

W O R L D V I E W S

TEACHING
TEXTBOOK

I N F O C U S



THINKING LIKE A CHRISTIAN

*Understanding and Living
a Biblical Worldview*

DAVID NOEBEL
WITH CHUCK EDWARDS

INCLUDES
CD LEADER'S GUIDE
with detailed lesson plans for
homeschool, youth group, college, and adults.

TEACHING TEXTBOOK • TEACHING TEXTBOOK • TEACHING TEXTBOOK
"... a masterful job of
leading high school and
college students... take
them through Thinking
Like a Christian."
-Chuck Colson



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Nashville, Tennessee

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Published in 2002 by Broadman & Holman Publishers
Nashville, Tennessee

DEWEY: 248.48
SUBHD: CHRISTIAN LIFE / DISCIPLESHIP

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Cover and interior design by
The Gregory Group and Paul T. Gant, Art & Design—Nashville, TN

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10-Digit ISBN: 0-8054-3895-5
13-Digit ISBN: 978-0-8054-3895-6

6 7 8 9 10 09 08 07 06

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Introduction to the *Thinking Like a Christian* Study

HOW TO USE THIS TEXT

The *Thinking Like a Christian* study consists of four components which can be used independently or—for the best learning experience—in a coordinated teaching plan. The components are:

- (1) This textbook
- (2) A Leader's Guide CD included with this textbook
- (3) A separate Student Journal for directed, interactive learning
- (4) A separate Video that gives a comprehensive overview of biblical worldview thinking.

TO USE THIS TEXT AS AN INDEPENDENT RESOURCE

Getting a quick overview of this material will help you take in all it has to offer. To begin with, read the entire first chapter. Chapter 1 points out the significance of understanding Christianity from a worldview perspective. Then read the “Summary” sections at the beginnings of chapters 2–11. This will present the scope of our study. Following your review of the summaries, read Chapter 12 in its entirety. This chapter explains other worldviews that vie for attention (and devotion)—Secular Humanism, Marxism/Leninism, and Cosmic Humanism. While this text focuses on the Christian worldview, it is important to recognize the opposition to Christianity of other views and the individual and collective influence of those views on the world in which we live. Finally, read chapters 2–11 all the way through.

TO USE THIS TEXT IN CONJUNCTION WITH ONE OR MORE OF THE OTHER STUDY COMPONENTS

The above-mentioned method of reading the text works well as a start for using the larger *Thinking Like a Christian* study, and here is a summary of how each of the other elements contributes:



(1) **STUDENT JOURNAL.** The Student Journal expands the study of the worldview disciplines presented in each chapter of the text. The five daily exercises contain excerpts from corresponding chapters in the textbook. The Journal, however, is peppered with illustrations different from those found in the text, to give students a broader perspective on each week's topic. The pacing—one lesson for each of five school days per week—is designed to help students absorb the sometimes weighty concepts inherent in understanding a comprehensive worldview.

(2) **THE VIDEO.** The 60-minute, documentary-style video greatly enhances the learning process. It is divided into segments of approximately five minutes each, summarizing the ten disciplines. We recommend either of two viewing patterns:

#1: **WEEKLY LESSON REVIEW:** View one 5-minute video segment on Friday of the week as a review of that week's lesson.

#2: **MID-TERM AND END-OF-COURSE REVIEW:** Schedule two separate days for interactive discussion of the previous six lessons. You can stop the video after each 5-minute segment for a brief discussion, or students can simply watch the video and take notes as a review of the material.

(3) **THE CD LEADER'S GUIDE.** A forty-five minute interactive lesson introduces students to the topic for each week and is designed to foster interest in the subject studied. Each discipline is covered by a detailed lesson plan to simplify preparation, along with resources such as creative activities, worksheets, and hand-outs (permission is granted to reproduce them for the members of your class), and teaching outlines formatted to allow you to adapt lessons to your own knowledge level or teaching style.

PREFACE

JOSH McDOWELL

Speaker and author of best-sellers

Right from Wrong, Why Wait? and *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*

This generation is faced with the greatest and most serious cultural crisis in history. And the crisis is a direct result of a radical change in the way people view what is true.

I've given more than 23,000 talks to students in universities and high schools in 100 countries around the world. What I'm finding is this: When I make a statement about the deity of Christ, the resurrection, or the reliability of Scripture, I have people come up to me and say, "*What right do you have to say that? You're being intolerant! What right do you have to judge anyone's moral life?*"

These questions come from a totally different view of life than was once the case. We are now living in not just a post-Christian culture, but an anti-Christian culture!

That's why you face a challenge unlike any other in recent history. Before you can know how to respond to our changing culture, you must first understand how the Bible relates to all of life.

In this book, you will encounter a biblical worldview. Each chapter explains a way of looking at the world that gives hope, meaning and a greater understanding of how God fits into every part of your life. Once you've made this way of thinking your own, like the leaders from the small tribe of Issachar in the Old Testament, you will understand the times and know what you should do (1 Chronicles 12:32).

Josh



CHAPTER 1



Thinking about Worldviews

KEY QUESTION

What is a worldview?

KEY IDEA

A worldview is any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement, or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world, and the relationship of people to God and the world.

KEY QUOTE

“I now believe that the balance of reasoned considerations tells heavily in favour of the religious, even of the Christian view of the world.”

—C.E.M. JOAD

SUMMARY

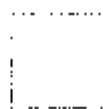
Every individual bases his or her thoughts, decisions and actions on a worldview. A person may not be able to identify this worldview, and it may lack consistency, but the most basic assumptions about the origin of life, purpose, and the future guarantee adherence to some system of thought.

Because worldviews are pertinent to every person's life—the way we think and the way we act—and because virtually all worldviews promise some sort of salvation or utopia, the study of worldviews is of critical importance.

This study lays out a biblical Christian worldview. The reason this approach is so crucial is that Christians today generally are not taught the importance of thinking in biblical categories. As a result, the Christian community is having little influence in the larger society, especially in the areas of education, government, and the mass media. And more tragically, we are losing our Christian young people to alien worldviews that dominate popular culture and the college campus.

By the time you complete this study, you should understand how certain ideas comprise a worldview's content and give it form. Christians will fight the good fight of faith, finish the course, and keep the faith (2 Timothy 4:7) if they understand the truth of their worldview.

After years of skepticism and relativism at work in America and abroad, the world yearns for a revival of soul and spirit—that is, a revival of truth. The biblical Christian worldview forms the basis for such a revival. This text sets forth that worldview.



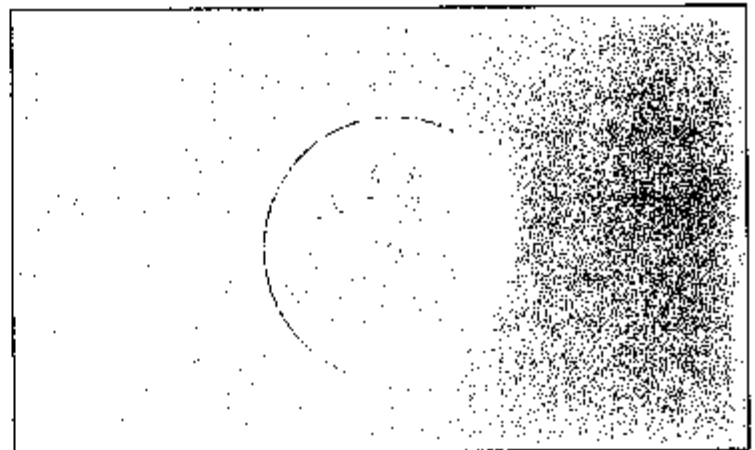
Ask the average person about his or her philosophy of life and you will probably get some sort of answer, even if it turns out to be a little sketchy. While many people may not be sure what they believe, all admit to some set of ultimate beliefs and values. This set of beliefs is the basis for one's whole approach to life, or worldview. And while everyone has a worldview, most have a tough time defending what they hold to be true.

The reason it is difficult to discuss the issue of worldview is because our generation has lost the art of thinking deeply about why we believe what we believe. We are not accustomed to considering seriously life's most foundational questions. Yet, because actions are based on beliefs, everyone must start with a few basic assumptions about our place in the world. So the question is: "What's your worldview?" To answer that question we must define what is meant by the term "worldview."

How should a worldview be defined? This question has various answers depending on whom you read. Some Christians divide worldview along theological lines. Thus, worldview categories are listed as atheism (no God), theism (God is), pantheism (God is all), panentheism (God is in all), deism (God is transcendent), finite Godism (God is finite), and polytheism (God is many).

This is the approach of Norman Geisler in his book, *Worlds Apart*.

James Sire slices the worldview pie differently. In *The Universe Next Door*, Sire includes chapters on deism, naturalism, Christian theism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern pantheistic monism, and the New Age. Then there is the approach of R.C. Sproul in *Lifeviews*, where he outlines secularism, pessimistic existentialism, sentimental humanism, pragmatism, positivism, pluralism, relativism, and hedonism. Using biblical terminology in his book, *How Now Shall We Live?*, Chuck Colson describes how every worldview answers three major questions: Where did



Every worldview attempts to answer questions about creation, the fundamental problems of the world, and the solution to those problems.

we come from? (the question of creation), What's wrong with the world? (or what Christians call "the fall"), and What's the solution to man's basic problem? (the biblical term is "redemption").

UNDERSTANDING THE TIMES

While each of these approaches to worldview thinking is helpful in various ways, this text follows the divisions found in *Understanding the Times*.¹ In that book, David Noebel defines worldview by using the following ten disciplines: theology, philosophy, biology, psychology, ethics, sociology, law, politics, economics,

"A worldview is a way of viewing or interpreting all of reality. It is an interpretive framework through which or by which one makes sense of the data of life and the world."²

—NORMAN GEISLER, WILLIAM WATKINS

and history. This arrangement has several advantages. First, as will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, each of these disciplines is a part of God's creative and redemptive order. They are not artificially derived constructs, but are actually a reflection of how God made the world, ordered man's place in it, and redeemed it.

Second, these ten categories are easy for the average student to identify. At some point in life, everyone asks the question, "What about God?" (theology). Also, we are curious about what is real and how we know what is true (the questions philosophy ponders). We have questions about life's origins (biology), how to understand

EVERY DISCIPLINE EXAMINES ITS OWN WORLDVIEW QUESTION

Discipline	Question
Theology	Is there a God, and what is God like?
Philosophy	What is real, and what is true?
Biology	What is the origin of life?
Psychology	What is the basic nature of mankind?
Ethics	What is right?
Sociology	How should society be structured?
Law	What is the basis for law?
Politics	What is the purpose of government?
Economics	What produces a sound economy?
History	How should we interpret human events?

ourselves (psychology) and what makes choices right or wrong (the study of ethics). We wonder about how society ought to be structured (sociology), how to solve legal issues (law), what our system of government should look like (politics), how we ought to make, save, spend, and give money (economics), and how our lives are affected by the past (history).

