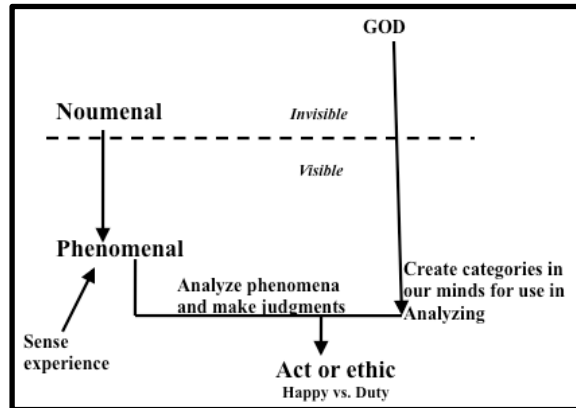




Word of God written follows the same model as the Word of God incarnate (God-Man). Revelation is divine interpretation in human Words.

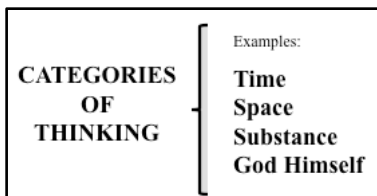
Word of God
Author - ity



Classroom in a Book Series Book 9

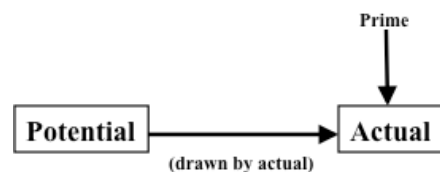
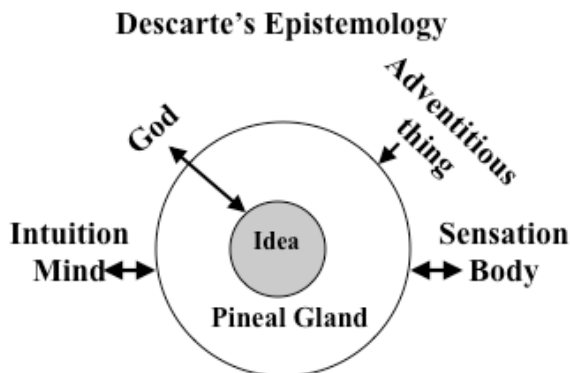
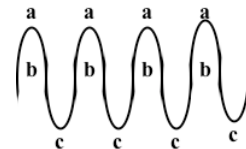
DECEPTION FOR DISCIPLES

A New Look at Philosophical Systems



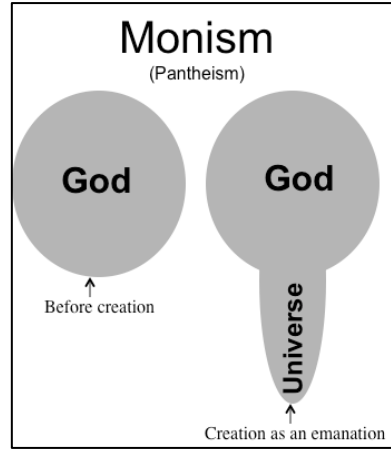
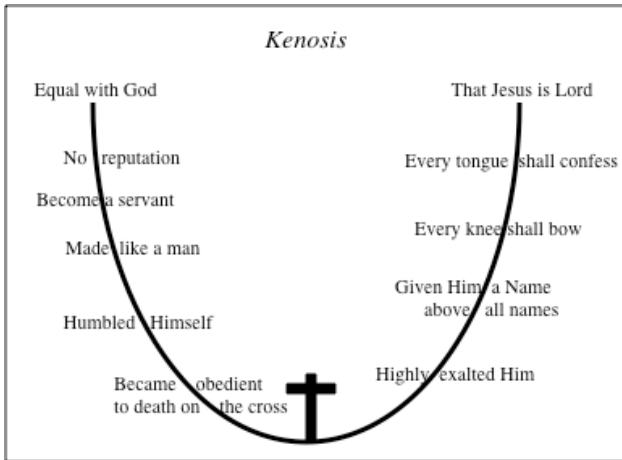
• By

• **William E. Vinson, Jr., PhD**



DECEPTION FOR DISCIPLES A New Look at Philosophical Systems

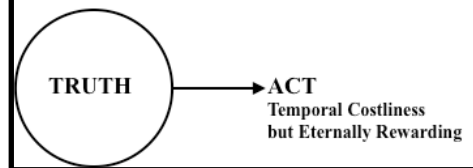
Vinson



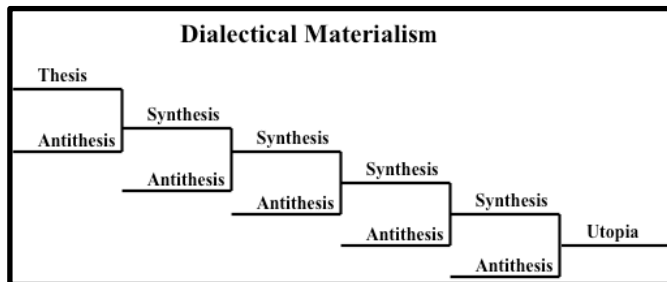
**Reason is prime
in scientia**



Actions Based on Religious Truth



Dialectical Materialism



**Faith is prime
in sapientia**



**A voluntary system will
determine what you believe**

**CLASSROOM IN A BOOK
DISCIPLESHIP SERIES**

Book 9

**DECEPTION FOR DISCIPLES:
A New Look at Philosophical Systems**

**By:
William E. Vinson, Jr.**

**Published by
William E. Vinson, Jr.
Fort Worth, TX**

First Printing

**All rights Reserved
©2011**

Preface

THE CLASSROOM IN A BOOK DISCIPLESHIP SERIES

The *Classroom in a Book Discipleship Series* is a unique approach to education. The author has twenty-five years of experience in classroom teaching at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and Internet teaching. The teachings covered Old Testament, New Testament, Theology, Church History, Hermeneutics, Christian Ethics, Philosophy of Religion, Evangelism, and Biblical Backgrounds. In other words, the teacher was a generalist in the world of specialization.

During recent years of teaching, God sent two people into the classrooms that have made this series possible. One student brought in some audio recording gear into the seminary classrooms and recorded everything said by teacher and students. The other person, Helen Agnew, transcribed the tapes into weekly sessions. Finally, Helen put all the weeks together for a course into a book, which became the nucleus for a formal book. Next came the editing phases in which the improper English and sentence construction was corrected. Also, the organization and thought flow was improved in order to facilitate a reader's comprehension.

Each class session became a chapter that went through several iterations of the editing process. Also, Helen provided computer drawings of the theological charts and models used by the teacher. These models were inserted into the book at the appropriate places.

INFORMAL WRITING STYLE

You should be aware that the chosen style of communication in this series of books is much more informal than the typical. I have worked to retain the folksy way of expression that I use in the classroom and pulpits. In a

formal treatise, like my doctoral dissertation, the expression was stiff and formal (one may even say that it was written by a stuffed shirt). So, who is going to read my dissertation because of its stiff formality?

These books are going to be easy reading because they will be what you hear in everyday conversation. In the classroom, I am a great communicator. When reading the transcripts of my audio-recorded classroom lectures, the students have commented that they could actually hear my voice with its inflection and volume in the printed words. These sensory experiences add to the impact and learning by the reader. So, I want you to know that the folksy level of communication was purposefully chosen in order to enhance your learning experience.

Dear saint, you are in for a treat. There will be points of time in which your mind will be so absorbed into thinking new and analytical thoughts of our Most Wonderful Lord, that you will be unable to resist sharing them with a loved one. In my editing passes of the various drafts, I found myself reliving the classrooms and all the high emotion and drama. My pulse rate would quicken and convictions and tears would return.

CLASS PROCESS

Each book is a semester-long class. The subject matter is explored very thoroughly because all the students are participating in the questioning and answering. You will have the next best thing to being in the classroom. In fact, there will be times in your reading in which you will be in the classroom through imagination.

BENEFITS

Discipleship has been declared by many to be the greatest need in Southern Baptist life today. In my many years of teaching, I have had churches to bus in many of their members to take my classes at Southwestern Seminary. The reason that was given was that it was a very good source for discipleship training. This discipleship training is a step up from Sunday school and other training because *it involves seminary training at the lay level*. Armed with this new discipleship training, the new lay ministers are fulfilling their calls and impacting the Kingdom of God in a very positive way. Pastors are benefiting by having some new lay ministers to help them minister. Churches and society are benefiting by receiving positive help that is theologically sound and practical.

For you, the busy Christian of today, this series is a rare opportunity to actually participate in a seminary classroom to learn from the teacher and your peers in high impact and focused studies that are not available in any other books. The teacher's experience of teaching as a generalist will provide *intercon-*

nected insights and truths that are not available in specialization. The *student interactions* in these books will create a *relevancy* that is unheard of outside the classroom. The quality of the *class dynamics* will lift you, the reader, up into unparalleled densely packed teachings that will greatly improve the *efficiency of your learning*. You owe it to yourself to jump into this series because you can get an education that is the next best thing to actually going to seminary.

In addition to the student interactions recorded in each chapter, the major points that I made which would be the source of the tests given to the classroom students are stated in the text, and the *test questions* are stated at the end of each chapter (class session). The *answers* to those tests are given at the end of the book for you to check yourself. If you seriously want to know that you have accomplished the goals of each chapter and to be able to teach a course like this, answer those questions to the point that you can do so without going back into the chapter itself—i.e. memorize those points and charts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface -----	ii
Table of Contents -----	iv
Introduction-----	1
Chapter 1 The Battle for the Minds of Men-----	4
Chapter 2 The Beginnings of Philosophy -----	19
Chapter 3 Philosophy’s Impact on Government -----	36
Chapter 4 Good Versus Evil and Faith Versus Reason-----	53
Chapter 5 The Search for Understanding -----	68
Chapter 6 How Can One Know Truth?-----	83
Chapter 7 Eighteenth Century Empiricism-----	95
Chapter 8 The Primacy of Ethics Over Knowledge -----	103
Chapter 9 Existentialism and Neo-Orthodoxy-----	114
Chapter 10 Existentialism’s Subjectivity plus Dialectical Processes -----	128
Chapter 11 Pragmatism, Process, and Language -----	140
Conclusion-----	152
Appendix-----	154
Answers to Chapter Questions -----	158
Glossary-----	165
Certificate in Discipleship Studies -----	170

INTRODUCTION

We must go through some pains here to discover this linkage of theology and philosophy so that you can begin to be the watchmen on the wall that you need to be. If *you* are not the watchman, who is going to watch out for the sheep? You watchmen are their last line of defense.

Philosophy has played a large part in shaping the present Church. It has caused us to have “Mystery Babylon” written on our foreheads. We cannot be distinguished from non-Christians while in the marketplace. Years ago, when there was more of a distinction between Christians and non-Christians, I did a random face-to-face survey of what people thought those differences were. There were only two differences that were stated frequently enough to even merit mentioning now. The first was recognized by both Christians and non-Christians alike. That difference was **church attendance**.

The other difference conflicted between the two parties. The non-Christians accused Christians of being hypocrites and self-righteous while they led lives that were no more righteous than those of non-Christians. Whereas the Christians claimed righteousness for themselves and unrighteousness for the non-Christians.

My survey was far from scientific. It consisted merely of questioning passersby in a shopping mall in Atlanta, Georgia during the early 1970's. I was struck by the lack of visible differences between lost people and saved people that was mentioned. How could the two groups become so much alike?

When the Apostle John was removed from his present time on the Isle of Patmos and taken to the end times, he was shocked to the point of almost fainting when he saw what the Church had become. What John saw, folks, is us. We are that harlot who is riding on the dragon and has “Mystery Babylon” written on our foreheads (Rev. 17:5).

We got to this point because the world penetrated the Church with its vain philosophies instead of the Church going into all of the world with God's philosophy. We have drunk in the deadly poisons of vain philosophy dregs and all. We have lost our ability to think clearly. As a result, we have participated with Satan to set the stage for Antichrist to rise to power.

We do not know how to manage our families. We cannot manage our money, votes, time, possessions, skills, spiritual gifts, worship, recreation, vocations, education, jobs, ministries, possessions, or churches. We are starved for wisdom and the ability to think and analyze, i.e. we no longer know and use God's philosophy.

In order to distinguish between God's philosophy and vain philosophies, we must study both. If we continue to neglect the effort of study, we will continue to be vulnerable to Satan's deceptions. Those deceptions have been very effective. How do I know? Look at the mess that the world is in. America is on the path of destruction. Our so-called “brilliant” politicians are nothing but foolish blind guides leading a blind citizenry over the edge of the cliff. But folks, that blindness can be

removed by studying this course on philosophy of religion.

Studying philosophy is difficult and bitter to the soul, especially when your hand has been held and you have been pampered by an entertaining church all of your life. But I think you can gain a ton here if you will just let me show you some erroneous linkages between your theology and vain philosophy so that you can see the implications.

I want you to read the appended book summary on the *Seven Men Who Lead the World from the Grave* because I think you will see in it why people are going to hell because of the subtle deceptions from philosophy. If you can just stay with me in this study, you will become one of God's watchmen on the wall. Sometime down the road, God will bring this knowledge up to your remembrance for use in ministry, and there will be people born again, or souls rescued out of the pits of hell because you made the effort in this course. This is important stuff. It is difficult, it is dry traveling, and all of that, but if you ever get your philosophy, your theology, and your church history united together in a whole system, you are going to become a holy terror against evil.

I have prayed that you would not become prideful with your expanded knowledge from this course. This course is not about knowing for knowledge's sake. I want you to be armed to the teeth with some analytical tools for use in fighting the good fight.

God has a true philosophy that we are supposed to take hold of. Vain philosophy and God's philosophy are in competition for your allegiance. Beginning with the Middle Ages, the Church has been held captive by a

variety of vain philosophies. Until the Reformation, *all* church doctrines were shaped by vain philosophy. Today, the world is being ruled by new vain philosophies. It is my job to prepare you to defend yourself against them and make a positive impact on the kingdom of God.

Vain philosophies have permeated the churches and governments. Secular and religious people are soon going to join together in an effort to rid the world of your kind of Christianity and replace it with the religion of Antichrist.

In order to anticipate how and when that purge will proceed, you will need to know the signposts and their philosophical underpinnings. God is going to use this course to give you some analytical tools so that you can combat apostasy's progress.

I feel a somewhat panicky desperation for you because Progressivism is already here in a big way. Many of your people in your churches know nothing of its threat. How are you going to inform them? I think that the David Breese book, *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave*, does a good job of teaching at the level of our church people. Our churches can get hold of this concept from writings like his. But they need to couple that with church history, the book of Revelation, systematic theology, and all the other 4Disciples courses. They are not likely to do that on their own! How are we going to educate our churches? It is a difficult task because most of the people are going to say that they do not want to study systematic theology, church history, or philosophy. They just want to study the Bible.

Certainly, Bible study is good in itself, but vain philosophy has given us a false hermeneutic to make the Bible say whatever we want it to say. The *kenosis* has been jettisoned, and the requirements for discipleship have been watered down. We are in a desperate situation here. I do not know what the answer is except for me to just keep on teaching you. You, then, can take the baton and run your lap of the race of trying to do the same thing for somebody else.

We are just going to have to do our very best to rescue as many as possible. I am fortunate that I have you to teach because you are easy to teach. You have a hunger for

learning that uses what you learn to increase the profitability for God's Kingdom by your ministry. The book of Revelation says over and over again "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7). I pray that God has given you ears that hear.

"My dear Lord Jesus, please make these philosophy lessons understandable to this student reading now. Then, my dear Lord, please help the student to fight the good fight and not fall victim to vain philosophy's destructive goals. I ask it, my Lord, for the student's sake and for Your Glory. In Your Name, Jesus, I pray. Amen."

Chapter 1

THE BATTLE FOR THE MINDS OF MEN

Please pay particular attention to the word *deceived* that is emphasized in the following:

Revelation

19:20 And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he *deceived* them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.

20:3 And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should *deceive* the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

That is Satan being locked into the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

Revelation

20:8 And shall go out to *deceive* the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom [is] as the sand of the sea.

That is Satan coming up out of the bottomless pit and going out to *deceive* the nations.

Revelation

20:10 And the devil that *deceived* them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet [are], and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

Deception is a serious problem for us. Satan is out to deceive you; that is his mode of operation. Deception is his specialty. Deception is something that goes on in the mind, and the shocking reality is that every one of us is deceived. I am deceived, and all of you are deceived.

There has been only one perfect theologian to walk this planet, only one. The rest

of us are deceived. That fact means that you believe something to be true that is, in fact, not true. Every one of us has that problem, and the terrible thing about it is that we do not know what it is. The nature of deception is that you cannot know your deception. If you know your deception, then you are not deceived. If you believe to be true what you know to be false, then you are a fool. Please understand that what we *believe* to be true corresponds exactly with what we think we *know* to be true. So, I think that the prior problem of deception comes not in *believing* but in *knowing*.

Faith is in the believing, but prior to faith is the knowing. Faith is volitional, and we have our old man to wrestle with in order to choose to believe and act on that belief.

Satan uses two tricks to defeat our faith. One is to get us to believe and act on a false understanding (knowledge). The other trick is to tempt us to follow our flesh rather than the Spirit. The course on sanctification (Hebrews) deals with the latter trick; this course will be concentrating on the former.

Knowing something to be absolutely false and then believing it and basing your life on it is the height of foolishness. However, a great variety of ideas are bombarding you from all over the place. You are undoubtedly buying some of them and making them a part of your life. When you assimilate them into your very being, you begin to behave in ways that are based on that foundation of beliefs. When the beliefs are false, you will be behaving on a deception. This problem is going to cost many people their eternal lives, or at the very least, their eternal rewards.

In this course, we are going to deal with deception in several categories of ideas. Thus there will be many ideas to explore because

more than one idea exists per category. The main goal that we want to accomplish is to root out deception from our lives and learn how to discern and combat deception in the ideas of your church, community, and world.

This course is very important. Please note that at the end of time, as described in the book of Revelation, Satan is described as the deceiver. He is helped by the false prophet to deceive the nations. Instead of following the Truth (Christ Jesus), the people are deceived by Satan into following the lies of Antichrist while thinking that they are following the truth. That terrible mistake will cost the people their eternal lives.

What follows the description of deception in the book of Revelation is the Great White Throne Judgment. In that judgment, people are going to be cast into the lake of fire to spend their eternity there because of their beliefs.

It is important for you to get a grasp of your responsibilities in that judgment because you are going to do some of the casting of your loved ones and friends into the lake of fire. Please be warned that if you do not warn them to turn to Jesus as their savior, then their blood is going to be required at your hands (Ezekiel 3:18).

Satan's plan is to deceive you into thinking that you are not going to experience any pain or suffering during your life. Instead, you will be led to believe that you are just going to come down to the end while celebrating and having a big time because you are saved. You may not realize that some of the people who will be cast into the lake of fire will include some of your loved ones and friends. You may not realize that you will have to throw some of them into the lake of fire. Because all of the condemned will not be evil never-do-wells who have rejected Jesus, your alarms will not have been raised. Your belief of a lie that all will be okay will result in terrifying and eternal suffering for

your condemned loved ones and friends, and terrible grief for you.

You must not assume that your lack of understanding will not cost you. You are not going to come through Satan's deceptions unscathed. He will win a victory over you and your loved ones for every deception that you believe.

If you *choose* to believe what you want to believe over against what God has clearly said, then you are already self-deceived. Philosophy is going to deal with that kind of deception in which you are using human values, subjectivity, sentiment, and lust to *choose* one idea over another. For example, a son who commits a series of abominable murders or other terrible atrocities will have a mother to deny that her son could ever have done such things. Her reasoning will be all cluttered up with value-laden and sentimental pre-suppositions that preclude her coming to the conclusion of truth. I see multitudes of cases like this on the news. Please understand that because of Satan's deceptions, all of us have this kind of problem.

Today you have philosophical arguments that have nothing to do with reality. Take the old Ford-versus-Chevrolet debate for example (since the government takeover of General Motors, I expect this debate to wane). People who drive Fords thought that their car brand was the best; Chevrolet drivers thought that their car brand was the best. You could test each brand scientifically, come out with which one is best, but that would have no bearing on the personal evaluations in a philosophical argument at the personal level. It does not matter what the reports say and does not matter what the performance is: "My kind of car is better than your kind of car."

That Ford-versus-Chevrolet debate is the way a philosophical argument goes at the personal level. It is value-laden and attached to some kind of sentimentality, lust, subjectivity,

or other preconception. There is much of this kind of believing.

All of the above discussion about deception has to do with the realm of ideas. Ideas do not have to be couched within fact in order to control you. For example, a rubber snake can evoke involuntary emotions of fear and shock when you are surprised by discovering it while pulling your bed covers back. Your emotions which cause you to jump back and holler are caused by something that is false. Your reaction will be governed by your belief.

The book *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave*¹ presents seven men who have given the world their destructive ideas. The world is still being controlled by those ideas even though they are false, and the persons who thought them up are dead. Yet, the world is being shaped by those kinds of ideas which compete with those of the true idea maker Jesus, the Truth Himself.

Jesus is shaping ideas in a portion of the world and the Church. Please note that not all ideas in the Church are shaped by Jesus. Certainly, all Christians think that they have the Lord's right ideas. That idea is itself disastrously dangerous. It is only true wisdom that is ultimately going to find the Truth. In this course, we are going to look for true wisdom, root out the deception, and go with the Truth.

¹ Dave Breese, *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1990). The students were required to write summaries of this book. They were to read each chapter and summarize it in such a way that the paper could be profitable for their people or for their friends or for whomever. I wanted them to think of people in their churches who hold to some of the ideas that originated with these men. I also asked them to look for errors in their own thinking that they might find described in the book because finding one's own errors is the beginning of corrective action. We must be able to see what it is that we ourselves believe in regard to these deceptions. In the Appendix to this book, you will find an example summary to Breese's book.

Deception is a terrible thing, and we are all involved in it. For instance, when we read a passage of scripture, we will come up with our separate meanings of what it says. If our understandings are true and are in agreement, then we are okay. But suppose that two of us come up with different meanings. Then we must conclude either that one of us is wrong, or else that both of us are wrong.

Conflicting understandings happen all the time. A Christian might declare that according to God, a certain action is a sin, but another Christian might reject that declaration. Two theologians often come out with different conclusions on the same passage.

Understanding what God's Word says is the realm of hermeneutics, which is the science and art of interpretation. Thus, hermeneutics has a prominent place in our understanding of the Truth. It is the cutting edge of theology.

Philosophy, by definition of seeking the truth of an idea, must deal with hermeneutics. Hermeneutics, in and of itself, is to look at the source of Truth, i.e. God's Word, and try to understand what He is saying. That understanding will equip us to assimilate the Truth regardless of whether it cuts across our pet peeves or our pet beliefs. We must throw out our pet stuff in order to stake our lives on God's Word. After accomplishing this purge, however, the question remains about whether or not we are deceived into believing something that is false and are staking our lives on a lie.

As we go through this course, we are going to be studying the worst philosophies that have caused and are still causing the most damage in the world. We will also explore some new categories of thought that hopefully will give you ways to think a little more accurately and deeply. It is important that you have many categories of thought because if you have just a few categories then your thought processes are bunched up into those

few categories, and your thinking will lack clarity. If you have a bunch of categories, then you can take a general idea, and you can separate it into its pieces and start sorting the pieces into their respective categories and have a much better concept of what the idea is all about. If you have just one or two categories, it limits your capability of analyzing what the idea is.²

Analysis is the division of something into its components in order to evaluate each component within its respective category. If you have only one category, then you cannot divide the idea. You just take the idea as it is. Because you cannot think about the idea from different angles, thought is limited. We need to be able to divide all ideas into their elements so that we can think about and evaluate the elements. Then we can begin putting the pros and cons and the strengths and the weaknesses together and come up with an evaluation that helps us to find the truth.

I want to read to you some parts of the preface of David Breese's *7 Men* book which lit my fire. I hope that they will do the same for you. Starting with the beginning of the Preface, I will then skip to some parts on page 11 and then on page 13.

The means by which one person is able to rule many others is a fascinating subject of study. Invariably the explanation of such control is that it is a matter of the mind. Any ruler, no matter how numerous his weapons or how great his wealth, must finally rule by other means. He must rule by persuasion, the ultimate weapon by which influence on a culture is produced and sustained. The truly powerful leader must influence the minds of men.

² Suppose that you have only one category, i.e. destination, for analyzing salvation. In that case you could not think about the following salvation categories: sanctification, glorification, ontology, behavior, rewards, costs to God, work of Christ, purpose of the Church, etc.

To do this he must produce in the minds of others something more, something stronger, something more compelling than what we normally call an idea. This "thing" that he must produce within the minds of others actually exists but in the form of a mental construct. It is an image. The influencer sets up in the minds of others an image that can become an object of occupation, then of concentration, and then, dare we say it, of veneration. The influencer must produce in the minds of those he influences a kind of little god. This god of the mind is a real thing he plants in the mentality of unsuspecting people. This real thing may externally resemble Marx, Lenin, or Freud, but in reality it is a thing unto itself. It goes beyond the limitations of ordinary personality and takes on dimensions of near deity. Possibly that is why one of the strongest prohibitions of Scripture is the statement: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me."

When the God of the universe uttered those words against idolatry, He was giving an absolute command that applied to all things and to all places for all time until the end of time and beyond.

Obedience to that command is the key to everything. No benefits come apart from the diligent conformity to that eternal and changeless rule.

Conversely, disobedience to that inflexible Word results in the irretrievable loss of everything: sanity, security, rationality, health, happiness, civility, civilization, and even life itself. For the rule of God uttered has to do with ultimate good and the final basis of all things, with the foundation for all foundations, the measure of all measures.

Every adverse fortune of life in history for men and nations has come from ignoring that command. The degree of ill present in that adverse fortune is in direct proportion to the degree and action as deviated from that command.

Page 11: From those gods of the mind came what we now call philosophy, the love of thinking, the affection for the concept of things. Philosophy, a respectable pursuit in its place, has become in our time the word for all seasons. We have a philosophy of life, a philosophy of the future, and yes, even a philosophy of religion.

Now there has been added “his” philosophy, and “her” philosophy. Philosophy has come to mean simply a set of ideas collected from one spot and from another and formed into a composite that people call a point of view. This point of view has itself now become sacrosanct so that now philosophy is revered as something to which we all “have a right.”

Page 13: “He commands all men everywhere to repent.” The unfortunate English translation of *metanoia* serves to obscure its real meaning. *Metanoia* means a change of mind. Before a person can step into true reality he must change his mind. This is commanded to all men everywhere.

We do not do violence to truth when we suggest that God is requiring a world to depose the gods of the mind and receive within that cleansed mind the true God, the Lord of glory. When we consider how the god of this world has blinded the minds of them who believe not lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ who is the image of God should shine unto them, we sense the importance of the mind to God and to the devil. Satan works daily to prevent in any person an enlightened mind. By contrast God promises that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. Within the mind of man is resident his great capability which is to give assent to the truth of God and to depose and send into exile the false gods that persistently work to confuse the mind.

What a preface! The battle for our minds is what we are up against. Many of our brethren do not understand where the battle is. The battle is raging in the mind, and some of

the minds have already been captured by the ideas of people that are dead.

GODS OF THE MIND

1. Vain Philosophy

Vain philosophy is one of the gods of the mind. Colossians 2:8 points out that philosophy is a weapon being used against us. This is a warning from Paul who says:

Colossians
2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through *philosophy* and *vain deceit* [emphasis added], after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

There is that word deceit again. Deceit and spoil may not sound like strong words, but this stuff is sending more people to hell than you can imagine. It is destroying Christian lives, our families, our schools, our churches, our country, and our world. We must beware of the philosophy and vain deceit that are spoiling all of us.

The tradition of men in Col. 2:8 reminds me of Peter. When Jesus set His face to go to die in order to fulfill His Mission on this planet, Peter tried to stop Him. He said, “No, be it far from Thee, Lord.” We must beware of this sentimental kind of love that will deter Christian missions: “Do not go there because I love you! Do not do that because I love you! Do not go!” To this sentiment, the Lord responded, “Get behind Me, Satan.” He called Peter Satan. And He justified His response to him by saying, “You do not savor the things of God; you savor the things that be of man.” That is exactly what this verse says. “Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and *vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ.”

Jesus calls you to follow Him by denying yourself, picking up your cross, and following

Him.³ That is a sacrificial path that He is calling you to walk. God says, “Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.”⁴ That mind is the mind of sacrifice, the *kenosis*.

The *kenotic* path is a downward move: humility, becoming a servant, being obedient, obedient to death on the cross (see Chart 1.1). Jesus began his downward move from

ward path, the path that goes to sacrifice, and like Him, we get our exaltation in the next life.

Now, what are the traditions of man and the rudiments of this world? They are the reverse of the *kenosis* (see Chart 1.2). This path is directed by what we want to do, i.e. we want to climb, climb, climb to power, wealth, and happiness. We want the applause of men

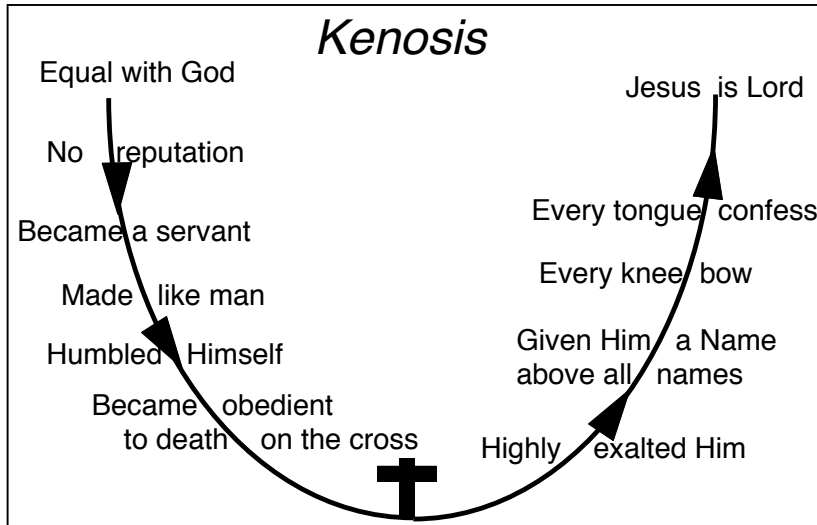


Chart 1.1

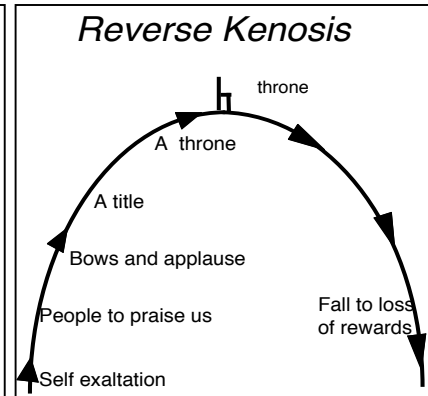


Chart 1.2

equality with God and proceeded downward all the way down to His death on the cross.

After death is the exaltation! Jesus was exalted to His rightful heritage as Lord. Every tongue will confess His Lordship, and every knee will bow to Him. That U-shaped path was the path of Christ.

You are to be on the same U-shaped path. Your path is to be neither after the rudiments of this world nor after the traditions of man. Instead of seeking your own temporal good, you belong to Jesus Christ and are to be seeking His eternal good by obeying Him as His devoted slave. He says to each of us, “Deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Me.” When we follow Him, we go on His down-

and hear: “Oh, what a wonderful pastor he is. What a great preacher!”

But let me tell you that when you take the upward path, you are not following Jesus; you are asking Jesus to follow you and bless what you do. If you follow this path after the traditions of man, what comes after death? The fall comes instead of exaltation because your exaltation came during your temporal life. You see, if you get your exaltation now, then that exaltation is all you are going to get—the first will be last, the last will be first.⁵ If you have your life, you will lose it; if you lose your life, you will gain it.⁶

The rudiments of the world and the traditions of men will put you on the reverse *kenosis* path. I am here to tell you that you already are brainwashed—every one of us.

³ Matthew 16:24.

⁴ Philippians 2:5.

⁵ Matthew 19:30.

⁶ Matthew 16:25.

No matter where we go in our pilgrimages, no matter what mission we are on, the rudiments of this world and the traditions of men will dog our heels. In an unguarded moment we will throw down our crosses, and instead of denying ourselves, we will indulge ourselves. We will be looking out for number one in this temporal life because all men know from worldly wisdom that the first priority is to take care of number one.

Hopefully, before going too far on the upside down *kenosis*, we will come to our senses when the Holy Spirit comes to us and says, "Wake up!" I will **think**, "Oh, my, I am not on my Lord's path!" Then I will go back (repent) and resume the *kenotic* path.

Beware, if you are not always alert, your inner, spiritual watchman will become preoccupied, and bang, you will find yourself climbing again. Everybody will applaud and say, "God is blessing you!" As you climb on up, they will say, "God is blessing you. Go man! You are doing it right!"

What are they using to evaluate? Where are their categories? They have only one set: the traditions of man, the rudiments of the world. What we must do is get some eternal categories which will enable us to get some truth in our thinking. Start reading the Scriptures for what they say instead of making them say what you want them to say. In other words, employ correct hermeneutics.

The most difficult thing to do is to think out of the box, especially while you are living the exigencies of your temporal life. I can guarantee you that it is hard to get yourself to do the *kenosis*. Wait until you try to get your church to study to show themselves approved in their *kenotic* living. Then you will find out what real sacrifice is, because they are probably going to reject you along with your message rather than give up their traditions of men and the rudiments of the world.

In the book of Revelation's addresses to the various churches, we can see the conflicts that will come between a spiritual Christian and the carnal churches. The Lord prizes the victories that are earned by Christians opposing the sins of their churches. He promises special rewards to those over-comers.

To repeat, according to Colossians, one of the gods of the mind is *vain philosophy*. We are going to examine several of the vain philosophies in this course. Our purpose is to clean out of our own minds those philosophies that have lasting influences on all of us today. Then we will be better prepared to rescue the perishing.

2. Your own point of view.

I have always been amazed by people who think that they are perfect theologians in their own right. They may not know anything about the Bible beyond their own subjective thinking, but they consider themselves to be perfect theologians. They will strap it on you, too! They have their own point of view, and you cannot even dialogue with some of them because their point of view is most times so narrow that it allows no incoming thought, no incoming ideas, and no consideration of another point of view.

This god of the mind happens to all of us. Every one of you thinks that you are right about everything that you believe. If I should say something that contradicts what you believe, then you will say that I am wrong. That is natural. What I want you to do is to be able to begin the dialogue in your mind by giving analytical consideration to what I am saying. Then, try to do truthful evaluation of both my ideas and also your own ideas, start breaking them apart, and checking the validity. Integrity within theology requires this philosophical activity.

When you build your system (everybody has some kind of a system for their theology), you will build your system around a central

stack pole. That center pole will be your most precious belief. Then, you will build a doctrine next to the pole and tighten it down with belief and commitment. You continue with the next doctrine, the next, and the next until you get to a doctrine that conflict with the foregoing structure. You try everything to achieve adding it to your system because you believe it. But if it still will not fit, you must decide at that point what to do.

Most Christians have ridiculous looking systems that are filled with doctrines that do not fit together. Some have erroneous stack poles, and some have erroneous doctrines being jimmied to fit with their true doctrines. Most systems are only one story high and will not even need a stack pole. Some of them are towering, wobbly, and leaning systems that will collapse under any investigation. You declare: “This is **my** system, and I am hanging on to it because it is right!” You reject all of your own critical observations of your system. You can see that it is meandering, wobbly, and containing obvious contradictions. But you will justify your beliefs by saying that your system looks like that because our meager minds cannot understand the deep things of God.

Integrity demands that you evaluate your system again and again. You must analyze every plank in your system. If you find a contradiction between it and your other doctrines, then you must analyze those doctrines against the true understanding of scripture. For your conclusion to be valid, your analysis cannot be between your system and the god of your mind. If you should conclude that a doctrine within your system is no good, you must discard the error and rebuild. In order to maintain Jesus as the God of your mind, you must start dismantling your system while retaining only the true doctrines. Integrity requires that you rebuild your system with doctrines that are compatible and supported by the Scriptures. Only this level of integrity will get you a “Well done” from your Lord.

It is a requirement for us to do the hard work of theological analysis. The more that we build, and the more that we tear down and start over again, the more of a master builder that we will become. As you become that master builder, you will face the new Christians who are trying to build their own systematic theologies under the direction of the gods of their minds. Your task of teaching brainwashed Christians the Truth, then, will be like trying to run in waist-deep mud.

Some will try to build on the beach where there is smooth sand and no philosophical trees to clear out. No, we must build our systems on the rock. We must clear away all of our traditional and philosophical garbage. You already know that much. You know that you do not build your theological life on that sinking and shifting sand. We even have a hymn that tells us not to do that.

3. Values higher than God.

Every one of us has a hierarchy of values. This hierarchy is a continuum in which you have a low value on the bottom and a high value at the top. The top value is your god. When you have a top value that is not God, you have an idol in your life. That top value will set the direction for your life. It will determine your recreation, your vocation, your spouse, and even your religious convictions.

Most people have lives that are somewhat like the following: In their raising of the children, their ultimate goal for the boy child is to get him into and through college and into a great career. For the girl child, marriage to a great provider seems to be the focus while planning college and a great career as a fall back position. Everything seems based around getting the children set up so that that they will be able to stand on their own feet and be able to have a good life, and to be able to provide materially for themselves and their families.

Wrong!! Wrong!! Wrong!! This kind of planning is subtle Idolatry. Yes, they are good goals, but the strongest competition with God's best things is always a good thing. Good things are what drive away God's very best in someone's life.

The number one thing for your child is to get that child to be holy. Holiness should be your first thought for your child.

Holiness means to be set apart as a morally clean asset for God's exclusive use. Holiness is to have the person dedicated to the Lord so that the Lord can direct the path of that person. If the Lord wants the child to go to college, the Lord will provide the call, the ability, and the motivation. If the Lord wants that child not to go to college, then the best thing that child could do is not go to college.

The marriage partner is also to be selected by the Lord. And once married, there is to be NO divorce. Can you hear what I am saying?

When you are dedicated to the Lord, and you bring your children up so that they are throwing their lives into the Lord's hands, you are doing a good job. But if you use the rudiments of this world and the traditions of men to give guidance to your children, you are messing up. You are contributing to the brainwashing that continues right on through history through us today.

Peter was so temporal minded that he could not understand what Jesus was talking about. Jesus said, "Get behind me, Satan." Likewise, you would be contributing to the temporal brainwashing when you give ideas to your children that these worldly goals that I have just described are the most important things in their lives. Marriage is far more important than college! I am not throwing out college. I am not throwing out marriage. I am not throwing out anything; I am telling you that holiness is to be first and foremost in everybody's life. That is it! Let God be Lord of your life and do not go through life saying,

"God bless me; I am over here pursuing this great career and trying to marry this great beauty. You do see me over here, God, don't You?" Instead of following the Lord, this kind of strategy is asking the Lord to follow you on the upside down *kenosis*.

Look at how some pastors make their plans to build up their church in the eyes of others. They may start a building program or another eye-popping program. It is easy to see when these pastors are climbing because they esteem the things that be of man, not of God. As they are going along, they will start thinking: "Oh, we must wrap our program in prayer. 'Lord, we are over here. We have started this program for You. Please bless our efforts to glorify Your Name, and make the program a success. We know that if You will bless this program, many will be added to Your Kingdom.'" Bottom line: the upside down *kenosis* is not holiness; it is carnality.

4. Lack of repentance.

Repentance requires humility for a change of mind. Carnal pride will stop you from repenting because when you openly state something, you get committed to that idea. If God's Word shows that your idea is wrong, then you must change. If you had been private with your ideas, you could easily change. But since you have gone public with your idea, you may feel that you have to stand with it. You even may be willing to condemn the world to hell, if necessary, so that you do not have to repent.

Metanoia literally means after knowing. *Meta* is after, beyond, and with; *noia* is to know. When you know the truth, you had better change to get on that path of truth. If you do not make the change, then you have made a philosophical judgment. You have bought into deception. Deception comes with a lot of little hooks on it. Those hooks are gods of the mind, e.g. hierarchy of values, personal attachment, and pride. All these

little things will make you hold on to deception, and keep you from grabbing hold of the truth and committing your life in its direction.

DEFINITION OF PHILOSOPHY

1. Philosophy is a quest for answers to important questions. (*Phileo* is love, plus *sophia* is wisdom). Philosophy is made up of those two words, *Phileo sophia*, the love of wisdom.
2. Philosophy is a quest for truth. (Religion refers to ultimate truth; therefore, the philosophy of religion is the quest for ultimate truth). This course is going to expose many of the falsehoods that Christians have accepted as life-guiding truths.
3. Philosophy is a discipline of asking questions (theology gives the answers). When you take philosophy you learn how to ask the questions; when you take theology, you learn how to give the answers.
4. Philosophy deals with critical thinking and methods for seeking knowledge.
5. Philosophy of religion is a small area within philosophy; other areas include ethics, politics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and each area of life. Its tools are reason and logic.

The following passages exemplify deceit, reason, mind, and thinking. They are very important to our well being. God expects us to think through everything so that we will not be blown about by every little wind of doctrine that comes up.

To exemplify what we are talking about, consider the following references:

Colossians

2:8 Beware lest any man spoil you through **philosophy** and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Matthew

22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy **mind**.

1 Peter

3:15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an **answer** to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

Philippians

1:7 Even as it is meet for me to **think** this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

Acts

17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days **reasoned** with them out of the scriptures,

1 Corinthians

1:20 Where [is] the **wise**? where [is] the scribe? where [is] the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the **wisdom** of this world?

HISTORICAL PERIODS OF PHILOSOPHY

Pythagoras was the first philosopher. His dates were 570 to 490 B.C. Yes, he is the guy who developed the Pythagorean Theorem. Remember how you used the Pythagorean Theorem for figuring out triangle measurements in high school? Well, Pythagoras was the first philosopher, but he was not typical of the early period because he was a groundbreaking explorer into the general nature of truth.

The sweep of philosophical history has occurred in three large periods. Each of these periods has distinctive focuses. We will look at the philosophers that are grouped in these periods because all of them will be focused on an area that was germane to their particular period of history.

1. The ancient period: 600 B.C. to A.D. 500. Philosophers: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine. The focus of the thought of this early period was on the **world** and its origin.
2. Medieval Period: A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500. Typical of the philosophers of this period, which extends up to the Reformation, were Anselm and Aquinas.⁷ Their philosophies revolved around the **Church** and its decrees.

The medieval period encompassed the dark ages during which the Church *decreed* what was truth. To go against the Church meant that you put yourself in jeopardy of hell. Therefore, there was very little analytical reasoning of outside ideas done by the constituents of the Church because it was against the law. That deficiency of analytical thought and scientific research is the reason for the term “Dark Ages.”

In my doctoral program, I had a classmate who was sent here to prepare to become the president of a Southern Baptist seminary in South America. He was very sharp, and we became friends. He focused his doctoral dissertation on the cause of the Dark Ages. In his dissertation, he concluded that the Roman Catholic Church was the cause of the Dark Ages, and that is why we have Third-Worldism today. Third-Worldism is a symptomatic extension of the Dark Ages because analytical thought and scientific research is still suppressed because of the Church’s doctrines.

The stranglehold on scientific thought by the Church was broken by exposure to the outside world which occurred via the crusades. The crusades brought Christians into contact with the algebra of the Islamic peoples and other explorative thinking of Asia. At that point, Scholasticism no longer was the only way of thinking. Inductive re-

search was added to the repertoire of thinking man.

The Muslims allowed inductive science, but the Catholic Church did not. Catholic Scholasticism had reduced the so-called science of Christians to merely proving Church and papal decrees. Thus in Europe, the Dark Ages blanketed the area of Christian domination. In Christian lands, truth was decreed, not discovered.

Anselm and Aquinas focused on the position of the Roman Catholic Church and its support. For whatever position the Church took, the philosophy became totally devoted to supporting that position. It did not matter whether or not the Church’s position was true or false. Supporting the Church was the only way to heaven. Not supporting the Church was the way to hell.

3. Modern Period: A.D. 1500 to present. Typical philosophers: Descartes, Hume, Marx, Kierkegaard, and James. The focal point of these thinkers was the place of **humans** in the world.

Thus you can see the progression of topics in this list of broad historical periods. Philosophical thought went from the world, to the Catholic Church, and then to man.

PHILOSOPHICAL QUESTIONS

There are **five** areas of questioning to be explored in philosophy:

1. The ontological question is a category of thinking that you need to bring into your repertoire. In your analyses, you will need to sort things into various categories. One of those categories is ontology. This category deals with what the thing’s being is. Is it real?

As an example of the wrong use of this category, I am going to describe a Christian versus atheist debate in England between the Christian philosopher C. S. Lewis and a

⁷ Thomas Aquinas was the subject of my doctoral dissertation.

famous secular philosopher in Europe. That secular philosopher was a knockout debater who opposed Christian reality. His opponent was C. S. Lewis, who was a common kind of philosopher who thought in accordance with Christian Truths. The debate, which was billed as the final takedown of Christianity, took place in a great hall with about a thousand people in the audience. On the stage before a panel of judges, the atheist philosopher, by coin toss, was selected to go first, and Lewis took a seat in the audience.

The atheist philosopher put forth an ontological argument that was superb. I thought, as I was listening, that I could never defeat his argument. Probably, all of us together could not have defeated him. His argument was an ontological question about what is real? He took a negative approach, and said that what you see is illusory. He extended his application to include the idea that the people who were seen by others were not real. He waxed eloquent on his proofs by using scientific and technical laws that were far beyond my abilities to refute. He concluded that hell and heaven were not real and that Jesus, he, and the people who were there in that gathering were also not real either. He built such a tight argument that I thought that C. S. Lewis did not have a chance. After the atheist philosopher finished his argument and sat down, C. S. Lewis stepped to the podium and said, "I declare myself the winner. How can I lose to someone who is not here or even real?" Then he sat back down. The audience went wild in their laughter, applause, and pandemonium. The panel, which was decidedly in favor of the atheist philosopher, reluctantly declared that C. S. Lewis was the winner. It was over so quickly that I just sat there in stunned amazement.

The important lesson is that we need to be able to answer arguments by using the proper categories of thought. C. S. Lewis answered the negative ontological argument via the

positive side of the same category of ontology.

Ted Cable was a former philosophy professor here. He went up against a greatly renowned atheist in a debate hosted by SMU. Ted whipped him good, and it was not because of verbal skills or anything like that. He did it by questioning the opponent's presuppositions.

Please get the following picture in your mind when you are about to engage someone in philosophical debate. The orientation is like two warriors standing on immovable and very narrow pedestals to face each other in combat. Your opponent may be such a huge guy that you can see no way of defeating him. He is so huge and so skilled with his weapons that you conclude defeat for yourself before any argument is started. You are standing on a pedestal too, and you are a little guy with your little sword and little shield. You may think that you do not have a chance, but please note that what your opponent stands on is his weakness, not his skills as a debater. He stands upon his pedestal of presuppositions. However, when you have the mind of Christ, you stand upon the rock, your pedestal cannot be knocked down. Your opponents can beat all over your rock of foundation, but it is not going anywhere. You just take your little sword and do a slash at your opponent's pedestal, and it will collapse under the big warrior. He will collapse along with his erroneous presuppositions. That is what C. S. Lewis, Ted Cable, and other Christians have done for ages.

When the other guys on their pedestals start brandishing their big swords, do not focus on your opponent's skills. Instead focus your attention on the category upon which they are standing. Their pedestals are their weaknesses because of faulty presuppositions. With one little stroke you can defeat them. You are expected to win because you have the Truth, but you must be able to

analyze what your opponents are standing on. Go after his presuppositions and knock them out from under him. That is what you are going to learn how to do if you begin to think analytically. You will place his presuppositions in their proper categories and then determine their strengths and weaknesses.

I do not remember Ted’s debate other than the public’s thinking that Ted did not have a chance, but he won just like C. S. Lewis did. They both won by not matching the opponent’s blows with blows of their own. They simply collapsed the presuppositions upon which their opponents were standing.

2. The axiological question deals with what is important.

Some people hold knowledge to be of extreme importance, others value possessions, experiences, or relationships. These examples are just four of many common examples.

3. The epistemological question deals with how I know something.

In this question there are three ways of knowing:

(1) By deduction. Deduction is the finding of a truth by extrapolating it from a large body of truth (see Chart 1.3). For example,

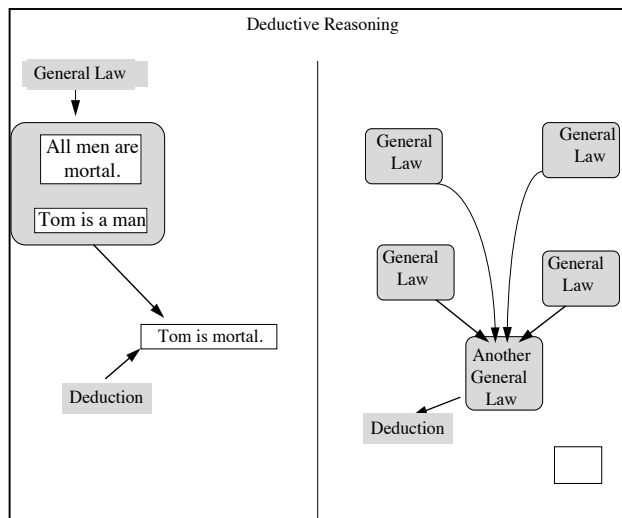


Chart 1.3

the large body of truth could be that all crows are black. Then it would be valid to say that if you see a crow, it will be black. Thus the deductive process goes from the “all” to the “singular.”

Deduction provides for one to make a statement that is beyond the general law. Out of a general law, you arrive at a singular statement about something that you did not know before. The singular statement is implicitly within the general law, but it is deduced in order to be known.

The Bible says, “All men have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” You are a man. Therefore, you have sinned and come short of the glory of God. So every time you give the gospel presentation you do a deductive argument out of God’s general body of truth. See how it works? You are going specifically to the individual from the general law expressed in Romans 3:23. Based on what God says in general, then we must conclude that each of us is a sinner.

(2) By induction. Induction is the “scientific” approach built on a multitude of observations. The scientific approach is that you begin to look at crows, and every time you observe a crow, you make a record of its color. You look at crows all over the world. They all come up black. You have not looked at the total population of crows, but you have looked at enough of them to draw an overarching conclusion that all crows are black (see Chart 1.4 on the next page). This conclusion is always open for change, however, because you might someday spot a crow of a different color.

Scientific, or inductive truth, constructs a general law out of many observations that are consistently within a single category, e.g. color in the above example. Induction goes from the “one” to the “all.”

Both deductive and inductive kinds of processes are valid. Invalidity from deduction

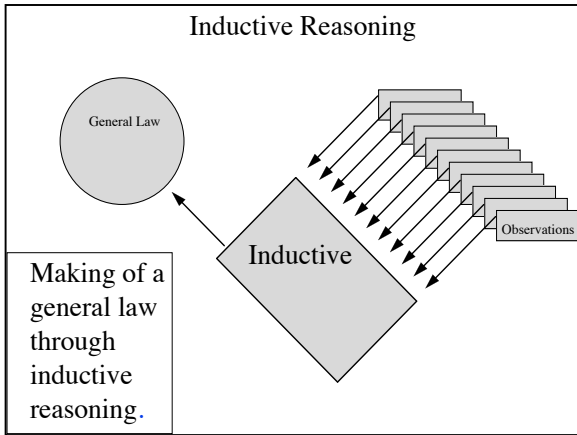


Chart 1.4

arises when one starts with a false general law or by using false logic. Invalidity for induction arises from not making a statistically sufficient number of observations or by inconsistencies in the observations or in their categories.

(3) By dialectical thinking. Dialectical thinking begins with two contradictory theses. There is thesis “A,” and then there is its opponent which is called the antithesis “B.” The two are pitted against each other in a battle of ideas. From the battle results a synthesis which is a new truth (see Chart 1.5).

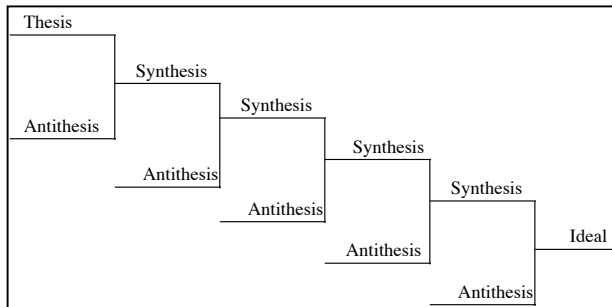


Chart 1.5

Synthetic truth is composed of a part of “A” and a part of “B.” However, sometimes the synthesis is all of “A” or all of “B.”

For example take our observation of animal life. The thesis could be that the animals are living, and the antithesis could be that the animals are dying. Perhaps, the synthesis

could be that animals are living and also dying. In their living, they are heading toward death would be your new synthetic truth.

There is something that you may pull out of each side of the argument. This item is black; no, this item is white. A synthetic truth would be that it is black and white, or that it is gray. The goal of dialectical thinking is to pull elements of truth out of two opposing theses and blend them together into a new truth.

With both theses containing truth, then the conclusion should be a good synthesis, and you would have a good example of dialectical thinking that is valid. However, when power is added to the war of ideas, then the synthesis can be perverted into an illogical one that is installed by the intrusion of power.

Jack. It is when you are talking about things that seem to be opposite such as living and dying. How about this idea: when we die as Christians, we live.

V: That is really a good example, Jack.

Another example that I just thought about is Christology. Jesus is God, one thesis. Jesus is Man, an antithesis. In our Christology we take the synthetic approach: Jesus is the God hyphen man, the God-Man. You pull two complete truths together and put them together into a synthesis which is composed of all the truth. The God-Man is an ontological synthesis that concludes the debate over who Jesus is.

Now, we come to the fourth kind of question.

4. The methodological question deals with how to express what I know? It is obvious to us that some of the ways that we express ourselves are by our words (language), by our actions, and by our body language.

Now most philosophers largely omit the fifth question.

