is TM a science, a religion, a pseudo-science, a pseudo-religion—or an eclectic mixture of several of these depending on who is doing what with it?
9. Given the need and the opportunity, would you try acupuncture? If it helped you, would you attribute religious significance to the outcome and come to accept ancient Chinese views of man's relationship to the universe?

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**ADAM AND THE APE** by R. J. Berry. London: Falcon Books, 1975. 8 pp.

This book, subtitled "A Christian Approach to the Theory of Evolution," is written by a Professor of Genetics at the University of London. By his own admission, it is *not* an attempt at a logical and metaphysical analysis of the issue, but a discussion at a layman's level to answer questions "people are really asking." Berry feels that it is high time that a number of myths were exploded on both sides of the issue, but particularly among Christians. By discussing both the creation narrative and the evolutionary evidences, he hopes to show that the data are compatible and complementary.

Dr. Berry's purpose appears to be two-fold. First, he sees the need to challenge the belief of many Christians that evolutionary theory is in actuality a paper tiger in the realm of ideas that can be dismissed with quick recourse to creationist writings or the "gap" theory. Secondly, he wishes to plead for a better understanding of the immanence of God. In this context, the book reads well but is confusing at times, as if the author assumes a bit too quickly that his direction is self-evident. He does not deal at any length with the motivations which have kept the evolutionary controversies alive beyond the nineteenth century.

The book is interesting reading, particularly the author's attempts to speculate on the interactions between Biblical and biological meanings. Some scientists as well as theologians might feel his reasoning was too loose at these points, but I enjoyed them (probably because I enjoy the same process in my own discipline, juxtaposing Matthew 15:10-20 with the afferent/efferent pathways in the nervous system and Luke 11:21 with the function of the reticular formation).

Berry touches on the history of the church-evolution controversy, illustrating how Christians reacted out of ignorance and out of feeling that God needed defending. Both Bibliolatry and rejection of the faith stem from misperceptions of the facts and issues, according to Berry. He develops this position very well but has to stretch a point or two, such as when he states (pp. 12, 34) that the Genesis account should be interpreted as the narrative of a hypothetical Hebrew observer; this treats the account as a primitive scientific report, which may distort the meaning of the Hebrew narrative form.

His call for an acknowledgement of the immanence of God is likewise incomplete because Berry doesn't seem equipped to follow through on his own. As a scientist, he seems to have difficulty dealing with

mystical, mythical, or metaphorical paradigms, while feeling that they may be called for. In short, Berry touches on some crucial issues which he doesn't seem to have the time or space to develop further. Among these are the differences between man and animals (also a key point for Richard Bube, "Biblical Evolutionism?" *Journal ASA* 23, 140 (1971)), the idea of the *imago Dei* as responsibility, and the relationship of morality and natural selection. He also contrasts pain and disease as biological mechanisms with the more theological concept of suffering (see also: Bube, "Original Sin as Natural Evil," *Journal ASA* 27, 171(1975)).

In some ways, this book is a polite and diplomatic way of pleading for Christians to cease and desist from uninformed and reactionary pronouncements on true scientific work. As such, it suffers from the drawbacks implicit in addressing two audiences: the searching Christian and the skeptical unsaved. But it is an attempt and a beginning that can be commended for its motives. Scientism will probably always be with us, but for the Christian to invest considerable energies battling it, in place of the patient education of self and others, results in a poor witness to society.

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Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, California.*

**SYMBOLS, SYSTEMS, SCIENCE AND SURVIVAL** by R. Wayne Kraft, Vantage Press, New York, N.Y. 10001. 246 pp. (1975) \$6.95.

Dr. Kraft is a Professor of Metallurgy and Materials Science at Lehigh University and is also director of the American Teilhard de Chardin Association, Inc. The

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## BOOK REVIEWS

sub-title of his book is "A Presentation of the Systems Approach from a Teilhardian Perspective." The hook springs from Teilhardian optimism, seizing the reality of present global crisis as the sign that man has

an opportunity of unimaginable magnitude and beauty and scope to build a world which is as superior to the one we live in as the one we live in is superior to a lifeless planet such as the moon. . . . Man does control his destiny. . . . The reader will realize that he can achieve his impossible dreams, that life is not hopeless, and that a better world can and must be built by us, every last one of us . . . provided we learn how to use science and technology to superhumanize us rather than dehumanize us.

My reaction in reading such works as this is to rejoice in the spirit and optimism of the author, and then to weep that he has so misjudged the reality of the human dilemma by deleting major portions of biblical revelation.

The book opens with some interesting comments on communication and understanding, and on interactions between communication theory and the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics. A quantitative measure of information is suggested by using the idea of probability as follows: "the more *improbable* a message is to a receiver, the greater the amount of information contained in the message."

The systems approach is advanced as the master key to unravelling the complexity of today's problems. The author sees a systems approach as a way to understanding complexity, and then through his optimism believes that understanding leads to wisdom, and that wisdom provides the means for building a better world. Many useful insights are given into the nature of systems and the inadequacy of a reductionistic viewpoint.

The author argues that "entropy, information and energy are *different* manifestations of the same mysterious something," and that an input of information into the system of the universe can offset the increase of entropy described by the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics. Thus usual predictions of the death of the universe are based on an inadequate picture. It is at this point that he introduces and accepts (essentially as faith presuppositions) the main elements of the thought of Teilhard de Chardin.

There must be an energy driving the evolutionary process because, otherwise, a universal evolutionary process as he envisioned it just would not occur. . . . If the universe is converging, as he believed it was, then there must be a driving force causing it to converge. The driving force he called radial energy. (p. 99).

Because the belief that there is only a finite amount of energy in the universe would lead to the conclusion that the evolutionary process would not ultimately lead to its destined conclusion, the belief must be rejected. To reject the concept of the universe as a closed system is to suggest that there are inputs into that system, not only of a spiritual nature as commonly argued in evangelical Christian circles, but of a physical nature, which really means that "the energy supply in the universe is forever increasing."

It is our purpose as human beings to discover that source of energy which gives us life, and then to learn how to use it to build the earth.

We can be no more than at one stage of a process in action, not the final stage.

In addition to being antiscientific, antireligious, preposterous, and egotistical, such a belief would be deadly because if man believes that there might be a reversal of the cosmic processes sometime, . . . then he would lose heart to progress and would never progress. The cosmic processes must be irreversible or man will die.

Dr. Kraft attempts to construct a model of the Beginning and the End, the Alpha and Omega of Teilhard's thought, in thermodynamic categories. Radial energy is interpreted to be love, "the most mysterious kind of cosmic energy . . . its source is Alpha. God emits love. God is love."

Finally Dr. Kraft seeks to identify the Teilhardian system as he has elaborated it with the main perspectives of historic Christianity. He indicates his acceptance that Jesus of Nazareth is the Savior of the world, but he does

not regard Christianity in an exclusionist sense which belittles and denigrates the values, truths, customs, and beliefs of the other major religions of the world, for I believe all the major religions of the world are in fact converging onto Omega.

He accepts the words, "This is My body . . . this is My blood" as being literally true, but at the same time holds that the "this" in these statements is "the whole world. . . . Its groaning, the suffering and anguish of its people are part of His sacrifice. Its evolution and development, the achievements and creations of its people are part of His glory." Dr. Kraft's definition of the Center of Centers leaves one wondering as to the meaning of the verb "is."

He is immortal. . . . He is unchangeable. He is eternal. He is supreme. He is supremely personal. He is the Creator. He is Lord. He is Master. He is Teacher. He is truth. He is process. He is system. He is space. He is time. He is spirit. He is entropy. He is evolution. He is Alpha. He is Omega. He is One. He is incomprehensible. He is my God—and yours. And He became a Man, in time, in the Person of Jesus Christ. And He, Jesus, loves me—and you.

He believes that "all the peoples of the world are part of the Church of God—whether they realize it or not."

The Church recognizes that it will only succeed insofar as it helps scientists become better scientists, black men better black men, Chinese more Chinese, democrats more democratic, Christians more Christian, yes I will even add, Jews more Jewish, Hindus more Hinduistic. . . . Somehow or other the Spirit of God works in all men—just because they are men.

As a consequence of this universalistic approach, we are led to a series of injunctions that human beings must follow if they are to be successful in building a new earth. Human beings *must* love, work, be patient, put love into practice, build our systems so that they reflect love, design them so that they promote love, "get over the idea that military, political, scientific, economic, or ideological supremacy is the path of progress," realize that we do not have all the answers, love our neighbor until it hurts, "try to solve the real problems of war, poverty, starvation, injustice, ignorance and prejudice," and "design and build our institutions . . . to permit and encourage each individual to develop

to his fullest potential." Amen and Amen. But *how* is sinful humankind, beset by a fallen nature in rebellion against God, to meet this long list of *must's*?

Dr. Kraft is realistic and humble enough to realize that it is not in our power to attain heaven, and that we can succeed only by the grace of God. But he misses the very means by which God has acted to provide such victory for us. He misses the uniqueness of the person, life, death and resurrection of Christ, all of which he believes in, but none of which is sufficiently important to claim his and others' complete commitment. In all such discussions of what *must* be the case and what *must* be done and what *must* happen in the future, one simple question (and its answer) is missing. That question is, "Yes, and what has God said?"

### GOD IN CHARIOTS AND OTHER FANTASIES

by Clifford Wilson, Creation-Life Publishers, San Diego, California 92115. Paperback. 144 pp. (1975) \$1.50

This is a quickly put-together continuation of the author's refutation of Erich von Däniken's *The Chariots of the Gods*, following such books of his as *Crash Go the Chariots* and *The Exorcist*. With a foreword by Tim LaHaye, the body of the book consists of a question-and-answer format between Wilson and Ralph Simons, proprietor of Western Book Company in Oakland, California, used in a series of radio broadcasts. Primarily the book is an array of contradictions of the claims made by von Däniken that may be helpful to someone who has found von Däniken convincing. In the ninth through twelfth chapters, Dr. Wilson passes on to his own opinions of UFO's; he both accepts their reality and is convinced that they are messengers of Satan.

Jesus said that before His return there would be signs in the sky. I believe we are seeing some of those signs as Satan uses UFO's in an attempt to deceive men and to lead them away from the true God.

Later chapters deal briefly with "The Relevance of Archeology to the Bible," and with the author's criticism of the movie, "The Exorcist," when viewed in biblical perspective.

**REINCARNATION, EDGAR CAYCE AND THE BIBLE** by Phillip J. Swihart, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515. Paperback. 55 pp. (1975) \$1.25.

Dr. Swihart, chief psychologist at Midwestern Colorado Mental Health Center, compares the teachings of Edgar Cayce with those of the Bible in this brief booklet. Cayce is probably the single individual most responsible for popularizing the idea of reincarnation in connection with pseudo-Christian thought.

Born in 1877 Cayce astounded the medical world for some 43 years with his "near perfect diagnoses" of medical illnesses "stated in proper medical terminology" although he had never had more than a sixth grade education. Initially considering himself as a devout Christian, Cayce came to trust more and more in his

psychic "readings," especially after 1923 when a wealthy printer named Arthur Lammers urged Cayce to use his abilities not only to arrive at medical diagnoses but to plumb the ultimate questions of life and its meaning. When his readings were complete, he had arrived at quite a different theology than that of the Bible.

In summary, according to the Cayce readings the Bible is neither accurate nor authoritative. Jesus was only one manifestation of Christ; there were many others. Jesus Christ was not God incarnate but an entity such as you and I. All of us sin and all of us will eventually achieve perfection by repaying our Karmic debt. This requires many lifetimes in which we work our way back toward an eventual reunion with God. There is no eternal judgment, for God does not judge.

The crux of the conflict can be seen most clearly through the words of Gina Germinara, a Cayce devotee, whom Swihart quotes as follows.

For almost twenty centuries the moral sense of the Western World has been blunted by a theology which teaches the vicarious atonement of sin through Christ, the Son of God. . . . All men and women are the sons of God. . . . Christ's giving of his life . . . is no unique event in history. . . . To build these two statements, therefore—that Christ was the Son of God and that he died for man's salvation—into a dogma, and then to make salvation depend upon believing that dogma, has been the great psychological crime because it places responsibility for redemption on something external to the self; it makes salvation dependent on belief in the divinity of another person rather than on self-transformation through belief in one's own intrinsic divinity.

Misunderstanding the nature of God, the purpose of creation, the person of Christ, the meaning of salvation, the quality of divine grace, Cayce and his followers end with a universalistic salvation for all after sufficient self-expiation through reincarnations, with "no judgment, no eternal accountability, no hell, and no existence or place called heaven."

Swihart goes on to consider those biblical passages quoted by Cayce and others in support of a biblical basis for the doctrine of reincarnation. In every case (Matthew 11:14; Mark 9:11-13; Genesis 14:18; Hebrews 7:3; John 3:3-6; John 9:2,3; Romans 9:11-14; John 8:58) Swihart shows convincingly that the exposition of a doctrine of reincarnation must be the consequence of an uninformed reading into the Scripture what is simply not there. "Reincarnation and biblical revelation are mutually exclusive."

