Learned and lucid, this multiauthor survey of Western thought about God and the world from the Greeks and Hebrews to the exotically furnished vagaries of our own time will be a boon to serious students. It is a major achievement.

—J. I. Packer, professor of theology, Regent College

Revolutions in Worldview is a magnificent intellectual and spiritual tour de force—indeed, a feat of strength and virtuosity. This work is everything that a primer to worldview thinking should entail. From the early Greeks to present-day postmodernists, these authors explore what the human race has done to illustrate Solomon's admonition "to search and seek out wisdom and the 'reason of things.' " (Eccl. 7:25). Solomon concluded: "As for that which is far off and exceedingly deep, who can find it out?" This is the lament of modern and postmodern man after 2,500 years of probing the "exceedingly deep" of theology (Is there a God?), philosophy (What is reality?), ethics (What is good and evil?), biology (What is life?), physics (What is dark energy?), and so forth. I cannot recommend this book too highly.

—Dr. David Noebel, founder and president of Summit Ministries and author of Understanding the Times *worldview curriculum*

Having taught history of philosophy and Christian thought at the graduate level for many years, I am delighted to welcome *Revolutions in Worldview.* Andy Hoffecker, who has long been a recognized leader and expert in this field, has brought together an impressive faculty to present a worldviewish survey of the history of Western thought—a kind of contemporary course in moral philosophy for the undergraduate, or an introduction to this important material for the graduate student who escaped college or university without adequate exposure to this vital subject matter. This volume joins Colin Brown and Jacques Barzun in providing the student a window into how outlook has informed life in key stages of the development of the Western mind. Written from a standpoint that emphasizes the majesty and lordship of God, and his sovereignty in his redemptive purposes, these chapters provide us with knowledge and perspective crucial for an integrated understanding of history and philosophy, and for current cultural analysis and engagement.

—Ligon Duncan, senior minister, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS

Revolutions in Worldview is about ten major worldview revolutions, and several sub-revolutions, in Western culture and civilization. Like its predecessor, *Building a Christian World View*, the authors of this well-written volume recognize the immense intellectual and practical importance of the concept of worldview itself and its inescapable human significance. This book's historical orientation sheds light on the past up to our own day. Its grounding in Scripture and the Reformed tradition gives it authority and perspective. Its wealth of theological and philosophical insight is sure to make readers better lovers of God and wisdom. I hope, as the editor does, that it will be used as a formidable text in capstone courses for undergraduates regardless of discipline. I also believe it will help cast a new vision for graduate and seminary education.

—David K. Naugle, professor of philosophy, Dallas Baptist University and author of Worldview: The History of a Concept *(Eerdmans, 2002)*

A dreadful irony of our times is that much of the world is looking to the West for constructive models of cultural patterns, while many in the West are cynically refusing their own heritage. When I travel to China, or the African continent, I am regularly asked what ingredients from Western history can bring inspiration to their local problems and opportunities. Far from perfect, and perhaps not entirely unique, yet the West gave the world so much: health care, human rights, freedom of conscience, the separation of church and state, technology, humane labor laws, and flourishing arts. This book challenges the cynics and encourages advocates by explaining how it all came about, and by setting forth conditions whereby the West may continue to stay alive.

—William Edgar, professor of apologetics, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

At a time when knowledge of the history of ideas, either by neglect or design, seems to have fallen out of favor, *Revolutions in Worldview* is a welcome antidote. Sweeping in its scope, without being simplistic, *Revolutions* shows how the ideas of today, together with their consequences, have not come to us ex nihilo. The impetus to bring together the disparate elements and institutions that make up a culture is embedded in human nature. In this volume, that impetus is laid out clearly as each historical era builds on the other. Providing historical perspective as well as critical analysis, these essays give the reader both a telescopic and a microscopic view on present-day Western culture.

—K. Scott Oliphint, professor of apologetics and systematic theology, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia

W. Andrew Hoffecker's *Revolutions in Worldview* offers insightful accounts of the intellectual, political, and social movements and forces that have shaped Christian worldviews through the course of Western history. All by themselves, the chapters "Christianity from the Early Fathers to Charlemagne," "Medieval Theology and the Roots of Modernity," and "The Renaissance" justify the price of the book! The book as a whole demonstrates two important reasons for Christians today to take worldview analysis seriously. First, the various essays show that the task of bringing our own thinking and affections into conformity with Scripture is both perpetual and complicated. The spirit of the world in every age is more diverse and more subtly attractive than we like to admit. Second, the essays show that worldview analysis can serve many different valuable ends, from making us appreciate the faithfulness of Christians in the past, to displaying the ways that Christian worldviews can respectfully differ, to inspiring us to resist the encroachment of a worldly mindset. For readers ready to enrich their pursuit of a biblical worldview with a historical perspective, this book will be a valuable and challenging resource.

—William Davis, professor of philosophy, Covenant College

If ideas have consequences, *Revolutions in Worldview* shows definitively that ideas also have contexts. For those interested in defending, maintaining and promoting a Christian worldview, this book gives ample material for considering the complications and importance of the work of cultivating Christian minds.

—D. G. Hart, PhD, director of partnered projects,
Intercollegiate Studies Institute

Professor Hoffecker's *Revolutions in Worldview* is an incisive collection of essays by leading Reformed scholars who examine the historical, philosophical, and cultural roots of Western civilization—and those ideas and movements that continue to challenge the credibility and vitality of Christian faith. I warmly recommend it for use as a text in all Christian colleges and seminaries.

—John Jefferson Davis, professor of systematic theology and Christian
ethics, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Much is said, but little understood, about worldview, yet the recognition of its importance is gaining adherents daily. You cannot afford to be uninformed about worldview and its shaping influence on all of life. If you must choose one volume to orient you to this critical subject, you can do no better than *Revolutions in Worldview*, edited by Andrew Hoffecker, one of the foremost experts on this subject.

—Luder Whitlock, The Trinity Forum

Students of intellectual history have become accustomed to a vocabulary that highlights the struggle for the meaning of Western civilization. Terms such as *metanarrative, paradigm shift, weltanschauung, worldview, presuppositions,* and *hermeneutics* are weighty yet commonplace words that reflect the evolution and revolution in the history of ideas. But what is not so common is a succinct and historically logical presentation of this flow of ideas, simultaneously developed by a cadre of profoundly competent and deeply committed Christian scholars. If you seek to better understand the flow of Western thought, then *Revolutions in Wordlview* will sharpen your vision into the essence of the ideas that have created the way we view our world.

—Dr. Peter A. Lillback, president, Westminster Theological Seminary

Revolutions in Worldview

Understanding the Flow of Western Thought

Edited by W. Andrew Hoffecker

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Preface

W. Andrew Hoffecker

Of the writing of books on worldview—as a philosophical category and as specific belief systems—there is no end! For example, over the last twenty years a myriad of texts have probed the cacophony of worldviews that characterize modernity and postmodernity, and yet, ironically, the first full-scale treatment of *worldview* as a philosophical category appeared only recently in David Naugle's analysis *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002). Other publications exploring related topics with titles such as *The Soul of the American University* and *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* remind us of the remarkable influence of worldviews on academics. They highlight the failure of evangelicals to tackle the challenge of identifying and confronting underlying principles that shape scholarly pursuits.

Evangelicals' interest in understanding how worldviews influence life has not been limited to the rarefied air of the academy. Various types of publications, along with church conferences, leadership seminars, and summer institutes, testify to sustained evangelical interest in worldview-related issues. The appearance of Mark Noll's *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind*, toward the end of the twentieth century (1994), highlighted the irony that characterized American evangelicalism at that time. Despite cultural leadership at the earliest stages of American intellectual life, Noll contended, evangelicals sowed seeds in the nineteenth century that bore anti-intellectual fruit in the twentieth century. Thus, evangelicals abandoned their heritage of making substantial contributions to the American mind. About the time Noll's book appeared, evangelicals began to awaken to the challenge of articulating a distinctively Christian worldview—a hope-filled trend that Noll documented. The prevalence of texts about Christian worldview issues justifies this hope.

I awakened from my own "dogmatic slumbers" to worldview concerns in the mid-1960s during my last year at seminary—a heady time for theological graduate studies. I had thoroughly devoured my coursework—historical, biblical, theological, and practical. Equipped with the tools of an evangelical seminary education, I eagerly looked forward to ministry, though I had no idea what form my service would take. This changed radically when Arthur Holmes (*Contours of a World View*) and another guest lecturer challenged our graduating class with a bold proposition. Our theological education, they contended, was severely impoverished if it consisted only of the traditional disciplines of a seminary curriculum. They argued that the cultural crisis of the 1960s demanded that every responsible Christian, not just ministers and ministerial candidates, articulate a vibrant, compelling, Christian worldview to challenge the contemporary unbelief that threatened to engulf American life. Similarly, during the closing years of that turbulent decade, Francis Schaeffer inspired the rising generation of evangelicals by preaching that "people act as they think," further solidifying my growing conviction that the academy needed Christians who were self-consciously committed to thinking and acting in terms of their worldview. Therefore, I enrolled in a PhD program, not only to be equipped to teach "religion" courses but to do so with a firm conviction that the Christian worldview should influence all the disciplines of higher education.

Evangelicals preoccupied with worldview concerns occasionally are criticized for overintellectualizing Christianity. Defenders of "worldview thinking" deny the validity of such charges. Everyone has a worldview, and one's worldview, they argue, influences every aspect of a person's thought and life. One's worldview gives coherence to how one thinks and lives, provides moral parameters, and directly motivates behavior.

Thus, "worldview thinking" is not merely an academic issue and concern. Worldview issues and influences pervade every area of human existence, from individual reflection to all forms of social and cultural activity—family and marriage, labor and management, economic transactions, scientific investigation, technological development, political and judicial practices, arts and entertainment, and leisure and recreational activities. Worldviews determine the cultural activities in which individuals and people groups immerse themselves.

Before beginning our survey of revolutions in Western worldviews, we need to understand what constitutes a worldview and how this term has been used in the history of ideas. David Naugle's *Worldview: The History of a Concept*, mentioned above, offers the first extensive analysis of the concept and its role in intellectual history.[1] The term *worldview* is modern in origin, stemming from one of the most dramatic philosophical shifts in

1. David Naugle, *Worldview: The History of a Concept* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 55–67.

Western thought: the Enlightenment. In his *Critique of Judgment* (1790), Immanuel Kant, who thought of his own epistemology as a "Copernican revolution," coined the term *weltanschauung*. Kant was referring simply to one's empirical perception of the world—one's "worldview." Later, *worldview* was expanded to include not only one's sensory apprehension of the natural order, but also the categorization of moral experience. Thus, early on, *worldview* encompassed how one experienced the phenomenal and moral aspects of reality.

In the nineteenth century, there was an explosion in the use of the term *worldview* among philosophers in their discussions of the existence of the cosmos and the meaning of reality. As its use proliferated, *worldview* as a comprehensive way of understanding human existence transcended strictly philosophical inquiry. Worldview vocabulary captured the attention of thinkers outside the field of philosophy, until scholars throughout the academic disciplines—language, music, art, theology, history, and the physical sciences—adopted the term. For many, *worldview* became a help maid to philosophy.[2]

Widespread use of *worldview* in other academic fields testifies to its significance in the abstract world of ideas, and to its implications for every form of human activity. One's worldview, or world-and-life view, consists of one's most basic beliefs and framework of understanding. Basic beliefs can be expressed by several terms—*ideas*, *assumptions*, *convictions*, *presuppositions*, and *premises*. Directly or indirectly, basic beliefs influence every dimension of human life: they guide thought, stimulate imagination, influence intuition, direct moral choices, and determine the value and priority given to each of these faculties. Collectively, basic beliefs function as the grid or matrix by which we comprehend reality and attempt to live consistently within that framework.

All humans are committed to their basic beliefs; otherwise, these beliefs would not be *basic*. Our commitments to our basic beliefs are *core* commitments—we cling to them; they are nonnegotiable; we express them in every facet of our lives. Basic beliefs and core commitments are the fundamental aspects of a worldview, since, by definition, they determine how we understand the world and what aspects of that understanding are nonnegotiable. Thus, having and living out a worldview are inescapable aspects of being human. To be human is to have a worldview. So although we might associate *worldview* with complex philosophical systems—from Platonism to Cartesianism to postmodernist proposals—*worldview* also is fundamental to what it means to be human.

Basic beliefs are religious in nature because they are *basic* beliefs; core commitments are religious in nature because they are *core* commitments. Religion is fundamentally a matter of *basic* beliefs and *core* com-

2. Naugle notes that in the early nineteenth century, a German dissertation included in its bibliography about two thousand entries with "weltanschauung" in the title.

mitments—a worldview. Thus all worldviews are religious, and all people are religious. All thinking and doing arise from or are motivated by our core commitments, our basic beliefs—what the Bible terms "the heart" and describes as the center of our being.

Since everyone has a worldview, Christian truth addresses people not just theologically and doctrinally but in other ways as well. One's worldview encompasses not only what one believes about God but also everything about which one can think or do. A worldview influences how one comprehends everything from the exterior vastness of the cosmos to the most interior reflection of our hearts. It does so in several ways, at different levels, and in every conceivable subject matter and vocational calling.

Though worldview as a category is modern in origin, "worldview thinking" describes a universal feature of human experience. Evangelicals understand that the concept of worldview has immense implications for Christianity. If everyone possesses a worldview—a comprehensive, unifying perspective in terms of which we interpret the cosmos and live our lives—then it is in terms of our worldview that Christians should live in the world to God's glory, defend the faith to unbelievers, and live out the implications of God's revealed will. The Christian worldview is rooted in the Bible: the transcendent, triune God, who sovereignly created and redeemed heaven and earth, provides the ultimate context for understanding all reality.

The previous two-volume work, *Building a Christian World View*, was an introductory, college-level discussion of the history of Western worldviews from the ancients to contemporary thought. The present volume attempts a similar survey but is directed toward upper-level undergraduates and graduate students. As a historian of the old Princeton theology (which arguably represents traditional Reformed thinking at the peak of its influence in American life), I see the present volume as analogous to the "exiting course" on moral philosophy that most nineteenth-century American colleges required. Princeton and other American colleges framed this course using Scottish Common Sense philosophy to rebut the skepticism of David Hume, which had undermined the foundations of Christian orthodoxy. The lectures ranged widely over epistemology, natural theology, and social and political relations, thus providing students a Christian framework for all that they had learned. Many college presidents taught these capstone courses to round out their graduates' education, no matter what vocation they would pursue. Although I hope such a vision is not quixotic, I am convinced that Christian undergraduates need assistance in clarifying their own worldviews as they seek to serve Christ in various vocations.

The present volume follows the basic schema of *Building* by dividing the study of worldviews into ten discrete historical eras, but it differs from the earlier work in several ways. We do not separate our discussion into subtopics, such as theology, anthropology, and epistemology, but treat the worldviews as wholes. We also delineate the historical eras differently.

To probe the medieval era in more detail, we divide the vast Middle Ages into two sections, showing the variety of perspectives from Augustine to Charlemagne in one chapter and the High Middle Ages in another. We also add a separate chapter on the Renaissance to enable readers to compare and contrast its thinkers with those of the Middle Ages, which preceded, and those of the Reformation, which was contemporaneous with it and which extended past it. We also divide modernity into two segments: the Enlightenment, which in the name of modernity departed radically from the philosophy and religion of the past, and the nineteenth century, which furthered that rupture. Finally, we devote a separate chapter to the twentieth century, giving special emphasis to the emergence of postmodernity, which broke from modernity by denying the very idea of philosophy and thus of worldview. Each of these changes enables us to engage in more detailed study of the worldviews and movements they have precipitated.

The thesis of this book is that Western thought has experienced a series of changes so profound they should be called *revolutions*. Chronicling these revolutions should enable Christians living in the twenty-first century to understand the flow of Western thought—how key ideas persisted over time; how unique perspectives such as the nature of the deity, the question of human nature, and that of the cosmos got their original impetus and developed to their present state; how ideas spawned debates that remain with us; and how shifts from theism to secularism have intensified.

Although the contributors to this work teach in various academic milieus—most are seminary professors, while others teach at the undergraduate and graduate levels—they affirm what traditionally has been called a "Reformed perspective." Thus, we identify at the outset of this project the worldview within which we practice our scholarship: the Reformed worldview. The Reformed worldview, examined more fully in chapter 8, views all reality in terms of the majesty and lordship of God and his redemptive purposes. Reformed thinkers believe that all of life and thinking should be shaped or reformed according to the Word of God.

Our goal in this book is to present honestly and forthrightly the worldviews that characterize the periods assigned. The early chapters on ancient Greece and the Old and New Testaments establish a basic sense of antithesis between biblical revelation and other systems of speculative thought. In virtually every chapter besides those probing the Old and New Testaments, more than one perspective comes to light. Our assumption as scholars from the Reformed tradition is that despite obvious differences between and within the Old and New Testaments, we can affirm confidently that the Bible is the Word of God and speaks with a unified voice. The Bible serves as the qualitative touchstone for implicit and explicit criticism found in the remaining chapters.

Acknowledgments

W. Andrew Hoffecker

The vast majority of books are not the product of a single mind. Those who pursue writing as a vocation readily acknowledge a variety of individuals who contributed to what they have written. How much more does an editor of a joint project such as *Revolutions in Worldview* owe to those whose efforts combined to give birth to this book.

I acknowledge first the colleagues who wrote the chapters. Their teaching and writing had already established them as respected scholars in their various disciplines. Thus, they were an easy choice as I projected the book's scope. They waited patiently as several years marched by from the time they first signed on with this endeavor. May your teaching ministry prosper and your next manuscript be accepted!

I thank Reformed Theological Seminary for the sabbatical that enabled me to bring to completion another book on worldview. I extend my appreciation to those who sat through courses and weekend seminars on worldview during the past three decades, first at Grove City College, then at RTS. Your questions and contributions to discussion enhanced my thinking about worldview issues.

Thanks also to Allan Fisher, former director of publications for P&R Publishing, who expressed enthusiasm for the project and guided me through initial hurdles; to Bryce Craig, president of P&R, and Marvin Padgett, P&R's present editorial director, who offered words of advice and encouragement; and to Eric Anest, P&R's associate director of editorial, who brought the manuscript to its completion.

I offer special words of thanks to John J. Hughes, president of Bits & Bytes, Inc., who shepherded the other authors and me in a timely manner. His suggestions for improving the book as a whole, as well as the individual

chapters, have made the text more attractive and reflect his commitment to excellence in Christian publishing.

Finally, I thank my wife, Pam. In our forty-four years of marriage, she has always been my most faithful encourager and critic. She combines those two qualities not only in the most loving manner possible but also at times when they are most needed.

1

Greeks Bearing Gifts

John M. Frame

The ancient Greeks were not the first civilization in the West, but they made such immense contributions to art, architecture, science, politics, warfare, education, poetry, history, and philosophy that many discussions of these subjects, even today, begin with them. Until the twentieth century, when Eastern religion and philosophy began to make a major impact, Western thought had two roots: Greek and biblical. Some thinkers tried to synthesize these traditions in various ways; others saw an antithesis and sought to be consistent with one or the other.

Although I greatly admire the creative brilliance of the Greek thinkers, I believe it is a serious mistake to adopt their worldviews or to try to synthesize their thinking with the worldview of the Bible. The Greeks and the biblical writers did explore many common themes: God and gods, the nature of reality, the origin of the world, human nature, wisdom, knowledge, ethics, politics, and even salvation. We can still learn much from the Greek discussions of these topics. But the ancient wariness about "Greeks bearing gifts" should be applied to the study of Greek worldviews.[1] The chief benefit in studying Greek thought is to understand better the philosophical and cultural consequences of rejecting biblical theism.

The ancient wariness about "Greeks bearing gifts" should be applied to the study of Greek worldviews. The chief benefit in studying Greek thought is to understand better the philosophical and cultural consequences of rejecting biblical theism.

The word *rejecting* may seem harsh. Did the Greeks have access to Scripture? And if not, how could they have rejected it? The early Christian writer Justin Martyr thought that Plato got the idea for his Demiurge (a godlike figure in the dialogue *Timaeus*) from the writings of Moses. Justin's hypothesis is historically unlikely, and it is a symptom of Justin's overesti-

1. The phrase "beware of Greeks bearing gifts" paraphrases a text from Virgil's *Aeneid* and other sources. The allusion is to the Trojan horse. The Greeks sent the Trojans a huge wooden horse as a supposed gift. After it was brought into the city of Troy, Greek soldiers emerged from the wooden structure, wreaking havoc.

mation of the coherence between Platonism and the Bible. But whatever we may say about the commerce in ideas between Greece and the Near East, the Bible does tell us that the Greeks, like all people, had the resources for formulating a theistic worldview. According to Romans 1:18–23,

> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

Because of God's self-revelation in creation, Paul states, all people, Greeks included, know the biblical God, but the human race has rejected this knowledge and has come to worship images of created things.

When Paul visited Athens, he found it "full of idols" (Acts 17:16). He preached there to an audience that included Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, and concluded by demanding their repentance for the sin of idolatry. Although Epicureans and Stoics had little use for traditional Greek gods, Paul evidently believed that Stoic materialistic pantheism and Epicurean atomism were no better than the worship of Zeus and Apollo. The world is not governed by impersonal fate (Stoicism) or impersonal (occasionally random) movements of atoms (Epicurus) but by a personal God who "has fixed a day on which he will judge the world in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed; and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead" (Acts 17:31). When Paul said this, some mocked, some withheld judgment, and a few believed.

None of the Greeks believed the world was created and directed by a personal, supreme, absolute being. The idea of a **personal** *absolute being is virtually unique to the Bible.*

The biblical God tolerates no rivals. It is wrong to worship Baal, Moloch, Dagon, Marduk, Zeus, Apollo, or Aphrodite. It also is wrong to regard the natural order as absolute, as an uncreated, self-sufficient reality. For both the "religious"[2] and the "secular" alternatives deny God the worship due him alone. In this sense, both the materialistic Stoics and Epicureans and the spiritualistic Plato are idolaters.

Greek Worldviews: One and Many

We sometimes speak of "Greek philosophy" or even "Greek thought" as if it represented a single worldview. However, even at first glance, there

2. I put "religious" in quotes, for in a larger sense all worldviews are religious, even those called "secular." A person's religious faith is his "ultimate concern" (Paul Tillich), the passion or allegiance that governs his life, whether or not he expresses that faith in ceremonial rites.

seem to be vast disagreements among Greek thinkers. Besides the disagreement between materialists and spiritualists, we note that Homer and Hesiod believed in the traditional gods; Heraclitus, Xenophanes, and Epicurus had little use for them. Parmenides believed that nothing changes, Heraclitus that everything changes—well, almost everything. Plato despised sense experience; Heraclitus, the Stoics, and Epicurus affirmed it. Protagoras denied, and Plato affirmed, the possibility of objective knowledge. Parmenides and Plotinus believed that reality is a perfect oneness; Democritus and Epicurus believed that the world was irreducibly plural. Epicurus advised people to avoid politics; the Stoics encouraged such involvement. The tragedians and Stoics were fatalists; the Epicureans were not.

Both the materialistic Stoics and Epicureans and the spiritualistic Plato are idolaters. . . . Since the theistic hypothesis was excluded from the outset, the Greek thinkers had the common task of explaining the world without reference to the biblical God, that is, of explaining the world by means of the world.

But Greek thinkers had much in common. First of all, none believed in the God of the Bible, despite the revelation of God to them mentioned earlier. None of the Greek philosophers even considered the theistic worldview, as far as we can tell from their writings. Since the theistic hypothesis was excluded from the outset, Greek thinkers had the common task of explaining the world without reference to the biblical God, that is, of explaining the world by means of the world.

Unbelief in the biblical God also meant that the human mind had to do its work without help from a higher mind. Although Anaxagoras taught that the world was directed by *nous* (mind), according to Plato's *Apology* Socrates expressed his disappointment that Anaxagoras didn't make much use of this idea. Nor did Heraclitus, who taught that the world was ordered by *logos* (word or reason). And although Aristotle also believed in a higher mind—the Unmoved Mover, a being whose entire activity consists in thinking about his own thoughts—this god did not reveal his thoughts to Aristotle but instead is a hypothesis of Aristotle's own reason and thus an idol.