Each of these areas is relevant to every one of us. Our educational enterprise is structured around these disciplines, with universities offering courses in each discipline to seek out answers to these vital questions.

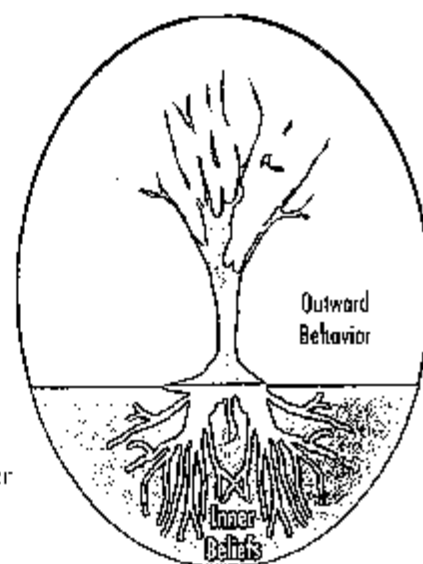
Dividing a worldview into these ten disciplines corresponds with how we approach life's important questions.

Third, dividing a worldview this way helps the student see connections between the various disciplines. It demonstrates how a worldview is built upon the foundational studies of theology and philosophy. Visualize a fruit tree with these two categories forming the root system. All the other categories are the fruit of what one thinks about God (theology) and reality (philosophy). Pictured this way, a worldview is a coherent, organic whole, with the fruit (outward behavior) flowing naturally from the root (inner beliefs). This unifying aspect of worldview thinking will become more apparent as you move through this text and corresponding course of study.

Finally, slicing a worldview into these major disciplines allows for easy comparison between competing worldviews, such as Secular Humanism, Marxism-Leninism, and Cosmic Humanism (comprising both New Age pantheism and neo-paganism, i.e., Wicca.) While our primary concern in this text is to develop a biblical Christian worldview, we will occasionally mention these other views by way of contrast to highlight specific issues. For a brief overview of Secular Humanism, Marxism-Leninism, and Cosmic Humanism, see Chapter 12 along with the summaries found in the chart in Appendix A.

*"All branches of knowledge are connected together, because the subject matter of knowledge is intimately united in itself, as being the acts and the work of the Creator."*⁵

—JOHN H. NEWMAN



THE HEART OF A WORLDVIEW

The term “worldview” refers to any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement, or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world, and man’s relationship to God and the world. Specifically, a worldview should provide a particular perspective on each of the following ten disciplines: theology, philosophy, biology, psychology, ethics, sociology, law, politics, economics, and history. These disciplines also have implications for cultural expression such as found in the visual and performing arts, music, and literature.⁴ Since biblical Christianity offers a specific stance or attitude toward all ten disciplines, it is, by our definition, a worldview.

A worldview also offers a particular perspective from which to approach each discipline. Conversely, each discipline is laden with values that have worldview implications. Christians must understand that these various disciplines are not value-free. Each discipline demands basic assumptions about the nature of reality in order to grant meaning to specific approaches to it.

This text analyzes how the Bible portrays a total worldview related to each of the ten disciplines. We are attempting to understand each discipline and how it

**In the end,
all ten disciplines form
one piece of cloth.**

fits into an overall picture of reality. No discipline stands alone. Each affects all others in one way or another. The line separating theology and philosophy is fragile; the line separating theology, philosophy, ethics, law, and politics is more so. In fact, there is

no ultimate line, only a difference in emphasis and perspective.

Thus, the arrangement of the categories is, to some degree, arbitrary, but we have tried to place them in their most logical sequence. It is clear that theological and philosophical assumptions color every aspect of one’s worldview and that disciplines such as sociology and psychology are related, but other relations and distinctions are less recognizable. Therefore, one reader may feel that we have inappropriately distanced law from ethics, and another may feel history to be almost as foundational to a worldview as philosophy. Our format is a logical suggestion; it is not binding. Besides, in the end, all ten disciplines form one piece of cloth.

A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW	
SUBJECT	VIEWPOINT
THEOLOGY	View of God: Theism
PHILOSOPHY	View of Reality: Supernaturalism
BIOLOGY	View of Origin: Creation
PSYCHOLOGY	View of Mankind: Fallen Human Nature
ETHICS	View of Morality: Ethical Absolutes
SOCIOLOGY	View of Social Institutions: Traditional Home, Church and State
LAW	View of Source of Law: Natural Law
POLITICS	View of Government's Role: Justice/Freedom/Order
ECONOMICS	View of Economy: Stewardship of Property
HISTORY	View of Meaning in History: Historical Resurrection

A BIBLICAL CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

This text will demonstrate how Christianity provides a consistent explanation of all the facts of reality with regard to theology, philosophy, ethics, economics, or anything else. As Carl F.H. Henry says, "The Christian belief system, which the Christian knows to be grounded in divine revelation, is relevant to all of life." This relevance results from the fact that Christianity is the one worldview based on truth. "Christianity is true," says George Gilder, "and its truth will be discovered anywhere you look very far." Gilder, who is not only an outstanding economic philosopher but also a sociologist, found Christ while seeking sociological truth.

Philosopher C.E.M. Joad found Christ and Christianity because he was seeking ethical truth. "I now believe," he wrote, "that the balance of reasoned considerations tells heavily in favour of the religious, even of the Christian view of the world." Joad recognized the need for absolute truth, rather than a truth that evolves with each new theory: "A religion which is in constant process of revision to square with science's ever-changing picture of the world might well be easier to believe, but it is hard to believe it would be worth believing."

Christianity is the embodiment of Christ's claim

*"Christianity is true, and
its truth will be discovered
anywhere you look very far."*

—GEORGE GILDER

that he is “the way, the truth, and the life” (John 14:6). When we say “this is the Christian way,” we mean “this is the way Christ would have us act in such a situation.” It is no small matter to think and act as Christ instructs. Therefore,

Christians agree with humanist Bertrand Russell’s admission that “What the world needs is Christian love or compassion.”¹⁰

America is often described as a Christian nation. Over 150 years ago, Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, “There is no country in the whole world, in which the

“There is no country in the whole world, in which the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America.”

—ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE

Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America;

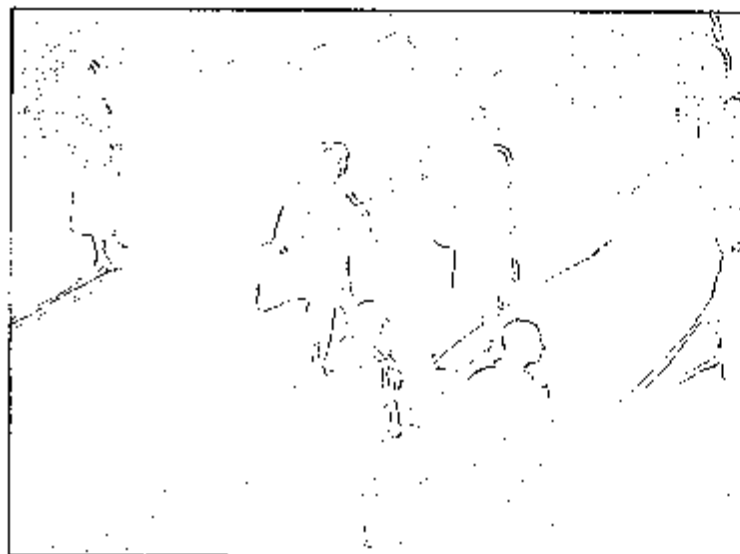
“Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light.”

—GEORGE WASHINGTON

and there can be no greater proof of its utility, and of its conformity to human nature, than that its influence is most powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth.”¹¹

Unfortunately, however, America—and the rest of Western Civilization—are turning away from their heritage. Western nations are eradicating large chunks of Christianity from the public square.

We contend that America should be moving in the opposite direction—embrac-



Pursuing consumerism and entertainment, many people now see life in bits and pieces rather than as a meaningful whole.

ing the Christian worldview rather than pushing it away. Francis Schaeffer blames America’s drift toward secularism and injustice on the Christian community’s failure to apply its worldview to every facet of society: “The basic problem of the Christians in this country in the last eighty years or so, in regard to society and in regard to government, is that they have seen things in bits and pieces instead of totals.”¹² He goes on to say that

Christians have very gradually “become disturbed over permissiveness, pornography, the public schools, the breakdown of the family, and finally abortion. But they have not seen this as a totality—each thing being a part, a symptom of a much larger problem. They have failed to see that all of this has come about due to a shift in the worldview—that is, through a fundamental change in the overall way people think and view the world and life as a whole.”¹⁰

This study is a wake-up call for Christians living in America. A country seeking to promote human rights and religious, political, and economic liberty must adhere to the only worldview that can account for the existence of those concepts. Unfortunately, countless Americans are embracing other worldviews.

This, then, is our fundamental reason for preparing this text and the accompanying study guide: too many Christian young people are ill-prepared to lead. The vast majority have no concept of the components of their worldview and stand intellectually naked before left-wing university professors and the liberal media. Henry says that evangelized students know more about God than their secular counterparts, but “with some few gratifying exceptions, neither home nor church has shaped a comprehensive and consistent faith that stands noon-bright amid the dim shadows of spiritual rebellion and moral profligacy.”¹¹ Christ’s teachings impart just such a noon-bright faith to all Christians who master their worldview, who “understand the times.” This book’s foundational verse, 1 Chronicles 12:32, announces that just two hundred individuals who “understood the

*1 Chronicles 12:32
From the Issacharites, who
understood the times and knew
what Israel should do: 200
chiefs with all their kins-
men under their command.*



Many young people are poorly prepared to face the challenges that contemporary college studies present to a Christian worldview.

times" provided the leadership for an entire nation. We believe that a comprehensive knowledge of a Christian worldview will provide today's young people with the understanding necessary to become Christian leaders and defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints by the apostles and prophets (Jude 3).

verse 3

Dear friends, although I was eager to write you about our common salvation, I found it necessary to write and exhort you to contend for the faith that was delivered to the saints once for all.

THE SECULAR AND THE SACRED

Many people believe that when Christians confront other worldviews and attempt to speak to such "secular" disciplines as politics, economics, biology, and

"I believe Christianity is the only logical, consistent faith in the world."

—MORTIMER ADLER

law, they are overstepping their bounds. "Mind your own business," we are told. Jesus taught His followers, "you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19).

How, then, can the Christian justify his claim to a worldview that speaks to every facet of life?

Shouldn't he stick to spiritual matters and allow non-Christians to concentrate on the practical matters of running the world?

In short, isn't there a difference between the secular and the sacred?

Not according to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who says we should not distinguish between the two: "There are not two realities, but only one reality, and that is the reality of God, which has become manifest in Christ in the reality of the world."¹⁴ From the biblical Christian perspective, the ten disciplines addressed in this text reflect various aspects of God's creative and redemptive order. God created mankind with theological, philosophical, biological, ethical, etc., dimensions. We live and move and have our being (our very essence and existence) within and about these categories. Why? Because that is the way God created us.