*Reviewed by Richard H. Bube, Department of Materials Science and Engineering, Stanford University, Stanford, California.*

**BREAD FOR THE WORLD** by Arthur Simon, Paulist Press, New York, and Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1975. Paperback, 177 pages.

I highly recommend this concise paperback for anyone who wants to begin to get a grasp on the world food crisis.

Arthur Simon is head of an organization with the same name as the book, which tries to bring public opinion to bear upon Washington policy makers on the issue of world hunger and the role of the United States. The book, however, is much more than simply

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the mouthpiece of that organization.

It begins with an overview of world hunger and a summary of food production and demands on the food supply such as population growth. The "lifeboat" and "triage" philosophies are briefly discussed from the Christian perspective. Part II considers the question of economic development in the poor countries in easy-to-understand terms, and relates this to the issue of resources and environment in the West. The issues of Christian stewardship and human justice are touched upon, but the main thrust of the book is the need for corporate action:

The chief value of (simplicity of life and voluntary poverty) is spiritual and symbolic. (It) consists in lives that are placed more fully at the disposal of God and other people, and in keeping alive for others a sense of proportion.

Life-style adjustments should not, however, be viewed as a substitute for helping to enact needed public policies . . . 'eating lower on the food chain' by cutting back on grain-fed meat makes sense, but . . . does not automatically transfer food to hungry people. . . . Food will reach hungry people only if government policies see to its proper production and distribution. (pp. 55-56)

Consequently, the major portion of the book is Part III, "The Need for a U. S. Commitment," which includes chapters on foreign aid, international trade, foreign investment, and the role of the United States.

The book is particularly useful in that Part IV contains many suggestions for involvement by individuals and groups at various levels. The following are helpful to those who may want to teach a course on world hunger or include a unit on it in some other course: bibliography, list of films, Bible passages, and list of organizations involved with the issue.

This book is used in a course I teach at Wheaton College, called "Food, Hunger, the U. S., and the World," one of the courses offered under the college's new Human Needs and Global Resources (HNCR) Program of Studies. The program and the course were organized on the basis of the belief that as Christians, we cannot be aware of the plight of millions of poor people around the world without doing something about it. We concluded that while it may not be the role of an educational institution to feed hungry people, we could increase student awareness of the complex causes and consequences of the world food crisis and point out our corporate and individual responsibilities.

It is easy to lose one's objectivity when discussing an emotion-laden topic like world hunger. Therefore, an emphasis on facts and accurate analyses is essential. Arthur Simon's book meets this criterion and yet is simple enough that any individual using it can begin to relate to the issue.

*Reviewed by Bee-Lan C. Wang, Department of Sociology, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois.*

### **A Second Review of *Bread for the World* . . .**

I sat in my office eating a sandwich and began to read *Bread for the World*. I debated whether I should have a second sandwich when I suddenly realized I

had already eaten more food than that available to several million people every day. In a simple way Arthur Simon managed to convey to me the blessing of being able to decide to eat a second sandwich while living in a world where hunger is a way of life to more than 460 million people.

Arthur Simon is Executive Director of Bread for the World, a non-profit Christian organization whose purpose is to affirm the right to food for all individuals. As a mark of Simon's commitment, it should be noted that all income from the sale of this book goes to the organization. The group looks at the world situation with regard to hunger in light of Christ's call for us to serve, not to be served. Some searching questions are asked about the priorities in the United States, both governmental and personal. The unifying theme of the book is the liberation offered by Jesus and the impact this liberation can have upon the world if Christians are truly transformed people.

Simon has done a great deal of very careful research and his facts cannot be disputed. In addition, he tempers the listing of data with personal observations and experiences that others have had, experiences which bring home the enormity of the problem and the anguish of suffering in a way no columns of figures can ever achieve.

The problem of hunger is a complex one and Simon demonstrates this well. He discusses the "Green Revolution" and various aspects of increasing food production in other countries. World trade, industrial development, international commerce—all have a bearing on the problem of food production and distribution. Especially disturbing is the emphasis so many countries (including the United States) place on military strength, necessitating huge expenditures for machines of warfare, when the resources could be better used in ways which would benefit people more. The facts Simon presents are irrefutable; the implications are frightening.

Simon does not rest with simply describing the problems; he calls for solutions and offers ideas. Throughout the book there is a stress on Christian commitment and Christian responsibility; we are all challenged to examine our own lives and our own failings. A list of discussion questions for each chapter is provided, making this book useful for group study (and perhaps group commitment).

This is a disturbing book; it perhaps should be labeled "Caution: This book may be hazardous to your complacency". But it must be read and acted upon if we are serious about our dedication to Jesus Christ.

*Reviewed by Donald F. Calbreath, Director of Clinical Chemistry, Watts Hospital, Durham, North Carolina 27705.*

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**THE FUTURE: HUMAN ECOLOGY AND EDUCATION** by Edward A. Sullivan, Homewood, Illinois: ETC Publications, 1975, 154 pp., \$8.50.

A biomedical revolution is upon us in full force. Recent progress in the life sciences and in medicine have unleashed forces which will profoundly affect the future of each of us. Concepts which were mere speculation ten years ago are reality today. The new

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vocabulary of molecular biology includes such terms as cloning, genetic engineering and the like. Significant issues are being raised which call for both an understanding of the science involved and an ethical stance. Christians have a unique world view and can make important contributions to the problems being debated. In order to participate effectively, they need a reliable, comprehensive scientific explanation of the issues and a consideration of the ethical aspects of the questions being discussed. *The Future: . . .* offers neither.

The book deals mainly with developments and issues related to the mind and its function. After a brief review of the brain and nervous system, Sullivan begins to delve into areas associated with mind control and learning; such issues include electrical stimulation of the brain, a consideration of biofeedback control of body function, neurochemistry and the behavior of children. Each area receives a brief review of scientific progress and the author then looks into the future to examine the implications of current research and to speculate on the uses to which scientific findings may be put. The result is a sort of psychobiological *Future Shock*.

Unfortunately, the book has two major failings: there are factual errors and there is no serious examination of the issues. With regard to the first problem, a few examples can be cited. A discussion of the relationship between the XYY chromosome and a propensity to violence (pg. 65) leaves one with the impression that there is a definite cause-effect relationship when, in reality, the question is still quite controversial and unresolved. On page 74, Dilantin and diphenylhydantoin are referred to as two different drugs; however, Dilantin is the registered trademark for diphenylhydantoin preparations sold by Parke-Davis Co., so the two drugs are the same. A consideration of phenylketonuria on pp. 82-83 seriously oversimplifies the issues involved. The use of magnesium pemoline in altering the biochemistry of memory (pg. 89) ignores the controversy and conflicting data surrounding this drug. In discussing the effect of ethanol on physiological responses (pg. 96), the author seems unaware of data made available several years ago by the American Medical Association suggesting impairment at much lower limits than those stated in the book. Since the bulk of the references cited were from popular magazines and not primary scientific literature sources, many of the errors are understandable but seriously affect the reliability of the author's statements.

For the Christian, an examination of the ethical issues involved is important, but this is not done in the volume under discussion. Sullivan states various possibilities but draws no conclusions as to the propriety of his speculations. The serious student must look elsewhere for guidance to the many moral problems related to our progress in the biomedical sciences. The writer makes an attempt to cover a complex field in a simplified manner, but is not successful.

*Reviewed by Donald F. Calbreath, Director of Clinical Chemistry, Watts Hospital, Club Blvd., Durham, North Carolina 27705*

**ANIMAL NATURE AND HUMAN NATURE** by W. H. Thorpe, Anchor/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1974. \$12.50.

W. H. Thorpe, a prominent British ethologist, gave the Gifford Lectures, a long-standing series on "natural religion" at the University of St. Andrews in 1969-71. The book Thorpe has written, based on his talks, is primarily an examination of animal nature, but this examination is used as a basis for discussing other topics that are of more interest to readers of this *Journal*. I shall not attempt to deal with the ethological portions of the volume, except to state that they are interesting, reasonably up-to-date, and relevant to Thorpe's discussion.

The author is erudite, using the works of many philosophers, scientists, and theologians. He may roughly be summed up as a scientific non-materialist. Another way of summarizing Thorpe's view is that animals, man and the universe are more complex than many people think they are. His treatment of the topic does not allow for firm conclusions about his view of God, Christ or the Bible.

A recurring theme is that of hierarchical control, based particularly on the ideas of Pattee and Koestler. From hierarchy theory, and for other reasons, he thinks determinism is too simple, and that the origin of life and of consciousness are two profound discontinuities which a simple appeal to chance processes cannot explain.

Following Popper, Thorpe argues for the existence of both mind and soul, and goes as far as to admit to a belief in the existence of parapsychological powers. With MacKay, he believes that there really is free will. He also thinks that man is qualitatively different from all other organisms.

This is an interesting book, attempting with relative success to argue from nature for many principles which most of us believe that the Bible also teaches.

*Reviewed by Martin LaBar, Central Wesleyan College, Central, South Carolina 29630*

**EVOLUTION AND GUILT** by Juan Luis Segundo, Orbis Books; Maryknoll, New York, 1974. Volume V of *A Theology of a New Humanity*; 148 pages; \$7.95 Hardback.

This is a serious and important work by a Catholic Theologian with the help of the staff of the Peter Faben Center in Montevideo, Uruguay. The translation is by John Dury. The author is a Latin American Christian Marxist of the "Che" Guevara type who sees Christianity from a Teilhardian perspective. Father Segundo is a serious Jesuit Christian Moralist who is committed to dealing honestly, but from an evolutionary perspective, with both Scripture and Catholic dogma. This is no easy feat and volume V breaks new ground with almost every page. The basic approach of the author is to develop a structural framework for a Christian view on guilt and redemption that is both evolutionary, Biblical, and Catholic. While it is easy to criticize such a grand task, his book will inspire a great deal of thought and controversy. His tool is an

analogy between entropy and sin. "Entropy is sin" (p. 109) since it impedes evolutionary progress. The work reflects a heavy social orientation.

Teilhard de Chardin has been criticized for his inadequate handling of sin and redemption. Segundo seeks to remedy that. He starts by pointing out that guilt is an individual concept, based on an "immobilist" static view of mankind, and that evolution is totalistic involving all living things. Evolution is dynamic and goal oriented. (Teilhard's influence.) In Chapter 2, *The Energy Basis of Guilt*, entropy is seen from an evolutionary perspective as analogous to guilt in the immobilists' paradigms of the biblical writers. Since "Evolution moves towards ever more complex and potent concentrations of energy . . . and energy tends towards degradation . . . (evolution) does so by running counter to the statistically greater tendency toward even simpler . . . energy". (p. 23)

If "Evolution is a fact, then, it is a universal fact and the whole order of guilt is framed within it." (p. 25) Part of this guilt in Catholic Christian terms is concupiscence, since redemption does not save us from this part of our basic nature. Concupiscence is an operative law, just like entropy. "By definition, it is a negative tendency that paves the way for sin, something that inclines us toward sin." (p. 26). Entropy is tied into redemption by suggesting that despite the *quantitative* victory of sin or entropy, the quality brought into the world by God's incarnation will move us to higher evolutionary realms, in that we can qualitatively overcome sin and reach God. So God's incarnation is a real Historical event, but more than that. It is the redemptive force that pervades all—Humanity and the Universe. (Col. 1:15-20)

Christ, sin, and other biblical terms, when removed from their immobilist Biblical *situ* and are translated to a Christian Evolutionary perspective, are made to do double duty. "His redemption must be simultaneously at one point in time, and at the beginning of time." (p. 30) Since Biblical writers thought in immobilist, non-evolutionary terms, some careful reinterpretation is required. But the author concludes, after looking at Rom. 2:14-16, Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, Rom. 5:13, Gal. 3:17-20, etc., that Paul's view of Law and of Sin "would be contradictory" if he were not viewing it (Law & Sin) in evolutionary terms. Modern Man, as more fully evolved than ancient Man, is less instinctual (concupiscentual) and more choice-directed. He is more evolved. Societally, the conservative, static elements of culture are seen to mitigate against change or evolutionary forces, just as concupiscence mitigated against Love and free choice.

To illustrate the author's handling of Biblical material, it is worth while to see his analysis of St. John. When John writes about Christ taking away "The Sin of the world", it is *not* to be understood in the immobilists' categories of individual morality and personal redemption, but, here Sin is the structure of the world system which obscures their real import from man. The "alienating sin of the world is ideology". (p. 52) Christ's rejection by the world is a constant, since the world's social mechanism is conservative. But there *are* critical moments in history, so Christ's "*hour*" is His moment of opportunity. To overcome this conservative bent of Society is to be "Born Again". (p. 56)

Segundo states that "operating through immobilist

mental conceptions, John perceived that Christ's redemption was operating in an evolutionary framework." (p. 58) He then states that the key to understanding Christianity is to see it in evolutionary terms. The collective bent of Segundo is seen in his treatment of societal change. The traditional Christian view of internal individual conversion and subsequent societal outworking just won't do. It never has. Instead, the paradigm is the liberation of minorities in which interior conversion is not the cause, but is the result of change, since they (Christians) are not victims of mass mechanisms—they have overcome sin.