5. The functional question deals with what the thing does.

To illustrate this question, I sometimes ask my wife what she likes best about me: my ontology or my function (what I do)? She has insisted that she loves me because I am hers. I say, "That is a relational statement. Why do you not love my ontology?" She insists that she loves my ontology. To which

I have followed up with: "Well, if I were married to somebody else, would you love my ontology?" To this, she says, "No." Then, I say, "Well then, we are back to relational again."

These are the kinds of categories that we need to begin using for thinking and analyzing. With their use, we can be more precise and clear in our discussions and conclusions.

Chapter Questions

1. Draw the *kenosis* as described in Philippians 2:5-11 and use it to describe what comes after this life is over.
2. Draw the reverse *kenosis* and use it to describe what happens to the Christian who lived this kind of life.
3. List the gods of the mind.
4. What is the definition of philosophy?
5. What is the historical approach in viewing philosophy? Name the periods, give dates, and the focus of each period.
6. What are the five questions to be explored in philosophy?

Chapter 2

THE BEGINNINGS OF PHILOSOPHY

As we look at the beginnings of philosophy, we will see how it splits into two major streams of philosophical thought that will come down through history. The Church is going to be highly impacted by one of the streams.

The two streams will be shown to rejoin again into a synthesis just prior to the Reformation. Out of this synthesis will come a new philosophical stream that will impact the Church greatly and even shape it into what we have today.

Right now, today, philosophy is invading the Church. That is why I want you to be familiar with the *Seven Men* book¹. The seven men, who are described as ruling the world from the grave, are all modern philosophers. Their philosophies are impacting the world including the Church.

There is a true and good philosophy. That philosophy is God's philosophy, and it is something that we want to examine carefully. There are counterfeits that are competing for our allegiance. You need to be aware of those counterfeits if you are leaders because they have gained the ascendancy in the churches. You and I too have been infected in some areas and do not even realize it.

If you are a parent or a teacher or a leader of any kind who must guide others, then you had better become aware of the bad influences in your life and remove them so that your leadership will not be condemned and condemning. Everyone is accountable to God for himself at the very least, and many are responsible for helping others to watch out for

wolves in sheep's clothing. This course is not just an exercise in vanity or anything like that. This is life-or-death kind of information that we are dealing with in this course.

When you take some of the other courses like Church history, Systematic Theology, and Evangelism, you will see how Satan's counterfeits have sent many people to hell. They are still doing it today by causing churches to be inactive or to take off on tangents because they are filled with irrational sentimentalism. Without a strong rational theology, there is no strong foundation for practical out-stepping.

Our foundation is a rock. Stand on that rock, and then you will be equipped to step out and move forward in true ministry. But if your foundation is shifting sand, sinking sand, or slippery mud, then your foundation and steps from it are unstable.

Please know that we all have already slipped and fallen. It is time now for us to get out of that hole into which we have fallen. There is no perfect theologian today. There has only been one that has lived on this planet. The rest of us have messed up. We just have to find out what the mess is and get it out of our lives. This course is going to help us to do that.

The wise man will labor to understand the deceptions that are already gripping his life. He will apply his studies to his life. If you want to be one of them, you will learn all this counterfeit philosophy and how to protect yourself from it. You will teach those who are depending on you how to defeat the deceiver. You will use your learning to advance the Kingdom. These win-win results are what I want.

¹The class was required to read and write a summary of the book *Seven Men Who Rule the Word from the Grave* by David W. Breese (Moody Press, 1990). A redaction of one of the students' summaries is appended for your use.

THE TWO STREAMS OF PHILOSOPHY

Thales asked in 585 B.C., “What is the one thing out of which all comes?” His presupposition was that everything came out of one thing. His presupposition set the stage for evolution by assuming that everything that exists today evolved out of some one thing.

Heraclitus: Everything Is Changing

The first answer came from Heraclitus. He said that all matter that you see today is in flux; there is nothing constant. Since everything that exists in the world is constantly changing, then fire was an example of primacy. There is not a “one material thing” according to Heraclitus. He thought that change, not matter, was prime.

A river was one of the examples that Heraclitus used to prove his point: when standing on the bank of a river, the river that you see is not the same river that you step into a moment later. Everything has moved because it is in flux. It is constantly changing and flowing.

Constant change means that flux is the primary description. Another way to describe change is to say that the thing is repeatedly ceasing to exist and then re-existing as something else. The change from one thing to another occurs as continuous reiterations with no appreciable time expanses between iterations. It is a complicated thought, but Heraclitus says there is no “one” out of which everything came. There is only change.

Parmenides: Everything Is Constant

Parmenides, in 500 B.C. however, thought just the opposite of Heraclitus (see Chart 2.1) in saying that everything was constant and that change was an illusion. Parmenides took to heart that “one” out of which all came and said that everything that exists, exists as a constant in the realm of forms.

Furthermore, he held that there was no such possibility of thinking of something that does not exist: if you can think of it, then it exists because all thinking is done with pre-existent forms. Therefore, according to Parmenides, every thought has a form, and forms only come from existence.

Following Parmenides’ theory, if you think of something, you must think of it as form. That form originates in the realm of ideas, which are formal thoughts. Therefore, if you think of it, it exists because you cannot think, i.e. conjure a form of something into your mind that does not exist. Weird, huh?

As weird as Parmenides’ theory is, it will resurface *in the formative days of the Church*. Parmenides was the first, though, that declared in ancient times that everything was constant and that all flux was an illusion.

Philosophical thought about where everything came from started with Thales who tried to find the one thing out of which everything came. His thought then split into two different ideas. Heraclitus, on one side, said all was changing, and Parmenides, on the other side, said that change was an illusion and that all that was real was constant (see Chart 2.1).

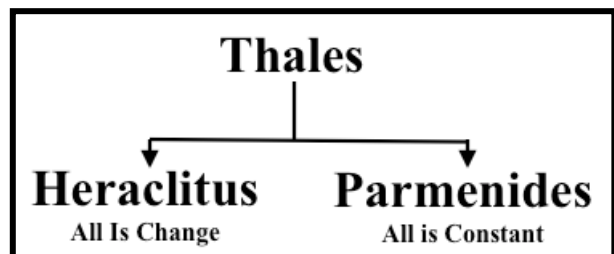


Chart 2.1

Next came Socrates who synthesized the two streams by putting them together into a two-world system.

SOCRATES

Socrates said that there are two worlds: a sensible world and a formal world (see Chart 2.2). The sensible world is in flux, and the

formal world is constant. He drew the two opposing ideas of change and constancy back together. He constructed a two-tiered-world system that was composed of the particular and its form.

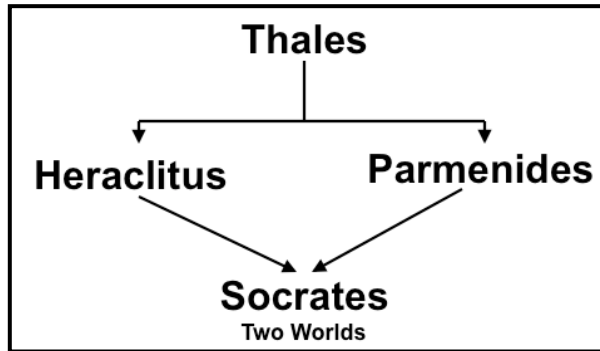


Chart 2.2

This Socratic concept is going to plague us throughout history. According to Socrates, the particular is one individual example of a category of forms. For example, this table that is supporting my lectern is a particular table, but there is a “formal” table, which is an ideal that is in the realm of the forms. Thus this particular table is made up of both substance and form. The form is an ideal, and the substance is how that form is expressed in this particular table. The substances are metal, wood, and lamination. These substances have been “formed” into a table. The form, the ideal, is in the realm of the forms, which would mean in heaven in my translation of Socrates’ terminology. Thus the form of a table is in heaven.

The materials of this table could be taken apart and turned into a chair. Thus the substance can be formed into something else. The Socratic premise is that the form makes something what it is, not the substance. You can take a tree, cut it down, re-form it into lumber, and then turn that lumber into a chair, a table, a house or whatever you want to form it into. The form is an ideal, i.e. an idea or a concept, which controls a substance.

Socratic man, then, is substance and form. The form of man is in heaven, and the substance is flesh and blood and bone and all of the components of humanity that are formed into a man. You have, then, forms of manness, tableness, or houseness. These forms use the substances to be what they are, i.e. a man, table, or house.

Henry: He also claimed that before we were born, we would be created from the world of forms. Now does that mean that somewhere there is an ideal Henry?

V: No, Socrates meant that there is an ideal man.

Steve: Our origination from this world of forms was just as a generic man?

V: Yes, according to Socrates, out of that generic man-form emanated a man that was made particular via his soul, flesh, and blood.

Jerry: Well, when you die, do you go back to the generic man?

V: You go back to a soul without flesh and blood, and the soul goes to the realm of generic man.

Jerry: It seems to me that Socrates’ form-matter idea could give way to reincarnation.

V: It does. Reincarnation can easily be added via the recycling of souls to produce a New-Age cult.

The Socratic Source Of Knowledge

When Socrates turned his attention to epistemology, i.e. knowledge, his question became where did our knowledge come from? How did we get knowledge?

You have heard of the Socratic method of teaching. It is built on the presupposition that your form already knows everything. Thus teaching changes from helping someone to gain knowledge to helping him to recall what his form already knows.

Where did you learn what you know? According to Socrates, you learned it while your soul was in the realm of the forms. So when you are formalized into a particular person, you bring understanding and knowledge from the realm of the forms. Learning, then for Socrates, is a recalling of what you brought with you from the world of the forms. Thus, when I ask you a question about something on which I have not instructed you, I will indirectly lead you to discover knowledge that is innate within you. That questioning which leads you to recall formal knowledge is the Socratic teaching method, and, of course, there are variations off of that general method.

I use the Socratic method a lot in small group settings. However, I use it for drawing the students into analytical thinking. I do not expect the student to know data without it being taught to them, but I do expect them to be able to use the data in analytical thinking to develop further knowledge via conclusions.²

However, the actual method that Socrates used was to ask questions not based on a lecture. He sought to help a person discover the information he was born with from the realm of the forms. He thought that there are *concepts* of beauty, justice, right, wrong, and other things with which we are born. His proof was that a child that is shown something beautiful will automatically know it as such because beauty is a form that is recognized by the child as something that he encountered in the realm of forms.

Socratic vision of something that is *conceptual* must be of something that you have seen before in the realm of forms. You recognize the concept for what it is (beauty, justice, truth, right, wrong, etc.) because of

²The modern Socratic teaching method involves the students in assimilating the knowledge and then hooking it together with other knowledge and expounding on the combination.

where you come from. According to Socrates, where you come from determines what you know because you bring the knowledge with you.

Socrates blends together, then, all the flux from the Heraclitus stream of thought with all the constancy from the Parmenides stream of thought. Socrates says that change is in the earthly realm where sense experience detects change. The heavenly realm of forms is the constant realm.

Every one of us is deteriorating. Change is evident in our persons; we see wrinkles, the graying hair, and that kind of thing. We can see the changes; we can use our senses to detect them. According to Socrates, these changes occur in the realm of the particular.

Concerning constancy, Socrates had no trouble because constancy for him was in that other world, the world of forms where concept and intuition rule rather than the senses. Everything for him was made up of two things, i.e. the world of forms and the world of substance. When you see things changing, it was not the form that was changing. It was the substance that was deteriorating.³

Emphasis On Form Versus Substance

Out of Socrates' synthesis, the two big strains will separate again and hugely impact the Church. Socrates himself is not the big guy that hits the Church. No, the big hitters

³ In the middle of all of this thinking came the Sophists. They are extremely complicated cynics who said that there is neither such a thing as constancy nor such a thing as change. What you see, appearance, is what you get, and that is all you get.

For the Sophists, there are no metaphysics, nothing beyond this realm. You eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die, and then you do not exist any more. This group excluded the heavenly realm of forms. Where Socrates synthesized by pulling the change and constancy together into a two-world system, the Sophists said that everybody, except them, is wrong because they claimed that only what you can see is real.

are Plato and Aristotle. These two philosophers take neither the position of Parmenides nor that of Heraclitus. However, they are going to take the two-world system of Socrates and emphasize one or the other of the two worlds. Both men will hold to both worlds, but each will emphasize one side or the other side of Socrates' two worlds (see Chart 2.3).

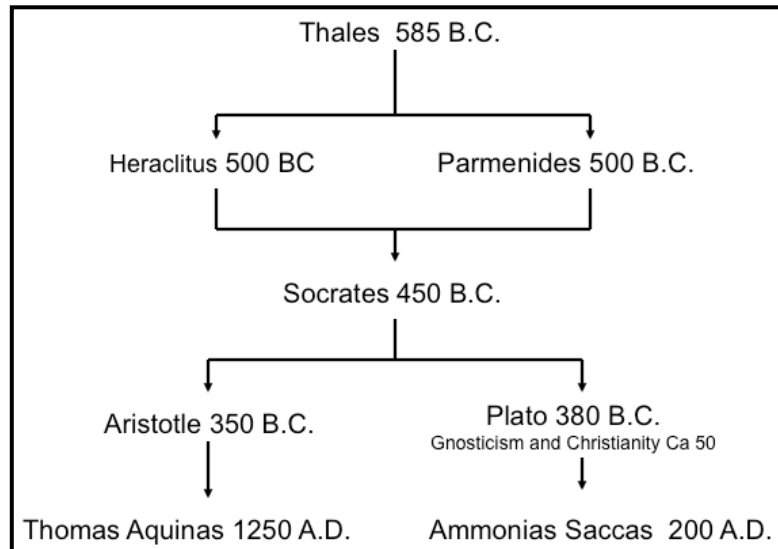


Chart 2.3

Statues of Aristotle and Plato always show Aristotle looking down and Plato always looking up. Their emphases are expressed in those postures. Plato is looking up to the forms, and Aristotle is looking down to the particulars. While Aristotle emphasized the temporal world, and Plato emphasized the world of forms, neither said that the other world did not exist. They simply put the emphasis either on the forms in heaven or on the particulars on earth.

PLATO

Plato never forsook the idea of the particulars, but he claimed that the particular was in the shadow world. In describing the shadow world, he wrote a story about the figures in a cave. It goes something like this: A man spent his life in a dark cave without being able to see anything. Then he came

around a curve where he could see a light from a fire and figures moving. He concluded that those figures were other people like himself, but he was wrong. What he thought was other people were merely shadows. He did not know that it was his own shadow being reflected on several walls. He was standing between the walls and the fire, and the light from the fire was casting his own shadow on the walls. He was seeing his own shadow in several locations. He concluded that the shadows were people because he did not understand that the fire was projecting the shadows upon the wall.

Plato said that the particular world is like those shadows, and that the world of the forms is prime. In the cave, the shadows themselves were real, but they were not real people. Real people existed only as forms in the realm of forms.

Plato's position is that in this realm that we live in, we are shadow beings. The real world is upward; that is why statues and paintings of him show him looking up.

When the emphasis is that all reality is above, the philosophy is called Realism. In Realism, the world that we see with our eyes is the shadow world. The real world is above.

In Realism, only the forms above are real. Another name for Realism is Idealism because forms are ideals. Notice the word idea is contained in the word ideals. Thus ideas come from the formal, i.e. ideal, world.⁴

⁴I have been in secular hermeneutical classes where today's Realism went over the edge. Ideas for those secular idealist classmates were those real, primary concepts that float down from the formal world, float around, and then enter your mind. At that point, you can verbalize it by converting it into sound, a sonic idea, that shoots out and enters other peoples'

The word concept for Plato speaks of form. Form is conceptualization. Anything that is conceptualized is from the world of the forms. Anything you can sense with the eyes or with the touch or with the body's senses is a shadow of the form that has been particularized with the addition of substances.

Betty: The form can be varied such as a dining table, coffee table, end table, etc.?

V: Yes, the table-form can be particularized into one of those items.

Betty: How does it work for people?

V: We are a Betty, Bill, John, Joe, or another particular person of human form.

Betty: We are from the same basic form, but we are each one. . .

V: . . . a particularization of that form.

In subsequent "Christian" Idealism, God is considered to be the supreme good who gives definition to all forms. As the soul comes down from God, it is going to have all of the concepts of forms in it because it came from God's formal world or realm, i.e. heaven.

Joe: It seems like almost everyone enters a search for the source of everything. It was striking what Socrates was writing as far as comparing it with the Bible as the information coming from heaven's source, i.e. God. I was thinking, this really kind of makes sense here.

V: There is only parallel with the Bible. The Scriptures are mediated revelation to us after birth, whereas Socratic forms supposedly have immediate revelation that occurred before birth.

The Socratic concept is a pure philosophy. Its enticement to Christianity is its system of two layers: heaven and earth.

ears. Then several people will become interconnected by that idea.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle, as opposed to Plato, points to the particular as being prime and being made up of both substance and form just like Socrates said. Aristotle also claimed that everything is of two worlds, but the primary world is in the world of the substance because the form does not exist in this world apart from the substance. The form is embedded in the particular. If you see something, it has form in it. You all can see this table that is supporting my lectern. It has table form in it, but the substances that make it particular are prime for Aristotle. That is why his statues show him looking down at the particular.

Betty: Form is embedded in substance?

V: Yes, in order to see a particular thing, it must have both substance and an embedded form. In contrast, Plato says that the particular is nothing but the shadow of the form. It is almost a portrayal of form without substance, almost like it does not exist, but it does exist because you can see it. The primary thing is the form, so he is looking up. You must focus your attention upward in order to contemplate the real according to Plato.

Aristotle would say to Plato, "No, if you want to see the real thing, look down here. Here is a real table."

Bob: Does Plato say that everything, every form, exists whether we can see it or not? Everything already exists? In other words, would Plato say that the perfect table already existed? And would Aristotle then say that when we created the table, we created the form too?

V: Plato would say that all forms already exist.

Aristotle would say that the generic form of this table had prior existence. However, Aristotle would say that when we created the table, we also created the particular version of

table form. When our version of form was embedded in it, it became a real table. Reality depends on the creating activity. You have to look down at the particular thing that was created to see the reality of the thing.

Aristotle brought correction to Plato’s philosophy by declaring the particular as the real thing, but we do not call it “Realism” because that word had already been taken to mean what Plato had established. The reality for Aristotle is this actual table. You want to see what is real, grab hold of this table. That is real. He does not say that this table is a shadow on the wall in the cave. This table is real; however, we do not call Aristotle’s philosophy Realism. Do not make that mistake. I have been there, done that, and got ten points off. Do not confuse the two.

Tom: If someone invented something, would Plato say that the form was already up there? We just had not discovered it yet?

V: Exactly.

Tom: Aristotle would not say it was up there?

V: Not exactly, he would say that the ideal form already existed. But if you have a particular, the particular form is embedded in it at its creation to be a real thing down here.

Henry: He is like the artist who says the form was in the clay; I just removed the excess.

V: That is somewhat right. I would prefer the idea that the glob of clay already had a glob-form and that the artisan gave it new form.

GNOSTICISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Gnosticism is salvation by mystical knowledge. The idea of knowledge from forms above easily adapts to the Gnostic concept of descending aeons if the aeons become a new name for the heavenly forms.

The Gnostics hold that Jesus was only a spiritual being without flesh and blood because matter is considered to be evil to them.

Joe: So where Gnostic Christology breaks down is in the human part. Because they think that all material is evil. Thus, their Christology is that Jesus was just a spirit.

V: That is right. Gnosticism naturally gravitated to Christianity through Platonism. The Apostle John fought against its intrusion into Christian doctrine when he declared that anyone confessing that the Lord came in the flesh was a real Christian.⁵

Gnosticism is a Greek philosophy that we glimpsed in our study of church history. It is akin to Platonism.

In it, the heavenly realm of forms, which are spiritual and good, are united with the earthly realm of material, which is evil, via a series of descending *aeons* (gods). The *aeons* (gods) deteriorate as they devolve lower in the series until one is deteriorated enough to create the world that is composed of evil matter (See Chart 2.4).

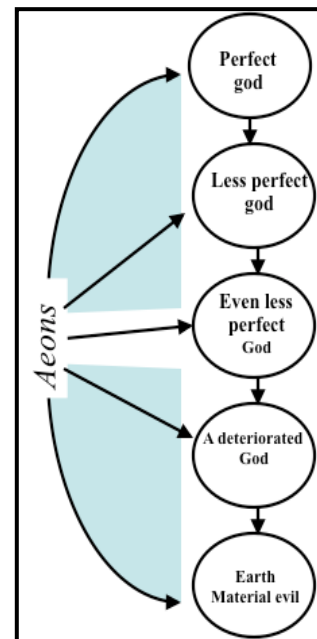


Chart 2.4

Both Plato and Aristotle came from Socrates as two separate streams. Platonism invaded first-century Christianity via its offshoot of Gnosticism’s focus on spirit and intuited knowledge, and Aristotelianism invaded Islam in the Seventh Century via its

⁵1John 4:3.

focus on the material world and sensory knowledge (see Chart 2.5).

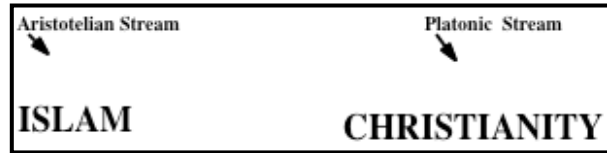


Chart 2.5

Aristotle started the scientific process of investigating nature to discover its laws of operation. In this philosophy, unlike that in Platonism, the world and matter are considered to be good and should be explored.

Knowledge is salvific to the Gnostic, but unlike the Aristotelian method of acquiring knowledge, the Gnostic acquires it via a mystical intuition of the knowledge brought from heaven by the descending *aeons*.

See Chart 2.6, which shows Gnostic ontology on a sliding scale of good and evil. The higher on the scale the greater is the proportion of spirit to matter. Thus at the top of the scale is pure good spirit, and at the bottom is pure evil matter. Everything in between the top and bottom is part good spirit

GNOSTIC AND NEOPLATONIC HIERARCHIES OF BEING

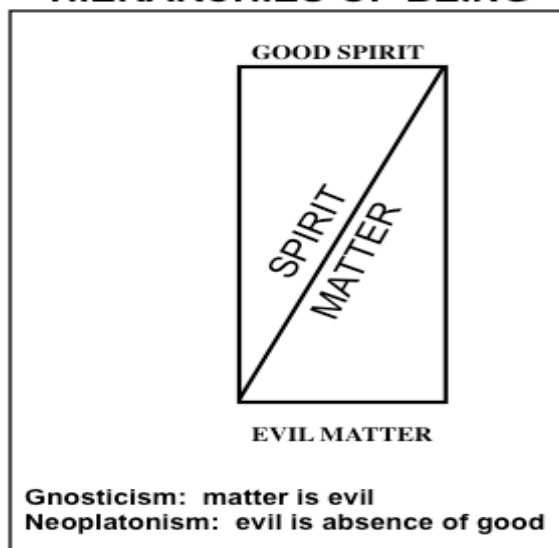


Chart 2.6

and part evil matter in different proportions.

Aristotle came on the scene at about 350 B.C. From Aristotle, I am going to use a broken line in Chart 2.7 to extend way down to Thomas Aquinas who arrives on the church

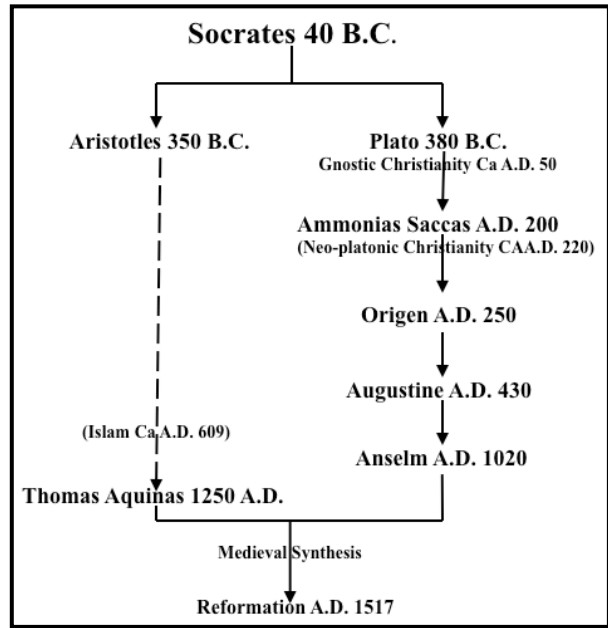


Chart 2.7

scene in the middle of the Thirteenth Century.

During the centuries of church history between Origen and Aquinas, Aristotle's ideas disappeared from the Christian scene. This lack of Aristotelian methodology in Christianity's development ushered in that terrible time which is known by the name of the Dark Ages.

During the Dark Ages, truth was declared by the pope rather than discovered via science. Scholasticism, which was the only allowed method of research in the universities, sought to prove papal truth and then find additional truth via deduction.

Aristotelianism, however, reentered the Christian-church scene in A.D. 1250 through Thomas Aquinas. Even though Aristotle came in at 350 B.C., his inductive reasoning was crowded out of Christian thought beginning

with the rise of Gnostic Christianity in the First Century of the apostolic era of the beginning Church. Then the rise of Origen's Platonic theology in the Third Century of the Church age led to the birth of the authoritative pope who intuited all heavenly truth. Aristotelianism finally reappeared with Thomas Aquinas in A.D. 1250 in his efforts to win Muslims to Christ.⁶

NEO-PLATONISM AND CHRISTIANITY

It was strange how Platonism gained the ascendancy in Christianity. Ammonias Saccas whose influence peaked about A.D. 200 preserved Plato's stream of thought. Ammonias Saccas' philosophy arrived just in time to affect all Christian philosophy in its neophyte stage. It is called Neo-Platonism, which is basically an addition of Gnosticism's hierarchy of being to the philosophy of Plato.

Neo-Platonism used the sliding scale of Gnosticism (look back at Chart 2.6) in a completely non-religious view of ontology. It linked truth and justice with the formal realm. At the top would be the form of good, the ultimate good. As you descend on the scale, there was an increasing absence of good. Everything that was below the top of the scale was in need of more good.

Remember that Plato had a two-world system in which the two were linked only via cause and effect. Everything was either form or shadow. But Ammonias Saccas synthe-

sized Plato with the Gnostic model by taking Plato's two worlds and hooking them together into a continuum which resembled the descending continuum of *aeons*. The result was a world that was composed of various things each of which was part spirit and part matter on a sliding scale. He said that Plato's shadow world at the bottom is the Neo-platonic evil material world which is nothing but rocks and dirt (pure matter with no spiritual content). Coming up in the Neo-platonic continuum is vegetation, animal, and human life which proceeds upward to the realm of the spirit form at the top. There is gradation in Chart 2.6 as you ascend up the continuum, and at the peak of the continuum is the form of totally good spirit.

Applying the sliding-scale model to Christianity, a deterioration of good was seen in our Lord. If something that contains matter has a lack of good, then a human person would not be entirely good. That conclusion was exactly that of the First-Century Gnostic Christians who claimed that Jesus was a spiritual apparition without a human body.

Neo-platonic Christianity used ethics to climb the continuum of gradations of good. Thus salvation by works from this philosophy entered the Church's doctrine when Neo-Platonism was married to Christianity during the early years of the Church. You saw it in the church history course when we examined the Catholic doctrine of salvation.

Neo-Platonism actually had two ways for people to climb the continuum. One way was via ecstasy (stand out of yourself) in which you became spirit by shedding your material body. The other way was by ethics, i.e. by climbing up through good works.

Origin a Catholic bishop in North Africa (*Ca.* A.D. 250) advanced the Neo-platonic philosophy of Ammonias Saccas into Christian circles when he wedded Christianity with Neo-Platonism in his writings. Christian Neo-Platonism, which resulted from this wed-

⁶My doctoral dissertation dealt with the Reformation which occurred after the Medieval Synthesis which resulted when Aquinas re-introduced Aristotle's philosophy as an addition to papal Platonism.

Anselm appealed to Muslims via faith in the Church in combination with papal decrees. His efforts largely failed. Aquinas had more success because he appealed to them via the Scriptures in combination with empirical evidences (Aristotelianism). The synthesis of Anselm and Aquinas influenced Martin Luther by providing new inductive reasoning as the foundation for the Reformation.

ding of a secular philosophy to Christianity, resulted in a continuum and its accompanying salvation by works, i.e. climbing up the continuum toward heaven via good works.

However, ecstasy was replaced by the sacraments as the other way to climb. From Origen, these two errors were spread throughout Christendom. Augustine (died A.D. 430) was taught indirectly by Origen through his writings. Augustine, in turn, propagated Origen's Neo-Platonic Christianity via his own prolific theological writings.

Tim: The Roman Catholic Church taught me that salvation was by faith. I was taught that faith comes through works, not that salvation comes through works. The two are different.

V: They are only different in sequence. If works supposedly generate faith, and if faith generates salvation, then salvation comes from works. In other words, if you cannot be saved apart from faith, and you cannot obtain faith apart from works, then works supposedly become essential to salvation.

The ascension on the ladder to heaven can also come by ecstasy in the extreme charismatic form of Neo-platonic Christianity. Ecstasy means to stand out of yourself (*ek* means out of, and *stasis* means stand). Ecstasy is to get out of yourself via an ecstatic, i.e. out-of-body, experience. This experience makes a third way in certain circles to climb the continuum toward heaven's salvation.

The terrible perversion to God's doctrine of salvation of climbing the continuum of good, by works, sacraments, and ecstasy entered the Church through this marriage of Neo-Platonism to Christianity. The perversion was propagated further through Augustine. It is still alive and well, and in fact, it holds captive the great majority of Christendom.

After Augustine, Anselm is the next big milestone in the Platonic stream. We will view him over against Thomas Aquinas, who is the next milestone of the Aristotelian stream. Thus, Anselm and Aquinas will be the two people who will describe the two sides of the Christian epistemological scene when Platonism and Aristotelianism come back together again to form the foundation for the Reformation (see Chart 2.7).

All through the time from Plato in the stream which leads to Anselm, Christianity is going to be enslaved to the idea that all true knowledge comes from the world of the forms. The position of the learned people in this stream is that since people already have all of this knowledge in them via forms, it just needs to be discovered. Since the pope was considered to be the highest person in the ontological continuum, he would therefore be the authority of all knowledge. As he recalled knowledge, he would decree it so that it could be used by lesser Christians to discover particulars in the body of truth by deduction.

During the Church's history from Plato all the way down through Anselm, it relied on the pope to go inside of himself to find all truth from the world of forms. The Pope said that he was the one who knows all truth and spoke inerrantly for God. The Church agreed that all theological and other particular truths had to line up with the general body of papal decrees. No particular truth could conflict with the officially decreed body of truth. That body of decrees, then, composed the body of Christian knowledge down to the present time for the Catholic Church. For centuries, what the Pope said became the only pond of knowledge in which scientific researchers could fish for specific truths via deduction.

If the Church created the body of knowledge,⁷ and if you were going to have faith,

⁷I am using Pope and Church to mean the same thing here because universal church councils became equally

then you had to believe what the Church called truth. If the Church claimed that black was white, but the evidence of your eyes declared just the opposite, then what you were seeing with your eyes was merely shadow truth. The real truth was the formal truth (truth from the form) which was decreed by the Church. During the Medieval Dark Ages, Christians were pushed into not trusting their senses, and because of ignorance, many are still there today.

For an example of not trusting your eyes, take the Church's doctrine of transubstantiation. According to this doctrine, the bread and wine instantly change into the body and blood of Jesus as soon as the priest recites the requisite formula. Even though the recipient's eyes see no change occur in the bread and wine, he is forced to acknowledge that the change had occurred because saving grace could only be dispensed through the *real* (think Platonic Realism) elements of the supper, i.e. the Body and Blood of Jesus. The reasoning was thus: if the substance of grace comes through Jesus Christ, then the elements of the supper have to be Jesus Christ, i.e. the elements have to be His Body and Blood. If the elements were not His Body and Blood, then saving grace would not be received through receiving Him.

The universities worked on the problem of a lack of visibility of a change occurring in the elements of the Mass. Thus through the scientific research of the Scholastics, it was determined via their Neo-platonic system of ontology that the "form" of the elements had changed, but the "accidents," i.e. the shadow truth which was visible, remained the same. In this system, the people were to trust not what they could see (the shadow) but what the Church decreed to be true (the form).

The Dark Ages were a direct result of this Platonic concept—what you see is a shadow,

able to add to the general body of inerrant truth because of the collective genius of all the bishops.

what you feel is a shadow, but the reality is what you cannot see and cannot feel. Reality was confined to the Church's decreed body of truth, and you could not check it out to see whether or not the decrees were right or wrong because all that you could see were the shadows instead of the forms. That limitation, then, required a wise person to tell us what the real form was. That wise person became the *papa*, the pope who was the first to be able to declare inerrant truth.⁸

Through ordination, the pope imparted some of his unique ability to the bishops. When gathered into a universal council, the college of bishops could combine their individual wisdoms into a whole that approaches the great wisdom of the pope. Thus it came to be that in a universal council, working together in a collective, they too were deemed to be able to declare inerrant truth.

The ability to know truth by the common uneducated masses was severely limited. Basically, it began with discarding the Bible and not trusting visual evidences. Belief in the statements of the Church's bishops was an absolute necessity in order to be in fellowship with the Church. That fellowship was essential to one's salvation because it was decreed that you could not have God for your Father without having the Church for your Mother. Furthermore, the Church was viewed as the ark of salvation, i.e. one's not being in that ark results in total loss.

There was no real science conducted in the Platonic world because real science required experiments and observations of particular things. Since observations were of the shadow world, they could not be trusted as accurate depictions of formal truth.

There had to be a breakaway from the Platonic limitations if science were ever to ad-

⁸Neo-Platonism entered the Church to become the barrier that separated the Bible from the Church as the inerrant body of truth.

vance. That break came with the crusades in which Christians fought against the Muslims that had captured the Holy Land. In those battles, the Christians were introduced to new thought, inventions, and science. A whole new world opened up to Christians, who had been trapped in darkness, when they invaded and recaptured the Holy Land from the Muslims during the Crusades.

Platonic and Aristotelian Christianity Today

Pockets of darkness from philosophy still exist today in Christianity. One of those pockets of darkness results from Plato's emphasis on the spiritual world. Those Christians who emphasize the spiritual world sometimes become so otherworldly that they are of no earthly good. This group tends to downplay the real issues of life. Only ideals have supreme value. Thus, the particular people who are poor, infirm, and strangers who are struggling with life's many problems can be discounted. Their struggles are often minimized in the minds of the Idealists.

The other world is the Aristotelian material world. The Christians who emphasize this world tend to serve the institutional church instead of God. Institutionalists tend to conduct their life-pilgrimages by attending church, participating in its financial support, and receiving grace through its sacraments. Esteem for the institutional church may easily move into idolatry. Then they think that everyone must pay the proper obeisance to the church in order to be right with God.

Those Christians who desire to link the two worlds as the Neo-Platonists did before them with the continuum of existence become enslaved to works-salvation. Works are sometimes joined by sacraments and ecstasies as ways to climb the continuum into heaven.

Breaking Open the Dark Ages

During the Medieval Dark Ages, knowledge was very dim because the body of

knowledge was originated by church decree. Therefore, there was no capability of adding to that body of truth by doing scientific research. Inductive research in medieval times of Platonism and Neo-Platonism would have been merely looking at shadows on the wall instead of looking at the real knowledge that was in the body of the church decrees.

Neo-Platonism was concentrated in North Africa through Origin and Augustine. From there however, Neo-Platonism gained an entrance into Rome through Augustine. It was through Augustine's prolific writings that doctrines compatible with Neo-Platonism became permanently entrenched in Medieval Christianity.

As a result of the Church's Neo-Platonism, there was no outbreak of scientific investigation until the Crusades brought Christians into contact with the Muslims, who had not been impeded by a limited body of decreed knowledge. Aristotelian methodology, which is the scientific method, was restored by Christian contact with the outside world during the crusades to reclaim the Holy Land from the invading Muslims.

When Aristotle disappeared from Christian thought, it was because of the Church's exclusive adoption of Platonism. Aristotle had been completely lost to the Medieval Church because of the devotion to the papacy by Scholasticism's professors. The Islamic invasions, however, brought an unexpected benefit to the West when they brought Aristotelian thinking with them. The Islamic people had been opened up to scientific investigation at the same time that the West had closed off to it. Anything that has an "al" prefix has an Islamic name. Algebra, one of your favorite subjects, is an example.

Mary: So were the Dark Ages the time when all education could only come through the Church, and the whole thing was about suppression?

V: That is somewhat right. The Church limited education because no research could be made that did not correlate to the Church's decrees. In my opinion, suppression of knowledge occurred as a result, not as the purpose of Scholasticism.

The body of truth was thought to come from the formal world via papal decrees. Everything outside of that body of truth was mere shadows of those forms. Thus, anything that you saw with your eyes and investigated with your senses was the shadow of the real, not the real thing itself. So, in order to stay within the realm of the truth, then you had to base all thought and investigation on the decrees. Therefore, Scholasticism, by necessity, was a recitation of the body of knowledge or a deduction from it to arrive at a particular truth. Scholastic deduction would be considered true when it started from the body of truth and arrived at another truth through valid logic.

During the Dark Ages, real knowledge could not come by looking at the shadows. New truth occurred by deducing the new out of the old. That is the syllogistic methodology that is used today in finite math. It is deduction from a body of affirmed truth. A couple of syllogistic examples follow: All men are mortal, if you are a man, then you are mortal. If all crows are black, and if you should observe a crow, then it will be black. You start with an "all." If "all" are of category "A," and if something is an individual item within the "all," then the particular member will have the same characteristics of category "A."

The Scientific Method

The use of a syllogism is a valid, but limited, method of finding information about a particular. To be limited to deduction means you have to know the universal body of truth in order to get to any particulars. We know by experience that it is impossible to

know the universal body of truth as is held by Socratic soul-memory. Thus we need Aristotelian methodology in order to examine particulars and build up our known body of truth.

The Aristotelian method for determining truth is via induction. Induction is just the reverse of deduction. In it the particulars are examined in order to come to a general theory that describes the "all-ness" of whatever the particulars are.

A thinking man can investigate the individual things. Plato would say that the individual things are nothing but shadows, but Aristotle would say that they are the real things. The Aristotelian can investigate, measure, lift, weigh, examine, and describe them. For example, you can describe this table as having four legs. You can describe another table as a pedestal table, another as a three-legged table, all kinds of tables. You can begin to form a conclusion that tables usually have a measure of distance from the bottom to the top, and they have surface areas to put things on, and so forth. So, by developing the description of the table, I am using inductive reasoning, which is scientific methodology, to develop a general truth about tables.

Scientific methodology of induction is how we achieve most knowledge today. We do it through scientific, i.e. inductive, study of particulars in order to draw up a general theory, or law. The discovery of that process broke the back of the Dark Ages by opening up the ability to discover new truth.

In science, however, there must still be the ability to use deductive logic. For example, we use deduction in our space exploration. Before our launching into space, we did research here on earth in order to build a body of observations, and make a general theory. That general theory is then applied via deduction to extrapolate the answer to a prior unobserved situation like a no-gravity situation in

space. Thus, we try to deduct out of our body of scientific truth and then project what is going to happen under other unobserved conditions. Our NASA scientists have done that over and over again. In true science, both deductive and inductive logic and reasoning are used to build the base of knowledge about old and new things. Our scientists are no longer limited to just a body of decrees.

Plato's conclusion about a particular object comes not by studying the object, but by reflecting on the formal group from which the object comes. He then can arrive at a description about a particular member of the group. Aristotle's conclusion, on the other hand, comes from studying the actual objects so that he can draw up a general rule for grouping the objects. He then can use that general theory from which to deduct some other something.

You see, both philosophers used both worlds, but the emphasis, or starting point, of each was different. It makes a lot of difference where one arrives when his emphasis or starting point is different.

Now, we are going to examine these two schemas to determine their relevance for the Church. The Platonic stream gained the early ascendancy in the Church and led to the Dark Ages. It was centuries later when The Aristotelian stream rejoined Christian society.

Faith vs. Understanding

Ironically, God used the Church's encounter with the Muslims to open it up to the discovery of His larger world of truth that was required for rediscovery of His salvation for us. When the Christians and Muslims were intermingled as a result of the crusades, the need to win the Muslims to the Lord became apparent.

Faith Is Prime

Anselm (1033-1109) was the Platonic theologian who developed the Ontological

Argument that was supposed to win the Muslims who needed proof before conversion to a new faith. Anselm's argument follows: if God is someone which nothing greater can be conceived, then He must exist because thought can only be made of something that existed as a form. Thus, if you could think of it, then it exists.

This Platonic argument was ineffective in its use to persuade Muslims to put will over reasonable evidence and accept the fact that the Christian God exists simply because He could be thought of.

Understanding Is Prime

In the meantime, Abelard (1079-1142) began rejecting Anselm's faith-first model, which required one to willfully believe papal doctrines first, and then attempt to understand them later. Abelard declared that many papal doctrines and decrees were in conflict with other papal doctrines and decrees. His book, *sic et non* (yes and no), juxtaposed conflicting decrees and declared that they could not both be correct at the same time. Thus, in one fell swoop, a theologian disproved the long-standing Platonic entrenchment of papal inerrancy.

Do not forget, however, that disapproval of Catholic doctrines changes nothing in that Church in which the doctrines whether true or false, are so entrenched that they will never be discarded. As evidence, see the doctrine of transubstantiation. Plato's shadow world is still used in this doctrine to prove that what you see in the elements of the supper have no bearing on what they have been changed into by the power of the priest.

Abelard began a strange new concept that understanding should precede faith. Anselm's faith-first model had to make room for a reason-first model. In this new model, understanding something was required in order to believe it. Blind faith could not be accepted.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) accepted Anselm without rejecting Abelard and became the person whom God used to break open the Dark Ages to new light. This philosopher did not reject the Platonic doctrines of the Church. He continued to support the Scholasticism that sought to prove doctrines that were untenable by Aristotelians. However, he added Aristotelian proofs of God's existence for the purpose of winning the Muslims to the Church.

Five well-known proofs of God's existence were developed by Aquinas and began from natural inducted evidences. He worked with the observable and then concluded that God existed based on reason. Those five proofs of God's existence are:

1. The existence of motion proves a first mover. That first mover is God.
2. There is nothing that is self-existent. The efficient cause of existence is God.
3. There is nothing in creation that has necessary existence. Thus, God is necessary to determine all that should exist.
4. All of creation constitutes a sliding-scale continuum of goodness. Therefore the top good of the continuum of good must be God Himself.
5. Things of creation act to reach their natural ends without any intelligence or knowledge of those ends. Thus God must exist to direct those things to actualize their potentials.⁹

Aquinas actually wedded together the Platonic Church doctrines with the Aristotelian proofs of God. In him the Great Medieval Synthesis occurred in which both kinds of thinking could occur together.

⁹I had the hardest time with explaining this concept to my daughter who, once while we were camping in the mountains, asked why did trees and plants grow vertical on the side of a mountain and not perpendicular to the land?

Now let us turn our attention to a review of Socratic doctrines that pertain to various aspects of life that are relevant for us.

SOCRATES (450 B.C.)

1. *The Doctrine of Epistemology*

Epistemology for Socrates is that knowledge comes from soul memory. You just look inside yourself, and you remember what it is that you saw when, before birth, you were in the realm of the forms. Thus, knowledge was gained in association with the forms before birth. It is therefore discovered in self-examination after birth.

Paul: All this class is doing is to teach me to recall? (Laughter around the room)

V: Yes, if we were Socratic, we would be learning to recall what we already know. We could then give you a Ph.D. in advance because you would already know all formal truth. Instead of learning truth, you could just recall it as you need it.

2. *The Doctrine of Soul*

Three Parts and Functions of the Soul

Socrates' doctrine of the soul has three parts: reason, spirit, and appetite. The function of man's reason is to do his thinking part of life. Man's spirit is to do the acting part. The will is included in the spirit part of man's soul. Finally, the appetite of the soul is concerned with the meeting of physical needs.

Three Virtues of the Soul

Socrates assigned certain virtues to the three parts of the soul. Since reason does the thinking function, then the virtue of reason would be wisdom.

The virtue of the Socratic spirit part of the soul, which does the action part, is the courage to act.

The virtue of the Socratic appetite part of the soul is temperance. Temperance makes

usable to restrain ourselves from run-away appetites (see Chart 2.8 for the delineation of the soul’s parts).

PARTS OF THE SOUL	Reason
	Spirit
	Appetite
FUNCTION OF PARTS	Thinking
	Action
	Physical Needs
VIRTUE OF PARTS	Wisdom
	Courage
	Temperance

Chart 2.8

Socrates’ theory of soul becomes the foundation for his political theory.

3. Political Theory

Socrates correlated his political theory to the soul’s parts, functions, and virtues. Thus, Socrates correlated reason with the **guardian** part of government. The guardian part of government is the part that is supposed to do the wise thinking. Wise rulers are desired, not self-centered, appetitive rulers. Thus they were not supposed to accumulate property as a part of their governing.

Self-centered rulers will grab property and rob the people through their power. Wise rulers will put the welfare of the people above their own. They should be wise and thinking persons who are completely temperate.

The second part of government is the **auxiliaries**, which corresponds to the spirit. The auxiliaries are the military enforcers of what the wise men say. Because the spirit is the realm of action, then those who enforce the government need to be courageous.

The military should have just a little property, just enough to get by. They should be issued a comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, bar of soap, and one change of clothes. That is all the auxiliaries should own.

The third part of Aristotle’s society composes the great majority of his political structure. That part is the **craftsmen**, who are the citizens of the country. They own all the property except the small part issued to the military.

The political theory, then, is set up under the same structure as the soul. The tri-partite structure of soul becomes the model of all society, from the individual to the group.

Steve: This kind of thinking got him arrested, right?

V: Yes. They executed him for saying too much that was contrary to the existing government.

Preview of the Politics of Antichrist

In a democratic society, it is dangerous to be politically incorrect. Please know that what I am telling you is going to come back to haunt you. If you do not hear what I am saying, you are going to suffer the wrong way somewhere down the road. Beware and be prepared to suffer **rightly!**

In order to suffer rightly, you must know who the Boss is so that you can please Him. The Boss for us, even in a democratic society, is Jesus Christ! That means then that you must walk against the tide somewhere along the road. And when you do, there is going to be some suffering. Jesus said, “Expect it.”

You are not, by being politically correct and in line with the policies of a democratic society, determining whether you are in God’s will or not. You determine it like I started this class off: Get on your foundation. It is the Rock. You stand on that foundation! Do not step off in order to be politically correct; you do everything from that foundation! When you do that, you are going to be on a different foundation than are the politically correct people.

Political correctness is going to rule the end times, and it will be used by one leader to

establish right and wrong for the entire world. You cannot follow his system. Thus you will suffer by being deprived of the ability to buy or sell.

Laws will be decreed, and the whole society will fall in line with those decrees. You are going to be left out because you will not be able to accept the subjective civil and spiritual laws of a man over objective, codified civil and spiritual laws. You are going to fall out of line with society and be brought to trial and executed just like Socrates was.

Jack: Society will suppress the objective truth and promote a subjective truth.

V: Right. We must lock the Scriptures in our souls as objective Truth and use them to guide us in our lives and to our deaths because guys, it is coming!

4. The Doctrine of Evil

Evil for Socrates was not from a mis-directed will but from spirit and appetite joining to overwhelm reason. Evil was connected to the body either through a strong appetite or

a weak reason. An example would occur when the guardians made laws that would enrich themselves through the acquiring of property.

The tri-partite soul begins with reason. If you act reasonably, you will not do evil. Our problem, however, results when our reason is too weak or when our spirit in conjunction with our appetite become so big that they overwhelm our reason, e.g. when you put greed and courage together, it will overwhelm wisdom.

Refer back to Charts 2.3 and 2.7. Origins boiled down to evolution versus creation, and change followed suit. However, after the two origins were blended together by Socrates, they then split into two streams, i.e. the Platonic and Aristotelian streams of thought. The Church became ensconced in the Platonic stream to the exclusion of the Aristotelian stream. This perversion allowed the invasion of many false doctrines into the Church.

Chapter Questions

1. What was the question that Thales asked?
2. Heraclitus, agreeing somewhat with Thales, compared everything to a river, constantly changing as life flows along. What did Parmenides say in opposition to Heraclitus?
3. What was Socrates' Doctrine of Evil?
4. How did Socrates approach the two sides of the ontological issue?
5. What was the Socratic theory of teaching?
6. How did Aristotle and Plato differ?
7. What was Socrates' Theory of the Soul? Complete the following table from Socrates.

PARTS OF THE SOUL	
FUNCTION OF PARTS	
VIRTUE OF PARTS	

Chapter 3

PHILOSOPHY'S IMPACT ON GOVERNMENT**REVIEW**

Let us do a little review before we take up Aristotelian government. In our historical overview of philosophy that I did last week, there were two main streams of philosophy down through history. Can you name those two streams?

Paul: Aristotle and Plato.

Epistemology

V: Yes, what would be the distinctive epistemology from Plato?

Homer: Forms and shadows.

V: Good. Plato's eyes are looking up. Why are his eyes looking up?

Homer: Forms are located in the eternal heavenly realm.

V: Okay, why would Aristotle be looking down?

Homer: For him, the form is embedded in the particular.

V: So, who would be the philosopher of Realism?

Carl: Aristotle.

Joe: Plato.

V: I anticipated trouble at this point. Why would it be Plato?

Carl: He said that realism existed only in the forms.

V: Yes, what would the particular be for him?

Carl: The particular is the shadow of a heavenly form.

V: Good. Who believed in soul memory, and what is that?

Joe: Socrates.

V: Good, and what is soul memory?

Bob: Soul memory is where you know that something is true because it is related to you through the forms. The example you talked about was beauty. Someone knows that something is beautiful without someone teaching him that it is beautiful. It is congenital knowledge.

V: The soul was in the world of the forms before it was here. All formal knowledge was acquired by the soul while it was in the formal world. Thus for Socrates, knowledge is recall of those pre-birth memories.

Teaching and Learning

V: What is the Socratic method of teaching?

Bob: Making the student realize something he already knows. It is remembering.

V: Good. What is deductive reasoning?

Bob: It is where you arrive at truths that are deducted out of the main body of truth, like forms.

V: Okay, so if you have a body of truth, e.g. the collected data that came from the world of the forms, then an additional truth could be extrapolated out of that body towards the particular. You would know something about the particular not by induction but by deduction. You would get your knowledge of a particular from that larger body of knowledge about the group in which the particular resides.

So what is induction?

Steve: Arriving at a truth by a set of observances. You observe the particulars and arrive at the body of truth from that evidence.

V: That is good, Steve!

In your opinion, what made the Muslims Aristotelian?

Tim: They had the freedom to experiment, and to seek knowledge, to ask questions and get answers. The politicians or the church did not suppress them.

V: That is good. What was a Platonic church?

Wanda: The Roman Catholic Church.

V: Okay, and why do you think the Roman Catholic Church was Platonic?

Wanda: The Church decreed the body of knowledge.

V: Good. What would be the characteristics of a Platonic present-day Baptist church?

Oscar: It would be where the shepherd had supreme authority and dictates all truth or interprets it.

V: Good. What would be an Aristotelian Baptist church?

Jack: A normal autonomous Southern Baptist Church—my church.

V: Autonomy would not do it because that is in the area of volition rather than epistemology. Think about it. What would be the characteristics of an Aristotelian church?

Pete: A church that arrives at its own decisions or discovers its own truth.

V: Arriving at its own decisions will not work because that is nothing but a matter of the will which could be back to surrender to a dictatorial pastor or body of elders.

Mary: Would this have something to do with whether the church is works oriented versus charismatic?

V: Aristotelianism is mainly in the area of epistemology, rather than works. Sometimes, however, charismatics get their knowl-

edge directly from the Spirit, and this would make them Platonic.

Okay, if a church took the Bible as its body of truth, and deduced from that what it is supposed to do, how would that relate to Aristotle and Plato?

Tom: If the leadership points to the Bible as the source of truth and that you must do what it says, then it would be Aristotelian.

Bob: No, that would be Platonic.

V: Bob is correct. Platonic would mean that the Bible contained the body of spiritual truth from which we would get our instructions.

Now, if you collected your truth from the world, then what would that be?

Jill: Aristotelian.

V: Yes, what if you read the Bible and construct your systematic theology, which contains the principles for what you are supposed to do, and then you deduced out of that systematic theology the application for life, what would you be?

Ted: Platonic.

Paul: Aristotelian.

V: Both of you are right. You would be a synthesis of the good part of both philosophers coming together. The position that the Bible is the total body of Truth from God is Platonic. The Bible study and evaluation of life's problems and natural issues would be inductive and therefore Aristotelian. The construction of the systematic theology would be both deductive and inductive. The application of theology to life would be Platonic deduction, and Aristotle would enter at our checking the results and modifying our activities in order to improve. The plan to deduct the application of theology *per se* would be Platonic, but the discerning, i.e. the induction, of life's issues to be solved would be Aristotelian. The evaluation of one's ac-

tions to be corrected by further study of the Bible would be both Aristotelian and Platonic.

Class, we must have a balance of both methodologies in our epistemology. It is when we are captured by one side or the other that our thinking goes awry.

So, before we leave the description of an Aristotelian Baptist church, let me describe the characteristics. Pure Aristotelianism would mean that the church does not turn to a body of truth. Instead, it studies individual issues and constructs general laws for behavior. This means that the church would reject the Bible as its body of truth. This kind of church could easily turn to pragmatic truths as their guide, instead of God's inerrant Truths.

Impact of Philosophy on Church History

Why do you suppose that it is important for us to know these two streams of philosophy that came down through history to our studying them today?

Carl: Today's philosophies determine good and evil.

Pete: They define the thinking of different sects of the world.

Jill: It would have something to do with the book of Ecclesiastes, where there is nothing new under the sun; it is just a matter of our figuring out what has been done before.

V: Very good, Jill. Has anybody in here been through church history? It is very important to understand these two streams of thought when dealing with church history. Now why would it be important for us if those two streams of thought played a part through the Middle and Dark Ages when we are here several centuries after the Dark Ages?

The book of Revelation tells us why. A new set of Dark Ages is coming our way in the end times, folks.

With what Carl, Pete, and Jill have said about these problems being repeated, we need

to learn how to avoid repeating them. Actually, they are going to be repeated, but you will be God's restraining influences for keeping Christians from repeating the errors.