Such being the case, these categories are, from the Christian perspective, sacred and not secular. They are sacred because they are imprinted in the creative order. Both the early record of Genesis and the life of Jesus Christ reflect this truth.

GOD'S CREATIVE AND REDEPTIVE ORDERS

All ten disciplines are addressed in just the first few chapters of the Bible because they manifest and accent certain aspects of the creative order. For example:

- Genesis 1:1—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—is value-laden with theological and philosophical ramifications;
- Genesis 2:9—"the knowledge of good and evil"—contains ethical ramifications;
- Genesis 1:21—"according to their kinds"—biological;
- Genesis 2:7—"the man became a living being"—psychological;
- Genesis 1:28—"be fruitful, and multiply, fill the earth"—sociological and ecological;
- Genesis 3:11—"I had forbidden you"—legal;
- Genesis 9:6—"Whoever sheds man's blood"—political and legal;
- Genesis 1:29—"This will be food for you"—economic;
- Genesis 10:1—"These are the family records of Noah's sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth..."—historical.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5
We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Further, God manifests Himself in the form of Christ in such a way as to underline the significance of each discipline:

- In theology, Jesus Christ is "the entire fullness of God's nature" (Colossians 2:9);
- In philosophy, Christ is the logos of God (John 1:1);
- In ethics, Christ is "the true light" (John 1:9, 3:19-20);
- In biology, Christ is "that life" (John 1:4, 11:25; Colossians 1:16);
- In psychology, Christ is "Savior" (Luke 1:46-47; Titus 2:13);
- In sociology, Christ is "Son" (Luke 1:30-31; Isaiah 9:6);
- In law, Christ is lawgiver (Genesis 49:10; Isaiah 9:7);
- In politics, Christ is "King of kings and Lord of lords" (Revelation 19:16; 1 Timothy 6:15; Isaiah 9:6; Luke 1:33);
- In economics, Christ is Owner of all things (Psalm 24:1; 50:10-12; 1 Corinthians 10:26);
- In history, Christ is "the Alpha and the Omega" (Revelation 1:8).

The integration of these various categories into society has come to be known

as Western Civilization. For an overview of God's Creative and Redemptive Order, see the chart in Appendix B.

"Faith is the central problem of this age."
—WHITTAKER CHAMBERS

a complete worldview. Indeed, Christians gain a perspective so comprehensive that they are commanded to be "taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:5). Once we have captured all thoughts and made them obedient to Christ, we are to use these thoughts to "demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God" (2 Corinthians 10:4-5). When nations and men forget God (see Psalm 2) they experience what mankind has experienced in the twentieth century. Nazism and communism, two major movements bereft of the knowledge of God, cost the human race tens of millions of lives. Whittaker Chambers says that communism's problem is not a problem of economics, but of atheism: "Faith is the central problem of this age."¹¹ Alexander Solzhenitsyn echoes him: "Men have forgotten God."¹²

The Apostle Paul insists in Colossians 2 that those who have "received Christ Jesus the Lord" (Colossians 2:6) are to be rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as they were taught (Colossians 2:7). While the Christian works to strengthen his faith or worldview, he must see to it that no one takes him "captive through philosophy and empty deceit based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ" (Colossians 2:8). From the Christian point of view Secular, Marxist, and Cosmic Humanism fall within the realm of "the elemental forces of the world." They are based on the wisdom of this world and not upon Christ.

"Men have forgotten God."

—ALEXANDER SOLZHENITSYN

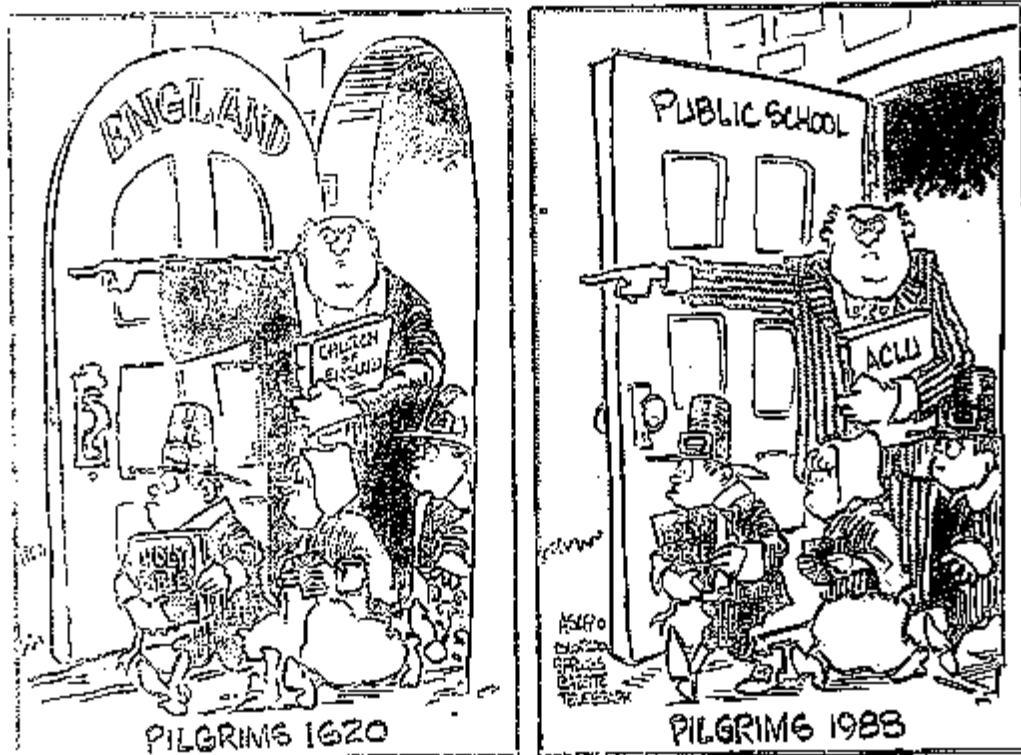
This wasn't merely a point of doctrine for Paul. He practiced what he preached. In Acts 17, Paul confronted the vain and deceitful philosophies of the atheistic Epicureans and pantheistic Stoics—the professional humanists of his day. The Apostle countered their ideas with Christian ideas; he reasoned and preached, and he accented three Christian truths—the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 17:18), the creation of the universe by God (Acts 17:24), and the judgment to come (Acts 17:31).

Can we do less? We, too, must fearlessly proclaim the good news of the gospel (God created the universe and all things in it; mankind rebelliously smashed the image of God by sin; Jesus Christ died for our sin, was raised from the dead, and is alive forevermore [1 Corinthians 15:1-4]), and we must stand fast in the context of the same worldview as Paul—creation, resurrection, and judgment.

Certain non-Christian worldviews are religious.

Paul recognized that people dare not compartmentalize life into boxes marked “sacred” and “secular.” He understood not only that Christianity was both a worldview and a religion, but also that all worldviews are religious by definition. Indeed, he went so far as to tell the Epicureans and Stoics that they were religious—they just worshiped an “Unknown God.”

Most people have no problem recognizing that certain non-Christian worldviews are religious. Cosmic Humanists talk about god, so they must practice a religion. But how can the “religious” label apply to atheists like the Marxists or Secular Humanists?



It applies because all worldviews include a theology. That is, all begin with a religious declaration:

- Christianity begins with “In the beginning God.”
- Marxism/Leninism and Secular Humanism begin with “In the beginning no God.”
- Cosmic Humanism begins with the declaration “Everything is God.”

Christians who have seen their worldview effectively eliminated from the public schools are rightfully outraged by the humanists’ violations of the present interpretation of the First Amendment. They are angered that a mere 7.3 million humanists can control the content of American public schooling while the country’s Christians provide the lion’s share of the students and bear the majority of the cost through their tax dollars.

Humanists attempt to downplay their violation of the present interpretation of the First Amendment by claiming that they present a neutral viewpoint. But no educational approach is neutral, as Richard A. Baer notes: “Education never

Trying to separate the sacred from the secular is like trying to sever the soul from the body.

takes place in a moral and philosophical vacuum. If the larger questions about human beings and their destiny are not being asked and answered within a predominantly Judeo-Christian framework [worldview], they will be addressed with

another philosophical or religious framework—but hardly one that is ‘neutral.’”

Clearly, both Secular Humanism and Marxism are religious worldviews. Trying to separate the sacred from the secular is like trying to sever the soul from the body—a deadly experiment. Thus, in order to provide a fair educational system for our young people, we must recognize that all worldviews have religious implications and that it is discriminatory to bar some worldviews and not others from the classroom.

Both Secular Humanism and Marxism are religious worldviews.

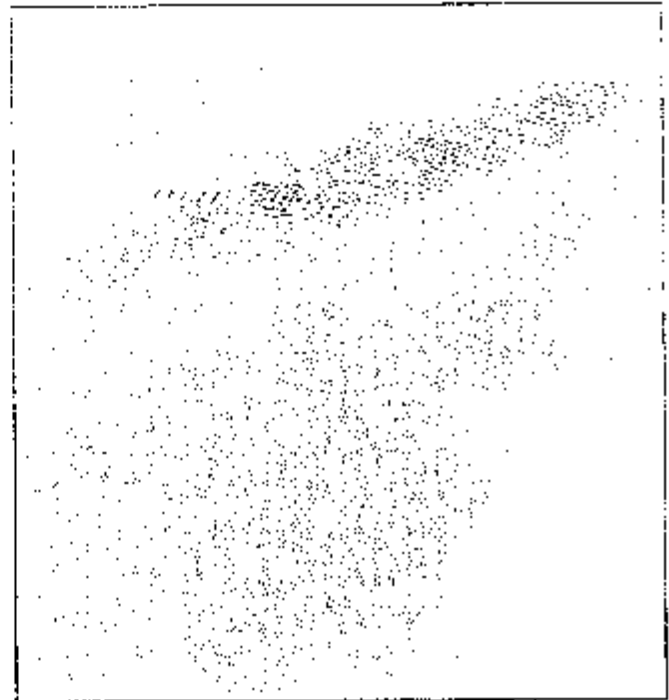
A WORD ABOUT SOURCES

The Bible, of course, is the primary source for the Christian worldview. Christianity explains the facts of reality better than any other worldview because it

relies upon divine inspiration. If the Bible is truly God's special revelation to man, as we believe it is, then the only completely accurate view of the world must be founded on Scripture.

The divine inspiration of Scripture explains not only its miraculous coherency but also the incredible power of the figure of Christ. Atheist historian W.E.H. Lecky admits that the character of Jesus "has been not only the highest pattern of virtue but the strongest incentive to its practice; and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and to soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers, and all the exhortations of moralists."¹ We believe the reason for this is that when Christ told the woman who spoke of the Messiah, "I am He, the One speaking to you" (John 4:26), He was telling her the most fundamental truth of all. What Christ said concerning life and death, the saved and lost condition of mankind, body and soul, and truth encompasses the central precepts of the Christian worldview. Christ is its cornerstone. He is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6).