The demonic element in the Gospels is seen as the "prehuman, presocial stage from which Christ and His followers are commissioned to free Man". Satan shows up as the Base—Negative but Necessary—on which the humanizing power of God will build. What Segundo has done then is make sin the universal, as Scripture has done, by equating it with certain aspects of Law, concupiscence and society. Christ's redemptive work is also universal, since it fights entropy and the original quantitative force that brings disruptions and degeneration to every thing that exists. It is claimed that this view is far more primeval than the view that sin was committed by our first ancestor, Adam.

Having sketched his views on sin and redemption, he then relates them to Catholic dogma, arguing, for example, that just because dogma says it "is in no way evident . . ." doesn't preclude one from trying. Use is made of denz. 2302, "in which the Magisterium now admits that we do not find history, in the classical or modern sense of the word, in the first eleven chapters (of Genesis) . . . . . But fundamental truths about salvation and popular descriptions of the origin of the human race, both expressed in simple figurative terms."

In summary, Father Segundo has taken Biblical and Catholic materials and asked the question, "is it hurt if we view it through an evolutionary paradigm even if that was not the view of the Biblical writers?" His answer is no, the ideas of Scripture and the Historicity of the Christ redemptive event are fully compatible with an evolutionary approach.

How convincing is Segundo? First, for him, evolution is viewed in Teilhardian terms of goal orientation rather than a mechanism. Modern biology just won't buy that. In addition, many times his interpretation of Scripture is strained and awkward—he wants his ideas to fit the Bible so much. But many will feel that things have been stretched too far. Thirdly, he seems to deny, or at least pay scant heed, to God as Personal since his thrust is almost totally societal in orientation. So with Segundo, I have no Personal Savior.

*Reviewed by Fred Jappe, Dept. of Chemistry, Mesa Community College, San Diego, California*

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**CREATION VERSUS EVOLUTION? NOT REAL-LY!** by William A. Schmeling. Clayton Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1976, Paperback, \$3.75, 119 pp.

William Schmeling, a parish pastor and teacher, correctly places the creation-evolution controversy in the context of the broader Bible-science relationship. He modestly presents some guidelines and directions

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for reconciling this apparent conflict, as well as others, between the Bible and science. He believes the real problem is "with faulty definitions and assumptions we have about the Bible and science."

The point of the book is that both Bible and science are true. They are not classic enemies locked in mortal combat. Neither has to out-do the other in order to win, to be safe, or to prove something to the world. Creation and evolution are complementary truths, not antagonistic.

Schmeling confesses: "The Bible is the Word of God." "It is trustworthy, authoritative, and without error" as "a guide for life with God and a compendium of truth to outfit us for life under God" (by Paul's definition in 2 Tim. 3:16-17). "The Bible, including Genesis," is "a history of salvation, to equip us toward Christian completeness" . . . and is "a *theological* book." Schmeling also discusses the meaning of its inspiration.

"The Bible speaks its truth in the revealed answers to the great 'who' and 'why' questions of life." Science, as the pursuit of empirical knowledge, "has its truth in the demonstrable answers and theories concerning the 'what' and 'how' of things." Schmeling presents several helpful diagrams to clearly explain (1) these types of truth and what they reveal: the Bible-theological—essence (Who?) and purpose (Why?), science—empirical—description (what?) and function or mechanism (how?); and (2) how the Bible and science can give complementary approaches to truth in contrast to the false extremes of biblicism and scientism.

Schmeling probes "the creation accounts to ask questions of their meaning and purpose, not to undermine God, Church or Bible," . . . but "to come to renewed faith in God who creates and sustains heaven and earth." Almost half of the book is a detailed and refreshingly illustrated documentation of the two types of Biblical creation accounts: (1) Gen. 1-2:4a, Ps. 18:4, 30:3,9, 104:1-9; Eccl. 1:5-7, and (2) Gen. 2:4b-25. The first type declares God's transcendence and His orderly creation by fiat in the setting of ancient Sumerian cosmology; the second type relates God's immanence and personal participation in creation: both types presented as complementary revelations.

If the nature of Biblical truth is its accuracy in describing the methods and stages of the origins of things and of mankind, then we are left with an unresolvable difficulty: two unique accounts, two absolutely authoritative sources. If the nature of Biblical truth is something else, only then does this marked difference in detail cease to matter.

"The physical data in the accounts are meant to be no more than incidental 'setting' to make the theological point," because the physical "information is different in each account," and it . . . "is simply untenable in the light of present knowledge about the universe. There is no disrespect for God or the Bible in saying this. Both accounts are scientifically primitive." "Profound and eternal as theology, they are dated as descriptions of (pre-Ptolemaic) cosmology and geography."

The truth of the matter is that the cosmology of Genesis was probably as vast a concept to the writer, who could only walk or ride up to twenty miles a day, as the twentieth century cosmology is to us, who can go around the earth in a day and are fast approaching

interplanetary travel. The vaster the universe, the greater God's glory as its Creator, and thus the more profound the theological statements of Genesis.

"The theological purpose of the creation stories is to lead us to a knowledge of God, to an understanding of ourselves," . . . "to a loving relationship with God and to a working-living relationship under Him." In contrast, Sumerian and Egyptian accounts of creation are difficult to illustrate, are pre-logical (although their pre-Ptolemaic cosmology is similar to that of Genesis), are polytheistic, partly purposeful and moral, partly capricious and immoral, and somewhat pantheistic.

The Genesis description of the cosmos is not accurate. But the point it makes is absolutely true! God is Creator and Preserver of all things. Humankind is uniquely created for fellowship with God, for fellowship with itself, and for 'stewardship' over the whole earth.

These theological truths about God, humanity, and their relationship cannot be scientifically tested, because "they are outside the purview of scientific investigation."

Difficulties with alternatives other than biblicism and scientism are evaluated: "the elastic Yom" or Hebrew day = a thousand years or longer eon, the "mature creation" or apparent age belief, "the flood did it" answer, "they (the Sumerians) borrowed from us" superiority complex, "Creation Research" zeal, and von Däniken's explanations with outer space visitors. Schmeling's criticisms in general are: (1) these alternatives do not consider the primitive cosmology in Gen. 1, (2) they are naive in approach and theology, (3) they do not accept that the truthfulness of the Bible is independent of man's ability to account for scientific discrepancies, and (4) they present "contrived leaps of faith in the direction of biblicism." Since "the Bible is a theological document that neither requires nor admits of scientific verification, I personally find the 'cause' of the (Creation Research) Society tedious and unnecessarily consuming of Christian time and talent." Although biblicism vs. scientism is a Protestant dilemma, for Augustine it was a problem of Biblical Christianity vs. neo-Platonism, and, as a kind of pioneer of theistic evolution, he came up with the concepts: "creation in potential" and "creation in the beginning" (before time). For Roman Catholicism, the intervention of God in the creation of the human soul is a reasonable alternative, defensible theologically and not scientifically unprovable. Schmeling sees Chardin's Omega Point vision as a "mind-expanding" alternative.

The last chapter discusses "loose ends and new questions," giving references for further study: the nature and origin of the human soul, the meaning of "image of God," immortality vs. resurrection, the fall of man, our need of salvation, and Jesus Christ as the answer. The thrust of this book is but one aspect of "They're-taking-our-Bible-away-from-us-controversy," which has recently split the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. God can be speaking to all evangelical Christians through this unhappy situation. The publishers represent the moderate group (Concordia Seminary-in-Exile) of Bible scholars responsibly using historical-critical methodology. Pastor Schmeling is to be highly commended for his useful contribution to a faithful solution of a problem which has confused so many for too long. Although written in a popular style, his book

can be placed in the credible tradition of other, more scholarly writers, including a number of ASA members, such as Richard Bube, Robert Fischer, Walter Hearn, Bernard Ramm, and Aldert van der Ziel. The publishers feel this book will be so helpful for group study on teen and adult levels that a 20% discount on 10 or more copies (+ \$1.00 for postage and handling) has been offered.

*Reviewed by Jerry D. Albert, Mercy Hospital Research Facility, San Diego, California 92103*

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**IN THE BEGINNING GOD** by William Hartley, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1975, 112 pp., \$1.45.

This book consists of 50 two-page devotional notes on the first verse of each chapter of Genesis. The material was originally published as a weekly devotional in *Redemption Tidings*. While these notes may be suited to a periodical devotional page, they tend to lack cohesion when published in a single volume. Thus, the subtitle of the book "Jottings from Genesis" fairly accurately describes the content. It is a somewhat disjointed collection of thoughts on an assortment of themes. Thus, it is of little use as a commentary or reference book. It does not deal with creation as the title might suggest. However, once one gets over trying to read it as a commentary, it does reveal some insights, especially into the similarities between the struggles of the patriarchs and our own. Hartley's method is to extract from each chapter an application to our attempts to live the Christian life. Often the note has only a marginal relevance to the text, since Hartley often takes only a single phrase from the chapter and then enlarges on it. This book appears to have a fairly limited usefulness. Nevertheless, it is a very readable book and will undoubtedly continue to provide inspiration to many readers.

*Reviewed by Steven R. Scadding, Department of Zoology, University of Guelph, Guelph, Ontario, Canada.*

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**THE GENETIC BASIS OF EVOLUTIONARY CHANGE**, by R. C. LeWontin, Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1974. 346 pp.

Richard C. LeWontin is, in the opinion of many, the most important population biologist of our time. Not only are his research work and his theoretical insight both broad and deep, but he is very articulate in speech and on paper. He has made national news twice in recent years, both over issues of conscience. He resigned from the National Academy of Science over NAS secret work for the military, during the Viet Nam war. He has attacked fellow population biologist Edward O. Wilson for what LeWontin considers to be nondemocratic presuppositions in Wilson's book, *Sociobiology*. A committed Marxist, LeWontin will probably be newsworthy again.

*The Genetic Basis of Evolutionary Change* is not worth a full review in the *Journal ASA* in my opinion. However, its basic thesis, which is that we really know next to nothing about the genetics of evolution, is worth

pointing out, considering the stature of the author. The immense theoretical structure of evolutionary genetics, says LeWontin, is an idol with feet, body, and head of clay. His arguments are largely convincing and persuasive. A book for those with a strong background in evolutionary theory, most of it would be obscure to most *Journal ASA* readers. However, this very depth makes it the more impressive.

Two quotes, both italicized in the original:

*"To the present moment no one has succeeded in measuring with any accuracy the net fitnesses of genotypes for any locus in any species in nature."* (p. 236) and . . . *"in large part we know virtually nothing about the genetic changes that occur in species formation."* (p. 159)

*Reviewed by Martin LaBar, Central Wesleyan College, Central, South Carolina 29630*

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**SCHIZOPHRENIA: A SOURCE OF SOCIAL INSIGHT** by Brian W. Grant, Philadelphia: Westminster, 1975, 252pp., \$10.00.

From ancient times the psychotic person has been subject to polarized reactions in society. Sometimes the psychotic has been persecuted, ostracized, and punished; at other times he has been viewed with awe as the possessor of mysterious arcane knowledge, even elevated to the status of prophet or seer. In this book, the author devotes much of the first half denouncing drug treatment and hospital care of the psychotic schizophrenic because he views such treatment as persecutory repression by those who do not understand the schizophrenic language. In the second half, the author presents the schizophrenic as an unparalleled seer who possesses social insights that will cure the astigmatism of our community life.

The author is a chaplain, pastoral counselor, and professor at Christian Theological Seminary, Indianapolis. He speaks from this professional perspective to the church, calling it to provide a haven for the psychotic in the community and to be a translator of the schizophrenic insight to the society at large. Just why he picks on the church is unclear, particularly since he equates the church with "any humanistic community institution".

In brief critique, the author gives a simplistic formulation of schizophrenic process, totally misapprehends modern treatment, glorifies the distortions of schizophrenic perception into the quintessence of insight, gives us a mish-mash of Whiteheadian philosophy to justify the whole enterprise, and charges us ten dollars to boot for the book!

The book reads like an unedited Ph.D. thesis, which it turns out to be: from the Theology and Psychology division at the University of Chicago. That particular group of professors are known for their highly intellectualized approach, uncontaminated by fundamental clinical experience. Their tradition appears to be well established with their students. This book is a good example of what the rapprochement between psychology and theology is *not* about.

*Reviewed by E. Mansell Pattison, Department of Psychiatry and Human Behavior, University of California, Irvine, California*

**I KNOW IT WHEN I SEE IT: PORNOGRAPHY, VIOLENCE, AND PUBLIC SENSITIVITY** by Michael Leach. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1975. 153 pp. \$5.95 hardback.