To consider the issue more broadly: none of the Greeks believed the world was created and directed by a personal, supreme, absolute being. The idea of a *personal* absolute being is virtually unique to the Bible.[3] Hinduism, like Aristotle's and Plato's philosophies, teaches the existence of an absolute being, but that being (like those of the philosophers) is impersonal. The Homeric gods (as those of the Canaanites and other polytheists) are personal, but they are not absolute. Only the biblical God is both absolute and personal.[4]

3. I say "virtually" to interject a note of caution. I have not studied all the religions and philosophies of the world in order to prove the negative proposition that no other worldview includes a personal absolute. But I do believe this generalization is true. Scripture itself teaches that idolatry is universal among fallen people. God's revelation and grace, revealed only through the gospel of Christ, are the necessary antidote.

4. The god of Islam is absolute and often is presented as personal. But, (1) this emphasis ultimately comes from the Bible, from Mohammed's respect for the "peoples of the book," and (2) Muslim theology compromises absolute-personality theism when it takes divine predestination in a fatalistic sense and when it presents its god as a super-transcendent being about whom nothing may truthfully be said in human language.

The Greek Way of Worship

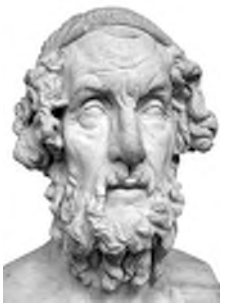
In Greek religion, the philosophical and religious absolute was fate. Although sometimes this is symbolized by the three women ("fates") who together weave and terminate the fabric of human life,[5] to the Greeks, fate was impersonal. The tragic heroes of Aeschylus and Sophocles are propelled by fate to transgress the proper boundaries of human life, whereupon they are destroyed, again by fate. The dictates of fate may agree with those of morality in some measure, but not necessarily. Fate is an impersonal force like gravity or electricity, and even the gods are subject to it.

Dooyeweerd says that the older, pre-Homeric Greek religion

> deified the ever-flowing stream of organic life, which issues from mother earth and cannot be bound to any individual form. In consequence, the deities of this religion are amorphous. It is from this shapeless stream of ever-flowing organic life that the generations of perishable beings originate periodically, whose existence, limited by a corporeal form, is subjected to the horrible fate of death, designated by the Greek terms *anangke* or *heimarmene tuche*. This existence in a limiting form was considered an injustice since it is obliged to sustain itself at the cost of other beings so that the life of one is the death of another. Therefore all fixation of life in an individual figure is avenged by the merciless fate of death in the order of time.[6]

He later describes the "central motive" of this religion as "that of the shapeless stream of life eternally flowing throughout the process of birth and decline of all that exists in a corporeal form."[7]

For the tragedians, however, fate governs not only birth and death but the rest of life as well. A fate that governs birth and death must govern all the events leading to birth and death. How, then, can we reconcile such a comprehensive fatalism with the amorphousness of the stream of life? One of these, it seems, will have to yield to the other; maintaining both leads to an unstable worldview. Neither fate nor the "shapeless stream" gives any meaning to the historical process. Things happen just because they happen (the shapeless stream) or because they were made to happen (fate); there is no rational or moral purpose. We often contrast fatalistic worldviews with worldviews based on chance, but in the end these coincide: both leave history meaningless and human beings helpless. Both types of worldview present a world that is not governed by purpose, goodness, or love.



Homer

Gradually, the old nature-religion gave way to the religion of the Olympian gods. The transformation was not too great, for the gods were basically personifications of the various forces of nature: Poseidon of the sea, Hades of the underworld, Apollo of the sun, Hephaestus of fire, Demeter of the earth, and so on. Then the gods became patrons of human activi-

5. Clotho spun the thread, Lachesis measured it, and Atropos cut it.
6. Herman Dooyeweerd, *In the Twilight of Western Thought* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1960), 39.
7. Ibid.

ties: Hera of marriage, Ares of war, Athena of education, Artemis of the hunt, Aphrodite of love, Hermes of commerce, and so forth.[8] Zeus was the most powerful but not all-powerful. He had a father and mother, the Titans Cronos and Rhea. He gained knowledge by consulting the fates and suffered irrational fits of jealousy and rage.

Dooyeweerd describes this "younger Olympian religion" as "the religion of form, measure and harmony."[9] The Olympians lived far above the "shapeless stream of life." So worship of these gods became the official religion of the Greek city-states who, of course, preferred order to chaos. Apollo especially became the embodiment of orderliness. But "in their private life the Greeks continued to hold to the old earthly gods of life and death."[10]

We often contrast fatalistic worldviews with worldviews based on chance, but in the end these coincide: both leave history meaningless and human beings helpless. Both types of worldview present a world that is not governed by purpose, goodness, or love.

Dionysus, god of wine and revelry, was one of the Olympian gods, but not one honored much by Homer or by the politicians. His worship was an intentional violation of form, order, and structure—a religion of drunken revelry and sexual orgy. So Dionysus, for all his Olympian transcendence, came to be seen as the patron of the old religion, the religion of shapelessness and chaos.

By providing some meaning to history, some reason why things happen as they do, the Olympian religion improved somewhat on the older one. Now, not only impersonal fate, or the chaotic life stream, but rational thought, the thinking of the gods, became part of the process. Ultimately, however, history remained in the hands of irrational fate, which was superior to the gods, and of the stream of life, over which the gods had little control.

Thus the old religion and the Olympian religion have pessimistic implications for human life. Human beings are essentially pawns, of fate, of chaos, or of the Olympians. Unlike the God of the Bible, none of these elements of Greek religion has a moral character, nor is any of these beings "a very present help in trouble" (Ps. 46:1).

Philosophy, the New Religion

A new movement began around 600 BC, when some thinkers tried to understand the world without the help of religion. They were called philosophers—lovers of wisdom. There had been wisdom teachers earlier in the ancient world, in Egypt, Babylon, and elsewhere, and the wisdom literature in Scripture (Proverbs, Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes) is similar to extrabiblical wisdom literature in many ways. But, unlike it, the biblical wisdom

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8. One is reminded of how the later church appointed dead saints as patrons of human endeavors.

9. *Twilight*, 40.

10. Ibid.

teachers declare that "the fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10, 15:33; compare Eccl. 12:13).

What distinguishes Greek philosophers from Greek religions and other ancient wisdom teachers is their insistence on the supremacy of human reason, what I shall call rational autonomy. Wisdom teachers in other cultures treasured the traditions of fathers and mothers, the teachers of past generations (as in Prov. 1:8–9; 2:1–22; 3:1–2; etc.) They saw themselves as collectors and guardians of such traditions, occasionally adding something and passing on the collection to their sons and daughters. The philosophers, however, wanted to accept nothing on the basis of tradition. Although Parmenides and Plato occasionally resorted to myth, they considered mythological explanations second best and, in the end, rationally inadequate. Reason must be autonomous, self-authenticating,[11] and subject to no standards other than its own.

Although the philosophers disagreed on much, they all agreed that the good life was the life of reason.[12] To them reason, not the fear of the Lord, was the beginning of wisdom; reason itself became something of a god—though they did not describe it as such—an object of ultimate allegiance, and the ultimate standard of truth and falsity, of right and wrong.

The philosophers' attitudes toward the traditional Greek religion ranged from ridicule (Xenophanes) to genial acceptance (Epicurus, who affirmed belief in the gods but denied that they caused anything to happen on earth). Socrates, considered the most admirable model of the philosophic temperament, was executed for his failure to believe in the gods of Athens, as well as for corrupting the youth by teaching them also to disbelieve. So Greek philosophy was indeed a "revolution in worldview." It represented a radical break from what had gone before.

What distinguishes Greek philosophers from Greek religions and other ancient wisdom teachers is their insistence on the supremacy of human reason, what I shall call rational autonomy.

A Survey of Greek Philosophy

Now we will survey Greek philosophers in more detail and in roughly chronological order. In our discussion, the following themes will apply to almost all of the individual philosophers: (1) the supreme authority of human reason, (2) the consequent attempt to make rational claims about the nature of *all* reality, (3) the consequent claim that all reality is basically one, but (4) the continuing problem of dualism: the antagonism between impersonal fate and the shapeless stream of life. And (5) the shapeless stream challenges the power of reason to grasp reality. The philosophers

11. I.e., validated only by itself.

12. The sophists of the fifth century (Protagoras, Gorgias, Thrasymachus) and the skeptics of the later Academy (Pyrrho, Timon, Arcesilaus) denied the possibility of knowing objective truth. But (paradoxically) they offered rational arguments for this conclusion. They never considered abandoning reason. For Plotinus, ultimate knowledge is mystical, not rational. But the path to mystical experience is rational. For him (also paradoxically) it is reason that teaches us how to transcend reason.

try to deal with this problem in various ways, without compromising their fundamental allegiance to autonomous reason. But (6) the philosophers' inability to maintain the rationality of their enterprise indicates the failure of their attempt to understand the world autonomously. For in the end, we must conclude that they have set themselves an impossible task: imposing autonomous reason on an essentially irrational world. (7) These difficulties invalidate much of what they say about the soul, ethics, and society.

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The Milesians

Only fragments remain from the teachings and writings of the first group of Greek philosophers, named for their city, Miletus, in Asia Minor. Most of what we know about them comes from other writers, particularly Aristotle, who were not entirely sympathetic. Still, it is less important for us to know what these philosophers actually said or meant than to know how they were understood by later thinkers; for it was by these later interpretations that the Milesians influenced the history of philosophy.[13]

Thales (ca. 620–546 BC) taught that "all is water" and that "all things are full of gods." Anaximenes (d. 528 BC) believed that "all is air." Anaximander (610–546) taught that "all is indefinite" (*apeiron*, boundless). To understand this, it helps to remember that, generally speaking, the Greeks thought the universe consisted of four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. So the Milesians were seeking to discover which of these, if any, was the fundamental one, the element of the elements, the basic constitution of the universe.

The Greek philosophers sought answers to three questions that continue to interest scientists and philosophers: (1) What is the fundamental nature of reality? (2) Where did everything come from? (3) How did the universe get to be as it is?

For Thales, (1) the fundamental nature of the universe is water. That is the essence of everything, what everything really is, despite appearances to the contrary. (2) Everything came from water and will return to water. (3) The world developed out of water by various natural processes. Perhaps by saying that "all things are full of gods" he meant to indicate that these natural processes were governed by thought or mind in some way.

Anaximenes thought similarly about air, doubtless provoking arguments about whether water or air was the most plentiful element, the element most able to account for other phenomena, and so forth. For him, the diversity of reality results from the condensation and rarefaction of air. Later, Heraclitus would make the case for fire. To my knowledge, nobody

13. This also is true with regard to other thinkers discussed in this essay. For the most part, I shall be assuming traditional interpretations of these thinkers, even though I know that many of these are controversial among specialists. I cannot enter here into detailed interpretative controversies, and I believe the traditional interpretations reveal the nature of the impact these philosophers have had on later history.

Outline

hypothesized the primacy of earth, perhaps because earth seemed to be less changeable than the other three elements. Anaximander believed that none of the four elements could explain the variety of the world, so he said the essence of things was a substance without a definite nature (in that sense "unbounded") that takes on limitations to create the visible world.

Commentators sometimes describe the Greek philosophers as children looking at the world in wonder. This picture, however, is far from that of the apostle Paul, who, in Romans 1:18–23, says that those without the biblical God are suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. It is hard not to sympathize with Thales and his colleagues as they forge ahead to look at the world in a new way. We cannot hold against them the fact that modern science has transcended their perspectives. But if we consider seriously what they are doing, we may evaluate their work differently.

Thales' statement that all is water does not arise from what we would call scientific research. Doubtless, Thales' observations influenced his view: the vast amount of water in the world, the need for water to sustain life, and so forth. But the "all" goes far beyond any possible observations. It is the language of a man sitting in an armchair, dogmatically asserting what the whole universe must be like. The "all" statements of these thinkers represent human reason vastly exceeding its limits. This is rationalism, an awe over the power of reason that turns it into a god.

[In Thales' statement, "All is water,"] the "all" goes far beyond any possible observations. It is the language of a man sitting in an armchair, dogmatically asserting what the whole universe must be like.

On the other hand, water (and air, and even more obviously the "boundless") represents the "shapeless stream" of the old religion. Water moves in waves and currents; it cannot be leashed or controlled. There is a randomness about it that calls into question the power of reason to give an account of it. Thales' statement about everything being "full of gods" may be an attempt to give a rational direction to the random flow. But that raises further questions: are the gods, too, made of water? If not, then his hypothesis fails to explain "all." If they are water, then they, like Zeus and Apollo, are victims of the flowing stream, not controllers of it. And we cannot ignore the fact that on Thales' basis the human mind, too, is water. My thoughts are essentially waves and wavelets, occurrences that just happen to take place in the movements of my inner sea. So why should we think that one wave is more true than another, more valid, more illuminating, more profound? Mechanistic natural processes can account for waves, but they cannot account for the truth or falsity of human thoughts.

So, Thales is an extreme rationalist, but his worldview calls his reason in question. He is a rationalist *and* an irrationalist. He calls to mind Cornelius Van Til's philosophical reading of Genesis 3: Our mother Eve was faced with two claims. God told her she would die from eating the fruit. Satan told her she would not die but would become like God. Eve should have disregarded Satan's claim at the outset. Instead, she asserted her own right to make the final judgment (rationalism). Satan's claim presupposed God did not exist as the ultimate determiner of truth and meaning, and

that therefore there was no absolute truth (irrationalism). Van Til says that every unbeliever is caught in this tension between rationalism and irrationalism. Some emphasize the former, others the latter. But when they get uneasy with one, they leap to the other.[14] I shall mention this pattern with other Greek philosophers. I mention it, not just as a fact of possible interest, but to show that the main inadequacies of Greek philosophy, in the end, are not to be blamed on primitive science, incomplete observations, or remediable logical mistakes, but on religious rebellion. Although these thinkers all absolutize human intellect, their nontheistic worldviews call human intellect itself into question.

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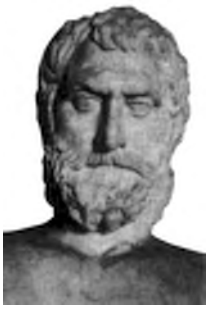
The Milesians' epistemological failure is linked to a metaphysical failure. For the "all" of the Milesians excludes the biblical relation between Creator and creature. If all is water, then God, if he exists, also is water, and we are water. There is no fundamental difference between him and us. God and the world are one stuff. There is no creation. God has no intrinsic sovereignty over the world. The Milesians' scheme, therefore, rules out the biblical God. And if the biblical God is the only possible ground of meaning or truth in the world, the Milesians also rule out meaning and truth.

Heraclitus (525–475)

Heraclitus lived in Ephesus (not far from Miletus) and thought the most fundamental element was fire, the most dynamic and changeable of the four. But he was less concerned with identifying the fundamental substance than with describing the pervasiveness of change, with the ways in which fire changes into other things and others into still others. He is quoted frequently as saying, "You cannot step in the same river twice," meaning that when you step in the second time, you are stepping into different waters. Since the waters are different, it is a different river. Actually, what he said was this:

> "On those stepping into rivers staying the same, other and other waters flow."[15]



Thales

The river stays the same, but the waters constantly change. Evidently, his view was that the elements of things are indeed constantly changing, but such change makes it possible for sameness to occur at other levels of reality.[16]

14. Van Til's discussion can be found in his *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969), 41–71. For his application to Plato, see Van Til, *A Survey of Christian Epistemology* (Den Dulk Christian Foundation, 1969), 14–55. Cf. my *Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1995), 231–38 passim.

15. Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Zurich: Weidmann, 1985), DK22B12. Translated by Daniel W. Graham in "Heraclitus," in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/h/heraclit.htm.

16. See Graham, ibid.

So, the world is constantly changing, but somehow these changes occur in regular patterns. If absolutely everything was in constant change, rational thought would be impossible; rational thought requires stability—objects that remain themselves long enough to be examined. Horses must remain horses, houses houses, people people, rivers rivers.

Heraclitus called the source of such stability the *logos*—probably the first philosophically significant use of this term. Logos has a variety of meanings: word, reason, rational account. Heraclitus believed that change was governed by a principle that kept change within rational bounds.

We can understand Heraclitus's philosophy as common sense. When we look at the world, nothing seems perfectly at rest; everything moves and changes, even if ever so slightly. Yet there is enough stability that we can talk about rivers, horses, houses, people, and many other things. The question is whether Heraclitus sheds any light on this change and stability. To say there is a logos is to say that the stability in the world must have a source. But what is that source? Is logos really an explanation of anything, or is it just a label for an unknown? Heraclitus's writings are paradoxical, multi-layered, full of symbols. They are fascinating, but in the end it isn't clear (to me, at least) what he is trying to tell us.

The logos is another assertion of Greek rationalism. Heraclitus tells us that reason must be our guide, even if we don't see how it can be a reliable one. By arguing that rationality must exist, not only in our minds but as an aspect of the universe, Heraclitus invokes reason by an act of faith. On the other hand, the changing flux amounts to irrationalism; Heraclitus virtually concedes that reason cannot deal with reality unless reality somehow is constant. But at the elemental levels, reality is anything but constant. Yet, rationalistically, he tries to develop a rational analysis of the elemental change.

Heraclitus called the source of such stability the logos—probably the first philosophically significant use of this term.

Like the Milesians, Heraclitus rejects biblical theism and therefore the One who originates and sustains change. He is left with a world that is *somehow* changing and a rational constancy that is *somehow* there. The God who alone can give meaning to constancy and change is not a part of Heraclitus's philosophy.

Parmenides (510–ca. 430)

Parmenides lived in Elea in southern Italy, and agreed with Heraclitus that reasoning requires something changeless. So, turning 180 degrees from Heraclitus, he denied the existence of change altogether. He wrote a poem describing an encounter with a goddess, who reveals to him that "Being is." The goddess, however, does not deliver this revelation on her own authority; she appeals to reason as a properly philosophical goddess should do.[17]

17. Parmenides usually is considered a follower of the religious teacher Xenophanes (570–475), who rejected the Olympian gods in favor of a kind of pantheistic monism. Par-

"Being is" means that nothing can change from what it "is" to what it "is not." Red cannot change to green, for then red would be changing into non-red, or non-green would be changing into green. And how can that be? Where does the green come from, if the previous state is non-green? Therefore, change cannot be real; it must be an illusion.

Indeed, the very idea of "nonbeing" must be rejected. There is no change from nonbeing to being, for there is no such thing as nonbeing. Nonbeing simply is not, nor are non-red, non-green, and all other negative expressions.[18]

Parmenides

What *is* the real world, then? Parmenides tries to describe what a world without nonbeing, and thus without change, would be like. It would be ungenerated, homogeneous, solid, symmetrical, spherical. If it is not homogeneous, for example, it must be a combination of one element and what it is not, for example, water and non-water. But that cannot be. The same holds true for the other characteristics Parmenides ascribes to reality.

Parmenides' worldview, which he calls the "way of truth," is so removed from common sense that it provides no help for living in the world of our experience. In fact, it requires a drastic *rejection* of our experience. Parmenides' poem also includes, however, an elaborate cosmology that the goddess calls the "way of belief." This cosmology includes change and is very different from the "way of truth." Most likely, Parmenides regards the "way of belief" as an error to be rejected. But he may also have intended for us to use the "way of belief" as a practical guide, as a way to think about the world that our senses presents to us.

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Parmenides may well be the most consistent rationalist in the history of philosophy. He said there is no difference between "what is" and "what can be thought." Therefore, having determined what can be thought by human reason, he believed he had discovered the true nature of the world. To serve reason he was willing to deny (almost entirely) the testimony of sense experience, thereby positing a world vastly different from anything we have seen or heard. But what happens to reason in this unchanging world? Human reason is temporal, or seems to be. We think one thought after another. Our minds experience change, even in our most intellectual activities. How can we think at all if we cannot advance from less adequate to more adequate ideas? So, Parmenides' rationalism actually invalidates reason, leading to irrationalism.

menides' "Being" is roughly equivalent to Xenophanes' god.

18. Critics of Parmenides have pointed out there is a difference between existential (e.g., "horses are" = "horses exist") and the predicative ("horses are mammals") senses of the verb "to be." Parmenides evidently confuses these. Obviously, it is contradictory to say that "Being is not," for in that phrase *Being* refers to existence. It is not obviously contradictory to say "the horse is not green," for "is" in that sentence is used predicatively, rather than existentially.

Perhaps Parmenides knew this and provided the "way of belief" as an alternative philosophy, one that would account for the structure of our sense experience.[19] If so, we can detect rationalism in Parmenides' "way of truth" and irrationalism in his "way of belief." On this understanding, Parmenides would have anticipated Plato's distinction between the world of Forms, which really Is, and the world of our sense experience, which is less knowable and less real.

Again, we must ask how Parmenides' thought might have been different had he started with the existence of the biblical God and listened to his revelation.

The Atomists

Parmenides is classified as a "monist," someone who believes that the universe is basically one. Indeed, Parmenides systematically excluded all diversity from the world in his attempt to exclude "nonbeing." In the "way of truth" there cannot be different things, one that is red (for instance) and one that is not.

Other philosophers have been pluralists, maintaining that the universe is fundamentally many, rather than one. In ancient Greece, those who held this position most consistently were the atomists, Empedocles (major work ca. 450), Anaxagoras (500–428), Leucippus (fifth century), Democritus (460–360), and Epicurus (341–270).[20]

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Empedocles thought that the world was originally something like Parmenidean Being: one, homogeneous, and so forth. But the opposing forces of love and strife start things in motion, separating out the four elements and combining them in different ways. The four elements are "roots" of all reality, in effect the atoms, the basic stuff of which everything is made.

According to Anaxagoras, there were an indefinite number of elements. Fire could not produce earth, he thought, unless some earth already was present in fire. Nor can a person's bread become muscle and hair unless there are little bits of muscle and hair already in the bread. Anaxagoras also taught the existence of *nous* or mind, a principle that maintains the rationality of change, and is similar to Heraclitus's logos and Empedocles' love and strife. In Plato's *Apology*, Socrates complained that he had hoped to find in Anaxagoras some account of how mind directed the world but was disappointed to find only mechanistic explanations of nature.

Empedocles and Anaxagoras are called "qualitative atomists," which means they believed the world is composed of elements with different qualities—four (Empedocles) or indefinitely many (Anaxagoras). Some-

19. Plato also introduced myths (e.g., *Republic* and *Timaeus*) to deal with subjects his philosophy was unable to treat adequately. We might compare here the "custom" of David Hume, the "practical reason" of Immanuel Kant, and the "mystical" of Wittgenstein.

20. The atomists were pluralists only in a sense. They were monists in that like Thales they believed there was only one kind of thing in the world—atoms.

what like Parmenidean Being, the elements are unchanging, but reality as a whole changes as these elements combine in different ways.

Leucippus, Democritus, and Epicurus were "quantitative atomists." Their atoms, or elements, had the same qualities, except for size and shape (Democritus) or weight (Epicurus). These atoms moved through space and collided with one another to form objects. On this view, reality consists entirely of atoms and empty space.

Since Epicurus's atoms had the quality of weight, they tended to fall in one direction, a sort of cosmic "down." Normally they fell in lines parallel to one another. How, then, did they ever collide to form objects? Epicurus posited that occasionally an atom would "swerve" from the vertical path. The swerve is entirely uncaused, and accounts for the formation of objects. It also accounts for human free choice. Human beings are able to act apart from causal determination because the atoms of their bodies sometimes swerve inexplicably.

Epicurus is probably the first philosopher to identify human freedom with causal indeterminacy and to make this indeterminacy the basis of moral responsibility.