When presenting the Christian worldview, then, we take the Bible at face value. Call it "literal" interpretation if you wish, but it is difficult to see how else the writers of the Old and New Testaments meant to be taken. Figures of speech—yes, typologies—yes, analogies—yes, but overall they wrote in simple, straightforward terms. When a writer says, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," we understand him to say that there is a God, there was a beginning to creation, that heaven and earth exist, and that God made them.

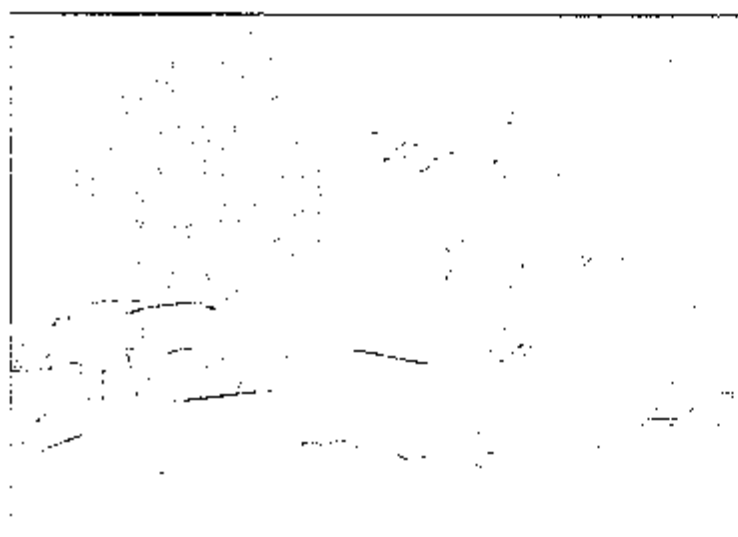


Because God's special revelation is presented in the Bible, an accurate worldview must be founded on Scripture.

The Christian worldview
stands or falls on the
accuracy of the Bible.

It does not take a Ph.D. or a high IQ to comprehend the basic message of the Bible. God's special revelation is open to everyone. There is no room for an "intellectual elite" in Christianity: only one "high priest" need intercede between God and man—Jesus Christ. For this reason, every man may "approach the throne of grace with boldness" (Hebrews 4:14-16).

This text also will rely on Christian men and women to describe the Christian



British writer and philosopher C.S. Lewis offered a concise picture of the Christian worldview in his classic book *Mere Christianity*.

worldview. "If we accept the testimony of men, God's testimony is greater, because it is God's testimony that He has given about His Son." (1 John 5:9). The Christian worldview stands or falls on the accuracy of the Bible.

STUDY PROCEDURES

This work paints the various categorical positions with broad strokes, adhering to Albert Einstein's dictum: Everything

should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler. Each chapter, we know, could consume thousands of pages by itself. Millions of pages and billions of words have been written on Christian theism alone. We have attempted, therefore, not to address every subtlety of each approach, but rather to capture the kernel of each discipline. We follow C.S. Lewis' formula, striving to capture "mere Christianity." Thus, we examine the core, the foundational approach, of each discipline. In this way, we assure the reader a text that will never become outdated.

If you are interested in additional study about worldview, you would do well to read James Orr's *A Christian View of God and the World*, along with *A Christian Manifesto* by Francis Schaeffer and Chuck Colson's *How Now Shall We Live?* These works make a fitting addition to this study by helping you think in terms of worldviews and enforcing the notion that ideas have consequences—even logical consequences that proceed from prior beliefs.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR ADVANCED STUDY:
APOLOGETICS**

- Bauman, Michael, David Hall, and Robert Newman. *Evangelical Apologetics*. Camp Hill, Pa.: Christian Publications, 1996.
- Craig, William Lane. *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994.
- Geisler, Norman L. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1988.
- McDowell, Josh. *The New Evidence that Demands a Verdict*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1999.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR ADVANCED STUDY:
GENERAL WORLDVIEW STUDIES**

- Breese, David. *Seven Men that Rule the World from the Grave*. Chicago: Moody Press, 1993.
- Colson, Charles. *Kingdoms in Conflict*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1989.
- Colson, Charles and Nancy Pearcey. *How Now Shall We Live?* Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House, 1999.
- LaHaye, Tim, and David Noebel. *Mind Siege: The Battle for Truth in the New Millennium*. Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000.
- Nash, Ronald H. *Worldviews in Conflict*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1992.
- Noebel, David A. *Understanding the Times: The Religious Worldviews of Our Day and the Search for Truth*. Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1991.
- Noebel, David A., J. E. Baldwin, and Kevin J. Bywater. *Clergy in the Classroom: The Religion of Secular Humanism*, 2nd edition. Manitou Springs, Col.: Summit Press, 2001.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. *How Should We Then Live?* Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1983.
- Veith, Gene Edward, Jr. *Postmodern Times: A Christian Guide to Contemporary Thought and Culture*. Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1994.

ENDNOTES

1. See David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1991).
2. Norman L. Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1989), p. 11.
3. Quoted in David A. Noebel, *Understanding the Times* (Eugene, Ore.: Harvest House, 1991) p. 9.
4. Some may ask where the arts (the visual and performing arts, literature, music, and film) come into a worldview. There are two options: you could either have an eleventh category for "The Arts," or this area can be subsumed under "Sociology," as a means of outwardly expressing our worldview in a cultural way. This course of study does not specifically focus on the arts, although we use examples from movies and music to illustrate the worldviews being presented. For more information on a Christian approach to the arts, see Francis Schaeffer's landmark book, *How Shall We Then Live?* Other more recent works include Neil Postman's *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business*, Steve Turner's *Imagine: A Vision for Christians in the Arts*, Gene Veith's *State of the Arts: From Bezael to Mapplethorpe*, H. R. Rookmaaker's *Modern Art and the Death of Culture*, Kenneth Myers' *All God's Children and Blue Suede Shoes: Christians & Popular Culture*, and Carson Holloway's *All Shook Up: Music, Passion, and Politics*. Or you might consider David Quine's "Adventures in Art," a curriculum designed for home use found on his website at: www.cornerstonecurriculum.com/Curriculum_art.htm
5. Carl F.H. Henry, *Toward a Recovery of Christian Belief* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1990), p. 113.
6. L. Neff, "Christianity Today Talks to George Gilder," *Christianity Today*, March 6, 1987, p. 35.
7. C.E.M. Joad, *The Recovery of Belief* (London: Faber and Faber, 1955), p. 22.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 240.
9. Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Mentor, 1962), p. viii.
10. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, two volumes (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, n.d.), vol. I, p. 294. Elsewhere he declared, "The Americans combine the notions of Christianity and of liberty so intimately in their minds, that it is impossible to make them conceive the one without the other" (p. 297).
11. Francis A. Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1981), p. 17.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Carl F.H. Henry, *Twilight of a Great Civilization* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 1988), p. 94.
14. H. Burmese, "Bonhoeffer, Dietrich," in *Baker's Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, ed. Carl F.H. Henry, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1973), p. 67.
15. Whitaker Chambers, *Witness* (Lake Bluff, Ill.: Random House, 1952), p. 17.
16. Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Harvard Lectures.
17. Richard A. Baer, "They Are Teaching Religion in Public Schools," *Christianity Today*, February 17, 1984, p. 15.
18. W.E.H. Lecky, *History of European Morals (from Augustus to Charlemagne)*, two volumes (New York: George Braziller, 1955), vol. 2, pp. 8-9.

CHAPTER 2



Theology

KEY QUESTION

Is there a God, and what is God like?

KEY IDEA

Christ's teachings and actions as revealed in the Bible provide the cornerstone for special revelation and a solid foundation for Christian theism.

KEY QUOTE

"Theism, the belief that God is, and atheism, the belief that God is not, are not simply two beliefs. They are two fundamental ways of seeing the whole of existence. The one, theism, sees existence as ultimately meaningful, as having a meaning beyond itself; the other sees existence as having no meaning beyond itself."¹

STEPHEN D. SCHWARTZ

SUMMARY

The theology of Christianity is the affirmation of the existence of an intelligent, powerful, loving, just, and awesome God who exists in the Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. From the Christian perspective, “In the beginning God” (Genesis 1:1) is the foundation for all meaning.

Christianity further proclaims that this powerful, intelligent God who created all things in heaven and earth is the same God who took upon Himself human form in the person of Jesus Christ and died for our sins.

Christianity proclaims a God who is both Mind and Heart—who not only created the world, but also loves it so much that He sent His only begotten Son to die for it. Christian theism declares in large letters, “God is,” “God created,” “God loves,” and “God judges.”



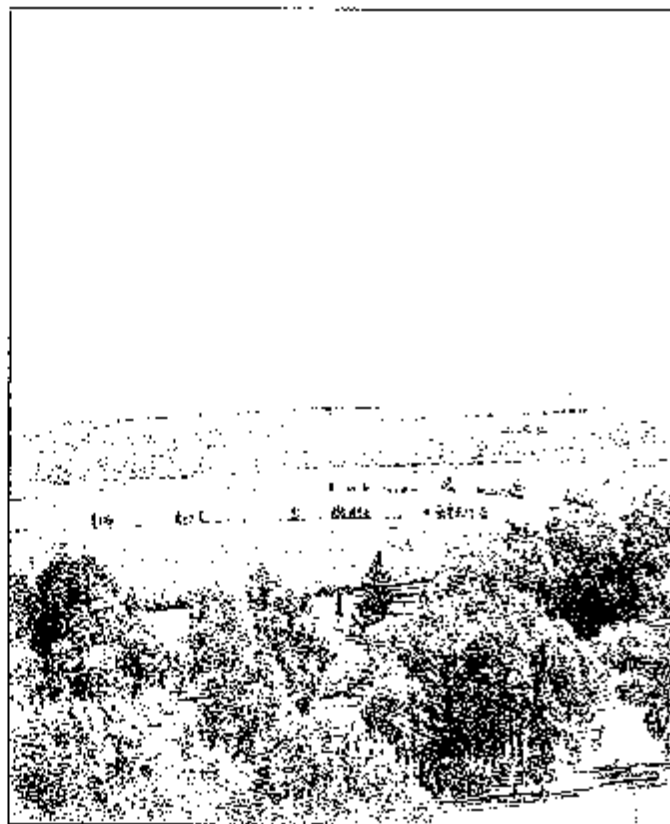
Christian theism rests primarily on two foundations: special revelation (the Bible) and general revelation (the created order). While the Bible reveals the character and personality of God page after page, the "whole workmanship of the universe," according to John Calvin, reveals and discloses God day after day.

James Orr explains that the theistic position is established not by any single clue or evidence, but by "the concurrent forces of many, starting from different and independent standpoints."² Christians see evidences of God everywhere. It is the Christian position that history, theology, philosophy, science, mathematics, logic, and experience all point to the existence of a Creator and Redeemer.