This is not just another item in the continuing debate on pornography, but an entertaining and fresh approach to develop ethical standards for judging motion pictures. What makes a movie obscene? Is *Deep Throat* as immoral as *Super Fly*? In attempting to treat these questions the author leads the reader humorously through a critical review of noteworthy and representative motion pictures dealing with sex and violence, from first efforts to current hard-core. The author's reaction to *Deep Throat* (pp. 43-51) and *Death Wish* (pp. 86-89) is particularly graphic.

A former Roman Catholic priest and children's home administrator and currently a free-lance writer who is Director of Professional Services for The Seabury Press—Leach struggles to arrive at existential definitions. Pornography is a portrayal that stimulates a fantasy that society at large finds indecent. Obscenity involves material that has as a basic purpose the degradation, debasement, and dehumanization of persons. Focusing on both cultural mores of sex and violence as reflected in film, Leach asks the reader to consider what is really obscene and what simply appeals in a grossly incomplete manner to the unwholesome taboos of American society, many of which have been supported by religious moralism. Although concluding that many popular films are simply "junk," he senses that the Christian community has been overly sensitive to sexual pornography and undiscerning about the obscenity of violence. Encouraged by some recent trends, he hopes that the Church will be as realistic about the effect of violent films in the 1970s as it was enlightened about sex in the previous decade.

This book reads like fiction and will appeal to those who appreciate clever writing. More careful editorial revision might have prevented several minor inaccuracies such as faulty mathematics (p. 33), slightly incorrect titles, (pp. 56, 119) and spellings of personal names (pp. 114, 119). A helpful postscript presents a bibliographical essay which describes the usefulness of the sources consulted. This review essay deserves a wide audience for its thoughtful conclusions. Alas, it may not be selected for libraries of Bible colleges and some seminaries because of its explicit analysis, yet in a subculture where the military is in and nipples are out, this brief discussion could raise some significant questions with profound effect.

*Reviewed by Donald G. Davis, Jr., Graduate School of Library Science, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, Texas.*

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**WOMAN BEYOND ROLEPLAY** by Elizabeth Skoglund, Elgin, Illinois—Weston, Ontario: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1975, 112 pages, \$1.25.

The author, a counselor in Burbank, California, has written a brief but helpful guide to the problems confronting contemporary Christian women. Skoglund begins with an analysis of the many conflicting demands and expectations, expressed by the churches, by men,

by educators, and by the secular media, which burden so many women. As one who has tried to balance the roles of Ph.D. candidate, wife, and student pastor, I found that her description rang true to my own experience. Skoglund displays an admirable sensitivity to the needs of all sorts and conditions of women: the middle-age wife trapped in stifling marriage to an insensitive husband, the student who is searching for God's will for her life, the woman entering the business world and facing discrimination. She understands both the insecurity of the housewife who feels threatened by Women's Lib, and the anger of the woman who is held back by prejudice in the use of her God-given talents. On the evidence of the book, Skoglund shows herself to be a skilled and compassionate counselor.

Another fine feature of *Woman Beyond Roleplay* is the author's courage and frankness in discussing issues that would have been taboo not so long ago: divorce, women's sexual feelings toward men, and masturbation. In addition she has included discussions of the special problems of single women in a marriage-oriented society. Since she deals so competently with these, I wish that she had also found room for some additional women's concerns—particularly unwanted pregnancies and worrisome homosexual feelings. Evangelical women are not exempt from these anxieties, as I discovered several years ago during a summer hospital chaplaincy.

The major weakness of the book is its treatment of the issue of the husband's authority in marriage. The author criticizes other evangelical writers for their fuzzy treatment of the status of women, but she herself seems ambivalent. In fairness to Skoglund, it should be said that feminism is presently one of the most divisive issues within the evangelical community, judging from a recent debate in *Christianity Today*. Skoglund herself takes the more conservative position, namely that within marriage the husband should be the head of the wife. However, her assertion dies the "death of a thousand qualifications". She insists that the husband's authority must never be exercised arbitrarily, and she attacks forthrightly the idolizing of the male sex inculcated by *The Total Woman* and *Fascinating Womanhood*. Her "case study" of what male headship should be struck me as indistinguishable from the ideal of *mutual* submission in marriage as proposed by many feminist evangelicals. Skoglund also believes that a woman ought not to be the pastor of a church, although she challenges women to answer God's call as they hear it, and excludes them from no other job or profession. I find myself wondering how she would advise a woman who feels called to ordination. As a woman seeking holy orders myself, I cannot believe that God would deceive all women who hear that particular call as addressed to them. However, these sections of the book should provoke readers to thought and discussion.

On the whole, I would recommend the book highly to pastors, guidance counselors, youth leaders, and others whose advice may be sought by women. I would especially urge men who are confused and upset by the women's movement to read this book; it will help them understand why so many women are protesting against the old order, but it will also reassure them that feminism need not lead to loss of Christian faith.

*Woman Beyond Roleplay* is well written, avoids jargon, and contains many concrete case studies to serve as examples of the author's points. I found it enjoyable as well as informative.

*Reviewed by Rebecca Frey Wenger, graduate student in theology, Religious Studies, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut*

**THE CLASH BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURES**, by Donald E. McGavran. Washington, D.C.: Canon Press, 1974, 84 pp. \$1.75. (Now available from Baker Book House, Grand Rapids).

The author is Dean Emeritus of the School of World Mission and Institute of Church Growth of Fuller Theological Seminary, and was a missionary in India for thirty years. Because of his background, one would expect this book to be valuable for those who are interested in the cross-cultural communication of Christianity. Unfortunately the positive aspects of the book are greatly outweighed by the negative aspects.

The stated purposes of the book are very good. McGavran expresses the hope that it "will help Christians see the issues involved in the contextual nature of Christianity and work their way through to decisions in harmony with Biblical convictions" (p. 1). The central question is "*How can we incorporate different cultural patterns in Christian life while remaining soundly and Biblically Christian?*" (p. 35, author's italics), and he affirms with Biblical missiology that Christianity "*must fit the context and make adjustments to each culture into which it flows, while remaining true to its God-given revelation*" (p. 16, author's italics).

He also suggests a useful distinction among four kinds of Christianity, although they are more correctly *facets* rather than *kinds* of Christianity. Christianity One (theological Christianity) includes beliefs concerning God, man, sin, Scripture, salvation, eternal life, and right and wrong. Christianity Two (ethical Christianity) deals with applied value systems—what people should do under certain circumstances. Christianity Three involves church customs, including ways of worship, forms of prayers, canons of song and praise, and kinds of church organization. Christianity Four concerns the local customs of Christians. He sees accommodation of Christianity to a specific culture ranging from almost nil in Christianity One to almost total in Christianity Four. One problem with his model is the inclusion of "right and wrong" in category One, because most Christians tend to evaluate as right or wrong many cultural practices which more correctly belong in categories Two and Three. It is certainly correct that "Much of the confusion which exists concerning Christianity and cultures could be avoided if those discussing the matter were to state which of the four kinds of Christianity they were speaking about" (p. 49).

The clash between Christianity and cultures is seen as being between Christians, who believe that "God has shown men the true and living way and wants all men to walk in it" (p. 6) and cultural relativists, who hold that "Each culture has an inalienable dignity and right to exist; no man has a right to change it" (p. 2).

McGavran presents three proposals for resolving the clash. The first is to take a high view of Scripture, i.e., that "it is authentic and demands faith and obedience to all its declarations" (p. 52). The second is to take a high view of culture, which "regards each culture as *reasonable* given the specific circumstances in which it has developed" (p. 67). He hastens to add that seeing them as reasonable is not synonymous with seeing them as *right*. The third proposal is to allow differences of opinion in the relationship between Christianity and cultural practices.

Although these proposals seem straightforward, problems arise in attempting to understand McGavran's position. He sees the high view of Scripture as requiring faith and obedience to all its declarations, and claims that

The Church has again and again rejected symbolic or allegorical meanings alleged to lie behind the words of the Bible. The plain meaning of the Bible is the true meaning. Seeking behind the plain words for "new meanings which fit this new culture" opens the door to all kinds of subjective interpretations (p. 65).

Unfortunately we are not told whether he is dealing here with the crucial doctrines of the Bible or with all statements. Are we to act on the plain meaning of heaping coals of fire on the heads of people (Romans 12:20)? The accepted "plain meaning" of many Biblical passages is more correctly agreement on a particular interpretation.

A further statement makes his position even more difficult to understand.

The written Word is always supplemented by the spoken Word. What God currently says through his Word, the light which the Holy Spirit constantly causes to break forth from the Word, will vary from culture to culture and from age to age within the same culture, and thus further the possibilities of acting in ways which both conserve culture and obey God (p. 74).

His discussion of whether Christians in Bangladesh must refuse to work and shop on Sunday is inconsistent with his statement that all declarations of Scripture demand our obedience. Most work for Moslems and would be fired if they refused to work. Since the main markets are held on Sunday, women who did not shop then would be at a serious disadvantage. He concludes that they cannot be expected to have a full day of rest and worship, but that they should work toward that end. It is interesting to note that he does not draw any analogies to Christians in the United States whose jobs require Sunday work.

McGavran's second proposal is that we take a high view of culture, but he surprisingly insists that we reject the positions of cultural relativism, which has been primarily responsible for that high view of culture. Unfortunately he does not differentiate using relativism as a tool for understanding from using it for evaluation. There is a crucial difference between stating that beliefs and practices of a given culture should not be interpreted in terms of the standards of a different culture, and saying that all cultural practices are equally good and right. For example, the Eskimo practice of leaving old and unproductive people to die can be understood only in terms of limited resources which must be used to maintain the strength of those who are productive. To attribute to Eskimos

the same motivations, (e.g., callousness, selfishness, etc.) which we would to someone in our culture whose older relatives died through complete neglect would be utterly meaningless. Although a few social scientists use the concept of relativism in the extreme fashion that McGavran does, the majority are concerned with understanding rather than evaluation.

His understanding of the nature of culture seems to be minimal. He evidently sees cultures as aggregates of customs rather than as unified systems, because "although a high degree of relatedness is observable, the components are seldom essential to the culture. Most components can be changed or even abandoned without trauma" (p. 38). Although he gives examples such as the introduction of outboard motors, car-tire sandals, etc., there are many cases in which cultures have experienced widely ramifying changes because of the introduction of new technological or social practices. The introduction of the steel axe to the Yir Yiront of Australia is a classic example. Although the steel axe is not a great technological improvement over the stone axe, it affected relationships between the sexes, status positions, trading patterns, and indigenous religious beliefs and practices.

Another confusing statement is that there is one Christian culture. Since there is one way of acting, thinking, worshipping, repenting, and believing which is pleasing to God, the Christian culture is formed as this life style takes shape in "deeds, thoughts institutions, buildings, customs, languages, and dreams" (pp. 8-9). This new culture then "marches to a new drum beat" (p. 12), but surprisingly enough (given the specific categories listed above), not all cultures will be transformed into one uniform model.

In dress, diet, discipline, language, and form of houses and gardens (all neutral components), great dissimilarities will exist; whereas in love for the Lord Jesus, obedience to the Biblical revelation, what is regarded as sin and what righteousness, hope of heaven, and many other such matters, great similarities will exist (p. 13).

This is confusing. The implication seems to be that houses are neutral but that buildings (churches?) are part of the Christian culture.

The inference from McGavran's statements is that there are certain cultural structures which are essential to a "Christian culture," and that these will not affect the rest of the indigenous cultural system. Unfortunately we are left in ignorance concerning the nature of those essential traits.

We are given very few specific examples of customs that will be affected. As mentioned above, he evidently would condone working and shopping on Sunday, although others maintain that they are against Scriptural injunctions and therefore are in the category of sins. He agrees with the decision of the church in the Philippines to ban cock fighting for members, even though it is not proscribed in the Bible. His rationale is that the associated gambling leads to poverty, and the economic potential of the Christian community needs to be enhanced, not endangered. (Since there must be some winners as well as losers, one could possibly argue that it may well contribute to the economic well-being of at least some Christians).

McGavran is also against polygamy (more specific-

ally polygyny), which he labels a social evil. Recognizing that it is nowhere prohibited in the Bible, he states "Yet polygamy as a system is only tolerated in the Old Testament. It is not endorsed, much less commanded" (p. 79). This seems to be a weak argument, on much the same level as stating that the Bible condones slavery because in the New Testament Christians are never told to set their slaves free. In fact, there is at least one instance in the Old Testament in which polygyny seems to be endorsed. After David had Uriah killed so he could take Uriah's wife Bathsheba, the prophet Nathan's condemnation of that act included a list of things which God had done for David, among which was to give David his master's house and his master's wives (II Samuel 12.8).