Epicurus is probably the first philosopher to identify human freedom with causal indeterminacy and to make this indeterminacy the basis of moral responsibility. This view of freedom is sometimes called libertarianism or incompatibilism.[21] A number of theologians have argued for such an understanding of free will, including Pelagius, Molina, Arminius, and the recent open theists.[22] But how does the random swerve of atoms in my body make my acts morally responsible? If I walk down the street and some atoms in my head swerve and collide, making me rob a bank, why am I to blame? I didn't make them swerve; indeed, the swerve had no cause at all. It seems more plausible to say the swerve *happened* to me and therefore I am *not* responsible for its consequences. It is like a chemical imbalance in my brain that makes me do strange things. In reality, this is an odd kind of *determinism*, rather than freedom. Should we not say, then, that such a swerve precisely *removes* our responsibility?

The question of responsibility leads us to think of ethics. Writing after the time of Plato and Aristotle, Epicurus was eager to apply his atomism to moral questions. One wonders, indeed, what kind of ethics can emerge from such a thoroughgoing materialism?

Essentially, Epicurus's ethic is that we should avoid pain and seek pleasure, which he defines as the absence of pain. Unlike the Cyrenaics and some later Epicureans, Epicurus distinguished short-term from long-term pleasures and taught that on the whole a quiet, peaceful, contemplative life is the most pleasurable. This view of ethics is called hedonism, from the Greek word meaning pleasure. There are several problems with it:

21. It is called incompatibilism because it is incompatible with determinism. Other views of freedom are compatible with determinism. For example, the view called "compatibilism" is the view that freedom is simply doing what you want to do.

22. I have criticized libertarianism extensively in my *No Other God: a Response to Open Theism* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001) and in *Doctrine of God* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2002).

(1) In the normal sense of *pleasure*, there are many things that human beings value more. One example is sacrificing one's life to save the life of another. Epicurus offers no good reason to pursue pleasure rather than some other value. (2) If we define *pleasure* so broadly that it includes all other values, even self-sacrifice, then it loses its meaning by failing to distinguish pleasurable from non-pleasurable activities. (3) Even if it is true that in some sense people value pleasure above all else, it is a logical jump to say that we *ought* to value pleasure above all else. But the *ought* is what ethics is all about. I doubt that anyone can derive an ethical ought from a materialistic philosophy.[23] Matter in motion simply cannot tell us what we ought to do.

Atomism, then, tries to explain everything in terms of matter, motion, and chance. If Thales was unable to account for human thought by means of water, how can the atomists expect to account for it by means of nondescript bits of matter in motion? The atomists are rationalistic in trying to use reason to reduce all reality to its smallest components. But, having done that, they have left us little if any reason to trust our minds. So rationalism and irrationalism again combine. The problem becomes even more difficult when we try to account for human responsibility and moral obligation on a materialistic basis.

The religious roots of this way of thinking become especially clear in Epicurus's writings: he is most explicit in wanting to exclude the supernatural from any role in the world. But without a personal God, how can one account for the validity of thinking and the authority of moral principles?

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Pythagoras (572–500)

We know little of the specific views held by Pythagoras, but he influenced a school of thought that in turn influenced other philosophers. Plato visited the Pythagorean religious community in southern Italy and reworked many of its ideas in his own writings. The Pythagoreans followed a religion known as Orphism, which taught that the human soul was a divine being imprisoned in the body. According to this view, the soul undergoes repeated reincarnations until it is sufficiently purified to return to the divine realm. Our souls are divine because they are rational; so salvation comes through knowledge. Thus, the Pythagoreans followed the common Greek emphasis on the autonomy of the intellect. They also divided human beings into three classes: lovers of wisdom, lovers of honor, and lovers of gain, which may be the source for Plato's similar threefold distinction in the *Republic*. And they developed an elaborate cosmology, similar to that of Anaximander and of Parmenides' "way of belief."

However, we remember Pythagoras chiefly for his work in mathematics, including the Pythagorean Theorem that is found in every high school

23. The question of whether one can derive obligations from facts about material objects came up again in the modern period. David Hume denied that one could deduce "is" from "ought," and G. E. Moore labeled the attempt to do that the "naturalistic fallacy."

geometry book. This theorem tells us that in a right triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. In a right triangle whose sides measure 3, 4, and 5 inches, the squares of the shorter sides would be 9 and 16, totaling 25, the square of the longest side. Pythagoras and/or his disciples also most likely discovered that harmonious combinations of musical notes arise from different vibrations related by simple fractions. If A on the scale is 440 vibrations, the next higher octave is 880, and so on.

Pythagoras

These data may have suggested to the Pythagoreans that everything in the universe can be described in terms of the application of a mathematical formula. Hence the slogan "all is number," reflecting the "all" formulae of the Milesians. Since everything is the outworking of a mathematical formula, mathematics is the ultimate reality. This was the Pythagorean version of the common Greek theme that reason is the nature of reality as well as the nature of thought.

The Pythagoreans, however, did not ask, so far as we can tell, where the formulae came from. The existence of such formulae would seem to be a remarkable fact. Indeed, it should have suggested a personal creator, for the natural home of numbers and formulae is in the mind of a person. For the Pythagoreans, numbers "just are." They exist as brute facts. For the Pythagoreans, like the other Greeks, were unwilling to acknowledge a rational person higher than themselves. The greatest mind is the mind of the human mathematician.

But the cost of this rationalism is the loss of cogency. If mathematical formulae just are, why should we trust them? Is it perhaps an accident that mathematical formulae neatly apply to right triangles and some musical intervals? And by what process do abstract numbers get converted into concrete things? Like other Greek philosophies, the Pythagoreans' rationality terminates in irrationality.

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The Sophists

The Sophists were traveling educators in fifth- and fourth-century Greece who went from one city to another teaching young men the skills needed for success in public life: rhetoric, grammar, history, science, art, and the virtues of character that lead to public admiration. These teachers had many clients, for the traditional aristocracy was losing ground to the mercantile class, creating opportunities for upwardly mobile sons of wealthy families. Also, there was much political upheaval, raising philosophical questions about the ground and legitimacy of political rule.[24]

Thus philosophy took a new turn. No longer were philosophers mainly concerned with the structure of the natural world. Now human nature and the problems of human society became prominent.

24. For more extensive discussion of the political and social background of Sophism, see Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1957), 46–48.

If one's main concern is getting along with various political factions, then relativism will have a strong appeal, as we know from contemporary politics. If there is no absolute or objective truth, no truth that everyone must acknowledge, then one's convictions are free to move here and there, with every wave of political opinion. So it is not surprising that the Sophists were relativists.

We learn about them mainly through the dialogues of Plato, an unsympathetic witness, to be sure, but most likely a fair one. The sophist Protagoras, for example, advocated acceptance of traditional ways of thinking, not because they were true, but because we need to use them to gain power and acceptance. Gorgias denied the existence of objective truth and so wanted to substitute rhetoric for philosophy. Thrasymachus taught that "justice is the interest of the stronger," so that laws are (and should be) means by which the strong keep the masses subordinate. Callicles held, on the contrary, that laws are the means used by the masses to check the power of the strong.[25] Critias, later described as the cruelest of the thirty tyrants, said that a ruler must control his subjects by encouraging fear of nonexistent gods.

Socrates, as Plato presents him in the same dialogues, replies that indifference or hostility to objective truth is unacceptable. For one thing, the Sophists themselves are making assertions of fact. If there is no objective truth, then the Sophists' positions are not objectively true, and there is no reason for anyone to listen to them. This argument has been a standard answer to relativism ever since, and we still hear it used over against, for example, contemporary postmodernism.

If one's main concern is getting along with various political factions, then relativism will have a strong appeal . . . . If there is no absolute or objective truth, no truth that everyone must acknowledge, then one's convictions are free to move here and there, with every wave of political opinion.

Furthermore, Socrates argues, justice cannot merely be the interest of the stronger. For the interest of the stronger is not what makes it *just*, as opposed to unjust. There must be some other quality that *defines* justice, that serves as a criterion to evaluate the conduct of rulers.

Thus Socrates refutes the irrationalism of the Sophists, or rather shows that such irrationalism is self-refuting. But the Sophists were also rationalists in the typical Greek way. Protagoras said that "man is the measure of all things." This statement expresses the Sophists' irrationalism: reality is what any man thinks it is. But it also is rationalistic, for it makes human reason the ultimate criterion of truth and falsity, right and wrong. One asks, how could Protagoras *know* this, especially given his overall relativism? He asserts rational autonomy arbitrarily. That is, he asserts rationalism irrationalistically, as he asserts irrationalism rationalistically—by the measure of his own mind.

25. The distinction between Thrasymachus and Callicles reminds us of the differing attitudes of Marx and Nietzsche to Christianity. Marx considered Christianity an "opiate" by which the strong kept the poor in their place. Nietzsche considered it a "slave religion" by which lesser people inhibited those with ability and power. That such opposite conclusions can be derived from the same (relativistic) premises indicates some problem with the premises themselves.

No other course was open to the Sophists, for they were skeptical about the traditional gods and would not consider the God of biblical theism.

Socrates (470–399)

But Socrates did more than refute the Sophists. He is a figure of such towering importance that all of the other thinkers discussed to this point traditionally bear the label "pre-Socratic." He is a major saint in the religion of philosophy, a martyr. He was executed in 399 by the Athenian state for disbelief in the official gods[26] and for corrupting the youth by teaching them also to disbelieve.

Socrates is revered, not so much for his ideas . . . as for his way of life, his style of argument, his passion for truth. Having rejected the relativism of the Sophists, he insisted on getting to the roots of philosophical questions, exploring first here, then there.

Socrates is revered, not so much for his ideas (which are hard to disentangle from those of his student Plato, our major source of information about him), as for his way of life, his style of argument, his passion for truth. Having rejected the relativism of the Sophists, he insisted on getting to the roots of philosophical questions, exploring first here, then there. And he insisted on living in accord with his philosophy. He refused opportunities to escape death, wanting to show himself loyal to the government of Athens.

The Oracle at Delphi, he says, told him he was the wisest of men because he alone was aware of his own ignorance. So he sought out people he thought might be able to answer important questions, and he interrogated them rigorously. He regularly exposed flaws in the reasoning of the experts. Then he sought to define terms: what is justice, really? What is virtue? Characters in the dialogue would bring up examples of these qualities, but Socrates wanted to know more than examples. What is common to the examples of justice that makes them just? Usually, his interrogation yielded nothing definitive. But his use of dialogue (the technical term is *dialectic*) as a way of finding truth has inspired philosophers and other educators for centuries. Hence all disciplines have adopted his slogan, "The unexamined life is not worth living."

For Socrates, however, the use of dialogue was subordinate, as a source of truth, to something inward, to the human soul itself. He claimed that within him was a *daimon*, a divinity, and he believed that everyone could find the truth by looking within. So another Socratic slogan is, "Know yourself."

Dialectic and introspection together, then, constitute the Socratic epistemology. The emphasis on dialectic renews the Greek rationalistic tradition. The emphasis on introspection, however, locates truth in individual subjectivity.[27] This subjectivism is uncomfortably like that of the Sophists. If we are not to dismiss it as irrationalistic, we need to know how human subjectivity is related to the objective world, and to the Author of truth.

26. Though Plato says that one of his last acts was to ask someone to deliver a cock to Asclepius, the god of healing.

27. So Socrates has been compared to Søren Kierkegaard.

Outline

Plato (427–347)

Plato was the greatest student of Socrates and one of the greatest philosophers of all time. The greatest philosophers (among whom I include Aristotle, Aquinas, Kant, and Hegel) tend to be those who bring together many ideas that at first seem disparate. As an example: Parmenides said that Being is fundamentally changeless; Heraclitus that the elements of reality are in constant change. Plato's genius is to see truth in both of these accounts and to bring them together in a broader systematic understanding. Similarly, Plato provides distinct roles for reason and sense experience, soul and body, concepts and matter, objects and subjects, and, of course, rationalism and irrationalism.

Plato's epistemology begins with the observation that we can learn very little from our sense organs. So far, he agrees with the Sophists. Our eyes and ears easily deceive us. But the remarkable thing is that we have the rational ability to correct these deceptions and thus to find truth. It is by our reason also that we form concepts of things. We have never, for example, seen a perfect square. But somehow we know what a perfect square would be like, for we know the mathematical formula that generates one. Since we don't learn the concept of squareness by sense experience, we must learn it from reason. Similarly concepts of treeness, horseness, humanity, justice, virtue, goodness, and so forth. We don't see these, but somehow we know them.

Plato's epistemology begins with the observation that we can learn very little from our sense organs. . . . Our eyes and ears easily deceive us. But the remarkable thing is that we have the rational ability to correct these deceptions and thus to find truth. It is by our reason also that we form concepts of things.

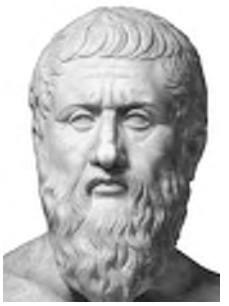
These concepts Plato calls *Forms* or *Ideas*. Since we cannot find these Forms on earth, he says, they must exist in another realm, a world of Forms, as opposed to the world of sense. But what are Forms, exactly? In reading Plato we sometimes find ourselves thinking of the form of treeness as a perfect, gigantic tree somewhere, which serves as a model for all trees on earth. But that can't be right. Given the many different kinds of trees, how could one tree serve as a perfect model for all of them? And even if there were a gigantic tree somewhere, how could there be a gigantic justice, or virtue, or goodness? Furthermore, Plato says that the Forms are not objects of sensation (as a gigantic tree would be). Rather they are known through intelligence alone, through reason. Perhaps Plato is following the Pythagoreans here, conceiving the Forms as quasi-mathematical formulae, recipes that can be used to construct trees, horses, virtue, and justice as the Pythagorean Theorem can be used to construct a triangle. I say "quasi," because Plato in the *Republic* said that "mathematicals are a class of entities *between* the sensibles and the Forms."[28] Nevertheless, he does believe that Forms are real things and are the models of which things on earth are copies.

The Forms, then, are perfect, immaterial, changeless, invisible, intangible objects. Though abstract, they are more real than the objects of our sense experience, for only a perfect triangle, for example, is a real triangle.

28. Diogenes Allen, *Philosophy for Understanding Theology* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985), 20. Allen's further comments on this issue are helpful.

And the Forms are also more knowable than things on earth. We may be uncertain as to whether a particular judge is just, but we cannot be uncertain as to the justice of the Form Justice. As such, the Forms serve as models, exemplars, indeed criteria for earthly things. It is the Forms that enable us to know the earthly things that imitate them. We can know that someone is virtuous only by comparing him with the norm of Ideal Virtue.

The Forms exist in a hierarchy, the highest being the Form of the Good. For we learn what triangles, trees, human beings, and justice are when we learn what each is "good for." Everything is good for something, so everything that exists participates in the Form of the Good to some extent. The world of Forms, therefore, contains not only formulae for making objects but also norms defining the *purposes* of objects.



Plato

In *Euthyphro*, Socrates argues that piety cannot be defined as what the gods desire. For why should they desire it? They must desire it because it is good. So piety is a form of goodness, and goodness must exist independently of what gods or men may think or say about it. So it must be a Form. We should note, however, that if courage, virtue, goodness, and so forth are abstract forms, then they have no specific content. To know what is good, for Plato, is to know the Form of Goodness. But Goodness is what all individual examples of goodness have in common. How, then, does it help us to know specifically what is good and what is bad?

Any time we try to define Goodness in terms of specific qualities (justice, prudence, temperance, etc.), we have descended to something less than the Form of Goodness. The Form of Goodness serves as a norm for human goodness, because it is utterly general and abstract. Any principle that is more specific is less normative, less authoritative. Such is the consequence of trying to understand goodness as an abstract Form rather than, as in biblical theism, the will of a personal absolute.[29]

"And the Forms are also more knowable than things on earth. We may be uncertain as to whether a particular judge is just, but we cannot be uncertain as to the justice of the Form Justice. As such, the Forms serve as models, exemplars, indeed criteria for earthly things.

The world of sense experience is modeled on the world of Forms. Plato's *Timaeus* is a sort of creation account in which the Demiurge, a godlike figure, forms matter into patterns reflecting the Forms, placing his sculpture into a "receptacle" (presumably, empty space). The Demiurge is very different from the God of the Bible, for he is subordinate to the Forms and limited by the nature of the matter. The matter resists formation, so the material objects cannot be perfect, as the Forms are. So the Demiurge must be satisfied with a defective product. It is not clear whether Plato intended this story to be taken literally. He sometimes resorted to myth when he could not come up with a properly philosophical account of something. But it is significant that he saw the need for some means to connect the

29. And if anyone asks the relation of goodness to the God of the Bible, the answer is as follows: (1) Goodness is not something above him, that he must submit to; (2) nor is it something below him, that he could alter at will; but (3) it is his own nature: his actions and attributes, given to human beings for imitation. "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

categories are so regularly present. Or, rebut the whole idea.

5. Describe some of the Greek philosophers' views of ethics. Do any of them succeed in showing us what we ought to do? Why or why not?

6. Distinguish form and matter as these categories are used by Plato and Aristotle. What is the purpose of this distinction? Does the distinction accomplish its purpose? Explain.

7. Does Aristotle prove the existence of the God of the Bible? Why or why not?

8. Give an example of determinism and an example of indeterminism among the Greek philosophers. How is each position argued? Is either position cogent? Present your own view, and an argument for it.

9. Frame says, "The only ultimate alternative (to the Greek philosophies) is the absolute-personality theism of Scripture." Explain and evaluate.

10. Should Christians try to synthesize Greek thought with the biblical message? If so, describe how the two would fit together. If not, why not?

2

The Hebrew World-and-Life View

John D. Currid

You ask, what was the philosophy of the Hebrews? The answer will be a very short one—they had none. . . . In short, we find in them only an ignorant and barbarous people, who have long united the most sordid avarice with the most detestable superstition and the most invincible hatred for every people by whom they are tolerated and enriched. Still, we ought not to burn them.

Voltaire, Dictionnaire philosophique *(1764)*

Today the modern skepticism of Voltaire finds its greatest advocacy in a cadre of scholars often called biblical minimalists.[1] To them, the history of Israel before the Exile is principally fabrication; it is really nothing more than a Judaic *Iliad*, King Arthur legend, or even *Winnie-the-Pooh*. One of the primary advocates, T. L. Thompson, puts it this way: "We have seen that the biblical chronologies are not grounded on historical memory, but are rather based on a very late theological schema that presupposes a very unhistorical world-view. Those efforts to use the biblical narratives for a reconstruction of the history of the Near East, in a manner comparable to the use of the archives of Mari and similar finds, can justly be dismissed as fundamentalist."[2] Although sometimes painted as extremism, this position has most recently gained a host of scholarly followers.

A great danger of minimalist thinking is that it not only attempts to undercut the veracity of the biblical accounts but also calls into question any succeeding history or thought based on the reliability of the Bible.

A great danger of minimalist thinking is that it not only attempts to undercut the veracity of the biblical accounts but also calls into question

1. Three important works of this position are P. Davies, *In Search of "Ancient Israel"* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992); K. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and T. L. Thompson, *The Mythic Past: Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel* (New York: Basic, 1999).

2. T. L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1974), 315.

any succeeding history or thought based on the reliability of the Bible. It is true that for at least two thousand years the Hebrew world-and-life view has had a tremendous impact on world thinking and, especially, on the beliefs of the Western mind. But what if, as Dever asks, "ancient Israel was 'invented' by Jews living much later, and the biblical literature is therefore nothing but pious propaganda? . . . there was no ancient Israel. There was no actual historical experience of any real people in a real time and place from whom we could hope to learn anything historically true, much less anything morally or ethically enduring. The story of Israel in the Hebrew Bible would have to be considered a monstrous literary hoax, one that has cruelly deceived countless millions of people."[3]

The biblical minimalism, however, rests on faulty assumptions that manifest more the speculative worldview of modernity and postmodernity than any clear evidence from the biblical texts themselves. Secure and sound historical connections between the Bible and other ancient Near Eastern documents make it nearly impossible to defend their approach. That the biblical authors set incidents such as the invasions by Sennacherib (2 Kings 18:13; 19:16, 20; 2 Chron. 32:1–22) and Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 24:1–10; 1 Chron. 6:15) in their proper chronological framework and setting is confirmed by contemporary ancient Near Eastern texts—the Prism of Sennacherib for the former campaign and the Lachish Letters for the latter. Moreover, excavations at Lachish and Jerusalem furnish positive evidence of the historical accuracy of the biblical account of those events. If the books of Kings and Chronicles were free literary creations by late and disparate authors, how could they have placed so many events in their "right time and pew"?[4]

Biblical minimalism . . . rests on faulty assumptions that manifest more the speculative worldview of modernity and postmodernity than any clear evidence from the biblical texts themselves.

Denouncement and denigration of the Hebrew people, their history, and their view of life did not originate with twenty-first century biblical minimalists. Throughout history, at least as early as Marcion in the second century AD, the Jews have been considered a primitive or even a barbaric people whose worldview has not contributed to the realm of ideas and progress. Adolf von Harnack remarks about Marcion's view of the Hebrews in the following manner: "The God of the Old Testament is pictured, approximately as Marcion had done, as a limited, petty, and contradictory national deity who also does immoral things; the Mosaic legislation is a wholly unsatisfactory, particularly limited and offensive work, a distortion of the *lex naturae*, very little different from the pagan religions. The nation of Israel, of bad character from the outset, runs aground of this law."[5]

3. W. Dever, *Who Were the Israelites and Where Did They Come From?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), ix.

4. This section is taken from J. Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997), 173.

5. A. von Harnack, *Marcion: The Gospel of the Alien God* (Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1990; 1924 original), 136.

Much of the so-called higher criticism of the last two hundred years has been presuppositionally based on the idea that the Hebrews borrowed many, if not most, of their ideas from surrounding cultures. They were not very original. Friedrich Delitzsch's strident book *Babel und Bibel* (1903) is the apex of this perspective.[6] Delitzsch, for example, "drew sharp attention to the Babylonian ingredient in Genesis, and went on to conclude that the Bible was guilty of crass plagiarism."[7] His distaste for any originality in Hebrew thought manifests itself when he emphatically states, "How utterly alike everything is in Babylon and the Bible!"[8] The influence that Delitzsch and others of his ilk have had on modern biblical scholarship should not be underestimated.

Adolf von Harnack

We contend, on the other hand, that such views severely underestimate the originality of thought of the Hebrews and their influence on centuries of succeeding generations. And, clearly, Hebrew thought is not a mere mouthpiece of other ancient Near Eastern cultures. Even the notorious higher critic H. Gunkel recognized that fact: "How incomparably superior the Hebrew legend is to the Babylonian! . . . and this also we may say, that the Babylonian legend strongly impresses us by its barbaric character, whereas the Hebrew legend is far nearer and more human to us." Although we sharply disagree with Gunkel's characterization of Hebrew writing as legend, we affirm his statement of the unique Hebrew conception of the universe and its workings. The impact of the Hebrew world-and-life view, in addition, has exercised a powerful influence on world thinking and, in particular, the beliefs of the Western world. It largely shaped cultural structure and moral direction in Western life. We contend that the primary features of the Old Testament worldview treated in this chapter—its view of God, who creates, speaks and acts in history; its view of human nature, both its dignity in the *imago Dei* as well as its moral failure in the space/time fall; its covenantal conception of law and redemption, and their corresponding implications for individual and public morality—provided intellectual and moral underpinnings for Western culture before they were challenged by the worldviews of modernity and postmodernity. What influence has there been from the philosophy of Babylon?

Revelation

The belief that God has revealed himself and given his word to his people forms the foundation of the Hebrew perspective and alerts us to the utter centrality of theological concerns to their worldview.

The belief that God has revealed himself and given his word to his people forms the foundation of the Hebrew perspective and alerts us to the utter centrality of theological concerns to their worldview. Whatever else may be said of the Hebrews, theological matters inform their fundamental beliefs

6. F. Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible* (Chicago: Open Court, 1903).
7. E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1964), lv–lvi.
8. F. Delitzsch, *Babel and Bible* (New York: Putnam, 1903), 175.

more than any other concern. Theology was never peripheral to any discussion; sooner or later it manifested itself regardless of what topic was probed.