SPECIAL REVELATION

Christian theists believe that God has revealed Himself to mankind in a general way through creation and in a special (personal) way evidenced by His divine words and acts contained in the Bible and especially in the person of Jesus Christ. Millard Erickson defines the two forms of revelation this way: "On the one hand, general revelation is God's communication of Himself to all persons, at all times, and in all places. Special revelation on the other hand, involves God's particular communications and manifestations which are available now only by consultation of certain sacred writings."³

General revelation has been viewed throughout church history by a variety of Christian theists as a necessary but insufficient means for providing knowledge about the Creator and His character. It is better theology and philosophy



At 9,100 feet, Mt. Hermon is the highest mountain in Syria and is believed by some scholars to be the place where the transfiguration of Jesus—a divine revelation to His disciples—took place.

to begin with the God of the Bible to explain the universe than to begin with the universe to explain God.

According to the Christian view, the destiny of created mankind involves both salvation and judgment. It is not general revelation but special revelation—the Bible—that answers such questions as: How can mankind be saved?

From what must mankind be saved? Why will judgment occur? Special revelation,

General revelation refers to the means by which God reveals Himself to mankind through the physical universe and the moral order.

then, is “special” because it is the key that opens the door to both heaven and earth.

One of the most basic tenets of Christian belief is the divine inspiration of the Bible. When the individual accepts the Bible as the Word of God, the teachings and events it describes become the most important basis for understanding all reality. Without faith that the Bible is God’s Word, people are left floundering—forced to trust their own (unfounded) thought processes as the ultimate criteria for discerning truth. No one can



The unified message of the biblical writers, despite the extreme diversity of their circumstances and backgrounds, argues for the divine inspiration of Scripture.

deny the Bible’s divine inspiration and still claim to be a biblical Christian for the simple reason that Scripture proclaims itself to be God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16-17). If one believes the Bible to be a true and accurate document, then one must accept its claim to be divinely inspired.

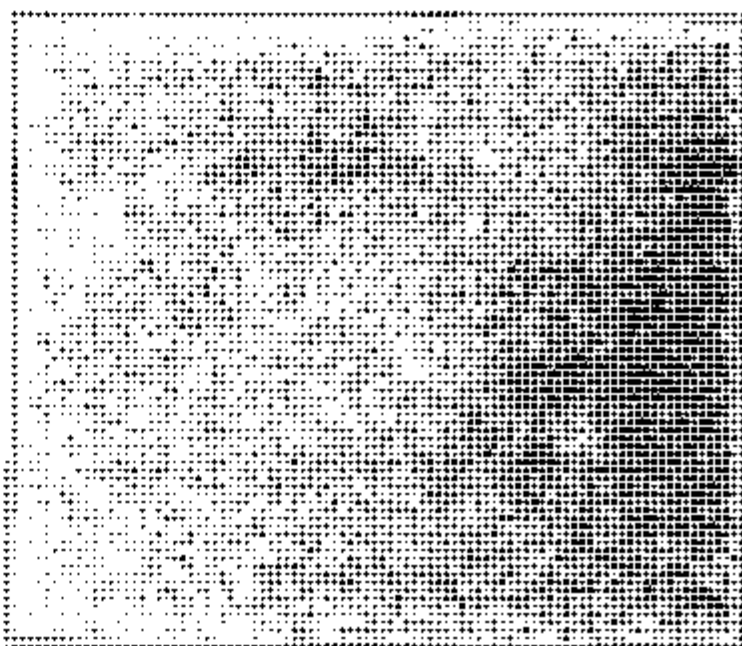
One of the most basic tenets of Christian belief is the divine inspiration of the Bible.

The evidence in support of the Christian’s belief in the divine inspiration of the Bible is convincing. For example, the unity of teaching in the Bible is startling in light of the fact that its books were

authored by different men faced with very different circumstances. Further, the astounding ability of the Bible to change the lives of individuals (for the better) who accept its authority strengthens its claim to be a special revelation from God. The degree of moral truth contained in the Bible also supports its divine inspiration. All these arguments support the belief that the Bible is God's Word; however, the most convincing witness for divine inspiration is the Bible itself. Those hesitant to accept Scripture as God's special revelation are most often convinced by a thorough, open-minded study of the Bible.

In studying the Bible, the reader meets God's most direct form of special revelation: the person of Jesus Christ. "In Jesus of Nazareth," writes Carl F.H. Henry, "the divine source of revelation and the divine content of that revelation converge and coincide." Christ's teachings and actions as revealed in the Bible provide the cornerstone for special revelation and a solid foundation for Christian theism.

The purpose of divine revelation lies in its communication to the Christian of the significance of Christ's teachings and actions. The third member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, plays an important role in this dialogue. Henry explains: "Scripture itself is given so that the Holy Spirit may etch God's Word upon the hearts of his followers in ongoing sanctification that anticipates the believer's final, unerring conformity to the image of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word."⁵ This is the ultimate reason God chose to reveal Himself and His plan for mankind in the Bible.



Special revelation refers to the specific means by which God reveals Himself to mankind through the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ.

Special revelation refers to the specific means by which God reveals Himself to mankind through the Bible and in the person of Jesus Christ.

For this reason, the Christian's reliance on the Bible should be profound and constantly renewed. Christians do not read the Bible once and set it aside. Rather, they study it as the Word of God and work constantly to conform to its teachings. Christians spend their lives seeking to understand the powerful message of the Bible.

"Unless I believe in God, I can't believe in thought; so I can never use thought to disbelieve in God."

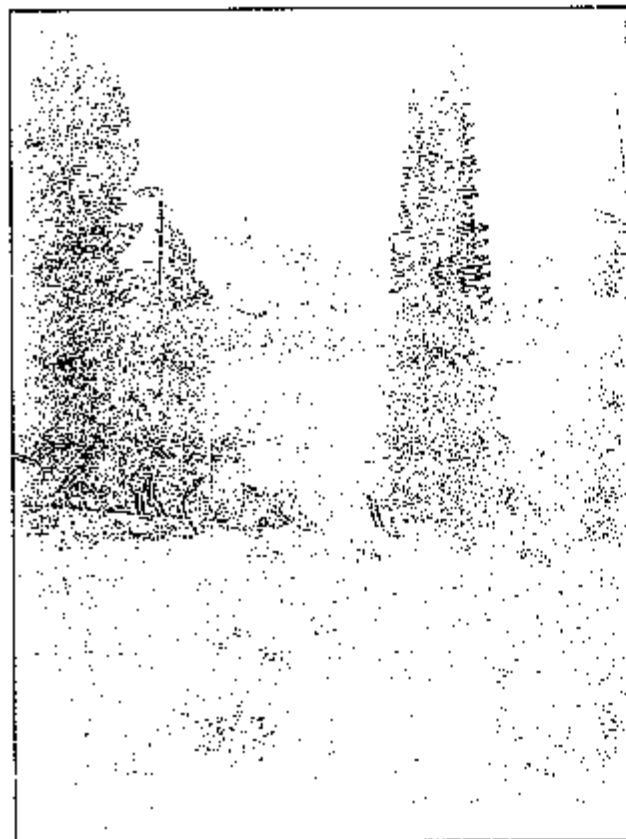
C.S. Lewis

DESIGN AND GENERAL REVELATION

Special revelation, then, is the linchpin of Christianity, while general revelation serves as a prod to encourage man to recognize the ultimate truths set down in Scripture and embodied in Jesus Christ.

Although God's revelation through nature, in and of itself, fails to bring men to a saving knowledge of God, it is capable of bringing men to a general knowledge of God. A great majority of intellectuals agree that the concepts of purpose and design, for example, have validity in regard to the question of the existence of God.

Anglican clergyman William Paley argued in *Natural Theology* (a book about which Charles Darwin admitted, "I do not think I hardly ever admired a book more . . .") that a man chancing upon a watch in the wilderness could not conclude that the watch had simply always existed; rather, the obvious design of the watch—not only its internal makeup but also the fact that it clearly exists for a purpose—would



The majesty of nature, as well as our own thought processes, are evidences for God's existence, according to C.S. Lewis.

necessarily imply the existence of its designer. Paley went on to substitute the universe for the watch and contended that a mechanism so obviously designed as the universe necessitated the existence of a grand Designer. This is an excellent example of the way in which the created order reveals the existence of God.

The universe forces its sense of design (and thus a Designer) on all men open to such a possibility. Many discover God through the general revelation of a structured universe; many others encounter Him in the purposeful nature of reality. C.E.M. Joad, who was an atheist for much of his professional career, wrote a book entitled *The Recovery of Belief* shortly before his death. This book traces his gradual advance toward God and Jesus Christ. Joad was largely convinced by his observation of human nature—that a moral law exists, and that men often flaunt that law.

Still another twist on the argument for the general revelation of God's existence is presented by C. S. Lewis. "Suppose there were no intelligence behind the universe," says Lewis. "In that case nobody designed my brain for the purpose of thinking. Thought is merely the by-product of some atoms within my skull. But if so, how can I trust my own thinking to be true?" asks Lewis. "But if I can't trust my own thinking, of course, I can't trust the arguments leading to atheism, and therefore have no reason to be an atheist, or anything else. Unless I believe in God, I can't believe in thought; so I can never use thought to disbelieve in God." The evidence points to what Christians believe—that a personal God has revealed Himself through a created world, that He has a plan for that world, and an ultimate destiny for it.

WHAT DOES REVELATION TELL US ABOUT GOD?

The Christian is concerned not only with the existence of God in general, but also with the relationship that exists between God and man, and particularly with the redemption of all mankind. While Secular Humanists declare in the *Humanist Manifesto II* that no God can save us—"we must save ourselves"—Christian theism echoes Thomas, the disciple who referred to Jesus as "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28), and Peter, who said to Jesus, "You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). God, as revealed throughout the Bible and especially in the person of Christ, is clearly knowable and desires to be known.

To say that God is knowable is also to say that God "relates" or has personality—that

He is "personal." God's self-awareness, His emotions, and His self-determining will make up the core of His divine personality. The Bible is emphatic in describing

"I Am Who I Am."

Exodus 3:14

God as a person aware of Himself. In Isaiah 40:6, God says, "I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides me." In Exodus 3:14, God says to Moses, "I Am Who I Am."