McGavran sees polygyny as a social evil because if the population of sexes is approximately equal, some men will have no wife at all. Using the same line of argument, one could maintain that monogamy in our society is a social evil because, given the surplus of females, many women have no husband. Recognizing that most influential men in polygynous societies have more than one wife, and considering the fact that it is important to attract them to the church, he would allow interim adjustments. Men who had plural wives before accepting Christianity would be baptized, but the rule against Christians taking second wives would be rigidly enforced. Obviously Western values rather than the "plain teaching" of the Bible are being applied here.

There are a number of ethnocentric statements about cultures, of which only one illustration will be given. He comments that cultures are bound to be sinful because man is sinful, and that "God's holiness and righteousness make it impossible for Christians to believe God is responsible for the cultures of all races" (p. 11). There would be no purpose for such a statement unless he believes that God is responsible for the cultures of *some* races (or at least *one* race), which is an incredible idea. Certainly God cannot even be held responsible for the culture of the ancient Hebrews. (The term "race" is obviously used in an unscientific way; there is no such thing as a culture of a given race).

McGavran's third proposal is to allow for differences in opinion in the relationship between Christianity and cultural practices, but it is difficult to determine the extent to which he would follow this. His different statements cannot be readily combined into a coherent position. He notes that the older churches have tended to control the younger churches, with the objective of preventing the repetition of certain errors. He asks whether each group should not be allowed to make its own adjustments, even though we might consider some of them to be in error. In support of this position he cites the teaching method of Paul, which was

to preach, baptize, instruct for a few days, weeks or months, and *go away* leaving the new converts to the guidance of the Old Testament Scriptures, oral tradition about the Lord Jesus, and the beneficent influence of the Holy Spirit. Some congregations did what he thought they should not (witness Corinth), but he trusted the Holy Spirit and the Bible to correct them (pp. 29-30).

He states that theological Christianity (his category

One) "must not be unnecessarily burdened or stopped by inflicting on weak churches adjustments and patterns which suited strong churches in other cultures" (p. 81). As long as the new churches accept the Bible as "the sole authority in life and worship" (p. 28), they should be allowed to make some beginning adjustments. Since he has set the condition of accepting the Bible as their sole authority, it is meaningless to refer to "beginning adjustments" by new churches unless it is taken for granted that they will be expected to eventually conform to the customs of Western Christianity.

To further confuse the issue, he seems to give the missionary primary responsibility for making decisions.

No question faces the missionary with more insistence than what form Christianity should take when churches begin to multiply in a different culture. He faces the question not on a theoretical, but on an intensely practical level. If he gives the *wrong* answer, the church he founds will likely become a closed-off enclave of foreign religion. If he gives the *right* answer, soundly Christian churches will be more likely to multiply (p. 16).

By now it should be obvious why the usefulness of this book is questionable. McGavran renounces a cultural relativistic position (as he defines it), but his high view of culture requires a relativistic approach. His appeal to the "plain meaning" of the Scriptures is not consistent with his interpretations. His understanding of the nature of culture is confused. His approach to the way in which Christianity is to be accommodated to other cultures is inconsistent.

Although McGavran's stated purposes for this book (see the second paragraph of this review) are excellent, he has failed in helping Christians to understand the issues. One of his statements about others could well be applied to his own effort: "The evangelization of the world will be accomplished better if Christ's obedient servants avoid ambiguous generalizations and say exactly what they mean" (p. 50).

*Reviewed by Claude E. Stipe, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.*

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**BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS ON CRISES FACING THE CHURCH**, by Raymond E. Brown, S.S., Paulist Press, Paramus, New Jersey, 1975, \$2.45.

For centuries Roman Catholics have been accused of sacrificing the authority of Scriptures on the altar of tradition. With characteristic vigor, Vatican II struck a new note concerning the Bible's place within the church. Along with Sacred Tradition, it is to be, "accepted and venerated with the same sense of devotion and reverence."

Raymond Brown, the only American to serve on the Pontifical Biblical Commission, believes that the church is just beginning to face the immense impact that biblical criticism will have on the formulation of theology. A scientific approach to the study of the Bible yields results that have major implications for such contemporary issues as the ordination of women, religious education, the papacy, the role of Mary, and ecumenism.

In addition to the Hoover Lectures at the University

of Chicago, this book contains addresses by Brown to the National Catholic Educational Association and the College Theology Society. In them he considers the question of what will happen now that Catholics have joined with the rest of Christendom in a relatively common understanding of the New Testament.

Brown outlines a theology of the papacy based upon the principles of "diversity," "collegiality," and "subsidiarity" and suggests that the goals of ecumenism might best be served by approaching "the question of Peter" from the perspective of service rather than authority.

Unlike the papacy, mariology has remained outside the realm of formal ecumenical discussion. After searching the New Testament record, particularly Luke and John, Brown agrees with Wolfhart Pannenberg that it provides little information on Mary as a historical character. Her significance for Christians lies primarily in her symbolic role as the true disciple.

Anyone who has witnessed the long and bitter controversies among many Protestants concerning the contributions of biblical criticism may be less inclined than Brown to welcome wholeheartedly the advent of modern critical methods. Indeed he has been a favorite target for the abuse generated by members of Catholicism's far right. It does seem unfortunate that, as a man dedicated to the ideals of ecumenism, Brown should succumb to provocation by repeatedly referring to this segment of fellow believers in such intemperate terms as "right wing vigilantes."

Minor criticism aside, this little book is a lucid and easily comprehended survey of the church's attitude towards seventy years of biblical criticism. It points to the last third of this century as a time when biblical reflection will act as the pathfinder for theological discussion.

*Reviewed by Ann Spangler, Editorial Assistant, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503*

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**CONTOURS OF A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY: AN INTRODUCTION TO HERMAN DOOYEWEERD'S THOUGHT** by L. Kalsbeek, Toronto: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 1975, 360 pp., \$12.50.

Herman Dooyeweerd (1894- ) is a Dutch jurist and philosopher whose "Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea" (published in English as *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*) forms the basis for the present introduction by Leonard Kalsbeek. Dooyeweerd's work was conceived and developed within the context of the Dutch Calvinist tradition—a tradition which includes such eminent scholars as Groen van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Bavinck. These men have been significant contributors to the nineteenth and twentieth century renewal of Christian philosophy and Dooyeweerd's systematization can be seen as a major development in this ongoing process.

Basic to an understanding of Dooyeweerd's work is his assertion that *all* philosophy is grounded in certain presuppositions which, in turn, determine its direction. These presuppositions constitute a fixed starting point which is of a religious nature, transcending philosophic thought itself (i.e., not immanent). The re-

ligious root of human existence is the "heart" (out of which are the issues of life) and thus, it is the heart, directed toward or away from God, which forms the "ground motive" and determines the religious direction of all philosophy. The whole of Dooyeweerd's philosophy rests on this assertion, as does the possibility of a biblically directed Christian philosophy. Since all thought proceeds from a definite heart commitment, part of the ongoing task of Christian philosophers is to uncover the religious foundations of contemporary thought and to formulate specific alternatives based on the biblical ground motive of (according to Dooyeweerd) creation, fall, and redemption.

Dooyeweerd's alternative then represents a human attempt to ground philosophy, and all other sciences as well, in a biblical world and life view. His work reflects, throughout, a commitment to the authority of Scripture as the only legitimate foundation of Christian theoretical activity and thus, contrasts sharply with the work of Kant who held to the sufficiency of human reason as the "neutral" foundation of theoretical thought. Kalsbeek's frequent reference to Kant is helpful, both in clarifying the development of Dooyeweerd's thought and as an aid to understanding the unique character of his philosophy. While the contrast with Kantian Idealism is mentioned most frequently, the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea also stands opposed to any other philosophy which is characterized by an attempt on the part of man to construct his own (non-biblical) framework for understanding. Thus, Dooyeweerd's philosophy provides an alternative framework for addressing the important theoretical and social issues of our day.

The first half of this book is devoted to outlining the foundations of the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. This includes Dooyeweerd's thoughts on the nature of philosophy, the nature and meaning of temporal reality, and the problem of knowledge. Several chapters are then devoted to drawing out the implications of this philosophy with respect to specific social structures—the family, marriage, the state, the church, and "voluntary organizations". The final chapter contains a brief outline of a Christian philosophical anthropology.

The author states in the preface that, "this introduction is not intended for philosophers but for persons with an interest in philosophy who discover the existing introductions and extensive publications of Herman Dooyeweerd initially too difficult." I was quite impressed with the way in which these intentions were fulfilled. Kalsbeek does a superb job of explaining some fairly complex ideas; and his clarity of expression makes this a very readable book which should, indeed, be easily understood by one who does not have an extensive background in philosophy.

There are two additional features of this book which deserve to be mentioned. The first is the Introduction by Bernard Zylstra in which he summarizes the cultural-historical context within which Dooyeweerd's philosophy was developed. Secondly, there is an extensive bibliography, also compiled by Zylstra, of English, French, and German titles of books and articles related to the Philosophy of the Cosmonomic Idea. The bibliography should satisfy anyone who wishes to pursue the developments and implications of Dooyeweerd's work.

On the other hand, many of the titles listed are not likely to be available in the library of a secular college or university and may even be difficult to obtain under the best of circumstances.

My overall impression of this book is very favorable. It is first class introductory work which deserves to be read by anyone interested in the religious nature of theoretical activity, the possibility of a radically Christian philosophy, and the implications of such a philosophy for our response to contemporary social issues. Clearly, there are specific points which will have to be developed further or even altered completely in the light of fresh insights into God's Word. However, regardless of one's agreement or disagreement with some of the specific formulations of Dooyeweerd's philosophy, the spirit in which it was conceived certainly recommends his work to the Christian community for its consideration. The present introduction by Leonard Kalsbeek is, in my opinion, a very good place to begin.

Note: I made an inquiry at the campus bookstore aimed at finding out how easy it would be to obtain this book and was told that I should order it directly. In case you must do the same, here is the address of the publisher: Wedge Publishing Foundation, 229 College Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada, M5T 1R4.

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**LIMITS TO GROWTH**, by Dennis and Donella Meadows et. al., Signet books, New York, 1972, revised 1974, 207 pp., \$1.75.

A question: what book written in the past 5 years has sold over a million copies and foresees an apocalyptic vision of mass starvation, economic collapse, and death-dealing pollution, probably within the lifetime of us or our children?

If you are an evangelical, you probably answered with the title of one of Hal Lindsay's books. Well, there is another, enormously influential, secular book that presents such a vision. It is *Limits to Growth*, and it deserves far more attention from the Christian community than it has received. Although it was published in 1972, in searching the Christian Periodical Index, I have not found one reference to *Limits to Growth* or its content.

The authors are a team of systems analysts from M.I.T. They were commissioned by the Club of Rome, a non-partisan but highly placed group of businessmen, systems analysts and others to model the world economic system and investigate where it will lead if current trends continue. Beginning with work along these lines already done by Prof. Jay Forrester of M.I.T., they developed and computerized such a model taking into account five factors: industrial output, population, pollution, food production, and availability of natural resources. Using data collected throughout the world on the past and present state of these five variables and their interrelationships, a computer was programmed to trace their evolution. *Limits to Growth* is a non-technical account of the authors' conclusions.

The central features of their model are two as-

sumptions: continued exponential growth of the five variables (although at different rates) and the existence of finite limits to the world's natural resources and agricultural capacity. With these assumptions, the consequences of continued growth become obvious. The question becomes, not *whether* growth will be stopped by smashing against the limitations of our planet, but *when*. The startling factor in their projection is that these limits will be reached within the next hundred years. Furthermore, because of built-in delays in the system, the basic behavior of population is overshoot and collapse; i.e., population grows beyond the carrying capacity of the planet and agricultural and other resources are severely strained. This is followed by a collapse of population presumably due to disease, war, or starvation, until population is reduced to a level the world can support. The authors vary the parameters in several different ways, assuming first the world-wide availability of effective birth control, then effective pollution controls, then combining these and various other assumptions. Such policies generally only delay the inevitable by one or two decades. The only policy that does allow human life to be sustained without a collapse is an equilibrium or "no-growth" economy. In such an economy, population is stable, extensive recycling is carried out, and the mean world-wide standard of living is constant, although the model allows it to be higher than the current world-wide mean.

A variety of criticisms of *Limits to Growth* have been made. One is the standard criticism that predictions based on extrapolating past trends are tentative at best. This is a weak criticism in this case, however, as the authors are not attempting prophecy. They are attempting to tell what they foresee will happen unless things change and are calling for specific types of change to prevent these things from happening. Furthermore, these trends are real and their possible consequences need to be taken seriously. For example, population continues to grow and many of the most overpopulated parts of the world show continued resistance to birth control. The economy continues to grow and with it our rate of consuming natural resources; in fact, we tend to measure our national well-being by the rate of its growth. Even though some progress has been made in combatting pollution, resistance to further pollution controls in the name of economic growth is increasing. Another criticism is that the continued advance of technology will enable us to substitute other sources of energy or other resources for those exhausted and enable us to continually produce more food as population grows. This, too, is an invalid criticism as there are many reasons for regarding such a hope as vain. Among these are the fact that we do live in a finite world and we are going to encounter its limits eventually; for example, the effects of the "green revolution" were generously allowed for in the world model, yet population still overshoot the carrying capacity and collapse occurred. Also, technology has side effects which are often not beneficial and there is no guarantee that the kind of technology produced in the future will be beneficial; a large proportion of research and development today is toward military ends. And depending on technology as an "escape hatch" which allows us to conserve resources today without regard for the poor of today's world or for future generations is selfish and irresponsible.