In contrast with those other ancient religions and philosophies, the Old Testament writings propose the revolutionary idea that a transcendent-personal God reveals truth not through myth and magical practices but through the creation itself, actual historical events which are interpreted by means of language and words disclosed by God to prophets and other messengers. Hebrew life and culture gains its central core of beliefs, as well as the vast diversity of its practices, from God's self-revelation. Revelation may be defined as "the view that God communicates to mankind the literal truth about his nature and purposes."[9] The Hebrews believed that God's revelation appears in both nonverbal and verbal form. Psalm 19 provides a striking example of how the wonders of creation manifest both the glory and wisdom of God. The heavens and the pattern of day and night reveal God's wisdom and power in concrete form. Although neither speech nor words occur, metaphorically their "voice" permeates the earth, "even to the end of the world."

Events in Israel's history and the history of its neighbors, the rise and fall of kingdoms, also reveal God's purposes (Ps. 78; Amos 1, 2). The very fact God speaks and human beings develop language as a cultural tool illustrates the belief that people can legitimately formulate fundamental metaphysical questions (Job 11:7; Ps. 13:1–2) that in turn yield authoritative, though not exhaustive, answers (Deut. 29:29; Job 38–40). The cultural mandate in Genesis 1:26–28 presupposes that God and the cosmos are knowable and that human life consists of living morally responsible lives. The moral component of revelation is evident in God's commandments (Ex. 20). But the list of diverse acts condemned in Amos 1–2 implies that knowledge of good and evil does not rest exclusively on contents of biblical law but is accessible even to people who do not have access to covenantal law. Truth about God, mankind, and the entire order of creation is accessible and can be expressed in words that people can understand.


וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה
תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ
עַל־פְּנֵי תְהוֹם
וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים
מְרַחֶפֶת עַל־פְּנֵי
הַמָּיִם׃

The Hebrew text of Genesis 1:2

Many moderns dismiss this thought by saying that the written word, specifically the events recorded in the Old Testament, is mere man-made myth. But the Hebrews themselves clearly understood that "Thus says Yahweh" is exactly that, the very word of God. The term *myth* does not occur in Old Testament literature. Myth is more compatible with Israel's polytheistic neighbors' religions that God repeatedly commanded Israel to avoid. Even when mythological language appears in the text (e.g., Job 7:12; Ps. 74:13), it is ridiculed or contrasted with the truth of revelation.[10]

9. C. F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, vol. 1 (Waco, Texas: Word, 1976), 44.

10. Cf. Michael A. Grisanti, "Mayim" in VanGemeren, ed., *Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), G. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1952), "Myth Become Fact" in C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), "Revelation and Myth" in Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority* (Waco: Word Books, 1976).

Outline

For Further Discussion

1. Why would anyone conclude that the Old Testament is guilty of "crass plagiarism" in its relationship to ancient Near Eastern literature? How would you respond to that claim?

2. How would you demonstrate to a non-Christian that the Old Testament is truly God's word, that is, it is his revelation of himself and his plan to humanity?

3. How do the names for God in the Old Testament help us to understand his character?

4. Define what you think is the purpose(s) of the Hebrew creation account?

5. How are we to put into effect the cultural mandate today?

6. According to the Old Testament, what is the means of redemption? How is one saved from sin?

7. How do you define history?

8. How has the Hebrew world-and-life view affected beliefs and thoughts in the Western world?

5

Medieval Theology and the Roots of Modernity

Peter J. Leithart

Looking back from the perspective of a culturally and intellectually fractured modernity and postmodernity, the medieval world can look enticingly unified. Long, long ago in a place far, far away a culture was united by a single worldview. For Christians, the attraction is especially powerful, since the whole of medieval life and thought was infused with Christianity. Medieval revivals have been a regular feature of modern Christianity.

Long, long ago in a place far, far away a culture was united by a single worldview. For Christians, the attraction is especially powerful, since the whole of medieval life and thought was infused with Christianity.

Nostalgic though it is, this portrait is true in many respects. Medieval thinkers and writers attempted to understand every feature of the world through the lenses provided by Christian faith. Political thought was thoroughly infused with theological principles.[1] The economic issues that dominated medieval discussion, the just price and usury, were hashed through using biblical texts and theological principles. Aesthetics was not a separate branch of thought but simply one part of theology.[2] When Henry of Langenstein set out to write on science, he modeled his work after the

1. See Walter Ullmann, *A History of Political Thought: The Middle Ages* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1965); id., *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1961); Ernst Katorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study of Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1957). For a wonderful collection of texts in medieval (as well as patristic and Renaissance) political theology, see Oliver and Joan Lockwood O'Donovan, eds., *From Irenaeus to Grotius: A Sourcebook in Christian Political Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

2. Umberto Eco, *The Aesthetics of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Hugh Bredin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1988); id., *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*, trans. Hugh Bredin (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1986).

days of creation in Genesis 1.[3] Philosophical concerns raised by Plato, Neoplatonists such as Plotinus and Porphyry, and Aristotle were evaluated according to their consistency with Scripture and Christian tradition. Fine arts were replete with Christian themes and principles, and theater consisted of biblical stories (mystery plays) or allegories (morality plays). The lives of ordinary people were ordered by Christian rituals and festivals.[4] Entry into a cathedral enabled worshipers to relive their incorporation into the church, as well as to walk imaginatively through the events of the history of redemption.

Guillaume le Clerc

We can be even more specific, for medieval thought and culture orbit, almost obsessively, around the nature and interpretation of signs, including linguistic signs, literary imagery, artistic symbols, meaningful rituals and gestures, pictures in architecture, and stained glass. Drawing on Augustine's treatment of signs in his classic text *On Christian Teaching* and on the hierarchical symbolic philosophy of Pseudo-Dionysus the Areopagite, medievals approached life with a "symbolic worldview." Marcia Colish says that "People who read books on the medieval mind are familiar with the dictum usually found on page one of any book on this subject: 'Medieval man thought in terms of symbols.' "[5] Despite a hint of irritation in that sentence, Colish does not dispute the dictum. Instead, she sets out to explain how "four major medieval figures actually thought that signs functioned in the acquisition and transmission of knowledge."[6]

"Medieval thought and culture orbit, almost obsessively, around the nature and interpretation of signs, including linguistic signs, literary imagery, artistic symbols, meaningful rituals and gestures, pictures in architecture, and stained glass.

The unity of medieval life and thought can, however, be exaggerated, and scholars have recently paid much closer attention to the fractures and breaches within the medieval world.[7] One illustration will suggest the variety and complexity of medieval thought. A thirteenth-century French clergyman known to us as Guillaume le Clerc composed a rhyming bestiary that surveyed the habits and symbolic features of animals, both

3. G. R. Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), vii.

4. John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

5. *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge* (rev. ed.; Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), vii. This, interestingly enough, appears on the first page of Colish's own book.

6. Ibid. For more on this theme in general, see, for example, M. D. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society in the Twelfth Century: Essays on the New Theological Perspectives in the Latin West*, trans. and ed. Jerome Taylor and Lester K. Little (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), chap. 3: "The Symbolist Mentality"; Bernard J. Cooke, *The Distancing of God: The Ambiguity of Symbol in History and Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1990), chaps. 5–7; Michal Kobialka, *This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Eugene Vance, *Mervelous Signals: Poetics and Sign Theory in the Middle Ages* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1986); Stephen G. Nichols Jr., *Romanesque Signs: Early Medieval Narrative and Iconography* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1983); Ross G. Arthur, *Medieval Sign Theory and Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1987).

7. See the survey in John van Engen, "The Christian Middle Ages as an Historiographical Problem," *American Historical Review* 91 (1986), 519–52.

real and legendary. Of the unicorn, Guillaume wrote,

> Now I will tell you of the unicorn,
> A beast which has but one horn
> Set in the middle of its forehead.
> This beast is so daring
> So pugnacious and so bold,
> That it picks quarrels with the elephant. . . .
> That it fears no hunter
> They that would ensnare it
> Go there first to spy
> When it has gone to disport itself
> Either on mountain or in valley.
> When they have found its haunt
> And have well marked its footprints
> They go for a young girl
> Whom they know well to be virgin.
> Then they make her sit and wait
> At its lair, for to capture the beast
> When the Unicorn is come back
> And has seen the damsel
> Straight to her it comes at once
> In her lap it crouches down
> And the girl clasps it
> Like one submitting to her.
> With the girl it sports so much
> That in her lap it falls asleep
> Those who are spying at once rush out
> There they take it and bind it
> Then they drive it before the king
> By force and despite its struggles.[8]

How do we evaluate the "worldview" of people credulous enough to believe that unicorns can be tamed by virgins but so obsessively Christ-centered that they turn the unicorn's legendary habits into an allegory of the incarnation?

From this, medieval writers concluded that the unicorn was a fitting symbol of the incarnation, since Christ, too, was an untamable being who submitted to being slaughtered by placing himself in the lap of a virgin.[9] That medievals apparently believed unicorns existed and behaved this way points to an important feature of medieval thought and culture. That they saw an allegory of Christ in the habits of the unicorn points to a feature even more fundamental.

The picture becomes even more charmingly complex when we recall that while Guillaume was composing his bestiary, scholastic theologians in Paris were studying Aristotelian philosophy and engaging in sophisticated debates about the nature of angels, the meaning of essence and existence, and whether or not there is a single "active intellect" shared by all human beings. How do we evaluate the "worldview" of people credulous enough to believe that unicorns can be tamed by virgins but so obsessively Christ-

8. Quoted in Rodney Denys, *The Heraldic Imagination* (New York: Clarkson N. Potter, 1975), 163–64.

9. Louis Charbonneau-Lassay, *The Bestiary of Christ* (New York: Arkana, 1991), 365–75.

centered that they turn the unicorn's legendary habits into an allegory of the incarnation? How do we evaluate the "worldview" of a civilization that can produce a playful portrait of unicorns alongside dense, deadly, and earnest treatises in metaphysics? If there is a unity behind this, it is not, to say the least, obvious on the surface of things.[10]

Viewing Worldview

Further questions arise about the category of worldview itself. Is this concept "worldview" adequate to deal with something as richly chaotic as medieval thought and culture. Whose worldview, after all, are we talking about?

Further questions arise about the category of worldview itself. Is this concept "worldview" adequate to deal with something as richly chaotic as medieval thought and culture. Whose worldview, after all, are we talking about? Thomas Aquinas used Aristotelian categories to attempt to penetrate the nature of things, but did a Parisian merchant selling English woolens down the street from Thomas's rooms at the university share his worldview? Would he have understood the first thing Thomas was saying? Where, moreover, is the medieval worldview to be sought? Does the "medieval worldview" refer to a set of categories or a map of the universe in the heads of medieval people (and, again, which people)? Or, is it found in texts, and if so, what kinds of texts—philosophical, poetic, epistolary? Or, is it located in the assumptions made by writers of texts, in things everyone takes so much for granted that they never need to say them out loud? Or, is it embodied in practices, institutions, and artifacts, in the traceries of Gothic rose windows, in the pageantry of a feudal ceremony of vassalage, or in the theatrical celebrations that accompanied the Corpus Christi festival? In the last case, is there any significant difference between the "worldview" and "culture." Furthermore, on what basis do we conclude that there is a single "worldview" shared by people in a particular historical epoch? Is this an assumption or a metaphysical or moral necessity? Or is there empirical evidence that this is the case?

To control some of these complexities, I have written mainly about developments in medieval "theology,"[11] as well as the social and cultural setting and ramifications of those developments. Though "worldview" usually has a broader scope than "theology," my focus on theology is defensible for several reasons. First, medieval thought, as noted above, was shot through with Christian language, symbols, and ideas, and many medieval figures studied today as philosophers (e.g., Scotus and Ockham) were in the first instance theologians. For medieval thinkers, "theology" was as broad a subject as "worldview" is for modern evangelicals. Second, tracing developments in theology gets at the very pretheoretical judgments and beliefs that "worldview" analysts are interested in. Finally, my training is in

10. Of course, variety of outlook was not unique to the Middle Ages. Scratch just below the surface of any age, and you find bewildering, incomprehensible diversities.

11. As will be noted below, the word "theology" also is a loaded term. It also has a history, and a controversial one.

theology rather than literature, art history, or philosophy, and therefore I am more confident that I can offer helpful guidance here.

The Shape of the Story

The story of medieval theology has often been told, with great variety. For many evangelicals, Thomas Aquinas is the syncretistic villain of the story, the evil genius who smuggled Aristotle into the church under cover of orthodoxy, and who thereby assisted the development of the evils of the modern culture: the autonomy of reason and nature, secularism in politics and society, foundationalist epistemology, the primacy of scientific modes of knowledge, and knowledge understood as functional control over the world. More recently, John Duns Scotus has become the *bête noire*. His advocacy of the univocity of being, in contrast with the Thomist analogy of being (see below), provided the foundation for all the violent antinomies whose clashes are the story of modernity.[12]

One way to state this story is that it traces the development of what Heidegger called "onto-theology." Many have taken Heidegger as an opponent of any theology that makes metaphysical claims about what really is the case with the world. For Heidegger, however, "onto-theology" refers to a style of theology subordinated to and constrained by philosophical commitments from outside theology. For onto-theology, "God" comes to the world "only insofar as philosophy, of its own accord and by its own nature, requires and determines how the deity enters into it." Heidegger had nothing but scorn for a god who can be controlled by philosophy: we "can neither pray nor sacrifice to this god. Before the *causa sui*, man can neither fall to his knees in awe nor can he play music and dance before this god."[13] The Christian God, the Creator and Redeemer, the God of exodus and resurrection, is precisely the God who enters the scene wherever and whenever he pleases, the God who interrupts, the God who surprises, the God who is constrained by nothing, certainly nothing so feeble as human ideas.

No medieval thinker went so far as to subordinate theology to philosophical conceptions. But before onto-theology could develop, philosophy and theology had to be separated from one another, so they could begin their struggle for domination.

I am adopting a version of this story line, for it seems incontestable that the medieval world contained some of the seeds that grew into modern thought and civilization. No medieval thinker went so far as to subordinate theology to philosophical conceptions. But before onto-theology could develop, philosophy and theology had to be separated from one another, so they could begin their struggle for domination. If philosophy is

12. Scotus and the voluntarist movements of the later Middle Ages are targeted especially by theologians in the Radical Orthodoxy movement. See John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 14; Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy*, Challenges in Contemporary Theology (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 121–66; Conor Cunningham, *Genealogy of Nihilism*, Radical Orthodoxy (London: Routledge, 2002), 16–58.

13. Both quotations from Merold Westphal, *Overcoming Onto-Theology: Toward a Postmodern Christian Faith* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 2.

seen as internal to theology, onto-theology is impossible.[14] The process of separating philosophy and theology began during the High Middle Ages, in the two-and-a-half centuries following the reforms of Pope Gregory VII. I argue here that the main mechanism for this rupture was the separation of theological and philosophical "questions" from reading and interpreting of the text of Scripture.[15]

I depart from the common stories in two ways. First, there was no pristine Christian purity in patristic, or even the apostolic, Christianity. The New Testament is the infallible Word of God, but many heard the gospel through the filter of Hellenistic conceptualities that distorted the sound waves. One cannot read Justin Martyr without realizing that he is in a very different thought world from the apostle Paul. Hellenistic static distorts the gospel message in even the greatest of the fathers. Augustine very nearly struggled free of his Neoplatonic roots, but remained to the end ambivalent about the goodness of material creation, a fact especially evident in his ambivalence about sexual passion. The development of the Christian theology in the West is not a story of patristic rise and Thomistic (or Scotist) fall. It is a much more complex picture, with significant progress in the medieval era as well as significant wrong turns.

Abelard and Heloise

Second, I offer a third choice for the villain of the story, Peter Abelard, a choice that suggests that medieval thought took a wrong turn earlier than Thomas or Scotus. I offer this option not out of lust for innovation (which would place me alongside my villain) but for two reasons: first, because the issues that Abelard raises and the methods he employs are the issues and methods of medieval thinkers throughout the following centuries; and, second, because examining Abelard will help us to locate precisely where the shifts in theology took place and precisely how medieval theology moved toward onto-theology. Attention to detail is essential here, for in many respects the *substance* of medieval thought changed little between 1050 and 1400. At the beginning of that period, every thinker believed in an almighty Creator who made a good creation that was corrupted by sin but became flesh to redeem the world, to gather his church, and to bring history to a glorious consummation. At the end of the period, every thinker believed the same things. The shift is less in the *substance* of thought than in the *style* and *language* in which it was discussed and elaborated. Abelard marks an important moment in that shift, which, though a change in style,

"The process of separating philosophy and theology began during the High Middle Ages . . . . I argue here that the main mechanism for this rupture was the separation of theological and philosophical "questions" from reading and interpreting of the text of Scripture.

14. It seems that the opposite might also be true: If theology is simply ignored, as it is in much modern philosophy, it would seem that onto-theology is impossible. But, Heidegger claimed that philosophy had always had a hidden theological agenda, and thus was inherently onto-theological.

15. One way to state the point is that the twelfth century marked the beginning of interest in theological method. I have critiqued method in an essay review in *Pro Ecclesia* 9:3 (2002): 356–62.

is simultaneously a subtle change in the substance of theology. Both shifts, moreover, are part of a broader revolution in medieval civilization.[16]

Abelard and the Adventure of Scholasticism

Rupert of Deutz smelled a rat and wanted to sniff it out, remove it from the church, and give it a decent burial. In 1117, he made a trip from his monastery at Saint-Laurent of Liege to Laon to take on two masters of theology, William of Champeaux and Anselm of Laon.[17] Rupert was a learned biblical commentator, an "enthusiast for the richness and vividness of the Bible's imagery, the myriad pictures countercharging and reflecting one another in its pages."[18] Everywhere, he displayed his love of "the details of the sacred text, tracing patterns and connections, passages in the Old Testament which have echoes in the New, prophecies fulfilled."[19] Rupert was not the least opposed to the liberal arts, but saw them as tools to be used for the study of Scripture, not as independent subjects for study in themselves. Without the discipline of Scripture, he said, the liberal arts are nothing but "silly giggling girls." Put into service of scriptural reading, interpretation, and preaching, they become *ancillae*, handmaidens of theology.

William and Anselm had already been involved in a war of treatises with Rupert on the problem of evil. William and Anselm had attempted to reconcile God's omnipotence with the existence of evil by positing a distinction between a permissive will and an approving will, a distinction based partly on observation of the workings of the human will.[20] Rupert protested that this distinction had no basis in Scripture, and he insisted that scriptural language be employed to explore the mystery of evil. In the book of Job, one reads not of a permissive will but "of the patience of God; a patience which is not a 'specific' way of willing evil, but merely goodness and forbearance and benevolence."[21] If this did not completely solve the intellectual problem, so be it. Rupert had no problem resting in mystery and standing before the dark glass of faith.

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Rupert's struggle with William and Anselm of Laon was many-sided. Rupert recognized that the authority of Scripture was at stake: "Whatever can be thought up apart from sacred scripture or fabricated out of argumentation," he argued, "is unreasonable and therefore pertains in no way to the praise or acknowledgment of the omnipotence of God."[22] Rupert's insistence

16. I should make explicit an assumption that is no doubt already apparent: I reject the separation of form and content as a modern innovation, an early form of which is found in Abelard. Like "worldview" and "theology," this conception has a history.
17. *PL* 170, 482–83, quoted in Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society*, 270.
18. Evans, *Logic and Language of the Bible*, 13–14.
19. Ibid., 14.
20. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society*, 271.
21. Ibid., 271–72.
22. Quoted in ibid., 272.

on Scripture's centrality in all theology was characteristic of the monastic schools in which he was trained. William and Anselm, by contrast, had forged their habits of thought in cathedral schools, in which a master (not an abbot) taught students (not novice monks). The social differences between the monkish theologian and the school theologian could hardly be starker: Monks were rooted to a single place, while the masters of the schools were mobile, the original of the rootless Western intellectuals who later populated Russian novels. Monks were bound to obedience; masters made a living in a competitive environment, which encouraged innovation in order to win students. Monks were scholars of Scripture and used rhetoric and grammar as means for making Scripture plain; masters employed dialectic (logic) to resolve "questions." Monks sought union with God through meditation and a kind of unbounded free association on the text; masters pursued propositional truth through the application of logic and the concoction of disputations, and attempted to summarize Christian truth and organize it in systematic ways.[23] Rupert's protest against the masters was an early skirmish in the battle over a new kind of theology that no longer focused on study of sacred Scripture and no longer sought wisdom (*sapientia*). Instead, the masters' theology was increasingly understood as a "science" constructed through logical argumentation.[24] Although earlier scholarship had arisen from the text and from the practical needs of the monastic liturgy,[25] the new scholarship was a product of sheer human curiosity.

*According to the early medieval conception, Christendom was a single **ecclesia**, ruled jointly by priests and princes. Both ecclesiastical and civil rulers were seen as holding sacred offices.*

Eleventh-Century Foundations

In some important senses, the die had already been cast in the mid-eleventh century. Institutionally, Pope Gregory VII had, in his famous battle with Henry IV, asserted and achieved papal primacy over the emperor. More importantly, though, Gregory's reform movement had driven a wedge between the two leading poles of early medieval society. According to the early medieval conception, Christendom was a single *ecclesia*, ruled jointly by priests and princes. Both ecclesiastical and civil rulers were seen as holding sacred offices. For centuries, medievals thought of the royal anointing as a sacrament, analogous to ordination. In various ways, however, Gregory's program split this unified social and political reality. By insisting that priests remain celibate, Gregory detached the clergy from the networks of kingship that constituted society, so that the clergy became a

23. Anselm of Canterbury (different from Anselm of Laon) is *sui generis*, both exemplifying the monastic approach and departing significantly from it. Anselm's works all begin in meditation and prayer, but he rarely cites Scripture at all, much less offers free-ranging allegories on it. See Evans, *Language and Logic*, 17–23; more fully, R. W. Southern, *St. Anselm: A Portrait in a Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

24. On the development of theology as a "science," see M.-D. Chenu, *La theologie comme science au XIIe Siecle*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Librairie J. Vrin, 1943).

25. R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1953), 186–87.

"class" unto themselves. Gregory considered Henry IV "merely" a layman, and his heated rhetoric was an implicit "secularizing" of political power. A century later, the king's anointing was downgraded from a full sacrament to a "sacramental." Clergy became identified with the "church" and the "literal priesthood," while laymen were considered as only "metaphorically" priests. Though his intentions were quite different, Gregory's reform transformed a unified society with twin rulers into two societies, the church, on the one hand, and the "state" or society, on the other. Gregory thus laid institutional foundations for the later development of separated areas of study. After Gregory, it became reasonable to think of "politics" as an area of study distinct from "theology," which pertained specifically to the church. These developments were centuries in the making, but Gregory set them in motion.[26]

Gregory's papal reforms were inspired by reform movements within Benedictine monasticism. By the mid-eleventh century, many monks had become disenchanted with the Cluniac revival of monasticism of the previous century, regarding Cluniac monks as too comfortable and soft. They revived the more rigorous ascetic monasticism of the early church. When these reforming monks, such as Gregory VII himself, because leaders of the church, they sought to spread their ascetic ideal throughout the church, and indeed throughout the world. At least the clergy could be reformed into a holy and ascetic class.[27]

Other cultural shifts in the mid-eleventh century also helped prepare for the birth of scholasticism and the early development of onto-theology. Fresh devotion to the humanity of Jesus, Anselm's theory of the atonement that emphasized the importance of his human sufferings, and renewed attention to the literal sense of Scripture all indicated a new affirmation of the goodness of the material creation.[28] By the mid-eleventh century, Islam had become somewhat moribund and was less of a threat to Europe. Europeans began to move out into the Mediterranean world and the Middle East, and by the end of the century, Crusaders were fighting Muslims in the Holy Land. Wars with Islam were a common feature of the Early Middle Ages, particularly during the Carolingian age. In those wars, however, Franks had been fighting off a Muslim advance. By the eleventh century, Europeans were on the offensive. Technological changes also contributed to the formation of a new outlook: "The importation of the horse collar and stirrup gave them a much greater use of available horsepower," and "Euro-

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26. For more discussion and for evidence for these claims, see my "The Gospel, Gregory VII, and Modern Theology," *Modern Theology* 19:1 (2003): 5–28. Note that the formation of a new social entity—the "state"—was historically prior to the formulation of theories about that entity, i.e., political science.