Besides possessing self-awareness, the God of the Bible (like man) has sensibilities. At times God is portrayed as sorrowful (Genesis 6:6), angry (Deuteronomy 1:37), compassionate (Psalm 111:4), jealous (Exodus 20:5), and able to show satisfaction (Genesis 1:4). Theologians do not feel that such scriptures suggest that God is limited, but rather that God is willing to reveal Himself in an anthropomorphic, personal way to people.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERSONAL GOD

Besides believing that God is a personal God and communicates His nature, Christians believe that God is self-determining—that is, sovereign in regard to His will. God's self-determination is described in Daniel 4:35: "All the inhabitants of the earth are counted as nothing, and He does what He wants with the army of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth. There is no one who can hold back His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'"

In addition to being self-determining, the God of the Bible is moral. Proverbs 15:3 warns us that God distinguishes between good and evil and that He is concerned with our morality (see also Proverbs 5:21). God's uncompromisingly moral character is one of the most crucial aspects of His being. A true understanding of God's absolute goodness leads the individual unerringly to the conclusion that every man has an acute need for a Redeemer.

Long-suffering patience and faithfulness are also personality traits of God. God's willingness to delay His judgment upon the Israelites when they worshipped the golden calf (Exodus 32:11-14) and His faithful promise to save the believer from eternal judgment (John 10:28) are prime examples of His patience and faithfulness.

Perhaps the most astounding characteristic of God's personality is that He is triune. The Christian believes that God is three co-existent, co-eternal persons in

one, who are equal in purpose and in essence, but differ in function.

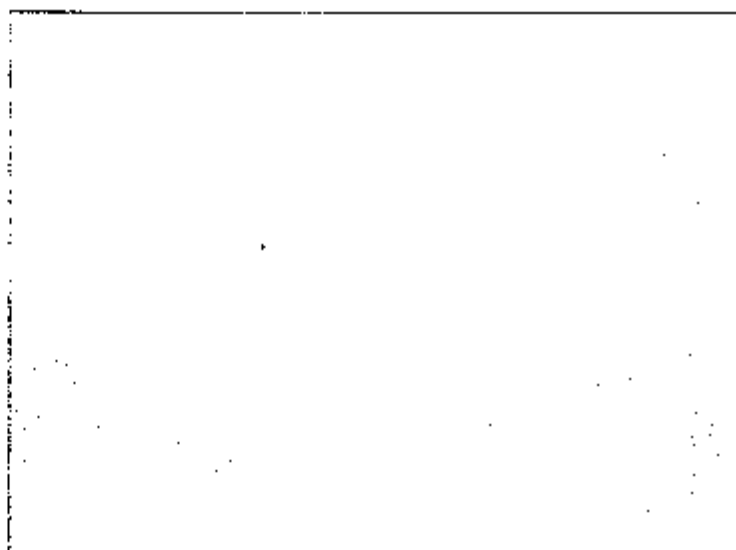
The God of the Christian also is a God of power, evidenced by His works in creation and providence. Hebrews 1:10 declares, "In the beginning, Lord, You established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands." Christian theology asserts that God is the source of all things and that He created the cosmos out of His own mind, according to His plan.

God also demonstrates His power by moving His world to a purposeful end. Each created thing has an appointed destiny—God has a plan for His world, and nothing takes Him by surprise. The Bible is emphatic on this point. Romans 9:25-26 says, "I will call 'Not-My-People,' 'My-People,' and she who is 'Unloved,' 'Beloved.' And it will be in the place where they were told, you are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God." Scripture makes it clear that God manifests His power by a sovereign and holy plan—a plan which generally collides with the plans of men.

GOD AS JUDGE

The judgment of God is not a popular subject—even among Christians. A great majority of people abhor the thought that the "God of love" could also be the "God of wrath." However, one cannot read the Bible without encountering the judgment of God.

The holiness of God necessitates the judgment of God. Christian theists agree that God must be a judge because His holy nature is antithetical to sin. Such acts in the Bible as the great flood (Genesis 6:17-7:24), the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19), the smiting of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10:1-7), the fall of the Canaanites (Leviticus 18-20), and the fall of Israel (2 Kings



God's holiness requires that He judge the world for its sins.

17) and Judah (2 Chronicles 36) are all demonstrations of God's judgment as motivated by His holy nature.

The holiness of God necessitates the judgment of God.

Christianity teaches that God is fair and always right because His nature is perfect. God is not a giant bully or a cosmic killjoy brooding in the heavens, waiting for an opportunity to spoil everyone's fun. The Bible teaches that God is truly interested in good winning over evil, and in holiness being the victor over moral depravity. In short, God judges people because they are sinners. The Bible is clear in communicating that God does not take pleasure in the judgment of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11), but the wicked must be judged because God is holy (Jude 15).

GOD AS REDEEMER

Only one thing can protect people from God's wrath on the day of judgment: God's mercy. In His mercy, God has provided an advocate for every individual—an advocate so righteous that He washes away the sin that should condemn every person. God as the Redeemer, in the person of Christ, saves people from His wrath.

The central theme of redemption is the love of God. John 3:16 tells us, "For God loved the world in this way: He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." Using John 3:16 as a text for portraying God's love, theologian Floyd Barackman points out the following characteristics of this love:

Only one thing can protect people from God's wrath on the day of judgment: God's mercy.

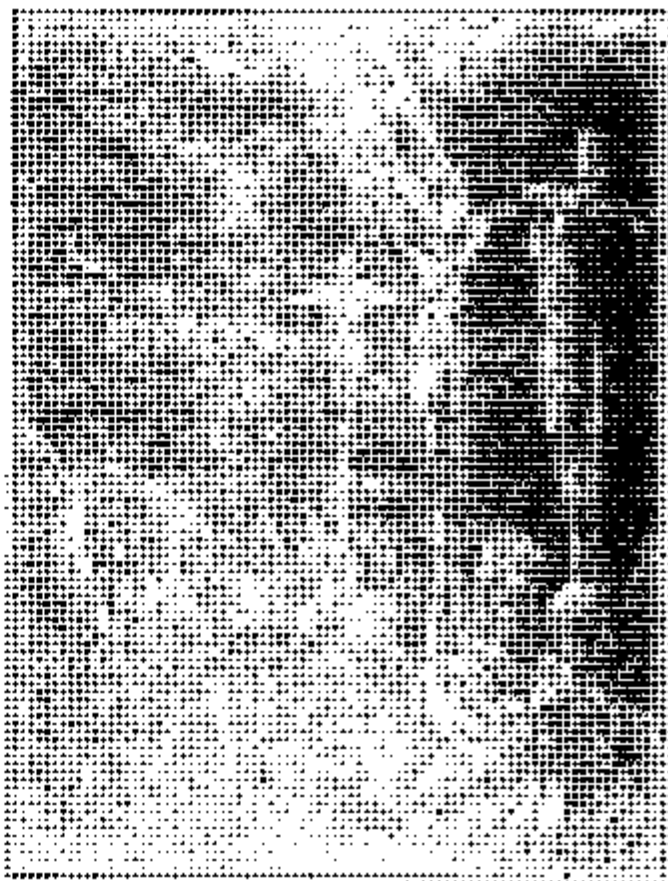
1. **God's love is universal.** God loves every nation, tribe, race, class, and gender equally. There were no social prejudices when God offered His Son. Christ died for the rich and for the poor, for the free and for the enslaved, for the old and for the young, for the beautiful and for the ugly.
2. **God's love is gracious.** God loves sinners even when they hate Him and do not deserve His love. Romans 5:8 clearly outlines the nature of God's love: "But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still

sinner. Christ died for us!"

How could God love the sinner?

This question is answered by the Christian doctrine of grace. Christianity declares that God's love and mercy are so awesome that He can love the sinner while hating the sin.

3. **God's love is sacrificial.** God did not send His only Son to earth just to be a good example or simply to be a teacher, but to be a perfect and atoning sacrifice for sin. Christ's substitutionary death was sacrificial and closely resembles the Old Testament concept of atonement. The main difference between Old Testament atonement and the New Testament concept is that in the Old Testament it was temporary, whereas in the New Testament Christ atoned for sins once and for all. Through the death of Christ, God has reconciled the world to Himself and offered a way for His wrath to be appeased (Colossians 1:20)—man now must be reconciled to God through faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20).
4. **God's love is beneficial.** For all those who receive Christ (John 1:12), for all those who are born from above (John 3:3), for all those who believe (John 3:16), there await certain eternal benefits given by God. Scripture declares that through God's grace, the believer will not be condemned (Romans 3:24) and will not be captive to sin (Romans 6:11). Further, the believer is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17) who has been declared righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21), redeemed (1 Peter 1:18), forgiven (Ephesians 1:7) and who is the recipient of the gift of eternal life (John 3:16).



Christ's death was a sacrifice based on the Old Testament concept of atonement for sins.

CONCLUSION

Christian theology is Christ-centered. The God who loved the world so that “He gave His only Son” has allowed for a personal relationship between Himself and fallen man. Theoretical atheistic possibilities belittle the God who has revealed Himself propositionally through His creation and His word and who has sacrificed His incarnate and holy Son. If the story is true, then the world that lives in unbelief should be fearful, for it sits under the judgment of God until it recognizes and experiences the ever-faithful promise of Jesus: “Listen! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and have dinner with him, and he with Me” (Revelation 3:20).

RECOMMENDED READING FOR ADVANCED STUDY: THEOLOGY

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1. Stephen D. Schwarz, "Introduction—Philosophy," *The Intellectuals Speak Out About God*, ed. Roy Abraham Varghese (Dallas, TX: Lewis and Stanley, 1984), p. 98.
2. James Orr, *The Christian View of God and the World* (Edinburgh: Andrew Elliot, 1897), p. 111.
3. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, three volumes (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1983), vol. 1, p. 153.
4. Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, six volumes (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976ff), vol. 2, p. 11.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
6. Charles Darwin, *Autobiography* (New York: Dover Publishing, 1958), p. 59.
7. C.S. Lewis, *Broadcast Talks* (London: 1946), p. 37-8.

CHAPTER 3



Philosophy

KEY QUESTION

What is real, and what is true?

KEY IDEA

The single most important philosophical truth in the Bible is that Jesus Christ is the Logos of God.

KEY QUOTE

“The crucial problem is that some thinkers place their trust in a set of assumptions in their search for truth, while other thinkers place their trust in a quite different set of assumptions.”

—WARREN C. YOUNG

SUMMARY

The philosophical quest that most appeals to Christians is the attempt to obey 2 Corinthians 10:4-5, "We demolish arguments and every high-minded thing that is raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." Philosophy is not inherently non-Christian. What makes some philosophy non-Christian is what the Bible refers to as "philosophy and empty deceit." That is, philosophy "based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ" (Colossians 2:8). The single most important philosophical truth in the Bible is that Jesus Christ is the Logos (word, or mind) of God. Christian philosophy says Christ the Logos is the explanation for the universe and everything in it. The major charge against Christianity in general and Christian philosophy in particular, is that it is unscientific. Christians claim that the Christian doctrines of God, creation, Logos, design, purpose, law, order, and life are consistent with the findings of science, history, and personal experience in a way that the vain and deceitful philosophies of dialectical materialism and philosophical naturalism will never be.



Some people assume that the Christian worldview cannot possibly have a philosophy of its own, since it requires faith in biblical revelation. How can Christians, who must postulate existence or reality outside the material realm, ever hope to prove their beliefs true, reasonable, rational, and worth living and dying for?