As we move further and further into irrationality (we are well on the way), good is becoming bad, and bad is becoming good. As we move along through this transformation, we need to be able to see how the people are getting there. How are we going to break through that thick shell around them, and penetrate their thinking with the truth?

There are many philosophies in our midst, and they are destroying the people that are unarmed. The people that are armed are those of you who are studying the Bible, church history, philosophy, the book of Revelation, and systematic theology in order to build your system and think clearly from that foundation.

THE CHRISTIAN SYNTHESIS IS NEEDED

Christian Epistemology

Platonic epistemology and Aristotelian epistemology are both wrong when taken alone. But they both have good contributions. We need to pull the goody out of each of them and synthesize those goodies. So if you become Aristotelian in your inductive Bible study, that is good because that would mean that you obtain your data out of the bank of truth that God has given us. Thinking that the Bible is the bank of truth is Platonic, and that is also a good position.

The Bible might not tell you which can of soup to buy at the grocery store, but the body of truth gives you principles by which you can use to deduce proper behavior in the grocery store and get the right can of soup. Your system of theology should contain all the principles for you to live your life in a Christ-like way and to bring honor and glory to Him. They are all there to be deduced, but the data in the Bible does not say specifically

which can of soup to buy or which house to buy, which state to live in, which company to work for, and all of those particulars of life, but it does have the body of spiritual truth. You use Aristotelian methods to gather other data to use in building your theological system, and then use the Platonic methodology to extrapolate that out into your own particular behavior. This is a synthetic approach to the two streams of epistemology.

We need to look more critically at the mystical kind of epistemology. What is the difference between Rationalism and knowledge by reason? Rationalism is the same thing as Realism in which you know by deduction from your formal memories. You deduct out of generic knowledge brought with you from the world of forms. Pure Platonism rejects all bodies of truths except that body of truth contained in the "forms."

Knowledge via reason, however, is the same thing as empiricism. Empiricism is using your senses to accumulate data via Aristotelian methods. What this means is that you are getting your data through your senses—touch, taste, sight, and so forth. For example, inductive Bible study would be that you get into the Bible, you read, you use a dictionary to look up the words, and then you start looking at the structure of the sentence in order to discover the direct object of the verb, the subject of the sentence, and the modifying phrases. It is exegetical work in which you are examining through empiricism what the words themselves say.

Let us pursue some self-examination. Every one of us in here falls on a scale somewhere between Plato and Aristotle in our epistemology. For the most part, most of us do not land in the exact middle between Aristotle and Plato. We have either Platonic leanings or Aristotelian leanings. I am talking about epistemology, not ethics. We need to talk about ethics too, but right now I am talking about epistemology.

Usually 50% of the people have Platonic leanings. Look at yourself. Where do you land?

Tom: That would mean you would get your knowledge from the soul, from soul memory?

V: Right, current-day Platonic practice usually takes the form of charismatic feelings. The knowledge is not primarily through deep Bible study. Usually, a whole-Gospel person has just a few scripture verses on which he majors. He will hardly know anything in depth about the rest of the Gospel. He will judge truth by his internal feelings.

Oscar: When I talk to somebody from the Church of Christ, I get that kind of response. They open their Bible, point at one verse, and they live by that one verse.

V: Now to be fair, I think that you have caricatured the Church of Christ, and I have caricatured the charismatic by emphasizing the extremes.

What about mysticism? Are you mystic? Do you commune with the invisible? So, do you talk to the Lord openly as you are going through your daily life? That behavior would describe a mystic.

Henry: I am thinking in terms of the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Mormons. They have set Scriptures to which they point, and they know what you are going to say in response.

V: Yes, they are trained in specific actions and reactions. Their body of truth is small in scope and by decree. They are very Platonic because they deduct all their theology out of that small body of decreed truth.

How many of you would be Aristotelian Christians?

We have six Aristotelians.

How many of you would be Platonic?

We have no Platonic's, right? Oh, now we have four Platonic's. The rest of you are neither?

Paul: I do not think of myself as either.

V: But do you have leanings?

Paul: I would be Aristotelian, then.

V: The rest of you did not commit. Is it because you have no epistemology?

Jack: I think that I change from day to day.

Homer: I think that I line up with the wisdom, encouragement, spirit, and appetite that were discussed in our last class.

V: That was an ethic based on the delineation of the Socratic soul. Right now, what I am looking for is your epistemology.

Jill: I would say that I have shifted during the last two weeks. After the first week, I think I was Aristotelian. Then I shifted overnight to Platonic.

V: When you run out of answers, you can always go to Platonism.

Steve: Bouncing off what has been said so far, I am mystic because I commune with Someone Who is invisible. That would make me Platonic. However, when I came to the Lord, it was not necessarily because I had a supernatural experience all at one time. Even though that did occur, it came about over a period of time of putting together observances and seeing certain things happen a certain way. From that point, I came to the conclusion that the mystical must be real. Then I switched over to where I have the mystical experiences. Do you see what I am saying?

V: I would say that you are mostly Aristotelian because you practiced induction first. You now exercise Platonic reasoning in addition to your Aristotelianism.

Mary: My experience and my love for the Lord started with strong intervention of the

Lord, with a strong spiritual awakening. But since then my craving has been to be able to stand on the Word, and to learn it, to do it, to touch it, to live it. I went from Platonic to the other side.

V: Okay, so your path is just the opposite of Steve's.

Tim: Would your old self in the fallen state lean toward Aristotle in reason and knowledge and the new self lean more toward the spiritual and the mystic and the Platonic side?

V: Okay, that is an interesting thought, Tim. I think that you could be right in that analysis. It kind of describes my journey.

Let us move now gently over to ethics because I think that that is where our thinking would go.

Christian Ethics for the Aristotelian

Socrates had a doctrine of evil. Do you remember what that was?

Tim: Evil was not from a misdirected will but from spirit and appetite joining to overwhelm reason.

V: Good, the Socratic doctrine of evil was based on the delineation of the soul into the three parts: appetite, reason, and spirit. Spirit was the activity, and appetite was the need for the physical comforts. If the spirit and the appetite joined together and overcame reason, which had to do with finding the form of something, the good of something, i.e. wisdom, then you had evil. Weak reason or a strong appetite could do that.

Tim: Evil, then, was connected to the body.

V: Yes. Therefore, as long as reason ruled, good took place. The Socratic way to promote good, then, was through education. It was thought that if the person knows the right things to do, it is guaranteed that he would do the good if his appetite did not grow

to the point where the spirit and the appetite overwhelmed his reason. What about Aristotle? How did his version of evil go?

Jill: Aristotle's was the embedded truths.

V: Okay, the embedded truth. Let me give you a diagram for you to use on Aristotle (see Chart 3.1). If you have this right corner of the chart as thought, and thought generates an act in the top corner, then the result is good. On the left corner, there is appetite. If you act out of appetite, you have not good but pleasure. When you synthesize your good and your pleasure, you get happiness.

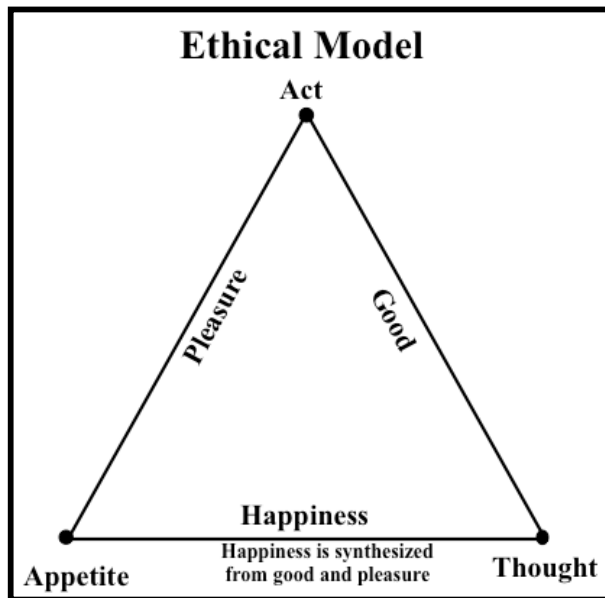


Chart 3.1

The Aristotelian ethic assumes, then, that happiness is the goal of every human being. It is possible to be good and have happiness if you balance thought and appetite. When you balance thought and appetite, and act out of both in a synthetic way, your act joins both good and pleasure together, and that synthesis produces happiness.

Bob: Aristotle's ultimate is happiness?

V: Yes. If the good is presented by thought alone, such as a duty, then there would likely be no pleasure involved, no satisfaction of the appetite. Therefore, the

Aristotelian would not necessarily do that good because his ethic is built out of synthesizing good and pleasure. Thus the Christian ethic, which calls for the *kenosis*, would not survive in this model. However, I think that the great majority of Christians fit in quite well with Aristotle's ethic because temporal happiness more likely dictates what they will or will not do.

If you leave the good out of this ethic, all you have is pleasure, and that does not generate happiness because you are not being "formed." Growth is the forming of the person. Your form is another word for your nature. Virtue is derived from growing your nature, i.e. growing in form, while satisfying appetite in order to gain happiness.

The thief thinks first and develops a plan to do what he is. Successfully stealing a bunch of loot then generates pleasure. When you successfully act out of your form or your nature, you are virtuous because your thought process and actions come out of who and what you are, i.e. your form. That combination of success and doing what you are produces happiness for the Aristotelian.

Look around today. You hear stories of cat burglars who have scaled buildings, entered very secure places, and robbed people. They have accomplished the seemingly impossible and gotten away. Many people say, "Wow! That was a good thief." Much credit is given to these thieves. If a thief is successful over and over again and just keeps on getting away, never gets caught, . . .

Homer: . . . people will say that he is good at his trade.

V: That is right. Does the thief think like who he is? If he does, he is doing good in his accomplishments. Also, if he derives pleasure out of his accomplishments, then he is a happy thief. An Aristotelian ethical model is that you do what you are if it brings you pleasure.

You have probably seen or heard of a court of law in which two different kinds of persons come before the judge for the same offense. In one case, John has committed the same crime many times. In the other case, James had never committed a crime and had never been in trouble with the law. The judge slams James with a severe penalty. However, John, the habitual criminal, will hear words like, "What am I going to do with you, John? If I see you in here again, I am going to make you wish that you had never been born! Get out of here, and never let me see you again." In these two examples, the judge is looking at the nature of the person and seeing that he is acting on the basis of his nature in one case and against his nature in the other.

Reforming the Aristotelian's Ethics

In an Aristotelian ethical model, the effort is to create some virtue in a criminal by rebuilding his character. The Aristotelian uses a teacher to "reform" persons. When the criminal is a youngster, he goes to reform school. The older criminals go to prison.

The Aristotelian teacher's task is to reform the person by moving his nature to something that is better than a thief, or whatever. The goal is to produce a productive citizen or some person that is going to contribute rather than take. The teacher will correct the appetite by taking away the pleasure and substituting pain in its place. When you put a little pain in an Aristotelian ethic, the person will likely decide not to do the crime. If I am a thief, and every time I go steal something, they break my bones, then I will be less likely to keep on stealing.

Essential to virtue for an Aristotelian is thinking out of his nature, doing what he thinks, and gaining pleasure by it. When pleasure is removed and pain is substituted in its place, you will change an Aristotelian.

Oscar: Indian and Arabian societies use chop off the hands of thieves.

V: Yes, that is Aristotelian because it substitutes penalty for pleasure. Aristotelian reform continues by using a teacher to move him towards something that is productive and pleasurable.

The teacher must be of a higher form than the student for proper reform to work because if you have an outlaw to reform a good guy, you will turn the good guy into an outlaw as well. The teacher has to be of a higher form, a better citizen than the criminal. The teacher is to reform the person by helping him to anticipate the pain from acting out of his old form and see the benefits of acting out of a new form.

Act is derived from two inputs: (1) thought, which by definition is good because it comes out of nature (form), and (2) appetite, which is always in pursuit of pleasure. Appetite also correlates with one's nature. So appetite for one person may be different from appetite for another person depending upon the forms or natures of the persons.

Steve: Is repentance part of the reform?

V: Aristotelian repentance must have sufficient incentive in order for someone to reverse his behavior. Remember, if there is no reversal, there is no repentance. Much of what goes on today under the guise of repentance is nothing more than sorrow for getting caught.

Steve: Repentance comes from pleasure and good.

V: No, Aristotelian repentance comes from a reduction in pleasure or the substitution of pain. As long as there is pleasure and good, you cannot reform the Aristotelian because there is no incentive there. No repentance will occur as long as pleasure and good are present to make the person completely happy and content with no need to repent.

The totally Aristotelian Christian must get caught and have all his pleasures replaced by sufferings in order to force him to repent.

The totally Platonic Christian will repent only when his conscience hurts to the point that his mind will change and his actions will follow suit.

The Christian embodying a synthesis of Plato and Aristotle will repent based on fear of suffering and his principled conscience calling for a change of direction.

Ted: Is that why our penitentiaries are so full because there is no physical pain?

V: Yes, in an Aristotelian system, pain and suffering are required for reform.

Ted: I am a counselor with alcoholics and addicts in a Fort Worth center. When an alcoholic or an addict in our program relapses, we ask him to leave the center until such time that he has had enough suffering. Then he can come back and listen. Until he hits bottom, there will be no reform?

V: Hitting the bottom is the reason for the prodigal son in the Bible to come back to the father. Until he could determine that his life style was stupid because it caused too much suffering, then he was not motivated to repent.

Wanda: In the reformation of the prodigal son, who would have been the teacher?

V: Experience and consequences taught him. Once he found himself eating with the hogs, he came to his realization of what his choices had produced. The pain and suffering came not from a human teacher but from his social experiences.

Pete: Sometimes parents have to allow their children to go through a bad experience.

V: If you just alleviate the bad experiences by insulating the child from the bad consequences of his choices, then they will

not change. They will continue in their bad choices.

In many ways, the Aristotelian model is like God's method for the non-Christian. God allows the person to suffer under the consequences of his own behavior in order to open him up to receive the Truth. That life-saving Truth is God's offer of forgiveness and a new start with a reborn nature if we will repent and believe.

Turning our attention to the Christian ethical model, I want to talk to you about character.

Character of a Platonic Christian

The character of a Platonist would come from the realm of ideals. You have heard people called idealists. The term is descriptive of a Platonist. There are both good and bad points for a person in this category. The bad points will be addressed first.

Examples of Platonic Bad Points

The bad points pertain to the elitist attitude that the Platonist displays. They are usually biased to their own ideas to the point at which they are not able to consider the opinions of others. Their own opinions carry the day on every issue. When this comes to religion, they impose their own ideas and ideals on God. God's Word is reduced in authority to what the idealist sets for it. What he thinks that the Scriptures say, or even should say, is imposed on everyone else.

When dealing with government, the elite Platonist thinks that his idea is the only one that is good. He can easily employ a teleological ethic (the ends justify the means) in order to accomplish his governmental goals. He thinks that he knows better about what is good for the ordinary citizen than the ordinary citizen knows for himself. Thus, he feels justified in using any means possible to impose his will on society.

Examples of Platonic Good Points

When it comes to Christianity, the Platonist can acknowledge that the Bible contains all the divinely inspired revelation that has been recorded. If the Platonist should come to this position, then his Christian application of Scriptural principles can be dogmatically thorough. He would be a conservative rather than a liberal. However, the conservative or liberal result depends on the starting point for the Platonist. If he starts with the Bible as his body of Truth, then he will be a conservative because all other considerations will be required to line up with biblical principles. However, if he starts with his own ideas, which he esteems as equivalent to the realm of the forms in the heavens, then he will be a liberal because he will try to force everybody else to conform to his ideals.

When dealing with government, the Platonic idealist could be good as a newly elected conservative because it would be difficult for the political insiders to force him to change. However, the trick is to elect the real conservative because the progressive idealist (liberal) has no trouble lying because he uses a teleological ethic.

The one thing that Platonic idealistic progressives (i.e. the new name for liberals) have in common is that they are not looking for a new idea of what is good for you and me. They already know what is best for us, and they do not want or need our input.¹ They know that they know, and they are frustrated by our not knowing that they know what is best for us in every area of our lives. We are the problem in their idealistic system because we are not willing to surrender our beliefs,

¹ One of my theology professors who could not sway me to Neo-orthodoxy said that I came to seminary with too much baggage. He declared that I was older than the other students, and I had had too much time to harden in my beliefs (that were, to his dismay, unbendingly conservative) before I got there.

opinions, property, vocation, religion, and even our own selves to them.

It is my opinion that we need to protect ourselves from Platonic liberal elitists by only electing conservative Christians when possible. In this way we will be electing either the wonderful conservative idealists who hold to the Bible and the Constitution as their guiding bodies of truth, or we will be electing Aristotelians who can be directed in their government policies by threats and rewards.

Character of an Aristotelian Christian

Where does character get formed?

Virtue is going to come out of thought and appetite working together, i.e. virtue comes from happiness, a balanced synthesis between thought and appetite. All thought and good without pleasure from appetite satisfaction is not virtuous. Nor is all appetite and pleasure virtuous. The only time there is virtue is when there is a synthesis between the two. When you do the good and have pleasure in the doing of it, then you are happy, and that is virtuous for the Aristotelian Christian.

Reform by Creating New Habits

Now what does a teacher need to do to reform an Aristotelian who is happy doing bad? The teacher must brainwash the person. Brainwashing is accomplished by training the person to act in a way that is more conforming to society's rules, i.e. to act in compliance with a more proper form, or nature.

The training's goal of forcing compliance is by creating "habit." The teacher builds habits in the person in order to eliminate the chance for the appetite to regain control. Suspending the chance for thinking must be accomplished during the time needed for reforming. Prior to the reforming, thinking would come out of the non-reformed character and thus the old behavior would be resumed. The ultimate goal in brainwashing is to create a reflexive kind of action built

around habit. The plan is to reform the character through the new habits. The brainwashed person would then automatically think from his new habits.

Since the person is still by nature a thief or bad guy, he must be trained to act in a way that is more conforming to society's rules. Society trains him by rewarding him when he complies and giving him pain when he does not comply. Thus through rewards and punishment, the person will be trained to behave more acceptably. As one practices acting properly, habits will form, and habits reform his very nature because thinking from his old nature will be replaced by reflex long enough for the new nature to gain the ascendancy.

There is a parallel in Christianity. Proverbs 22:6 tells us to "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." Ephesians 6:4 says: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." The difference, however, is that Aristotelianism pertains to societal rules rather than to God's rules.

Paul: Jesus is referred to as the Master Teacher because He gives us His nature in our rebirth.

V: Yes. That is a good point, Paul. However, we still have our old nature to contend with. We still have to cultivate the Mind of Christ in our thinking (the *kenosis* in Phil. 2.5-11).

The Marine Corps is good at reforming nature. If you do what they tell you to do, you get pleasure. But if you do not, Ouch! You become formed into a Marine. The next thing you know is that when someone gives an order, there is no thinking, there is no analytical work; you just do it. That is what boot camp is all about, i.e. to prepare people to go into battle and to fight without having to make independent evaluations and decisions.

The military man does not decide that he is not going to do what he is ordered to do; he has been prepared to act, not think. If he begins to think, he may lapse into his old nature and disobey. The purpose of military discipline is to help soldiers to take on the form of the commanding officer. The commanding officer gives a command; the soldier acts from the form of the commanding officer.

If the soldier acts from the form of the commanding officer and is wounded while obeying, he may become reluctant to obey next time. Why? because he will no longer be happy. Happiness is a requirement in Aristotelianism.

ARISTOTELIAN POTENTIAL

Now, I want you to see the difference between potentiality and actuality for Aristotle. For Aristotle, actuality is prime over potential. What that means is that the actual act is the real thing that develops potential (see Chart 3.2).

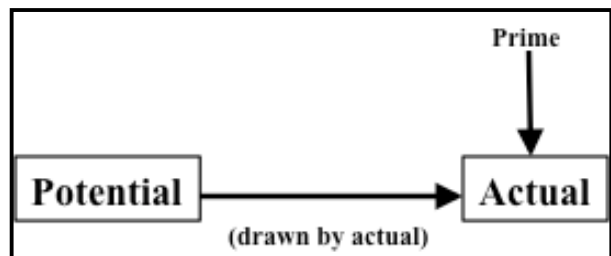


Chart 3.2

Which came first, the chicken or the egg? For Aristotle, the chicken came first because it is the actual form for potential to reach. That form is embedded in the egg, but it is only potential in the egg. The egg must hatch out a chick, which must grow to become fully formed in actuality. The form in the chick has still much form to actualize. When the chick reaches maturity, then it is fully formed and can pass its form as potential form into another egg.

The form of the teacher is prime. As the former criminal acts over and over again building habits from the form of the law-abiding teacher, then a new potential will be created in him. His final character/nature changes when his potential is actualized.

Actuality, not potential, is prime in Aristotle. In other words, actual nature drives actions. Without a teacher, the outlaw has no hope. His potential is achieved by actuality, and without a teacher, his actuality is from a perverted nature. He does not change; he just acts out of what he is. You can anticipate what his acts will be. He is going to act to perfect what he is and gain happiness.

We act out of our natures. Potential can be trusted to reach the actuality of nature. Take a hound dog for example. Put a hamburger near a hound dog, leave the room, and that hound dog is going to eat that hamburger in order to bring pleasure to his hound dog nature. Hound dogs are going to eat hamburgers. A good hound dog will always eat a hamburger.

Tom: The old story of the scorpion and the horse is another example. A horse agrees to transport a scorpion across a river, and half way across the scorpion stings the horse. The horse says, "Why did you do that? Now we will both die." The scorpion says, "Because it is my nature."

V: Yes, that is a good example.

Form/nature is the actuality, and they are prime. If a person is going to be reformed, there has to be a new actual form/nature. If there is not a new actual form/nature, all he has is potential, and a potential cannot be actualized without acts that are drawn by the form/nature (refer to Chart 3.2).

In Aristotelian Christian-theology, the ultimate actual man is Jesus, the Son of God. Saved sinners' potentials are drawn to the actual Manhood of Jesus Christ. Unserved men are only potential Christians until they

reach actuality. Christians are potentially like Christ, but they are not actually there yet behaviorally. However, as they actualize the Scriptures, they will grow in His likeness.

For Aristotelian Christian-theology if there were no actual Christ, sinners could not be drawn because actuality is prime. There has to be a goal in Aristotelianism or there is no process.

Bob: That goes along with the *kenosis*?

V: Yes. There must be an actual Christ with that nature for us to be drawn to that same mind. You cannot do it without having the actual nature residing as potential in your heart. You cannot go into self-denial unless there has been one that has actually done it, because the rest of us are only potential and need an actual to draw us.

ARISTOTELAIN CAUSES OF ONTOLOGY

There are four causes of ontology in Aristotelianism.

1. Material cause is the cause of ontology via giving existence for something by giving it stuff or matter with which to exist.
2. Formal cause is needed for anything to exist. In order to exist, it must have actual or potential form. The potential form for the acorn is the oak tree. As the acorn takes root and grows, it will turn into an actual oak tree.

The idea is somewhat manifested in Christianity. If we have Christ, it is His form that is in us. As His Nature takes root in us and grows, we should become more and more like Him. Our problem is that we also have the form of the old man still in us.

3. Efficient cause is the agent acting on matter to bring it into its present form.

Take for example a woodworker forming a lamp out of a log or a potter forming a bowl out of the clay—a craftsman forming some-

thing that he has envisioned. That craftsman with a vision would be the efficient cause of the lamp or the bowl.

The efficient cause in the Aristotelian realm of Christianity would be the Holy Spirit working in you to bring you into your Christian form. You are progressively growing more like Christ. However, in pure Aristotelianism your will is not involved, i.e. it is not because you *choose* to implement the Spirit's plans.

Wanda: Would the end result be in the Spirit's mind like a form?

V: Yes, the end goal would be the Christ Form in His mind.

For Aristotle, form is thought. When you think of something, you cannot think of the thing itself, you think of the form of the thing. Form is like a signet ring pressing into some wax and leaving its imprint. When you think of a tree, it is the form pressing into your brain and leaving the imprint of what that tree was. As you think, you are putting forms together and linking them into actions of cause and effect. You analyze and decide on the effects of your actions. You estimate consequences, and you do all of that in the spirit realm. You do this activity by using forms. You are not actually going out and picking up things and moving them about to think about them. You are sitting here not even being in the presence of the real things. You are doing all of that in your mind using forms.

4. Final cause is the purpose of a thing.

The final cause of a thief is to steal.

The ultimate actuality in Aristotle is god. It is not the person of God Who created you and me. His god is an impersonal god; he is fore-formed without matter, and he is called the unmoved mover because you cannot move ultimate form. You cannot even reach out and grab it to move it. You cannot do any thing with ultimate form; you can only think

of it. The unmoved mover is the one that is moving the entire universe. Aristotle calls that impersonal unmoved mover god. Do not think that Aristotle was thinking like we Christians think? He was not.

Oscar: Would final cause for the criminal be pleasure?

V: Pleasure is motivation for the appetite, but it is not the mover. The final cause is the actual form/nature. The form/nature is the ultimate thing that will drive all actions unless the person has a teacher who redirects or forces him to do so many new acts that new habits and their resulting character are built into the person. That new character is the formal nature of the teacher.

Oscar: That conclusion is built on the theory that all nature can be changed?

V: Right, it is a Humanistic model.

Society as the Formal Cause

Jack: I keep thinking over and over that I see a lot of stuff in this model that seems right on. For instance, society could be a teacher for bad actions because we live in a time where there are not a lot of bad consequences for doing bad things. Good consequences for bad behavior just seem to foster more bad stuff over and over.

V: That is right. As long as there are no bad consequences for bad behavior, the Aristotelian is being trained to behave badly. Half of our population is Aristotelian. If there are no consequences for their behavior, it is guaranteed that their character will not change unless there is divine intervention. When you are dealing with Aristotelian people, the only hope you have in "our sick society" is divine intervention because we have not the kind of justice that substitutes pain for the pleasure of crime. If a guy does wrong, we do not blame him. We go find someone else to punish, e.g. his father, bartender, wealthy people, etc. The culprit maintains his pleasure without having

to change his behavior. The culprit then becomes a teacher himself by exemplifying and reinforcing society's mores.

Mary: Our teaching society is sick because money and profit in society trumps justice. Government-leaders, make money by doing unjust actions. Thus society is not being reformed because its leaders get great pleasure in making money unjustly. So if there are no consequences or no divine intervention, then people will go from bad to worse.

V: That is right. However, because God loves all people, He will bring pain and suffering to society in order to incentivize a turn back to His Justice.

Jack: But our leaders are deceiving us. We are being deceived into thinking that our government is adopting temporary measures for our good when the system actually is being set up to enslave us forever.

Jack cont'd: We have moved from an individual parent who is the head of the family unit to the philosophy now that it takes a village to raise a child. That is not true.

V: If the Aristotelian village is already sick, it is guaranteed to raise a sick child.

Betty: Sometimes there is not much teaching going on at all. The new rule is just, "Do not punish a child; just let him be who he is." Christ is not in the equation. The parents are not teaching, and society is not teaching either. The children are left on their own.

V: But that is teaching, Betty! That passive society is teaching the lesson that kids are to be allowed to do their own thing.

Henry: God says that each of us will be held accountable for our choices. Whether we accept God's Law or not, our choices will bring us to personal accountability to God whether or not man's laws are just.

V: And God is dealing with Christian choices. When we choose a wrong path, God

disciplines us. However, we cannot conclude that suffering from our chosen path is evidence that we should change paths because the *kenosis* that is required of us also necessitates sacrifice and suffering. So pain and suffering are not the sole determinations of whether or not we are on God's chosen path. We must not adopt a strictly Aristotelian Christianity.

Interpreting Consequences

When the Aristotelian thinks that God is indifferent to his choices, then he must evaluate the pain that results as to whether it is fatalistic or whether it was caused by the behavior. The latter will teach him to change paths. If the consequences were deemed fatalistic, then he would conclude that there was no reason to change because those consequences were independent of choice.

Christians, however, must look at the signs of the times, and see what God is saying to us. The acts of nature are not fatalistic. They are God's workings in His universe. Even when the whirlwind that wreaks destruction on lives and property is caused by the devil, as it was in the first chapter of Job, the Scriptures describe the act as one that was first permitted by God. We should, therefore, look around and read the signs (see Ez. 38 for an example of God's using nature in His warfare). God uses the acts of nature to reprove our behavior in order to move us to reform. He wants us to re-evaluate our behaviors and determine whether or not they line up with His commandments and His values. Based on what is happening now to our country and world, I cannot help but conclude that we are not very good students of the signs of the times.

TWO KINDS OF GOVERNMENT

If you are Aristotelian, how would you determine how government should operate,

and if you are Platonic, how would you determine how government ought to operate?

Mary: If you are Aristotelian, you should set the laws as to how one should live, then punish the people who do not follow those laws. The reformers are the police who will force violators to repent and get back on the virtuous path.

V: That is good. And so, the Aristotelian, would ask, "What kind of government should we have? Let us go examine the various kinds of governments that exist." He would get the constitutions from all those governments, and determine by induction what kind of government produced the greatest happiness. In his study, he would look at the pros and cons of each from the point of view of all the citizens and determine which parts of them would be the best of all. Then, he would implement that form of government by acquiring a teacher, a reformer to establish that kind of government. This government is called a democracy.

The police are the example reformers that Mary used. It could be other government leaders or even teachers in the universities to teach the government workers.

What would a Platonic government look like today?

Oscar: He would do it based on nature, the nature of the way people think or people act.

V: That is good. The ways people think and act are based on the theory of the soul.

There were the guardians, auxiliaries, and craftsmen. Thus the three parts of society were modeled after the tripartite soul. So based on his doctrine, he extrapolates (uses **deduction** from his basic belief) to what is the best kind of government.

His implementation would be dictatorial because there would not be any need for codified law since there would not be any voting

by the people being governed. Platonic government is government deducted by the guardians. Platonic government is dictatorial government by man.

The republic of America is a synthesis of the government by law and government by man. The former acknowledged the peoples' right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The latter puts the modifications to the law, the judging of conformance to the law, and the execution of law in the hands of a select few men, who make up the three branches of government. This government is called a republic.

Steve: If you formed your government after the Aristotelian method, then you would have to have a government that could evolve and change, and when new situations came up, you would use induction to determine what you should do in response.

V: Amendment would result from further experience of shortcomings of the codified laws.

Steve: And if it were the other way, to where you have your body of truth, and everything was deducted out of that, then the government would be rigid and unchanging. It would be the weight of tyranny that you cannot get out from under.

V: That is correct. I am glad you chose that phrase, weight of tyranny. That is what the Dark Ages became. One could not get out from under the tyranny. The citizen could not get to the light because the thinking processes of induction were eliminated, or at least limited by bondage.

Steve: Our lawmakers are really changing our laws. They are changing back and forth, and reforming our government.

V: Yes, many of our lawmakers are Platonic. They are elitists who seek to evolve government into their preconceived ideal form of government that they want to impose

on us. Thus they think that they already know what is best for us via deduction out of their personal agendas. They are not overly concerned with the happiness of the citizens.

Even though the Aristotelian lawmakers will seek to maximize the happiness of society via codified law, they are prone to becoming dictatorial because the longer they are in government, the more elite in their thinking they become.

Steve: It seems to me that dictatorships in foreign countries occurred with the Church's help. It seems that revolutions go hand in hand with the Church's approval of the declared body of truth to follow.

V: That is good, Steve, because that is exactly what happened in Church History. When you begin to watch governments change, you can see church and state working together in parallel.

Tom: So a democrat would be more Platonic because they do not like to be hindered by law.

Homer: They use the government's power to determine what is good for us.

V: The model of epistemology for democrats and other progressives is mostly Platonic because they already know the ideals. Thus, they deduce government from their internal ideals. Their internal ideals trump all laws, values, and traditions upon which the existing government was built. Once their ideals are reached, they will harden and close off from additional change. Killing all who refuse to change is not beyond tyrannous dictators with absolute power.

In those cases where absolute power is not owned by the dictator, Aristotelian reforming methods will be used. The government will employ teaching via punishment and reward

in order to change the values of the resisters to match those of the ideal government.²

The idealist seeks absolute power. The only idealist Who is good in His use of absolute power is God. All others are corrupt. Remember the saying that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The need for happiness should eliminate one's desire for Platonic government except, of course, the ideal government by God. God's government is unique in that it maximizes both His happiness and that of His subjects.

When it comes to human government, however, it must allow for the appetite's hunger for happiness. Therefore human government must be built upon God-given rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness under the spiritual rule of God over all men. Under God's Law, reasonable human laws for maintaining order and behavioral limits for sinful humanity are also required. There should be moderation of liberty by bringing together the two sides of liberty under God and moderation of liberty under law so that there would be a balanced synthesis of good and pleasure blended together which brings both happiness and responsibility. That synthesis comes out of thinking and appetite working together.

Commerce alone is not virtuous. Christian virtue is *obedience to God* in commerce and every other action of life. The Lord wants us to be formed after Christ, and that alone is virtue in Christianity. We must adopt the *kenosis* of Jesus. Total holiness is to be our pursuit, i.e. we are to give our all over to God as a living sacrifice (Romans 12:1). Ours is to be the Christ model.

² Russian Communism uses insane asylums and mental hospitals for housing or correcting those citizens who oppose their tyranny. The thought is that anyone who opposes their ideas of a perfect government has a mental disorder.

Tim: I have a question about Marxism and Communism. Would they not be based on a Platonic philosophy? They alone know the truth for the common good of the people, and there is nothing outside of that.

V: That is correct. The body of truth is known only by the elite of the Communist Party who will decree it to us who know nothing except what the elite choose to share with us.

Tim: What I am seeing in those kinds of systems is that there is always corruption and greed going on. In the Aristotelian model there are those people who are greedy and use their powers to accumulate all those things and become dictators when they obtain enough power. Their actions from an insatiable appetite cause the others who lack power to suffer loss of happiness.

V: The Aristotelian governor can be reformed by the society under him when it becomes his teacher by putting some pain in the correct places.

What we have is basically a population that is 50% Platonic and 50% Aristotelian at any given moment. Either side running amuck and unchecked will bring awesome oppression. We know very clearly the Platonic side of oppression through Church History because the Church, the pope, and the emperor took turns running the world until the time of the Renaissance and Reformation.

Betty: Could not the revolt of society cause that pain that is needed to reform the Aristotelian governor who is out of control?

V: Yes, some kind of pain is needed today to be inflicted upon the Aristotelian that

is running amuck. We need to inflict enough pain to force him to do good. If we just go along to get along, there will never be any change to the Aristotelian—unless he is a Christian with a God-consciousness that is strong enough to restrain him.

In my opinion, the Platonic governor must be removed altogether because the Platonist will only be satisfied when deciding everything for us. He is certain that he alone knows what is best for us. Thus, to live with the Platonic governor is to live in slavery.

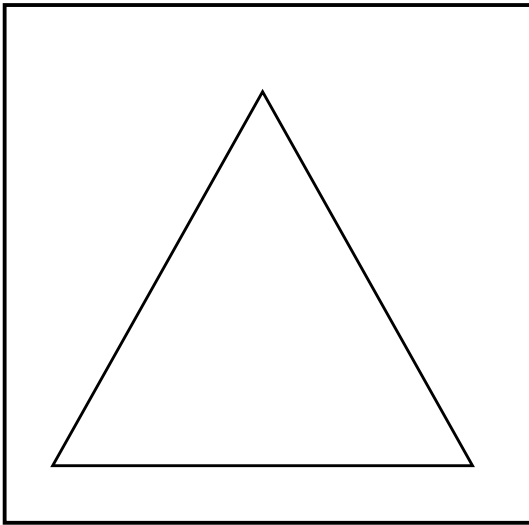
Paul: Did the Platonists go through the Dark Ages?

V: Platonism created and controlled the Dark Ages. When the Reformation came, it broke the Platonic hold on all of the Church. The Renaissance broke open the Dark Ages to new scientific light secularly or humanistically, and then the Reformation broke the Dark Ages open to theological light religiously.

Coming out of the Reformation, the Platonic half of the population still sought to fulfill their nature of immediate contact with the all-wise forms through mysticism! The same thing is true today. If they cannot achieve control, they have to have the self-centered mysticism in their religion. The mystic would rather have goose bumps than a face-to-face rational conversation with God Himself. The mystic would rather *feel like* he had had a conversation than *have* the conversation. In the former, he still would be in control and could therefore interpret the experience any way that he desires. In the latter, God would be in control as the Boss.

Chapter Questions

1. What are the two main streams of philosophy down through history?
2. What is the Socratic method of teaching?
3. Define the following:
 - a. deductive reasoning
 - b. inductive reasoning
4. Analyze the following chart by describing the following results:
 - Act out of thought = _____
 - Act out of Appetite = _____
 - Synthesize good and pleasure = _____
 - An act that balances thought and appetite together creates _____



5. What are the four causes of ontology in Aristotelianism?

Chapter 4

GOOD VERSUS EVIL AND FAITH VERSUS REASON

AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OF EVIL

Augustine's journey toward an understanding of evil ended with his dedication to Christianity. It started with a Persian religion and traveled through Neo-platonism before it finally arrived at Christianity.

We must study Augustine's doctrine of evil because he is the one who will give the definition for evil that will dominate the Dark Ages. Also, his doctrine will survive in the Roman Catholic Church into the present. Thus one can conclude that this doctrine will dominate the realm of Christianity.

1. *Manichaeism*

"*Mani*" was a Persian who had invented a dualistic view. The Manichean solution to the problem of evil was a dualism of good and evil with the following characteristics:

- a. Good was passive light; evil was aggressive darkness.
- b. Evil invaded good, and good was impotent against the invasion, but it would fight back afterwards to regain a balance of power. This invasion of evil and fighting back of the good was seen in the dark and light phases of the moon.
- c. This dualistic solution impugns God's omnipotence.

In a dualistic system, if you have good and evil, and good has no power over evil, then you have an impugning of God's omnipotence. In this dualism, God would not be in control. Evil would be of equal power with good, and it would be the aggressor of the two (see Chart 4.1)

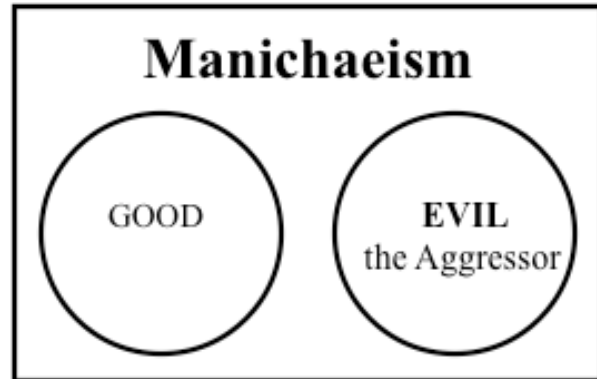


Chart 4.1

The Manichees saw the results of the war between light and darkness in the stars in the heavens. They could see the dark expanse with lights sprinkled all around in it. They concluded that the dark was evil and the light was the opposing power of good.¹

The Yingyang (see Chart 4.2) is a symbol of dualism. One side of this symbol is a dark color. The other is white. This symbol presents evil as the aggressive power for evil opposing the power for good.

Jill: That symbol is in the Korean flag.

Henry: I have a question about Manichaeism. In that line of thought, do they hold that God is the creator?

V: No, when one believes that God is the creator, then religion is an ultimate monism, and by necessity, it has good as the stronger



Chart 4.2

¹ The movie *Star Wars* was Hollywood's portrayal of dark and light dualism of evil and good.

of the two. Manichaeism was an ultimate dualism. In it there was no creator. Both evil and good are both self-existent and equally eternal.

In a creationist model, the creator would stand as the ultimate good over against creation. Creation could contain both good and evil. What I want you to see, however, is that in this dualistic concept of ontology in Manichaeism, there are two equal and opposing views or systems that are of the highest rank in existence. They are self-existent, and there is no creator.

Henry: When you make the devil to be almost as powerful as God? Is that not moving into dualism?

V: The words “almost as powerful” do not qualify as ultimate dualism.

What I am trying to show you here is that Manichaeism is an ultimate dualism. If you have a good and an evil as equal and opposing forces running the universe, then there would be no sovereign god. You should be able to see now that a view of evil’s running amuck impugns God’s power. If He existed at all, He would just be a member of the light/good side and would not be in charge of the whole universe.

Oscar: Is belief in the yingyang a dualism?

V: Yes, it is. Whenever you are debating with a dualist, you should realize immediately that your opponent is attacking at the point of God’s power.

Christians will always be attacked by atheists and other non-theistic religions on the basis of the presence of evil. The name of the attack is theodicy. In the theodicy, God’s Power is pitted against His goodness. The word theodicy means the judgment of God. *Theo* is God; *dikeo* is to judge. The way theodicy (*Theo-dikeo*) works is like this: *If God is all-powerful, and God is all-good, then*

He would eliminate evil because He could and because He would want to. If evil is present, then God is either not all-powerful or He is not all good.

Theodicy impugns either God’s power or His goodness on the basis of evil’s existence. Most Christians engage in theodicy by questioning God’s goodness in times of tragedy by asking: why would God allow this evil to happen? Hardly ever does a Christian question God’s power. Since Christian theology begins with the creation, then there is an understanding of the absolute power that accompanies the doctrine of a creator.

The dualism of Manichaeism, which was first adopted by Augustine, came out of the ancient Persian religion.² It was the first in a series of doctrines concerning evil that Augustine acquired by his coping with the definition of evil.

2. *Neo-platonism*

Augustine’s second stop on his pilgrimage toward an understanding of evil was Neo-platonism. *Neo* means new; thus Neo-platonism was a New Platonism.

Remember the two philosophical streams that have come down to us through history, i.e. Plato over against Aristotle? Within the Platonic stream was the secular philosopher Ammonias Saccus who blended Platonism with the Gnostic hierarchy. This Neo-platonic model was picked up by Augustine and carried into his theology and then into the Church through his voluminous influential writings. The Church, in turn, merged Neo-platonism with the ontology of creation and developed a perverted doctrine of salvation and its system of discovery via deduction. The result was an approach to theology in which the body of truth was decreed by an

² The Persians studied the stars and the phases of the moon. It is theorized that the three kings from the Orient who detected the new star indicating the savior’s birth as a new king were Manichaeist Persians.

elite person who was high enough in the hierarchy of ontology that he had contact with the Good, i.e. the Pope.

For centuries, all truth had to be deduced out of that body of papal decrees. There was no room, therefore, for scientific discovery of a spherical earth or earth's revolving around the sun. There was no room to have any kind of theological exploration outside of the realm of truth that was already stated. Thinking and exploration was oppressed, and out of the oppression came the Dark Ages.

The Dark Ages reached other countries through the Church's missionary expansion. Those countries are now called Third-World countries. That Platonic concept that originated the decree of the accepted body of truth will be re-introduced again when we come to Antichrist. All truth is going to be decreed by Antichrist, and if you are not politically correct and following that truth, you will be killed just like it was done in the Middle Ages.

Joe: I have heard that many Europeans are already clamoring for a one-world government that will not be built around the United Nations.

V: Keep your ears open, class, to those centralizing movements. We need to know more about them as they develop so that we can effectively resist them.

In the Neo-platonic philosophy, evil did not have its own existence. It was instead a privation (lessening) of good on a descending hierarchy of ontology. This philosophy's world view is basically a pantheism in which all creation is an emanation from God.

Pantheism

Chart 4.3 depicts God as the black circle on the left before creation. Emanation means that creation came out of Him. Picture it as the black circle on the right with the drop down portion. In this depiction, creation (the

universe) shares the same ontology with God. This is a pantheistic model which is a version of monism in which creation comes out of God's ontology.

The monistic model of pantheism impugns God's goodness instead of His power. In the depiction on the right of Chart 4.3,

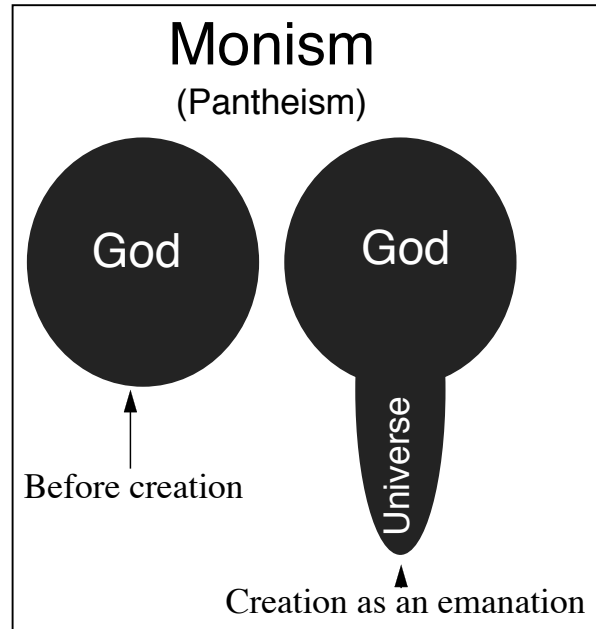
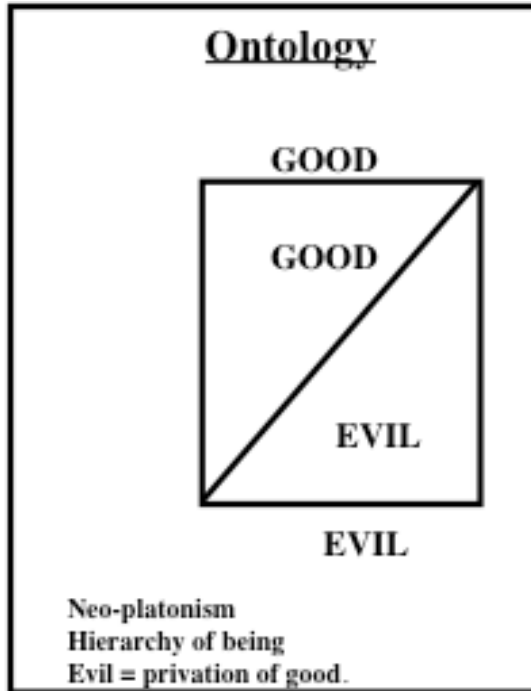


Chart 4.3

good resides throughout the black area, but it varies in its purity depending on where it is positioned in the drop down emanation.

Neo-platonic creation has degrees of good in it, but it decreases as you go down in position. That view is a privation of good as you descend in creation. Thus you can see that if God's ontology is shared, and it has evil contained within it, then this model would be an impugning of God's goodness.

Pantheism gives a definition to creation that contains the idea of a privation of good on a sliding scale (see Chart 4.4 on the next page). The higher you go, the more good you get, but the lower you go, the less good you get. Evil, then for this model, would exist in God's ontology.



Ammonias Saccus' secular model
Chart 4.4

Evil exists over against good in the Manichaeism model. In Neo-platonism, however, evil does not exist as an actual something but as a mere reduction of good. Neo-platonism is a secular monistic-model of good in a hierarchy that was provided by Ammonias Saccus. Augustine became a Christian but retained an adaptation of Neo-platonism in his view of evil within Christianity. Through his influence, his view of evil gained the ascendancy in the Church's worldview. In the Neo-platonic schema, total evil resided at the bottom, and total good resided at the top. Between top and bottom, there is a sliding scale in which the proportion changes (see Chart 4.4).

Carl: A sliding scale of good and evil would imply that salvation is through works. Right?

V: Good thinking, Carl. You are correct to conclude that a hierarchical model for good would lead to salvation by works. That is why the Catholic Church added the statement,

in its reaction to the Reformation: that good works aid in a person's salvation. Remember that saving grace is viewed as the saving substance generated by the *good works* of Mary, Jesus, and the saints. This grace is distributed to sinners to supplement the deficiencies of saving grace which they provide for themselves by their own good works. The goal is to provide the quantity of grace that is needed to cover the sinners' own sins.

Bob: You do not need baptism because you grow progressively toward salvation.

V: Well, that is not correct for the Catholics because baptism is an initializing sacrament of properly ordered love, which I will address shortly. Proper love of the Church,³ as shown through obedience, conveys a quantity of saving grace. However, for the "pure" Neo-platonic Christian, you would be right.

Neo-platonism, through Augustine, came down through the Church right through the Middle Ages. When Thomas Aquinas arrived on the world's scene, he brought Aristotle's works system into the Church. When the works-system of Aristotle and the hierarchy-of-being from Neo-platonism are synthesized, a new theology of salvation by works in a sacramental religion results.

Mary: It is called Catholicism.

V: We have addressed the issue of evil through Augustine's first stop-off at Manichaeism. Neo-platonism was his second stop-off, and now we will look at his Christian synthetic doctrine. He declared that evil in Christianity is a product of freewill.

3. Christianity

Augustine, in his Christian position, holds that evil is a product of freewill. His new position was that evil is neither a co-existence

³ Origen had already established that one could not have God for his Father without the Church as his Mother.

with good, nor is it ontologically embedded in God. It is instead created by personal free choice by humans and angels.

Please remember Augustine's three stopping-off points in his journey towards understanding evil: Manichaeism's dualism, Neo-platonism's hierarchy of being in a monism, and Christianity's free choice.

Disordered Love

Further in regard to Augustine's free-choice concept of evil in Christianity, he arrived at the concept of disordered love, which was a two-tiered system of love. The top tier was love of God,⁴ and the lower tier was composed of a hierarchy of all other objects of love. Any lower-tiered love should come after the love of God. Evil arises from a disordered love—love in the lower tier getting ahead of one's love for God. Thus, evil for the Christian was the love of an improper object.

Neo-platonism always has a hierarchy. In secular Neo-platonism, it is a monistic continuum as represented in Chart 4.4. In Christian Pantheism, it is represented as an emanation in the right hand side of Chart 4.3.

When you have a gradation in a Neo-platonic or monistic system, Chart 4.4 is the model that you have. It is a secular model, but when you super-add God at the top as a second tier (as Augustine did), then it would be converted into a pseudo-Christian model with God as a spiritual party and creation as a sliding scale of good and evil. The Ammonias Saccus model (see Chart 4.4) had just one scale with total evil at the bottom and a gradation of good as you ascend to total good at the top. It was used to describe everything in the universe.

Pete: In these systems that we are examining, it seems that evil is generally applied to

⁴ Love for God and love for Church were considered synonymous.

actions on the one hand and to the material world on the other. But this disordered-love model seems to be only actions by personal beings. How is evil then separated from sin? Are they related?

V: For Augustine, sin and evil are basically the same thing, i.e. disordered love. Thus, we could conclude that evil exists only through the actions of persons; it does not exist as a separate thing apart from personal will.

Let me show you how a disordered love works in this schema. When you love God with all of your heart, mind, soul, and body, then you have a proper ordering of your love. You also love your neighbor as yourself. That is a secondary or a lower-tiered love, but if you should love yourself as the maximum good, then you have lowered God to some point beneath you, and that is disordered love.

Now, I want you to see how disordered love ties to the Neo-platonic model. It is not easily seen. The thing about philosophy is that there are a lot of repercussions that will send people to hell that come out of influences gathered out of the various philosophies. They are hard to see, but if you love people, if you have a dread in your heart about people going to hell, then you need to see the connection between philosophy and theology so that you can spot the evil as it pops up in your churches.

Those evil influences are already in the churches, even in the best churches. When I start talking to people, get past their cliché-theology, and hear what they truly think, I just cringe. The invasion of philosophy into theology has destroyed the vitality of the churches and the country.

What you are preparing to do in this course is to have a theological base so that you can derive your philosophy out of that base. We want to reverse the natural course of nature in which you have a philosophical

base out of which comes your theology, which is happening in the churches today.

Pete: Could this Christian Neo-platonic system become a form of utopianism?

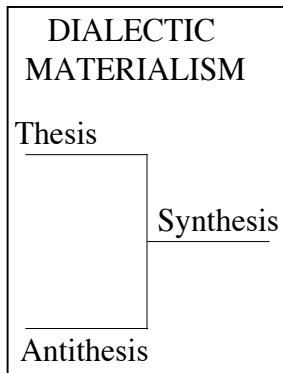
V: Yes, I congratulate you Pete for your analytical thinking. Utopianism is a monistic system of hierarchy, and it connects to Platonic idealism and leads to Progressivism.

Jack: When you say “monistic,” is that like “mono”? One?

V: Yes.

DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Dialectical Materialism is a monistic system in which all of reality progresses to be unified material. Please understand that Dialectical Materialism is Communism! The



progressive process is class warfare between the thesis of “haves” and the antithesis of “have nots.” The victorious synthesis is a ruling class of government bureaucrats and a working class that is equal in how much they have (see Chart 4.5).

Chart 4.5

Through revolutionary warfare, the Communistic system takes control of a country. Then, however, because Communism is a progressive⁵ system, it must, by definition, expand to another country. Revolution will spread to the many countries in the world for producing Communistic syntheses in each one. Eventually there will be a resultant single global system. The Book of Daniel declares that this progressive system will be centralized into ten kingdoms that are ruled by ten kings. An eleventh will grow up and

⁵ People who claim progressive as their political label today are of this worldview.

uproot three of the original ten leaving eight of which one will be the Antichrist. All survivors in this system will adapt to a heretical monistic worship of Antichrist and his materialism.

Monistic theology ruled the Church during the whole era of the Dark Ages. According to the Bible, we are going back again. However, instead of God occupying the top spot, Antichrist and his materialistic rules will control the whole world.

Is there anyone to resist our plunging into that terrible mess? If you the people who are called by God’s Name (2 Cor. 7:14), do not resist the advance of materialism, who is going to stop our progress toward another monism? God will only do so if we who are called by God’s Name will humble our selves, pray, seek His Face, and turn from our wicked ways. These four steps seem so far away because the Church is no longer a people, but a collection of materialistic institutions.

Most Christians tend to say, “Oh, we are not going to mess with this philosophy stuff. We are just going to preach Jesus.” I hear this all the time. I am even guilty of it myself.

Now, I must warn you that we are in desperate straits. This world is fixing to plunge into catastrophe because Christians, the salt and light of God, have been unknowingly poisoned by philosophy.

Law is what God uses to restrain evil. If Christians are the primary persons for God to implement righteous laws in the land, then the world is already on its way to hell. Many Christians do not know how to vote because they do not know theology, history,⁶ philoso-

⁶ The founders of this country (from those who first landed on the shores of America to those who established the Constitution of the United States were all God-fearing Christian men. Stated in our Declaration of Independence is that all men were endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, and that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

phy, or how to think. Many of them cannot even distinguish right from wrong.