27. Norman Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), 243–49. Cantor describes the Gregorian reform as the first "world revolution" in Western European history.

28. Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, chap. 5: "From Epic to Romance."

peans also began to make use of water power" to grind grain and cut lumber.[29] Rising population, increasing wealth, and the beginnings of urbanization also lent energy to the age. Christopher Dawson claimed: "there is no doubt that the eleventh century marks a decisive turning point in European history—the end of the Dark Ages and the emergence of Western culture. . . . with the eleventh century a movement of progress begins which was to continue almost without intermission down to modern times."[30]

Pope Gregory VII

In an illuminating study comparing developments in medieval architecture and scholarship, Charles M. Radding and William W. Clark point to the spirit of experimentation that gripped both builders and masters in the eleventh century:

> From being craftsmen who took the learning and styles of the past and adapted them to contemporary use, builders and masters [scholars] had by 1100 transformed themselves into self-aware and consciously innovating members of disciplines. But 1130s saw a quantum leap in the level of intellectual sophistication required of masters and builders as they shifted their attention from solving individual issues to constructing whole systems of solutions to intellectual and aesthetic problems. Masters moved from dealing with isolated texts that could be glossed or *quaestiones* for which definite answers could be proposed to constructing systems of thought in which the effects of an answer on one issue impinged upon the answer to other equally complex issues. . . . builders . . . not endeavoring to devise increasingly complex and integrated spaces, found themselves having to design small details with an eye to the effects each decision would have on the whole.[31]

In scholarship, the new approach showed itself in the debates over Berengar's Eucharistic theories, the theological *cause celebre* of the eleventh century.[32] Architecturally, the new spirit was evident in innovative uses of Romanesque style that prepared the way for Gothic style in the following centuries. Behind the diversity of Romanesque styles was a basic design plan, which Radding and Clark call the "modular conception." Architects treated the various component spaces of a church, for example, as discrete spaces set off from one another by columns, half-columns, and so on.[33] Details aside, there is an evident resemblance between the architectural practice of organizing smaller, semi-independent units into a larger whole

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29. Ibid., 228–29.

30. Christopher Dawson, *The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity* (New York: Times Mirror, 1952), 239.

31. Radding and Clark, *Medieval Architecture, Medieval Learning: Builders and Masters in the Age of Romanesque and Gothic* (New Haven, CT: Yale, 1992), 57.

32. Ibid., 22–27.

33. At Saint-Sernin of Toulouse, for example, the apse at the east end of the church was circumscribed by a walkway (ambulatory), which led out into five alcove-like chapels that radiated from the main building. Each of the chapels was considered a modular unit distinguished in some way (columns, half-columns, etc.) from the ambulatory. This had two practical benefits: later builders who continued the project would be able to work from the original design without altering the overall plan, and modules could be added without disrupting the whole (ibid., 37–44).

and the scholarly practices of scholasticism, which summarized theological issues in a series of "questions" as part of a larger systematic pattern.[34]

This new spirit of optimism or adventure creeping into the medieval mind manifested itself institutionally in the formation of universities. E. Harris Harbison writes:

> From the point of view of intellectual history, the first half of the twelfth century (1100s) was the most exciting fifty years since the fall of Rome. The long fight for sheer survival had finally been won and Europe was beginning to feel her energies flowing. The Crusades had begun, and Western European scholars were traveling in Spain, Sicily, and Asia Minor, ransacking Moslem libraries, and translating into Latin the scientific and philosophical works of the ancient Greeks, preserved and commented upon by the Arabs. The intellectual excitement was widespread, but Paris soon became its focus. In the twelfth century Paris became "a city of teachers," the first the medieval world had known.[35]

Yet, nowhere was the new attitude toward life more evident than in literature. Two related changes are evident. Beginning in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, traveling poets in southwestern France known as *troubadours* began composing what has come to be known as "courtly love" poetry. C. S. Lewis called courtly love a "real change in human sentiment," which was very rare: "there are perhaps three or four [such changes] on record." Troubadours "effected a change which has left no corner of our ethics, our imagination, or our daily life untouched, and they erected impossible barriers between us and the classical past or the Oriental present. Compared with this revolution, the Renaissance is a mere ripple on the surface of literature."[36]

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According to the definition of Andreas Capellanus, one of the "theorists" of courtly love, love is suffering induced by seeing the beauty of a member of the opposite sex.[37] Love comes as a wound from an arrow shot by the god of love that enters the eye and pierces the heart. Classic treatments of this theme were found in the thirteenth-century French allegory, *The Romance of the Rose*, and in the intense longings of Troilus in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. For many courtly lovers, love is pain because the beloved is inaccessible—either married or scornful of the lover. A courtly lover, however, is utterly devoted to his lady, so that she becomes almost a replacement for his feudal lord, and the lover's passion inspires him to undertake great deeds of daring. For the courtly love tradition, therefore,

34. The classic study of the connections between medieval theology and architecture is Erwin Panofsky, *Gothic Architecture and Scholasticism: An Inquiry into the Analogy of the Arts, Philosophy, and Religion in the Middle Ages* (New York: Meridian, 1951).

35. E. Harris Harbison, *The Christian Scholar in the Age of the Reformation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983).

36. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936), 4.

37. Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, trans. John Jay Parry (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941), 28.

love made the lover in every way a better man. This last characteristic of courtly love is perhaps the most innovative of all the features of this perspective. Ancient writers often rhapsodized on the character-building potential of love, but they were talking about the love of one man for another. Only this kind of male love could inspire virtue. For courtly love poets, passion for a woman had a similar effect.[38]

Courtly love poetry quickly became intertwined with the adventure literature that was making its appearance in the same period. According to the Marxist historian Michael Nerlich, this marked a significant and permanent new development in Western history. Adventure stories existed from antiquity, but Nerlich argues there was a fundamental difference between ancient and medieval adventure: Ancient adventurers (such as Odysseus) were driven unwillingly into their adventures, but for medievals after the twelfth century, "adventures are undertaken on a *voluntary* basis, they are *sought out*, (*la quete de l'aventure*, the quest for adventure), and this quest and hence the adventurer himself are glorified." The very meaning of the term "adventure" underwent significant change: "*Adventure*, which in its literary occurrences before the courtly romance, means fate, chance, has become, in the knightly-courtly system of relations, an event that the knight must seek out and endure, although this event does continue to be unpredictable, a surprise of fate." Nerlich examines how these medieval motifs assisted in the development of capitalist economic practices, a connection still evident in phrases such as "venture capital" and "business ventures." He goes so far as to say that the first truly modern man was the twelfth-century poet Chretien de Troyes, the first and greatest writer of Arthurian romance.[39]

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These eleventh-century developments in culture and literature provide the setting for a significant shift in theology, especially in theological method. Moreover, these shifts signaled one of the key revolutions in medieval worldview, a revolution associated in the first instance with the adventurous work of Peter Abelard and with the movement known as "scholasticism."

The Invention of "Theology"

For many moderns, "scholasticism" carries connotations of aridity and conservatism and exudes the noxious odor of dust and death. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, however, scholasticism was an innovative movement, riding the wave of adventure and experimentation that we have glanced at above. Scholasticism took its name from the fact that its practitioners taught in a "school" setting rather than a monastic setting, and their methods of theology reflected the contentious setting of the early universi-

38. C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

39. Michael Nerlich, *Ideology of Adventure: Studies in Modern Consciousness, 1100–1250: Volume 1*, Theory and History of Literature, 42, trans. Ruth Croley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3–12.

ties.[40] On the surface, scholasticism was a systematic way of organizing theology and a method for resolving apparent contradictions in the tradition. Medieval theologians inherited a rich and varied tradition but one that was not always internally consistent. When Augustine says X, and Ambrose says Y, and the Bible says Z, what are we to do? Is this a contradiction, or are they speaking of different things or of the same thing in different ways? Add Aristotle into the mix, and you have most of the sources for scholastic theology. Scholasticism also was an attempt to harmonize faith and reason, an effort to demonstrate that the truths of Christian faith did not contradict logic and reason. This effort preceded Aristotle's renewed invasion of the West, for in the eleventh century Anselm already was offering rational defenses of the atonement, sophisticated linguistic treatments of the doctrine of the Trinity, and ontological "arguments" for the existence of God. But, again, adding Aristotle to the mix complicated things immeasurably.

On the other hand, from the beginning there was a more "conservative" impulse in scholasticism. Both intellectually and politically, scholastic theology strove to tame a rapidly changing and sometimes chaotic world. In an intriguing work on modernity, Stephen Toulmin argues that Descartes and his successors were reactionaries who wanted to bring the intellectual and political energies of the Renaissance under control.[41] Something similar was going on in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. As Europe grew into a bumptious toddler, scholastics intervened to discipline it.[42] R. W. Southern explains the aims:

> From a scholarly point of view, it was the twelfth-century innovators who first introduced systematic order into the mass of intellectual material which they had inherited in a largely uncoordinated form from the ancient world. The general aim of their work was to produce a complete and systematic body of knowledge, clarified by the refinements of criticism, and presented as the consensus of competent judges. Doctrinally the method for achieving this consensus was a progression from commentary to questioning, and from questioning to systematization. And the practical aim of the whole procedure was to stabilize, make accessible, and defend an orthodox Christian view of the world against the attacks of heretics within, and unbelievers . . . outside the area of Christendom.

On the surface, scholasticism was a systematic way of organizing theology and a method for resolving apparent contradictions in the tradition. Medieval theologians inherited a rich and varied tradition but one that was not always internally consistent.

This "conservative" motif was mingled with an astonishingly ambitious agenda. Underlying scholasticism was a desire to participate in the reversal of Adam's fall: "In principle, they aimed at restoring to fallen mankind, so far as possible, that perfect system of knowledge which had been in the possession or within the reach of mankind at the moment of Creation."[43]

40. For a brief summary of the rise of the universities, see Charles Homer Haskins, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 1927), chap. 12.

41. Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

42. Southern, *Making of the Middle Ages*, 179.

43. Southern, *Scholastic Humanism and the Unification of Europe: Volume 1: Foundations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 4–5. Note the similarities between the scholastic agenda

Of the early scholastic works, Peter the Lombard's *Four Books of the Sentences* had the greatest overt impact on later generations, but the origin of the scholastic drive for rational inquiry was the work of Peter Abelard (1079–1142).[44] Abelard is of interest in many respects. His colorful life, involving a love affair that ended with his castration, has often been recounted, first by himself. His Trinitarian speculations landed him in difficulties with Bernard of Clairvaux and other church leaders. He was among the earliest proponents of a form of the philosophical position called "nominalism," the view that every really existing thing is particular (see on Ockham below). As Norman Cantor points out, Abelard's autobiography, *The History of My Calamities*, was of a piece with his philosophical agenda. By emphasizing the uniqueness of his life, he was protesting against the "Platonic absorption of the individual into the universal."[45] For my purposes, Abelard is of interest for his contribution to the separation of theology and philosophy and the development of new ways of pursuing theology. Abelard was one of the early thinkers to treat "theology" as a "scientific" pursuit. He established the "summary" (*summa*) as the unit of theology, and he organized theology around topics, rather than following the contours of the biblical text.

Page from Peter Lombard's ***Sentences***

Anselm, following Augustine, had said his theology was a matter of "faith seeking understanding." In his autobiography, Abelard says that his students demanded from him theology in precisely the opposite direction, for one cannot believe what he does not first understand.[46] Though Abelard coyly puts the demand for rational theology in the mouths of his students, it is clearly his own theological agenda. The seriousness with which he took the abilities of reason to penetrate and explain Christian faith is evident in his claim that he was able to penetrate the mysteries of the Trinity. When challenged, Abelard protested that he had no desire to subordinate Christ to philosophy. In a much-cited letter to his lover Heloise, he wrote, "I will

Anselm, following Augustine, had said his theology was a matter of "faith seeking understanding." In his autobiography, Abelard says that his students demanded from him theology in precisely the opposite direction, for one cannot believe what he does not first understand.

and the aims of many worldview thinkers.

44. For introductions to Abelard, see John Marenbon, *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1997); M. T. Clanchy, *Abelard: A Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997); more briefly, David Luscombe, *Medieval Thought,* History of Western Philosophy 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Adriaan H. Bredero, *Christendom and Christianity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Reinder Bruinsma (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), chap. 8. Haskins says that twelfth-century philosophy was not dependent on the infusion of Arabic and Greek texts into the West, pointing to Anselm, Abelard, and Roscillinus as examples of philosophical theologians prior to the main Aristotelian revival (*Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 349).

45. Cantor, *Civilization of the Middle Ages*, 332.

46. Abelard wrote that "[pupils] asked for the human and philosophical reasons and insisted that it was not enough for something just to be said—it had to be understood. Indeed, they said that it was vain to utter words if they were not then understood, nor could anything be believed in unless it was first understood, and that it was ridiculous for someone to preach to others what neither he nor those he taught could grasp with their intellects, for then (as Christ complained) the blind lead the blind" (quoted in Marenbon, *Philosophy of Peter Abelard*, 54).

never be a philosopher, if this is to speak against St. Paul; I would not be an Aristotle, if this were to separate me from Christ."[47] Yet, his use of logic pushed him in the direction of onto-theology.

With regard to "theology" as a science, Abelard's work was a crucial moment in the invention of "theology" as a discipline.[48] In earlier centuries, monastic writers had "done theology" by expounding the text of Scripture, applying it wherever it happened to lead. They did not describe themselves as "theologians" but as "masters of the sacred page." This interpretive scholarship was not seen as a separate "discipline" alongside other disciplines but merely an evangelical use of Scripture, which the liberal arts served. Because it centered on the study of texts, monastic interpretation made fuller use of grammar and rhetoric than of dialectic or logic. Abelard, however, was one of the first to use the word "theology" to describe a distinct kind of treatise and a separate course of study. The newness of the usage is evident in Bernard's reaction. In his controversy with Abelard, Bernard never used "theology" to describe his own work but only pejoratively to describe Abelard's, and Bernard frequently used the neologism "*stultilogia*" ("idiotology") as a synonym.[49]

Fittingly in an age of questing, Abelard's method in theology was a method of questioning. Questions about the text of Scripture were inevitable, and commentators during the earlier Middle Ages frequently digressed to explain particular words or grammatical forms or to address theological concerns that arose from the text. Abelard normally followed this technique as well, addressing the issues in sequence as they come up in Scripture. Yet, Abelard intended to move past this textually based method into one more fully guided by logic. According to Manchy's summary, for Abelard "the 'reading of the divine books' of the Scriptures was the way a conventional student of divinity proceeded. A theologian, on the other hand, proceeded by reasoning from first principles."[50] Dissatisfied with the method of "reading" with commentary and explanation (*lectio*), Abelard aimed to provide "reasons" that were satisfying to the human intellect.[51]

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47. Quoted in Edward Grant, *God and Reason in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 57.

48. According to J. Riviere, Abelard was the first to use "theology" to describe "une etude raisonnee, general ou partielle, de la doctrine chretienne, soit, par extension, un ouvrage consacre a ce genre de travail" (quoted in Chenu, *La theologie comme science*, 85, fn. 2).

49. G. R. Evans, *Bernard of Clairvaux*, Great Medieval Thinkers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 48; Clanchy, *Abelard*, 264–65. For other evaluations of Abelard's method, see Roger French and Andrew Cunningham quoted in Grant, *God and Reason*, 59; Louis Bouyer, *Cosmos: The World and the Glory of God* (Peterham, MA: St. Bede's, 1982); Chenu, *Theologie comme la science*, 64.

50. Clanchy, *Abelard*, 264.

51. In this, Abelard was a transitional figure, who still valued the spiritual reading of the monks. Beryl Smalley points out that Abelard advised Heloise to attend to the *lectio divina*, the traditional monastic reading of Scripture, and to learn Hebrew to enhance her grasp of it (*The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1964], 79).

Gradually, the method of "questioning" was pried away from the context of the "reading," so that theology became detached from exegesis, and eventually reason from faith, and philosophy from theology.

Abelard's separation of the substance of theology from its biblical form was deeply rooted and at least partly self-conscious. A form-content opposition appears repeatedly in different contexts in his work. He advised his son Astralabe not to accept a teacher or writer on the basis of eloquence or personal love. Rather, the best teachers speak plainly and organize their teaching logically and systematically. Style and personal character (ethos) are bracketed off; what counts is the disconnected, impersonal logic of a teacher or a book.[52] His ethics, moreover, focused on intentions to such an extent that he could write: "external things do not commend us to God," a statement that nearly everyone in the previous century would have rejected. As Stephen Jaeger summarizes it, Abelard introduced a wholly new system of education and a wholly new approach to scholarship: "An entire system of education was caught in a conflict between a traditional kind of teaching that tended toward the acquisition of human qualities and a new kind of teaching that tended toward knowledge and rational inquiry."[53]

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Though Bernard won his battles with Abelard in his lifetime, Abelard had the final say, for Peter the Lombard (ca. 1095–1161) consolidated theology in an Abelardian key, and Lombard's text became the leading theology textbook of the medieval period until displaced by Thomas's *Summa theologiae* many years later. Lombard's *Sentences* was a rather modest compilation and harmonization of the Christian tradition, not yet a systematic work on the scale of the later scholastic *summas*. But, the continuity is evident. Chenu claims that a text like Peter Lombard's *Sentences* "made it possible to foresee already how the questions would become more important than the texts being commented upon,"[54] though he fails to note Abelard's centrality in this process. Abelard, after all, wrote his *Sic et non* prior to Lombard's text, and Lombard was an assiduous reader of Abelard's work, probably heard Abelard lecture, and patterned his *Sentences* after Abelard's earlier treatise.[55] Although apparently a dispute about a few isolated theological issues and abstruse questions of theological method, the conflict between Bernard and Abelard actually was a basic "worldview" conflict about the role of human reason, the relationship of God and man, and the purposes of study and education. It was a conflict fraught with the future.

52. To put it into contemporary terms: earlier monastic teachers could not have imagined "distance" learning, learning detached from personal relationship. Abelard could. This is not to say, however, that Abelard invented the Internet, which, everyone knows, was the work of a former American vice president.

53. This entire paragraph is indebted to C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 229–34.

54. Chenu, *Nature, Man, and Society*, 295.

55. Evans, *Language and Logic*, 135. The separation of scriptural interpretation from speculative theology also is discussed in Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, esp. chap. 6.

Synthesis of Faith and Reason, Thomas Aquinas, 1224–74

Although Abelard planted the seeds of scholastic theology, it was only in the thirteenth century that they bore abundant fruit. One key new factor was the rediscovery of various works of Aristotle on logic, which contributed to the creation of the "new logic." Several of Aristotle's works on logic had long been known in the West through the mediation of Boethius. During the latter part of the twelfth century, however, other works were newly translated into Latin and began to be employed in theology.[56] In addition to the texts themselves, Arabic commentaries from Averroes and Avicenna were translated into Latin and widely used. In the fourteenth century, Dante still spoke of Averroes as the author of the "great commentary," though, admittedly, Averroes was confined in hell at the time.

Naturally enough, Western authorities were suspicious of Aristotle, first because he was a pagan and second because he was introduced to the West by Islamic scholars. Many believed that Aristotle (or his commentators) taught things that contradicted Scripture, such as the eternity of matter and the idea that there is a single "active intellect" in which all human intellects participate. Siger of Brabant (1240–84) and others toyed with the Averroist idea of "double truth," the notion that truths of philosophy are different from truths of faith, though equally valid. Various church authorities issued condemnations, the most important of which was the Condemnation of 1277, which denounced various Aristotelian beliefs as inconsistent with the Christian confession of the sovereign omnipotence of God.

Nature and Supernature in Thomas

According to some accounts, Thomas's reconciliation of faith and Aristotelian philosophy was achieved through a version of the "double

Thomas Aquinas

56. Charles Homer Haskins gives a concise summary of the situation: "Of his works the early Middle Ages had access only to the six logical treatises of the *Organon* as translated by Boethius, and as a matter of fact all of these except the *Categories* and the *De interpretatione* dropped out of sight until the twelfth century. These two surviving treatises came to be known as the *Old Logic*, in contradistinction to the *New Logic*—the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*, *Topics*, and *Elenchi*—which reappeared in various forms soon after 1128. By 1159 the most advanced of these, the *Posterior Analytics*, was in the course of assimilation, and the whole of the Aristotelian logic was absorbed into European thought by the close of the century. The *Physics* and lesser works on natural science, such as the *Meterorology*, the *De generatione*, and *De anima* were translated not long before 1200, though . . . traces of their teachings can be found somewhat earlier, coming from both Greek and Arabic sources. About 1200 came the *Metaphysics*, first in a briefer and then in the complete form. In the course of the thirteenth century the rest of the Aristotelian *corpus* was added: the various books *On Animals*, the *Ethics* and *Politics*, and, imperfectly, the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*, accompanied and followed by a considerable mass of pseudo-Aristotelian material, so that by ca. 1260 the surviving works of Aristotle were known and men were busy comparing the texts of the versions from the Arabic with those derived immediately from the Greek" (*Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 345–46).

truth" theory. Francis Schaeffer admitted that "the origin of modern man could be traced back to several periods," but he begins with Aquinas. According to Schaeffer, Thomas operated with a two-story view of reality. On the top level is grace (including the concepts God, heaven, unseen, soul, and unity), while nature is a lower sphere (the created, earth, visible, man's body). After Thomas, there was a constant struggle to unify nature and grace. Because of Thomas's work, "Man's intellect became autonomous." The sphere of autonomous nature takes the form of "natural theology," and by this method Thomas detached philosophy from theology and destroyed the unity of the Christian worldview.[57] Although Schaeffer does not use this phrase, Thomas opened the possibility of a "secular" sphere for scholarship, philosophy, politics, economics, and so on that could be pursued without any recourse to the Bible or revelation.[58]

Although Abelard planted the seeds of scholastic theology, it was only in the thirteenth century that they bore abundant fruit. One key new factor was the rediscovery of various works of Aristotle on logic, which contributed to the creation of the "new logic."

This view of Thomas has been challenged on a number of fronts in recent years. Within Catholic theology, the main attack has come from Henri de Lubac and the "new theologians" influenced by him.[59] According

57. *Escape from Reason* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1968), 9–11. A similar assessment may be found in Gordon H. Clark, *Thales to Dewey: A History of Philosophy* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1957), 269–84. More sophisticated versions are found in Cornelius Van Til, *A Christian Theory of Knowledge* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1969), 169–75, and Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, trans. David H. Freeman and William S. Young, 2 vols. (Ontario, Canada: Paideia Press, 1984), 1.179–81. A more sympathetic evangelical treatment of Thomas is available in Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas & Movements, Volume 1: From the Ancient World to the Age of Enlightenment* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1990), 117–34, and a thorough Protestant appreciation of Aquinas is found in Arvin Vos, *Aquinas, Calvin, and Contemporary Protestant Thought: A Critique of Protestant Views on the Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Christian College Consortium, 1985). Interestingly, Norman Geisler, an evangelical Thomist, appreciates Thomas only by adopting the view that Thomas separates philosophy and theology: "We may take Aquinas' theism without buying into his theology" ("A New Look at the Relevance of Thomism for Evangelical Apologetics," *Christian Scholar's Review* 4 [1974]: 200, quoted in Vos, *op. cit*., xii, fn. 1).