Unfortunately, some Christians adopt just such an attitude—conceding that their faith is indefensible. They attempt to avoid the whole problem by stating that what they believe is “beyond reason.” These Christians point to Colossians 2:8, where Paul writes, “Be careful that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deceit . . .,” and from this they draw the conclusion that God does not want us to meddle in such a vain and “deceitful” discipline as philosophy. However, people who point to this verse as a warning against philosophy often omit the rest of the verse, in which Paul describes the kind of philosophy he is warning against, namely, philosophy “based on human tradition, based on the elemental forces of the world, and not based on Christ.”

The Bible does not ask the Christian to abandon reason in accepting its truth.

The Bible does not ask the Christian to abandon reason in accepting its truth. “‘Come,’” records Isaiah, “‘let us discuss this,’ says the Lord. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they will be as white as snow’” (Isaiah 1:18). 1 Peter 3:15 encourages Christians to understand and be able to present logical, compelling reasons for their hope in Christ. But is this possible? Is Christian faith and, more specifically, Christian philosophy defensible?

C.E.M. Joad, who lived most of his life believing that the concept of God was unacceptable, finally concluded, “It is because . . . the religious view of the universe seems to me to cover more of the facts of experience than any other that I have been gradually led to embrace it.”¹ He concluded his long personal pilgrimage by admitting, “I now believe that the balance of reasonable considerations tells heavily in favor of the religious, even of the Christian view of the world.”² This is the same Joad who appeared on BBC radio with humanist Bertrand Russell attacking Christianity.

Many who reflect honestly on the deeper things of life—“Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?”—discover that Christianity answers

more questions more completely than any other worldview. Those who earnestly seek truth will ultimately find themselves face-to-face with the God of the Bible. It is all well and good to debate whether God exists, but for the average person the debate is a moot point. They don't require reasoned argument because most people are aware of His existence in their very souls.

*"Thou hast formed us for Thyself,
and our hearts are restless till they
find rest in Thee."*

—ST. AUGUSTINE

Even today the vast majority of human beings in the world believe in a God (some polls place the figure as high as 95 percent). Paul found this to be true in Athens as well (Acts 17:23). People tend to believe the most likely solution to a problem. That's why most people believe, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) and "everything in it" (Acts 17:24). Jean Piaget, a child psychologist, has found that a seven year-old almost instinctively believes that everything in the universe has a purpose. It makes more (common) sense to believe Genesis 1:1 than to believe that a series of cosmic accidents brought about the orderly, beautiful, meaningful cosmos.

FAITH AND EPISTEMOLOGY

The basic tenets of Christian philosophy can be demonstrated to be rational, for they are held by average, rational men and women. But surely, Christianity must still run into an epistemological problem—how does the Christian know without clashing with science and experience? This is the question of epistemology, or how we know what we say we know. In addition, the Christian must often answer the related question: How can the knowledge we gain through faith in biblical revelation compare to knowledge gained by a scientific investigation of the universe?

The answer is not as difficult as you might imagine. When all is said and done, all knowing requires faith. Faith precedes reason or, as W. J. Neidhardt puts it, "Faith correctly viewed is that illumination by which true rationality begins."⁴ While some Secular Humanists like to portray science as the primary source for knowledge and faith in biblical revelation as some blind second-class epistemology or even superstition, the fact remains that all methods of knowing ultimately rely on certain assumptions. Edward T. Ramsdell writes, "The natural man is no less certainly a man of faith than the spiritual, but his faith is in the ultimacy of

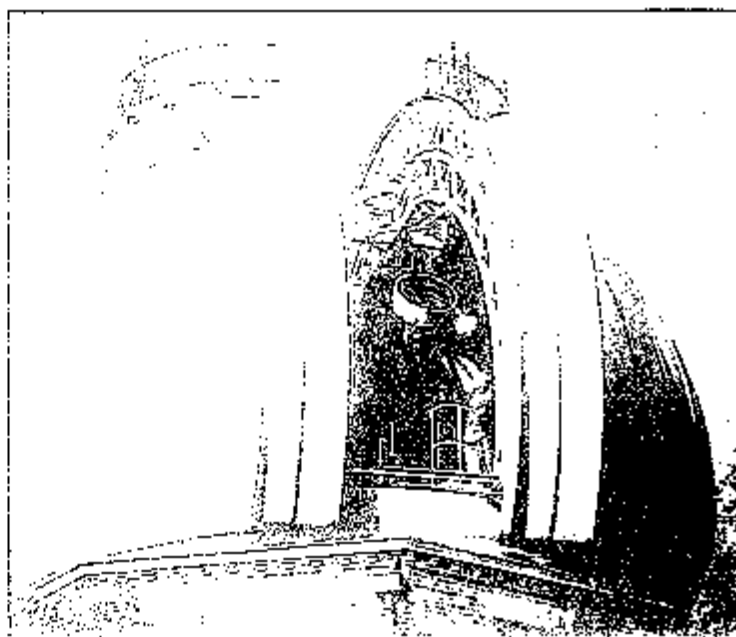
something other than the Word of God. The spiritual man is no less certainly a man of reason than the natural, but his reason, like that of every man, functions within the perspective of his faith."

The basic problem of philosophy is not the problem of faith versus reason. "The crucial problem," says Warren C. Young, "is that some thinkers place their trust in a set of assumptions in their search for truth, while other thinkers place their trust in a quite different set of assumptions." That is, Secular

Humanists (atheists) place their trust in certain findings of science and experience, neither of which can be rationally demonstrated to be the source of all truth. Christians also put some faith in science, history, and personal experience, but they know such avenues for discovering truth are not infallible. Christians know that men of science make mistakes and scientific journals can practice discrimination against views considered dangerous. Christians know that history can be perverted, distorted or twisted, and that some personal experiences are not a good source of fact or knowledge. On the other hand, Christians believe that biblical revelation is true and that God would not fool or mislead His children.

It should be stressed that Christian philosophy does not throw out reason or tests for truth.

Christianity says the New Testament is true because its truths can be tested. Christians aren't asking the non-believer to believe a revelation of old wives' fables, but instead to consider historical evidences that reason itself can employ, much as an attorney builds a case using evidences to determine questions of fact. Christian epistemology is based on special revelation which, in



Knowledge gained through the scientific investigation of the universe rests on a specific set of assumptions.

Christianity says the New Testament is true because its truths can be tested.

turn, is based on history, the law of evidence, and the science of archaeology.

Up to this point we have established two things regarding Christian philosophy:

- Many hold it to be the most rational of all worldviews.
- It requires no more faith than any other philosophy.

Indeed, one could argue that it takes a great deal more faith to believe in the spontaneous generation doctrine of Secular Humanism and Marxism or the randomness of all nature (i.e., that the universe happened by accident) than it does to accept the Christian doctrine of Creator/Creation.

RECONCILING SCIENCE AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

At the outset of this chapter, it may have appeared that reconciling supernaturalism with science would be difficult. However, in light of the previous discussion, little reconciliation, if any, is necessary.

The wise Christian philosopher recognizes the scientific method as a limited, but valuable, ally. In addition to lending support for the teleological argument

"Christianity was 'the mother of modern science.'"

FRANCIS SCHAEFFER

(discerning God from the design evident in Creation), science also shores up the cosmological argument (about the origin and nature of the universe) and raises serious questions about whether or not atoms are material particles (which doesn't

bode well for either naturalism or materialism).

Joad reinforces the idea that science does not threaten Christianity, stating, "It has often been represented that the conclusions of science are hostile to the tenets of religion. Whatever grounds there may

have been for such a view in the past, it is hard to see with what good reason such a contention could be sustained today." Stephen D. Schwarz cites four specific scientific discoveries that support the conclusion that God exists: the Second Law of Thermodynamics, the impossibility of spontaneous generation of life from non-life, genetic information theory (DNA), and the Anthropic Principle (that the cosmos is "fine-tuned" to accommodate human life).

*"In science we have been
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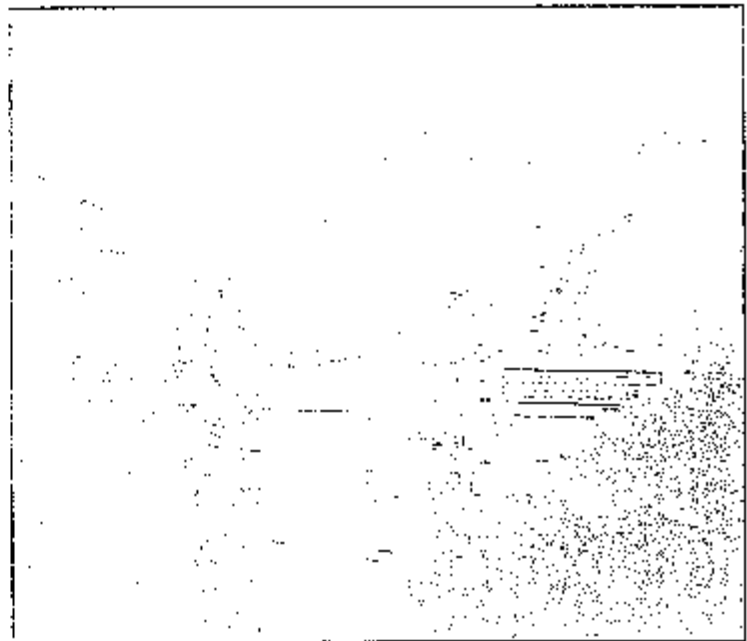
—C.S. LEWIS

For the Christian, then, science need not be an enemy. Indeed, science should be accepted as a fairly successful means to obtain knowledge about God's design in the universe. As C.S. Lewis says, "In science we have been reading only the notes to a poem; in Christianity we find the poem itself."¹

THE ORIGIN OF SCIENCE

An examination of the history of modern science reaffirms the supernaturalist's premise that science is not hostile to his position. Modern science was founded by men who viewed the world from a Christian perspective. Neither the Marxist nor the humanist worldview, with their corresponding beliefs that the universe was brought about by a series of accidents, could serve as a fitting base for modern science. Francis Schaeffer writes, "Since the world had been created by a reasonable God, [scientists] were not surprised to find a correlation between themselves as observers and the thing observed—that is, between subject and object. . . . Without this foundation, modern Western science would not have been born."²

Christianity was "the mother of modern science," Norman L. Geisler and J. Kerby Anderson's *Origin Science* includes a chapter entitled "The Supernatural Roots of Modern Science." Both English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead and American physicist J. Robert Oppenheimer defended this view. Philosopher and historian of science Stanley I. Jaki notes that historically the belief in creation and the Creator was the moment of truth for science: "This belief formed the bedrock on which science rose."³ Jaki has powerfully defended this position in *The Origin of Science* and *The Savior of Science*.



Our confidence in the unchanging Law of Gravity makes space flight possible.