Did you know that killers, homosexuals, and abortionists know exactly who to vote for? They do not even have to think about it. They automatically know exactly who to vote for. Who are the only people in the world who cannot figure out who to vote for? The Church. Listen, Christians, “If you cannot figure out who to vote for, go find an abortionist,⁷ ask him who he is going to vote for, then you vote for the other guy.

Betty: Evil knows evil.

V: Our power of discernment is broken! We are stumbling around and groping in the dark. We say, “We are just going to preach Jesus. We do not need to know all that philosophical garbage,⁸ theology, or church history. We just need to get back into the Bible.” Class, there is no right understanding of the Bible apart from a *kenotic* application of every part of it.

Folks, our triangle of piety is not spiraling up because our “do” corner (application of all known truth) has been omitted! Thusly, we are spiraling down because to know the truth and not do it is sin. The result of the sin of spiraling down is to lose all discernment between good and bad.

Jack: It seems like the philosophy of the church people is to let God take care of the problems, even the problems in the Church. We do not need to do anything about it, just

let God take care of it. We forget the fact that God uses His people to accomplish things.

V: We have become passive. We have refused to engage society on their intellectual turf. But the philosophers have engaged society. Now, look at the results that are evidenced in how society has declined and how its poisonous philosophies have invaded the Church.

In this course, we are going to shore you up so you do not step in the holes. Once you figure out what the deceptions are that causes people to fall in the holes, then you can help others by pointing the holes out or by reaching down to pull them out of the holes. But if you do not know the deceptions, then it is up to me to come along and pull you out of the holes. You see? We need a lot of watchmen.

Tim: You are saying that *we* need to see the hole first.

V: Yes, if *we* do not see it first, then *we* are going to step into it.

Bob: I was reading some history on World Wars I and II. I think that many changes that have taken place with world leaders and powers were justified by their saying that they were doing it “for the good of the people, for the good of the nation, for the betterment of the world.” And I believe that the devil is going to deceive so many in our near future by saying, “We are doing it for the greater good of the entire world and to protect the nations and the people.” When in fact, in the back door, Satan is bringing about the great enslavement that will not be seen until it is too late.

FAITH VERSUS REASON

Dialectical “Thinking”

V: A dialectic is a very good reasoning device for you to use to investigate theology. In it, you take one thesis, *i.e.*, Jesus is God, all God. Then you take the antithesis, *i.e.* Jesus

Dialectical Materialism takes away all three of those “inalienable” rights.

⁷ Jesus came to give life (Jn. 10:10), not death. Abortion gives death.

⁸ Hermeneutics is on the cutting edge of changing the Church in America into a microcosm of a materialistic society. Hermeneutics is how you understand what God said in His Word. However, the *new* hermeneutic is: “what do we want that Word to say?” We just wrestle around with it while using our personal philosophy until it says exactly what we want it to say.

is man; He is all man. You wrestle with those two opposing views in order to come out with the theological synthesis: Jesus is the God-Man (see Chart 4.6). The statement that Jesus is both God and Man is a synthetic statement. That is how you use dialectics for good. It is good when you analyze each side and pull the goodie out of them and create a single truth that is all truth. Usually, the thesis is a half-truth, the antithesis is a half-truth, but the synthesis is a whole-truth. It puts the truth from both positions into a conclusion.

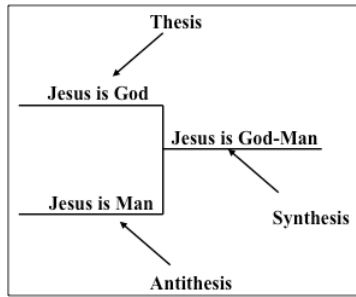


Chart 4.6

Not only is dialectical thinking a good way to get to the truth, but it is also a way to get to error. Let me show you how you get a bad conclusion out of dialectical thinking.

Errors via Big Tent Theology

Error results through the big-tent concept. When trying to appease via inclusiveness, you take all of one side and all of the other side and put them together into a synthesis for the “greater good.” The “greater good” is the incentive to bring all ideas together instead of just the truth from each side. That kind of synthesis is compromise or “big-tent” theology.

Wanda: Can you give us an example?

V: Sure, divorce and homosexuality are two things that are being accepted into the churches today. How can two things that God has called “abominations” be acceptable to the churches? They gain acceptance through big-tent theology! The churches are accepting sin of all kinds because we have difficulty separating the sinner from the sin. God hates the sin but loves the sinner. On the basis of

God’s love for the sinner, the churches have become accepting of the sin when accepting the sinner. Yes, the sinner is to be accepted, but the sin must be condemned openly and without apology. It may be a fine line, but we must find and observe that line.

Errors via Power

Another way to bring bad out of a good device is via power. More power can be expressed for one side by the ability to debate, by just having a louder voice than other people, or by having the platform or bully pulpit.

Bob: Like Hitler did.

V: Yes, also like our current media that covers up evil and maligns good.

Errors via Excluding the Antithesis

Another way to arrive at a false conclusion is to bring out only one of the theses and leave out the good of the other thesis. That would be a synthetic answer as well even though it left out the whole other side of the issue.

Steve: The thesis would be the line in the sand where God said, “Do not cross this line.” The antithesis is what Satan wants for you. The error would be to reject God’s thesis and accept Satan’s. One day, you are going to look up, and you are going to say . . .

V: “. . . Oh no! I am on the wrong side of the line.”

Paul: We have seen in history how theology has been changed in an entire denomination. The thesis for that change was that Mary was the Mother of Jesus. The antithesis was that Jesus is God. Therefore, the synthesis was that Mary is the Mother of God.

V: Yes, that would be a good example of an erroneous synthetic statement. Catholics adopted that synthesis and declared it to be inerrant.

Tom: I have been trying to understand what a synthesis is. You said that the “Mother-of-God” synthesis was erroneous, but the “God-Man” synthesis was correct. But both are synthetic.

V: Yes.

Tom: A synthetic statement can be correct, or it can be wrong.

V: Absolutely. I am glad you brought that up. Dialectics are good for coming out with synthetic truths, and you use them in theology. But it is also a slick device to introduce error. It can produce wonderful results, or it can slip error right into place. Because anytime you are dealing with two total opposites, one of them is wrong, or they are both wrong or partly wrong. If either is wrong, and you come out in the inclusive middle, then you have included error in your synthesis. But if there is truth embedded in both sides, and we pull out just those truths, then the synthesis is good.

Errors via Charisma

Tom: Are we not seeing a move from the authoritative control like Hitler to control by charisma?

V: Certainly charisma may be used initially to overload one side or the other. But once the balance of power has shifted, the charisma will be replaced by naked power.

Pete: Our governmental system uses checks and balances, but sometimes one side gets too much power.

Pete (cont’d.): In the midst of it all, prayer changes imbalances, and we must continue to pray. I do not have confidence in man.

V: Neither do I, Pete.

Pete: They all seem to be too willing to take a bad position if it will gain votes.

Errors via Passivity

Jill: My faith is in God.

V: That is good but please note that faith is not an excuse for passivity. God has an agency in place to bring corrective action. The agency apparently does not know what it is doing. God says, “If my people who are called by my name will humble ourselves, pray, seek God’s face, and turn from our wicked ways, then God will hear our prayers and heal our land” (2 Chronicles 7:14). Well, that promise by God is to heal our land. If healing is not happening, then it is not God’s failure. We have chosen to major on the prayer step but not on the humble, seeking, and turning steps.

When the people pleaded for the first king in Israel, the prophet Samuel gave the antithesis to the peoples’ desires. The people wanted a powerful king to fight their battles and take care of them. The prophet provided the antithesis of what replacing God as King would cost them. The destruction of America is occurring because we are following in Israel’s footsteps, i.e. we are willing to sacrifice our liberty for the government’s promise to take care of us.

Errors via Ignorance

Is there a prophet for today? The Church is to provide God’s prophetic voice to the world. What does the Church do? It meets for worship, sings, prays, takes up offerings, builds edifices to celebrate itself, and hires ministers to keep the process going.

The Church’s passivity results not only from its selfishness, laggardness, and disobedience but also from its ignorance. We cannot figure out what is right or wrong. So, for the good of the institution, we compartmentalize our Christianity to our gathering times in the churches. The Church’s prophetic voice has been traded to the government for tax-exemption, i.e. for filthy lucre.

The prophetic voice of today is, at best, a splattered voice within the walls of the institutional church building. There is no certain sound to this trumpet. The government, then, is running amuck because there is no prophet. The problem is not God. The problem is not the government. The problem is not the world. The problem is not even Satan. The Church is the problem because God has put the Church in place to win the lost, to straighten out the world, to point to God's Law as the foundation of man's law, to bring all good tidings to the land, and to bring salt into society and light into the darkness.

So, where is the Church? It cannot figure out why God is not doing anything to correct the problems in answer to its prayers. We are just preaching Jesus' love. The world is a disaster simply because we are the chosen ones to straighten it out. Why do the cults come shopping in the Baptist ranks for their members?

Wanda: We are ignorant.

V: Yep, we are punctiliar salvationists. We have no full doctrine of salvation because we have omitted the process of sanctification. We just want to get born again, learn some cliché theology, and learn to be passive clay for the institutional church and society, instead of the Lord, to shape.

We are doing nothing to preserve the Christian worldview of America. We hide our Christianity when we are outside of the church building. While inside the church, we stand up when we are told to stand up; we sit down when told to sit down. We sing, we bow our heads, and we put money in the offering plate when we are told to do so. What else do we do? Nothing except when we see ministry that we feel called to do, then we hire substitutes to do it.

Wanda: The world does not want to be influenced by Christianity. Instead, it wants

to redefine Christianity. So, it has joined the Church.

V: The world penetrated the Church with its vain philosophy instead of the Church going into all the world with God's philosophy.

Homer: I went on vacation to New Mexico. While there, I shared the Gospel with a man in a coffee shop. He replied, "I want to share some of my material with you." It was nothing but philosophy. He was as much of a believer in that philosophy as I was in God, and he worked hard to push it on me, to change me. I think that God put that man there to show me how much I need this course.

V: Yes, but that is just the tip of the iceberg. Their vain philosophies have enslaved us by entering the Church undetected.

Homer: My own brother has been infected, and he is resisting all mentions of Christianity. Finally, he told me the other day, "Do not bother me with your garbage, and I will not bother you with my beliefs. Just leave me alone, just go ahead with your Christianity, and let me go ahead with my philosophy, and let us not bother each other any more."

V: Wow! Those words are especially painful when you hear them from a relative.

Steve: Did you see the recent news article about the Episcopalian's letter claiming that the devil can freely roam the Church now. My brother also warned of leftist groups that are currently targeting churches.

Ted: Dr. Vinson, this afternoon before I came here, I watched the news and Dr. Meredith is out of town right now speaking for Wedgwood,⁹ but some guy stood on the steps out here (I could not tell whether it was the seminary steps or the church steps) and

⁹ Wedgwood Baptist Church was the scene of multiple killings by a man with a gun who randomly chose that church in Fort Worth, TX

said that it was time for everyone to get on their knees and pray to “their gods.”

V: Pray to their “gods”? Was this at the church? or at this seminary?

Ted: I could hardly believe my ears. I could not tell which place it was; it could have been either.

Tom: Whatever god you believe in or something?

Ted: Anyway, this event is an example of what you are talking about.

Carl: That is like the Baptist Church accepting all gods.

Jill: I saw a slogan on a car that said “My goddess is your God’s mother.”

AUGUSTINE’S EPISTEMOLOGY

V: Okay, now I want to talk to you about epistemology. We have looked at ontological evil, evil as disordered love, and dialectics to be used to produce evil. I need for you to see one more thing, i.e. the epistemology of Augustine because it propagated a Neo-platonic worldview in the ancient Church.

Augustine’s epistemology was also a two-tiered system. You have the lower sensible tier which is where you detect through your senses, and then you have the upper intelligible world of eternal truth. These are two separate realms in which two different kinds of knowledge are available. One does not reach the upper realm through the lower.

Chart 4.7 shows Augustine’s epistemological organization. The intelligible world is the world of eternal truth in which God operates. The sensible world is the world in which you obtain knowledge through your senses. The way you know your sensible world is through *scientia*, which is knowledge through induction. We get our word, science, from this Latin word which means to know through sensory induction

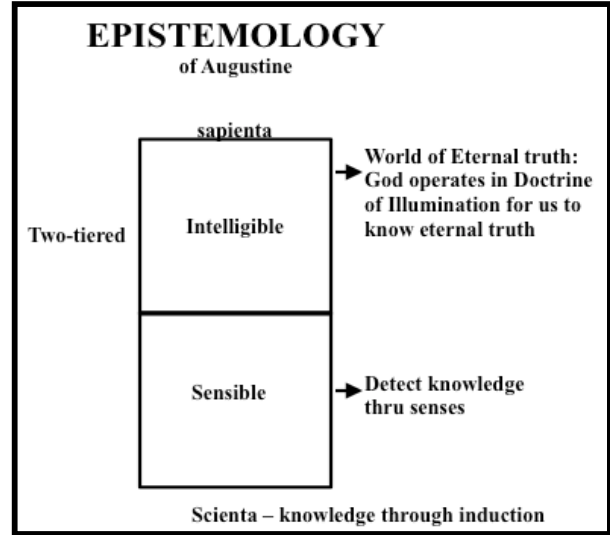


Chart 4.7

Augustine’s method for gaining knowledge in the upper realm is *sapientia* which is to know eternal truths directly through some kind of illuminated intuition.

Jill: *Scientia*, was getting your knowledge through God?

V: No, it is via sensory induction in the physical realm. In using our doctrine of revelation from Systematic Theology, I will explain Augustine’s two levels thusly: first, you gain knowledge of physical things and characteristics of God through *scientia* in five of the 6 forms of revelation: nature, history, experience, salvation history, and Scripture. Secondly, you gain knowledge of God Himself directly through *sapientia*.

The upper realm is the realm through which God works. When God is working in the upper realm, you do not have the capability of understanding. So you need illumination. Augustine says that this realm of intuition has to be illuminated for you to know eternal truth, i.e. for *sapientia* to work. Here comes the issue at hand: in Augustine’s two-tiered system, for illumination to work on your intuition, you must have faith first in order to understand. Faith becomes prime in *sapientia*. To understand eternal truth in

Augustine’s system, you have to begin with faith.

In our doctrine of revelation in systematic theology, we start with knowledge that is supplied via the six forms and illuminated by the Holy Spirit. Faith then *results from* revelation rather than *generates* revelation.

Henry: To have faith means that we can understand revelation and then believe it.

V: That is right for our doctrine, but Augustine’s doctrine was reversed. You had to believe it first before you could understand it. Let me show you how it was put to me on the doctoral exam. There are two tiers (see Chart 4.8). In order to understand in the realm of God’s eternal truth, according to Augustine, you have to have faith as prime. So in your Augustinian (and early Catholic) epistemology you have to begin with faith.¹⁰ Super-added upon faith is reason or understanding



Chart 4.8

If you must believe first before understanding, then this is a volitional system in which your will determines what you believe before understanding it.¹¹ In a two-tiered system in which faith is prime, your will determines what you will believe. Then after

¹⁰ Since you did not have to understand what you believed, it was acceptable for the Catholics to preach their masses in Latin for centuries without any understanding of the sermons by the church members. All that was required by those members was to believe what was being preached, whatever it was.

¹¹ Once when I was witnessing on the streets of Atlanta, a man told me that he was not interested in what the Bible said because his faith was in the pope. He said that he believes whatever the pope says. He was willing to believe before knowing.

you believe it, you will become enlightened to know what you had already believed. To me, it is a buying-a-pig-in-a-poke concept.

Henry: Because even though my will says that I will have faith, it is the Word of God and the illumination by the Spirit, which determines what I will believe in.

V: No, that would be causative; God would be a pre-determiner of who is going to believe and what they are going to believe.

Henry: What you are saying is that you have faith because you have understanding.

Tom: My understanding improves my faith.

V: Okay, Henry and Tom, you both have expressed a reason first and then faith next concept.

Which comes first: faith and then understanding or understanding and then faith?

Jack: Faith and then understanding.

Homer: Understanding and then faith.

V: Does not the Scriptures say in the beautiful-feet passage: How can one believe unless he hears the sermon and he cannot hear until a preacher is sent and he preaches the Gospel to be heard?

Okay, let me give you an example. Let us say that a stranger stuck his head into this room and said that someone is giving away hundred dollar bills out in the hallway. There would be several of you who would run out the door to get one, but the rest of us would stay in place because we would think that the statement was a prank.

Now, say that the several came back in waving hundred dollar bills; the rest of the class would then go zooming out. If they came back in waving hundred dollar bills too, then I would run out too. After understanding the claim to be true, I would act in faith too.

The first group believed it because they were *willing* to believe it even though there was no evidence. The second group believed it after they saw some evidence that the claim was likely not a prank. I was not willing to believe it until I *knew* that it was not a prank. Theologically, the middle group is what we would want to be because it is based on the trustworthiness of the biblical evidence's being far beyond mere claim. The evidence would be experientially known through the senses and understood before it is believed.

Oscar: So until there was absolute experiential proof, you yourself did not believe it.

V: That is right; I would have been operating on the model of reason alone in that situation. I know the way students behave and therefore, I needed more than just seeing a few hundred-dollar bills. When I saw dozens of hundred dollar bills, then I would know that it was not a prank because I know that students could not pool that much money together (all the class started laughing). Do you see how the middle group's understanding of the evidence preceded their willingness to believe the claim? It was reason before faith, not faith before reason. Though reason was first, faith was needed to act upon the evidence.

Whenever faith is involved, then the object of the faith becomes extremely important; it must be reliable. When it is nothing more than church decrees that are way off base, then you have an entire church willing to run way off base because they have faith as prime, i.e. a faith based on will.

However, when reason is prime, then you understand something as having reliability before you believe it. That would be an induc-

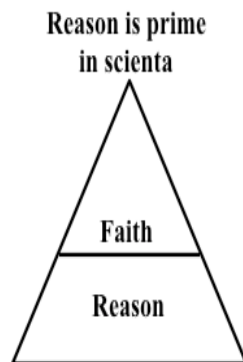


Chart 4.9

tive model in which you would go to the Scriptures which have been proven to be reliable (see Chart 4.9).

If you should hear conflicting testimonies, which one you would choose to believe would be based on the reliability of the witnesses. Therefore, I always choose the Scriptures over everything and everyone else in the world. Thus, the Catholics would say that I have a paper pope.

Let me show you a model that I used on my doctoral examination (see Chart 4.10). I sought to show that in some cases, faith is prime, and in other cases, reason is prime. In one of the cases where faith is prime is that of the Trinity. You just believe that God is One God in Three Persons; you cannot completely

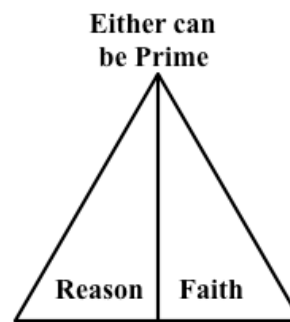


Chart 4.10

understand how God is three actual persons without being three Gods. I cannot wrap my mind around how it works, but I believe it because the Bible shows that the Holy Spirit is God, Jesus is God, and the Father is God.

Belief in the Trinity is a faith-first system, but in other cases, you use induction to understand the reliability of a claim prior to believing it as truth. I trust what we know inductively and deductively from the Scriptures more than what we know from church decrees. Why? It is because we trust the Scriptures that have proven to be absolutely reliable, not so for the Church or anything else. That is a reason-first system when it is based on the reliability of evidence. You see what I am saying now?

We pride ourselves on being a faith-first people, but that is Neo-platonic. It is sending many people to hell. People of this stripe just believe by the force of their wills what they

are told. This system caused the Dark Ages, and it is in the process of repeating itself. The many government claims are believed in spite of incontrovertible proof to the contrary. This faith in government's statements is political correctness. Antichrist will flourish in this system: "Just believe it. Everything will be all right. Just believe it."

Without evidence of reliability, faith then becomes a product of your will. That faith-first system can be used to force, like Augustine used against the Donatists,¹² people to accept state-defined religion: "If you do not convert, we will cut your head off for the good of society." We are going to repeat history. During the Dark Ages, the Roman Catholic Church evangelized through the power of the sword to sway the will, and the Muslims are still doing it.

Sometimes, however, I go with faith first because I just cannot understand the evidence. Other times I go with reason because I can understand the evidence and weigh its reliability. An all-faith model can be achieved by force of will. An all-reason model can be achieved without any willful faith involved.

Back to my example story about the hundred dollar bills, the all-reason model was by my waiting for incontrovertible proof. The all-faith model was by the first group that believed the claim without any evidence of reliability. We do not want to be doubting Thomas's that refuse to believe anything without visible proof that is absolute. We also do not want to be gullible by willy-nilly believing everything that comes down the pike.

Tim: Those two have to be held in tension. You struggle against one another.

V: Yes, and that is the definition of dialectical thinking.

¹² The story of the Donatists can be found in book 8 on Church History.

Joe: The average Christian rejects the idea that reason has anything to do with the Christian belief system.

Tim: They think belief has to be on faith alone.

Pete: Many scholars ridicule the study of apologetics. They will say that you cannot reason somebody into believing. It has to be done on faith alone.

V: The resurrection was a demonstration of evidence to the first disciples. John testified that he had handled the Lord in His resurrected state (1 John 1:1). Also after Jesus' resurrection, he ate fish before the disciples (John 21:9-13). Those events are evidences that John is putting forward to elicit belief in Jesus' resurrection.

Pete: There is evidence also in general revelation.

V: Yes, God points out in Romans 1 that everyone can see the evidences of God's hand all though nature, history, and experience. Both general and special revelations comprise a good, reason-first system from which faith then comes. But there may be some things contained in inerrant revelation that do not support reason before faith. In those rare cases, you would just have to believe first and hope for the understanding later.

Jerry: The model with reason on the bottom of the pyramid, and faith being on top, would that be like Christian Scientists?

V: Yes, in my opinion, they work by using the power of the mind.

Bob: Would Abraham's belief in God's Covenant with him be based on reason?

V: Yes, it would be based on both reason and faith. First, he believed that it was God who gave him the command. Then, he understood what God had commanded and promised. Believing in the reliability of God, Abraham's will to obey came after both belief and reason. Action is generated by faith.

Whatever it is that you believe, that is who you are. What you believe is what you do and who you are. Willful sin arises when you act on the basis of your old nature, which is still resident in you. Sometimes those willful choices come from your new nature when you have been deceived into believing a lie. In this case, your reason has been bypassed with a false understanding. Acting on a deception is sin also.

Abraham believed God, and that was counted to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3). Noah did the same thing. Today, I hear what God says through the Scriptures. I understand what they say, and I throw my lot in with what God said, just like Abraham did. Abraham understood what He said, and he threw his lot in with what God

said. That is the call, the invitation issued at the end of a sermon. You preach to be understood. Then you give an invitation, and the hearers throw their lots in with God. You see how it works? Will is important, but will connects with faith. Will and faith go together. Out of faith comes action. Action is an expression of will, and hopefully, will is based on faith, and faith is based on a reliable object, i.e. God's Word, not papal decrees or government claims.

Bob: Your will becomes His will as your faith grows.

V: Yes. It is a spiraling up in the triangle of piety that we studied in the course on doctrine.

Chapter Questions

1. Describe Augustine's early explanations of evil and the view that was eventually his conclusion.
2. Describe and evaluate Augustine's concept of disordered love.
3. Describe or illustrate Dialectical Materialism.
4. The text described a good theological dialectic about Jesus being the God-Man. Illustrate or describe that dialectic.

Chapter 5

THE SEARCH FOR UNDERSTANDING

This lesson will be very difficult, and I will be leaving you with a lot questions to ponder so that you can begin to do the mental exercise that you are going to need to do in the future as our society begins to slip as we progress in the Book of Revelation. I want to show you how to do the analytical work for winning in the coming battles.

THE MEDIEVAL SYNTHESIS

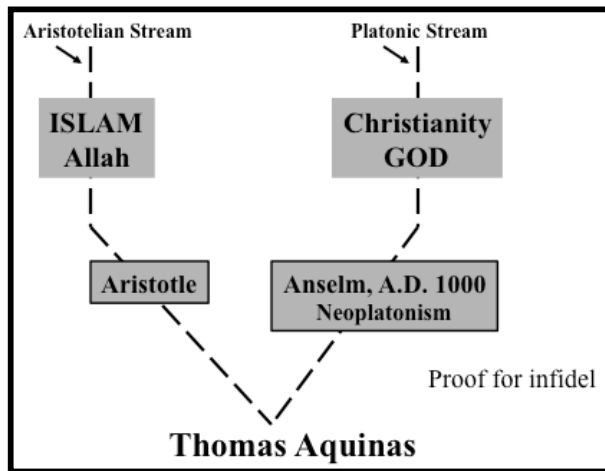


Chart 5.1

I will try to show you the synthesis of the two streams of thought that we have discussed before. For Islam on the left of Chart 5.1, Aristotelian induction and ethics became the dominant principles for religion in the East. For Christianity on the right of Chart 5.1, Platonic deduction and Neo-platonism’s hierarchy of being became the dominant principles for religion in the West.¹

Anselm was a proponent of the Neo-platonic stream of thought within the

¹ Abraham is the commonality between the two religions. Islam claims that Allah is Abraham’s god of Genesis, and Christianity claims that Abraham’s God of Genesis is the One True God.

Church’s doctrine.² One of the identifying characteristics of Neo-platonism is the hierarchy of being (see Chart 5.2). In this hierarchy, the proportion of good to evil increases as you go up the hierarchy. We saw that same sliding scale in Augustine’s Doctrine of Evil, which defined evil as the privation of good.

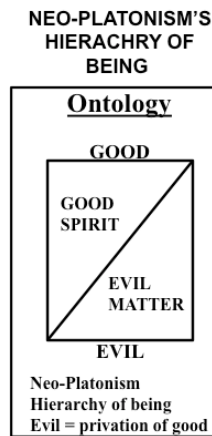


Chart 5.2

In Neo-Platonism, salvation comes by ascending the hierarchy of being. Ascent in Anselm’s hierarchy of being could be achieved via ecstasy, thought, and sacrament. Via ecstasy, the person basically ascended via his spirit stepping out of the body which is lower on the scale because it is matter. The spirit without the material hindrance of the body went immediately up to the realm of the forms for additional forming via being with the forms. When the ecstasy was over and the spirit rejoined the body, the person found himself a little higher on the hierarchical scale.

Ascent via Neo-Platonic thinking is done by using the forms. In this theory, one does not think with a material object; he abstracts all objects by seeing the form in his mind. Having that form in the mind forms the thinker (forming means that the person is moving closer to the realm of the forms). Neo-platonic reality is not below with mankind. It is above us in the realm of the forms. We ourselves supposedly live merely in the shadows of reality. Our nexus with reality while in the body supposedly occurs via

² Anselm inherited the Neo-platonism of Origen who, along with Plotinus, got it from Ammonius Saccus.

thought where the realm of the forms enters our minds and begins to form us.

The Neo-platonic hierarchy of being has huge implications for the doctrine of salvation in the Medieval Christian Church. Salvation became a climbing, an ascending up the hierarchy of being. Something was needed beyond mere thought or ecstasy that moved the person up the hierarchy of being. That something was the Form of God Himself that was contained in the Church and its sacraments.

The Church's Appeal to the Infidels

Anselm used the Platonic theory of forms in combination with the Neo-platonic hierarchy of being in the Church's appeal to the infidels around the turn of the first millennium. Anselm's appeal is called the Ontological Argument. This argument basically sought to prove that God exists. In my words the argument goes thusly: *God is the greatest possible being that you can think of. If existence is greater than non-existence, then God has to exist. Otherwise, you could not think of Him as existing because one can only think of something real, i.e. the actual form is required for thought.*

How was the Church going to get the Islamic people into the Church? Proving that God exists did not prove the Christian's claim that God, not Allah, existed and that God's only begotten Son (Jesus) was the savior. If the Church was built upon Jesus, then the Church still had a problem with the Muslims even though it may have overcome the existence of God issue with the nonbelievers. The Church decided that it had to come at the Muslims differently.

The different argument came as Anselm's logical reason for Jesus' coming to earth as God's Son. That argument is called "*Cur Deus Homo (Why God Became a Man)*." This argument goes thusly: *God was offended by man's sin. It was required then of man to*

appease God. However, man was not able to appease God. Only God could make that level of appeasement. Therefore God became a man in order to make the appeasement.

The basis for the coming of Jesus Christ was based on the offense to God. Since Muslims were able to understand an offense to God, the *Cur Deus Homo* argument was pretty effective.

Jill: In witnessing to Muslims now, you can present all the arguments, but they still think we have three gods. Did they buy into the argument in Anselm's day?

V: Yes, a few did, especially under the persuasive power of the sword.

Anselm was part of the Neo-platonic stream in which faith was prime. The initial call, then, from the Medieval Church to the Islamic people began as a Neo-platonic **faith-first** step of joining the Church, which claimed to be the highest good on the hierarchy of being that was below the forms.

In order to **understand** the Neo-platonic argument that God exists as the form of the Church and that Jesus is the way to salvation, belief was required. The Muslim proved his belief by joining the Church even though there was no understanding. Lack of understanding was because the Muslims thought inductively, and Christians were trying to argue the existence of God deductively. Thus, joining the Church **by believing without understanding** began the salvation process of accumulating saving grace via thought, sacraments, and works.

The Medieval Synthesis of Philosophy

Later the Church would refine its appeal via the merging of Neo-platonism with Aristotelianism. This merger came about because of the Crusades of Christianity against Islam. In the conflicts, the cultures and philosophies of each side were exposed to the other, and

eventually a merger of the two philosophies was forged in the West.

Anselm's Neo-platonism was the thinking of the Western Church that joined with the inductive sciences and ethics of Aristotelianism from Islam to form the Medieval Synthesis. Thomas Aquinas is the person in the Church who put the two sides together as you can see on Chart 5.1.

The category of infidels had expanded to include not just the people who did not believe in God but also the Islamic people who believed in Allah as god. Aquinas desired a proof that would be winsome to both groups. The Islamic people were already moving closer to Christianity because of the common bond with Abraham, but they struggled with accepting the faith-first Ontological Argument for God's existence which was required before the *Cur Deus Homo* argument could be used.

Aquinas came up with a proof for God's existence that was acceptable to both the nonbelievers and also the Muslims. He abandoned Anselm's Ontological Argument. Anselm's argument was based on the realm of forms: if you could think of something, then it, by definition and necessity, had to exist. This kind of argument ran counter to all of the requirements for inductive evidence that Islamic Aristotelianism required. For Aquinas, Anselm's argument was valid, but it would not achieve his goals of winning Muslims to Christianity.

Aquinas changed from the Neo-platonic argumentation to that of Aristotelianism inductive methodology in order to appeal to the infidel without losing favor with the Islamic people. Thus, he came up with the following five Aristotelian proofs for God's existence:

1. Motion: movement implies a first mover—God.

2. Efficient cause: sensible order had to have an efficient cause; nothing is an efficient cause of itself.

Today's efficient-cause argument is the argument from design, i.e. something designed implies a designer. That would be the same thing as an efficient cause.

3. Existence: existence of beings implies a creator. Nothing is self-existent.

4. Gradation: if there is a greater and a lesser, then there is a greatest—God.

5. Final ends: if all things seek their potential ends, then a guiding mind is needed.³

After convincing the infidels that God exists, the Church's next effort was to do something about getting them into the Church. Thus the preaching was changed toward the goal of churching the infidels so that they could begin the long climb up the hierarchy of being toward salvation.

The Church claimed that if you would believe its claims, then you would not have to understand the claims in order to be saved. The Church claimed that the understanding would come later. Thus the Church thought that if it could get the infidels into the Church, and since the sacraments were salvific, it would have them headed for heaven before they understood what had happened.

The Church, then, was winsome in its argument for God's existence, and it was wooing in its call for faith first without under-

³ On a personal note, my family and I were camping in the mountains. My daughter pointed out that trees on level ground grew straight up perpendicular to the ground. However, the trees growing on the side of a mountain still grew straight up even though the land was slanted. She asked, "How do the trees know how to grow straight up?" I thought maybe I needed to go back to Aquinas and add this proof: there is a guiding mind that tells those trees to grow straight up. There is an intelligence there, and the trees do not have it; there is something else that guides those trees in growing. It is God.

standing. The faith was in the Church, not in the Gospel because there was no understanding of the Gospel. Though the members may not ever get the understanding, the Church was growing, and its thinking was that more people were going to heaven because they were being formed for heaven by the highest form on earth, the Church.

As the Church grew with the large influx of unchanged pagans, there was a revived desire for monasticism, which grew out of the messed up Church. Two monastic orders came out of the two streams. One stream was the Aristotelian Dominicans of which Thomas Aquinas was a member. The Dominicans became the teachers in the seminaries and the universities. They introduced inductive logic and scientific reason into scholasticism.

The Franciscans were the other stream which retained the Neo-platonic ideology from Anselm. These two monastic orders which were begun in the Middle Ages are still parts of Roman Catholicism. Since no Protestants existed before the Reformation, there was only one kind of Christianity, and both streams of philosophy were synthesized into that one brand of Christianity that was, and still is, Roman Catholicism.

The Dominicans studied to get their knowledge; they read and consulted references and checked carefully what the meanings were. Their feet were firmly planted down to earth. They studied, measured, opened the writings of the church fathers and read and studied inductively.

The Franciscans bowed and prayed to get their understandings. They were mystical, deductive, and in contact with the higher forms which gave them additional knowledge through deductive reasoning.

Class, those two streams are also in Baptist life. We have these issues today, and when you take my Systematic Theology, we go further into those things to see how they

shake down, especially in the area of revelation and hermeneutics. But right now you need to see how the effects of the two forms of gaining knowledge played out in the Medieval Church.

Anselm's call was to believe in order to understand. The Islamic people asked, "Believe what?" The answer was, "Believe the Church." If you believe the Church and obey it, you will understand later, but you will begin receiving saving grace now. My warning is that in a faith-prime system, it becomes critical to believe something without sufficient reason or without understanding of what you believe. But *what* you believe determines your eternal destiny.

FAITH VERSUS REASON IN EPISTEMOLOGY

When discussing faith and reason, we have to consider all the combinations. In gaining knowledge, faith can be first, or reason can be first. Where does one start when he is trying to obtain the truth? Is one to believe whatever the Church says and hope to understand it sometime in the future? Or is one to understand something before he believes it? Lets look at those two situations.

Reason Is Prime

We Protestants, when asked, will usually state that we prefer a faith-prime system because we think of faith in God. We know that without faith, all knowledge is vain. Mostly, we fail to understand that our God is a reasonable God, and that he reached out to man by giving us His written Word and demonstrating myriads of miracles chief of which were creation, the virgin birth, life, teachings, miracles, death, burial, and resurrection of His only begotten Son, the incarnate Word. He gave us sufficient reason to believe His claims.

We equate the Scriptures with the Word of God because their claim to be God's Word

has been proven to be absolutely reliable. We use inductive study of those Words to understand them, and then we believe them. Thus, our system is really more of a reason-first system. We hear and understand the Gospel, and then we believe it. Certainly, our doctrine is salvation by faith, but it is a rational faith, not a blind faith.

Unlike our salvation-by-faith, the Muslims have a works-salvation. Aristotle used ecstasy and ethics in order to climb up into the realm of the forms. Thus ethics, i.e. works, became the chosen method for pleasing Allah.

The Islamic peoples' heritage was composed of inductive thinkers. Thus reason was prime for them. They would listen to new ideas because they were receptive to evidences and proofs. On the other hand, the deductive idealists of the Church were not interested in hearing new stuff outside of their decreed body of truth. They were interested in doing the teaching because they were endowed with all the answers. After all, the truth had already been decreed, and it was "forming" them from within the Church.

Faith Is Prime

The faith-prime system can be a wholesome thing, but look out! When somebody says, "Believe in order to understand," you had better find out what they are asking you to believe. Most of these people have an agenda in mind, and they intend to enslave you. That is what the Church of the Dark Ages did; it enslaved the entire western world to the decrees of one man who was out for number one at the expense of everyone else. Only Jesus Christ is out for the reverse, i.e. to bless the multitudes at His own expense.

The Church wanted everyone to believe that God exists, and they proved it through the use of forms and the hierarchy of being. Neither of these two things were evident to the senses, nor were they rational. So, the

person had to start with faith, and hope that reasonable understanding would soon follow.

Thomas Aquinas recognized the shortcoming of a faith-first system in churching the Muslims. Through his efforts, the great Medieval Synthesis of faith and reason entered the Church. In that synthesis, Aristotle's inductive reasoning merged with Neo-platonism's request for believing before understanding.

Last week we looked at a two-tiered triangle. In the bottom was faith, and in the top reason. That would be the faith-prime model (see Chart 4.8 in the last chapter). In the other triangle, reason was at the bottom (the one on the bottom is prime), and faith at the top (see Chart 4.9 in the last chapter).

Now when faith is prime, you are called to believe something, and later you will understand it. Faith is at the base of the triangle and reason is its capstone. That faith-prime triangle was the Neo-platonic, Anselmic model used by the Church in the late Middle Ages. It was the call to anybody who was outside of the Church to believe the claim of the Church as being the only way to salvation. Therefore, in order to get the Muslims into the Church when they did not know and understand the Church's doctrines, the call was for them to believe whatever the Church claimed anyway with the promise that the claims would make sense later.

The Church's belief was that if it could get the infidels into the Church, then those people could begin to receive the sacramental grace that was considered to be salvific by the Church. Thus once those people had begun participating in the sacraments, then they were considered heading for heaven because they already had received the Church's form of God via the sacraments. Once their forming ascended high enough, then their understanding would follow. The Church figured that their policy was failsafe. The new Christian may have to go to purgatory for many

millennia, but at least they were going to heaven afterwards.

Not only is our eternity determined by what we believe, but also our temporal conditions are also affected. One of those crucial things is the issue of Church and State.

FAITH VERSUS REASON APPLIED TO THE CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONSHIP

We must be careful in our understanding of Church and State relationships. We will now examine how those relationships are affected by our epistemology.

Faith Is Prime

When adapting the monistic model to the Church and State issue, then the resulting monism will be ruled ultimately by the side that has the power of the sword. However, all paths to get to that ruling position include a faith-prime system.

The Church Militant

In a faith-prime system, then the Church's worldview is that the State was a mere emanation (see Chart 5.3), and as such, the State is a lower extension of the Church. In the view that salvation was to climb up the hierarchy of being from State into church and ultimately into heaven, then the Church's philosophy was being consistent with its Neo-platonic concept that salvation was an ascending within the hierarchy of being. In this monistic concept, the doctrine of the Church became that of a militant, two-sword Church, i.e. a Church that swallows up every-

thing within its confines as its methodology of redemption and rules all through the power of the sword.

There was a call for believing in order to get into the Church. It did not matter what your mind says, just believe in the Church in order to get into it. Believing the Church was to rise to the safe level on the scale of the hierarchy of being. The goal of the militant Church is to become the Church triumphant. In this model, the entire globe, then, will become the Church.

How you move from State to church in this system is through the sacraments. The sacrament is the bridge over the divide between church and non-church on the scale of the hierarchy of being.

The present church and State distinction is only temporary in a monistic hierarchy of being. The sacramental doctrine in combination with the salvation-by-works doctrine are the processes of moving the people up from the State into the church. Eventually, everything will be sucked back up into the One. At that point all the people of the world will then be the One Holy Universal Church. The distinction between church and State will have been dissolved, and anyone refusing to join this Church in faithful allegiance will be dissolved too.

What process will be used? It will not be by hearing the Gospel with understanding that will be followed by personal faith in Jesus. Instead, the process will be by a believing in the Church with the hope of understanding to come later in the by and by.

In this process, as one comes under submission to the priest, the priest will give the person the sacraments. Through those sacraments will come into the person a measure of grace that comes from the world of the forms. As one ingests that grace, the person is formed into the good by a moving upward on the scale. The more sacraments that one can

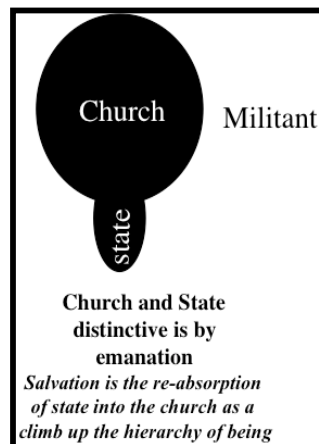


Chart 5.3

take, the more he will be formed into the likeness of God.

Tom: I have a question about climbing up the scale. Eventually, the Church becomes triumphant. Would the progress of mankind end at utopia?

V: Yes, post-millennialism fits this view which is an optimistic view of man. That view is that once the Church is identical to the world, then the millennial reign would be by the Church Triumphant. There would be no need of Christ's coming again until after the Millennium in that concept because Christ would be reigning through His Body (the Catholic doctrine of Corpus Christi), i.e. the Church.

Betty: So social reform and things like that become really important.

V: Yes, they are very important, because social reform and social justice are actually considered important ethical methods of climbing up the hierarchy.

Carl: Does that climb not start with a false sense of reality via infant baptism? Catholics think that they are automatically saved because they have been baptized as an infant. Then they are doing exactly what you are talking about—working their way up.

V: Once that infant is baptized, the seed form is considered to have been implanted. Then all he has to do is to mature what is in place, i.e. grow that form by climbing the hierarchy of being. Sacraments and works are all-important in a theology based on the hierarchy of being. I opine that it defies reason to ask someone to surrender the will and believe whatever the Church says in hopes that understanding will come later after participating in the sacraments.

Joe: Once the Church becomes triumphant there is no need for the State. Is that what you are saying?

V: Yes, there will be no need for the State because the Church will be the all-in-all.

Joe: The State is part of the hierarchy?

V: Right now, it is the lower unsaved part, but in the end times, it actually gets sucked right up into the upper saved part. The State's "governmental functions" will survive the State's loss of identification. However, it will be the Church alone exercising those governmental functions.

Tim: The one-world religionists think that the Church will become supreme, but a one-world government is actually going to become supreme according to the book of Revelation.

Pete: The religionists' goal is to become the all in all, right? But that is, in fact, not going to happen. The woman rides the beast for a while, but then . . .

V: That is right; then the beast turns against her when she is no longer useful to him. I refer you to my course on the book of Revelation.

Please see that the monistic concept can have either a spiritual ontology or a material one. In the spiritual monism, the Church is the one into which the State will be sucked up. In the material monism (Communism), the Church will be sucked up into the State. Neither of these monisms allows the Christian to be a citizen-of-heaven who is a pilgrim-in-the-world. The Church is savior in the first case, and the government, which provides access to matter, is the savior in the second case. Thus, you pilgrims are facing some terrible news. You will have no place for life in the monistic world to which we are headed.

Augustine used force against the Donatists in order to force them into participating in the Catholic Church's sacraments in order to get them bound for heaven. The way to do evangelism in this environment is to threaten death for any who will not believe the Church.

Under this kind of coercion, many will probably submit to the Church and become soldiers themselves to promote it.

The Church uses force to get some “form” into the infidels in order to start them in their formation. That initiation of forming is accomplished through the sacrament. By force, evangelism occurs. That was how North Africa was evangelized during Augustine’s time and how Europe was evangelized during the Spanish Inquisition.

Homer: This clearly goes against God’s gift of freewill to man.

Wanda: To me, forcing the will goes against why God allows Satan to live, so that you have that choice. Forced love is not free.

V: You are both right. Servile fear is produced with the power of the sword. It will move the bandit at the bottom of Charts 5.4 and 5.5 up the hierarchy of good in the State. He is forced via fear to ascend in the lower hierarchy of Charts 5.4 & 5.5 (please note that Chart 5.5 should be seen as overlaying Chart 5.4). The bandit is less and less bad as he goes up the sliding scale. He goes up as high as he can go as a good citizen of the State, and then he makes the jump via the sacrament into the Church. Once he is in the Church, he has God’s form in him via the sacrament, and he transitions to filial fear.

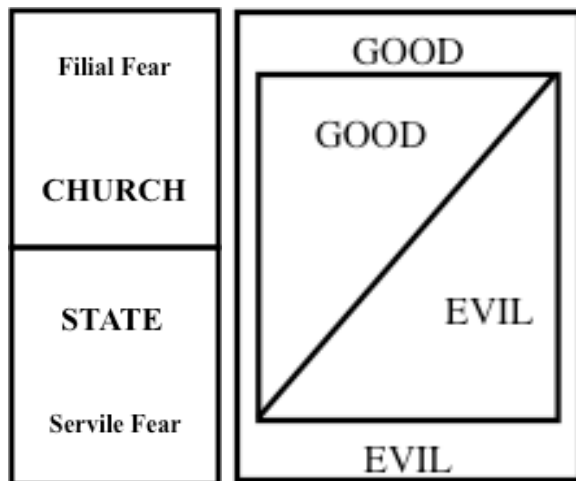


Chart 5.4

Chart 5.5

Filioal fear is a more loving fear. He loves God, but he fears God because of his love for God. But servile fear is a useful method of evangelism for the power-based religion in this two-tier concept. It has been practiced before by the Catholics against the Donatists and against Muslims and Jews in the Spanish Inquisition. The Muslims still practice it today in all the territories under Islamic rule.

Under the threat of torture and death, people start believing. The more afraid they get, the more willing to believe they get. As servile fear intensifies it approaches the point of transitioning into filioal fear.

This is a tough concept, but folks, read your history. Your forefathers paid with their lives for your privilege to be reading this book, freely thinking, and exploring. You owe much to your ancestors, to those martyrs who rebelled and gave their lives for you to have the opportunity for freedom of religion. We need to carry the good news forward, to give everybody an opportunity to use their minds and exercise their faiths. Mind and will work together in faith.

The State Militant

Which of these two in Chart 5.6 would be boss? State? Or church?

Mary: State.

V: Okay, in the quest for understanding, we will now deal with reason as the first step, and belief comes after understanding (see the triangle in Chart 4.9 in the prior chapter). In this model, reason initiates the developing monism which, when fully matured, is sucked up into faith.

In this two-tiered system, you have State on top and church underneath. And so, church is being told to tone its doctrines down to something that is governed by reason, rather than faith.

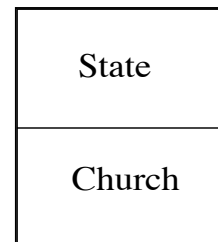


Chart 5.6

The Church is under the control of the State, and the Church's beliefs are established by State decrees/laws. Religion would be forced into a rationalistic approach in which there would be no room for freedom of faith.

The Church's existence would be either allowed or eliminated by the whim of the State. This would be very much like the early Roman Empire in which the Caesars decided to eliminate the Church and later reversed themselves to bless the Church.

Joe: The ideal would be that Church controls Church and State controls State. But the State would still set the limitations as to how far Church can push it on to people. That is the ideal of the United States.

V: Now if you had, then as you describe, Joe, church and State side by side, similar to my faith and reason model, then would that be a good model (see Chart 5.7)?

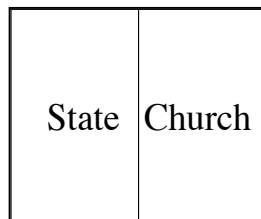


Chart 5.7

Ted: Each would be in control of its own sphere. That sounds like a good model to me.

V: With Each in control of its own area, then they would never infringe on the rights of the other?

Joe: There could still be some infringement, but the State would have the power to keep the Church limited somewhat so that you could not go back to the Church controlling the State and ruling the people by the sword.

V: So then, you think that they would have equal standing, except there would be some control coming from the State?

Oscar: The State would not control doctrine. It would guarantee freedom of religion and worship.

Bob: It would guarantee individual freedom.

Homer: Like a check and balance system.

V: Okay, now I must ask the crucial question: by what power would the State's power be checked by the Church?

Mary: To keep the Church from getting coercive power. The State should prevent the Church's saying, "You will convert to Christianity/Islam/Hindu or I will kill you."

Paul: God gave us the perfect model, i.e. the theocracy.

V: What did the theocracy look like?

Pete: Well, you have the people and God. God is the king, and the people are His subjects. He uses prophets and priests to communicate and carry on business with His people.

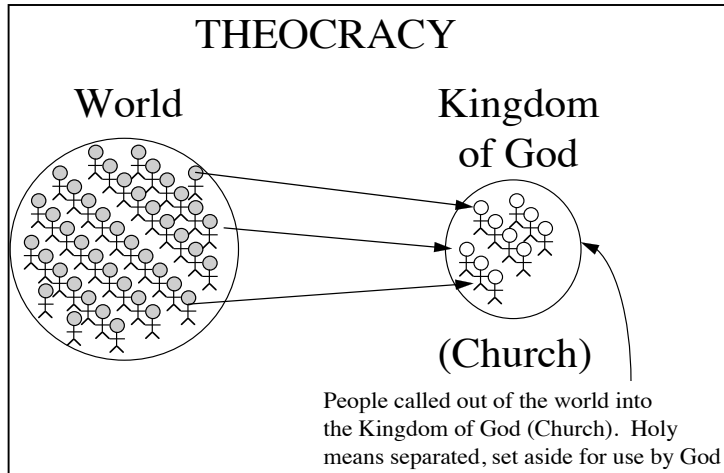
V: Okay. The people of that kind of kingdom were a chosen people, not all the people, were they not?

Pete: Yes.

V: Was not the theocracy of Israel a pilgrim of Israel in the world? So then instead of Church over against State, you have the Church-State as a pilgrim in the world.

The Kingdom of God as a theocracy is populated by people called out of the world—the *ecclesia*, the called out ones, to be used by God as He sees fit (see Chart 5.8 on the next page). That would be, then, a group of people that no longer have the world as their home. They are to be in the world but not of it. They are pilgrims here on earth, but their home is heaven. They are answering to God as their ultimate authority. The Church should be a restoration of the theocratic Lordship of God through Jesus Christ over the individual Christian. Every Christian is responsible to Jesus as his Lord.

My job is to teach the saint and then get his hand into the hand of the Lord and then get out of the way and watch to see what God does with that person. This is the pilgrim

**Chart 5.8**

model or the theocratic model for the Church that resides as pilgrims within the world.

Theocratic means “God rules.” God is Boss. When you have State bossing the Church, then God obviously would not be boss of the Church. Even when the Church is bossing the State, there would be no guarantee that God would be in that arrangement. Thus a Christian theocratic State is not the ideal. In that case, it would just be a repeat of the Church’s rule in the Dark Ages.

Now, coming back to my crucial question, what power would the Church use to check the power of the State in the side-by-side Church and State model of Chart 5.7? In other words, what is to keep the State from using the power of the sword to implement its materialistic anti-faith ideals?

In the end times described in the Bible, Antichrist is going to rule with an iron hand and demand that everyone worships him and takes his mark. His rule will be by decree because he will have the power to enforce anything that he desires. The church that will not follow his rules will simply be destroyed. That scenario of heavy-handed rule by the State could happen right now in America.

All that is keeping tyranny away in America is that our founders were a people

who were seeking *freedom of religion* (see chart 5.7). So, they established America with the checks and balances of a “Constitutional Republic” that was established on the divine principle of a creator. Our Declaration of Independence testifies that all men are endowed by their “creator” with certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Christians who sought freedom of religion established America. Thus, America joins Israel as the only two countries in the world that were established by God as a chosen people

in one case and a chosen government in the other.

Christians whom God used to create the most unique government in the world implemented our government. We call it the American Experiment. In this government, a *constitution* that guarantees freedom of worship was developed to provide God’s supervision (not his rule as in a theocracy) by allowing total freedom of conscience to be restrained only by *beneficent laws* that were founded within three branches of government. Thus congress makes the laws, the judiciary interprets the laws in light of the Constitution, and the executive branch implements the laws. Thus, it is only the voluntary reliance on our unique Constitution that prevents a tyrannical government.

Class, before my very eyes, our Constitutional form of government is being destroyed. What is looming ahead is total tyranny. When the law is removed, then the lawless one will be revealed. State tyranny, then global tyranny, and then Antichrist will be our rewards for abandoning the Constitution.

A monistic State, as seen in global government by Antichrist, will evolve from unchecked power of the State over the Church. All it takes is to tip the scales in

favor of unchecked power of the sword over the power of the vote. That tipping is happening in America through the government's purchasing of the vote, voter fraud, and the media's help. There is a blind faith by our population that is willing to believe all governmental claims. We have been conditioned to believe that the government is looking out for *our* welfare.

Jerry: Today we are the children of God, and we are to evangelize the world, and we, who have the most freedom, are neglecting our job just like Israel did.

V: That is right! We are agreeing with our government's desires to set up barriers to that evangelization via erecting a *wall of separation* of Church and State that will prevent our penetrating the State. The State wants the Christian's pilgrimage to be confined to the Church realm. When the Christian leaves the confines of the Church, he is to leave his religious paraphernalia and witness behind.

Please see that the plan is in place to gradually increase the State's power so that it will soon leave the model as depicted in Chart 5.7 (side by side) and become the model in Chart 5.6 (State over Church). From there it is a short journey to the rule of Antichrist.

Let us now turn our attention to how Christian understanding works. It takes both Word and Spirit working together for us to understand.

WORD AND SPIRIT IN THE PINCER MODEL

The Word and Spirit work together in true Christianity. On the Word part, there is the need for an understanding of the meaning of the words. On the Spirit part, there is the need for illumination of the human mind to understand the highest things of God, and to bring conviction in the heart. You need both

together. It is like two arms working together.

Human reason and faith correlate to divine Word and Spirit. On the one hand, Word is objective and connects with human reason. God's written Word is a rational conveyor of information to man. It is, therefore, a written object to be studied. Reason is the human tool for reading and understanding the information of God's objective Words. Thus reason and the written Word of God correlate.

On the other hand, Faith is subjective and connects with the Holy Spirit Who, as the ultimate subject, seeks to implement God's perfect Will in us. God gave the human subject a free will. Thus we can act on our understanding or reject it. We can obey God or disobey Him. However, since He is the ultimate subject, then He can set the rules and determine the consequences for our actions. He has revealed those rules and consequences in His Word for our benefit. However, if we are to benefit, then we must understand them.