58. This view is regularly repeated in textbooks on medieval theology and philosophy. Marcia Colish, in a highly sophisticated study of medieval intellectual life, describes Thomas's "natural philosophy" derived from Aristotle and adds "Thomas coordinates this natural philosophy with supernature, clarifying what we can know in each subdivision, how we can know it, and how these areas are related. Embracing the entire physical world under the heading of nature, Thomas thinks that Aristotle's explanation of it is basically correct. . . . The fact that a pagan philosopher could arrive at these conclusions, without revelation and faith, is Thomas' empirical rationale for rejecting Bonaventure's pan-illuminationism. In the realm of nature, reason alone is sufficient. In the realm of supernature, however, reason, while important, is subordinate to faith. Here, our starting point is faith, not metaphysical first principles" (*Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400–1400,* Yale Intellectual History of the West [New Haven, CT: Yale, 1997], 298).

According to some accounts, Thomas's reconciliation of faith and Aristotelian philosophy was achieved through a version of the "double truth" theory. . . . According to Schaeffer, Thomas operated with a two-story view of reality.

59. See especially *The Mystery of the Supernatural*, trans. Rosemary Sheed (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967). On the revised Thomism of the twentieth century, see now Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002). According to de Lubac, the dualistic interpretation of Thomas, rather than originating with Thomas himself, originates with Cajetan, a cardinal of the sixteenth century and interpreter of Thomas. In de Lubac's opinion, Cajetan simply misconstrues Thomas, and nearly everyone after was simply presenting a Cajetanian misinterpretation of Thomas, rather than Thomas himself.

to de Lubac, Thomas did not operate with a two-story theory, and he did not give any autonomy to natural reason. There has, furthermore, been a resurgence of interest in the Neoplatonic structures and direction of Thomas's thought. Thomas quoted Pseudo-Dionysus frequently, though not as frequently as Aristotle, and Thomas's frequent citations of Augustine also point to a Neoplatonic influence.[60] Far from being a thoroughgoing Aristotelian, the Thomas of recent scholarship emerges as some kind of Platonist.

Given this scholarship, it may be that Dante was a more accurate reader of Thomas than many have realized. Nearly the first word of Dante's *Paradiso* is "glory," and this theme dominates much of the canticle.[61] Employing the image of light, Thomas Aquinas, the greatest of the medieval theologians, later explains more fully this view of created glory. Everything "which dies and all that cannot die/ reflect[s] the radiance of that Idea which God the Father through His love begets" (*Paradiso* 13.52–54). By "Idea" Aquinas means the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, who became flesh in Jesus. He is the "Idea" of the Father, as he is the Father's Word, because in him all the Father's mind is expressed. Aquinas also calls the Son the "Living Light," who "streams forth" from the Father. The Father is the "radiant Source" of the Light that is the Son, but the Light "never parts" from the "Source," which is the Father, nor from "the Love which tri-unites with them," that is, the Holy Spirit (*Paradiso* 13.55–57).

All created things reflect the "radiance" of the Son. This is so because the "Living Light" that is the Son "of Its own grace sends down its rays, as if / reflected, through the nine subsistencies / remaining sempiternally Itself" (*Paradiso* 13.58–60). The nine subsistencies may refer to the nine spheres of Paradise or to the nine orders of angels that Pseudo-Dionysus identified, but it does not really matter which. The Light of the Son is diffused as it moves from the higher reaches of the universe to the lower. Like a light penetrating water, it becomes dimmer at the lower end, so that different parts of creation reflect the Light of the Son in different degrees. Though its parts display different degrees of glory, all the diverse things of creation are ordered into a brilliant display of beauty and light. The glory of which Dante spoke in the first line of *Paradiso* is the glory of the "One Who moves all things." Just as each thing reflects its particular degree of the Light of the Son, so also everything moves toward the place that is appropriate to its degree of glory.

"According to de Lubac, Thomas did not operate with a two-story theory, and he did not give any autonomy to natural reason. . . . Thomas's frequent citations of Augustine also point to a Neoplatonic influence. Far from being a thoroughgoing Aristotelian, the Thomas of recent scholarship emerges as some kind of Platonist.

This theology of light, borrowed from Pseudo-Dionysus (whose works had begun to circulate widely in the twelfth century) as well as from Thomas, had a direct effect on the architectural theories and practices of

60. See Wayne Hankey, "Denys and Aquinas: Antimodern Cold and Postmodern Hot," in Lewis Ayres and Gareth Jones, eds., *Christian Origins: Theology, Rhetoric, and Community* (London: Routledge, 1998), 139–84, though Hankey's article is as much about contemporary theology as about Aquinas.

61. The following paragraphs are condensed from my *Ascent to Love: An Introduction to Dante's Divine Comedy* (Moscow, ID: Canon, 2001), 141–44.

Abbot Suger. He designed the monastic church at Saint-Denys in France to manifest the fact that all creation is illumined with divine light. As described by Georges Duby,

> It was in the choir of the new church . . . that the mutation in aesthetics took place. Suger naturally placed the glowing center, the point where the approach to God became most dazzling, at the other end of the basilica, at the culmination of the liturgical procession turned toward the rising sun. At this point he therefore decided to take away the walls and urged the master builders to make fullest use of the architectonic resources of what until then had been merely a mason's expedient, the ribbed vault. And so the years between 1140 and 1144 saw the construction of a "semicircular sequence of chapels, which caused the entire church to glow with marvelous uninterrupted light, shining through the most radiant of windows."[62]

It would seem that Thomas did separate nature and grace, giving considerable autonomy to nature and natural reason, and thus was the grandfather of secular modernity and modern onto-theology. Numerous passages in Thomas appear to support Schaeffer's reading.

If Dante's reading of Aquinas was correct, Thomas must have been delighted at Suger's achievement. Few medievals read Thomas, but those who worshiped at Saint-Denys were confronted with Thomism in stone and glass.

For my purposes, the differences between these interpretations of Aquinas are of less interest than the overall question of whether Thomas is guilty of syncretism: did Thomas mold Christian faith into an Aristotelian or Neoplatonic shape, or did he employ Aristotelian and Neoplatonic tools as handmaids that enabled him to expound the Christian faith?

Videtur Quod

It would seem that Thomas did separate nature and grace, giving considerable autonomy to nature and natural reason, and thus was the grandfather of secular modernity and modern onto-theology. Numerous passages in Thomas appear to support Schaeffer's reading. First, we have the massive evidence of his use of Aristotle. Though Thomas does not always agree with Aristotle, and in some fundamental ways modifies Aristotelian philosophy, he depends in many respects on Aristotelian categories. His treatment of the real presence in the Lord's Supper, for example, is entirely framed in terms of the Aristotelian ideas of "substance" and "accident." To that extent, he clearly considered Aristotle's account of the nature of things to be correct, and just as clearly Aristotle was not deriving his ideas from revelation.

Furthermore, Thomas frequently distinguished between faith and reason in a way that seems to imply a dualistic view of reality. At the beginning of the *Summa theologiae* he wrote: "Although those things which are beyond man's knowledge may not be sought for by man through his reason, nevertheless, once they are revealed by God they must be accepted by faith" (*ST* I, 1, 1). Later in the *Summa*, Thomas asked whether man can know apart from grace. Citing Augustine's comments on Psalm 50, he concluded in the affirmative. Using the metaphor of light, he explicated a distinction

62. Duby, *The Age of the Cathedrals: Art and Society, 980–1420*, trans. Eleanor Levieux and Barbara Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 100–101.

between what man can know by natural light and what he can know by an added supernatural light (*ST* I–II, Q 109, a 1).[63]

Thomas also distinguished between the interests and objects of philosophy and theology. Philosophy pertains to that realm in which natural reason operates; theology pertains to the realm where grace operates.[64] Philosophy addresses theological questions, but the second form of theology is "higher than the other divine science taught by the philosophers, since it proceeds from higher principles," namely, the principles of revelation and faith. Theistic proofs offer further evidence that Thomas believed in a certain degree of autonomy for natural reason, since he explicitly defends the notion that man can know God from natural reason without the assistance of grace.[65] Evidence like this could be multiplied at great length, especially from the early portions of the *Summa theologiae*.

Sed Contra

As Thomas would say, "on the other hand" (*sed contra*) there are other passages in Thomas that point in a very different direction, passages in which faith and reason are not set up as antinomies or as sharply different ways of knowing and where theology and philosophy are integrated. In other words, there are passages where Aquinas was not a dualist of nature/supernature but offered a profoundly unified and profoundly Christian view of the world.[66]

Summa Theologiae

63. Thomas used similar language and the same metaphor in his commentary on Boethius's "On the Trinity." See Ralph McInerny, ed., *Thomas Aquinas: Selected Writings* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 111, 113.

64. In his commentary on Boethius's treatise on the Trinity, he writes: "There are two kinds of science of the divine. One according to our mode, which uses the principles of sensible things to make the divine known, and so it was that philosophers developed a science of the divine, calling divine science first philosophy. Another following the mode of divine things themselves, which grasps divine things in themselves, which indeed is impossible in this life, but some share in and likeness to divine knowledge comes about in us in this life insofar as through infused faith we adhere to first truth for its own sake" (ibid., 131).

65. Defending the notion that the existence of God can be demonstrated, Thomas wrote that "the existence of God and other like truths about God, which can be known by natural reason, are not articles of faith, but are preambles to the articles; for faith presupposes natural knowledge, even as grace presupposes nature, and perfection supposes something that can be perfected. Nevertheless, there is nothing to prevent a man, who cannot grasp a proof accepting, as a matter of faith, something which in itself is capable of being scientifically known and demonstrated" (*ST* I, 1, 2).

66. John Milbank's comment on the deceptive simplicity of Aquinas is worth noting: "Only superficially is he clear, but on analysis one discovers that he does not at all offer us a decently confined 'Anglo-Saxon' lucidity, but rather the intense light of Naples and Paris which is ultimately invisible in its very radiance. . . . Of course it is true that Aquinas does indeed refute shaky positions with supreme economy, simplicity and clarity of argumentation, but the arcanum of his teaching lies not here. It resides rather in the positions he does affirm often briefly and like a kind of residue, akin to Sherlock Holmes's last remaining solution, which must be accepted in all its implausibility, when other solutions have been shown to be simply impossible" (Milbank and Catherine Pickstock, *Truth In Aquinas,* Radical Orthodoxy [London: Routledge, 2001], 20–21).

For starters, an initial, obvious point about the *Summa*: It is "divine science" (*scientia Dei*) from beginning to end. In a brief prologue, Thomas said that a master of catholic truth should not only teach the proficient but also "instruct beginners" and he claimed to have composed the *Summa* for those beginners(!): "We purpose in this book to treat of whatever belongs to Christian Religion, in such a way as may tend to the instruction of beginners. . . . We shall try, by God's help, to set forth whatever is included in this Sacred Science as briefly and clearly as the matter may allow."

Thomas also distinguished between the interests and objects of philosophy and theology. Philosophy pertains to that realm in which natural reason operates; theology pertains to the realm where grace operates.

Thomas defined this "sacred science" in the opening question of the *Summa* by categorizing different sciences in terms of their origins. Some sciences proceed from the light of intelligence and some from principles of a higher science. Sacred doctrine is a science "because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed. Hence, just as the musician accepts on authority the principles taught him by the mathematician, so sacred science is established on principles revealed by God." Thus true theology—sacred science—is the knowledge of the blessed, the knowledge of those who have achieved the vision of God. Theological science does not rise to this level, but is derived from it. This is the context in which Thomas offered the proofs of God's existence, employed Aristotelian concepts and ideas, and discussed the virtues.

Structurally, the *Summa* is a treatise on theology. The whole is divided into three parts, the second part of which is divided into two parts (they are numbered I, I–II, II–II, and III). Aquinas explained the purpose of each part at the beginning of question 2: "Because the chief aim of sacred doctrine is to teach the knowledge of God, not only as He is in Himself, but also as He is the beginning of things and their last end, and especially of rational creatures, as is clear from what has been already said, therefore, in our endeavour to expound this science, we shall treat: (1) Of God; (2) Of the rational creature's advance toward God; (3) of Christ, who as man, is our way to God" (*ST* I, 2).[67]

Some sciences proceed from the light of intelligence and some from principles of a higher science. Sacred doctrine is a science "because it proceeds from principles established by the light of a higher science, namely, the science of God and the blessed."

In examining this passage, Fergus Kerr has noted the narrative and eschatological orientation of Thomas's whole enterprise: "Thomas's theology is entirely dominated by the promise of human participation in God's own blessedness," and "the plan is clear—to treat the moral life as a journey to beatitude (*secunda pars*) in the middle of the treatment of God as beginning and end of all things (*prima pars*) and the treatment of the God-man Christ as the beginning of the new creation (*tertia pars*). The exposition of sacred doctrine, then, has the narrative structure of a journey from

67. On this point, Dante, in my view, misread Thomas. Dante introduced a separation of pagan and sacred learning, symbolized by the fact that his initial guide, the pagan poet Virgil, yields to Beatrice and then to Bernard when Dante arrives in Paradise. Thomas would not have countenanced that separation. In a truly Thomistic *Inferno* and *Purgatorio*, Virgil would have been consistently losing his way.

8

Enlightenments and Awakenings: The Beginning of Modern Culture Wars

W. Andrew Hoffecker

Traditional treatments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used the singular "Enlightenment" as an inclusive term to describe philosophical and cultural developments in Europe and America. Summaries of this age emphasize the following: new epistemological methods in philosophy produced an "age of reason" in which autonomous methods of rationalism or empiricism replaced traditional alliances between philosophy and theology in the search for truth; rising confidence in Newtonian science provided powerful new perspectives on nature and the laws by which it operates; a new intellectually elite class, the *philosophes*, believed that reason mated with science could inaugurate an era of progress politically, economically, and socially; and new religions such as deism and Unitarianism challenged outmoded faiths of Protestantism and Catholicism.[1]

*A new intellectually elite class, the **philosophes**, believed that reason mated with science could inaugurate an era of progress politically, economically, and socially.*

This chapter will present a different perspective in two ways.[2] First, rather than depicting a homogenous period, marked by virulent hostility to religion, we will show that the plural "Enlightenments" more appropriately

1. Peter Gay's two-volume work *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1966) remains the classic interpretation; the subtitles of the two volumes indicate his particular interpretation: "The Rise of Modern Paganism" and "The Science of Freedom." Gay's work responded to Carl Becker's claim in *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers* (1932) that the *philosophes* possessed a naïve faith in reason's autonomy and capacity to produce an earthly utopia.

2. Recent studies of the Enlightenment have spawned fresh appraisals of this era. Some venture to contend that little unanimity exists concerning the Enlightenment—its intellectual program, as well as its chronological, geographical, and social boundaries. See Dorinda Outram, *The Enlightenment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

portrays the diversity of perspectives in this period.[3] We will examine the plurality of views that developed in Britain, France, Germany, and America. What emerges are a series of Enlightenments—some radical, which attempted a total recasting of thought, and others more moderate, which sought to accommodate new ideas with traditional religion that radicals sought to replace.

Second, this chapter will juxtapose another trajectory of movements, which paralleled the Enlightenments—a series of "Awakenings": the Evangelical Awakening in Britain, Jansenism in France, Pietism in Germany, and the Great Awakening in America. Each exerted significant influence not only on prevailing religious milieus but also on the broader cultural context in which they appeared.[4] Surveys of Western civilization often consign Awakenings to sections separate from the Enlightenment. Isolating Enlightenment and religious movements into the public or "real world" of secular life and the private, inner world of "religious" life, however, ignores what should be obvious—that *both* Enlightenments and Awakenings competed for the public mind. Seeing both as worldviews, instead of qualitatively different phenomena, that is, "religious" and "secular," provides a more appropriate way of appraising them. Our procedure corrects a misconception that Enlightenments were more culturally significant. In the era we are studying, religious phenomena still carried cultural weight. Only as secular views took hold in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries did the sharp differentiation between public and private become commonplace.

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Both Enlightenments and Awakenings of the early modern period manifest what has been called a "subjective turn," a decisive shift in worldview from theocentric thinking to various degrees of anthropocentrism. Differences will become evident as we examine various figures and movements in Europe and America. The movement toward human self-sufficiency is most pronounced in radical enlighteners in their espousal of autonomy as the dominant theme of modern thought. More complex is the extent to which a turn toward the subjective manifests itself in evangelical and traditional Christianity. Clearly a spectrum exists on which we may differentiate pietist Jacob Spener, Methodist John Wesley, Jansenist Blaise Pascal, and latter-day Puritan Jonathan Edwards.

3. Henry May modified "Enlightenment" by the terms "moderate," "skeptical," "revolutionary," and "didactic." Henry May, *The Enlightenment in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

4. Ironically, the metaphors that both groups used to define themselves—"Enlightenment" and "Awakening"—are closely related in the imagination and proved effective in gaining adherents. Enlighteners described the past as intellectual and moral darkness from which society would be delivered, if people embraced the modern worldview offered by philosophy and science. Awakeners, on the other hand, portrayed the West as stifled by spiritual lethargy. Only dramatic religious experience, grounded in traditional Christianity, could wrench individuals and the culture from the clutches of moral and spiritual decay and infuse them with new life.

Our treatment also will validate "revolutions" as the larger theme of this book. In fact, the onset of modernity initiated the "culture wars." Although the term usually describes late twentieth-century struggles in public life, we will argue that initial skirmishes emerged far earlier as various thinkers and movements vied for intellectual and moral leadership in public life.

Enlightenment and Awakening in Britain

The Rise of Science and Rational Religion: The Transition to Deism

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) epitomized the Renaissance from the past and foreshadowed the modern age ahead.[5] Although he distinguished himself in politics, law, literature, and philosophy, his contributions in science instigated a revolution in the method and motivation for scientific work. The aphorisms in *Novum Organum* (1620) posited a new "interpretation of Nature and the Kingdom of Man." First, he proposed that modern man, "the servant and interpreter of nature," needed a method that is "altogether better and more certain" than traditional deduction, which "flies from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms." An inductive method, by contrast, "derives axioms from the senses and particulars rising by a gradual and unbroken ascent, so that it arrives at the most general axioms last of all." Bacon foresaw a new science, patient and diligent in method, steady in approach, and ready to rethink in light of new discoveries. Issuing the clarion call of Enlightenment thinkers, Bacon argued: "we must begin anew from the very foundations."[6]

Sounding like an Old Testament prophet, Bacon called for the overthrow of idols and false ideas that afflict peoples' thinking. He enumerated four idols fit for destruction: those of the Tribe, which are rooted in human nature; Idols of the Cave, which are errors due to each person's individuality, living in his own "cave" or "den" in the world; Idols of the Market-place, which arise from peoples' association with others, "the apprehension of the vulgar"; and Idols of the Theatre, which infiltrate peoples' thinking from the systems of philosophies that are nothing more than "so many stage-plays, representing worlds of their own creation."

Francis Bacon

Bacon's insistence that the elimination of idols will produce a new, impartial science heralds the modern preoccupation—even obsession—

5. Cf. Catherine Drinker Bowen, *Francis Bacon: The Temper of a Man* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1963); Anthony Quinton, *Francis Bacon* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980); Jerry Weinberg, *Science, Faith, and Politics: Francis Bacon and the Utopian Roots of the Modern Age, A Commentary on Bacon's Advancement of Learning* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

6. Bacon's *Novum Organum* was only a part of his *Instauratio Magna*, a great restoration of thinking that had been centuries in decay. Although historians traditionally credit Descartes with initiating "foundationalism" in philosophy, clearly Bacon harbored similar thoughts for science.

with finding the one true method by which thinkers can settle all disputes about matters of fact or truth. Just as religious idolatry requires a change of mind for genuine faith to succeed, so modern people must repent of false worldviews.[7]

Within a few years of Bacon's use of religious terminology to propagate a new science, the seminal proposal for natural, or rational, religion—deism—appeared.[8] In *De Veritate* (1624), Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1582/3–1648) proposed a radical change in religious a priori from revealed doctrine and piety to rational truth.[9] Herbert contended that principles of natural religion derive not from Scripture, confirmed by the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit, but from reason itself. An advocate of innate ideas, he enumerated five "Common Notions of Religion" as the basis for all religions: belief in the existence of a Supreme Being; this deity ought to be worshiped; virtue and piety are the proper forms of worship; sins ought to be expiated by repentance; rewards and punishments exist both in this life and the next. Because these principles are derived from reason a priori, they are universal and form the basis for a purely natural religion.

Bacon's insistence that the elimination of idols will produce a new, impartial science heralds the modern preoccupation—even obsession—with finding the one true method by which thinkers can settle all disputes about matters of fact or truth.

What immediately impresses the reader of *De Veritate* is the absence of prominent Christian beliefs—the incarnation, atonement, and Jesus' resurrection, as well as traditional Christian piety. Herbert did not explicitly deny doctrines that go beyond common notions, and his view of miracles is unclear.[10] However, the tone of the treatise and skepticism regarding the Trinity prefigured future unbelief. In a subsequent writing, Herbert intensified his opposition to traditional notions by directly attacking revelation and challenging biblical authority. Although some argue that Lord Herbert posed his work as an alternative to skepticism, as well as to Protestant and Catholic dogmatism, he clearly established the modus operandi for

7. Bacon portended a new age in which inductive science opened up mastery of nature. Some interpreted Bacon as advocating the Christian worldview, by following the cultural mandate in Genesis 1:26–28 to exercise dominion over God's creation, subject to God's laws. Others saw in Bacon a much bolder anticipation of rational man becoming the great controller of nature. According to this view, Bacon synthesized the Christian view of providence with the Promethean myth that gave humans power to control nature and by experimentation to shape it according to their whims.

8. The earliest use of "deist," dating from 1564, is by Pierre Viret, a disciple of Calvin who claimed it was used by intellectuals who believed in God but denied Jesus and Christian doctrines. They used "deist" to distinguish themselves from "atheists." Viret, like many others in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, rejected such contentions, blatantly calling them "atheists." Ernest Campbell Mossner, "Deism," *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 1, Paul Edwards, ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1966). Cf. Michael Hunter and David Wooton, eds., *Atheism from the Reformation to the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), and Alan Charles Kors, *Atheism in France, 1650–1729,* vol. 1, *The Orthodox Sources of Disbelief* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990). For a selection of deist writings, see Peter Gay, *Deism: An Anthology* (Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1968).

9. Cf. John A. Butler, *Lord Herbert of Cherbury 1582–1648: An Intellectual Biography* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellon Press, 1990).

10. Ironically, Herbert claimed a sign from heaven in answer to his prayer whether to publish his treatise!

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deism—affirm only what common notions of reason allow, and attack elements of any religion that do not meet rational criteria.

John Locke (1632–1704), England's foremost Enlightenment thinker, added to the growing intellectual ferment. His works covered a multitude of fields: epistemology (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690), toleration (*Letter on Toleration*, 1689), government (*Two Treatises of Government*, 1688), and several works on religion (*The Reasonableness of Christianity*, 1695; *Paraphrase and Notes on the Epistles of St. Paul*, 1705–7; and *A Discourse on Miracles*, 1706). His synthesis reexamined the foundations in each field of thought and attempted to unite the emerging fields of science and rationalism with prevailing Christian thinking.

Philosophers emphasize that Locke founded modern empiricism. His representational epistemology, or direct realism, challenged the theory of innate ideas, including Herbert's earlier deism. Prior to experience of the world through the senses, the human mind is a mere *tabula rasa* ("blank slate").[11] Therefore, ideas are not a priori but a posteriori; they enter the mind only through experience, which consists of sensation and reflection. A person has no direct knowledge of the world; such knowledge is mediated through the senses. Locke's empiricism, which at first blush promised knowledge based on simple and complex ideas, proved problematic. Instead of producing certainty, his probing of primary and secondary qualities resulted in skepticism.[12] Locke's epistemology could not assure the knower that ideas correspond with the objects they represent. Nevertheless, Lockean empiricism seemed fully compatible with the rising tide of science.

Locke's greatest accomplishment was his summation of the English mind in the late seventeenth century. He presented religious ideas in "plain and intelligible" terms so that anyone could understand them.