Re-examine the statements by Schaeffer and Jaki for a moment. Notice that each claim is grounded on the fact that science assumed an orderly universe. If man believed the universe to be disorderly or chaotic, he never would have bothered with science, which relies on matter to behave in certain meaningful ways under controlled conditions. On earth, we always expect an apple to fall down rather than up, because we believe in a consistent law—the Law of Gravity. Lewis says men became scientific because they expected Law in Nature, and “they expected Law in Nature because they believed in a Legislator.”¹² In other words, the origin of modern science itself provides grounds for the teleological argument—the argument from design to Designer.

METAPHYSICS: ONTOLOGY/COSMOLOGY

The Christian view of metaphysics—of ultimate reality (ontology and cosmology)—is part of what C. S. Lewis termed “mere Christianity.” There are certain things virtually all Christians believe, and one is that God is the supreme source of all being and reality. He is the ultimate reality and because He is, we are. The space-time creation, says Carl F.H. Henry, depends on the Creator-God “for its actuality, its meaning and its purpose.”¹³ This creation is intelligible because God is intelligent, and we can understand the creation and Creator because He made us in His image with the capacity to understand Him and His intelligent order.

For the Christian, matter exists but it is not the ultimate substance. It is real, but it is not ultimate reality. It is not eternal. Rather, the material universe was created on purpose out of the mind of the living Logos (John 1:1-4), and all the

The Christian explanation for the world of matter or nature is that the supernatural created the natural.

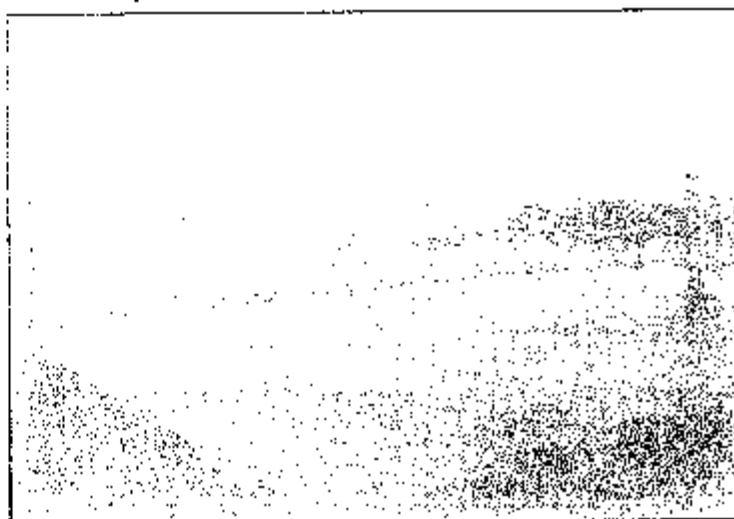
cosmos, existing independently of God, relies on God for its very existence and explanation. In other words, the Christian explanation for the world of matter or nature is that the supernatural created the natural. And since the supernatural God of the Bible is a rational, purposeful, powerful God, the created universe itself contains such qualities. It is

no accident that at every level of the cosmos—sub-atomic, atomic, organic, inorganic, sub-human, human, earth, moon, sun, stars, galaxies—all things manifest

amazing order and rationality that can be reasonably explained only as the result of a deliberate, creative act of God.

Christianity considers entirely irrational the notion that the orderly cosmos is the result of a series of accidents, chance, or random happenings. Such a position is tantamount to having a bridge, an airplane, an automobile, or a skyscraper, without an architect, plan, or engineer. It doesn't happen that way in the real world, only in the minds of those who lack faith in the supernatural and in the Bible.

The early verses of John 1 contain the Christian's metaphysics in a nutshell. "In the beginning [of the cosmos] was the Word [Logos, mind, reason, thought, wisdom, intelligence, idea, law, order, purpose, design], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things were created through Him; and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men" (John 1:1-4).



To believe that the universe has no designer is as irrational as thinking that a bridge comes about by chance.

The flow of this passage sets forth the parameters of Christian philosophy: mind before matter, God before man, plan and design before creation, life from life, and enlightenment from the Light. The orderly universe was conceived in the orderly and rational mind of God before it was created. Without the Logos there would be no cosmos. From the Christian perspective it is no surprise to see philosophers and scientists refer to the universe as a manifestation of mathematical law, order, design, beauty, etc. This is the way it was created "in the beginning."

Young says, "Christian realists are contingent dualists but not eternal dualists. They hold that there are two kinds of substance: Spirit (or God) and matter which was created by God *ex nihilo* as Augustine suggested. Matter is not spirit, nor is it reducible to spirit, but its existence is always dependent upon God Who created it out of nothing." Young chooses to use the term "Christian realism"

to represent the Christian philosophy. In an effort to stress the existence of something other than the material, we employ the term “supernaturalism.” Regardless of the name, true Christian philosophy requires a metaphysics consistent with biblical teaching.

MIND-BODY PROBLEM AND THE MENTAL PROOF

The supernaturalist believes that the mind, or consciousness, exists as a separate entity from the purely physical. The Christian believes that his mind is a reflection of the Universal Mind that created the universe *ex nihilo*, and he sees the mind as an additional proof for the existence of the supernatural. Most men perceive their thinking process as something different from the material world.

Young says, “Man is so made that his spirit may operate upon and influence his body, and his body is so made that it may operate upon his mind or spirit.”¹¹

This distinction between brain and mind implies a distinction about the whole order of things: matter exists, and something other than matter exists. As James Buswell comments, “We find in the created universe an important

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— WARREN C. YOUNG

difference between beings which think, and beings which are spatially extended, or spiritual beings and material beings. . . . In the body and mind of man we see integrated interaction between the spiritual thinking being, and the material extended being.”¹²

Many Christian thinkers believe this distinction between the brain and the

mind is intuitively obvious, and this is the beginning of the mental proof for the existence of a Higher Mind that created our minds. Other Christian thinkers begin with the untenability of the materialist position that the mind is only a material phenomenon and draw the conclusion that since the materialist explanation is irrational, the supernatural explanation must be the acceptable position. Again,

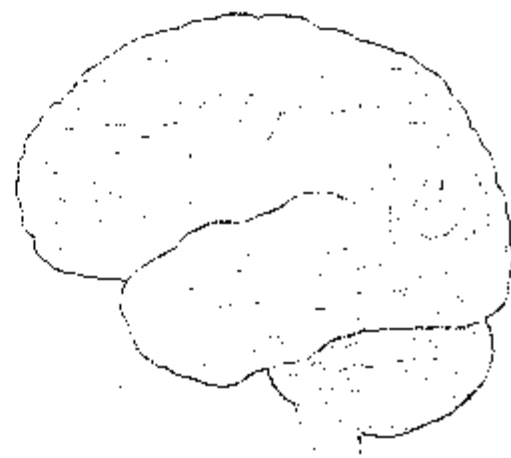
science aids the Christian philosopher in undermining the materialist worldview. Writes Buswell, "The mind is not the brain. The 'brain track' psychology has failed. . . . It is a known fact that if certain parts of the brain are destroyed, and the functions corresponding to those parts impaired, the functions may be taken up by other parts of the brain. There is no exact correspondence between mind and brain."

Sir John Eccles has made a voluminous contribution to this discussion in recent years. His three works, *The Self and Its Brain* (with Karl Popper), *The Human Mystery* and *The Human Psyche* are considered classics in the field. Eccles maintains that having a mind means one is conscious, and that consciousness is a mental event, not a material event. He further contends that there are two distinct orders—the brain is in the material world and the mind is in the "world of subjective experience."

Lewis cuts to the heart of the materialist and naturalist dilemma when he writes, "The Naturalists have been engaged in thinking about Nature. They have not attended to the fact that they were thinking. The moment one attends to this it is obvious that one's own thinking cannot be merely a natural event, and that therefore something other than Nature exists. The Supernatural is not remote and abstruse: it is a matter of daily and hourly experience, as intimate as breathing."¹⁷

D. Elton Trueblood believes that supernaturalism is unavoidable: "How can nature include mind as an integral part unless it is grounded in mind? If mind were seen as something alien or accidental, the case would be different, but the further we go in modern science the clearer it becomes that mental experience is no strange offshoot. Rather it is something which is deeply rooted in the entire structure."¹⁸ Implied, then, is the existence of a God that could create an

**The materialist explanation
is irrational.**



"There is no exact correspondence between mind and brain."—James Oliver Buswell, Jr.

entire structure with mind as an integral part. Once an individual grants the existence of an orderly mind separate from the physical universe, belief in the Ultimate Mind becomes the only rational option.

Christians must remember, however, that God is much more than an "Ultimate Mind." The mental proof may help to establish the existence of God, but the God of rational "proofs" alone is unworthy of worship—only the Christian God, in all His power and holiness, elicits awe and love in their proper proportion.

CONCLUSION

Supernaturalism is more than a philosophy in the narrow sense. Christian philosophy represents a worldview that is consistent with the Bible throughout. In the end, everyone must choose between a materialist/naturalist worldview and a

Christian philosophy represents a worldview that is consistent with the Bible throughout.

supernaturalist worldview—and the choice will create repercussions for every aspect of the individual's life. Christian philosophy embraces the meaningful, purposeful life, a life in which each of us shapes his or her beliefs according to a coherent, reasonable,

truthful worldview. A person who holds such a worldview will not be tossed to and fro by every secularist doctrine. Dr. Young says:

In the same way it can be said that the Christian philosopher and theologian must be acquainted with the contending worldviews of his age. Philosophy, after all, is a way of life, and the Christian believes that he has the true way—the true pattern for living. It is the task of the Christian leader to understand the ideologies of his day so that he may be able to meet their challenge. The task is a never-ending one, for, although the Christian's worldview does not change, the world about him does. Thus the task of showing the relevance of the Christian realistic philosophy to a world in process is one which requires eternal vigilance. To such a task, to such an ideal, the Christian leader must dedicate himself."

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2. *Ibid.*, p. 22.
3. Carl F.H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, six volumes (Waco, Tex.: Word Books, 1976), vol. 1, p. 169. Henry mentions W.J. Neidhardt's work, "Faith, the Unrecognized Partner of Science and Religion," as the source for his comments.
4. Edward T. Ramsdell, *The Christian Perspective* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1950), p. 42.
5. Warren C. Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, [1954] 1975), p. 37.
6. Joad, *The Recovery of Belief*, p. 107.
7. *A Mind Awake: An Anthology of C.S. Lewis*, ed. Clyde S. Kilby (New York and London: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), p. 240.
8. Francis A. Schaeffer, *How Should We Then Live?* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1976), p. 134.
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10. Stanley L. Jaki, *The Road of Science* (South Bend, Ind.: Regnery Gateway, 1979), p. 143.
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16. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
17. *A Mind Awake*, ed. Kilby, p. 205.
18. D. Elton Trueblood, *Philosophy of Religion* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 206.
19. Young, *A Christian Approach to Philosophy*, pp. 228-9.