We will come back and talk about the content of propositions, faith and reason, faith in faith, and stuff like that. But before we do that, let me talk to you a little about the two streams within our Southern Baptist ranks.

Faith and Reason in Southern Baptist Ranks **Understanding before Believing**

Going to your Bible and opening it up, reading and understanding the Roman road to salvation which includes the Statement that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23) is all rational induction. However, in your consideration of God's saying that all have sinned, and you conclude that you are included in the 'all,' then that is deduction. Both that understanding plus the conviction that comes with the understanding come by the illuminating work of the Holy Spirit.

By using this illustration, I have demonstrated how rational understanding and spiritual conviction came before belief during the Reformation. Today, many of you are following that same process by going to the Word of God and getting your information to process. Then you get some more information which you connect with the prior information. You build a database in your mind, and then you begin to come to some conclusions. This is the process for how you get saved. You come to some conclusions—you realize you are lost, God has paid the price to purchase your pardon, and it is offered as a gift to you. All you have to do is call upon the name of the Lord to ask for forgiveness, and He will forgive your sins and give you the gift of eternal life. When you believe and do that and get saved, you began the process with an inductive study of God's Words that He has caused to be written down for you. This approach is an approach of understanding before believing.

In this approach there is a working together of Word and Spirit for understanding. I am using "Word" in this context as a rationally understandable written Word from God, especially when the Spirit illuminates It for you. Thus Word and Spirit work together as a divine team.

Inductive study means that you open the Scriptures, and you begin to read and study. As you persevere in your study of the Word, you will begin to understand what you are reading because the Spirit gives illumination to your reason. The two working together stimulate faith in you. "Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Romans 10:17).

The theological process involves reason, faith, Spirit, and Word. It starts with the actual Words of the Scriptures themselves. When you open up the Word, start pulling the data together through reason illuminated by the Holy Spirit, start analyzing the intercon-

nections, and start drawing conclusions about yourself by faith aided by the Holy Spirit's conviction, that is theology.

Reason does not eliminate faith because faith results from the jointly working together of Word and Spirit in a pincer movement on one's reason. My faith in my Savior is a result of my understanding of the rational, written Word of God. That understanding is enabled by the illumination of my reason by the Holy Spirit. With the understanding comes also the Holy Spirit's conviction in my heart which leads to faith, true faith leads to actions. Dead faith is mere assent without actions.

Willful Believing apart from Understanding

Within Baptist ranks, however, there is another approach. There is a group of Baptists who say that a two-pincer model is philosophy, not theology, because philosophy is a rational-based system. They claim that to open up the Word and to study the Word like we do is rationalism.

This mystical side of Baptist ranks rejects propositional revelation and opts for personal revelation. They reject all objective forms of revelation. Thus, the Bible is not revelation to them. Instead, it is the arena of revelation. When this group's proponents open up the Scriptures, they step into the context in which the "real" (remember the Platonic forms?) Word of God, the person of Jesus, encounters the human spirit. This subject-subject encounter is not through the intellect in which we understand, with the Holy Spirit's help, information-bearing words. It is instead through the lightning bolt personal encounter on earth with Christ, the only Word of God.

In personal revelation, the words are not revelation. One can be reading the Scriptures which declare that something is a sin, and if you do not get the lightning bolt confirmation, then that passage is not God's Word for this

group. Only when you have a mystical encounter with the Word of God (the Person of Jesus Himself), is there direct revelation from person to person. That direct revelation may not have the same meaning as the words that you were reading.

In Protestant ranks there are two different groups. The mystical group is called Neo-orthodoxy. This group holds to personal revelation, i.e. the lightning bolt encounter of the human spirit with the person of Christ, the Word of God. There is not much place given to the work of reason or to the written Word of God by this group. This group would label me a philosopher rather than a theologian.⁴

The other group believes that the Holy Spirit inspired the Word of God, and so the Scriptures are the inerrant Word of God written, and Jesus is the Personal Word of God incarnate. Thus, when you open and read the Words of God that He has provided for us in written form, those Words coming into the mind bring along with them understanding provided jointly by reason and Spirit. The result is that “Faith comes by hearing (i.e. rational understanding) and hearing by the Word of God (i.e. divine Words accompanied by Spiritual illumination and conviction)” (Romans 10:17). Thus Word and Spirit jointly work together like pincers as the power of God to bring about understanding and faith. This group is the rational side of Protestantism.

⁴ I cannot prove any of the following, but I lived through it. Without recording the evidence, my claims which follow have to be stated as just my own personal experience: In my doctoral program, I discovered, to my dismay, that nearly all of my student-peers and professors in the School of Theology were of this group. Only by God’s supernatural help, was I able to survive the open hostility that I encountered from these seminarians who said that they loved the Lord. I agonize over my realization that every one of those esteemed students and professors are either retired or still in the schools and churches spewing their rejection of objective revelation, i.e. the inerrant written Word of God as God’s objective revelation.

Note that on the one hand, pure Aristotelianism becomes so objectified that belief is basically intellectual assent to human understanding without the Spirit’s illumination and conviction. In this case, it would be a mere rational human philosophy. On the other hand, pure Neo-platonism will take one too far on the mystical side in which the Spirit replaces the intellect, and the Words lose their objective meanings. In this scenario, belief becomes a faith in faith, which is nothing more than a mere mystical subjectivism.

Wanda: Would the mystical side be emotionally based?

V: Yes.

Wanda: So you need a balance between reason and Spirit.

V: Yes, you need a position somewhere in the middle where faith comes from a rational *and* a Spiritual understanding of God’s objective Words which issues into a trust in God Himself and what He said. That is real faith unless one fails to implement it.

Steve: I think the key is something you say all the time, i.e. we are all deceived. When we admit it, only then can we get to that middle ground.

V: Yes, and you then can make the changes that move you toward righteousness. But if you are locked down in your intellectual knowledge, then you cannot grow because excluded is God’s spiritual intellect, the Mind of Christ. Or if you are locked into your mystical world, then you cannot grow past your ignorance of Spirit-aided rational understanding of God’s Words Themselves.

Bob: Paul’s prayer was that we would grow in **grace and knowledge**.

V: Yes, I think that commandment points out growth in both faith and reason. There is always advancement in front of us; none of us has arrived. There is only one perfect theologian. His Name is Jesus.

Lightning-bolt revelation discards all unpleasantries of Scripture. Anything that you do not want to believe can be discarded if you do not have a lightning-bolt confirmation of it. The result is that you end up picking and choosing which passages apply to you based on your own subjectivity.

Steve: That pincer movement is what Christ refers to as worshiping Him in Spirit and in Truth.

V: Good analysis, Steve!

All right let me talk to you a minute about some other things here. The first is propositions.

Propositional Revelation

A proposition is a group of words put into a meaningful order so that you can understand what is being said. The Bible is basically a series of propositions. Propositions have meaning; you have to read or hear them in order to understand them.

If the proposition is assented to, then the proposition is objectified and it stands over against you. You could even put in a big notebook all the biblical propositions that you agree with. You then could set your notebook aside and go about your life just like nothing has happened. When your life does not reflect what is in that notebook, the Scriptures are not assimilated into your life; they are merely just intellectual assents to objective propositions. That is going too far to the one side where you have intellectualized Christianity to just a collection of propositional codes.

I have also encountered a group of professors who declared that propositional revelation is evil because assimilating a proposition is credalism. The people that I know who are in this group say: "We are just going to live for Christ."

When a person steps away from all propositions of the Bible, he is left with only

the mystical and emotional experiences. He receives the Lord, is lifted up into ecstasy, and lives his Christian life out of that feeling. Friends, that is subjective faith without any objective content other than what you want to believe. It is a faith in faith which is emotionally or sentimentally driven.

True faith in God values both the objective proposition and also the subjective application. I am trying to show you the difference between faith in faith and a true faith in a true object.

There is also a huge difference between mere assent to the objective propositions and experiential and subjective assimilation of them. The assent model is dead faith. The subjective encounter is a faith-in-faith model that is misdirected. Only understanding and belief in objective propositions, which becomes expressed in subjective obedience to the Person Who gave the propositions, is true faith.

Steve: Christ's life was a balance of "He knew, understood, and kept the commandments as an expression of His love and obedience to the Father."

V: Yes! He modeled faith for us, and all the apostles did it too. There is a tendency for each of you to lean to one side or the other, i.e. to rigid objective knowledge or loose subjective feelings. Only Jesus was perfectly balanced. The rest of us are leaning one way or the other. I am not saying that you are totally one way or the other but just a little out of balance. I want you to seek that balance because it is a wise man that actively follows after the Lord in a way that conforms exactly with His meaning that is expressed in His Word.

Paul: It seems to me that out of balances occur because man gets in the way and wants to do what man wants to do. We are drawn to something because we want to feel a certain way, or we must have this or that. Those

desires always draw us off from truly focusing on Jesus and following Him. Entire systems are built on one or the other human desires.

V: Every one of us has an internal desire or agenda. We may not be conscious of it, but it is there because each of us is fighting the “old man in us.”

Steve: When we are rooted in the Word of God with a good hermeneutic, His Spirit will keep us from falling via deception. But our wills are still involved. Salvation is free, but there is a price for discipleship. We must be willing to pay that price.

V: Good point, Steve. God’s directions for us work in a pincer movement, i.e. the objective Word and the subjective Spirit. The directions that we follow must have our objective reason and subjective faith to harmonize simultaneously with those two divine sources.

Pete: We are at war with the subjectivism of our selfish desires.

Tim: Does deception necessarily mean that we are deceived not basically on what we know but on what we think that we know?

V: I think everyone of us is faulty in every area of life, e.g. in our wills, knowledge, emotions, and relationships. I think that we need to rationally go to the Word of God, open it up, read for objective understanding what He is calling for.

We should not read the Word out of our subjectivity. When you read the *kenosis* with an **objective** mind, all of a sudden it starts making sense. It is calling for us to go down into sacrifice and suffering for righteousness

sake in order to have the mind of Jesus. The exaltation comes after the grave, not before.

However, we do not like to hear the call to *kenosis*. Instead, we are floating around in our subjective selfishness, as Pete just said. Thus, we come to the Bible in search of temporal blessings in our selfishness.

Oscar: What about the consequences of disobedience?

V: In our near sightedness, we do not see the eternal consequences of selfishness. We come at everything so screwed up because of being focused on the acquisition of money and power that it takes a strong person indeed to read and understand what the Bible says about eternal consequences. We all are continuously being tempted to trade our eternal blessings for temporal ones.

“Oh my goodness, I am undone” should be expressed every time we read the Scriptures objectively. It is like looking in a mirror. We see our true reflections, and we say, “Oh no, I am a mess.” But we forget what we saw very quickly after leaving the mirror of God’s Word.

Tim: Paul said, I do that which I would not do, and I do not do that which I would do (Romans 7:5).

V: It is a balance problem.

Two out-of-balance sins with which I wrestle are: the seeking of personal assurance in a code of belief and the repeating of an action because it felt good when I did it.

The first is faith in a code, i.e. legalism, rather than faith in God and His Word. The second is an emotional discernment of truth based on feelings. Both are sins of the flesh.

Chapter Questions

1. What is the Ontological Argument for the existence of God?
2. What are the five proofs (arguments) for God’s existence by Thomas Aquinas?
3. What is the pincer movement within hermeneutics?
4. What is our hermeneutical problem?

Chapter 6

HOW CAN ONE KNOW TRUTH?

REVIEW OF THE EARLY CHURCH'S PHILOSOPHY

The two ancient views are: first, that we get our knowledge from inside ourselves. This view is basically dealing with soul memory. The second view is that we get our knowledge from outside ourselves. That view is inductive empiricism.

Those two strands of thought entered the church age at two different times. The post apostolic Church first took up the Neo-platonic methodology, and so the foundation was developed for a system of knowledge that was called deductive reasoning.

The tragedy of the post apostolic Church's knowledge was that the deductions were from a limited batch of knowledge that was created from papal decrees. The result was that no room was allowed for examining the evidences from the outside world. Preventing the people from looking at new ideas put them into somewhat of a bondage situation. That bondage of the mind caused the Dark Ages.

The Dark Ages was a time in which there was no light and no additional scientific knowledge because people were basically limited even to what they could think about. One risked being excommunicated from the Church if he should come up with an idea that was outside of the boundaries of what was authorized by the Church.

Most of the Catholic Church's theology was formed during the Dark Ages. It was deduced out of the body of knowledge that was fallacious to begin with. Over the long haul, the established theology became so skewed that Martin Luther turned to the Scriptures instead of the Church for the truth. He discovered that God, not the Church, forgave sin

and gave eternal life and that God did so by grace through faith. Grace was discovered to be not a saving substance but rather God's unmerited favor.

The definition of grace had become perverted by the Church, which defined it as a substance that had to be accumulated by the person to provide eternal life. The Church then needed a method for distributing the grace. So, the sacraments were developed to provide the vehicles. In sacramentalism, the wine and bread of the Lord's Supper had to be changed into the grace-bearing body and blood of Jesus of the Church's Mass in order to provide the grace to the sinner. Thus, a special prayer and a special person had to be invented who had the power to make that change. So, the prayer¹ of the Mass was recited by a special person who had gained the power via ordination, another sacrament, to make that change. In the Mass, the sinner could actually eat the grace.

So then was the problem of how salvation occurred considered to be solved? Not quite! Then the question arose about how much grace did one need to go to heaven. No one seemed to know how to answer that one. It was thought that a person who possessed some amount of grace could not go to hell because grace could not be disgraced. The question arose then that if the person did not possess enough grace to go to heaven, where did he go when he died? So, an interim place needed to be invented to hold someone who did not have enough grace to go straight to heaven. That place was called purgatory where the person's excess sin was purged.

¹ As I recall in my dimming memory, the prayer is in Latin, and part of it sounded to the peasants of the Dark Ages like *hocus pocus*.

The Neo-platonic hierarchy of being provided a structure for another dandy method of accumulating grace, other than through the sacraments. That way was by the Aristotelian ethics when the second stream of inductive empiricism entered the Church via Thomas Aquinas' Medieval Synthesis. Good works were added by the Church as an aid to climbing the hierarchy toward heaven.

With the addition of good works as another source of grace, there became two classes of Christians. One class was the saint who went straight to heaven. It was theorized that the saint had earned so much grace through good works that, when added to that which was gained through their participation in the sacraments, there was more than enough to provide their own needs to go straight to heaven and still have some left over. Their excess grace was given by the "saint" to the Church to be redistributed via the sacraments to the non-saints, the other class of Christians.

The Church needed a place to store the excess grace so that it could redistribute it to sinners as needed. So, the Church's Treasury of Merit was invented in order to store up the extra grace earned by Jesus, Mary, and the saints. The priests dispensed that grace from the Treasury of Merit through the seven sacraments to the Church's members.

So, the disasters that came out of the historical streams of philosophy hit the Church in its doctrines. The practical consequence had to do with salvation. Even people of today are still being affected.²

Oscar: I will confess that this course has opened my eyes to the reason that Christians are being persecuted today. The Romans per-

² The book, *Seven Men Who Ruled the World from the Grave* by Dave Breese, describes the practical consequences of seven philosophies. Philosophy is impacting our world and impacting our churches. We need to see what that impact is. Thus, I have included a student's summary of that book in the appendix.

secuted Christians in the early days for accepting Christ **as the only way**, not for accepting Christ. That movement is going on right now. We cannot bring Christ into prayer; we can pray if we want to, but we cannot use Christ. This course has made me realize that there are thought patterns that society is following, and if you go against those thought patterns, you are going to be considered the problem.

Betty: Dr. Vinson, I work for the state, and I was given an assignment last week to drive to Dallas and assist a young male employee who claims that he is unable to work because of his stress. His stress results from his cross-dressing and claim that he is a woman. I can neither bring my Bible to work, nor discuss religion while working for the state or the government. Now, I must drive to Dallas to do his work for which he still gets paid. It is okay for him to express his beliefs in that way, but it is not okay for me to do the same. Oscar is right; the state does not want Christians. It wants political correctness.

V: I have concluded that political correctness is a religion of the cosmic spirit.³ The government follows that evil spirit by suppressing our rights. The gay guy has rights that we do not have because he fits within political correctness.

I am going to simplify our present battles as resulting from two basic streams of philosophy that have come down to the present time. That two-stream system was embodied in Socrates.

³ The cosmic spirit is **not** the Holy Spirit! There are only two spirits, i.e. the Holy Spirit and the devil's evil spirit. Societies and cultures that are not fashioned by God are being directed by the cosmic spirit of the devil who is trying to progress them to include the whole world. Be aware that Progressives are the devil's proponents for using political correctness to achieve a global government.

TWO BASIC STREAMS OF PHILOSOPHY

The two streams are the deductive stream and the inductive stream.

The Deductive Stream

When you are deducing truth from a body of beliefs, then those initial beliefs are all important because they dictate all truth from that point on. If that body of knowledge is papal decrees, then all the truth that is available to the Christian has to fit within that scenario of papal decrees.

Some of the papal decrees contradicted natural evidence. Concerning the structure of our solar system, the pope decreed that the earth was at its center, and that the sun revolved around the earth instead of vice versa. I am saying all of that to say this: that even in your present situation, you probably possess a systematized body of truth that may not be completely true. If that is the case, then some of your thinking may be limited to cliché-type theology that fits your body of truth. Cliché-type theology eliminates thinking; it is assumed to be true because you have heard it so many times.

Henry. What is a cliché?

V: “Where the rubber meets the road” and “garbage in, garbage out” are secular clichés. I am tempted to use the second one to describe the deductive system of the Dark Ages.

Tim: “Cleanliness is next to godliness” is one that I have heard all of my life; my mother said that it was in the Bible!

V: Mine, too. But, you see, once you are conditioned to accept a cliché, it becomes binding to you. Your mind cannot think beyond it. As a matter of fact, clichés cut off thinking. Once a cliché is heard in the ear, your thought processes stop dealing with how the truth of the proposition under investiga-

tion is achieved. All thought then builds upon the conclusion supported by the cliché.

There are batches of data that have been accumulated by churches and denominations that are not being examined any more because they are accepted across the board, *carte blanche*, and as a result, theological inquiry has diminished. Some theology has turned into nothing more than a restatement of pop culture and authoritative declarations rather than examination and testing. The doctrines of salvation, church, and end times are prime examples.

The Inductive Stream

I want you to come out of this course with a questioning mind, a mind that will examine whatever it is that you are building your system from and upon. Examine your own biases because we all confess with our mouth that our body of data is the Bible. However, when we interpret the Bible, we differ as to what it says. You may understand one meaning, and I may understand a different meaning. One of us is wrong or both of us are wrong. We should continually re-examine our theology as we go along, and that examination should be objective.

We need to be able to risk all of our conclusions. If you have your systematic theology all built, and along comes a piece of data from the Bible that, with an honest evaluation, contradicts your system, you know that you must tear your system down into its elements, and then start reassembling to build in that piece of data that you just got from God’s Word. It must go in; it cannot be discarded.

Honest theology is one in which you will question even your own. As you do that and begin to move from this day forward, you can begin to grow into having the mind of Christ as commanded by God (Philippians 2:5).

ANTECEDENTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

Both ancient Humanism and also Islam were primary antecedents. Strangely enough, Islam played an unintended role in the Renaissance that turned out to be very significant. Even though I opine that Islam exceeds all of the world's religions in restrictions, with the sole exception of Progressivism, that enslave its adherents, it inadvertently aided the expansion of freedom.

The Hunger for Truth Brought Investigation

Humanism, which was an antecedent of the Renaissance, began in A.D. 1340 when Petrarch began to examine human sufferings and passions and began to write poetry about it. This was a very simple approach. His poetry stimulated a re-examination of the value of man. When it became evident to men that mankind had value, it led to the ideas that man could not just be dictated to or that all knowledge was to be set up by elitists as a body of knowledge that enslaved men's minds. Humanism reversed that attitude and brought man out from under that suppression of thought.

The freeing of man to think outside of the box brought the birth of Humanism. This original Humanism was good because man was no longer an object to be used at the whim of the king or the pope. He had value, and his sufferings and thoughts had to be accounted for. This humanistic influence became the catalyst for the Renaissance.

Jerry: Would Humanism not also be *anti-kenosis*, because they have started looking to themselves rather than at theology or rather than God?

V: That would be correct for the Humanism of today. However, the first form of Humanism opened the door to the *kenosis* through **freedom**.

In the *kenosis* man is making definite choices which are based on his knowledge of theology and freedom to choose. The perception of humanity as a mindless devalued mass was challenged. Rebellious men began saying, "I am a man! I have value! I have been created in the image of God!" Instead of the reversal of the *kenosis*, it was the re-establishment of it. The early brand of Humanism is not like what we have today. Humanism of today is idolatry, but that of the 14th Century was a re-establishment of the value of man that confirmed the worthiness of the Lord's death.

Exposure to the East Brought Science

After the Turks⁴ (Muslims) captured the Holy Land and Constantinople in 1453, the West mounted several crusades to take back the Holy Land and Constantinople. These encounters brought the Crusaders into contact with new inventions of science that had been closed off to them by the Church's limitations on thinking and exploration beyond the official body of truth. In its contacts with the East, the West was about to shake off some of the chains of bondage that had created the Dark Ages. Thinking and scientific exploration was about to launch Europe into a new optimistic excitement that heretofore had never been experienced.⁵

The Hunger for Commerce Brought Exploration

The capture of Constantinople by the Muslims in 1453 cut off the land passage

⁴ When you take Church History, you will see how significant the Turkish threat was to the Reformation. All of these courses link up so tightly, that each enhances the value of the other. If you take Church History first, then Philosophy is more meaningful to you. But if you take Philosophy first, Church History is more meaningful to you.

⁵ Amazingly, the West benefited from the fledgling science of the East and used it to advance to world leadership. Islam of the East, on the other hand, still languishes in its backwater theocratic slavery.

from west to east. So the Roman Empire was cut off from the sources of goods in the east. Passage could not be made from Rome through Constantinople into Turkey, the Middle East, and the Far East because Islam controlled the Middle East. A Christian could not pass through Muslim land except at the risk of his life.

Alternatively, passage for Westerners into the Far East was sought by ship. In 1492 Columbus sailed the ocean blue looking for a passage to the East so that commerce that had been cut off from the East could be re-established. Instead of finding a path to the East, Columbus found a new world, and here we are, folks.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY: THE RENAISSANCE AND THE REFORMATION

Copernicus was a mathematician and an astrologer. After studying the movements of the stars, he developed some mathematical models that described the movements. Copernicus came up with the *Helio Centric Theory* in 1543, which means that the sun is the center of our galaxy, and that the earth revolved around the sun.

The Pope had already said that the earth was the center of the solar system and that the sun revolved around the earth. In opposition to the pope's decree, Copernicus' mathematical models were developed out of his observations of the movements of the planets and the stars. This inductive science was in direct conflict with the Pope's "inerrant" declaration. However, the Pope allowed Copernicus' conclusion to exist as a "false" theory, and so Copernicus was allowed to live through his "rebellion." He was not killed, but his theory was not widely accepted either.

The Reformation was a religious version of the Renaissance. The Renaissance resulted from the renewal of the worthiness of man to

re-examine all accepted facts of nature. The Reformation likewise resulted from Christians' re-examining the Church's theology.

The Reformation started a return to the Bible in search of a reliable body of Truth. As a result, a great new body of spiritual knowledge sprang up, and salvation was discovered not to be by the Church's forgiveness of sins. Furthermore, salvation was discovered not to be the gaining of substantial grace through a sacrament. Salvation was discovered to be the good news of a direct and immediate gift of life from God through His Son's sacrificial death.

This discovery of biblical salvation came out of Luther's reading the Bible and thinking about what he had read. The conclusion that somebody had to be wrong was unavoidable. Either the Bible was wrong or the Pope was wrong.

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY: RATIONALISM

Two men formed the two poles of epistemology: deduction in the Dark Ages versus induction in the Renaissance. Galileo took the inductive Renaissance side of thinking, and Descartes took the deductive Dark-Ages side.

Galileo's Science in the Midst of Rationalism

Galileo used refined inductive measurements to "prove" the theory that the sun was the center of the galaxy. Copernicus had gotten away with that so-called "false" theory because it was declared to be only a theory. But Galileo did not get away with it because of the Church's sensitivity to the Reformation's increasing momentum.

Sensitivity to the inroads of the advancing Reformation was a large factor in the Church's resistance to Galileo. However, by doggedly holding to his heliocentric theory,

Galileo was cutting at the very roots of papal authority.

So, Renaissance or not, Galileo had to be suppressed along with his science. The dreaded Inquisition condemned him in 1633 and sentenced him to life in prison. Even though his sentence was subsequently and mysteriously suspended, his theory gained no traction in the Church. It, along with any contradictions to the Church's *corpus*, were not allowed to be taught and were suppressed. The suppression of Galileo's discovery served as an example that there was to be no new thought.

The power of deductive thinking lies in its accepted base of truth. Once the body or the *corpus* of knowledge is put in place, and you are in a deductive thinking environment, my friend, you are in bondage because all thought has to correlate with that basic body of data.⁶

If the body of accepted truth has errors in it, you are in bondage to error. There is no escape out of that bondage except by going against the tide, becoming politically incorrect, and being subject to modern-day inquisition and all of the penalties that it can bring down upon you. You can be fired from your job even if you are actually right, and they are actually wrong. You can be put into jail because you are right and they are wrong. You can be fined, have your tax exemption snatched, have all manner of things brought against you if you are subject to an erroneous *corpus*.

Mary: I know a church where the pastor has his non-Scriptural beliefs in certain things that are sacrosanct. No teaching will be permitted that is in conflict with his beliefs. Something inductively attained that does not agree with what he believes must be held in secret. Even though the pastor is wrong, the

people believe him in order to be accepted by the power structure.

V: Beware of the tendency to go with the authority of the majority! We have to be brave. Galileo's example of inductive thinking that came up with the truth was treated as a crime. He was right, but he had to go to jail because he accepted truth over authoritative decrees to the contrary. Can we do as much?

Galileo lived in the early part of the 17th Century, but his system of thought was an inductive system. It was not going to be adopted because of the strong authoritative Church's resistance of anything disharmonious with the *corpus* of truth established by the pope. The idea of empiricism or inductive thinking or scientific investigation was set aside for a whole century because of what happened to Galileo. Thus the Catholics suppressed the Enlightenment until the 18th Century.

The 17th Century was a strong return to Rationalism as a basis for rejecting any semblance of the Reformation's inductive study of a "new *corpus*," the Bible. Basically, the additional century of Rationalism was truly spawned and spurred on by the Inquisition's condemnation of Galileo. Galileo's treatment told everybody not to go out investigating things and measuring them and looking through telescopes and doing inductive studies of nature because that will get you jailed. Just keep your head down and mind your own business. Do your work, pay your money, go to church, and do whatever the church leaders tell you to do. That will keep you out of jail and keep everything going fine and peaceful because the official body of truth stayed in place.

Descartes exemplifies this period by making a significant contribution to the century of Rationalism. Now, we turn to the problem that Descartes had and see how he solved it.

⁶ This is the condition that Progressivism must have. Again, it is called **political correctness**.

Descartes' Return to Rationalism

Descartes followed right on the heels of Galileo. So, he encountered Rationalism as basically the only way of thinking that was allowed by the powers-that-be. Since Galileo was in jail for his empiricism, Descartes knew that inductive evidence in contradiction to the accepted *corpus* was being challenged and set aside by the Church. The only thing left open for him to use was Rationalism, but Descartes had already seen that the results of Rationalism were often contradictory to what he could see with his own eyes.

Different popes building the same body of truth for the Church made some contradictory decrees. Abelard⁷ had already written a book in the 12th Century on contradictions in the Church's theology. The book's title was *Sic et Non* which means *Yes and No*. In it, he would select a doctrine, and then he would quote an inerrant pope who supported the doctrine, and then he would quote another inerrant pope who rejected the doctrine.⁸ Thus it was evident that something was wrong with the Church's *corpus*.

Given all the contradictions within "truth" found by Abelard, Descartes' dilemma was "how to find real truth" in his rationalistic environment in which error, not truth, was inherent with the inerrant authorities: "How am I to know what is true when the inerrant authorities cannot even figure out what is true?" He decided that he was going to distrust everything, even his own empirical

senses. If the Church said that black was white, but black looked black to him, who would be right? He could not defy the Church's authority, so his senses were declared to be unreliable.

Descartes decided that the only way that he could come out with a truthful system that was not deceptive was to disregard all sense experience. His conclusion meant that the Age of Enlightenment would be set aside and empirical knowledge would be set aside with it. All inductive logic had to be set aside because all of it was fallacious. He decided that one could not trust his senses or any evidence from his senses.

Descartes decided to stay safe within a rationalistic approach. However, if the *corpus* of knowledge, the Church's body of truth, was already fouled up, he could not trust it either. He decided that he could not trust any inbound stuff, especially any of the Church's truth that everybody had been trusting, and declared that he "must start in a new place."

Descartes decided that he would start with what he could "intuit within himself" the one thing which was self-evidently true and that could not be doubted. He decided to doubt everything until he could find something that could not be doubted. That one thing then would become his foundational truth upon which to build his *corpus*. He doubted that God existed, he doubted that the world existed, and he doubted that he himself existed. He doubted everything.

After much wresting with many issues, Descartes arrived at his first "truth." He arrived at the first issue by doubting that he himself existed. Then he realized that he had to be there to doubt that he existed. So whether he doubted or believed that he existed, he had to exist in order to doubt or to believe that he existed.

Descartes' first premise that he put into his body of truth was "I think, therefore, I

⁷ For his so-called heresy, Abelard was sentenced to life in a monastery. Surprisingly, the charge against him was not heresy, but teaching without a license.

⁸ The Church's doctrine yielded to the current pope because he had the power to enforce it. Eventually, the popes explained away all historical contradictions through a new doctrine of Progressive Revelation. In this doctrine, it was said that popes were inerrant only so far as their revelation had progressed. As papal intuitive, inerrant revelation progressed, so did their inerrant doctrinal decrees.

am.” You have heard this cliché probably all of your life. He came up with it as the first principle of knowledge that had to be intuitively true and self-evident because whether or not it was true that he thought he existed, he had to exist to think it. If he doubted that he existed, then he had to be there to do the doubting. Either way he had to exist. This was a simplistic approach in Descartes’ Rationalism.

I point out, at this point, that instead of ontology’s being prime for Descartes’ body of truth, he had moved to process. This change was similar to, but not exactly like, God’s command to evaluate a tree by its fruit. The difference, however, was that God was not telling us to investigate the tree’s existence, but rather its qualitative kind via *empirical* examination of its fruit, and Descartes’ investigation was through pure Rationalism. He supported the *rational* examination of something’s actions to point out that the thing had to exist in order to act. Thus, Descartes’ first principle foreshadows the terrible Process Theology that we will examine later in the course.

Next, Descartes had to decide what would be his next principle. He decided that he had to think about God. So he said, “Well, does God exist?” He finally came up with the idea that there is such a gap between the finite and infinite, between man and God, that it is unbridgeable by man. So, he concluded that “if the gap is unbridgeable by man, then the ‘idea of God’⁹ had to come from God.” If he is thinking about God, then God has to exist because the only way that you can have that idea is if God bridges the gap to give us the idea.¹⁰

⁹ Note that obtaining truth by just thinking is pure Rationalism.

¹⁰ This gap concept is factual. God gave the revelation of Himself to man principally via His creation, His Son, and His Word. That is what revelation means. We have general revelation and special revelation. In

Descartes built a new *corpus* because the old *corpus* was logically unreliable. Inductive experience was unreliable to him as well because it went against the authorities of the Church. Descartes intended to build a whole new *corpus*, and then he was going to deduct out of that *corpus* all of his new truth using mathematical models.

The new age of Rationalism then was pioneered by Descartes who was trying to do it in a better way in order to avoid the entrance of any errors. His trimmed down *corpus* would be something that would be reliable, something upon which he could trust his life.

The innate idea is intuitive. Intuitive means that it is not sensed from the outside; it is sensed from the inside, like imaging in your mind. You can intuit a perfect triangle, but you cannot sense a perfect triangle because there is no such thing as a perfect triangle. Every triangle that any engineer draws is flawed, but you can intuit a perfect triangle. You can say that each side is perfectly straight, equal in length, all sides in the same plane, and every angle is identical. You can intuit it, but you cannot construct it. You can describe it intuitively, but you cannot sense it.

So, on the basis of intuition’s capabilities, God has given you the innate capability of intuiting some of His Truths. On the other hand, you also gain most of His Truths through sensory experience.

An adventitious thing is something that you encounter. If someone taps you on the shoulder to get your attention, that is an adventitious event, and you sense that. The sensed event gives you the *idea* that somebody wants your attention, and you turn to see who it is and what he wants.

You can see something that brings an idea into your mind. For example, you can see a

the doctrines book, we deal extensively with the whole concept.

steak on television cooking on a grill, and you can have the idea of how delicious that would be, and your mouth will salivate. That is a physical, psychological, and emotional reaction to a mere idea.

Descartes says that the two ways from which you can get ideas are via adventitious events and via intuitions. However, the intuited ones are the only reliable ones. The adventitious thing will mess you up and cause you to have ideas that are wrong because you cannot trust your senses.

Out of intuition, Descartes deduced a mathematical model that is reliable. Whereas subjectivity in your personal analysis and conclusions are subject to great distortion and error, the mathematical model remains reliable.

The adventitious idea enters the mind and creates a chain reaction of intuitions. If the person should begin to think more and more about the ideas that result from the cascading intuitions, he could derive a theological premise, a theological conclusion, or even a whole doctrine.

The process begins with an adventitious question. You think about it by going step-by-step one after another, back and forth through intuition, analysis, back to intuition, then analysis repetitively in order to gather a whole bunch of data that is reliable because it is considered by the Rationalist to be from God when intuited. Rationalism, remember, is almost like soul memory.

Sensations, on the other hand, come into your body from the outside through the senses, and then they pass over to your mind. Once sensations reach the mind, then you can intuit something that is related to them. This is a physical kind of process that becomes spiritual according to Descartes. But then he encountered the following problem: where does the physical process become a spiritual process?

Tim: Because he is separating the mind and body?

V: Right. When you separate mind and body, where is the nexus; what is the link? How can you hook the two realms together? How can spirit and material hook together? How does mind move the body? How does the body influence the mind? There must be some kind of a bridge that hooks the two together. How can your mind's intuiting of ideas make your body do something?

Descartes wrestled with this issue: how does the mind hook up with the body? How can the body be moved by the mind? How can the mind tell the arm to rise, and it rises? What connects two different things that are qualitatively distinct?

In answer to this question about linkage, Descartes came up with the pineal gland theory: the pineal gland is the link between the mind and the body (see Chart 6.1). Descartes pointed to the pineal gland that was declared to be in the middle of the brain as the nexus between the physical and the mental. And so when the body senses something, *e.g.*, part of your body becomes uncomfortable, the senses go up into the pineal gland, the pineal gland takes this electronic impulse (physical act) and translates it into an idea (rational act).

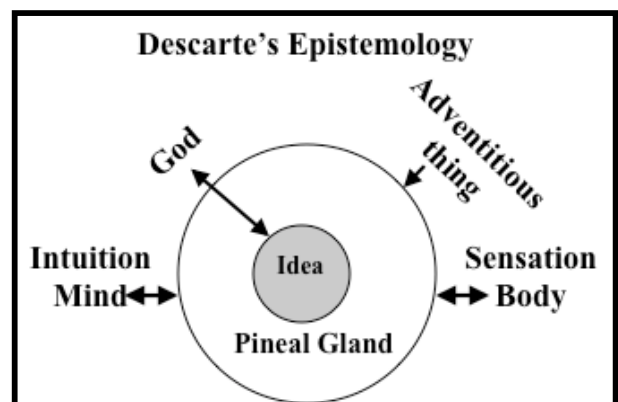


Chart 6.1

The idea is that you should move out of the uncomfortable location. That idea goes back to the pineal gland where it is translated

into an electronic charge (physical act) that is designed to move the body to a different location.

Tim: Descartes must have known something about anatomy.

V: Yes, he knew something about both anatomy and also math. Philosophy and math work together because mathematics is an abstraction. When you add 2 and 2, you get 4. But what do you get 4 of? Because math is an abstraction, the 4 can be of anything. You can have 2 apples and 2 apples to get 4 apples, or you can throw away the object (apples) and just have the rule, the abstraction itself, and say 2 plus 2 is 4.

The abstraction can be used as an algorithmic rule or a model, and say 2 of a thing plus 2 of the same thing make 4 of those things. It works every time. It is reliable. Philosophy is a quest for truth, for wisdom, and therefore is looking always for a model that is reliable. Mathematics and physics are two of the primary models of philosophy.

Eighteenth Century: Empiricism

Empiricism, which had been restrained by the Church for a whole century of Renaissance stirrings, finally broke through the bondage in the 18th Century. Empiricism was the novelty of obtaining data through the empirical senses, i.e. induction. One could read, study, magnify, describe, and draw it. This was the century of Empiricism.

Jill: Through experience?

V: Yes, but it had to be sensory experience—touch, feel, taste, sight. It is not just the rational experience of thinking about it. It was to be an inductive experience of getting your data from the outside. In 1727 the Enlightenment included the birth of Newtonian physics. I studied Newtonian physics in all of my studies. You older guys studied this kind too. They are the plain, ordinary physical kind of physics where you are looking at

planes, slopes, gravities, levers, pulleys, and things like that where you have real stuff there that you are looking at. However, the new process-prime philosophy has adopted quantum physics which we will examine later.

Kant ushered in the Nineteenth Century by synthesizing the prior two centuries into something that has impacted our theology.

Nineteenth Century: Return to Synthesis

The Kantian synthesis was of Rationalism and Empiricism. Rationalism is knowledge by intuition similar to soul memory. Empiricism is getting new knowledge through your senses. The empirical knowledge is an in-bound new knowledge that is being gathered and categorized in your system. Kant said that epistemology is the new kind of thinking that contains both Rationalism and Empiricism, and it involves *how* you know instead of *what* you know.

Kant changed the knowledge question from what do you know to how do you know. He declared that you know by both deduction and induction. In the deduction portion, he is redefining the “forms” idea that originated with Socrates. The new definition was that new empirical data took an “idea-form.” Thus the idea did not originate from the realm of the forms. Instead, the idea took form in the mind. The *forms* of all true knowledge were, according to Kant, provided by the mind that you are born with, but the *content* of that knowledge is received through the empiricisms of your senses. The form and the sensory data are put together into categories of knowledge by which to think.

In this course I have been rehearsing some categories by which we think, e.g. ontology, epistemology, axiology, methodology, function, relationships, *etc.* When we receive new data, we seek to systematize it into the proper category. That systematizing process requires strenuous analysis which breaks the data apart into its elements. Then we sort the pieces of

data into their proper categories so that we can use the content of our categories to build our system of knowledge.

If you are just thinking of a giant concept without breaking it apart via analysis, then all you can think about is that one concept. You will end up giving a yes or a no to the whole concept. But if you break it apart through analysis and put the parts in the proper categories, then you can ask all manner of questions about that concept. That is what you do in theological analysis, e.g. the doctrine of salvation is broken into justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Kant provided the synthesis of the prior two centuries, and he does that by joining the form of knowledge from Rationalism with the matter of knowledge from Empiricism.

Thomas Aquinas also had pulled the two strands together centuries before Kant. However, immediately after Aquinas, the synthesis was broken apart again by the hardening of the Roman Church through the Counter Reformation that we have already studied in Church History.

Kant felt that he had to pull the two strands of knowledge back together again because he knew that both deductive knowledge and inductive knowledge exist. He knew that truth is built from both.

Even God talks about inductive knowledge in Romans 1. He says that because of our inductive knowledge of nature, we are without excuse for not acknowledging Him as God (Romans 1:20). Our seeing the planets, earth, and creation is inductive knowledge, and God says that because we can see creation, we are without excuse for worshiping a creature rather than the Creator.

God also gives us the Scriptures, His body of truth. We can deduct out of that body of truth, and we can analyze those deductions to give meaningful pattern to our lives.

When you go to the grocery store you cannot look in the Bible to see that God tells you to buy Campbell's Tomato Soup. You must deduct out of the body of knowledge, i.e. the entire Bible, principles by which you live. You use those principles to exercise good stewardship. Thus good stewardship may require that you buy Campbell's, another brand, or even another kind of soup based on cost-benefit analysis.

We have an unchanging body of truth, i.e. the infallible Bible, and a healthy mind to examine it with. Praise God for that! We have the go-ahead from God in Chapter 1 of Romans to use our brains and senses in science for finding other truths as long as we connect the truths back to God. Our problem is that we tend to break the synthesis at every step along the way in order to support one bias or another.

Carl: About synthesizing the 17th and 18th centuries, it seems to me that the new synthesis now determines answers to ontological and axiological questions. It became the pivot point in the determining factor for the answers to all the other questions.

V: Well said, Carl. As we study further, ontology is going to be found to be no longer the starting place. *Process* will become prime, and ontology will come out of process rather than process out of ontology. Things will get upside down when epistemology is thought to create reality instead of reality creating epistemology!

As an aside, the new epistemology gained through Process's hermeneutics is gaining the ascendancy in our government. Those holding to Process are called Progressives. Authorial intent in hermeneutics is no longer thought to be viable by the Progressives. They consider authorial intent to be tied to some kind of stagnant ideas that are based on the ancient unprogressive thinking from non-advanced humans. They think that authorial intent must be discarded. Progressives think

that the author knew less than they do about what the intent of the mystical *idea* is that is being expressed in the document. In a Progressive environment the reader thinks that he knows more about what was written than its author.

Homer: So there is no more authority in authorship?

V: Not in Progressivism! And that really strikes at the heart of my argument about God's being the Author of His Word. If we are in an age of enlightened Progressivism, then the Supreme Court knows far better what the Constitution means than its authors, and today's pastors know more about what God meant than Paul did. Sadly, that is where we are today, folks.

Joe: They are saying they know more?

V: Today's Progressives consider themselves to be the absolute elite of history. The scenario is like this: *Progressives are the enlightened ones who have a great responsibility to advance the history of mankind into a global government to be ruled by them. They know far more today because of the cosmic spirit that is working in them to advance mankind. The Progressives are the elect who are "aware and open to the cosmic spirit" to be more like itself. That means, then, that as Progressive elites follow the cosmic spirit in changing society, the resulting culture is changing for the better, and we are headed to a global utopia of peace and equality.*

We Christians think that society is changing for the worse because the Bible warns us of it. Besides that, we know that the cosmic spirit, the god of this world, is the devil who opposes God. The Bible warns us that the prince and power of the air works toward the destruction of mankind. Beware! Progressivism has invaded not just politics. It has invaded the Church as well!

Joe: Boy! Their idea comes right out of the pits of hell.

V: You bet! Progressivism is the modern philosophy that has become an unacknowledged religion. It is winning the hearts of Americans through their minds. Instead of the Mind of Christ, even Christians are developing the mind of this world. Beware! We must teach and encourage Christians to implement the *kenosis* of the Bible!

Pray with me now: "Lord Jesus, please lift the minds of me and the students to see with clarity the danger that we are in. Satan has captivated the great majority of minds in this world. He is using those people as his pawns to implement his rule over the entire globe. His soldiers understand his plan, and they are working non-stop for its implementation. Your Word says that Antichrist is going to wear out the saints, torture, and kill them. But Your Word also says that we are to watch and pray that we do not fall prey to these end time traps. So, I pray: God give us the understanding and wisdom that we need to fight the good fight. In Jesus' Name I pray. Amen."

Chapter Questions

1. Compare Humanism of today with Humanism of the 14th Century.
2. Reproduce Descartes Epistemology chart.
3. What is the Reformation?
4. Define:
 - Empiricism:
 - Rationalism:
 - Synthesis:

Chapter 7

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EMPIRICISM**CLOSING STATEMENTS ABOUT RATIONALISM**

The significances of the Renaissance and the Reformation for philosophy are thinking man, search for truth, value in man, and value in original sources.

Before the Renaissance and Reformation, there was no thought outside of that which was allowed. Thought was a restatement of the body of truth that the Church had dictated as being the complete and whole body of truth allowed. The Renaissance, however, unchained mankind from the limitations in their thinking. Men began to think about what they were told and examine things for themselves. Scientific methods of examination followed by conclusions replaced the old conclusions-first methodology.

The search for truth became the task for every person. Merely accepting papal decrees about theological issues was not replaced by one's own truths. However, papal decrees about nature were no longer being accepted *carte blanche*. People began to study nature for themselves.

When it dawned on mankind that God gave His most precious and only begotten Son to save man, then a new value was placed on man. Man was no longer thought to be a mere animal to be used for the benefit of the ruling elites. Man began to see that he had something to contribute to society.

The Reformation followed the Renaissance's hunger for original sources and became a move "back to the Bible." "Back to the Bible" was one of the very first issues that brought about the Reformation. Thinking man endeavored to launch out into new areas of thought. Mankind found that they were

more than just puppets, to be under the control of an institution, but man himself should use the institution rather than reverse.

The Crusades had much to do with the Renaissance. As draining as the Crusades were, they brought back new thinking and new ideas to Europe from the Middle and Far East. Though the Muslims were oppressed in myriads of ways, they were not scientifically oppressed at that time. As a result, science was rediscovered by the West.

How to Witness to a Rationalist

In witnessing to a modern Rationalist, please remember that they now give more weight to scientific evidence. However, they value human reasoning very highly—to the point that it will provide whatever answer is needed to whatever problem arises. Thus, we should:

1. Appeal first to reason rather than Scripture, experience, and emotion.
2. Have him identify the absolute.
3. Use the Socratic method—ask questions and lead to obvious conclusions.
4. Remember that some parts of faith are easily argued.

A case in point is the book, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell. When I read that book, I concluded that no Rationalist in the world could stand up to that level of proof. I think that the book came about because Josh McDowell was a Rationalist who started trying to disprove the Bible and got nailed by its accuracy.

5. Use the Scripture at the appropriate place. Never close your argument without quoting the Scriptures that support your faith.

God has to guide you at this point because if you do this too soon, you will reduce your chances with a Rationalist. You have to meet him on his own ground, but when the time is right, you will know it. Then you pull out your Scripture, and the Holy Spirit will work on him.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Rationalism

Rationalism is a human-centered philosophy because it occurs in the human mind. As such, there are both strengths and weaknesses to be pointed out. Human-centered, by definition, means that it is too subjective. Thus, it optimistically gives too much credit to the human mind.

However, because it is human-centered, it is very personal and pertinent. It is not objective to the point of detachment and vacuum.

There is much that is very appealing to people who use human-centered philosophy. You must give credence to that appeal, or else you will think that your philosophy, which is God-centered, will have an automatic appeal. That is not necessarily the case. Beware!

Last week we talked about how Descartes' thrust for finding ultimate truth was through intuition. He was opposed to sense experience because it was not reliable. The reason he was having a hard time with empirical reliability, of course, is that his senses belied what the Church said. The Church declared that transubstantiation occurred in the mass. When Descartes looked at the elements, his senses said that transubstantiation had not happened. He determined that his senses were wrong because they contradicted the inerrant Church. Therefore, sense experience was no longer a reliable way to gain information for him. He became, then, a committed rationalist.

Descartes decided against using any kind of external, sensory data to form his body of

truth. He was going to use intuition only, i.e. a self-generated knowledge via thought. I believe that it was not inspired thought from God, as depicted in Chart 6.1 in the prior chapter, but a self-generated thought.

Descartes' first absolute truth was that he existed. He concluded that truth because he thought about his existence. Remember that a Rationalist believed that thought about something was made possible by one's prior experience with the forms. Thus that congenital knowledge was used to prove that the thing existed because it could be thought of. Then he built from there that God also existed. Then he began to build his body of truth, but he was careful to stay within the realm of disclosed truth from the Church because he was afraid to venture outside of that realm.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY EMPIRICISM

Locke kicked off Eighteenth Century Empiricism. Taking the opposite position from Descartes' congenital-knowledge position, Locke began his thought with the idea that every human is born with a *tabula rasa* (blank tablet). The mind remains a blank tablet until empirical data coming into him is written on that tablet. So, the more experience you have, the more is written on your tablet.

The difference, you see, between a Rationalist and an Empiricist is that a Rationalist is a person who generates his truth from within himself. He is a proponent of deductive truth. You start with your own body of truth, and every additional truth is deducted out of that body of truth. Thus, Rationalism is an extension of the Platonic lineage of the Medieval Church.

The Empiricist, on the other hand, is inductive, and that is more of the Aristotelian kind of person. Thus, he gets his data through his senses. As he senses something, he categorizes it, formulates it in his mind, and

draws conclusions from the totality of his knowledge.

Empiricism Led to Deism in Religion

Locke was a Deist. A Deist is a person who says that God created the world and then turned his back on it. Deism is a godism that confines its doctrine to just the creation. In this doctrine, it was supposed that when *Dei* created the world, He created it as a machine to work on its own according to the rules of its creation without the need for *Dei's* further involvement. Thus, when man is born, he has no congenital knowledge provided by *Dei*. All of his knowledge must come from experiences that write data on his mind-tablet.

Jerry: Deism operates on the laws of nature?

V: Yes, it then becomes incumbent upon man to see what the laws of the machine are. If the Deist can determine what the laws are, then he can know how to operate the machine.

Deists thought that the desired product could be produced by changing the input because the machine runs the same all the time. If you want to change the product, then you change your input, not the laws.

It was assumed by Deists that utopia could be produced. All you have to do is to discover the laws and experiment with the input. If the machine's laws are that a man is going to be a good citizen, if he just knows enough, then the machine's operators will make some schools to give him the proper knowledge. If inmates in the prisons will be good people when they get out if we give them good counseling, then we will start the counseling program.

You see what I am saying now? If this machine is running along without any interference from God, then it is a closed system. In a closed system, there is no room for miracles. All is natural law, and the elite

operators will govern the input so that their idea of utopia will be produced.

Jerry: Or prayer?

V: The Deist will not pray to Somebody Who will never be involved because it is a closed system?

Steve: Is a closed system where evolutionists get their logic?

V: You bet. It is also where Christians get their ideas of magical formulations of all you have to do is this, this, and this, and everything is fixed. That is a form of Christianity that operates on fixed laws without God's Subjective involvement.

What we need, however, is God's intervening in the affairs of men. We need miracles added to our tapping into natural laws. We need to understand that great things will not happen apart from the intervention of the Holy Spirit.

Steve: A Deist, then, would not believe the Scripture.

V: Correct.

Now, it is a given fact that if you teach and preach the Bible in the prisons, lives are going to change. But it is not just the teaching and preaching that does that; it is God Himself that does that. A heart that opens to allow God to enter will become a new creature. That new creature will have new yearnings, new vocabulary, new countenance, and new everything. But that is from God's penetrating the heart and transforming the person. But if we begin to think in terms of magic formulas, then those formulas become the wands in *our* hands that are subject to *our* wills. God will have been reduced to just the power in *our* wands.

The reason I bring this up is because today in Texas, the secularists are wanting the Christians to get involved in the secular problems because the Christian methods work and are more cost effective.

Some Christians are beginning to think that there is conversion among the secularists. There is not. There is, in fact, a Deistic understanding that the Christians have discovered the natural laws to turn criminals into good citizens. When you remove the supernatural as the cause of the changes, then you are left with a mere pragmatism.

Wanda: Dr. Vinson, you are right because they said they thought that putting Bibles in the prisons would work, and it works for the moment, but hearts are not changing. That is why they say that most people who go to jail have “jail house religion,” or whatever they call it. That is because unless the Holy Spirit is involved, then the inmate is just going through the formal motions that will facilitate his release.

V: Right. Reformation through conformation is not salvation. Salvation requires re-creation not reformation. Salvation is the penetration of the human heart by God. The Gospel is the way to get there. I do not want you to hear that the Bible is not the answer, because it is the answer. But formula-like-answers are not what God intends. Instead, we need to be wise enough to look to God, as He instructs in the Bible, for our guidance. It is God’s Word, and it tells you how He is ready to give you what you need. Salvation comes from Jesus, not from religious overtures that conform to those in the Bible.

Wanda: I read an article in a publication by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board which spoke of some of the founding fathers of this country. It said that the writers of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence were not Christians. It said further that even though they were far from being Christians, they recognized that we needed a religious base to point to in order to determine or to set the standard.

V: Our secular schools have been scrubbing all traces of Christianity from American history for decades now. Our religious

schools now have professors who were taught in those high schools and universities. They have bought the lies. Now we are being taught in our seminaries that our founders were Deists.

Class, our founders were not Deists. They were Christians with lively faiths in a personal savior Who is still personally involved in His creation. Our Declaration of Independence speaks about our founders’ reliance on divine providence, which, by definition, proves that they were not Deists.

Our public schools have changed history in an attempt to discredit our Christian beginnings. The goal of Secularism is to remove God’s rules and oversight from governance. Once God is removed from the equation, then governance is in the hands of man. Rather than God’s endowing men with inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, men become the endowers. The elites of government think of themselves as the people to govern as gods who give and take away rights.¹ They rule from their own subjectivity and reject any codified restraints from the Constitution. They are men of lawlessness.

Jill: One of the points was that human-centered philosophies are optimistic. It seems to me that Deism’s discovering the laws that go into the big machine creates the idea that via education, man can figure out the laws that are needed to produce the desired results. This attitude would be optimistic about man’s capabilities, but it would be constantly pessimistic toward God. Therefore, you become locked into a loop of looking to your own self.

V: Yes, it moves us into a closed system of trial-and-error methodology.

Homer: I do not see how it could work in any form.

¹ My course on Church History clearly proves the Christian beginnings of America.

V: Without God's involvement, man's saving himself from sin becomes the only option. That option is impossible because only God can forgive sin.

The Nazi experiment sought to plug into natural law to create a super race. This experiment was optimistically replacing supernaturalism with naturalism.

Tom: If the product were not what they wanted, the people would still attach blame to God.

V: Yes, in Secularism because men are still trying to wrest control of the world away from God which they can do by blaming Him for bad results. But not so in Deism because they are not admitting that there is any control in God's hands to begin with. They would just think that they had not yet found the answer in nature that would be thought to be just around the corner.