There are two other kinds of criticism which appear more legitimate. One is that, to poor nations, a call to cease growth appears to be an effort on the part of the rich to bind them into permanent poverty. This has been mitigated recently, however, as in April of 1976, the Club of Rome dramatically changed its position from advocacy of a no-growth policy to advocacy of limited growth, focusing on enabling growth in underdeveloped nations. Another serious criticism is that it is difficult to see how a no-growth or even a limited growth policy could be maintained without rigid government controls. While this may ultimately prove necessary if growth has to be limited, the dangers of it are obvious.

There are several special areas of significance of this book for evangelicals. A few years ago books on prophecy and the second coming of Christ were extremely popular. This popularity reflected a general feeling among evangelicals that our world was hurtling toward an imminent apocalypse. *Limits to Growth* provides some objectively measurable factors and data which suggest that this feeling was more than just a temporary passing reaction to the domestic turmoil of the late 60's. It should remind us that, although the society we live in is presently concerned primarily with its pocketbook, the same limits, the same growth, and the same imminent danger still remain. Secondly, the basic issues the book raises are moral and spiritual. It calls for profound changes by individuals, by our society, and by the world, especially an end to finding status and satisfaction through possessing and consuming and an increased concern for other peoples and future generation. Although not worded in this fashion, these are essentially calls to repentance from national sins of greed and selfishness. *Limits to Growth* tells us where our sins will lead us unless we change our ways. This should call those of us who are evangelicals to check out our own lifestyles carefully to see if we have over-adjusted to our society and to work out practically what seeking God's kingdom first means in an indulgent, consumption-oriented nation. Also, and this is the third major implication, on issues like this evangelicals have significant things about values, lifestyles and repentance to say to our culture and we need to be more involved in finding ways to say it.

One aspect of our role in society as Christian believers is our view of government. There is a tendency among evangelicals to favor a laissez-faire role for government except in areas such as protection from crime and national defense. However, if the trends projected by *Limits to Growth* prove correct, the unrestricted growth resulting from laissez-faire will soon bring us to a major disaster. Furthermore, as the effect of some of these limits begins increasingly to be felt, pressures for governments to "do something" (which means assume more power) will increase. Evangelicals need to be ready for these pressures and need to be involved in influencing government toward ends consistent with Christian belief and practice. Otherwise the disasters portrayed in *Limits to Growth* could happen when evangelicals could have played a major role in either averting them or mitigating their effects.

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### Multiordeinal rather than Complementary

I found the dialogue between Cramer and MacKay about *The Clockwork Image* fascinating. While I believe I understand, and agree with MacKay's arguments, I too stumbled over his use of the term "complementary."

May I suggest a substitute term which clarified his presentation for me and which hopefully will resolve a major point of difference in their respective positions. It is the term "multiordeinal," a word of mathematical origin which is used extensively in general semantics. In fact, Alfred Korzybski, the founder of general semantics uses it so frequently in his book *Science and Sanity* that he abbreviates it throughout as "m.o."

Multiordeinal describes our capacity, indeed our need, to make statements about our knowledge which have validity at several levels simultaneously. Each lower order statement is subsumed under the one above it and each has a validity of its own. Frequently the lower order statements give no clue to the levels above them and when we move to higher order the added dimensions dramatically change the appearance of what we describe, so much so that if we are not aware of the m.o. of our language we fail to see any relationship between the levels.

In fact, the man-made dichotomy between religion and science can be traced to this very failure. Let me use a beautifully m.o. verse as an example. "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." At the theological level it refers to spirit; at the social level (including moral) it refers to person; at the scientific level it refers to process. (The Way answers How? not Who? and life is also a process, of course.)

To clarify why these are identified as different levels of abstraction, let us start at the bottom of the abstraction ladder with events in the physical world. The physical scientist searches for order in these events. At the next level the social scientist, and those concerned with morals and ethics, select as their field of study only that class of events which represent the highest order we know on earth, the human being. They in turn search for order between persons. At a higher level, the theologian abstracts further and is concerned with those higher order attributes of humans which have to do with communion with God. This uniquely human ability to abstract to indefinitely high levels places us above other creatures which cannot do it and below God who functions at all levels simultaneously and without the human limitation of abstraction. This total order at all levels simultaneously and without abstraction is the logos of John I.

While we cannot comprehend all of it in its entirety in this life, we can enhance our ability to understand if we recognize this multi-ordeinal. Each level is a legitimate field of study. However, if we eliminate any of these levels from our consideration we limit our search for the Truth which sets us free. This applies both to the Christian who ignores process and to the physical scientist who divorces spirit and person from his consideration.

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### What's The Solution To Pollution?

Pollution—the result of improper waste disposal—is one of the many problems facing our urbanized technological society. Stewardship in utilizing our natural resources seems to offer a solution to pollution. Some interesting principles may be found in

the Scriptures regarding pollution.

Pollution comes in three forms—water, air and solid waste. Only water pollution is of interest here, but the underlying principles also apply to the management of any waste.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is committed to the management of both point and nonpoint sources of water pollution in this country. Point pollution sources emanate from discrete pipes and are easily controlled by conveying the waste to a waste treatment plant. Nonpoint pollution sources do not emanate from discrete pipes and, consequently, are much more difficult to control. Examples of nonpoint pollution would be fertilizers and pesticides applied to agriculture crops, soil erosion caused by construction activities or rather highly polluted stormwater from urban areas. The control of nonpoint sources is much more complex. Management practices might include restrictive fertilizer and pesticide application rates, erosion control programs for construction activities or a myriad of necessary controls to improve urban stormwater quality.

The EPA has demonstrated leadership in water pollution control and Mr. Mark Pisano, Director of Water Planning for that Agency has stated:

Our approach to the non point source problem is based on the concept of 'stewardship of the land.' By this we mean that man's activities in the use of the land should not destroy the land's productivity for future generations. Reasonable care in the conduct of these activities will markedly alleviate, and, if we are right, essentially prevent this type of problem.

The interpretation is—let us assert some responsibility and take care of the land; we have to preserve it for someone else to use too.

Chaucer states "... and out of olde bokes, in good feyth, cometh al this newe science that men lere." Interestingly, one of the oldest books, the Bible, contains instructions about both stewardship and waste disposal.

The underlying philosophy which pervades the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) is that of the individual's responsibility. The first four commandments deal with the individual's responsibility to God; but the latter six deal specifically with the individual's responsibility toward others and/or their possessions.

Further instructions in individual responsibility, waste disposal and stewardship also appear. A caveat placing the onus for waste disposal on the individual—the one who creates it—is found in Deuteronomy 23:12-14 (RSV). There it states:

You shall have a place outside the camp and you shall go out to it; and you shall have a stick with your weapon; and when you sit down outside, you shall dig a hole with it, and turn back and

### The Fat Furor

In an ironic commentary on the abundance of American life, concern for being overweight is reaching an hysterical peak. Now a flood of Christian books on how to lose weight is appearing, each claiming to provide the basic key on how to lose weight. The *Journal ASA* offers to its readers all they need to know about losing weight in the following four points.

1. Be sure that you really want to lose weight.
2. Know that for every pound of your present body weight, you can eat 16 calories a day without gaining or losing weight. (For example, if you weigh 150 lb., you can eat 2400 calories a day with no change in body weight.)
3. Know that for every 3500 calories less than that indicated in 2., you will lose one pound. For example, if you now weigh 150 lb. and eat 1900 calories a day, you will lose 1 lb. in 1 week. If you eat 2150 calories a day, you will lose 1 lb. in 2 weeks. If you eat 1400 calories a day, you will lose 2 lb. in 1 week. As far as weight loss is concerned, it does not matter what you eat, only how many calories. There is, therefore, no need to eliminate anything completely from the diet, and no basis for developing a martyr-complex. Choice of nutritious foods is, of course, desirable.
4. Get a pencil, a pad, and an up-to-date book of calorie values in different foods (*The All-in-One Calorie Counter* by Jean Carper and Patricia A. Kraus, Bantam, \$1.50, is a typical example). Don't put anything in your mouth without writing down the corresponding calories on your pad. At the end of each day, add up the total. You can't go wrong - and you can save a bundle compared to all the other money-making ways of helping you lose weight.

cover up your excrement. Because the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to save you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, that he may not see anything indecent among you, and turn away from you.

Both the method (bury it) and the place (outside the camp) of disposing wastes are defined. Wastes disposed in this manner were potentially useful as a fertilizer and it was not offensive to anyone else. Disposing the waste outside the camp would also prohibit any indecent exposure among individuals, since it presumably would be accomplished in private. This is stewardship along with responsibility, and as the Biblical passage also states, adherence to it would prohibit the Lord from seeing anything indecent among his people.

The solution to pollution is both stewardship and responsibility.

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## The Question of Synchronicity

Page Smith, distinguished historian and author, brought out *A New Age Now Begins: A People's History Of The American Revolution* for the Bicentennial. His editor asked him to guess how many pages the book had in its final form, and he guessed 1776. No, she said, 1976.

"I'm a believer in synchronicity, serendipity, chance," Smith claims. "History is full of those. They should play as important a role in research as they seem to play in life." Smith recalls the awesome fact that both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson died fifty years to the day after the signing of the Declaration of Independence—on July 4, 1826.

Christian author George MacDonald said in his novel *Wilfrid Cumbermede*, I do not believe we notice half of the coincidences that float past us in the stream of events. Things which would fill us with astonishment, and probably with foreboding, look us in the face and pass us by, and we know nothing of them."

I notice little of what floats by in the stream of events, but as a C.S. Lewis researcher, I have noticed the following coincidence in my very limited personal list of a few people related to C.S. Lewis research:

9th Street—location of Dr. C.S. Kilby's home in Mississippi  
9 Bradshaw Drive—address of Eugene McGovern, editor of the New York C.S. Lewis Society journal  
19 Shakespeare Road—address of Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Miller, who cared for the Lewis brothers in their last years  
19 Beaumont Street—address of Walter Hooper, Lewis's literary executor  
19 W. Orange Grove—address of Marilyn Peppin, officer of the Southern California C.S. Lewis Society  
1557 N. Orange Grove—address of John Beck, Smeagol Films, who is now filming the Lewis trilogy  
466 Orange Street—address of Hope Kirkpatrick, officer of the New York C.S. Lewis Society  
1344 E. Mayfair, Orange—my own address  
4013—house number of David Hendrickson, editor of the Portland C.S. Lewis Society publication  
43 Bowness Ave.—address of Clifford Morris, C.S. Lewis's car hire driver and good friend

Incidentally, I just received a letter about C.S. Lewis research from an English professor at Oral Roberts University. I see that the University is located on Lewis Street. Enough!

I am really not interested in trivia for its own sake. I grant that my collection of related addresses is not overwhelmingly impressive. But if indeed these patterns of synchronicity are prevalent (as Arthur Koestler asserts quite convincingly in *Roots Of Coincidence*), what is the answer of the Christian when we eventually have to face some very challenging questions about it from non-Christians? And what are those questions going to be?

I am a layman untrained in science. I have heard hundreds of stories about Christians who had experiences like needing \$109.62 on Tuesday at the latest, and receiving \$109.62 on Tuesday from an unexpected or unknown source. Many of us feel affirmed in our Christian faith by special patterns like that in our lives. Are we going to be told that these experiences, like the death dates for

John Adams and Thomas Jefferson and the senseless clustering of address elements among a few C.S. Lewis people—that these examples of synchronicity are a matter of physics? Are we willing to take that facet of reality in stride if it is true, and to incorporate it into our Christian world view? I'm not only willing; I'm eager. But I am unequipped.

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## Judging Scientific Research

*Dr. Harris B. Rubin's research into the effects of marijuana on male sexual response to pornographic movies has received considerable publicity in Science magazine. This letter of mine to the Editor of Science was not published.*

I found most disconcerting the editorial remarks of the author of Briefing (Science 192, 1086 (1976)) concerning the research program of Dr. Harris B. Rubin. First the author describes the congressional debate as: "On the one side were arrayed the forces of rationality and progress. On the other were those who stood for morality and traditional values." Toward the end, he/she said, "The result is a defeat for science . . ." The implied dichotomy between rationality and morality is enough to concern the sensitive reader, but the final declaration suggests a reductionistic approach that sets a dangerous precedent.