Likewise, in political thought, Locke's treatises broke new ground. Not only did he join others in denying the divine right of kings, Locke justified England's Glorious Revolution by appealing to natural law and the teaching of the Bible. He also proposed a new contractual basis for the state. Rather than the state resulting from a covenant between ruler and subjects, as Reformed thinkers argued, the new contractual theory viewed the state as democratic, based on the consent of the governed. Consistent with these changes, Locke also espoused a theory of toleration that permitted religious liberty for all dissenting religious groups, with the exception of Catholics.

Locke's greatest accomplishment was his summation of the English mind in the late seventeenth century. He presented religious ideas in "plain and intelligible" terms so that anyone could understand them. Locke criti-

11. By positing the mind as *tabula rasa*, Locke not only rejected Descartes' rational apriorism but also Calvin's view that all people are imbued with a sense of divinity imprinted in their hearts.

12. Although primary qualities ("bulk, figure, and motion of parts") are "real" qualities of objects, secondary qualities ("heat, whiteness, or coldness") are not: "[They] are no more really in them than sickness or pain is in manna. Take away the sensation of them; let not the eyes see light of colours, nor the ears hear sounds; let the palate not taste, nor the nose smell, and all colours, tastes, odours, and sounds, as they are such particular ideas, vanish and cease . . ."

cized Herbert's deism, but he had little to say about the Trinity, the atonement, and the deity of Christ. He defined a Christian as one who believes in Jesus as the Messiah, repents of sins, and tries to live according to the teaching of Jesus. He also espoused traditional apologetic strategies that affirmed fulfilled prophecy and miracles as primary means for defending the truths of Christian faith.

Locke gave reason a different role from the ones it previously enjoyed. For Locke, reason was not just a tool to prepare for faith (Aquinas) or to explain the faith (Augustine); it was the standard for judging revelation and the judge of truth claims. Locke distinguished three types of propositions: those that are according to reason (e.g., the existence of God), whose truth we can verify by examining ideas arising from sensation and reflection; those that are above reason (e.g., the resurrection), whose truth we accept but are beyond reason's grasp; and those that are contrary to reason (e.g., the existence of more than one God), because they are inconsistent with our ideas. Using these distinctions, Locke treated religion almost entirely as a matter of individual intellectual belief. Assent to what passed the test of reason captivated his attention. What claimed to be revelation must submit to reason's judgment.[13]

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An example of Locke's rationalist revision of Christianity is his acquiescence to Socinianism's rejection of original sin. Not only is the human mind a *tabula rasa*, but people are born with a moral nature untrammeled by sin. Although mortal, humans are morally neutral; the child is "denuded of all beliefs, opinion, and inclinations," with the exception of seeking pleasure and avoiding pain. Whether people are good or evil depends on their education, which consists of habit formation: "Of all the men we meet with nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education. It is that which makes the great difference in mankind." Original sin in its Augustinian form, therefore, is a fiction. Continued belief in inherited corruption from our first parents undermines morality.[14]

Although Locke never judged any Christian doctrine to have failed the test of reason, his rationalistic approach made religion primarily a private matter. Christianity consists in believing certain tenets that pass the test

13. Colin Brown contends that Locke's attempt to combine traditional apologetics with his rationalism established still another form of foundationalism, which demanded that belief rest on reasonable grounds. Colin Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought: A History of Philosophers, Ideas and Movements*, Vol. 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 225.

14. By advocating education as the means by which mankind can become morally better, Locke put forth a secular method of redemption that was contrary to the traditional Christian view that God's grace alone can save. Thus, Locke paved the way for various modern forms of the belief that human beings are perfectible. Because of Locke's influence, many viewed education as the secular equivalent of Arminian and Wesleyan prevenient grace. Whether one attributed confidence in human perfectibility to a secular basis or to a revised view of grace, the result was the same—a revolution in how people viewed human nature and the means of human redemption.

of reason. However, Christianity so conceived is marginalized from public life because it focuses on individual belief and moral behavior. Regardless of how one tries to categorize Locke's views—as consistent with or as a departure from traditional Christianity—his minimalist view of Christian doctrine illustrates a transition that culminated in the deistic controversy.[15]

Herbert's natural religion and Locke's theorizing opened the door for additional challenges to traditional worldviews. The seismographic impact of Newtonian science transformed this possibility into a reality. Sir Isaac Newton's (1642–1727) *Principia* (1687) is the culmination of a line of scientific inquiry that began with Nicholaus Copernicus and continued in Galileo Galilei, Tycho Brahe, and Johannes Kepler. Copernican cosmology had replaced the Ptolemaic model, thus producing a radical change in the West's worldview.

Newton's calculations produced a powerful new synthesis for understanding the physical universe. Newton's three laws[16] explained the motion of heavenly bodies and of motion *anywhere* in the universe. His formulas enabled scientists to calculate the masses of the earth, its planets, and the sun. Using Newton's laws, scientists could calculate paths of the planets and determine the times of future eclipses.

In *Optics* (1730), Newton enunciated principles that testified to his theistic beliefs. He reiterated the traditional view of creation: ". . . God in the beginning formed matter . . . of such sizes and figures, and with such other properties, and in such proportion to space, as most conduced to the end for which he formed them . . . " Newton repudiated the existence of occult properties as bases for understanding objects. Because creation displays clear signs of intelligence, "it's unphilosophical to seek for any other origin of the world, or to pretend that it might arise out of a chaos by the mere laws of nature." He further denied the power of "blind fate" to move the planets. The uniformity and intricacies of design in creatures confirm that "nothing else than the wisdom and will of a powerful everliving agent" could have created them. Newton opposed pantheism and panentheism[17]

Isaac Newton

15. For a sympathetic account of Locke's religious beliefs, see Victor Nuovo, "Locke's Theology 1694–1704" in M. A. Stewart, ed., *English Philosophy in the Age of Locke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). Nuovo argues that Locke's *The Reasonableness of Christianity* constituted an apologetic against deism and rendered his views compatible with traditional views of biblical interpretation. Also see S. G. Hefelbower, *The Relation of John Locke to English Deism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1918).

16. First Law: *Inertia*. Every object persists in its state of rest or uniform motion in a straight line unless it is compelled to change that state by forces impressed on it. Second Law: *Acceleration*. Force is equal to the change in momentum (mV) per change in time. For a constant mass, force equals mass times acceleration—F=ma. Third Law: *Reciprocal Actions*. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction.

17. Pantheism and panentheism differ from traditional theism, which clearly distinguishes God as creator of and separate from the world he created. Pantheism stresses the immanence of God by identifying God with the universe. Panentheism on the other hand holds that while God is immanent, God also transcends the world.

by defining God's distinction from creation and by affirming that the universe is "open" so that God may "vary the laws of nature."[18]

As scientific knowledge became available, profound questions followed. Is the universe a self-sufficient system? If events can be explained as part of the larger system, why posit a personal God who providentially orders history; why posit the existence of spirits and demons? If the cosmos is simply the most intricate watch or machine, should our conception of God change from the biblical image of a personal Father? How does one reconcile belief in fixed laws of nature with the personal God of the Bible? These and similar queries led people to view the heavens as autonomously ordered and structured. Newton himself maintained a deep sense of wonder, believing that creation is the work of God's hands. He viewed the universe as a marvelously coordinated system, a masterpiece produced by a grand designer. For him, God's existence was absolutely necessary for the operations of nature. As a master lawgiver or mechanic, God could and did intervene to perform miracles and correct irregularities in the universe.[19]

*Newton's calculations produced a powerful new synthesis for understanding the physical universe. Newton's three laws explained the motion of heavenly bodies and of motion **anywhere** in the universe.*

Newton's successors did not follow his lead.[20] They were convinced that the new science, allied with the new rationalism, resulted in a radically different worldview that required eliminating the old Christian perspective. Newton's disciples outstripped themselves as they invented metaphors to redefine the character of the universe: a vast machine or a watch designed so wisely by a watchmaker that it runs on its own without outside intervention. Nature no longer was an organism; now it had a mechanical nature and operated according to Newton's laws. Newton's accomplishments led to numerous accolades, but none more effusive than Alexander Pope's famous epitaph for Newton:

> Nature and Nature's Laws lay hid in night:
> God said, Let Newton be! And all was Light.

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18. Newton's greatness is revealed in this statement made toward the end of his life: "I know not what the world will think of my labors, but to myself it seems that I have been but as a child playing on the seashore; now finding some pebble rather more polished, and now some shell rather more agreeably variegated than another, while the immense ocean of truth extended itself unexplored before me," in John L. Beatty and Oliver Johnson, eds., *Heritage of Western Civilization*, vol. 2 (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1991), 53. This humble assessment of his remarkable discoveries, especially in the context of his Christian faith, stands in sharp contrast to the later hubris that sometimes characterized popularizers of science.

19. Newton outwardly maintained his faith as a professing Christian. In fact, in addition to his remarkable accomplishments in science, he cultivated an intense interest in minute theological matters. He published works on the Old Testament prophet Daniel and John's Apocalypse. Although his theological views displayed heterodox tendencies—he rejected the central dogma of the Trinity—he nevertheless believed that science and Christian faith were totally compatible.

20. See Richard Olson, *Science Deified and Science Defied: The Historical Significance of Science in Western Culture*, Vol 2: 1620–1820 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990) and Simon Schaffer, "Newtonianism" in *Companion to the History of Modern Science,* ed. Robert Olby (New York: Routledge, 1990).

The inroads of rationalism and science culminated in the deist controversy of the early eighteenth century. As laws restricting freedom of expression softened, hundreds of books and pamphlets on religion appeared. John Toland's *Christianity not Mysterious, Showing that there is nothing in the Gospel Contrary to Reason, nor above it; And that no Christian Doctrine can properly be Call'd a Mystery* (1696) and Matthew Tindal's *Christianity as Old as the Creation: or, the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature* (1730) indicate by their titles that the seminal ideas in Herbert developed into a full-blown deism, yet ironically retained the name "Christian."

Toland's treatise[21] reveals his desire to move well beyond Lockean rationalism.[22] Denying Locke's tripartite distinction of reason, Toland insisted that any religious claim be fully intelligible. Those that fall outside, that is, above reason, belong in the category of the mysterious, which he ascribed to pagan influences. He introduced the phrase "deceit of priests" as the motivation behind Christianity's sacraments. In contrast to Jesus who taught simple moral truths, priests copied pagan practices of adding mysterious ceremonies to baptism and the Lord's Supper and thus deceived worshipers into believing that salvation consisted of participation in celebrations controlled exclusively by priests. Medieval "worship" became the very antithesis to "religion," which consists in moral behavior. The standard of every religion, including Christianity, must be the eternal, intelligible truths of reason. Toland denounced doctrines at the heart of the gospel, and he expressed special repugnance for the doctrine of Christ's propitiatory atonement.

Tindal's *Christianity as Old as Creation* was the highest expression of English deism and so was nicknamed "the Deists' Bible." Tindal argued that natural religion, which is eternal and unchangeable, always has existed as a perfect religion.[23] Not only are additions, whether doctrinal or ceremonial, unnecessary, but they result in evil by detracting from the essential elements of natural religion. He changed the nature of the religious a priori from glorifying God to doing good: "to do all the good we can, and thereby render ourselves acceptable to God in answering the end of our creation."[24] Because God's natural laws always and exclusively determine the events in nature, neither mystery nor miracles exist. Tindal argued "the more that the mind of man is taken up with the observation of things which are not of a moral nature, the less it will be able to attend to those that are."

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21. Cf. Margaret Jacob, *The Radical Enlightenment: Pantheists, Freemasons and Republicans* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1981), and Robert E. Sullivan, *John Toland and the Deist Controversy: A Study in Adaptations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982).

22. Locke repudiated his admirers' efforts to move beyond his tripartite distinction of reason.

23. Cf. John Leland, *A View of the Principal Deistical Writers: British Philosophers and Theologians of the 17th and 18th Centuries*, 3 vols. (London: B. Dod, 1756–57; reprint New York: Garland Publishing, 1977).

24. Tindal's religious views directly counter the Puritans' classic expression in the Westminster Shorter Catechism's first question and answer: "What is the chief end of man?" "To glorify God and enjoy him forever."

As radical as the Herbert-to-Tindal deistic trajectory sounds, English deism remained relatively conservative in nature. Despite opposition to doctrines including the Trinity, original sin, and the atoning work of Christ, they portrayed their ideas as consistent with Christianity, instead of as a replacement for it. Although "Christian deist" may appear a contradiction in terms, English deists believed they were merely developing Christianity to its next, rational stage, not distorting it. Later, more radical deists aggressively denounced Christianity by repudiating miracles and supernatural revelation and by engaging in radical criticism of the Bible.

The British Enlightenment reached its most radical expression in the writings of David Hume (1711–76), specifically his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (1758) and his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (published posthumously in 1779). Hume's writings are every bit as controversial as John Locke's. Whereas Locke's works summarized the English mind leading up to the deist controversy, Hume captured his era's philosophic mind in its most skeptical form.[25]

Hume captured his era's philosophic mind in its most skeptical form. . . . Hume affirmed that what people ordinarily claimed to know about the world, themselves, and God resulted from habits of association. Upon careful analysis, human knowledge consists of a series of constructs based on sense data.

Hume insisted that the human mind is severely limited in what it knows. By taking Locke's representational assumptions to their logical conclusion, Hume affirmed that what people ordinarily claimed to know about the world, themselves, and God resulted from habits of association. Upon careful analysis, human knowledge consists of a series of constructs based on sense data. Regarding substance, for example, Hume stated, "The idea of substance as well as that of a mode is nothing but a collection of simple ideas, that are united by the imagination, and have a particular name assigned to them, by which we are able to recall, either to ourselves or others, that collection." We clearly perceive sense data, but we cannot know whether anything lies behind them. From this he concluded that while we think we know cause and effect, the idea of any connection between the two arises from our recalling similar events in past experience, rather than any direct knowledge of cause between two events.

In a similar vein, Hume reduced our supposed knowledge of the self to a series of perceptions, which is very different from knowledge of the soul.[26] Gaps of self-perception and the cessation of self-perception associated with sleep and one's death only reinforced Hume's skepticism about the soul. Although another person might believe in the self, Hume concluded: "All I can allow him is, that he may be in the right as well as I, and that we are essentially different in this particular. He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued, which he calls himself; though I am certain there is no such principle in me."[27]

25. An excellent account of Hume's skeptical empiricism is found in Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought*, 235–58.

26. Hume's treatment of the self reflects the emergence of the modern autonomous self, as distinguished from traditional language about the soul and its relation with God (as made in the image of God) that was rooted in biblical revelation.

27. Cited by Brown, *Christianity and Western Thought*, 241.

Hume also achieved notoriety for developing the conclusive argument against miracles. Miracles had long been used as a primary apologetic in defense of supernaturalism, but deists mounted the initial attacks on miracles, claiming they were inconsistent with belief in the laws of nature.[28]

Since Hume claimed that genuine knowledge could be found only in mathematics and experimental disciplines, he summarized his view of theology and metaphysics this way: "If we take in our hand any volume; of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance; let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames: for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."

Hume's ideas have elicited vigorous debate. Did his empiricism simply take Locke's representationalism to its logical conclusion? Were his views reducible to atheism, agnosticism, skepticism, a modern Epicureanism, or even a radically new fideism? None of these reductionisms can fully capture the complexity of his ideas. To the philosophical mind, he posed such profound questions that they prompted Immanuel Kant to rethink human reason. Hume achieved the reputation for demolishing several conventions: knowledge of the ego or self, knowledge of God or metaphysical reality, knowledge of cause and effect that serves as the basis for modern science, and knowledge of miracles that proves the truth of revealed religion.

The English Evangelical Awakening

David Hume

The Enlightenment occupied only part of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century English worldviews. In addition to dramatic shifts associated with the rise of reason, modern science, and deism, England also experienced remarkable religious phenomena based on traditional theism—the evangelical awakening.

Evangelicalism in the early decades of the eighteenth century offered a decisive, alternative worldview that profoundly affected the Church of England and helped counter the rising tides of secularism and the threat of cultural decay. Because of the comprehensive nature of the evangelical vision and its ability to galvanize English social life in new directions, many historians believe it was a benchmark worldview event, equal in stature and cultural influence to the French and the Industrial Revolutions.

28. See Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 79–100, which probes Hume's decisive role in countering miracles as part of the Christian apologia. Of special interest in light of our treatment of Jansenism below is Brown's discussion of Hume's refusal to accept reports of miracles that met his own tests, because of his conviction of the inviolability of the laws of nature.

The term "evangelical"[29] is associated primarily with John Wesley (1703–91),[30] whose indefatigable organizing, preaching, and advocacy of social measures epitomized the movement.[31] Wesley insisted that Christianity differed radically from natural religion, with its minimalist theology and moralism. Wesley also stressed worship and holiness, which deists found so distasteful because, in their opinion, they distracted from moral behavior as the essence of religion. Wesley's evangelicalism also differed from Anglican formalism in worship. Wesley prized evangelistic preaching and activism that led to conversion and social reform.

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Theologically, Wesley maintained the themes of the Protestant Reformation. However, German Pietism and Enlightenment thinking clearly influenced his worldview, as seen in his moving away from Christianity's view of authority, human nature, and sanctification. In his famous "quadrilateral," Wesley based his theology on four principles of religious authority: Scripture (the Reformers' *sola scriptura*), reason, tradition (influenced by Richard Hooker's views of natural law in *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*), and experience (reflecting the influence of pietism and Moravianism).[32] Wesley developed a careful revision of Dutch Arminianism.[33] His description of salvation deviated from the monergistic views of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin.[34] Although retaining some emphasis on the sovereignty of God, at the same time Wesley attempted to preserve a place for autonomous human choice, understanding salvation to be an act of synergistic cooperation between God and humans.

Theologically, Wesley maintained the themes of the Protestant Reformation. However, German Pietism and Enlightenment thinking clearly influenced his worldview, as seen in his moving away from Christianity's view of authority, human nature, and sanctification.

29. David Bebbington's *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989) enumerates evangelicalism's four defining characteristics: conversionism based on justification by faith; activism, a tidal wave of participation in ministries including missions, prison reform, and the abolition of slavery; ardent biblicism, where the Bible stood as the final authority for belief and practice; and crucicentrism, which held to Christ's atoning death as the preeminent core of Christian truth. For the emergence of evangelicalism, see Mark A. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism: The Age of Edwards, Whitefield and the Wesleys* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004).

30. See A. C. Outler, ed., *John Wesley* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964); Robert G. Tuttle, *John Wesley: His Life and Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); Henry D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992).

31. In addition to the awakening in England, evangelical movements broke out in other parts of Great Britain such as the Cambuslang revival in Scotland.

32. Cf. Donald A. Thorsen, *The Wesley Quadrilateral: Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience as a Model of Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1990), and Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994).

33. Named for Dutch theologian Jacob Arminius (1560–1609), who spearheaded the Remonstrance movement against scholastic Calvinism. Arminians attempted to de-emphasize Reformed theological distinctives, going so far as to urge significant changes in the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism on doctrines associated with original sin, predestination, the atonement, the work of the Holy Spirit, and perseverance.

34. Monergism is the belief, rooted in Pauline and Augustinian theology, that due to the pervasiveness of human sin, the sovereign grace of God is the only cause of a person's salvation. Monergism stands in opposition to synergism, which posits some cooperation or reciprocation between God's will and the will of the individual.

In describing salvation, Wesley distinguished between prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace. Prevenient grace[35] was a universal process by which the Holy Spirit works in people's hearts between conception and conversion. Wesley did not deny original sin, but he redefined its effects. Because of original sin, God must initiate the relationship with the sinner. The Holy Spirit prevents persons from falling so far away from God that they cannot respond to the preaching of the gospel. Justifying grace consists of Christ's righteousness being imputed to the believer and is manifested by an instantaneous conversion effected by the Holy Spirit. For Wesley, faith is the free human choice to accept God's grace. Finally, according to Wesley, sanctifying grace is the work of the Holy Spirit from conversion to death. Paradoxically, it is both an instantaneous event (sometimes called "entire sanctification") and a process that culminates in an experience of pure love devoid of self-interest.

Wesley also called sanctification "scriptural holiness."[36] Sanctification begins at the new birth, by means of the Holy Spirit, and progresses gradually until the instant of "entire sanctification," which results in love of God and neighbor. Because of conceptual similarities between Wesley's view of holiness and the modern belief in human perfectibility, controversy raged over Wesley's "perfectionism." At times, Wesley stated that believers come to a place in Christian experience that enables them to rule their lives without sin. More often, Wesley described perfection more as a goal than as a completed act. Wesley also emphasized perfection of motive and avoidance of conscious sin. Scholars debate whether Christian perfectionism, such as Wesley's, resulted more from his quadrilateral or from the moderating influences of enlighteners, who argued for perfection based not on grace but on human ability.[37]

Although some evangelicals maintained a Calvinist perspective—George Whitefield is an obvious example—evangelicalism as a whole proceeded from a different set of assumptions about God's sovereignty in salvation and human freedom in appropriating that salvation.

Wesleyan Arminianism became the driving force of British evangelicalism. Evangelicals affirmed justification by faith and pressed for conversion in their preaching, but they did so on the basis that God's grace is unlimited and free. Although some evangelicals maintained a Calvinist perspective—George Whitefield is an obvious example[38]—evangelicalism as a whole proceeded from a different set of assumptions about God's sovereignty in salvation and human freedom in appropriating that salvation. Evangelicals preached a gospel of salvation that assumed universal human sinfulness. But sin had not so corrupted the human will that it could not

35. According to Hodge, prevenient grace is a divine influence that precedes any good effort, which if acted upon receives "the merit of congruity." As Wesley redefined it, prevenient grace becomes a universal process that keeps people from being so enveloped by sin that they cannot choose to respond to the gospel.

36. Cf. John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (London: Epworth, 1952), and Kenneth J. Collins, *The Scripture Way of Salvation: The Heart of John Wesley's Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1997).

37. Cf. the discussion of perfectibility espoused by French *philosophes* below.

38. Wesley and Whitefield had a sharp falling out over the issue of predestination. Whitefield, who held a Calvinist worldview, preached throughout Great Britain and America.

respond to the offer of salvation. God's sovereignty was limited to his making salvation available to everyone in Christ's death on the cross. Individuals could freely respond to the good news by choosing to accept Christ as savior from sin. Thus, a person's salvation resulted from a synergy of the divine and human wills.

Enlightenment and Awakening in France

From Cartesian Foundationalism to the *Philosophes*

Just as Bacon's *Instauratio* launched the English Enlightenment by calling for a methodological revolution in science (inductivism), René Descartes (1596–1650) initiated a radically new approach to knowledge in his *Discourse on the Method* (1637). He wrote his *Discourse* to refute Pyrrhonism, a flourishing skepticism that threatened to banish all certainty in thinking. Descartes proposed a method premised on the superiority of the mind as distinguishing humans from the lower animals. He acknowledged the force of the Pyrrhonist contention that past philosophies led only to uncertainty. Ancient moralists lauded the virtues, but their intellectual edifices lacked sound foundations. Although he revered the teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, he could not understand it because it rested on divine authority. Despite philosophers' attempts to explain the nature of reality, their speculations lay shrouded in doubt and subject to dispute. The sciences fared no better, as evidenced by the spurious practices of alchemy and astrology.

*Descartes' new foundation for thinking rested in systematic doubt. Only by systematically doubting everything could he hope to arrive at certainty. Everything—the opinions of others, what he received through the senses, indeed what had ever passed through his mind—fell under the grand principle of **dubito** ("I doubt").*

Descartes believed only a fresh start in thinking would save philosophy from the grips of skepticism. Although an individual lacked the ability to reform a state or the sciences as a whole, he could rebuild his own thinking. And although he did not use the term worldview, clearly Descartes had in mind a radical reformulation of his mind. He laid out a clear, rational plan. Although he relinquished the goal of infallibilism, the belief that absolute truth or certainty in knowledge is attainable, he retained his belief that the lack of certainty and the root of disagreement in philosophy resulted from not appropriating the proper method in thinking. If carefully followed (cf. Bacon's elimination of idols), rational principles would comprise the true method that led to knowledge: accept only what is so clear and distinct as to exclude all ground of doubt; divide each difficulty into as many parts as possible; begin thinking about those parts from the simplest to the most complex; and engage these in thought so comprehensive that nothing is omitted.