The Mix of Empiricism and Rationalism in America

Locke kicked off the 18th Century with Empiricism in **England**. Rationalism was located on the continent in **Germany** and **France**. This split, which was foreshadowed in the Reformation, was going to reoccur in America. The spiritualists, the people who were looking for the inner experience with God were on the continent, and the pragmatic theologians who were very cold and aloof and knowledge-based were in England. We got the mix of the two as both types immigrated to **America**.

We still have the two strains running side by side today in America. Side by side are those who are more open to the Spirit for their instruction and those who labor in their study of the Scriptures for their instruction.

Hume: Empiricism to Its Extreme

Hume takes Empiricism to its logical conclusion. The logical conclusion to Hume is not logical to me. I can hardly describe it.

In normal Empiricism, the person experiences something via his senses, e.g. he sees something or feels it. Then he can analyze that experience and describe the object. He could describe this desk that I am standing behind as having sharp corners and a smooth top. Furthermore, if I should experience an event that looks like cause and effect, e.g. I hit something and it moved, then I could draw a conclusion about cause and effect from that experience.

Hume said, however, that cause and effect could not be determined because pure Empiricism deals only with isolated perceptions. One perception is the object's movement, and another perception is the hitting of the object, but you cannot see the hit *cause* the move. Cause is the invisible link between the hit and the move. You can perceive the hit, and you can perceive the move, but you cannot perceive the invisible link called cause. If you cannot perceive the invisible link between cause and effect, then can you count on processes to be consistent?

Mary: You are saying if I kick a chair and the chair moves, I am not intelligent enough to say that the chair moved because I kicked the chair?

V: Hume would say that you can conclude that, but you cannot prove it.

Mary: He needs to let me kick him, and see what he says.

V: Please see that the deeper you move into pure Empiricism, the less connection between cause and effect there is. By faith we can draw the conclusion that if we hit somebody in the face, it is going to hurt their face. That is a faith statement. Because you can perceive the hit, and you can perceive the

pain and disfigurement, but in pure Empiricism, you cannot perceive that invisible link between cause and effect. You can assume it or conclude it, but that is a faith statement because it is not perceived.

Bob: So you are saying that if you hit someone, you do not know that your hitting them is what caused the pain.

V: At the faith level, you can know it, but at Hume's empirical level, you cannot know it. It could have been a pain that came at that exact same time.

Steve: A coincidence.

V: Yes. Now he is not denying that there is pain, and he is not denying that there **seems** to be a cause and effect. He is denying that you can perceive cause.

Carl: What caused that spoon to get into his mouth to feed him then? Did it just appear in his mouth? To get the food into my mouth I have to lift the spoon . . .

V: Hume could not deal with cause because of his system. You and I deal with cause all the time. But Hume built a wall between perception and conclusion, and then he put cause into the conclusion category. He uses empiricism for perceptions and faith for causes. He would say that you can perceive the food on the spoon entering the mouth, but you cannot perceive the *cause* of the food to enter the mouth. With him, we are at perception only. So what do we perceive?

Pete: Remember, guys, he is limiting the empirical knowledge to perception. Deductive logic, which concludes knowledge about cause, is outside the bounds of pure empiricism.

V: Yes, taking knowledge further than induction is outside of Hume's limits. If the bat hits the ball, and the ball moves, you perceive the swing of the bat, you perceive the hitting of the ball, and you perceive the

ball flying in the air, but what you cannot perceive is the cause.

Henry: He would not make a very good weatherman, would he?

V: No, because what normal people do is based on faith. Even the secularists live by faith. To an atheist who says, "I do not believe anything unless I see it," you can say, "Does your house exist?" He will say, "Of course." "Can you see it?" "No. We are too far away." Then he believes via faith that his house exists.

People who claim to have no faith whatsoever will sit down in a chair without testing it. That is faith in the chair. They will say, "I do not do anything by faith. I do everything by proof." They are lying; they drive a car by faith. They believe that if they turn the steering wheel to the right, the car will go to the right. They believe that the car will crank up, that it will run, that the traffic lights are working, and that the brakes will stop the car at a red light. Their whole life is based on faith; they just do not know it.

Betty: What about something you cannot see, *i.e.*, you smell something, or the wind blows and the leaves move.

V: Yes. That is good. That is faith.

Betty: But you cannot prove the cause?

V: No, in pure Empiricism, all you can perceive is the perception itself. If you perceive an odor, then you can conclude cause, but you cannot perceive cause. In science we draw conclusions by faith that one thing caused the other. You link them together and say, "This caused that." Then you categorize that conclusion in your cause-and-effect knowledge, and the next time you see a bat swinging you know that something is fixing to move if the bat connects with it. But you cannot perceive cause itself. You believe cause by faith because you deduce it from your accumulated inductive perceptions.

Hume was a purist in Empiricism who limited his examination to the isolated perceptions. However, Locke was not a purist. He readily went to cause. He accepted Aristotle's five perceptions that are proofs of God's causal activity. Thus, he actually believes in cause and effect, and that is the kind of Empiricism that makes sense to me.

But Hume, the purist, only examined the atomistic perceptions, which are one unit at a time. You see the swing of the bat, and you see the striking of the ball, and you see the flying of the ball. Those are all events that you can perceive. If you limit your thinking to the atomistic events of perception, then your beliefs become limited and hardened. They start moving into themselves. This is called self-delusion, which I will try to show you next.

No Reality in Pure Empiricism

Brace yourselves! Once you limit knowledge to perceptions, and faith is excluded as a part of reality, then your beliefs become your own subjective perceptions. There is then no proof that there is actually something out there that you perceive because all your perceiving is what you perceive on your inside, i.e. what you perceive that you perceive. Once that happens then your perception of your perceptions is atomized, and only perceptions, not reality, are left to exist. Thus the link between perceiver and perception breaks, and the belief that there is a self in existence to perceive falls into the realm of cause. The next conclusion is that if there is no self to perceive, then the self, instead of having ontology, becomes a chance psychology which bundles the perceptions together and gives them the sense of continuity which in turn results in the two illusions that you and the perceptions exist.

Now that is some hard thinking, folks, because it is irrational. Once you move into that kind of thinking, then you have the state-

ment of that philosopher in the debate who said ultimately "I am not there." C. S. Lewis, then, said, "Fine. I win the debate because I cannot lose to someone who is not even there."

Carl: If you think about something reoccurring, then reoccurrence would be a mere idea from the first occurrence. Seeing it reoccur is nothing more than an independent impression that cannot link with the prior occurrence. The purist is calling the thought of reoccurrence just a floating idea.

V: Correct. The idea is a spiritual copy of an impression, and all that the empiricists are doing in their thinking processes is pulling up those ideas, i.e. remembering perceptions, and proposing relationships between them.

I am not going to waste your time on this, but I want you to be aware of what pure Empiricism goes to; it goes to absurdity.

Please be aware that an empiricist that is also a materialist (e.g. a Communist) at the same time means that matter is the only source of ideas, and if matter is the only source of ideas, then there are no spirit-caused ideas. This kind of belief will devalue human beings to the same level as animals. Once you move in that direction, then you can start thinking in terms of sacrificing humans for the welfare of animals instead of the reverse. You probably see some of this thought today in the news.

The Progressive is an elite person who is an Empiricist-Communist. Much like the Deist, he holds to a higher power. That higher power is the cosmic spirit that is embodied in certain individuals. They are those individuals, and they alone are the elite who can guide the universe toward its utopian goals. The rest of us are not part of the intelligentsia who can be trusted to make good decisions for society, or even for ourselves. Thus, we need for the elite to make all of our decisions so that we do not

destroy ourselves or others. Salvation is not from sin but from individualism and its greed. Salvation is for society. It is collective and therefore called social justice. Its greatest enemy is individual freedom.

Divine Providence Omitted in Today's Empiricism

We cannot allow the idea to prosper in the Church that we cannot prove anything beyond perception. If that idea should infiltrate the Church, then you would attribute to natural causes the miracles that are given by God in answer to prayers.

I read recently that a Baptist church in Texas prayed that God would stop the expansion of a nearby bar that was adding to its physical plant. A thunderstorm rolled through and lightning struck the bar and burned the whole thing down. The bar owner has sued the church for damages which were caused by their prayers. The church's representatives have said that it was the random storm that caused the damage. The judge said that the case was extremely strange because the church did not believe in the power of prayer, but the bar owner did.²

² This event that was reported in a news article that was dated July 2010 serves to illustrate what can happen in strict Empiricism.

Under the limitations of Empiricism, healings will be attributed to doctors. When God answers our prayers for healing, and the healing comes, then we will thank the doctor or think that the person never was sick. Rain will be attributed to Mother Nature. Providential help will be attributed to luck. These kinds of perceptions remove God as an active participant in the affairs of mankind.

Betty: Or he would have gotten well anyway.

V: Yes, once you start separating God from His miracles, then you are left with only a closed continuum in which prayer does nothing. When this happens, how can you get good outcomes? The machine will produce them only when you discover its operating laws and provide the proper inputs. This kind of thinking can lead to human engineering in which the government may attempt to create a super race.

Not as extreme as Hume, Locke's Empiricism progressed into Deism, which also removed God from the affairs of mankind. Certainly, I cannot abide that idea. But a limited, normal use of empirical data is good, and a limited, normal amount of rational deduction is good. Even though we all should use empirical data and rational logic, faith in the Lord is to govern all of our thinking. We must keep and grow that faith in God that is shaped by the Scriptures.

Chapter Questions

1. What is the significance of the Renaissance and the Reformation for philosophy?
2. How do you witness to a rationalist?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of a human-centered philosophy?
4. What is Deism?
5. What is Empiricism, and who started it? Where and when?
6. What results from Empiricism?
7. Where did the split between Empiricism and Rationalism occur, and where did that split re-join?

Chapter 8

THE PRIMACY OF ETHICS OVER KNOWLEDGE

Kant brought a turning point in history as he ushered in the 19th Century. We have been studying 17th Century Rationalism and 18th Century Empiricism. Last week we looked at Hume who took Empiricism to the extreme point where observation became totally subjective, and experience became nothing more than a sensation.

According to Hume, a subjective sensation was no proof that you or any kind of object was even there. All that a sensation proved was that there was a sensation. Objective ontology slipped over into a psychology in which you linked all these atoms of sensation, or experiences, together and projected a subjective being, or constancy of self-existence, from them. But that conclusion was a projection, and there was no assurance that a projection proved a reality. We talked about how absurd that lack of objectivity became and how C. S. Lewis, in a debate with an empiricist, won the debate by just saying he could not lose to a person who was not there.

The things that we are struggling with, as far as Christianity goes, are not this kind of over-emphasized Empiricism. It is instead the more moderate form of Empiricism along with Rationalism's decreed body of truth.

On the one hand, Rationalism threatens us because it is based upon a corporate body of data that some "expert" decrees as the body of truth/laws. So, Rationalism can be a threat to us especially when that body of truth contradicts the Bible.

We Evangelicals hold to the Bible as the Body of Truth that gives us God's Word on life. To that Word, we add inductive information from nature, history, experiences, salvation history, and Jesus (the other 5 sources of

revelation) so that we are equipped to think through a broad range of things. We put all those things together in order to have a whole system of epistemology.

A pure Rationalist, like the pope during the Dark Ages, poses a real threat to us because he could impose his beliefs on us. We must take note of that kind of threat because the Rationalist, when possessing enough power, can impose his own decrees over us all. I am warning now of Antichrist.

On the other hand, Empiricism is a threat to us at the point where it leaves out faith. If you have to see it in order to believe it, then you are moving too far into Empiricism, and that is not good either. So, we are also threatened at that point.

However, Hume does not threaten us in my opinion. Hume took things to such an extent that it left the realm of reality and went into the denial of even the simplest realities. Cause was projected as a conclusion. For this reason, when you experience yourself, or you are aware of yourself, in this moment and then in another moment, you are aware of yourself again, then you can project your own ontology. However, Hume declared that projecting ontology as a conclusion is actually a subjective psychology instead of an objective ontology.

Kant took a totally different approach from those who went before him in history. He actually brought together both Rationalism and Empiricism and then moved away from the epistemological question by moving the discussion to the role of the "will."

With the rise of Kantian philosophy, we were introduced to the will as the primary focus point rather than knowledge. What you

do became more important under Kant than what you know. This move into the primacy of the will produced a version of Christianity as an ethic rather than an ontology. It is called Kingdom of God Theology.

An ethic can easily include elements of ontology and epistemology with it. Kant's invasion of Christianity brought about a works-achieved system of salvation. In this system, its epistemology is subjective, and salvation is no longer an ontological re-birth.

Kantian Christianity is alive and well in the churches today. It pictures salvation as basically the idea in which all your good works are weighed on one side of the scale against all your bad works on the other side. If your good works outweigh your bad works, then you go to heaven. If the bad works outweigh the good, then you will go to hell.

KANT'S ETHIC

Kant came along in the milieu of Rationalism and Empiricism and tried to determine what is psychologized by building ontology between iterations, or atoms, of experience? What was the link between ontology and experiences? If cause and effect cannot be seen, then what was that mysterious thing that linked the atoms of experience?

The Noumenal and the Phenomenal

Kant named the thing in itself the noumenal. He claimed our inability to experience the thing in itself because that would be a return to the psychologized ontology of Hume's fantasy. Kant, however, gave credence to the idea that there is something really there. He agreed that he could not prove existence of the self, but he hypothesized self and named it the noumenal self. The noumenal self is the subject self beyond the realm of experience.

Imagine a horizontal line that separated the experiential below the line from the thing

itself above the line, then you would have the noumenal subject above and the phenomenal object below (see Chart 8.1). The phenomenon is what you experience of the real something that is there. Since you need not describe the thing that is there, you call it the noumenon.

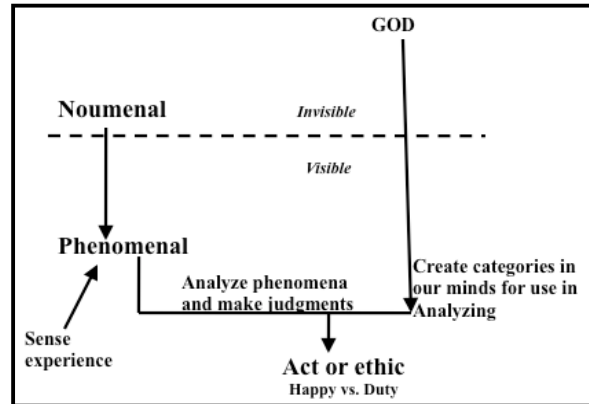


Chart 8.1

Emphasis, instead of being on the noumenal, is upon what you are going to do about your experiences of the various phenomena. Thus, your thoughts turn from ontology to ethics resulting from experiences.

Our understanding of Kant's philosophy is extremely important to us because it threatens the very foundation of Christianity. The noumenal and the phenomenal do not threaten Christianity, but I need to show the next step to you because it is the source of his ethic. Brace up again because here we go.

In the realm of the noumenal are the things within themselves that cannot be experienced directly and cannot be described. He puts God in that realm. The very essence of yourself is in the noumenal realm also and cannot be experienced directly. Only the phenomenal version of something can be experienced. The phenomenal version of you is what can be described with height, weight, race, gender, color of eyes, etc. Sense experience is of only the phenomenon, but it is produced only by the noumenal existence of a real thing. You cannot experience God

because, according to Kant, God produces no phenomena of Himself.

Kant claimed that God created us with categories in our minds with which we can think. These categories will consist of things, e.g. time, space, substance, good, bad, relationships, and the noumena (see Chart 8.2).

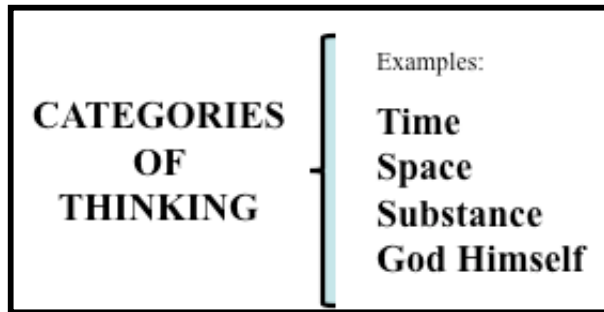


Chart 8.2

Kantian thought occurs when phenomena are experienced. You can sort out the elements of each into their proper categories. That process of thought is called analysis.

The Kantian Process of Analysis

Analysis is the dividing of thoughts and experiences into their categorical elements. Experiences come to us as phenomena or sense experience. The categories of thought, which were given to us by God, produce an ability for us to make judgments (see Charts 8.1 & 8.2).

Prior to Kant came Locke's *tabula rasa* theory. In this theory, everything that you know was created by the sense experiences that were recorded on your blank tablet (*tabula rasa*) that originally contained nothing, not even categories. Thus, you become a total product of your experiences—your personality, everything that you are. Your thinking will directly reflect your previous experiences according to Locke.

Furthermore, what you do, according to Locke's Empiricism, is governed by what is on your tablet. How you act, how you appear,

your personality, and all your characteristics stem from what has been written on that tablet. That tablet basically makes up who you are and how you act. You are a product of your experiences that have been recorded on your tablet.¹

Kant, on the other hand, said that there is no such thing as a blank tablet. Instead, there are categories in the mind that God creates in us at birth. All of us have the categories, but some of us are lazy. So we get phenomena coming in, but we do not even attempt to check them against the content of our properly corresponding categories, i.e. we do not put forth the analytical effort for evaluating truth and value. We just bring them in and act or react like animals to the raw, unanalyzed data.

Some of you analyze the inbound sense data before concluding anything. You take it apart, bounce the parts off the prior content of your categories, and come up with the proper conclusion. You then develop appropriately thoughtful responses, instead of knee-jerk, animalistic responses.

This analytical process moves us toward an ethic of response. Your responsive act comes out of judgment. You have data coming in, you have categories already in place that you were given by God at birth, and you have practiced analyzing and sorting out your data and making your judgments. As you grow and mature, your judgment matures and you start making better decisions with less trial and error. Actually, you start doing

¹ Many of today's parents seek to expand their children's experiences because they believe that they are producing or at least shaping their children's intelligence and personalities. Parents, like these, resist limitations to their children's experiences. Thus they tend never to discipline their children for fear that it will "stunt" their children's growth. They fantasize that their children will become creative geniuses if they are allowed to make all choices without parental limitations.

things right—that is, some of you do. (Much laughter around the room)

When you experience an act by someone else, you will make a decision in Kant's system about how you should respond. You must decide whether you act to be happy or act to do your duty? Every decision involves happiness versus duty.

Kant said that every one of us has an epistemological processor for actuating one of these responses. When the phenomenon is encountered, you process it through all of the information stored in your categories. Then you choose the proper response in order to do your duty. But if you are lazy, and you do not do the work of categorizing the data and acting responsibly, your response will be whatever generates happiness for you.

Ted: In other words, if you do your duty, you are not happy.

V: Not always. Sometimes you can have both, but at other times, he advocates trading some of our happiness in the now for more happiness in the eschaton.

Kant's Categorical Imperative

Kant developed the Categorical Imperative as the rule for all duty. It is stated in Chart 8.3.

If duty is based on the Categorical

CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE = Act only on the maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

Chart 8.3

Imperative, then why is it imperative? He knows, and all of us confess that we cannot achieve perfection using the Categorical Imperative. Sometimes, we are going to act in a way that we do not want to become a universal law for everybody to act in the same way. Sometimes we are not going to do our duty, and we are going to do that which will make

us happy. If you have such a lapse, a penalty for that lapse was theorized.

Kant's answer to why we should follow the Categorical Imperative is this: Because you have this urge in your heart to do "the right thing," and because there exists the idea of imperfection, then the possibility of perfection is implied to be the "right thing" which, in turn, implies that there is a judge. If you have a yearning in your heart to do your duty, the penalty for not doing it will be brought before some judge sometime in the future. That means then that if perfection is not available in this lifetime, there must be a judgment after this lifetime, and that implies a judge who is God.

You see, under Kantian philosophy, you argue for the existence of God through an ethic, not through the Bible, not through creation, not through ontology, not through epistemology, but simply through the Categorical Imperative—the duty that is within your heart that you would like to become a universal law.

Kant rejected the psychologized ontology from Hume. He said instead that reality is more than psychologized. It is an actual noumenal. There is something really there even though we cannot experience it in itself, but only its phenomena. I am really here, and all you can see is my phenomena. There is something behind the phenomena, there is a real me, and you may not be seeing the real me. All you can see is the phenomena of me. You can see my behavior and my appearance and things like that, but you cannot see the real me, the noumenal me (see again Chart 8.1).

Kant, in effect, did not totally discard the Hume problem of ontology that was given to us in the 18th Century. He hypothesized that being into an actual noumenal being that really existed but could not be experienced. He also, in effect, retained the rationalism of the 17th Century by claiming the power of the

individual to declare his own body of truth. So, he had put the two together in the process of judgment. Thus, out of judgment, which resulted from one's processing the phenomena through his categories of information, came an ethic or act. The act's rightness or wrongness was discovered in the Categorical Imperative (the individual's body of truth which defined duty as "the right thing to do"). Thus the ethic was then based on the individual's choice between duty and happiness.

The Categorical Imperative implies a judge in the after life who will judge your acts. Where is Jesus in all of this philosophy?

Paul: He is not in this.

V: There is no savior in this kind of religion! This religion will destroy the doctrine of salvation by converting religion into a subjective ethic, i.e. a salvation by self-determined works.

The Categorical Imperative is a values-based code of behavior. If you are to act in only the way that you, at the same time, could want it to be a universal law, then your definition of right behavior and my definition of right behavior could very well be two different things. That makes the person a god unto his own self who can decree his own body of truth.

Paul: Is that not basically what is going on now—the green movement, and global citizenship.

V: I can see where you are coming from. If one's values were mainly of earthly stuff and ecology, then the green movement would be elevated as the guide in his duty.

Paul: Unity is a worldwide call. Its desire is for a one-world government, one-world religion, one-world court, and one-world currency. That kind of singleness in prescribed behavior is doing the "right thing" under the guise of social justice. I think that the current movement follows Kant.

V: It does, but let me go a little further into values in this system. If you are the subject who alone determines your actions, then you are the noumenon who experiences phenomena and reacts. You have categories filled with information which you will use in choosing your responses. Your choice requires you to make judgments. The Categorical Imperative is the rule for making the judgments that determine your behavior as a subject.

In Kant's schema then, where are you as far as object goes? You are not object; you are totally subject. You are making every decision including what you think that the Categorical Imperative ought to be. You have made yourself god. Instead of unity via a single god, the multiple gods finds its unity in the single rule, i.e. the Categorical Imperative.

We Are Objects When God Speaks

If you are never object all the way through this process, then God is never subject. God is supposed to be subject in every case except when He is the Object of worship. God has given us objective rules for every decision between happiness and duty, i.e. what we are supposed to do. God makes all the knowledge of truth available. He decides what our values should be. He is subject; we are object.² We are supposed to get ethical guidance from God! We did! That guidance is called the Bible.

There is much in the Bible that has nothing to do with your being subject. You are object. You get to act as subject after you have first been object. Kant's system makes you subject at the get-go as a phenomenon

² Our being objects gives understanding to our being called slaves. Some people object to being called slaves of God and insist on being called just sons of God. We are both slaves and sons of God. Our freedom and obedience is found in our love of Him as Father after getting to know Him better. Our slaveship and obedience is found in our fear of Him as Owner and Master.

because the noumenon cannot be an object (see Chart 8.1 which shows that God's involvement with us is by giving us epistemological categories).

Please be aware that if a certain group of people in our government should figure out what the universal laws (the National Categorical Imperatives) ought to be, then they could easily decide that we mean-spirited Christians need to be exterminated in order to expedite earth's progress toward utopia.

Jack: That is where we are going!

Power Makes Us Objects

V: Yes, it is, Jack. Power is what is going to bring the Categorical Imperatives into the sole, private purview of one person on earth, i.e. the Antichrist. When that happens, you will be forced to surrender your judgments, values, and responses to political correctness.

When Christians are subject without first being object, the Church then can take some strange and terrible paths through the course of history. The Church's path has actually done this because basically the human who has headed the Church has been deciding what is right and what is wrong, what is true and what is false. The pope or the emperor, rather than God, in fact, made those judgments for centuries (see Book 8 on Church History) and is still doing it.

When we get to the Existentialism of Kierkegaard in this course, we are going to find out what a really subjective Christianity is all about. You will discover that Existentialism is where Protestant Christianity is today. We have blended Kierkegaard's epistemology with Kant's ethic. In our churches, most of us tend to do what is right in our own eyes.

Henry: Is that not what the Nazis did when they decided to create the super race?

V: Yes the Categorical Imperative for the Nazis was used by those in power to determine that inferior people left alive would just dilute the human race. So, "the right thing to do" was to remove the few that impeded the good life for the great majority.

The entrance of this kind of philosophy into Christianity could eliminate the need for Christ because salvation would be by works. The Church's decisions could also become very strange because of being based on human-values determined by powerful individuals. Without external guidance from the Scriptures, ethical chaos, like we have today, erupts because nearly everybody will be doing what is right in his own eyes.

Pete: Well, that is going on in the Catholic Church.

V: It is rampant in our own churches!

Beware of this philosophy's entrance into government. When this philosophy is mixed with the power to enforce an elite group's values, you will experience tyranny.

The doctrine of salvation in the Catholic Church was derived through the power of one man to enforce his tyrannical control over all Christians. But the priesthood of the believer also could allow the Christian, through decentralization of rulemaking, to do what is right in his own eyes. So balance is achieved via freedom for the individual to act under just laws that correspond to God's Laws. That balance was achieved in America's founding principles.

The American Experiment of limited government was achieved via making it accountable to the citizens. That accountability was guaranteed by keeping the government small and constructing it with a Constitution which codified a system of checks and balances. The Constitution preserved for us the God-given freedom to worship, speak, bear arms, gather in assembly, elect our government, appeal our grievances to a court that is bound

to our Constitutionally codified laws. Our Declaration of Independence, the prelude to our Constitution, acknowledges that our Creator has endowed us with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Within Constitutional law, Christianity takes seriously our liability for sin. Jesus died to pay for that liability. When we believe Who He Is, What He Did and ask Him for forgiveness, He re-creates us and gives us His Own special guidance for our life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness on an eternal scale. Instead of the subjective Categorical Imperative, Christians have God's objective Scriptures and codified objective laws under the Constitution for our guidance.

Kant's philosophy makes a person stiff-necked because if you are subject, you are your own boss. If you are accustomed to doing your own thing, then how does God get hold of you and bend your neck enough to make you pliable to do what He wants you to do. How can He get to be subject if you are going to be subject all the time?

Pete: He put me into two accidents and put me in a hospital bed for five years. I know now that God is boss.

Mary: Does this philosophy cause the women's movement for feminine independence? These women declare that they do not need a man. They think that they can do everything their own way.

V: Yes, all self-determinations away from natural law, codified law, and the Scriptures would be Kantian philosophy.

Bob: Dr. Vinson, how do you deal with balancing between not blindly taking in what somebody tells you as the truth with the priesthood of the believer? I want to study the Word and have the independence to not just believe what somebody tells me but to seek out the truth.

V: That is a very, very good question, Bob. The answer is Christian discipleship.

The Need for Christian Discipleship

God gives us the secret for seeking out the truth. Whoever knows the truth and does it will be given the ability to discern right doctrine (John 7:17). God has determined that your ability to discern rightness of doctrine is dependent upon your **doing the truth that you know**. If you do not do the truth that you know, then you will be blinded, and you will be unable to discern right doctrine. You will get confused between right and wrong, between good and bad.

According to God's promise in John 7:17, doing the truth unlocks the secret of knowing more truth. Doing the truth is a judgment call, is it not? But it is not a judgment call as subject. We need first to be object to God's Truth. We neither determine our own truth via the Categorical Imperative nor stand over the Bible and elect what truths we will do. We stand under the Bible and obey all of it.

Some of my misguided colleagues are making a profession out of biblical criticism. Rejecting biblical mandates is like tearing out pages from the Bible. They could just tear out every page that does not pass their value judgments. Pretty soon, they could get down to nothing but a Bible cover. At that point, they would be full-blown Kantian Christians.

Homer: The average church member in my church does not know truth from error and is really susceptible to novel interpretations. That is why I came to this class. When I become the pastor, I need to protect my congregation from these invading philosophies.

V: Yes, we have an uneducated population as far as the things of God are concerned. I am not talking about secular education. We have all that, but when it comes to theology, where are our Baptist people? Sunday school, instead of being a doctrinal teaching for

establishing a knowledge base for competency, has been changed into evangelism. Since pulpiterring has also become mostly evangelistic, we are majoring on adding nickels and noses.³

Carl: I have been working on a paper for one of your other classes, and I have been using many different research sources, and many times they interpret Scripture differently. People can get confused and end up looking for the one with the feel-good meaning.

V: You bet! We need to equip our saints in such a way that they are on their feet and producing, not just continuous pew-sitters. Where you have the clergy doing all the ministering and the people being passive, error can creep into the rank and file. The clergy must equip the people, get them on their feet, and get them out the door into their own ministries. If they are out there bringing converts into God's Kingdom and into the churches for training, there will soon be another whole generation of that kind of Christian.

There should be continuous up building of the body. But if we focus on numbers, then we will start doing whatever it takes to get the numbers, and the best thing to do to get the numbers is to have a lot of "entertainment" in the church. Get them in there and dazzle them by playing to their emotions via music and ear-tickling sermons from superstar pastors, and they will come back and bring their neighbors. Few get saved and grow into

³ Many churches do not use tracts. They even denigrate personal evangelism as "buttonholing." Adding someone to "God's" Kingdom is thought to be not nearly as important as adding someone to "our" kingdom. In my witnessing on the streets of Atlanta, church people declared that I was doing a disservice to the people. The complaint was that my lack of follow up did not get the new converts churched (in our particular church). This complaint was a disguise for their real concern—nickels and noses were not added to *our* church.

maturity, *but* nickels and noses will be growing.

Oscar: In one of my other classes somebody quoted some statistics that over 300,000 Southern Baptists had walked out the doors to join Mormonism. Is that the result of the lack of qualitative maturity?

V: That is exactly what I am talking about. We are the hunting ground for the cults! Why? We do not know anything!

Tom: No discipleship?

V: The word discipleship has been devalued to mean a Christian church member. The cultist will ask him: "What do you believe?" "I believe in God and going to church." "Are you a Christian?" "Oh, yes, I have been baptized and go to a Southern Baptist church." Many Christians cannot give a defense of their faith; they do not know the doctrine of salvation; they do not know ecclesiology, eschatology, or the prior struggles for true faith by our forefathers. They do not know the basics of holiness, *kenosis* and discipleship.

Mary: I think that the main problem is with the pastors being more concerned with the church "numbers" than with discipleship.

V: Our problems are definitely with quality. We should go back to multiplication instead of just addition. The pastor should just grit his teeth and say, "*I am going to train up a group in my church who are going to be duplicates of me as far as getting into the pulpit, going on teaching assignments, preaching assignments, evangelizing, visiting, etc. My members should be going everywhere and doing everything, i.e. preaching in the streets if the pulpit is not for them. Get out there and get with it. I am going to be right here behind you making doggone sure that you are out using your gifts. If you are not, you will not only have me breathing down your neck, but you will answer to God. Let us all get up and get out.*"

An Anecdote of Christian Ignorance

In the streets of Atlanta, Georgia, I led a black lady to the Lord and started teaching her the Bible in our little storefront teaching point on Spring Street downtown. After teaching her for a while, she got excited and wanted me to come and teach the people in her church.

I was shocked when I went. It was a black church, but the pastor was a white con man that was fleecing the sheep.

Have you ever heard of Little Jimmy Lord? He used to be on television; he was a young television evangelist who was five years old when he started preaching on television. The pastor of this black church was the father of that kid and was living in an apartment above the sanctuary. When the student introduced me to him, I got some bad vibrations right away. I could tell that something was not right. He asked what I was going to do there, and I told him I was going to teach them some basic things from the Bible, and I was going to preach a sermon. He determined that I posed no threat to him and left us and went up to his apartment.

I preached an introductory message on salvation and gave an invitation. Two of my friends were stationed at the front of each side aisle to do counseling for any that might respond to the invitation. The whole church got up and started down the aisles. I stopped them and said, "Hold it! You did not understand the invitation. Go back to your seats. This invitation is only for your first and only time of rebirth. It is not about revival or any other thing. **If you have *never* received Jesus, you come forward. The rest of you stay put.**" Here they came again! I could not believe what was happening. You see, all that religious stuff that their pastor had been giving them was fakery for the purpose of fleecing the sheep.

Mary: They were probably secure and comfortable in their religion but never saved.

V: We are not providing enough education at the pew level for our people. Every Christian needs to have systematic theology, church history, evangelism, Old Testament and New Testament, a short course on philosophy, every one of these courses that the 4Disciples team has produced.

Tim: Yes, and when Christians get saved, they need to cut their teeth on the Survival Kit. They need that the first day.

V: Years ago, I had an open challenge to any church to test the theological knowledge of its regular church members against the inmates in my prison discipleship program. In my challenge, I offered to let the church make out the test. There were no takers because everyone knew the difference between rinky-dink church education and real discipleship.

What would it have been like if it had hit the newspapers that these inmates had defeated the church people in a theological test made out by the church?

Why is it that we do watered down stuff in the church? Students in the seminary have to take tests, labor in their studies, and memorize the information, but in the church, you have to beg them to bring their Bibles, come to Sunday School, and do any kind of ministry.

Jesus never begged even one person to follow Him. When He told the many followers the hard truth about the Bread of Life and that they were going to eat Him (John 6:50-52), they began to reject Him and leave. Only the "disciples" remained, and He asked them, "Will you leave, too?" They huddled up, wrestled with it, and Peter, the spokesman, said, "We have no where else to go. You alone have the Words of Life." They followed Him to His death and eventually their own. He did not beg anybody. Numbers

were not His primary issue; it was **quality of discipleship!**

Educate the saints; get them on their feet because they will carry the baton on the next lap of the race. You do not carry the baton after you die. The next group runs with it. You must get that group ready.

Jill: Dr. Vinson, where do we start when we can see the deterioration over the years? There are many believers who want to know. How does one start to help them? They all will not be able to come to the Seminary and take these courses. What is going to happen to God's people because the breakdown is so severe? My pastor is so weak his sermons are more like testimonies of what his momma told him when he was a child. The Lord has not told us to leave there because there are so many sheep that . . .

V: . . . that are dying.

Paul: How do you help those who really have a yearning in their hearts? They want to please the Lord, they think that they are doing the right thing, but in essence they are just basking in religion. They . . . we . . . are lazy like the pastor. How do we help them?

V: Okay, the first thing that every one of you should realize is that unless you are a leader who can lead your church into a real discipleship direction, then you cannot solve the problem for the masses. You must try to help one at a time. You pick out one, and you say, "Will you covenant together with me that we will grow together so that we can come to a point where we can multiply?" Lead them to take these free discipleship courses. When you reach the right point of multiplication, then each of you shall get another trainee⁴

⁴ Remember that there are two facets for discipleship training. They are education and training. Education can be acquired via the free 4Disciples courses, but training necessitates actual plying one's gifts in ministry. It is in the area of training

each. You raise them up, and then you repeat the process again.

If the pastor will invest his efforts into discipleship, it will not take long before you will have a large church body that is strong and able to go and minister. Then the pastor can call on any of them and say, "I need for you to go to the hospital and visit with such and such." As they go out to do ministry, they will get people saved enroute, they will visit in the hospital and have a "hallelujah" service in the hospital. People will get saved because every trip will be a missionary journey. Your members will be lively Christians whose gifts are activated, and wonderful things will start happening.

If you can just get your attention off of yourself and get it onto your people, then you can elevate them. Pastor, do not be afraid to just get the hand of the congregant and the hand of Jesus together. Educate and train the disciple, but then back out of their way and watch for the miracles.

Ted: That is exactly what my pastor is doing. We have gone through so much stuff like church splits and bad pastors that a lot of our people have become passive. The pastor took on two people that want to do the will of God. He has worked with them, and now they are mentoring some others.

Steve: My wife and I started discipleship classes in the homes. Now, our church has taken off, but we also have some that are leaving because they do not want to work.

V: Remember that when starting a discipleship group, it is not to be just a knowledge system. It must be accompanied with action in ministry. Know and do what you know. Know and do more. Keep on knowing and doing more. That starts you spiraling up in the triangle of piety. If you should ever know

that the skills are learned and discipleship is forged.

the truth and not do it, then you will start spiraling back down.

An ignorant zealot, however, can do a lot of damage. Therefore the discipler is responsible for obtaining some education for himself in order to teach and train the disciples in the right way.

In this course, we are trying to help you to become a better discipler by your knowing the enemy. In military terms, we are at the debriefing stage after a reconnaissance mission into enemy territory. I cannot exaggerate the importance of these 4Disciples courses. All of them weave together to make a microcosmic cloth that pictures in a miniscule way God's giant discipleship cloth. God does not want me to teach you for teaching's sake. No, we write and teach for your sakes because God wants to use *you* in His service. If it does not count for the Kingdom of God, then just count me out. I am not going to teach it, and I do not want *you* to waste your time learning it if it does not count. That is why we are cutting down to the nuts and bolts on our selection of these courses to teach.

A THREAT TO CHRISTIANITY

I want us all to understand Kant's threat to Christianity. Kant makes Christianity a Christ-less ethic. It can be used to join all the religions together and make a one-world religion that has a nameless god and no Christ in it. It makes salvation nothing more than a subjective understanding of the Categorical Imperative.

Our society is going there.⁵ This threat is going to be consummated: Kantian religion is going to become the basis of the one-world religion. It is going to have a nameless god who will judge our conformance to our self-proclaimed duty, and it will not have Christ in it except as window dressing. Mohammed, Mary, the great cosmic spirit of Progressivism, Buddha, Communism, New Age, and apostate Christianity will be in it. But it is all window dressing. Basically, it makes you your own god because you are subject and never object in this system—until the rise of Antichrist.

When Antichrist rises to the throne, he alone will become subject; he will make all the rules by fiat. The citizens of earth will all be objects; they will obey his rules or be eliminated. Real Christians will refuse to be objects of Antichrist and be executed.

Steve: Kant kind of takes us back to Mars Hill where worship was of an unknown god.

V: It is more of a prelude to Antichrist's rule via political correctness. Antichrist will use Kant to unite all the religions, and then he will replace the individually determined categorical imperatives with his own unilateral subjective decrees of political correctness.

⁵ Published in the May 2, 2011 *Southern Baptist Texan* a poll revealed that a minimum of 44% of U.S. adults think that "if a person is generally good or does enough good things for others, they will earn a place in heaven." Of U.S. adults, 40% believe that "all people are eventually saved or accepted by God no matter what they do, because he loves all people he has created."

Chapter Questions

1. Describe the Categorical Imperative.
2. Describe a lapse in the Categorical Imperative.

Chapter 9

EXISTENTIALISM AND NEO-ORTHODOXY**REVIEW OF PRIOR CENTURIES**

Rationalism was the epistemology of the Seventeenth Century. In Rationalism, all truth had to be deduced from the body of accepted truth. In its pure form, truth became intuited from the congenital knowledge that was gained from the realm of the forms.

Empiricism was the epistemology of the Eighteenth Century. In Empiricism, all truth had to be induced via experience. The purest form of Empiricism excluded congenital knowledge and even the ability to experience cause and faith.

Kant ushered in the Nineteenth Century with a gigantic change in philosophy. Instead of epistemology, the discussion moved to volition. The questions of what do you know and how do you know changed to what will you do?

Kant brought Rationalism and Empiricism together by dividing reality into two areas—the noumenal area and the phenomenal area. One area was of the things in themselves, the actual things. These things were the real things in the area called the noumenal area, but they could not be experienced or known. The noumenal area was the area of Rationalism in which all deduced knowledge occurred by using the categories of knowledge that were created in people by their supposed god.

The phenomenal area was where experience occurred. The data that is produced by the thing in itself is experienced by other noumenals via phenomena. Noumena cannot experience other noumena. They can only experience phenomena that are given off by other noumena.

Kant provided a break in reality, which separated how knowledge was gained via phenomena from how knowledge is processed

by the noumena. This break brought about the question of: “So what will this kind of break mean?” *What* you know has not changed because sense experiences were processed by using the categories of knowledge for producing new truths. *How* you know did not change because the senses still provided data to the categories for the noumenon to induct and deduct truth.

The question about how and what can be known was no longer the primary issue. Kant’s Voluntarism assumed the validity of Rationalism and Empiricism and moved to the next step in Progressivism, i.e. what shall we therefore do?

In simple terms, now that we have affirmed the validity of our knowledge, then what are we to do with it? It was hypothesized that acts were either good or bad and that they would be judged by the creating god sometime in the future. It followed then that good needed to be defined. Kant’s answering definition of good was his Categorical Imperative. This imperative defined good ethics as one’s personal desires that he would like to be extrapolated over all people including himself.

The scenario was set for elite people who thought that they were endowed with great intelligence to make judgments on what we lesser humans ought to do. They think of themselves as mystically connected to the cosmic spirit (the creating god in the noumenal realm) that is leading the creation to utopia. They think that they are capable of implementing the Categorical Imperatives on the fly.

Progressivism is the undesired result of putting Rationalism and Empiricism together in Kant’s philosophy of Voluntarism. The phrase that you hear all the time is progres-

sive thinking. Some people label themselves as Progressives. That label is really esteemed today because it implies that non-Progressives are ignorant sticks-in-the-mud.

In the 19th Century, Kant ushered in Progressivism with his Categorical Imperative. This imperative is that we should act on the maxim whereby at the same time, we want that act to become a universal law. If you do something, the thing that you do needs to be desired as a universal law for everyone to live by.

In Progressivism, there is an emphasis on the duty of “oughtness.” When the Progressive is making a decision, he is at the fork in the road trying to make the best decision. He can go either of two ways. He evaluates his choices using the Categorical Imperative that requires him to choose the one that he would like for everyone to also choose. If he is at a point of choosing the good or the bad, he will choose the good (whatever that is in his deluded mind).

The Categorical Imperative is a way of naturally establishing, via humanistic ethics, rules of behavior, and it is based on your ideas on how the whole world ought to operate. The golden rule: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” is not applicable because the Volunteerism elites exempt themselves from the rules that apply to the people of the world. They must be free to evolve in their minds so that they can establish the changes in the rules that are necessary for the rest of the world. Like a heat seeking missile, they are constantly changing the rules in order to guide the complex world toward their elusive understanding of utopia.

The Categorical Imperative provides a method of behavior that implies a judge, but he is not named. Thus, you can have a generic religion without a specific god using the Kantian ethic.

When Kant’s philosophy invaded the church, Christianity became a code of behavior, not a belief system that re-created us into forgiven new men who followed the written mandates of God. Volunteerism does not provide for a new birth into a new creature that behaves differently because he is a new creature with a new nature.

There is a world of difference between behaving differently because you are forgiven and indwelt by God to follow Him in compliance to His objective code and conforming to your own subjectively desired pattern of behavior. Conformation without reformation will result in the dog returning to its vomit (Proverbs 26:11 and 2 Peter 2:22) and the sow returning to the mud (2 Peter 2:22). At any-time, that behavior can change because all you have to do is decide that you want a new behavior. When unchanged ontologically, you are prone to say yes if it is expedient for your pleasure or your narcissistic self-indulgence at the moment. But in Christianity you have changed behavior because you are different, i.e. an internal difference changes external behavior. Your “want-to” changes. Plus the code of behavior is already established as a permanent guide for pleasing the Judge who is also named.

Wanda: Concerning the Christ-less ethic that you spoke of previously, will that enable all the religions to join together under a nameless god?

Oscar: That is exactly what the one-world religion will be focused on.

V: Yes, that is why I am trying to give you some warnings.

EXISTENTIALISM

The Existentialism from Kierkegaard is where we are today. It is the heartbeat of society today for Progressivism’s efforts to usher in globalism.

I am going to take you, in this lesson, to the doctrine of revelation, and show you how Existentialism impacts it. The reason I am going to do that is because this is the largest problem that I have encountered in theology. It comes from Kierkegaard.

We have looked at Rationalism, Empiricism, and Kantian Volunteerism. Progressivism is the next step after Volunteerism's moving away from epistemology (how or what someone knows) into volition (how one chooses to act). Choice of action is determined via the Categorical Imperative, Kant's decision-making model for Volunteerism.

Decision-making models in nature focus on volition: what do you do in the moment? A Progressive is a person who is action oriented for bringing about utopia. Christian Progressives do not have to think in that environment because they can rely on natural desires and lustful feelings. Clichés become their systematic theology.¹

Bob: That is something that I struggle with concerning my roommate because he constantly uses clichés.

V: You need to be able to think. Everything that is happening today is critical. Thinking makes the difference in life and death.

Ted: Is that what Paul meant when he said, "Shun profane babblings" (2 Timothy 2:16).

V: Yes, that is part of it but there are a lot of other profane babblings.

¹ Do not get trapped by clichés. When others start using them, back away and think of a better way to express their cliché. Then you can put it back to the speaker in another way and ask them if that is what they mean by the cliché. If they say yes, then you have a meaningful statement that you both understand. Then you can start analyzing it by categorizing its elements, and proceeding to comparing the elements with prior truths.

Jill: Since philosophy is the love of wisdom and knowledge, then will our action from our volition in the moment, produce more knowledge as a result?

V: Yes, knowledge expands as a product of action. In Christianity, we see that happening in our spiraling upwards in our piety. However, we are going to look closely at the false process in Kierkegaard's Existentialism.

Carl: You can build a whole system of false knowledge depending upon how you act.

V: You sure can.

Mary: One of the dangers with clichés is that many times people take them as scriptural when they are not.

V: The Lord used parables that were stories which were parallel to the truth that He was teaching." *Parabole* is the word for parable. *Para* is beside; *boleo* is to cast. It is a story cast along side the truth. You learn from the story the truth being taught. His parables are hard to understand and apply; you have to think. He interpreted some of them for us in order to give us guidelines to use in our interpreting. Clichés, on the other hand, are humanistic parables; they are sayings that are cast right along side of the thesis being proposed and are meant to buttress that thesis.

An example cliché is: "That is where the rubber meets the road." Somebody may make a claim, and another may respond, "That is where the rubber meets the road." Automatically, you will assume that the proposition is truth, i.e. it is where truth and reality meet. Your mind immediately quits asking questions, and you go on to the next point. That is a dangerous game because the cliché may have been cast along side a false statement that moves you right into a false belief.

Oscar: Many ministers use them in their preaching instead of the pure Gospel. Clichés

condition people’s attention by directing their interests and creating itching ears.

V: Clichés lay out a reality that may not really be present, but the people are locked in, especially if the cliché is diced up with a little emotion. Then minds are numbed to analytical thinking and tend to move into sentimentalism. In the sentimental domain, a truth can be turned upside down, and error can be applauded.

Jack: I hear from the pulpit: “Listen to what I say. If you will take one step, God will take two.” It makes one assume that his one step is the right step.

Pete: Christ sometimes taught in parables to keep the truth from people that were antagonistic to it?

V: Yes! Parables are different from clichés. Via the parable, the Lord speaks to Christians in a way that is unknown by unbelievers. You can read a parable in the Scriptures and know the spiritual reality of what the Lord is saying. A guy sitting right next to you can read it and say, “So what!”

Tom: There is a Scripture that is now frequently being used today as a cliché to justify evil. It is: “This is the day that the Lord has made, let us rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalms 118:24).

Ted: But that is Scripture.

V: It is Scripture. But it was probably being used as a cliché to be set side by side with an evil event. A scripture like this can be used to buttress an evil thought, approach, or philosophy that should instead be rejected.

Paul: That scripture was a Psalm of David at his lowest point; he was being bombarded from every side. He was being overwhelmed, but he was determined to rejoice even when things are going badly.

V: Yes, that scripture can comfort us in the midst of evil, but it does not justify evil. If we should hold every Scripture as perfectly

applicable across the board without regard to context, then we are going to fall victim to a false approach.

Tim: Just say that verse to someone who has just lost a loved one and see what happens.

Homer: We must be on guard so that we can do good, not damage.

V: After Kant came Hegel and Dialectical Idealism.

HEGEL (1770 TO 1831).

Hegel added Dialectical Idealism as the thinking method of Progressivism by adding the non-violent revolution of ideas. In dialectics, there are two opposing ideas, i.e. a thesis and an antithesis. In Dialectical Idealism, the tension between the two opposites progresses through a non-violent, political revolution into a unified national synthesis in which the goody of each side is retained (see Chart 9.1). The thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are all ideas in Dialectical Idealism. The goal at the end is the ideal/utopia to which the cosmic spirit is drawing all of civilization.

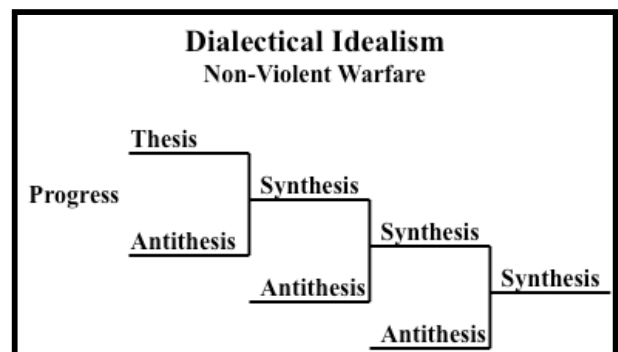


Chart 9.1

Tom: This progress will not end until the end of history?

V: Not exactly. Dialectical Idealism is a progressive system in which the state/nation

is drawn forward by the cosmic spirit toward the ideal or utopia that is within history.²

Note that Hegel's philosophy has also changed from an emphasis on epistemology to an emphasis on volition. Society, rather than the individual, chooses what to believe. As it acts upon each new idea that opposes the current ideas, it changes progressively into a new society. Dialectical Idealism is not confined to merely thinking the new thoughts. It is the production of a new society on the basis of the war of ideas within politics.³

Tom: This is happening today!

Carl: This is another way that religion and society are going to meet together! Society is moving toward another enlightenment.

V: Rather than another enlightenment, I think that we are moving toward another dark ages in which the nation would control the thinking that produces the ethics.

Bob: I was thinking that this erroneous philosophy could actually enter the church through a false doctrine of reconciliation. Instead of reconciliation to God via Christ's sacrifice, our reconciliation will be to a god who will judge us on how and whether we bring in a utopian society

V: Yes, it sure could, and it would be a progressive, Kantian morality that is being adopted by the state/nation/globe rather than the individual.

Tim: Would this progressiveness be basically what is happening now with political correctness?

² Utopian thought is not the same as Christian Eschatology which is eternity outside of temporal human history. Utopia is a temporal version of human history that has no defined end.

³ Obama calls this new society collective salvation. The Progressive thinks that his idea of utopia is a global government run by him so that his idea is forced on everyone "for their own good."

V: Yes, that is exactly what is happening. Ideas are taking shape in political leaders who have enough power to bring continuous change into society, including the church.

Homer: Would you say, then, that the synthesis becomes a thesis in Dialectical Idealism?

V: Yes, on the next cycle, the synthesis becomes a thesis, and the opposing idea is proposed as the antithesis. Each time a synthesis occurs, there is the potential for an antithesis until utopia is reached.

KIERKEGAARD (1813 TO 1855) AND THE BIRTH OF EXISTENTIALISM

Existentialism entered the Nineteenth Century with Kierkegaard as a philosophy that is based on a person's being an active subject in the now. As the subject in the now, the person's job in life was to decide what he was going to do in the now. The present, not the past or the future, becomes all important.

It is interesting to note that Kierkegaard's philosophy did not take root during his time on earth in the Nineteenth Century, the era of progress. Because Marx overshadowed him, Kierkegaard's ideas went into hibernation for about a hundred years. Then Existentialism erupted in a huge way in the latter part of the Twentieth Century. We are listing his Existentialism here merely to show how he personally fits into the scope of chronological history. We will, however, address his Existentialism later in its context of being applied to society's philosophical history.

KARL MARX (1818-1883) AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

Marx's Dialectical Materialism, which was accepted ahead of Kierkegaard's Existentialism, took hold in the Nineteenth Century as another method for progress. It followed a model that was very similar to Hegel's except

that Marx foresaw the world progressing via *force* toward an economic utopia. The resolution between thesis and antithesis is produced by revolutionary violence and force.

In Marxism, progress is economically driven, and it is pushed to the end. The cosmic spirit, as in Hegel, pulls progress to the end. However, for Marx, it is pushed to the end by men committed to using warfare to establish their positions in utopia. The elitists use the masses as pawns to do their fighting for them. The allegiance of the masses is gained through the false promises of redistributing the wealth of the haves to the have-nots. Instead, the wealth and power was redistributed to the revolutionary leaders, and poverty, slavery, and death was redistributed to everybody else.

The dialectical materialist is always looking to foment class warfare that theoretically will provide an opportunity to take from those who have and give it to those who have not. The motivational theory is that all will possess equal amounts of the nation's wealth. However, the men who drive this materialistic system position themselves to be "more equal." They will engineer the revolution so that they will be the big winners who possess much wealth and power. Because they are the elite that guide the revolution via their power, they will be naturally in the driver's seat when the existing government collapses. Thus the elites of the revolution will then comprise the new government. They will then move quickly to strengthen their hold on their power to govern by removing the guns from the people.

Pete: They are working on that concept here in the United States, are they not?

V: You had better believe it. This is a system that is implemented by force, and is built upon the lust for wealth and power. Social justice is the name of the goal that is supposedly achieved by moving to a classless society. In this society, the government owns

all the property and distributes life's necessities to all the governed in such a way that there are no longer any classes among the governed. They are all slave workers for the government.

Hegel's model is a war between ideas in which the synthesis is always the state and culture. Marx's model is a physical war for the redistribution of wealth and power to elite people in the government. The synthesis is always a more powerful government and a less free people being governed. Hegel's and Marx's final syntheses are global in scope, thus the description "progressive" is applied.

Revolution is the method of Dialectical Materialism. If you live through a communist revolution, you will be faced with taking a side in the war. That means then that you will be marked for being conquered by the opposing side so that the nation can arrive at a new synthesis. Many people on both sides of the war are sacrificed for the empowerment of the revolutionary leaders.