Curiously missing from the debate over the Rubin research is any consideration of the human rights and dignity of those participating in the research program, or of the morality of subjecting human beings to immoral practices, harmful to them, for the sake of scientific understanding. Such an approach is based on the presupposition that exposure to sexual stimuli and experience outside the context of a love relationship is not harmful to those involved; I personally disagree completely with this presupposition and can find no scientific basis for it. By direct and indirect implication the approach reduces the potentially unique sexual expression of a love relationship between two whole persons to a simple matter of tumescence. Even more harmful is the practice of enacting sexual relationships between two "research subjects" for the progress of science, while totally disregarding the relationship between the sexual act and the human attributes of the whole person. Next on the agenda may well be research into how much pain a person can stand, justified, of course, on the grounds that this will aid in alleviating suffering!

As one whose professional life has been dedicated to the integrity of science, I would have not the slightest hesitation in voting against this kind of reductionistic disintegration of human personality.

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## The Trouble With The Virgin Birth

I believe in the biological truth of the virgin birth. That is easy. But it isn't enough.

I can't *think* much about the biological truth of the virgin birth, because I can't find any comment anywhere on the obvious alternatives we have to sort out in order to think clearly about the subject. (How much do we really value a creed if we don't care to think about it?)

Here are the six questions about the virgin birth that block me.

1. Could God have used a kind of parthenogenesis within Mary? (As I recall, parthenogenesis is full development of an egg into an animal without benefit of fertilization. It occurs in nature in certain lower animals and has been accomplished in laboratory experiments with certain more complex animals.)
2. If the ovum was never fertilized, then Jesus' genes were all from Mary. What are the biological implications of that for the kind of man Jesus was? What could have been the nature of his chromosomal pattern?
3. In contrast, do any Christians hold the theory that the Holy Spirit implanted a zygote (fertilized ovum) within Mary? If that were the case, Jesus was no more a physical descendent of Mary than of Joseph, but her body nurtured Him without contributing any genetic material. Would this tie in with Christ being the second Adam, a new creation?

4. The only alternative I can see to the two ideas above is the idea that God implanted a sperm full of chromosomes into Mary's body to unite with her ovum. Is that an acceptable idea to orthodox theologians? Supernatural insemination.
5. If God created or transferred a certain sperm into Mary and united it with an ovum, what genetic code did He use? Surely not His own, I assume. Could He have drawn a sperm of David from a "celestial frozen sperm bank" so that Christ was literally the SON of David? (Here, of course, I am talking about the code, not the speck of material.) Did God use a sperm from Joseph? Or could Christ actually be the Second Adam genetically in that the sperm He grew from carried Adam's exact chromosomal pattern? (This, in contrast to the David theory, would give him twenty-four unfallen chromosomes out of forty-eight.)
6. My final question sounds zany, but I don't mean to be profane. I ask it in reverence. All time is now to God, I truly believe. Jesus was fully God and fully man. As a true human man, Jesus had sperm in His testicles, didn't He? Those sperm had genetic codes. Perhaps God took one of those sperm from Jesus' mature body and moved it back in time (from our point of view) and implanted it inside Mary to unite with her ovum to form Jesus in her womb. So He was physically the Son of God because He was His own father. If this idea is out of court, why?

In conclusion, I am willing to happily accept mystery at the point where human reason and knowledge fall short. But won't some perceptive Christians who know biology guide me to that given point? I can't get there on my own.

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### ***All We're Meant to Be***

I would like to share some reflections regarding the book *All We're Meant To Be*, reviewed in the March 1976 issue of the *Journal ASA*. I was saddened by much of what I read in the review, and book itself. Any notions I had of the evangelical movement having unified beliefs were largely shattered.

Some interesting, and positive things were included in the book. Overall however, the following points stand out: (1) The book intimates that only those Christians that find themselves in an "ideal" cultural setting can be joyful believers, and suggests that true joy on earth comes, not from being reborn in Christ, but one's earthly environment. It's inferred, that one's peace in the Lord is dependent on other people's choices, rather than my regeneration and relationship with the Lord. (2) The title "Biblical approach to Women's Liberation" seemed indeed quite unbiblical due to extensive use of secular references; opinions of theologians known to be more liberal than many evangelicals; secular opinion placed on 'equal footing' with the Holy Word. (3) Low regard for the wisdom, constancy, and inspiration of *all* Scripture. For example, Paul's writings are set against those of Jesus as if they don't mesh, and we must *choose* between them. It is hinted that one is redundant, or naive, to take the Scripture at face value. It breeds doubts about many "distasteful" passages. (4) The salvation message, is viewed as, "But the Good News was that *achieved* roles were what counted in the kingdom of God . . ." p. 84 (5) Wholesome attitude of acceptance of order, rightful authority, peace of the body, and love for brothers in Christ is lacking. I was left with the impression that the book's intent was not to praise and honor God, but rather to negate all that didn't conform to current women's lib standards. A prevailing mood of defiance seems characterized by the comment on page 20, "To speak of God otherwise is considered blasphemy." Many were shocked to hear singer Helen Reddy accept her Grammy Award with, "I'd like to thank God because She made everything possible." Any pastor who began by praying, "Our Mother, who are in heaven . . ." would probably be defrocked forthwith. Yet the Bible is not afraid to use that image of God . . .

With regard to discerning biblical principles, I thought the book was weak in realizing that Christians and non-Christians are guided by *different* values. Quotes from non-Christians seemed to be utilized as if automatically applying to the believer's circumstances (i.e., attitude toward being single) . . .

For a book claiming to be "A Biblical Approach to Women's Liberation" it seemed to include far too many unrelated references. While scholarly by English Department standards I expect, many of the over 275 references were not close to being exegetical. No effort was spared to bring the weight of today's secular women leaders, past cultures, psychology, et. al, down on the "wayward and errant man of the Bible." (marks my own) Though this often made for interesting side points, constant

### ***Propitiation***

*Four laws of ecology:*

- 1) *Everything is connected to everything else.*
- 2) *Everything must go somewhere.*
- 3) *Nature knows best.*
- 4) *There is no such thing as a free lunch.*

—Barry Commoner,  
*The Closing Circle.*

Eradicated molecules obey  
the laws of nature's faith  
and go somewhere,  
affecting something else,  
living their amnesiac lives  
disguised as foods or poisons—  
reincarnated polymorphously;  
eternal matter.

Someone or something pays  
for every advance or growth;  
for every giant mankind step,  
mankind is expended.  
Germs hosted by man  
are devoured by sewer worms  
who lose, obeying rules  
of ichthyology.  
Fish, in turn, on mankind's plate  
are a truly unfree lunch.

There is no death;  
there is no end to Hell.  
Eradicated molecules obey  
and go somewhere.  
Someone pays for every death;  
a price is recorded  
for every redemption.  
There is no inexpensive grace,  
only a resurrection—  
for which One has paid.

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evangelical exegesis is suspect. . . .

Of major concern to me was the degrading way the Holy Scripture was handled. For example, Paul's writing was treated as being less inspired than Jesus. Are we to now see his writing as only semi-inspired? or 25% inspired? The book has the thrust of casting doubt over the authority and trustworthiness of Scripture, generally. . . .

As to the inferences that God has somehow slighted or ripped off those unmarried people, the need to believe God knows best is apparent. Again, the biblical principle: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Prov. 3:5-6, is missing in applicable and *needed* situations covered by the book, in my opinion. . . .

In closing, I want to thank the men and women of this evangelical magazine for their rigorous efforts to *keep* this such a publication. We know that the path of least resistance among seminaries, denominations, and periodicals, is to become "of the world." May the Lord continue to bless your ministry.

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### ***There Is a Second Edition***

With regard to the review by Geoffrey A. Manley in *Journal ASA* 28, 136 (1976) of our book, *The Case for Creation*, we regret that the reviewer did not utilize the second edition.

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# Inerrancy Is/Is Not The Watershed of Evangelicalism: None Of The Above

In *The Battle for the Bible* Harold Lindsell joins Francis Schaeffer in *No Final Conflict* in arguing that the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy is the watershed of evangelical Christianity, upon which all else ultimately stands or falls. If the term used in place of "inerrancy" were "trustworthiness," "authority," "reliability" or the like, there would be little question about the cogency of this claim. But the very term "inerrancy" has lost its meaning - or had its meaning sufficiently obscured - that to carry into battle a banner with only this word held high can do little but scatter the people of God as they vainly seek to combat an elusive foe. If I am asked to answer whether (a) inerrancy is the watershed of evangelicalism, or (b) inerrancy is *not*, I can only reply that the answer must be, "None of the above."

On p. 129 of *The Battle for the Bible* Dr. Lindsell describes me as "an articulate spokesman in support of biblical errancy." This statement is itself an admirable example of the difficulty in using the terms "inerrancy" and "errancy." For Dr. Lindsell's statement is certainly true in terms of *his* understanding of "inerrancy," just as it is certainly false in terms of *mine*. A survey of several brief quotations from writings that have developed the theme according to the perspective I presently defend indicate a consistent position for almost 20 years.

A consideration of the total revelation of God . . . leads to the conclusion that the Scriptures are indeed verbally inspired, inerrant, and infallible as a *revelation* of God by Himself to men . . . This by no means implies that there are "errors" of fact in the Bible, but rather that the criteria for judging fact are often either uncertain or irrelevant to the revelational purpose of the Bible. ("A Perspective on Biblical Inerrancy," *Journal ASA* 15, 86 (1963))

The discovery of errors in the Bible is the result of asking the wrong questions to ascertain revelational content. . . . If, on the other hand, one is guided by the Biblical criteria, all of the supposed Biblical errors and contradictions are resolvable problems. (*The Encounter Between Christianity and Science*, p. 98 (1971))

It is possible to affirm that on the basis of God's faithfulness in the Scriptures, there is no error in the Bible when it is properly interpreted. ("Inerrancy, Revelation and evolution," *Journal ASA* 23, 81 (1972))

The more important question is: does the Bible set forth a *true* description of reality? Christian faith presents a clear affirmation, "Yes, that is exactly what the Bible does." (*The Human Quest*, p. 117 (1972))

In view of my clear and consistent denial of the existence of errors in the Bible, how then does Dr. Lindsell come to the conclusion that I am a "supporter of biblical errancy?" Such a conclusion is possible only because the term "inerrancy" means something quite different to Dr. Lindsell and to me.

This difference can be illustrated most clearly by comparing two quotations.

The Bible is not a textbook on chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, or medicine. But when it speaks on matters having to do with these or any other subjects, the Bible does not lie to us. It does not contain error of any kind. (*The Battle for the Bible*, p. 18)

The only criterion which is consistent with the Bible's own testimony is that which establishes that an error exists in the Scripture only if it can be shown that the revelation of Scripture fails to achieve the purpose for which it is given. ("Inerrancy, Revelation and Evolution," *Journal ASA* 24, 81 (1972))

Again we have a semantic conflict. I interpret these statements as indicating that Dr. Lindsell defends "arbitrary inerrancy" whereas I am defending "revelational inerrancy." I call the former position "arbitrary inerrancy" because it demands that the Bible be judged as free from error regardless of what kind of arbitrary criterion is used to judge by, even one independent of the Biblical purpose of revelation; I call the latter position "revelational inerrancy" because in the process of communication through historical documents, only the ability to convey the intended message can be the ultimate criterion of reliability. On the other hand, Dr. Lindsell considers the former to be "total" or "biblical inerrancy," the only form consistent with the integrity of an inspired Scripture, and he considers the latter to be a "partial" or "limited inerrancy" because it is not as inclusive as his own definition.

In presenting three possible views of the Bible, Dr. Lindsell argues (pp. 18, 19) that either (a) the Bible is not at all trustworthy, (b) the Bible is truthful in all its parts (arbitrarily inerrant, using my definition), or (c) the Bible contains some truth and some error. But his conception of inerrancy forces him to miss a fourth view of the Bible, the one which I would defend: the Bible is totally trustworthy in presenting to us the revelation of God, but if it is regarded as arbitrarily inerrant, some of the questions that we may put to it may result in *our* concluding there is error present - error according to the perspective of arbitrary inerrancy, but not error according to the perspective of revelational inerrancy, and *not*, therefore, actual error in the Bible.

Others have and will argue the case against "arbitrary inerrancy" more cogently than I, both from a historical and a theological position, but it seems to me essential to emphasize two aspects of such a case.

1. The most ardent advocate of "arbitrary inerrancy" applies his principle only with great care, falling back time and again on the principles of "revelational inerrancy" to argue that *this* was *not* really an error, after all, because the purpose of the authors and of the Holy Spirit were better served by the form taken. Thus differences between descriptions of the same event in different biblical accounts are interpreted as being consistent with the purpose of the authors not being to provide *verbatim* accounts. Different chronological ordering of events in different accounts is interpreted as being consistent with the purpose of the authors not being to provide chronological ordering. The difference between New Testament quotations of Old Testament passages and the Old Testament passages themselves is interpreted as being consistent with the overall purpose of the New Testament writers. Direct mis-statements of fact, as in Matthew's three sets of 14 generations in the genealogy of Jesus (whereas there were five other generations that Matthew omits) are interpreted as being consistent with the author's purpose in giving this genealogy. So many exceptions are routinely cited by the advocates of "arbitrary inerrancy" in order to defend it, that its defense seems arbitrary indeed. More importantly, its defense seems not at all consistent with the Bible's own testimony of the kind of book that it is.