Descartes' new foundation for thinking rested in systematic doubt. Only by systematically doubting everything could he hope to arrive at certainty. Everything—the opinions of others, what he received through the senses, indeed what had ever passed through his mind—fell under the grand principle of *dubito* ("I doubt"). His mind thus cleared, Descartes reflected on his very act of thinking. Even if he were deceived in every

idea, the fact that he thought demonstrated that he, the thinker, existed. Although he might doubt all else, the very act of doubting established one indisputable truth—that he existed. He summarized this conclusion in the famous phrase *cogito, ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am.") and made it the unshakeable basis of certainty and the starting point of all philosophy.

Archbishop William Temple identified the day that Descartes sequestered himself to gain certainty as the most disastrous day in European history. Descartes' methodical doubt and belief that individual existence is the indisputable starting point for philosophy resulted in an entirely new perspective—a shift from God-centered thinking to human-centered philosophizing. Temple stated: "There was an urgent need to find some new foundation on which the habitation of the spirit of man could be securely built. If the individual could not find it in the whole scheme of things in which he was placed, he must find it in his own integrity."[39] Cartesian rationalism effectively inaugurated the "modern self" or the "subjective turn," a shift from knowledge as objectively rooted in biblical revelation to knowledge as authenticated and demonstrated by human reason.[40]

The disparity between the Enlightenment and philosophy that preceded it is illustrated by the irony that Augustine actually used a *cogito* argument centuries earlier in *Contra Academicos* to dispute skepticism. However, Augustine's and Descartes' use of the argument reveals a fundamental disparity in their worldviews. Augustine formulated the *cogito* in the *context* of objective Christian belief, in which knowing God took preeminence. Certainty of his own existence served the higher end of knowing God. His *cogito* formed but a small part of thought that would center on God, who alone is self-existent and self-sufficient.

Descartes' use of the *cogito*, on the other hand, launched the whole project of modernity. Self-authenticating, rational self-sufficiency was the basis of Cartesian foundationalism.[41] No matter what form epistemology took in the ensuing seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discussions, its formulators used assumptions that furthered Descartes' break with the past. Descartes' radically new method—*dubito, cogito ergo sum*—provided a subjective, rational starting point—the intellectual fulcrum of human autonomy—that set the agenda for all future philosophical discussion. Although Cartesianism was but the first of many systems that occupied European thought, it placed the debate on new ground—a human-centered, secular perspective.

René Descartes

39. *Nature, Man and God*, Gifford Lectures 1932–34 (London: Macmillan, 1934), 57.

40. Cf. Charles Taylor's thorough treatment of the rise of the modern autonomous self in *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) and Jeffrey Stout, *The Flight from Authority: Religion, Morality and the Quest for Autonomy* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1981).

41. "Foundationalism" refers to any epistemological theory that maintains beliefs are justified (known) on the basis of "basic beliefs," i.e., "foundational beliefs." According to foundationalism, basic beliefs are self-justifying or self-evident and serve as the basis for other beliefs.

However, Descartes did not neglect God, nor did most of the Enlightenment philosophers. Having established rational autonomy as the basis for his knowledge, Descartes moved to the question of God. Descartes formed his own version of the ontological argument: his idea of God differed from other ideas because of its metaphysical nature, and since a less-perfect nature cannot produce the idea of a perfect nature, then the idea of a perfect nature must originate from a being that is more perfect, that is, from God. At first glance, God appears to play a crucial role as the second idea in Descartes' system. But this is not the case; God is reduced to a functional role within the Cartesian system as a whole. As James Collins comments:

> [Descartes' use of the idea of God] does not mean that the rationalist systems were religious or theocentric in structure. Quite the contrary, God was made to serve the purposes of the system itself. He became a major cog, but still a cog, in the over-all program of answering skepticism, incorporating the scientific spirit, and building a rational explanation of the real.[42]

Cartesian rationalism effectively inaugurated the "modern self" or the "subjective turn," a shift from knowledge as objectively rooted in biblical revelation to knowledge as authenticated and demonstrated by human reason.

Thus, Descartes used the idea of God as the bridge between the *cogito* and knowledge of the real world. Descartes' subordination of God to the aims of his system contributed to the modern marginalization of religion. Privately, Descartes remained a faithful Catholic—he lit a candle to the Virgin when he formulated the *cogito*, but Catholicism remained a matter of his personal faith, not a governing element in his public philosophy. Descartes' philosophical treatment of God illustrates the modernist shift from seeing God as a transcendent, personal sovereign, who is worthy of worship, pious devotion, and personal obedience, to seeing him as a "deity" who serves the philosopher's ends by tying together his system as a whole.

By the conclusion of the Enlightenment, compartmentalization of religious faith as a matter of private belief separate from philosophical speculation epitomized the modern worldview. What previously captivated thinkers in the Reformation—seeing public life as the arena where Christian faith in a personal, transcendent God would manifest itself in a diversity of vocations that would transform every aspect of cultural life—now became the prerogative of the secular use of reason and science.

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Philosophers in the age of reason in the seventeenth century prepared the way for the more dramatic shift in worldview that appeared in the eighteenth-century *philosophes*: Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, Helvetius, d'Holbach, and Condorcet.[43] These men were not professional philoso-

42. James Collins, *God in Modern Philosophy* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1959), 56. Temple makes essentially the same point. Even though God was the "pivot" of his philosophy, "yet it is still not a religious philosophy, for it sets no value on God in Himself, but only as the lynch-pin of its own mechanism. It does not interpret the world in the light of knowledge of God, but makes use of God to vindicate its own interpretation of the world. . . . He is to be used for our purpose, not we for his," *Nature, Man and God*, 84.

43. "Philosophes" is French for "philosophers," including this French group of eighteenth-century Enlightenment intellectuals. Although the primary figures were French, and

phers but champions of the epistemological revolution that began with the age of reason.

Whereas Toland and Tindal conceived themselves as "Christian deists," taking Christianity to its next level of development, French deists severed all ties with Christianity. The perception of the Enlightenment as a rabidly anti-Christian reprise of ancient paganism stems from the attacks by these thinkers against throne and altar—dominance of French life by the monarchy and the Catholic Church. Philosophes sought to break the *anciene regime's* stranglehold on French culture. They contended that Christianity's insistence on revelation, asceticism, and mysticism and the inadequacy of humans to save themselves without divine grace resulted in a tragic "failure of nerve" among Greek and Roman leaders. Ancient thinkers failed in their aspiration to achieve a life of reason because the church fathers appropriated Greek philosophy and subordinated it to revelation and Christian theology. Although Christianity captured the Western mind early, the modern period represented the philosophes' frontal attack to reverse the process. Seizing what rightfully belonged to the philosophers and propounding a new spirit of the age, their goal was nothing less than "the recovery of nerve."

Voltaire (1694–1778) epitomized the French Enlightenment with his demand "*Ecrasez l'infame*"—"Wipe out the infamy [of organized Christianity]." Unleashing a barrage of pamphlets, plays, poems, manuscripts, and treatises, he categorically upbraided Catholicism as an oppressive and scurrilous superstition. Twice he fled in exile when public opinion turned against the violence of his critique of Christianity and Judaism.[44] He pilloried every major theological belief—the Trinity, original sin, the atonement, Mary's virginity, the Eucharist—as antithetical to rational, natural religion. He issued a diatribe characterized by wit, verve, and indignation. Echoing Lord Herbert's rationalistic reductionism, Voltaire defined natural religion in a single phrase "the principles of morality common to the human race." Any act that went beyond the worship of a Supreme Being by these means was a distortion: "The only gospel one ought to read is the great book of nature, written by the hand of God and sealed with his seal. It is as impossible that this pure and eternal religion should produce evil, as it is that the Christian fanaticism should not produce it." Voltaire did not seek to purify Christianity but to rid France of Christianity altogether.

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Despite his virulent hostility to Christianity, Voltaire was not an atheist.[45] He claimed to be a theist. In his *Treatise on Metaphysics*, Voltaire

although Paris became the capital of modern discourse, the *philosophes* were an international group whose goal was to take the achievements of the seventeenth-century worldview to their logical conclusion.

44. See the citation at the beginning of our chapter on the Old Testament in this volume. Voltaire also attacked Pascal's *Pensées*.

45. Scholars frequently mention that the eighteenth century witnessed all degrees of deism but relatively few atheists. Several figures, however, qualify for this term, among

propounded Thomist arguments for the existence of God. However, his refusal to accept all evidence from revelation, his denial of providence, and his questioning even the goodness of God because of the problem of evil identify him as a radical deist. He once uttered the statement that if God did not exist, it would be necessary for man to invent him. In his most famous play, *Candide*, Voltaire rejected the facile optimism that sometimes characterized rationalism. When the tragic earthquake and tidal wave devastated Lisbon on All Saints' Day in 1755, killing thousands who worshiped in churches while sparing others in brothels, Voltaire questioned how the presence of such evil could characterize Pope's dictum "whatever is, is right" and Leibniz' belief in this as the best of all possible worlds. But in *Lettres philosophique*, he disagreed just as vociferously with Pascal's acceptance of miracles and the Augustinian beliefs of the fall (original sin), predestination, and the necessity of divine grace.

The philosophes' redefinition of religion and confidence in the powers of reason and science resulted in rising confidence in human progress.[46] As science became separated from theological ends, the medieval idea of theology as the "queen of the sciences" gave way to science as a series of autonomous disciplines that not only provide information independent of revelation but furnish humanity with the tools by which to transform the political order. Newton's discovery of the laws of motion led people to believe we could discover similar laws that determine human behavior. Modern scientism[47] grew out of the belief that an exact parallel existed between nature and human affairs. Just as universal laws govern events in nature, so universal laws of human nature lay ready to be discovered. The science of human affairs needs only its "Newton" to pave the way for continued human progress.[48]

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them Paul-Henry D'Holbach (1723–89), author of *Systeme de la Nature*; and Denis Diderot (1713–84), editor of the definitive *Encyclopedie*.

46. See Carl Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1974) and John Passmore, *The Perfectibility of Man* (New York: Scribners, 1970).

47. Scientism is the belief that the quantitative methods of science are the only means by which knowledge may be attained, coupled with the denial of all qualitative disciplines, e.g., ethics and religion. The most concise definition of scientism is that of Albert H. Hobbs: "Scientism as a belief that science can furnish answers to all human problems, makes science a substitute for philosophy, religion, manners and morals," *Social Problems and Scientism* (Harrisburg, PA: The Stackpole Company, 1953).

48. Condorcet represents Enlightenment hope in human progress based on the proper use of reason and science. His *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* (1795) divided history into ten epochs, each distinguished by remarkable cultural events. Throughout, he maintained that Christianity is responsible for the oppression, barbarity, and superstition that marked declines. The appearance of Enlightenment forces in his last era demonstrated the greatest opportunity in history for overcoming evil and establishing a just society. Condorcet believed that reason, joined with science, could prophetically map the future destiny of man and successfully eradicate individual and social evils.

Religious Movements in France

Jansenism and Blaise Pascal

Two religious movements, each espousing a distinctive worldview, opposed the French Enlightenment—Jansenism in the seventeenth century and the anti-philosophes in the eighteenth century. Blaise Pascal (1623–62), a Jansenist, countered Cartesian rationalism with its inherent confidence in autonomous reason.[49] Noted for his mathematical genius, experiments on the effects of the vacuum, and inventing the calculator, Pascal collected ideas, published as the *Pensées*, for a new Catholic apologetic. He defended Jansenism, a Catholic reform movement that reprised Augustine's monergistic emphasis on the absolute necessity of divine grace over against the synergism and moral casuistry of the Jesuits.[50]

The *Pensées* provided a profoundly different worldview from Pyrrhonic skepticism, Cartesian rationalism, and the theological and moral teachings of the Jesuits. Some of Pascal's defense mimics traditional apologetics—use of miracles and fulfilled prophecy. But he also proffered a striking psychological analysis of the human soul. He called man a monster who paradoxically manifests greatness and misery. Although Pyrrhonism, rationalism, and dogmatism can explain part of the human paradox, only the Christian doctrines of the fall and the incarnation explain both. The solution to the human dilemma consists neither in analyzing the Cartesian mind and its doubts nor in moral casuistry but in exploring the human heart.

Pascal combined a radical subjective probing of the human heart with an appeal to the objective authority of the Bible that was reminiscent of Augustine. The Bible poses the *Deus absconditus* (the God of Isa. 45:15), hidden from the speculations of discursive reason but also inaccessible to speculation, due to the willfulness of human sin. Despite human greatness, philosophers who pursue God through Cartesian reason cannot find him. Pascal especially decried the way Descartes used God merely to put the world in motion and then had no further use for him. By confining God to a deductive model, Pascal argued, Descartes misused reason and its method, which were designed for geometry and science, not for Christian faith.

Blaise Pascal

Pascal's most suggestive method posits the heart as the intuitive and synoptic center of human experience: "The heart has its reasons of which

49. Cf. A. J. Krailsheimer, *Pascal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); D. Wetsel, *Pascal and Disbelief: Catechesis and Conversion in the Pensées* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994); Marvin R. O'Connell, *Blaise Pascal: Reasons of the Heart* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997).

50. Cf. Alexander Sedgwick, *Jansenism in Seventeenth Century France* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 1977), and Dale Van Kley, *The Jansenists and the Expulsion of the Jesuits from France 1757–1765* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975).

reason knows nothing."[51] Hereby, Pascal affirmed the heart as the central experiential human faculty, and the heart's purpose is to apprehend first principles, from which the rest of human thought is derived. Pascal did not disparage genuine reason, but only its Cartesian misuse. Although Descartes argued rationally, Pascal contended that the heart sees intuitively through immediate awareness. What the heart apprehends comes not by ideas mediated through syllogisms. Instead, the heart knows first principles by instinct or sentiment, which is not mere emotional feeling but the assurance of faith. The heart intuits first principles as a matter of direct experience. One knows oneself and God not by the logic of the *cogito* and an argument from ontology but from the intuitive awareness in the heart. Thus, Pascal concluded it is the heart that perceives God, not the reason.

Pascal combined a radical subjective probing of the human heart with an appeal to the objective authority of the Bible that was reminiscent of Augustine. . . . Pascal's most suggestive method posits the heart as the intuitive and synoptic center of human experience: "The heart has its reasons of which reason knows nothing."

But Pascal does not thereby espouse an irrational fideism. Although the number of intuited first principles[52] is relatively small, reason's task is to form a coherent perspective within the confines provided by biblical revelation. Since the heart, not reason, experiences God, Pascal did not define faith primarily in cognitive terms; Pascal used affective terms (God felt by the heart), and he affirmed that faith is God's gift. Faith differs from proof; one is human, the other is a gift of God. God himself instills faith into the heart resulting not in *scio* ("I know") but in *credo* ("I believe").

Pascal did not eliminate objective truth from his worldview. He appealed to the authoritative teaching of the Bible as the basis for comprehensive knowledge. Without Scripture, which has Jesus Christ as its object, we cannot know anything but darkness. Genuine wisdom, therefore, consists in avoiding two extremes: excluding reason altogether and appealing only to reason. On the one hand, if we appeal only to reason, faith has no mysterious or supernatural dimension; on the other hand, if we reject reason, religion is absurd.

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The cure for human complacency in the seventeenth-century mind lay in existential shock, and Pascal wielded this quite effectively. He issued his most provocative challenge to the modern worldview in a wager directed to the cool, detached French gambler, who faces life's greatest risk; the ultimate wager is either God exists or he does not. If one wagers for God and God exists, the result is ultimate gain, eternal life. On the other hand, if a person bets on God who does not exist, or another bets against God who does not exist, neither loses anything of ultimate value. However, at the opposite extreme, gambling against God if God exists produces infinite loss. How could anyone who knows the stakes of life possibly wager for the latter![53]

51. See Bernard Ramm, *Varieties of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 39.

52. "For the knowledge of first principles, as space, time, motion, number, is as sure as any of those which we get from reasoning. And reason must trust these intuitions of the heart, must base them on every argument . . . Principles are intuited, propositions are inferred, all with certainty, though in different ways."

53. Cf. Nicholas Rescher, *Pascal's Wager: A Study of Practical Reasoning in Philosophical Theology* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985).

Glossary

absolute dependence. Friedrich Schleiermacher's term for the religious feelings of dependence people experience upon realizing their finitude—how small they are in an infinite universe.

absolute mind. G. W. F. Hegel's term for an abstract but real blueprint of ideas that determine how history progresses towards its inevitable goal.

Academy. Gymnasium in Athens where Plato taught; the Platonic school of philosophy.

active intellect. Aristotle's term for the aspect of intellect that abstracts concepts from sense experience. Aristotle distinguished the active from the passive intellect, which merely receives the data of the senses.

ad fontes. Latin meaning "to the sources" or "Back to the sources!" This term characterized the basic literary program of the humanists whereby they returned to the study of classical sources and texts. In the context of theology, this meant producing critical editions of complete works by the early church fathers that allowed a proper, overall assessment of patristic theology, rather than one filtered through the books of short extracts (called "florilegia" and "sentences"), which were typical of the Middle Ages.

already not yet. Designates the contrast between the present fulfillment of God's promises of salvation, and their future final and full realization in the new heaven and the new earth (Rev. 21:1–22:5). The "already" side includes what Christians already have been given as spiritual blessings in union with Christ (Eph. 1:3–14). The "not-yet" side includes all the blessings that have not yet been given but will be when Christ returns (Rom. 8:18–25). The two sides are related, because Christians now have the Holy Spirit as the "down payment" of future blessings (Eph. 1:14 ESV note). See also **inaugurated eschatology**; **union with Christ**.

Anabaptism. Literally "re-baptism." Practiced in the early stages of the Reformation by a broad spectrum of Protestants—Anabaptists—who rejected infant baptism. Anabaptists maintained baptism was to be received only on profession of faith, hence "believer's baptism." When, following this belief, they proceeded to baptize one another for the first time (as they saw it), their opponents dubbed them "re-baptizers," or Anabaptists.

analogy of being. Many theologians have concluded that language about God always is analogical. We say God is "creative" and an artist is "creative," but God's creativity is of a different order from the artist's. "Analogy of being" means that the word "being" has a similar but not identical meaning when applied to God

and to man. We can say "God exists" and "man exists," but God's existence is the existence of a sovereign Creator, and thus is of a different order from human existence. See also **equivocation; univocity of being**.

anthropomorphic days. An understanding of the "days" of Genesis 1 as God's days, rather than natural, 24-hour days.

anti-philosophes. Opponents of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment. They believed that philosophes' emphasis on autonomous reason corrupted morality and subverted French society. The anti-philosophes countered by stressing traditional Catholic piety and morality. See also **philosophes**.

Apollo. Greek mythological figure who came to represent harmony, order, and reason. Also known as the god of music and later, in Roman mythology, as the god of the sun.

apologists. Christians in the second and third centuries who wrote apologies, or defenses, of the faith to defend Christianity against pagan philosophy and state-sponsored persecution.

apostolic fathers. The earliest group of Christian writers after the New Testament, some of whom may have known or even studied with the apostles.

Arianism. Theological heresy denying the deity of Christ that threatened to engulf the church in the fourth century. Arius taught there was a time when Jesus was not the Son of God but was created like other beings. See also **Council of Nicaea**.

Arminianism. Theological movement named for seventeenth-century Dutch pastor/theologian Jacob Arminius, who revised traditional Calvinist doctrines on original sin, predestination, the atonement, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

atomic facts. Facts as experienced independent of criteria or framework.

atomism. Naturalistic view that reality is completely composed of tiny, indestructible bits of matter. Associated with Epicurus.

biblical minimalists. A group of modern scholars who deny there is much history in the biblical narratives.

categorical imperative. Kant's absolute moral law. Unlike conditional imperatives [if X do Y], it admits no exceptions. Basically, it is a restatement of the Golden Rule: "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

categories of understanding. Kant's twelve forms of understanding that structure knowledge. Human reason is not a *tabula rasa*, as the empiricists claimed; the mind organizes sensory experience by means of this a priori categorical structure. See also ***tabula rasa***; **Copernican revolution**.

class conflict, class struggle. Marx's contention that socio-economic differences between classes inevitably will result in inter-class conflict. Those in poverty are resentful of the affluent; the wealthy fear those below them. Marx believed the only solution was to abolish private property and thereby place everyone on the same economic plane.

cogito ergo sum. Latin meaning "I think, therefore I am." Used by Descartes to affirm his own existence as the starting point for epistemological certainty. This established the "subjective turn" as the foundation for modern thought. See also **subjective turn**.

common sense realism. Philosophical school rooted in the eighteenth-century work of Scottish thinker Thomas Reid. Resisted Hume's skepticism by teaching that ordinary common sense is generally a trustworthy source of knowledge.

Index of Scripture

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Recommended Resources for Exploring Worldviews

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Turning Points in Worldview

Revolutions in Worldview has surveyed the prominent thinkers and movements whose ideas have driven Western history. The following timeline identifies those figures and events that stand out as the most significant because they mark major turning points or transitions in worldview.

1400 BC Israelite Exodus from Egypt. The Mosaic revelation establishes a theocentric worldview: God, human nature, knowledge, creation, society, and ethics are developed within a framework of God as sovereign creator, providential ruler, and redeemer.

Eighth century BC The Homeric poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey* provide the background from which Greek philosophy emerged. Zeus and the personal Olympian deities replace the earlier primitive Greek religion, which focused on magical forces at work in nature.

Sixth century BC Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes found the Milesian pre-Socratic school in Miletus, Greece. They speculated that the source of order in the cosmos lay not in Homeric deities but in some ultimate natural phenomena.

Fifth century BC Plato's *Republic* proposes philosophy as the new ideal. Transcendent world of ideas replaces Homeric deities as objects of religious devotion. Aristotle subsequently revised Platonic thought by emphasizing sensory experience.

AD 31 Jesus is crucified and resurrected. The incarnation of God in Jesus Christ establish the historical and ontological basis for the Christian worldview, in which redemption from sin and death form the core of the Christian gospel.

AD 36 Conversion of the apostle Paul. His letters and the gospels of the New Testament articulate the Christian view of redemption in continuity with Old Testament revelation.

313 Roman Emperor Constantine issues the Edict of Milan, which ends empire-wide persecution of Christianity. In 325 he convened the first ecumenical council of the church at Nicaea, which affirmed the deity of Jesus Christ.

419 Augustine's *On the Trinity* establishes the Christian alternative to classical Greek thought. The tripersonal God alone provides a transcendent basis for understanding all reality. His *City of God* articulates a teleological philosophy of history to replace the Greek cyclical view.

1120 Abelard's *Sic et non* initiates a new method of doing theology. His use of logic in the form of questions controlled the interpretation of biblical content that separated theology from biblical exegesis.

1274 Thomas Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* combines Aristotelian philosophy and Christian teaching to form the classical medieval synthesis of faith and reason.

ca. 1285–1347 William of Ockham's nominalism denies the existence of universals, challenges Aquinas's synthesis of faith and reason, and provides the basis for modern science.

1304–74 Petrarch develops Renaissance humanism. His pioneering use of Latin manuscripts prompted the revival of classical writings, whose appeal superseded scholastic authorities as the way to legitimate civic values.

1503 Desiderius Erasmus publishes *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, a nondogmatic Christian humanism. His *Praise of Folly* (1509), a stinging satire, attacked corrupt medieval practices and religious superstition.

1515 The publication of Niccolo Machiavelli's *The Prince* launches the modern view of politics, which espouses power as opposed to virtue as the goal of political action.

Contributors

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Dr. Hoffecker has also taught at the various RTS sites in Orlando, Charlotte, Washington, DC, Memphis, and Detroit, as well as in the Ukraine. He and his wife, Pam, enjoy tennis; and when they visit their three sons, who live in Washington, DC, Phoenix, and Atlanta, a pick-up game always follows.

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