Communist countries are conquering countries by definition. When they declare their desire for peace, they are not saying that they do not desire war because as long as there is an antithesis, there will be war. Peace will be achieved in the final forging of a one-world Communist utopia. That final peace via conquest is the only peace that the Communist leaders want.

Carl: Would not Communism and Liberation Theology eventually arrive at a classless society?

V: Only in their propaganda. There will be economic separation into two classes in both because of the necessity of a ruling class and a ruled working-class. Communism requires a controlling group of elite people. In Russia, it is the Communist Party that rules over the workers. The elites, by definition, will not participate in classlessness. They will be the new class of haves in *their utopia*,

and all of the classless people will be the worker-slaves that will work to provide the government's utopia. The Communist utopia will consist of the government and the governed, the final version of haves and have-nots. The rulers expect to maintain their rule via force which is enabled via their control of all of the weapons.

In Liberation Theology, there will have to be a ruling class also because someone has to have the power to take from the haves and give it to the have-nots, i.e. a method of redistributing the wealth. In America, the government does that now through the graduated income tax rates. However, our government is expanding its power to enslave us via revolution that is non-violent so far. It is using economic dependence to enslave, but the tipping point will come via force because there are many Americans who will resist the erosion of their freedoms.

Our government has too much power already. Senior citizens who own their own homes have to rent them from the government by paying property taxes. The government has the power to take the home away by just raising taxes to the point that a person on fixed income can no longer pay their taxes.

A government that has the power to take one's private property can take one's life. It can decide who lives or dies, who can have children, who can marry, who works in the various trades, racial preferences, religious preferences, etc.

Jill: Slave and master!

V: Slave people and master government is Communism. Communism is created by force. Once you get to utopia through the force of war, force will still be needed to keep the people subjected to the rule of the governing elites.

Carl: The general public has no clue as to what is actually happening when a revolution is boiling to the surface.

V: They are generally not alert because they do not know philosophy, and they are trying to earn a living. They are just being used as pawns by the false promises of the elite. We must be alert and educate our people.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: DISILLUSIONMENT LED TO MIXED PHILOSOPHIES

The Twentieth Century is the century of disillusionment and mixed philosophies. Disillusionment came from the depression, wars, and the scientific advances that developed nuclear power. The wars brought in much destruction. The depressions brought in much economic suffering in spite of our best efforts.

This time of disillusionment opened the gateways for new thought about how to progress toward utopia. N.A.T.O. and the U.N. were developed to prevent any future wars, and arms treaties were developed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons.

On the economic front, Keynes originated a new idea of how the government is to solve all economic problems in depressions. His idea was for the government to control the money supply. To achieve that idea, our money had to be removed from the gold standard.⁴ Once the money was divorced from any standard, it could be printed on demand. Thus a country that could understand the concept could print up the most and purchase the good life from around the world.

What is behind the dollar? No longer does gold or silver back it. There is nothing behind it. Everybody trusts it, but there is nothing behind it.

Inflation arose, via printing money on demand, as the new economic enemy. When

⁴ God provided the gold standard so that money certificates would grow at the same rate as the discovery of gold, which in God's plans grew at the same rate as the population and the world's production of wealth.

the money supply is increased, the prices go up at the same rate. Thus if a country, in microcosm, has 10 dollars to buy its gross national product of 10 goods at a price of 1 dollar per good, and then if the country prints another 10 dollars, then those 10 goods will cost 20 dollars at a price of 2 dollars per good. Therefore what is being increased is the dollars, not the goods. However, as long as the international valuation of the dollar is higher than that of the other countries, then we can increase our wealth by buying some of their goods with our newly printed dollars. Thus on the international scene, there is a continuous devaluation of the monies by the countries and the increasing valuation of any goods that are exclusive to a particular country.⁵

On the Christian front, God wants you to be warned and armed for dealing with dialectical progress. That progress manifested itself in our church history. The apostles' true Christianity, as outlined by Scriptural authority, was opposed by the antithesis of church authority. Out of that dialectic came the Roman Catholic Church as the Christian synthesis. In opposition to the Church's authority came the Reformation, a return to Scriptural authority, as an antithesis. The Protestant Christian groups resulted. Since then, the dialectics have proliferated to the formation of a variety of Protestant denominations with varying degrees of clerical authority.

KIERKEGAARD'S CRITIQUE OF CORPORATE OBJECTIVE FAITH

During the Nineteenth Century, the Lutheran Church, as all denominations think,

⁵ The U.S. borrowed several trillion dollars from China. Now it is printing money as fast as it can so that it can pay back China with hugely devalued dollars. China caught on to the ruse, and is in the process of converting its debts from America into gold and any other commodities that are not liable to artificial inflation.

thought that it was the ideal Christian denomination. In particular, the Lutheran Church of Denmark, where Kierkegaard lived, considered that it was the ideal church and that the state was the ideal state. So, the state and the church merged to the point that the citizen of Denmark was, by right of citizenship, also a member of the Danish Lutheran Church.

Kierkegaard saw Danish Lutheranism as a dead religion. He saw that it took no faith to be born in Denmark and to become a member of the church. Where was the faith? He saw that Danish Lutheranism had no subjective value of the individual's being placed in Christ. It was totally objective in that one's birth was objective, and one's membership in the church was a result of his birth and thus objective as well. A Dane was born a Dane and a Christian at the same time. All he had to do in order to keep being a good Christian was go to church, sit in the pew, put your money in the offering plate, stand up and sing when told, sit down when told, and then leave when told. Does that sound familiar?

The corporate dimension of a state church robbed the Danish of the need for a faith commitment. Where the individual fits in with God in personal discipleship did not matter.⁶ When the Dane attended worship by sitting in the pew, that conforming act was a corporate objective faith. That corporate faith is embodied in the so-called ideal church. When faith is achieved by one's birth in a certain state, Kierkegaard rightly saw that it was a dead-faith.

Kierkegaard further declared that if Christianity were proven to be a falsehood, a myth about Jesus being raised from the dead, then there would be no Danish pastors to resign their payroll. They would just stay in place,

⁶ The Lord is telling each of you to follow Him. You take Him by the hand, and He takes you where He wants to use you in His ministry for which you are perfectly fitted. That is individual subjective faith that is shaped by the objective Scriptures

and everybody would just keep on going to church. They would be collecting their money, preaching their sermons, and nothing would change because it requires no subjective faith. It would be just a dead objective faith which was nothing more than the objectivity of being born into the corporate dimensions of a church when born into the citizenship of a nation.⁷

Kierkegaard said that the individual must make a commitment, and that commitment needed to be to the Lord. Without that commitment along with its accompanying applications, faith is dead. God requires the individual Christian to say, "Here am I, Lord, send me" (Isaiah 6:8). You must take hold of His hand and be His slave, to do what He wants, not what the corporate body dictates to you.

Some of Kierkegaard's critique was good, but it went too far. It devalued the objective content of faith to the point of the elimination of its necessity. True faith needs to believe some objective content and then live subjectively by that belief. However, Kierkegaard's fight was against the objectivity of faith to the extent of replacing the objective portion of faith with subjective faith.

Kierkegaard put an extremely high emphasis on the "application" of faith. He chose two Bible characters to exemplify the two kinds of faith.

⁷ This dead corporate worship resulted from the Hegelian dialectic that led to the ideal state and church which had worked its way into Denmark by the time that Kierkegaard came on the scene. Kierkegaard rightly observed that the Danish church was dead, and thus he critiqued it extensively. However, his critique sat idle for a long time because Marxism was in full swing. Basically, the critique declared that the objective faith which was embodied in being a member of the corporate body of the national church was dead because it was without any real life-changing application.

The Stories of Resignation versus Faith

Agamemnon, the Knight of Infinite Resignation, was the chosen character that exemplifies the dead objective faith.⁸ Abraham the Knight of Faith was the one chosen to exemplify real subjective faith.

The Knight of Infinite Resignation

Agamemnon, was told in battle that his kingdom was about to fall and that all his subjects were going to be killed or enslaved because the gods were displeased. He realized that he had to sacrifice some person in order to appease the gods and save his nation. He offered to sacrifice the first person he saw when he returned home if the gods would grant him victory. That person turned out to be his only beloved daughter who ran out to greet him upon his victorious return. He sacrificed his daughter under the bondage of duty to fulfill his objective oath, and his nation was saved.

Agamemnon was caught in the jaws of decision, to save his daughter or to save his nation. His decision made him the Knight of Infinite Resignation because he resigned himself to his duty of sacrificing his daughter.

The Knight of Faith

God told Abraham, the Knight of Faith, that he would be blessed with a child. Furthermore, a great nation would come through his seed that would number more than the sands of the sea. All the promises of God would come through that child. Abraham and Sarah received that child in their old age that was beyond the childbearing age.

After receiving the miracle child, God then told them to sacrifice the child back to Him. Abraham, at that point, found himself in the jaws of a dilemma similar to that faced

⁸ Kierkegaard chose Agamemnon, a secular person in his illustration, but in the book of Judges, Jephthah was the biblical character who did the same thing.

by Agamemnon. He could save his son, or obey God. He chose to obey God, but by faith, he also saved his son. So the Knight of Faith, by believing the absurd, created a reality in which he could have both the sacrifice and the survival of his only child.

Existentialism Requires No Real Sacrifice

There is an emphasis now in Existentialism under this interpretation that true sacrifice may be achieved without a sacrificial victim, i.e. you can have your cake and eat it too (a cliché) by faith. According to Kierkegaard, your sacrifice only has to be at your decision point, but by faith you do not have to actually go through with the sacrifice. The objective sacrifice is replaced by subjective commitment in Existentialism. By faith Abraham retained Isaac. He did not have to sacrifice him.

In Existentialism, there are both good and bad elements. One of the good elements is that it adds the subjective element to faith as application in the life of an individual Christian. One of the bad elements is an emphasis on the objective reality of subjective faith, and how you can create your own world through it. Another bad element is the danger that you can cast this idea in the right light and get a lot of people thinking that they can be good Christians without any real sacrifices. This danger is already present among us. Many Christians think that by faith, they can choose to follow God, and practice self-indulgence at the same time.

Joe: So did Agamemnon actually sacrifice his daughter?

V: Yes, his was a literal sacrifice; he resigned himself to an either-or, and he chose to save his nation at the cost of his daughter's life.

Joe: He sacrificed the one for the good of many.

Betty: Kierkegaard regarded the Knight of Infinite Resignation's action ethical but immoral. When he looked at Abraham, he said it was unethical and moral. But it was okay because it was in faith.

V: Yes, for Agamemnon. However, I think that Abraham's true intention to sacrifice Isaac was ethical too because God who defines good and bad ethics required it.

Kierkegaard had an overemphasis on the subjective and a de-emphasis on the objective. A national church is an objective Christianity, which is one that requires no subjective appropriation of justification by faith on your behalf. An objective Christianity without a subjective part requires no personal faith. A subjective Christianity without an objective part is nothing more than believing in your believing.

In true faith, both the subjective and the objective dimensions are involved. If you take away the subjective dimension, then you will have only the objective dimension, which is a dead faith. It is nothing more than a faith that requires nothing more than being a member of a corporate body. You, by virtue of being in that body, are saved with no faith required. That is an objective faith.

If you should dispense with the objective dimension and have a totally subjective faith, then you can create your own reality by your faith. In other words, by believing in your believing, you can create whatever it is that you want.

Our faith must be both subjective and objective. The objective gives us a real substantial part of reality to believe. The subjective gives us a willful participation in the choice to believe.

Existentialism Affects Revelation

Now I want to show you what Existentialism does to the doctrine of revelation. I will start by showing the doctrine of revelation

that I hold to. It is propositional revelation (see Chart 9.2). In this doctrine, God manifested Himself through an historical act. A witness saw the act. He understood that he was in a special place at a special time and that God had done something in his view. It could have been the resurrection of a dead person or some other miracle. God then inspired him subjectively to write an account of the act. What is he going to write? Is he going to write his own understanding of what he saw, or is he going to write God's intended interpretation?

The objective dimension to inspiration occurs when God interprets His Own Act for the witness to write. God selects the words from the witness's vocabulary to use in interpreting the manifestation so that the Scriptures become a divine-human product. If there should be nothing but subjective inspiration, then it would be just the witness's interpretation that would be written. Depending upon your doctrine of revelation, when you see the Gospel of John, you have either John's words or God's Words (God's choice of John's words). In propositional revelation, the Bible is God's Word because God gives both subjective and objective inspiration.

Subjective inspiration only involves God's moving the witness to write an interpretation of the act. When the objective part of inspiration is added, God gives His Own interpretation to the writer. When the writing occurs, the Holy Spirit actually picks the words out of John's vocabulary that reflect John's personality. Thus inspiration has man in yoke with God in the writing of the Word of God through the words of the witness. The Word has the same dimension as the incarnate Word of God. It is both human and divine joined together and is absolutely inerrant.

The Bible, then, is the Word of God. The person on the right of Chart 9.2 is in present time. He cannot understand the Word of God because it is beyond our human abilities to understand God's interpretation. It is so far beyond our limited human understanding that it appears as foolishness to natural man. We need our comprehension to be elevated in order to understand the things of God.

Illumination from God provides the needed elevation of our understanding by giving light to understand what God is saying in the Scriptures. That illumination has both an objective and a subjective dimension to it. The objective part gives understanding to us, and the subjective part convicts us to make a decision to submit to what God said.

Steve: Would you call the Bible, then, the synthesis of God and man working together?

V: Yes, absolutely.

Let us see what this doctrine becomes under Existentialism's influence. In Chart 9.3 is the doctrine of revelation under Kierkegaard's philosophical influence. It is called personal revelation (sometimes it is referred to as act revelation), and in it, God manifests Himself by acting in history the same way as in

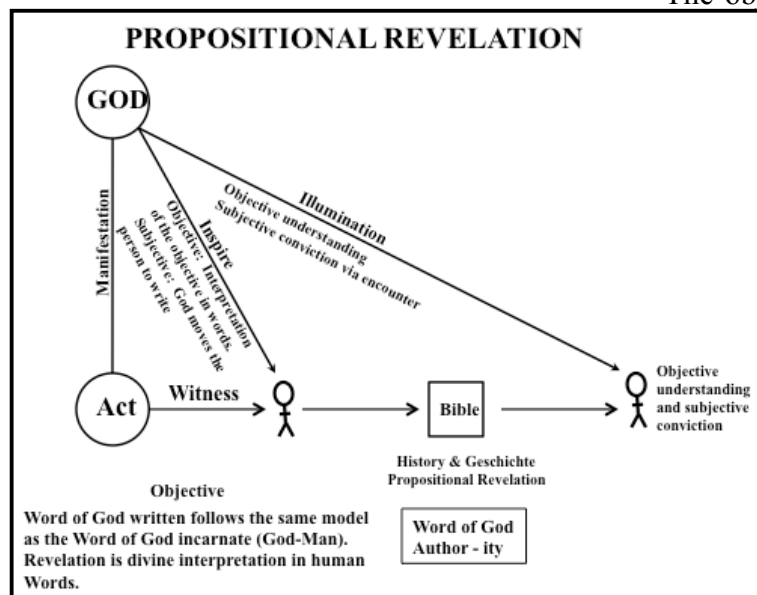


Chart 9.2

Propositional Revelation. However, inspiration changes in personal revelation to just the subjective part in which the witness is moved to record the act that he witnessed. In personal revelation, the Bible becomes the record of revelation as interpreted by the witness. The authority of the record is gained by the primacy of the witness' historical closeness to the act of God.

Furthermore, the reader of the Bible in present time receives only subjective illumination as a person-to-person encounter with the Word of God, i.e. Jesus Christ. The content of the Scriptures, as an understandable written Word of God, is not revelation because that understanding is objective. Revelation is the encounter between two subjects—Jesus and the reader in a subject-to-subject (person-to-person) encounter. What is the witness reading? He is not reading God's Word; he is reading a witness. So what does that witness mean to the reader? Nothing until he encounters Jesus. The witness is only the catalyst for that encounter.

In this scenario of personal revelation, your testimony would have a similar validity as the writer's testimony. The difference would be in the level of authority. The scripture writer would have a higher authority based on his closer proximity to the time of God's manifesting act.

Inspiration is not objective in personal revelation. As such, the scriptural words are not the Words of God, like they are in propositional revelation. Thus, both inspiration and illumination are only subjective in personal revelation.

Personal revelation is Neo-orthodoxy, the Existential version of Christianity, my brethren. We are inundated with this false doctrine. The Neo-orthodox theologians have extended inspiration from the point of writing to the point of reading in the present. Inspiration is said to occur in the Neo-orthodox Christian in the encounter of the reader with Jesus Himself. With this level of subjectivity, the liberal, Neo-orthodox Christian can make the Scriptures mean anything that he may desire.

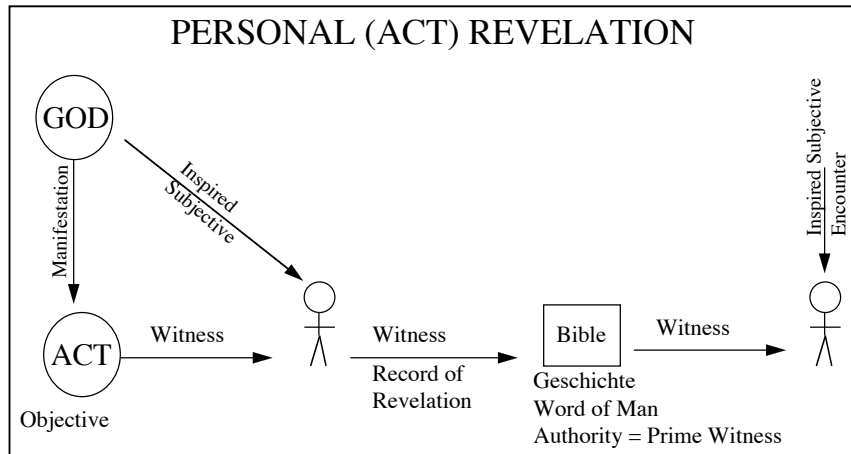


Chart 9.3

Personal revelation has not the objective value that the Word of God does in the propositional revelation model. Scripture, in personal revelation, is a subjective witness which may or may not lead the reader to an encounter with the person of Jesus, i.e. personal revelation.

Steve: Is there any real inspiration in this personal or act revelation?

V: There is no objective inspiration in the personal/act revelation model. There is only subjective inspiration, and it occurs at the points of urging the writer to record his witness and of urging the reader to make a decision. Illumination is eliminated because under

Kierkegaard's influence the objective dimension is removed; all of it is subjective inspiration. Revelation is subject to subject; it is person to person. You never know when it is going to happen because it must have the encounter in order to happen.

The Scripture that you read is not the Word of God in the personal/act revelation model. The Word of God in this model is the person of Christ Jesus, the only Word of God.

Kierkegaard's Existentialism is called Neo-orthodoxy in Christianity. That means that the words of scripture themselves are diminished in value and importance. Their only objective importance is derived from their being the record of a witness's account of God's act. Scripture, as revelation, is replaced by a subjective encounter in which you meet the actual Person, the Word of God.

The Bible is not the Word of God for the Neo-orthodox Christian. He may read the Bible, which says that divorce is an abomination. However, he does not have to hold to that objective statement because it is only the scripture writer's interpretation of God's manifestation. In his encounter with the personal Word of God, Jesus may supposedly tell him that divorce, homosexuality and abortion are okay. In the encounter, the Neo-orthodox reader may think that he hears: "All I want from you is . . ." (whatever it might be). What he hears is usually dictated by his own spirit, his own lusts.

I heard a professor say that personal revelation is very freeing, and it makes Christianity sweet, easy, and fun, not like that of the "stifling, mean-spirited fun-damn-mentalists." He claimed that Neo-orthodoxy provides the freedom to believe and follow the Lord the way that you want to.

Remember what Kierkegaard said? We need to replace this objective Christianity, which is a dead faith, with a real faith in which you place your hand in God's hand, and you follow Him unrestrained by any objective content. In his plan, your fellowship becomes whatever you want it to be.

The impulse to allow personal gain to shape your ministry will be allowed in Neo-orthodoxy. Ministry may cost some ministers

their lives, but the subjectivity of Neo-orthodoxy will find a "good and easy ministry" that will bring the most profit to the Neo-orthodox minister.

Feeling replaces rational thinking of the words of the Scriptures in Neo-orthodoxy because feeling is subjective. Rational thought is objective when it corresponds to the objective Scriptures. Subjective encounter replaces objective content, and that "encounter" can become anything under the sun. It usually becomes whatever it is that the Neo-orthodox Christian lusts for.

Pete: We do what is right in our own eyes (Deuteronomy 12:8).

V: Yes, and doing what is right in your own eyes can be easily justified via personal revelation. I want to tell you, folks, that this doctrine is flourishing everywhere!

Kierkegaard gave Existentialism to secular society, but it became Neo-orthodoxy to the Church. Some tip-off words are: "record of revelation," "according to the witness of (blank)," "when you meet the Word of God," "(blank) was inspired to write such and such," and "I was inspired by the Bible or sermon." Neo-orthodox subjectivity has influenced every one of us. Some of you are actually running your pilgrimage under this model, and you do not even know that you are doing anything wrong.

Just remember: our Christianity is both subjective and objective. It contains both divine elements and human elements put together and held in balance. If you omit a dimension, the other one will become your god.

If it is totally objective without the subjective element, it is dead faith. In this model, there is no individual, personal faith because it has no willful participation of choice. Your faith is gained from the corporate dimension. It can be cold, ritualistic, and by the numbers.

If it is totally subjective without the objective element, it becomes very warm, but it has no substantive anchor, no definition, and it is driven by your subjective feelings. One's own random choices to believe what he wants to believe gains its definition as a result of the believing.

Real Christianity must have both dimensions. When you put the two, i.e. subjective and objective, together in balance, however, you have real faith that gains its objective content from God's revelation and its subjective content from one's personal appropriation through willful choice.

Jesus was truly an historical Person, not some kind of a floating myth. He was divine, and when you put your faith in Him, it actually has to have the real Him as an

objective target for your faith. If you are not worshiping Christ on His terms, you have missed the boat.

The objective, then, is extremely important. But if there is no subjective dimension, i.e. if there is no real appropriation, and your Christianity is mechanical without subjective involvement, then you have missed the boat there too. The two must be pulled together and held in balance, and if it gets out of balance, we are in apostasy and we will lead our people in the wrong direction.

The evils of Existentialism and Neo-orthodoxy could be the most important things that you are going to learn in this class.

Chapter Questions

1. What did Kierkegaard fight against?
2. Which Bible character did Kierkegaard use and why?
3. When Existentialism enters into Christianity, what is the label that is applied to Christian doctrine? Also what is the doctrine of revelation called?
4. Is Existentialism subjective or objective?

Chapter 10

EXISTENTIALISM'S SUBJECTIVITY PLUS DIALECTICAL PROCESSES

EXISTENTIALISM

Kevin, if you have with you your paper on the book *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave*, I would like for you to open it up and read that part on Kierkegaard plus your conclusion for your book summary.

Kevin: Soren Kierkegaard was born in 1813 in Copenhagen, Denmark, lived a rather short and uneventful life, and died in 1855.

The world began to look for a new message in the time after World War II, a new theology, and a new personage whose ideals could replace a defunct and bankrupt liberalism. The philosophies of the past had been torn into shreds by the undeniable reality. The question of the day was, "Who shall we believe in now? We need a new king."

Onto the scene busted the slumbering writings of Kierkegaard, which made a stunning impact for they were just the ideals for which the world was waiting. The melancholy Dane gave the world an irresistible philosophy called Existentialism. This theological and philosophical emergence is best described as diffusion; thinking moved from the rational to the irrational. Reason gave way to feeling. The thinking of the world became a set of contradictions in which the finality of truth slipped away.

Existentialism implies contradiction, anomaly, fluidity, and rejection of any imposed or artificial sequence. In this theory, the moment is the ultimate thing which has neither necessary causes nor automatic consequences. Its significance is that it brings instant interaction with the outside world that is not verified by some categorical epistemology, but by the confirming emotion or feeling.

The effect of Existentialism in the atheistic society brought on the denial of any consistent morality. The theory was that wrongness was that which produces pain or inconvenience for you. Its precept is that there is no law or principle, no proper course of action of any kind; so, go with the flow. There is only one life so "have it your way" as the Burger King commercial says. Similarly, the Nike commercial tells us to "just do it." The implication is that there is only this one moment without causes and without consequences.

Out of Existentialism was born a form of Christianity called Neo-orthodoxy. In it the Bible becomes revelational only when the Scripture inspires the seeker of the truth to interact with the person of Christ. Inspiration would then be categorized as an experience for the believer rather than a definition of the providence of the Holy Scripture.

The Neo-orthodox view has altered the view of salvation to basically become a psychological experience with the personality of Jesus. The experience becomes a transforming relationship rather than a pulling from the pit. That transformational emphasis is not upon reconciliation with Holy God, but with realization and fulfillment of traditional ways of life. In this concept the ultimate truth becomes contradictory. The object becomes contextual, and salvation becomes experience oriented.

In conclusion, we see seven men who, through their ideals and philosophies, have literally changed our world. Most people today think this change a good thing. But the same people really cannot see the underlying aspects of the deterioration of our society. This concept has placed man on a pedestal claiming to have all the answers. He has literally put himself in the

position to be his own god. He, of course, is in need of one because he has totally pushed the only true, just, sovereign, and holy God out of the picture.

I find that each of these men, in some way, contributed to the darkening of society. They each arrived on the scene of history at just the right time to spin their web of deception. Each one had a different, yet similar, disguise such as Darwin's ideal that we should look to nature for our origins. Marx said that we should look to the government for our identity. Wellhausen said that within our own reason we had the answer. Freud gave our personalities credit for everything. Keynes put the responsibility in the hands of the economy, and Kierkegaard just flat out led us to believe that there is no truth whatsoever.

Each one of these ideals was different, yet all had the same goal in mind. That goal was to separate us from our only hope—Jesus Christ. "He who has an ear let him hear." This cry is heard from the innermost depth of my heart. Can we see the darkening that is going on here?

The progressive stages of philosophy are preparing us for the times in which the ends of the age have come. Each of these men has put into play the meanings for the end time events to happen. The Bible specifically tells us that at that time, we will have these factors such as deception, turning from the truth, one-world government, one-world religion, one-world economy, and men setting themselves up to be gods. These men have each contributed to those factors.

In my own opinion, Breese should reconsider the title to be Seven Men Who Progress the Opening of the Seven Seals and the Blowing of the Seven Trumpets from the Grave.

V: Amen, Kevin. That is a really good analysis!

Bob: My paper sounds just like that! (Much laughter around the room)

Kevin: God deserves the praise for my paper because it is really great to sit down and I mean I had no concept of what to write, and all this just came out.

V: When we were dealing with Existentialism last week, we took one doctrine, the doctrine of revelation and examined what Neo-orthodoxy, Existentialism in the religious realm, would do to that doctrine. It made revelation very subjective. Whatever the reader wanted it to be that is what it becomes.

A PERVASIVE PROBLEM TODAY

I am accustomed to dialoguing with people who are theologically minded and are able to talk at that level, but after class last week, Don came up to me to present a very different scenario. That scenario addresses what is happening in the pews of the churches.

I kept thinking that if I could get my peers to think in terms of objective revelation, then they would find the truth that is there. The truth of revelation does not change, it is rock solid, and you can base your life on it. You can stand on it, and it will not fail you. I was thinking that if I could just get my peers to come to that conclusion, then the problem would be solved. Now I think that it would not be solved!

Don, see if you can restate what the problem is that you are encountering, and let us see if we can see the scope of this problem that has moved to a new worldwide level.

Don: What I have been noticing over the last few months when I talk to people at work is that they are answering my witness with, **"Well, that is just what you believe. I do not have to believe that."** They are getting very tolerant of anyone's different viewpoint, so that nothing I say affects them. This kind of tolerance is happening with people who have never read the Bible or who know it cursorily. They are completely uneducated, but they can stop my evangelism by saying, "Oh, okay, if

that is what you believe. It is not what I believe." I cannot get through that belief barrier in order to engage them with truth.

V: The problem that Don describes is very real. What are we going to do to solve the problem? It extends past the theological issues that we can debate in the classroom; it is a real life problem that has invaded the pews of the churches. What are we going to do?

I showed you the complex doctrine of revelation. How many people in the churches could understand that doctrine without someone's walking them through the explanation? We are in a position where we cannot debate in the church theologically because they cannot hear it. For a debate, each party must have an objective truth to stand on in order to have both parties to be able to hear, dialogue, and understand. Here in this class, we are debating secular philosophies by analyzing them, and developing theological answers.

But what does dialogue do for the normal Christian who may even be educated with a master's degree in accounting or engineering or whatever? They are educated, but they do not know anything about theology. They do not know anything about the Bible. Everything that they know is so skewed that when they read scripture, they read their desires into it. They do not get meaning out of their readings; they put their desired meaning into them.

When you are talking to the non-Christian, and you are trying to lead him to the Lord, you get: "Well that is just what you believe. What I believe is just as important." They become theologians in their own right and because of their own self-esteem, we cannot get through their subjectivism for some real analytical dialogue.

Steve: It is not only in the pews, but it is also in the pulpit. Last night, I heard a recent survey of pastors in different denominations. Concerning the bodily resurrection of Jesus,

50% of one denomination did not believe in it. A third of another did not believe, and even 30% of the Baptist ministers did not believe in the bodily resurrection.

V: The pastors and leaders make up the level that I am trying to reach. You are the future leaders, teachers, and pastors. My hope is that as we go through the effects of philosophy on theology, you will put up your guards, put away these vain philosophies, and take up the Lord's philosophy. The problem, then, still would not be solved. We would still have the problem in the other denominations and in our own pews.

Steve: On top of seeing what you just described, I am seeing something else. The youth are saying that the stuff that a lot of these adults believe is garbage, and they want to know why they are not being taught the truth. Just to use the sex thing—a lot of the kids are being taught "safe sex." The kids are crying out, after they have gotten in trouble, "Why did you not teach us abstinence?" The kids are screaming out for the truth. The kids today are the ones who are ready to come back to God.

V: Yes, I think that there are still some pristine minds out there that have not been existentialized to the point where they have become islands unto themselves, subject to their own minds. They are still hearing. The seeds of the truth that we want to sow could lodge, take root, and blossom. It may be our generation that is fouled up, and it may be the kids who have not been so destroyed with Existentialism. If you go to college today, folks, you will be immersed in Existentialism.

Steve: Well, from the time they enter kindergarten all the way up through college, they are being taught inside of that philosophical context.

V: Yes, they are. Existentialism is a decision-based system, and the longer you are alive, the more decisions you will have made,

and the more the philosophy will have hardened in your heart. If, then, you reduce in age, you also reduce the number of decisions that have been made. As you continue to reduce in age, you will reach a point where the vain philosophy is an idea rather than a hardened habit.

Homer: Many are not allowed to make decisions until in junior high school. Even then you do not get to make a lot of decisions until high school. You do what your parents tell you.

Homer cont'd: In my church, I have had to argue with one parent about youth participation. Not enough of the kids in church would participate without parental overruling. It is not until the Holy Spirit really grabs hold of them that they really get on fire, come to church, and participate. If we do not get hold of them soon enough, they will eventually adapt to society's mold.

Mary: The problem that I hear so much of is that the truth is becoming subjective.

V: That is Existentialism.

Mary: Yes, it is to the point that the President of the United States himself can stand up and point his finger at the public through the TV screen and lie and then convince himself that he is not guilty of lying. In people's minds, then, there is no definite truth. Your truth is what it is to you.

V: That is what the issue is in the pews, home, and workplace. Adults simply believe what they want to believe. There is no hunt, no search, not even a regard for the absolute truth. All truth is subjective: **you** believe what **you** want to believe, and **I** will believe what **I** want to believe.

Homer: The church has closed itself off from society's problems. We are irrelevant because we cannot empathize with their many different issues.

Steve: How do we ministers who are out in the field change that mind that is coming from Existentialism into the church in which Existentialism has already permeated the people and the church systems?

Ted: More importantly, how do we change the minds of a population that has already been bent?

The Description Of Existentialism

1. Existence is a struggle for decision.

Incidentally, if you see the word crisis, or the phrase crisis theology, in an article on theology, it is normally Existentialism that you are looking at. "Crisis" brings you to a fork in the road, and the decision is about choosing which way to go. Neo-orthodoxy is a call to decision. What are you going to do? Go this way or that way?

Once a choice is made, then another fork in the road will be encountered. Each fork in life is a "crisis of decision." As long as your decision is based on your subjective belief, then you have made the right choice *in that system*. But if it is a choice made in obedience to something known, i.e. objective truth that is outside of yourself, then that would not be a decision of faith. That decision would constitute a walking by sight in Existentialism.

2. Decision-making experience is with conflict and agony in the soul.

3. The cure for the conflict and agony is a passionate commitment to one option. The option is not to an objective code but to the ultimate subject—God.

The object of faith is not the important issue. The subject of faith creates his own truth. Commitment is prime, but it is not a commitment to objective truth that is the important issue. For example, look at how suicidal terrorists view their own commitments to die for a subjective cause.

4. Choosing, not mere wishing, is what moves the personality to realization. The choosing is without knowing because the person is totally subjective. Existential truth is subjective, not objective, because it would be without faith if it were objective. Truth is discovered in decision.

Remember the doctrine of propositional revelation where you have inspiration in both objective and subjective forms. In propositional revelation, the Bible is produced as absolute Truth (see Chart 10.1). Furthermore, the reader of the Bible is illuminated in both the objective and subjective forms. Thus, God’s consistent Truth is conveyed objectively and subjectively from millennia ago to the present time.

to search for truth. One needs not look for it. He just has to live life, make decisions, and create his own truth.

V: Yes, just continue to make decisions.

Tim: So there is no need to read and study the Bible?

V: That is right because truth becomes whatever the Existentialist wants to do. Therefore, he can be inspired to do some things by some parts of the Scripture, but he must not obey it as an objective code. If he should do so, then that action is not of faith. The truth is found in his decision as a leap of faith into the unknown.

If an Existentialist wants to be a homosexual, he can declare that God supposedly blessed him to be that way.

That is where we are today. Many claim that God endorses lifestyles that He clearly rejects in His Word. The *truth* in one church counterbalances *the opposite truth* in another church. They are open to opposing truths and changing truths.

Wanda: The pastor is to be the watchman on the wall (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:2; 33:6-7). We are riding the bus, but he is driving it.

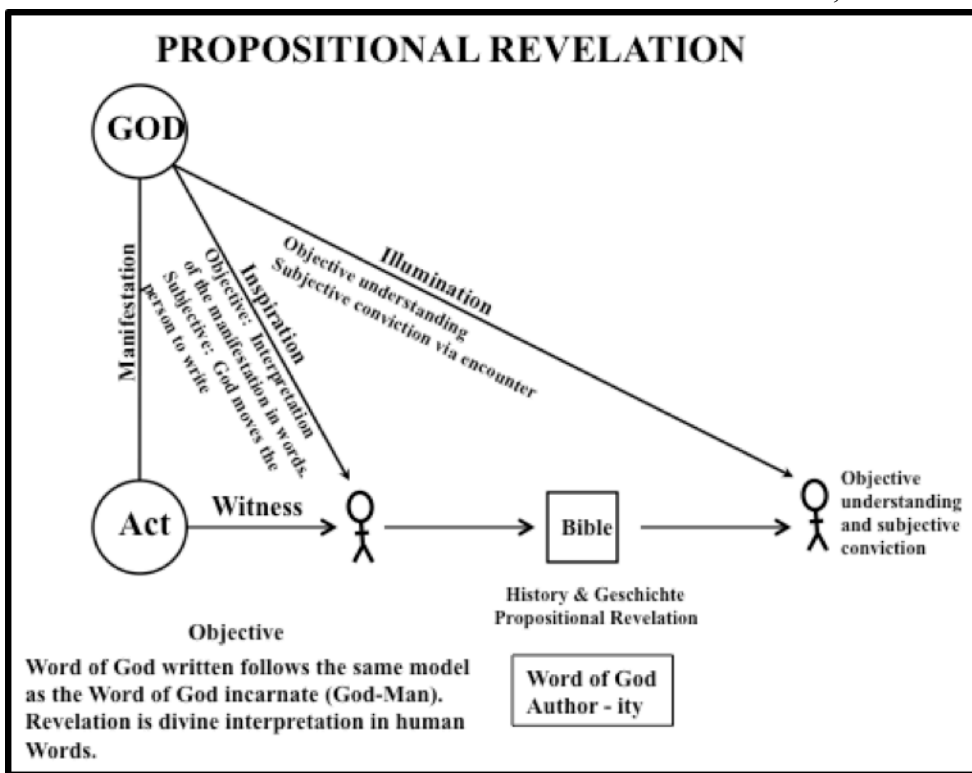


Chart 10.1

Tim: In propositional revelation, the existential element remains in the movement of the writer to write and also in the conviction of the reader. But in “Existentialism,” any solid objective truth disappears. Thus one basically just goes through life without having

Tim: Existentialism explains to me why, whenever I witness to homosexuals, they do not believe in repentance. As long as you live the way you want to, there is nothing to repent of.

V: If a person ever stops making decisions, then you are moving outside of Existentialism into non-existence. Existentialism is a decision-based system. Thus, it too is a progressive system of decisions. You must come to a crisis in your decision-making so that you can "become" your personality, who you are, in the decision. There is a need for the Existentialist to keep pressing on. The one thing that he cannot do is to have an objective anchor because that, then, is removing faith and walking by sight.

Walking by faith is pleasing to God when the faith is tied to some kind of objective revelation of real Truth. Existentialism's creation of its own truth through decision and act is a great deception.

Pete: Jesus said, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." He did not say, "Go and make your own decisions."

V: Following Jesus must align with the Scriptures. Scripture revelation is a past event and therefore objective. It was produced by both objective and subjective inspiration. In the same way that the Lord Jesus is both God and man, the Scriptures are also both divine and human. They are the written Word of God, and Jesus is the Incarnate Word of God. If you should remove the objective part of inspiration (God's interpretation of His Own manifestation), the Scriptures become an expression of a fallible witness.

Ted: Are you saying that objective inspiration is when God interprets the act? If so, then when is subjective inspiration?

V: Concerning objective inspiration, your statement is correct. In that case the words themselves are inspired. However, in Subjective inspiration, the witness is inspired to write what he saw or heard from God.

Remember that if you have only subjective revelation, then the Scriptures are only a witness. The Bible, then, becomes subjective records of witnesses.

Ted: The Scripture-writer describes manifestation as he sees it in his own understanding and words.

V: Yes, if he is only subjectively inspired.

Without the accompanying objective inspiration, the witness records what he saw by writing his testimony of God's manifestation.

When the objective inspiration is added, then God interprets His Own manifestation through the writer.

If you go with subjective inspiration alone, a testimony is what you get. It is merely a record of his witness. The only reason that we would esteem his witness over another's would be because he was chronologically closer to the event. He is a sinner, and you are a sinner. His testimony would be better simply because of his closer proximity in time to the manifestation. However, he would be handling the manifestation as a psychological experience in which he records his own interpretation of his own experience of God's manifestation.

Ted: His record is from the Spirit?

V: The Existentialist thinks that the writer was motivated by the Spirit to record his own understanding in his own words of God's act.

Ted: The reader in present time gets rid of guilt by saying he is led by the Spirit?

V: Yes, there is no guilt in Existentialism for not following God's objective laws as long as he *thinks* that he is following God subjectively.

Please note that when we get to pragmatism, the results of the reader's decision will determine the goodness or badness of his choices. If his choice causes bad results, then he was acting on false knowledge. Acting on truth causes good results. Therefore, in Pragmatism, His understanding of bad results would have led Jesus away from the cross; it

would also lead Paul not to stand up and testify before the emperor.

Mary: There would be no martyrs.

V: Everybody would be running away from suffering and persecution. There would be no *kenosis*; there would be only a reverse *kenosis*. If you allow this temporal, fleshly, indulgent desire for self-preservation and good feelings and joy and happiness and all that kind of thing to drive you rather than hard, rock-solid, unbendable truth, then you have stepped into Existentialism and Pragmatism.

I am telling you that everybody in this room has been affected by these philosophies. This is a terrible indictment. There is nobody of our age today that is not steeped in vain philosophies. You have been making decisions using these philosophies all of your life. You have been desensitized to them and can no longer even see them working in your lives. That is why it is important for us to start having dialogue in order to bring to the surface the errors in our own lives so that we can discard them and return to the rock-solid "objective truth" of Scripture.

Ted: One of the interesting things in the *7-Men* book was that any one of those seven men could have been silenced if the church had engaged in society's philosophical dialog. But yet, we remained silent in the public arena, and the philosophy was accepted. We are still doing the same thing today.

V: The church has bowed out of the debate. Basically, we have become a closed society that refuses to engage in anything that is occurring outside the church walls. We talk among ourselves inside the walls. When we go out into the market place, we tend to lose our *peculiar* Christianity.

Ted: We do not want to be the bad guys.

V: That is right. When we go outside, we tend to talk and act like everybody so that we

will be accepted by them. On Sunday, we go back into the church and talk and act like Christians again. Where are the prophets of today? Where is the prophetic voice that warns the public of God's judgment?

5. True religion is not just church going and assent to an objective truth. It is that plus a passionate commitment to God.

I heard a liberal once say: "Truth in religion is neither an objective something, nor is it obeying God. It is a *believing* that one is obeying God." Can you see how subjectivity can convert true belief and true obedience into a mere subjective belief that you are believing and obeying? It becomes a "doing what is right in your own eyes." Thus, in Neo-orthodoxy, Christianity is not obeying God; it is a believing that you are obeying God.

Ted: So it comes back to what you think—not what the Word says, but what *you* think.

V: Right, it is a faith in faith. It is the ultimate subjectivity of Christianity.

Evaluation of Existentialism

1. It is too subjective; there is no room for objective truth. It is faith in faith, it is feeling over reason, and it allows no assent to an external, propositional truth.

You are going to hear a lot of criticism against the idea of "assent" in theological circles because it does not take commitment into consideration. If assent is because you have not added subjective appropriation of the truth to which you are assenting, then it is pure objectivity without faith. However, if commitment is confined to only your personal belief, then it is to the exclusion of a true object of assent. This latter issue is the subjectivity of Existentialism and Neo-orthodoxy.

2. The doctrine of inspiration reduces to the Holy Spirit's impact on the reader's spirit

instead of the Word of God impacting his mind and spirit.

In conservative theology, The Bible is the inspired Word of God because of both subjective and also objective inspiration. Illumination of the reader also has both the objective understanding and the subjective conviction for the reader.

But in Neo-orthodoxy, the Bible is a subjective witness and inspiration occurs at its reading when the subject person of Jesus encounters the subject person of the reader.

In Neo-orthodoxy, Jesus alone is the Word of God, and He alone is the reader's authority. By that they mean that the Word of God is a Person rather than both the Person and the written Word of God. In Neo-orthodoxy, the Word of God is only subject rather than both subject and object. Beware, because inspiration of the reader in Neo-orthodoxy is a psychological encounter between two subjects that inspires the reader to act as a subject in obedience to another subject.

Bob: So, the subject may not truly be the Holy Spirit. It could be just what they consider the Holy Spirit.

V: That is true whenever they come up with something that conflicts with the Bible.

3. The doctrine of salvation changes—it is a psychological experience of relationship rather than a rebirth into an ontological relationship.

So now on the one hand are feelings, and on the other hand is God. If the Neo-orthodox Christian feels like he is in good relationship, then he thinks that he is saved. You see, it is a psychological experience of relationship rather than an objective rebirth.

4. The doctrine of Christ changes—it neglects the efficacy of the completed “objective” work from Christ's sacrifice.

Please note that Existentialism only works with personal acts in the present. You have to act, act, act, and that is how you experience fulfillment and completion. You actualize yourself into who you are in Existentialism.

The reader interprets revelation as whatever feels good and right to him. It must feel good. Feelings are very important in this system.

Self-denial is the first requirement of discipleship. It certainly does not fit the Neo-orthodox model which instead enables self-indulgence. The second requirement of discipleship is to pick up your cross. The Neo-orthodox model would free the reader from this threat of death. The third requirement of discipleship is to follow Jesus. Neo-orthodoxy says follow your heart.

5. Diffusion results from the lack of an objective standard.

I use this illustration: If you are in a boat out in a lake and you drop your anchor, that anchor is objective. The anchor alone is not what makes your boat stable and located in the right spot because you can pull your anchor up and put it in the boat so that you can just float around. That is a subjective handling of the anchor. To be objective, the anchor has to go down and lock onto something that is immovable.

Once you consider Scripture to be a subjective witness or record of testimony, you have pulled your anchor up and put it into your boat. You can then float around and be blown about by every wind of doctrine. You basically believe and do whatever feels good. In this case, whatever is expedient to your happiness becomes your Christianity.

Class, you must use this information as a shield because you are going to be continuously exposed to it. That is why we are spending so much time on Existentialism. This is where the current battle is being waged in the church.

MARX AND DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

In order to understand Marx’s explanation for change in the world, please recall the diagram of dialectical materialism (see Chart 10.2). In this dialectic, there is an antithesis that is at war with a thesis. The resolution of the war is a synthesis. In opposition to that resolution, there arises another antithesis. So no matter who wins the revolution, there is always another antithesis until you get to a materialistic utopia. Once you get to utopia, then supposedly there will be no more antitheses to arise.

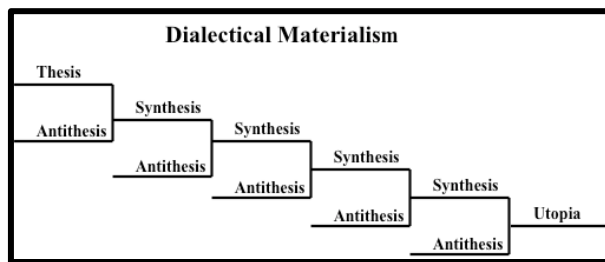


Chart 10.2

Marx rejected Hegel’s slow, gradual process of Dialectical Idealism. He opted instead for sudden, violent revolutionary wars of materialistic conquests.

Remember that in the Hegelian model, the ideal is in the idea realm. The ultimate ideal (i.e. the utopian state) is drawing history to this ideal. Whenever you come to a synthesis in a dialectic movement between ideas, the ideal (synthesis) results from battle between ideas as a new idea that is acceptable to all. That is Hegel’s Dialectical Idealism.

Similar to Hegel’s model of dialectics is Marx’s except Marx has a physical battle of force between the haves and the have-nots. The antithesis is always a revolutionary movement against the *status quo*. The winners snatch the material wealth and power away from the former owners.

Usually the final synthesis is a takeover of the nation(s) by the Communist Party. This

model was apparent in the revolutions that took place in Nicaragua, Cuba, and Russia. Wherever Communism has gone, it has been a revolution of physical and materialistic forces arrayed against opposing physical and materialistic forces—not idea against idea. The outcome is a conquest by force that produces a new set of rulers and owners (synthesis).

Jerry: Every time an antithesis arises, does the synthesis turn back into thesis?

V: Yes. Synthesis becomes the thesis in the next cycle of battle. Marx’s dialectic is the physical revolution of militaristic conquest by force. There is no place in Marxism for a gentle debate between ideas. Instead of ideas and words being used, guns, tanks, and other weapons are used. It will be a war of force, and the synthesis will be a conquest by one or the other sides. Please understand that Dialectical Materialism is a conquering philosophy that, by definition, progresses to worldwide rule.

The Surplus Value of Capitalism

I will use the following example to illustrate the theory of surplus value in Capitalism. Suppose that a person invests a lot of money in an airplane for the purpose of getting a return on investment that will exceed the cost of the plane. He, then, hires a pilot and sells tickets on the plane to passengers. The owner starts getting revenue. That revenue is the subject of the Marxist debate because the owner is keeping all the profit for himself. The pilot can see that there is excess value for the owner resulting from his, the pilot’s, labor. He claims that his labor is being sold at an inadequate value to himself.

I will illustrate surplus value with the following numbers. If the pilot only gets 100 dollars per year, and the machine cost 1000 dollars, and the revenue is 200 dollars per year. Over ten years, the owner gets his 1000

dollars back.¹ On the eleventh year, the owner is clearing 100 dollars per year that is the same thing as what the pilot is earning. The owner is described by the Marxist as profiting at the pilot's expense. The pilot, then, wants to take all of the profits because he is the only person doing the work. The owner is getting money (the excess value from the pilot's labor) without working. Capital has no profit-making potential in Marxism; only labor has value. So, the Marxist call is for the workers of the world to unite and take all the revenues by eliminating private property rights.

In Marxism, there is no God, there is no afterlife, there is only right now. It is strictly atheistic materialism.

Henry: The pilot claims that he has no control over his life.

V: That is right. The pilot claims that the owner is controlling him. They each get \$100, but the pilot is doing all the work. Owners demand a return on their risk of capital (this is the definition of capitalism). To do away with capitalism, Marxists conclude that we need to have social ownership of all property. Then everyone will get paid only for the work that they do.

In capitalism, the person who risks his wealth reaps the benefits. What is lost in the Marxist view of capitalism is that the pilot benefited, too. The pilot should not see himself as losing money when he took the job unless he turned down a better job for this one. He made his \$100 per year. If he manages his life better than ever, he can put his own savings to work like the owner did. Just because the owner got wealthier does not mean that the pilot's job was not a good job.

The downside of capitalism is that there could be loss on investment. If that happens, the owner loses all that he invested, and the

pilot loses his job. The pilot would never consider balancing his claim to all the profits with a willingness to pay for all the losses.

Jill: But if the airplane wears out and the owner does not have the money to go buy a new airplane, the pilot is out of a job.

V: That is right. That event would stop both the owner's revenues and also the pilot's pay.

A strange thing along these lines happened to Eastern Airlines to cause them to go out of existence. The union workers demanded more of the revenue. Their demands caused a continuous loss on investment. No business can stay in operation if the labor costs exceed the capital's revenues. The airline unions (to use a cliché) killed the goose that laid the golden egg by forcing Eastern into bankruptcy. Marxism is based on greed and class envy.

Jill: The pilot thinks that he is being exploited.

V: Yes. Now I will take the illustration further. The owner has grown his company to many planes and many employees. The employees are earning their paychecks, and the owner is getting the profit. The individual employee's request for a fair share of the profits is refused. The employee's options are: quit, keep working, or gather all the other employees into a union to gain leverage against the owner. By having a union and collectively coming together and demanding a share of the profits, the pilots can increase the risk for the owner. Facing a loss on his investment, he may be forced to share his profits with the employees. This is the reason for unions. Power through numbers increases the strength of labor against the ones risking their capital. As the owners (thesis) continue to lose to the unions (antithesis), the company will either go out of business or become the property of the unions (synthesis).

¹From the revenue of \$2000 over 10 years, the pilot's pay was \$1000, and the owner regained the \$1000 of his initial investment.

The Marxist philosophy is that the only way society can have a utopia is for everybody to have an equal share, and there is no private property. Everybody works and is paid the same amount, *i.e.* a medical doctor would get \$100 a week just as the janitor gets \$100 a week. Everybody would get \$100 a week.

Paul: But you do away with prosperity.

V: You certainly do. Once the worker figures out that there is no incentive for harder work, then he will just kick on back and draw his pay.

Paul: That is why a lot of people do not want nationalized healthcare. I would not want to go to a doctor who has no incentive to do a good job and make sure I survive.

Jack: Communism cannot work because man is by nature a sinner. There will always be the person who tries to take advantage of the situation. The leadership is hypocritical because they make sure that their share is larger and that their work is easier.

Liberation Theology

V: Now when you blend Communism with Christianity, you get what is called Liberation Theology. Liberation Theology is the battle between the thesis of haves and the antithesis of have-nots into a resulting synthesis. This brand of Christianity thinks that a capitalistic society overpowers the individual who owns less property and has less power than the average person in that society.

The persons of the antithesis gain power by uniting with a large number of others of the same class. The uniting could be on the basis of a number of things, e.g. gender, race, economic status, or some other basis. Then it is a class war of force against force. You push and fight between each other to come out with a synthesis.

Once this process of class warfare is started, there is going to be another antithesis

to arise against the synthesis until there is an ultimate militaristic power controlled by the synthesis.

Let us say that you are revolting against the ruling powers, and you come out the winner, as soon as you come out winner, guess what? There is going to be a revolution against you. You never come to a stationary point unless you can move from Marxism into Communism. Once you move into Communism, the Communist Party becomes a permanent class of haves who use their controls of all weaponry to govern all the laboring working class, who are the have-nots. The Communist party controls, through military power, all that is going on in society.

In the revolution, the elite who ignite it also guide it to their preconceived goal that includes their becoming the party bosses. They are the only ones who end up in utopia. They own everything and control the laboring pawns. The party elites determine who get to use what and who get to be pseudo bosses over other laborers.

Joe: The "green" movement is a liberation of the earth. Though the environmentalists say that a new green earth is the utopia, they still are using the war between the status quo folks and the liberating folks to end up with a utopia in which they run the show.

V: If the green movement is a class against a class in warfare that is pressing to a synthesis, then that would be a Marxist philosophy using a save-the-earth antithesis. However, it has not reached that point yet. Right now, it is a battle of ideas. However, the greens plan to enforce their agenda through the power of the sympathetic governments which control the militaries. At that point, the movement will become a Marxist synthesis. The greens could even try to co-opt Christians to their cause under a stewardship concept.

Joe: Well, they are talking about making the system a communal system by doing away with personal property. There is also talk about the United States paying countries like Columbia because Columbia has rain forests, and we have industry. We should pay them a tax because they are contributing to our welfare through their rain forest. That is part of the green movement. They are also saying that this is the Christian thing for us to do. That would make it Liberation Theology.

V: Yes, that would be Liberation Theology. It is a movement towards a temporal and materialistic synthesis rather than eternal and spiritual salvation.

Christ came to liberate us not from poverty or from a powerless class of society but from sin through a new birth. God says that we are not to worry about our being a slave or free.² We are to allow Him to give us a new life by changing us on the inside.

Betty: “. . .But be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God (Romans 12:2).”

V: Right. If Jesus came to liberate man from his sin, and we Christians take a Marxist view of liberation into a physical battle of classes, then you will have Liberation Theology. You will have wedded Marxist philosophy with Christian theology. By doing this, a Christian will be changing the object of liberation from sin to some kind of class envy and warfare.