2. On p. 19 of *The Battle for the Bible* Dr. Lindsell suggests that the "errors" that exist in the Bible according to his interpretation of the view that departs from that of "arbitrary" total inerrancy, can be assumed to have arisen "incidentally and accidentally, not intentionally." But such "errors" as Dr. Lindsell would find on the principle of "arbitrary inerrancy" are not present in the Bible because of some slip of the mind or pen; they are present of *necessity*. Any book that seeks to communicate to men of many different ages and cultures, many different worldviews and civilizations, must be written in a form that is meaningful to those for whom it is immediately intended without obscuring its meaningfulness for those who are to follow after. Nowhere is this more clear than in the discussion of whether or not the Bible is scientifically true. By insisting that the Bible must be scientifically true, Dr. Lindsell is insisting upon an impossibility - for the simple reason that what is scientifically true is defined by each generation for itself. To suppose that our present scientific views are "true" and that previous ones were "false" is to misunderstand the necessary transient nature of "scientific truth." Revelation, given as communication as is the Bible, must be given in terms of the "scientific truth" of the people for whom it was written. It is the task of inspiration to insure that this process will not obscure the meaning of the revelation for future generations; the Bible is an awe-inspiring evidence of how this can be accomplished. It must remain, however, that the revelation of God's Creation can be expressed equally truthfully in terms of the three-layered universe, the Ptolemaic universe, the Newtonian universe, or the Einsteinian universe. The model chosen will be determined by the date the revelation is given; the message is timeless and applicable to all generations. If it is demanded that the Bible speak with an ultimately true cosmology - which one shall we demand? We know that tomorrow's will differ from today's. To suppose that "error" and "truth" can be handled in these matters in terms of naive intuition or common sense, is to misunderstand the nature of these terms as they must apply to scientific questions in a historical continuity.

It is true that Dr. Lindsell senses this argument and on p. 190, in connection with his discussion of Beegle's writings, he seeks to reply. His reply is essentially that if God wanted to convey absolute scientific truth, He could, because God is sovereign. This reply does not recognize that there are indeed things that God cannot do. God cannot act contrary to His character, He cannot lift a stone heavier than He can lift, He cannot make the sum of two and two be five. And He cannot take a relative thing like

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"scientific truth" and absolutize it in revelatory communication. If the law of contradiction is not applicable in describing God and His activities, then we have come a long way indeed from biblical theology.

Because of the confusions discussed above, the term "inerrancy" has outlived its usefulness. The basic authority and reliability of the Scriptures as God's revelation continue to be watersheds of evangelical Christianity. But it is not a shibboleth about "inerrancy" that truly challenges the evangelical community today - it is not there that the watershed is to be found. The watershed, as in every other day, is still to be found in whether Christians are obedient to the Lord they serve.

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### Determinism vs. Free Will

I am pleased to see articles in *Journal ASA* devoted to important theological topics such as "Determinism vs. Free Will" by Richard Ruble in the June 1976 issue. However, five or six pages is probably not enough to expect a clarification of all the areas of confusion associated with this particular subject.

The format of Ruble's article is such as to suggest that there are essentially only two positions, viz. determinism and free will, but in this discussion he actually refers to several different positions, and many of his comments are relevant to certain specific positions rather than to determinism and free will generally. It is a source of much frustration to one discussing this topic to have his position confused with another one, and this is certainly a major factor contributing to the heat with which this subject is frequently debated.

Ruble's discussion of determinism often suggests a view in which a person's decisions are mechanically determined by events and natural laws over which he has no control, thus implying that he is no more responsible for his behavior than a rock is for its. On the other hand, the first argument the author suggests in support of determinism does not imply such a mechanistic doctrine. This argument is based on the nature of God, and so should be of special interest to those of us who value the theological approach. From God's nature one reasons that since the Creator freely acts with perfect knowledge of the consequences of his actions, no event should be regarded as ultimately purposeless or accidental. Forcing mechanisms are not necessary. What is contradicted is not freedom, but chance, which, unfortunately, Ruble lists as a synonym for free will even though attributing decisions to chance is not the same as claiming responsibility for them.

I enjoy the stimulation of articles like this and hope to see more such theological discussions in future issues of *Journal ASA*.

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### Justification by Faith Alone

A recent letter in the September 1976 issue of *Journal ASA* with regard to the Understanding of Roman Catholics caused me to reexamine an article by Russell L. Mixer (*Journal ASA*, 28, March 1976) entitled "Scripture and Science with a Key to Health." The letter discusses Mixer's inclusion of the Roman church in the list of groups presumed to be outside the mainstream of evangelical Christianity. The writer then laments the *Journal's* inclusion of such writing within its pages, feeling such statements to be "offensive and unfair."

I wish to compliment the *Journal* for printing such statements, for it is in the context of such exposition as Mixer's that we are obliged to reconsider the relationship of such groups to the mainstream of evangelical Christianity. The second article of the *ASA* statement of faith refers to Christ as the sole "mediator" between God and man. The Scriptures in Romans ch. 3 and 4 declare by divine inspiration that justification is by faith alone in Christ's atoning sacrifice. In the face of such a doctrine, the Roman church continues to stand behind the assertion made at the

Council of Trent (1545-63) that justification is a result of faith plus works; this constitutes a direct challenge to Paul's warning to the Galatians (ch 1, v 8-9). To the extent that Mixer's inferences cause our Christian brothers within or outside of the Roman church to again question such distinctions, the inclusion of such statements are a valuable service and a sign of the unwillingness of the *Journal* to simply allow such distinctions to be ignored.

The "evangelical" perspective referred to in the letter is, perhaps, broad in some areas and rather narrow in others. But to assert that the Biblical manuscripts teach or imply justification by other means than solely faith is either to imagine a contradiction between the books of Romans and James, or to deny the perspicuity of Scripture.

Knowledge of these doctrinal differences (deep ones to be sure) are often assumed in the writings of evangelicals, without restatement. For this reason, statements which regard the Roman church as lying outside the mainstream of evangelical Christianity may seem bigoted to some. On the other hand, if there is danger in associating with or contributing to such an organization as the Roman church, then what appears to be a bigoted statement is really simply an instructive one, which should raise honest questions in the mind of the reader.

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### Unfair to Jay Adams

The article "An Analysis and Critique of Jay Adams' Theory of Counseling" by James Oakland was most unfair in his presentation of Adams' material. He tried to discredit Adams' whole theory as nothing more than an opinion, supporting his argument by a string of misrepresentations of the material in Adams' *Competent to Counsel*. Oakland's careful selection of

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"evaluations" to include in his article made certain the onesidedness was preserved. Having read Adams for myself, I find Oakland and company far from accurate or fair. Must the *Journal* stoop so low?

The most glaring flaw in Mr. Oakland's article is that after accusing him of wrongly interpreting Scripture, he never offers a more appropriate interpretation which would discredit the nouthetic method. The basic argument comes down to one of how much can God be trusted? Adams says that God knew what He was doing when inspiring the Bible, referring to 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, *thoroughly* furnished unto *all* good works." Evidently Oakland disagrees, but not just with Jay Adams.

By saying that the Bible cannot thoroughly furnish a man "unto all good works" is to say that man is somehow wiser than God. The impression left by Oakland is that psychoanalytic theory is able to put together a whole man without the Scriptural model, and the theory supercedes what is "out-dated" in the Bible. Our generation is not the first to see such a departure from Scripture: "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:22) Another area where Oakland has sadly gone off the track is in the area of sin. All the "evaluators" are worried about calling "mental" patients "sinners" because of a fear of offending the client. There should be no fear of offending the person in this respect, because his need for God is evident.

Rosemary Camilleri accuses him of being a "frightened evangelical . . . , frightened of sin." But it appears to me that the people who Oakland cited in his article are the ones who are afraid, afraid of sinners' ridicule. Otherwise, they would be more willing to acknowledge the consequences of sin (in a sinless world,

there would be no mental disorders). Adams is merely, and rightfully, calling a spade, a spade.

What is the ultimate effect of Oakland's system of non-Christian psychiatric counseling? People are allowed to continue evading their responsibility before God, and to continue masking and denying their guilt for negligence and disobedience to the Scriptures. The Bible is made to appear incompetent where it claims expertise. People never learn how to use the Bible effectively for future problem solving on their own. So he keeps returning to the psychiatrist all his life, never really solving the problem for good, never getting saved because the psychiatrist was afraid to tread on his toes. This process keeps the psychiatrist in business now, but I doubt if his eternal account can bear much fruit.

Adams' system provides for guiding a person to a lasting answer, and also to a Book which can guide him his whole life. The homework ridiculed so fiercely by Oakland, is merely a tool which forces a person to stop relying on someone else to solve his problems for him, and to start recognizing, through Scripture, his own mistakes, developing an ability to solve his own problems. This will produce people who are willing to stand firm in their faith, and can endure a testing "by fire." The counselor may not soak as much money out of a patient through years and years of extended counseling, but his eternal account with God will bear much fruit. For this effort, Jay Adams should be praised.

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### SCIENCE AND RELIGION

A three-week course to be taught by  
*Professor R. Hooykaas, D.Sc. (Utrecht University)*

and

*Professor D. M. MacKay, B.Sc., Ph.D. (University of Keele)*

at the Regent College Summer School,  
Vancouver, B.C.  
July 4-22, 1977

The course will begin with a consideration of the historical relationship between Science and Religion. Natural theology and biblical theology will be covered and an attempt made at a proper understanding of both nature and scripture. It will go on to consider the basic principles on which Christian faith and scientific thought should be integrated and to apply these principles to practical issues in the areas of physics, "artificial intelligence" and the science of man.

Dr. Hooykaas, Professor of the History of Science first at Amsterdam and then at Utrecht, is well known for his important pioneering work in the relationship of science and faith. His most recent book, *Religion and the Rise of Modern Science* has been widely acclaimed among Christians in the sciences.

Professor MacKay, Head of the Research Department of Communication at Keele, has written and lectured widely in the fields of brain research, computing, communication theory, philosophy and theology. Among his publications are *Information, Mechanism and Meaning*, *Freedom of Action in a Mechanistic Universe* and *The Clockwork Image*.

The names of both men will probably be well known to readers of the *Journal ASA*. To have them both together in North America for 3 weeks is a rare opportunity. Regent College, situated on a major university campus, warmly invites ASA members to seize the chance to hear them and enter into discussion with them.

The tuition cost for the 3 week course will be \$60, plus registration fee of \$15. Fuller details and registration forms are available either from the ASA office or from The Registrar, Regent College, 2130 Wesbrook Crescent, Vancouver, B.C. V6T 1W6. Canada (604-224-3245).

Founded in 1941 out of a concern for the relationship between science and Christian faith, the **American Scientific Affiliation** is an association of men and women who have made a personal commitment of themselves and their lives to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who have made a personal commitment of themselves and their lives to a scientific description of the world. The purpose of the Affiliation is to explore any and every area relating Christian faith and science. The *Journal ASA* is one of the means by which the results of such exploration are made known for the benefit and criticism of the Christian community and of the scientific community.

Members of the **American Scientific Affiliation** endorse the following statement of faith: (1) *The Holy Scriptures are the inspired Word of God, the only unerring guide of faith and conduct.* (2) *Jesus Christ is the Son of God and through His Atonement is the one and only Mediator between God and man.* (3) *God is the Creator of the physical universe. Certain laws are discernible in the manner in which God upholds the universe. The scientific approach is capable of giving reliable information about the natural world.*

**Associate Membership** is open to anyone with an active interest in the purpose of the ASA. *Members* hold a degree from a university or college in one of the natural or social sciences, and are currently engaged in scientific work. *Fellows* have a doctoral degree in one of the natural or social sciences, are currently engaged in scientific work, and are elected by the membership. *Dues:* Associate \$13.00, Member \$18.00, and Fellow \$25.00 per year. A member in any of these three categories can take the *special student rate* of \$5.00 per year as long as he is a full time student.

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**LOCAL SECTIONS** of the American Scientific Affiliation have been organized to hold meetings and provide an interchange of ideas at the regional level. Membership application forms, ASA publications and other information may be obtained by writing to: AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION, Suite 450, 5 Douglas Ave., Elgin, Illinois 60120.

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#### **1977 ANNUAL ASA MEETING**

*The Annual Meeting of the ASA will be held at Nyack College in Nyack, N.Y. on the Hudson on August 12-15, 1977. Dr. Kenneth Pike will be the principal speaker; he will be applying his linguistic skills to areas of interest to scientists and Christians. For further information on this annual meeting, write Bill Sisterston at 5 Douglas Ave., Elgin, Illinois 60120.*

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