Jerry: I keep thinking of Judaism's continuous looking for a political Messiah.

V: The same tendency invades our Christianity. Class envy draws us into its grips. That is a materialistic, temporal view of Christianity, which is the opposite of the *kenosis*. *Kenosis* necessitates our looking across the chasm at the end of life to the

eternal. Laying up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:20) is antithetical to laying up treasure on earth (Matthew 6:19). If you lay up temporal treasure on earth, then your treasure ends at death.

Tom: In the Hegelian dialectic, there is something pulling the synthesis out of the thesis and antithesis of ideas. That something is the cosmic spirit that is working the battle of ideas towards a utopia. However, in the Marxian dialectic there is something pushing toward a synthesis from behind the antithetical revolution against the thesis which is the former synthesis. What is that something that is doing the pushing?

V: The push is from a group of greedy and power-hungry revolutionaries that is stirring up class envy that will reach the tipping point. Their desire is for a war that will be fought by expendable pawns for the purpose of the revolutionary leaders' acquiring new wealth and governing power. Where Hegel's dialectic is between ideas to be debated, Marx's dialectic is between warring physical and material forces in armed conflict for the conquest and exploitation of the spoils of war.

Tom: Both are like different forms of negotiations?

V: Yes somewhat. Marx's synthesis does not remain a verbal negotiation. It eventually becomes a militaristic conquest.

You have seen how historical conquests lead to syntheses. For example, when the Jews were conquered by Babylon, some Jews were deported, and some Jews were left. Some of those who were deported became honchos in the Babylonian government. That was a synthetic blending together of Babylonians and Jews in Babylon.

Mary: That is what God told them to do. God told Jeremiah to tell them to go on, build their homes there, and go on with their lives.

²1 Cor. 7:20-24

V: Yes, they were to pray for the people, and the government of their new country of residence. That means that you take your environment where you are and make the best of it. That is what Christianity is supposed to do. If we find ourselves in an oppressive situation, we are to make the best of it if we cannot change it. The idea is to be the salt and the light required to change the environment.

Existentialism, along with Hegelian and Marxist Dialectics, are all parts of Progressivism. Progressivism always involves process toward a global goal. Hegelianism and Marxism have a goal of collectivism. Existentialism has a goal of individualism. However, all the goals of Progressivism are of a utopia within history.

In opposition to Progressivism is Christianity's eschatological perfection in heaven. Where Progressivism is about improving one's position, Christianity is about improving one's character. Christ expects us to grow and mature in our *kenotic* pilgrimages. Growing in power and wealth are not Christ's answers to the human plight. Forgiveness of sin, new creaturehood, empowerment for a life of discipleship, and a set of written in-

structions for guidance are His provisions for us. We provide the faith and obedience.

A PREVIEW OF THE PRIMACY OF PROCESS OVER ONTOLOGY

Next week we will explore the ten steps in the Communist Manifesto. Then we will do a short review of the Pragmatism of James, Language Analysis of Wittgenstein, and then Whitehead's Process Theology.

In preview of Process Theology, I will contrast normal Christianity with the current move into process. Conservative Christians see change from the basis of ontology. You see changes in yourself and in the people around you. In other words, something must exist before it can change. Ontology is prime for us. Thus, we would say that God existed prior to His act of creation.

Our schools are moving away from the primacy of ontology into one of process. Once you move to the primacy of process, ontology becomes a product of process rather than *vice versa*. In your behavior you become what you are rather than your behavior coming out of what you are. It is a total reversal of God's biblical account of creation.

Chapter Questions

1. Describe and evaluate Existentialism.
2. Contrast Marx's philosophy for change in the world with Hegel's?

Chapter 11

PRAGMATISM, PROCESS, AND LANGUAGE

I promised to lay out for you the contents of the Communist Manifesto because they contain the materialistic steps within the mechanics of Progressivism. Please recall that Progressivism's mechanics are dialectics, which are pervasive in our society. Both the idealists and the materialists use them. The only society that is designed to escape the clutches of dialectics is Christian Capitalism that is based on win-win rules, i.e. an economy in which everybody wins and there are no losers in a transaction. However, the American society that was founded on those principles has largely fallen to Marxist greed, which drives dialectical class warfare.

In order for the Christian Church to be pulled into Progressivism's orbit, it had to be loosed from its anchorage. God provided that anchorage via His Word. As long as the Church considered the Word of God as propositional revelation, then it maintained its objective integrity. However, that anchorage was compromised with the introduction of the personal revelation of Neo-orthodoxy.

Neo-orthodoxy was the Christian version of Existentialism. In it, all objectivity was jettisoned. Now all the Church had left to guide it was the subjective Word of God and its subjective readers. God's Word became whatever the reader wanted it to be.

Then Pragmatism added a subjective ethic to the Christian church that allowed all Christians the freedom to act in their own self-interest. What is wrong with that? God expects us to act in our own self-interest because He commanded us to lay up treasure in heaven.¹ Yes, but Pragmatism is the reversal of that command. It now means lay up treasure on earth. In other words, Pragmatism

exchanges the *kenosis* for the upside down *kenosis*. In the fertile soil of an upside down *kenosis*, materialism easily takes root. In the climb and grasp of more and more power and material, the losers become a class of self-described victims. Dialectical class warfare of Communism erupts out of that scenario.

Materialism is the basic underlying content of Communism. So now, we will turn our attention to the steps that are used to achieve Communism.

THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO

The Communist Manifesto has the following ten planks:

1. All land is owned by the state.
2. The state will impose a heavy, progressive income tax.
3. The state will abolish all inheritances.
4. The state will confiscate the property from immigrants and rebels.
5. The state will own and operate one central bank.
6. The state will centralize and control all systems of communication and transportation.
7. The state will own and operate all factories and instruments of production.
8. There will be equal liability of all to labor.
9. The state will control the redistribution of population over towns and country.
10. The state will provide free education in public schools.

The provisions of this manifesto are progressively being implemented in the United States of America. Progress is the new buzzword in our politics. Individual freedom is being eroded with every act of progress by the government. The dialectic of society's thesis of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness endowed to mankind by God is opposed by

¹Matthew 6:19-21.

the antithesis of government's desire to control all of life for the purpose of its ideas of fairness and social justice. The ultimate synthesis that will come out of Progressivism's class warfare will be the politically correct utopia of world rule by Antichrist.

We will now turn our attention to William James who lived toward the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th Century. He is the American philosopher of Pragmatism.

WILLIAM JAMES AND PRAGMATISM

Existentialism had already invaded America by providing a moving target for truth. When we who are under the influence of Existentialism approach the Scriptures, we end up with nothing like the original Word of God that has remained immune from our manipulations. Instead, we have developed a way to get around the Word of God to make it into what we want it to be.

William James provided another of those ways to manipulate the Word of God. During the past century, we have blended Pragmatism and Existentialism together into a devastating philosophy that is destroying the church.

Characteristics for Pragmatism

1. Pragmatism seeks to eliminate all *a priori* in decision-making (experience and time provide their own meaning.)

A priori are the things that go before making decisions. Presupposition is a word that is close to what *a priori* means. Presuppositions come basically from your personality and your prior knowledge. When they enter into your decision-making, then the decision is based on *a priori*. Pragmatism's goal is to loose us from the Laws of God written on our hearts.

2. There is no final truth because truth is in process.

Truth is discovered in our decisions under the guidance of Pragmatism. If our actions work out to the good, then we acted on truth. If our decision produces bad results, then it is determined by Pragmatism to have been an erroneous act. Thus Pragmatism looses us from God's absolute truth of Scripture.

3. As life's pendulum swings, so does truth.

Pragmatism seeks to establish truth as a variable that is created by a fickle society.

Mary: That development of truth describes to me how the Catholic Church's doctrines developed.

V: I grant you that, but please understand that it is in the Protestant Church too. I had a debate with a professor at Southwestern Seminary about abortion. My position was that it was wrong and prohibited by God. His position was that as the pendulum of societal opinion swings back and forth, the truth of God's Word will be found. In his opinion, the rightness or wrongness of abortion changes as the pendulum swings. In other words, truth is to be found in the present and future, not in the past.

Mary: There are no absolutes?

V: In the blend of Existentialism and Pragmatism, or even Pragmatism alone, there are no absolutes on which to base your decisions. When the pendulum swings back, the truth reverses too.

The Supreme Court can read the Constitution and say that life is to be protected. The next day, they can say abortion on demand must be provided. The day after that they can reverse themselves with the next swing of the pendulum of public opinion.

4. There are no prior moral absolutes.

There are no guidelines other than the end results. Thus if certain actions produce bad results, then those acts would be outlawed in a pragmatic society. However, the truth had to

be discovered from the results rather than provided as a guide before the act.

5. If it works for me, it is true for me.

All guides for our actions are peculiar to each of us. Thus, laws then become favorable to those in power.

6. *Meliorism* is to be applied to make the entire world better through human efforts.

Pragmatists have the idea that man can make the world better via establishing laws of behavior that produce good results. Those results will be couched in global terms for progressive Pragmatists. The idea is to maximize the number of people benefitting from the results.

7. Pragmatism requires a *teleological* ethic, not a *deontological* ethic.

Christians use *deontological* ethics. This means that we observe a command from God and implement it. God's Word is *a priori* for us when our moral code operates from a pre-existing foundation. We get our marching orders from the Bible, and then we march accordingly. In other words, we obey God regardless of results.

A *teleological* ethic, on the other hand, is an ethic of behavior that is results oriented. What do you want to achieve? Do you want to achieve wealth? Then your truth is to do what it takes to get money. Thus stealing, manipulation, climbing, lying, or whatever it takes is truth for the Pragmatist who wants wealth. Whatever-it-takes would be appropriate in a *teleological* ethic because the results govern whether an action is good or not. For the Pragmatist, the ends justify the means.

Christians are to use a *deontological* ethic. *Deontology* is behaving according to rules. Christians obey God's rules because the Giver of the rules will judge us (see Chart 11.1).

On the other hand, Communists, Progressives, and even adherents of other religions are free to use *teleological* ethics. *Tel* is the

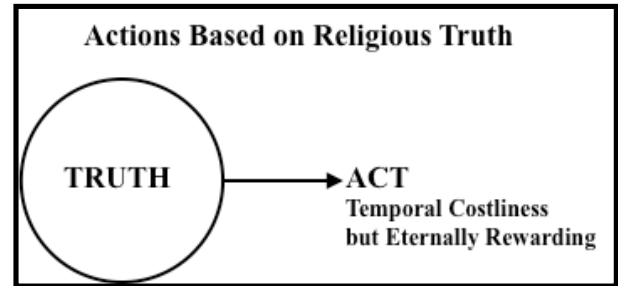


Chart 11.1

end or goal. Thus the ethic is to be governed by the desired ends or results. In teleological ethics, the ends justify the means. The teleologist ignores ethical mores, rules, and laws because they are considered *a priori*, i.e. a prior moral code. Thus, a terrorist can say that he wants only peace as he implements violence because only violent conquest will achieve his final goal of peace. In his mind, he is honest because his ethic is teleological.²

8. Liberalism is the victory of healthy mindedness over morbid and oppressive hell-fire theology.

Liberalism intends to liberate or to cut the Christian loose from all restrictive and oppressive bonds. The Christian who is anchored to the Word of God is not a liberated Liberal. The Word holds him to a behavior pattern.

The liberal is considered to be a free spirit with a healthy mind who is able to do things that are different from the strictures of some ancient code. It is to cut your moorings loose and float around as a free thinker. That is the position of Pragmatism because it has discarded all *a priori*.

² Any promise by the Muslims is based on their ultimate goal of world rule. They request Israel to give them land in exchange for peace. After the transaction, Israel receives no peace, and Muslim violence against Israel actually increases. Thus, the Islamists' desire for peace is not found in the present dialectical process. Instead, it is found only in the final dialectical synthesis which will be world rule by the Caliphate using Sharia Law. Then they will have peace.

Steve: Do not be afraid to try?

V: Somewhat, it is not to be a slave to a rule. The only thing that counts in Pragmatism is results. Were the results good? If so, then your behavior was good. Did your act work for you? If so, then your act was good.

When you merge Pragmatism with Existentialism, there will be people killing innocent people by just driving by and shooting them. The person doing the act defines those acts as good somehow. This merger produces a society that is steeped in irrationality, sentimentalism, shallow thinking, and a lack of absolutes. Look around, that is where we are!

Steve: If it feels good, do it?

V: Yes, if it feels good, do it. Whatever works for you is fine.

9. Religion’s truth is in its fruits (results).

Now the deception in Christianity from this philosophy is that it will produce results that appear positive. The adherents, however, just do not realize that there is going to be an eternity. They are looking for temporal fruits, and laying up treasure on earth does not pay dividends in heaven. In the Christian life, you have to die to live. The *teleological* ethic, on the other hand, is to live the good life by doing only those things that produce good temporal results.

Now I want to show you an orientation of what it looks like. Please observe the body of truth in Chart 11.1. A healthy dynamic occurs when your act is based on that body of truth. This means to me that I can take my Bible as my body of truth to act upon. If I use a good hermeneutic to get the proper understanding of what God said for me to do, then I can perform healthy acts. However, when I do that, it will cost me dearly in self-denying and cross-bearing temporal sacrifice.

Tom: Does the act cost you or does the truth cost you?

V: Well, just knowing the truth without doing it escapes temporal cost. There will be temporal cost in doing the truth within Christian ethics because of the *kenosis*. However, there will also be eternal rewards. When I get to the other side of death, a hundredfold reward is what I am promised (Matthew 19:29).

In Pragmatism, all *a priori* stuff must be discarded. The act produces truth (see Chart 11.2) instead of truth’s producing the act. The desire is for a body of truth that contains self-indulgence, pleasure, self-gratification, and minimum costs.

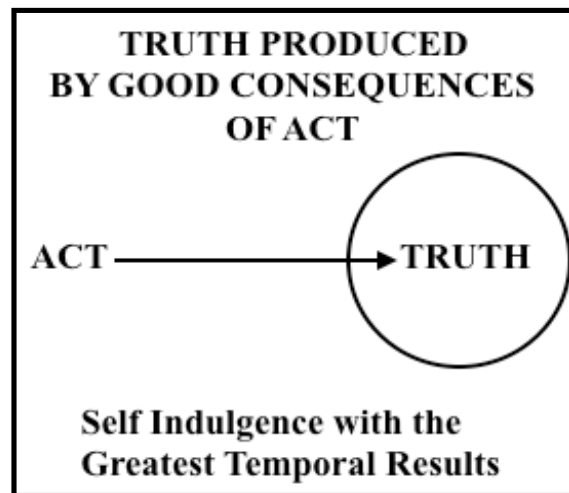


Chart 11.2

Another goal of Pragmatism is to produce good for the maximum number of people, i.e. the rule of *meliorism*. However, the goal of *meliorism* never takes precedence over self-centered pleasure. But, if you can have self-centered pleasure along with pleasing a large number of people, then you will have found the ideal truth. The Pragmatist bases his action on anticipated consequences of the act.

Examples of Pragmatism are pervasive in today’s news about court decisions, congressional acts, and international posturing by our president. From those groups, we often hear: “What message do we want to send?” When you hear those words, please note that Pragmatism is in play. The primacy of the law’s contents is replaced by the law’s conse-

quences. Thus decisions are guided by desired consequences instead of a body of truth.

Acting according to a pre-existing biblical code produces consequences, most of the time in Christianity that are going to cost you dearly. Be aware, however, that a Christian Pragmatist will recant his faith when he is faced with dying or recanting because he will reason that God does not want him to suffer.

Consequences govern the Pragmatist's behavior. You will begin to be like a bee-boo rolling down through a maze. You will just bounce around the obstacles finding the easiest course to your goal and avoiding bad consequences.

When you are following the biblical code, i.e. when you are following Jesus Christ, you are going to do the same things that He did. In the garden, He said, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine" (Luke 22:42). When you do that, the angel will come to nurture you and give you enough strength to endure the terrible temporal consequences. I must tell you that no spiritual Christian will go through life unscathed.

Our *a priori* is the Bible. Read it, set your jaw just like Jesus did when He turned to go to His death in Jerusalem. Live and die according to its contents. If you will do that, you will get the "Well done" from Jesus. If you persist in Pragmatism by creating your own truth that is expedient to your own temporal gains, there will be no "well done." The sorriest human being on this planet can do that.

Oscar: There is definitely no *kenosis* in Pragmatism.

V: That is right; there is no self-sacrifice, no self-denial, no picking up the cross. Pragmatism is an American contribution to philosophy.

Oscar: To the Pragmatist, picking up the cross would be a bad decision.

V: Yes.

It is absurd for me to consider following a philosophy that is opposite from the Bible's *kenotic* path for a disciple of Jesus.

PROCESS PHILOSOPHY OF ALFRED NORTH WHITEHEAD

Whitehead's philosophy of process gained a huge following in the scientific community during the latter part of the Twentieth Century. In my opinion, this philosophy is absurd in its irrationalities.

You are used to things existing and having substance. When you look at something, you can say that it exists because there it is. To you and to me ontology is prime. It has to be there or it is not there, right? If it is there, then it is there. If it is there, it exists. If it exists, then it has substance, and it is there.

What happens when the law of existence is reversed to where ontology is no longer prime and process becomes prime?

We say that action and process comes out of ontology. Ontology is prime, and if you are there, you can act. You have to be there in order to act. If you are not there, you cannot act. A basic law of creation is that a thing's creation is a prerequisite for the thing to do something.

When Whitehead reversed the "exist in order to act" rule, then things had to act in order to exist. If you do not act, you are not there because process is prime, and ontology comes out of process.

It is hard for me to think about this because of my biblical worldview. However, I must realize that Pragmatism and Process Philosophy still affect me, as they do every American. Process Theology is the next step away from God after Pragmatism.

Some Process Theologians came to present their papers at a theological conference that was hosted by SMU back when I was

working on my Master of Divinity degree. Many of our students flocked over there to hear them. They came back oohing and ahing. I did not know enough philosophy to enter the debate, but my opinion was that Process Philosophy was about as weird as anything I had ever heard of.

Process Theology turns our doctrines upside down. If the world was not created by God but came to be from a pre-existing process, what is that process? What keeps the world in place if it originated out of process? That kind of thinking makes God change. God, then, becomes a product of a prior process, and God is not there unless He acts. It gets deep and complicated in a hurry when you start thinking along these lines.

Tim: God is not there unless He acts?

V: Right. You are not there unless you act.

Tim: How could God speak the universe into being if He were not there?

V: Now you are thinking like I think! You think He must be there first in order to act.

Tim: So they believe, I guess obviously, in evolution because the process creates it.

V: Yes, and I am going to show you some strange evolution here in a minute, but before I do that—this stuff in Process Theology is taking root in our society (not yet in our churches) and growing. It is gaining its ascendancy through the scientific community which has grabbed hold of this philosophy with a passion.

You have heard me talk about Newtonian Physics several times. Newtonian Physics is based on ontology. You cannot balance a lever over a fulcrum and lift up a rock unless the rock is there, right? Newtonian Physics assumes the rock is there along with the fulcrum, lever, and someone to apply the

pressure on the lever's end. You cannot have the process unless the elements are there.

In Process Theology the thing is not there. It has to become, and it becomes by acting, being acted upon, or both.

Henry: I think that only a bunch of fools could believe that philosophy.

V: I agree wholeheartedly.

In process theology, a sound does not exist until it is heard. You have probably heard about the philosophical question: "If a tree falls in a forest, was there a sound created if there were nobody there to hear it?" In the theory of sound within Process Philosophy, two correlated things must occur simultaneously in an event in order for existence to occur. Thus it would follow, in extrapolating that theory to substance, that part of my existence is based on you, and part of your existence is based on me. As I observe you, I am helping you to be there, and as you observe me, you are helping me to be here. These simultaneous observations create our being. The process does not have ontology first; it creates ontology. The thing does not have to be there in order to act. The act makes it there.

Henry: So, by teaching this class, you are helping us to exist, and by our learning, we are helping you to exist.

V: Our mutual processes of teaching and learning must occur at the same time in order for us to cause mutual existence.

I will illustrate the idea as it applies to science via the sine wave in physics (see Chart 11.3). Radios transmit sound that travels over sine waves.

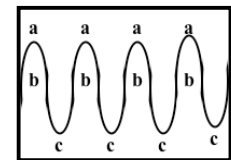


Chart 11.3

Amplitude modulation (AM) is based on the height of the waves. Frequency modulation (FM) is based on the number of waves in an inch.

Notice the “a’s.” The “a’s” are in process and you can hear them on the radio if it is tuned to that amplitude. There are also processes of items “b” and “c.” You can hear them on the radio when tuned to the appropriate amplitudes.

Let us say that item “a” (in Chart 11.3) is a person, but item “d” (in Chart 11.4) is a chair. The person sees the chair, the chair gains its being by being correlated to “a” on the same frequency. We will have then “a, a, a” and “d, d, d.” So “a” comes into its apex on the wave at the same time that “d” comes into its apex. They see each other, and they begin to have ontology, but they go out of existence as the wave moves down, but “bang” they exist again when they come back up to the same apex.

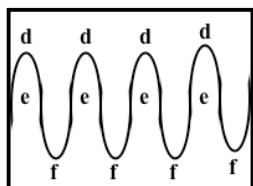


Chart 11.4

Music on a radio travels on sound waves, and you hear those sound waves at the same points on the sine waves. The sounds that you hear are the only ones that exist at that point on the wave. The sounds that reside at other points on the wave cannot exist until you tune in their amplitude, or frequency in the case of FM modulation. So “a” (in Chart 11.3) and “d” (in Chart 11.4) exist at the same amplitude, so they exist together.

However, existence is in short periods of time (dots) within cycles, not as a continuum of ontology, but as a series of dots through the modulation process, i.e. through waves (see Chart 11.5). Thus “a” goes out of existence” when reaching a point past the apex. It then



Chart 11.5

comes back into existence when it cycles back up to the apex as long as it is correlated with

another thing somewhere that is on the same wave length.

Now there is an entire science called Quantum Physics or Quantum Mechanics that says there are also “b” and “e” in each of those waves along with “c” and “f.” You are “a” and I am “d” and we see each other; we think we have ontology. As the sine wave progresses, our particular modulation changes, and we drop out of existence. But then, “b” and “e” rise to exist briefly in our place. They drop out, and then “c” and “f” appear.

Joe: Different planes of existence!

V: Right! Quantum Physics theorizes that there are different dimensions of existence.

Joe: That is like many things existing in the same space.

V: Yes, at different positions on the sine wave.

When I was in college back in 1960, we could see rogue electrons pass through a beaker of gas. I cannot remember the name of the gas, but when an electrode passed through it, the gas gave off light along the electron’s path. You could turn off the lights and hold that beaker up for a long time, and after a while you could see an electron shoot through it. There are rogue electrons that have broken loose from atoms, just firing all around all over the place, and they are so small they can pass through you without hitting anything within you. In this gas, however, an electronic charge occurred when an electron of negative polarity went through it. The charge would light up a thin thread-like trail marking the electron’s path.

Sometimes those electrons would go in but not come out. Sometimes they would go slam through, sometimes they would go in, disappear, and then reappear and come out. These observations have the scientists think-

ing electrons are going through cycles of existence and non-existence. This new science has changed physics away from Newton's version to the new Quantum version.

Joe: Science fiction?

V: Our government believes in it so much that they decided to spend 5 billion dollars in Waxahachie, Texas to build an atom-smashing superconductor there. The plan was to catch an electron and isolate it in the huge cyclotron. There were magnets all along the track within a huge tube in an underground circle of several miles. They were going to have all these little windows along the walls for the scientists to look through. They were going to fill that thing up with that gas that lights up when an electron passes through it. They would trap an electron between magnets. They would put a charge on the magnets in front of it and start moving it around the circle. The scientists would be looking for this little flash of light as the electron would go by. They were going to see about taking it a hundred miles an hour, a thousand miles an hour, ten thousand miles an hour, and up to the speed of light. They would just keep on accelerating it until it would go out of existence. Thus they hoped to discover the formula for transitioning to the next dimension of existence. They were going to correlate speed to the quantum of existence on the sine wave. Then they hoped to bring the electron back into existence by slowing down the magnetic charges.

Basically, our government was spending our money in order to find out if speed was the basis for modulation in Quantum Physics. The cyclotron was never completed. Three billion dollars was spent digging the huge hole and putting in the tube, but before it was rigged with all the magnets and controls, the project was abandoned, and one and a half billion dollars was spent covering it all up.

Jill: Star Trek?

V: You have seen in the Star Trek series the command to "Beam me up, Scotty." Demodulating him in one location and then re-modulating him in another location would change the person. I think that our government believes that the process is possible.

They gave up on the project when we ran into the budgetary crunch within a recession of our economy. We may think that Quantum Physics is nonsense, but our government does not. Many of the world's scientists believe in this new physics along with other absurdities like global warming and human control of the weather. Now, Newtonian physics is sharing time with Quantum Physics in colleges and universities.

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN: LANGUAGE THEORY

We have explored epistemology, ontology, and process. Now we are moving into language. There are two kinds of language: picture language and game language. In picture language, words represent objects and are considered to be mental pictures, or abstractions, of those objects.

Picture Theory of Language

There was once a court case in which small dolls and toy cars were used to show what happened in an accident. They demonstrated the accident by pushing toys around. It gave the observer a picture of what happened. You could then describe the accident by using words to say what the car did. That court case, then, became the basis for a theory of language in which words are pictures of objects.

Picture theory is an abstraction of an actual event that happened in time. Abstraction is required when we are removed in space and time from a real event in another time and place, and we are trying to tell what happened. In the telling of the event, you are drawing a picture in the minds of the people.

They can almost see what happened if you describe it in an effective way.

You are telling it using words, and words, then, are relational, descriptive, and picture words. When you say a red car with a broken windshield was traveling very fast down the street just before the collision, you are using words as an abstract picture of what actually happened in time. That word description is Picture Theory.

Picture Theory language, as an abstraction, may be incorrect. In order to assure accuracy, analysis of the resulting picture is required. Thus, this theory came to be known as Language Analysis. Language Analysis means that if the picture cannot be verified, it is meaningless. Use of language requires verification because it is an abstraction of the real event. In other words, you had to be able to go back and do some tests on various parts of the picture in order to determine the truth.

Truth has to be verifiable in this philosophy. Well, guess what? That philosophy throws theology right out the window because our theology is built on biblical language. We believe the biblical account of creation, but it cannot be verified. Thus, Language Analysis will keep us from talking about our Lord, which is what Satan is attempting in every way possible.

The church is already afraid to talk outside of its walls. We do not witness to anybody, give out tracts, or say anything about theology because somebody will think we are weird or fanatics. Now for our silence, Language Analysis gives intellectual justification for our ceasing to discuss theology in the marketplace.

I recently went to Seattle and found that only 4% of its population goes to church twice a year. I was giving out tracts and discovered that they typically did not know what a tract is. A typical response to my giving a person a tract was gratitude until he

opened it up. Then there was a total lack of religious respect to which I would say, "God bless you." One even retorted to that blessing: "I did not sneeze."

Talk of religion has become offensive outside of the church. I heard one seminary professor say that religious talk should be confined to inside the church. He explained that if the people wanted to hear it, then they could come to church.

He and much of society believe that religious talk is to be put in its place, and the appropriate place would be in a church or in a seminary. There you can talk about it, but they do not want us to go out on the streets to talk about it.

Pete: Was anybody receptive?

V: There was a waitress that was receptive but it was because I had combined a tip with the tract. She was polite in her reception, but I could tell that it was just a pretend.

When I introduced myself to the group in the seminar as a professor from Southwestern Seminary, the reaction was that it was extremely strange that I would be involved with "normal" people in traditional academics. I stood out further when I did not participate in the alcoholic happy hour prior to dinner.

Anyway, when you come to Language Analysis there is no room for discussion of theology. Language Analysis, then, is a verifiable kind of philosophy. Logical Positivism is another name for this philosophy. The Vienna Circle is the renowned name attached to the many proponents of Logical Positivism. These philosophies are all related to shutting up Christians.

Logical Positivism means that if you cannot logically verify something positively, then you cannot talk about it. Therefore, the Christian cannot talk in metaphysical terms because that is outside the bounds. He is left

to talk only of church as a visible institution and its visible activities.

Vienna Circle, Logical Positivism, and Language Analysis are all terms meaning the same thing in word-picture theory. Amazingly, many Americans who espouse that verifiable proof is necessary before belief readily accept ancient secular history without the need for verification. However, they will not accept ancient Christian history. There is also a tendency for them to denigrate America's theological founders. There is also a penchant in Progressives for changing history to suit their agenda.

Game Theory of Language

Abstraction is a moving away from the real via representation. Games are an abstraction of life, not the real things. The real thing is what you are, *i.e.* what you do in your life story in your pilgrimage. That is the real life. A game is a pretend kind of thing that simulates reality. It is basically an abstraction, and so when you play the game Boardwalk, that is not real money that you are playing with; it is not real property you are buying, it is not real success or loss that you experience. But some of us get lost in that kind of thing. The game becomes real, and the game replaces your pilgrimage in real life.

Game Theory is supposed to be an abstraction. You are supposed to be stepping out of your real pilgrimage and doing a little deal on the side here that has no real meaning in life. It is an abstraction; that is what "game" means.

Language can be a game. Game Theory is based upon what it is that you want to achieve along side of real life. As an extension of language that facilitates games, language has also developed to facilitate achievement of real life goals. Since games and life have many different rules and goals, languages have evolved to serve each.

In Wittgenstein's Game Theory, language arises in a particular social context. Take vocation for example. Basically, a particular vocation will have its own language to grow up around its context, *i.e.*, truckers speak their language, railroaders speak their language, and educators have their own language. So, each social context will have its own particular language. Even families have languages that are peculiar to the family.

Other factors of Game Theory abound. Some of these are:

- Any system of signs is a language in a social context.
- If a language promotes its purpose, then meaning occurs.

Occasionally the meaning of a word may be an image of the thing named by the word. This means that Game Theory can allow Picture Theory as a part of itself.

- Understanding is in the use of language, not in its meaning.

If I am using railroad language in a trucking environment, the meaning of understanding may not occur even though I am using language that is proper and true, but if I am using it in the wrong social context, understanding may not occur. For you to understand what I am saying I need to use the language that fits your social context. Otherwise it would be like me speaking a foreign language to you.

It could be that I might be trying to say something humorous, but you could take it as literally true. In that case, a misunderstanding would occur. My use of language can determine whether understanding takes place or not; the truth of the language is not the issue. The issue is in the use of the language.

Tim: Is teenage language good?

V: Teenage language is very good in their context. In it, the statement that everything is

cool does not suggest that you put your coat on.

Homer: They now say that everything is tight.

V: When I was a kid, saying that something was bad meant that it was good.

Game Theory in Hermeneutics

Game Theory is called Form Criticism when it is applied to the Bible. The basic rules are that when you go from the language back to the underlying form, that form has two dimensions, i.e. social context and the form of the words that are used.

Thus, when a form critic reads the Bible text, there is the form of the text, and there is the form of the social context in which that text fits. In order for the form critic to know what the text means, he thinks that he must go back and step into the social context to see what it would mean at that time and in that culture. Without stepping back in time and culture, then he claims that we cannot know what the text actually means because we are seeing it from our own social context. Form Criticism's claim is that a modern man who remains within his own context cannot understand a text written 2,000 years ago.

My warning is that Form Criticism implies that Relativism is implicit in forms. The meaning of the text is relative to the social context. Please note that, with Form Criticism, we have moved simply via language into the realm of Relativism. If you add a little Pragmatism and a little Existentialism, you can float all over the world in this stuff.

Thus, if truth or falseness is to be decided within the form in this theory, then truth is no longer in what Scripture says because you have both the form of the word and also the form of the context to consider. The implication of this theory is that if something is true when it was written because of the culture of that time, then it is "culturally

relative." Thus it could be concluded that the truth of that same scripture would be relative to today's culture. For example, if the text says that stealing was forbidden in that ancient culture, then God's commands in that text could be deemed to be culturally relative. Following that example, then the culture of today could reverse the scriptural command. That reversal would occur in today's culture which applauds stealing from the rich if you are poor. The justification for stealing from the rich is the Zero-sum Economic Theory³ which says that one can only get rich by stealing from the poor and disadvantaged.

Steve: So somebody that tries to be religious under this philosophy could be somebody who would think that he could act contrary to biblical mores and think that they are sinless?

V: Yes! Basically, this theory would allow culture to determine one's behavior.⁴

Please be aware that the latest Christian hermeneutics have been adapted to Form Criticism. Form Criticism means that in order for you to understand what the Scriptures mean, you have to adapt them to their form, i.e. their social context. That means then that if the writing moves from one form to another, i.e. from one culture to another, then its truth and falseness changes. Game Theory

³ Zero-sum Economics is the theory that the sum of wealth never changes. For example, if the total wealth is ten units, then if one person has six units of the available wealth, the other person can only have four units. On the other hand, Christian economics follow the multiplication rule: "Go forth and multiply." It means that via synergy the total will be greater than the sum of the parts. Thus, working together, the persons can have seven and five units of wealth.

⁴ I discovered this perversion early on in my master's degree studies. I named this phenomenon "The Culture Screen." I found many theologians that disallowed the command for wives to obey their husbands because that was the culture at the time of writing. Thus, they concluded that the Women's Liberation movement had changed today's culture and thereby annulled that commandment.

applied to the Bible makes it an abstraction which opens the door to a relativistic approach to hermeneutics.

If you add just a little of the stuff that we have been brainwashed with (Pragmatism and Existentialism), what does the Bible say? It says one thing to one person and something else to another. Personal opinions rule over the literal Words of God. Whatever works for you then determines the Scripture's meaning.

Joe: You hear that all the time.

Jerry: I just want to tell you briefly about an article I read in a Waco newspaper in this Sunday's edition. It was on the front page of the life section. It said, "Homosexuality and Christianity, Where the Two Meet." They had a pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in Waco⁵ . . .

Paul: . . . He addressed 1 Corinthians 6:9 and Romans 1:27, I think, along with six or seven other passages. He made the comment: "Well, back when those things were written they were written to a certain specific situation. . ."

Betty: ". . . and they do not apply to us today because the culture is embracing. . ."

V: That is exactly how Form Criticism works.

Jill: As you were talking about Form Criticism, that exact article was popping up in my mind.

Ted: But he is wrong!

V: Yes, and he is using Form Criticism of Language Philosophy to do the evil twisting of God's Word.

God says: "Beware of vain philosophy" (Colossians 8:20). I teach this course to forewarn you so that you can warn your people. If you do not do your duty, then they are going to step into holes that will cost them for eternity.

God has a philosophy, and His philosophy is the philosophy you are to have. Basically, it is "Have this mind which is also in Christ Jesus," (Philippians 2:5). God's philosophy does not make sense in this world today because it tells you to do things backward to the way the world tells you to do them. God's philosophy begins with self-denial, humility, losing your life, being despised by everybody, becoming a servant to everybody else, being mocked and persecuted and going to your death. A wise pilgrim, however, will know that there is a resurrection, an eternity, and a reward. He knows that God will judge how well he implemented the mind of Christ.

⁵ Homosexual churches seem to adopt some form of the name Metropolitan Community Church.

Chapter Questions

1. What are the ten steps in the Communist Manifesto?
2. What are the characteristics of Pragmatism?
3. Which philosophy was the source of the new science Quantum Physics, and who was the philosopher?
4. What is Wittgenstein's game theory?

Conclusion

What I have tried to do with exposing you to these vain philosophies is to give you the analytical tools that you need in order to know your enemies. You are going to come across all manner of strange stuff out there, and I want you to be ready to analyze what you are up against.

Although the damage has already been done, and this book is like closing the barn door after the horse has escaped, we must try our best to set things right. Satan has planned for taking over the world ever since he lost his position in heaven. He is the author of these philosophies which build upon each other toward global dominion. We must see into his plans in order to help the people. But alas, we ourselves have been duped by him and need help ourselves. I have been prepared by God to offer that help. That preparation has come at great cost to me in stress and mental labor, but now I can see why I had to go through it.

The Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave is a good book for you to also have in your arsenal to do battle effectively in a world that is on a slide into destruction. A student's summary of the book is appended for you to use. It clearly shows Satan's deceptions. You and I are already deceived. We must uncover those deceptions quickly before it is too late.

Your deception will be discovered in honest dialogue with your peers after studying this book. The problem all of you will have is that you are going to find that your church members are so steeped in deception that they will close off to your efforts. The problem that I have found is that the majority of the church members are already closed off to academic theological-studies. The crème de la crème of Christians are locked into Bible studies without being aware that their hermeneutics are already spoiled by vain philoso-

phies. They cannot possibly know. How can they know without knowing that the philosophies exist? Knowing that they exist is not enough either. They must understand the vain philosophies and their effects on the churches in order to defend against them. To stand pat in this day and age is to invite certain destruction. Study and dialogue with your peers who have put in the required efforts in this course will help all of you to discover your errors, discard them, and replace them with solid truth.

This study of philosophy, now, **is not** for you to use in the attack mode. It **is** to give you defenses. It is a defense course rather than an aggression course. Witnessing and soul winning in the evangelism course on duty for the disciples is the aggressive course. This course is to help you to become the watchman on the wall (Ezekiel 3:17; Ezekiel 33:2, 6, and 7) to watch, beware, and sound the alarm.

When I came through my first philosophy course in my master's degree studies, I thought that it was a ridiculous waste of time. I did not take it seriously. I finally woke up however. That awakening came soon after my declaration that I would never again study philosophy.

The awakening came when I was trying to reconcile the devastation of Progressivism and sanity. What was it that was driving many American politicians to purposefully destroy our country? Well, America and Israel stand in the way of Satan's plans for global rule, thus those two countries must be destroyed, and he is using his political pawns to do just that. I can see Satan's plan to bring Antichrist onto the world's stage. Once I could see what was looming on the horizon, I had to minor in philosophy in my doctoral work in order to catch up to where I was

supposed to be in order to be a watchman on the wall for the church.

Do not despise your study of this philosophy course; take and use it. Do **not** believe these philosophies, do **not** buy them, but **do** use them! The world is going to hell, folks, and we have some desperate situations. Pragmatism and Existentialism are destroying the Church. Existentialism is the biggest problem that we have on planet earth right now. But when you mix and stir the

churches' problems in with the Dialectical Idealism and Dialectical Materialism of Progressivism we have set the stage for Antichrist!

What a job we have as watchmen! The church is just drinking in all this poison and saying, "Isn't this good stuff!" The world is swimming in it. Who is going to sound the alarm? If you do not, who is? Tell me who in your church is going to sound the alarm? If you do not, God help you.

APPENDIX

A Student's Summary of the Book *Seven Men Who rule the World from the Grave*¹

INTRODUCTION

Many Christians face the possibility of being subverted by some of the strange philosophies that are being taught today. The Bible speaks of these philosophies and the dangers of listening to them. It instructs Christians to beware of the philosophy of men and the deceit of the world that are not from Christ and warns that they will "spoil" men.

Mankind since the earliest days has sought to determine the origin and purpose of life. This pursuit has led men in many different directions with various consequences. Societies that allow unbiblical philosophies to run rampant will eventually become what they believe. Today, society is slowly deteriorating because of the multitude of false beliefs and philosophies that permeate the minds and hearts of men. These beliefs, which are destroying the fabric of society from within, are passed to new generations as they are taught in the schools and institutions under the guise of higher education. As these harmful philosophies are allowed to live on, the world continues to degenerate at an ever increasing rate. Seven philosophers continue to exert profound influence today from the grave.

1. Charles Darwin

After traveling to remote islands in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans and gathering various specimens, Darwin determined that all present life forms evolved from a very basic life form in the beginning. David Breese states that Darwin's supposedly scientific discovery is not the reason that Darwin is

¹ This summary was edited for the purpose of reducing the required space.

remembered; instead it is the philosophy that has resulted from his theory of evolution that has had such a tremendous impact on the world. This theory holds that the world becomes better with the passing of time. Darwin taught that this improvement in mankind and the world can be explained through the theory of evolution and survival of the fittest. Under Darwin's theory, mankind is living in the best world ever today. The Bible contradicts this view by accurately detailing how mankind started in the best of all possible worlds, in the Garden of Eden. Man had almost perfect knowledge and walked and talked with God. When Adam sinned against God, he began a deterioration from that perfect world which will culminate in a world so evil that it will be destroyed in the end. The greatest flaw in Darwin's theory is that no one is able to relate what happened in the beginning. Darwin, of course, had no first-hand knowledge of the events of the beginning of time. His conclusions of natural selection and survival of the fittest are based on an unlimited number of variables, making them without merit. Interestingly, Darwin himself placed many disclaimers and conditions on his argument.

2. Karl Marx

Karl Marx, whom Friedrich Engels called "the greatest thinker that ever lived," was a revolutionary whose life mission was to overthrow the capitalist society and the forms of government that it brought into being. Marx believed that capitalists were the enemies of progress. Marx started the communist movement with a handful of fanatical followers who he believed could conquer the world, one nation at a time. Marx taught that the individual is only important as he becomes a part of the group. Philip Foner, one of Marx's loyalists, stated that by the two hundredth anniversary

sary of Karl Marx's death, the entire world would be communist. Marx published the Communist Manifesto which detailed numerous demands and promises of the communist party.

In 1867, Marx released his book *Das Kapital*, a major economics work which had a tremendous impact on society. In this book Marx called for the workers of the world to unite and rebel against the capitalist "bourgeoisie." As people began to study the ideas of Marxism, revolutions began. The movement did not have a worldwide influence until after Marx's death. This movement gathered momentum and continued to grow to the point of today's estimate that nearly one third of the world population lives under a communist regime.

3. Julius Wellhausen

From the time of the Reformation through the nineteenth century, Germany was the birthplace of many great thinkers and philosophers. Julius Wellhausen was one of these thinkers. During the nineteenth century the Germans became the most educated and sophisticated people of the world and anyone who aspired to be a philosopher or theologian had to know what the Germans were saying. Perhaps this is why the birth of religious liberalism was so easy.

Wellhausen believed that the Bible was one of the greatest compilations of human thoughts even though he denied that the Bible was the inspired Word of God. This philosophy led to the liberalist movement within the church. Church leaders following Wellhausen began to teach Darwinism and Marxism to support their own claims that the Bible was just a record of history and not the work of God. This view of the Bible and the teachings of Wellhausen led to the defection from sound doctrine by the church and its leadership. This philosophical school of thought introduced many of the more liberal denomi-

nations such as the Presbyterian, Anglican, and Methodist churches.

Dave Breese states that this religious liberalism is the reason that Europe "lost its soul" and is still searching for the truth to this day. This liberalism, however, was not confined to Europe and soon crossed the Atlantic to the United States. As liberalism spread across the United States, an interesting turn began to take place. Many preachers of the Word of God took a stand against the liberal position and the Fundamentalist Movement was born. These preachers spoke against the false doctrines that were being spread throughout the churches and many new churches were formed where the Bible was again held up as the inerrant Word of God. The result has been that liberalism in the United States was generally confined to the East, with a small number of liberalists in the Midwest, and even fewer in the West. According to Breese, "Liberalism destroyed the spiritual life in Europe and nearly destroyed it in the United States."

4. Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis, aspired to be a medical doctor. But after falling ill for approximately one year, he questioned whether or not he actually wanted to be a doctor. He received his medical degree in 1881 and began his career in psychiatry, moving into hypnosis therapy. During this period, Freud began to note that many of his psychiatric patients had related similar past experiences which convinced him that their exhibited behavior was somehow linked to an experience in the past.

As Freud continued in the field of psychoanalysis, he determined that the fundamental sexual urge, or libido, was the force behind all human actions. He believed that the death instinct was affected by the libido, which manifested itself as sadism or masochism. The life instinct was influenced by the libido,

creating an enhancing effect upon the personality. Freud gave western culture the terms id, ego, superego, libido, and the Oedipus Complex. His theories changed several times during his life, and his data came from unconfirmed testimony of his private patients. Even though many of his own colleagues deserted him, the world embraced him and his philosophies of psychoanalysis, psychotherapy, and pop psychology because they allowed responsibility for oneself to rest on past experiences or uncontrollable urges.

5. John Dewey

John Dewey, an educational philosopher, controlled education in America for about fifty years. It is important to note that Dewey usually generated more questions than answers when he spoke or wrote. Dewey, himself said “although I have raised large questions, it is not my ambition to answer them.” Dewey spoke on numerous subjects, but his views on education had the greatest impact on society.

Dewey believed that education should “progress” toward a more scientific approach on learning. He felt that experience was the best educator and his philosophy of education was frequently called “the experimental method.” John Dewey declared that the school’s role was to bring social change, thus began the drift away from the teaching of the fundamental three R’s: reading, writing, and arithmetic. He believed that too much discipline or homework would make students unhappy and deny children an opportunity to express themselves.

Dewey also stated that religion had no place in education. Until Dewey’s influence was felt in American public schools, most of the education in the United States had been Christian. Even in the public schools, most of the teachers were Christians. Dewey felt that the religious education of young people fell to

the churches, but the schools should be run by the community. He believed that the purpose of education was to produce a desired result rather than a dependable product.

6. John Maynard Keynes

John Maynard Keynes, described as one of Britain’s most respected intellectuals, is the developer of Keynesian economics. Keynes’ philosophy on economics changed the courses of the business and government worlds.

John Keynes, who worked in the British treasury during World War I and immediately afterwards, became famous for his views on economics and the peace treaty that was being prepared with Germany. He advised the government during the treaty negotiations in regards to the funding required for the rebuilding efforts. He believed that the reparations Germany was expected to pay could not be met and that it would lead to greater resentment on the part of the Germans. Keynes wrote and spoke on economics and began investing in the stock market, which ultimately made him rich and known around the world.

Keynes eventually immigrated to the United States and convinced leaders that to prevent economic collapse, the government must invest in business. He stressed that businesses could not be expected to increase production and employment unless the government provided the stimulus. The theory that has evolved from Keynes’ philosophy is that the government can do everything for its citizens. The government has all the answers and can solve any problem.

This Keynesian view has been proven false in both the short term and long term. Many of the world’s leaders are meeting today in an attempt to find ways to curb spending and slow the economic crisis that looms on the horizon for governments who have overextended themselves in an effort to provide for its citizens.

The question that arises now is, does the world have in the near future a one-world bank and a one-world currency?

7. Soren Kierkegaard

The last man studied in the book *Seven Men Who Rule the World from the Grave* is Soren Kierkegaard. Kierkegaard was a voracious writer whose papers were not discovered until almost one hundred years after his death. These writings introduced Existentialism and Neo-orthodoxy to western culture.

Much of Kierkegaard's work created confusion in the worlds of philosophy and religion. Contradicting himself many times within his writings, he both confirmed and denied many of the same ideas. Existentialism, which implies contradiction and a rejection of any sequence, is now one of the prominent philosophies among intellectuals. Existentialism, under the name Neo-orthodoxy, has also invaded religious thinking.

The neo-orthodox views have clouded many of the religious definitions which are central to Christianity. They have changed the view of inspiration of Scripture from the premise that the words were inspired by God, to a view that places the emphasis on the reader who is supposedly inspired by the words. Likewise, salvation becomes a psychological experience with God rather than a cleansing of sin and the gift of eternal life. This diffusion of the beliefs of Christians has allowed many unbiblical theologies to flourish under the name of Christianity.

CONCLUSION

All students are called by God to serve in His kingdom. We are mandated to preach and teach the truth. Unfortunately, the church has been lead astray many times throughout history by the false teachings of individuals who have used their perceptions regarding science or theology as the basis for their beliefs. Society is still searching for the answers to those fundamental questions concerning the origin and purpose of life. Our job is to provide those answers from God's Word and God's truth. If, indeed, societies do eventually become what they believe, then we, as teachers, can have as great an impact on our culture as these seven men who rule the world from their graves.

If public schools turn from the teachings of one man's heretical belief which cannot be proven with scientific evidence, to the teachings of God's truth which scientists are consistently proving today, then our society, one individual at a time, can begin the process of positive change. Just as societies have been destroyed from within, so can they be saved by proclaiming the truth and dispelling these false teachings. We must remove the false teachers and liars from the institutions and pulpits and return to the truth. When we are ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ and are living daily in His will, we have the opportunity to teach the Gospel that comes from Jesus Christ, who rules not from a grave but from a throne.

ANSWERS TO CHAPTER QUESTIONS

Chapter 1

1. Draw the *kenosis* as described in Philippians 2:5-11 and use it to describe what comes after this life is over.
Answer: See page 9 for drawing. Description: Exaltation occurs after this life is over. In the exaltation, rewards are received for following Jesus in self-denying and cross-bearing ministry. In the exaltation, those who were last in their temporal lives will become first in eternity.
2. Draw the reverse *kenosis* and use it to describe what happens to the Christian who lived this kind of life.
Answer: See page 9 for drawing. Description: The person who lives in this model will fall to a loss of rewards because he lives for himself in self-indulgence. The fall for this man is described by God's statement that the first will become last. Thus this man who was first in his temporal life will become last in eternity. This man's only exaltation will be what he enjoyed for himself while he was living.
3. List the gods of the mind.
 - a. Vain philosophy
 - b. Your own point of view.
 - c. Values higher than God.
 - d. Lack of repentance.
4. What is the definition of philosophy?
 - a. Philosophy is a quest for answers to important questions.
 - b. Philosophy is a quest for truth.
 - c. Philosophy is a discipline of asking questions.
- d. Philosophy deals with critical thinking and methods for seeking knowledge.
- e. Philosophy of religion is a small area within philosophy; other areas include ethics, politics, aesthetics, and metaphysics. Its tools are reason and logic.
5. What is the historical approach in viewing philosophy? Name the periods, give dates, and the focus of each period.
 - a. The Ancient Period. 600 B.C. to A.D. 500. Philosophers: Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine. Thought was focused on the world and its origin.
 - b. The Medieval Period. A.D. 500 to A.D. 1500. Philosophers: Anselm and Aquinas. These thinkers focused on supporting the doctrinal positions of the Roman Catholic Church.
 - c. The Modern Period. A.D. 1500 to present. Philosophers: Descartes, Hume, Kierkegaard, and James. These thinkers focused on the place of human beings in the world.
6. What are the five questions to be explored in philosophy?
 - a. The ontological question: What is real?
 - b. The axiological question: What is important?
 - c. The epistemological question: How do I know?
 - d. The methodological question: How do I express what I know?
 - e. The functional question: What does it do?

Chapter 2

1. What was the question that Thales asked? What is the one out of which all comes? His presupposition is that everything that exists today evolved out of some one thing.
2. Heraclitus, agreeing somewhat with Thales, compared everything to a river, constantly changing as life flows along. What did Parmenides say in opposition to Heraclitus?
Answer: Parmenides said that everything is constant, and that change is an illusion.
3. What was Socrates' Doctrine of Evil?
Evil was not from a misdirected will, but from spirit and appetite joining to overwhelm reason. Evil was connected to the body either through a strong appetite or a weak reason or a combination of the two.

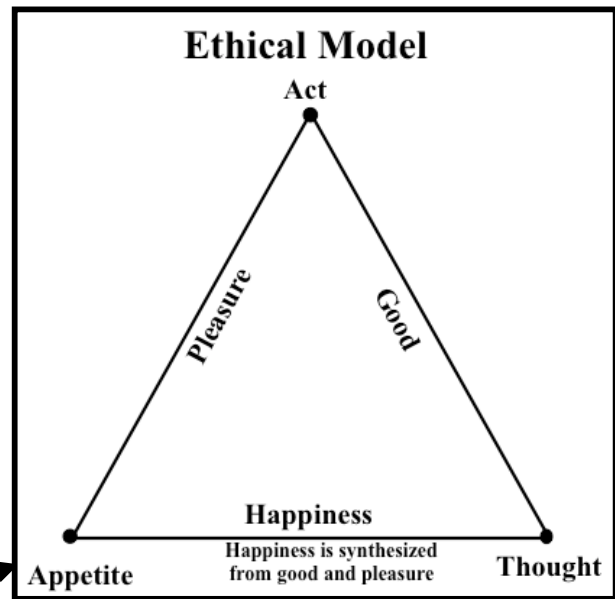
4. How did Socrates approach the two sides of the ontological issue?
Socrates put these two opposing sides of constancy and change together. He claimed that there was a sensible world and a formal world. The sensible world was in flux, and the formal world was constant.
5. What was the Socratic theory of teaching?
The student learned everything while he was in the realm of the forms prior to birth. So when you are formalized into a particular person, you come with an understanding of the forms. Learning is then simply recalling what you had previously known. How do you recall that knowledge? I ask you a question, one that I have not instructed you on, and lead you to discover knowledge that is innate within you.

6. How did Aristotle and Plato differ?
Plato and Aristotle retained the two worlds of Socrates but with different emphases. Aristotle emphasized the particulars, and Plato emphasized the forms.
7. What was Socrates' Theory of the Soul?
Complete the following table from Socrates.
Answer:

PARTS OF THE SOUL	Reason
	Spirit
	Appetite
FUNCTION OF PARTS	Thinking
	Action
	Physical Needs
VIRTUE PARTS	Wisdom
	Courage
	Temperance

Chapter 3

1. What are the two main streams of philosophy down through history?
Aristotelianism and Platonism.
2. What is the Socratic method of teaching?
Helping the student remember something that he already knows.
3. Define the following:
 - a. deductive reasoning
Deductive reasoning is to extrapolate from the body of truth to knowledge about a particular within the group.
 - b. inductive reasoning
Inductive reasoning is to experiment, and to seek knowledge by asking questions and getting answers about particulars. The answers are then grouped so that a general law can be expressed about all particulars in the group.
4. Analyze this chart by describing the following results:
 - Act out of thought = (good) _____
 - Act out of Appetite = (pleasure) _____
 - Synthesize good and pleasure = (happiness)
 - An act that balances thought and appetite together creates (virtue).



5. What are the four causes of ontology in Aristotelianism?
 - a. Material cause: The stuff or matter of a thing causes it to exist, i.e. causes ontology.
 - b. Formal cause: Form causes the thing to become what it is, i.e. the form within an acorn causes it to produce an oak tree.
 - c. Efficient cause: The unseen agent acting on matter to bring it into its final form.
 - d. Final cause: Purpose of the thing causes it to fulfill its purpose.

Chapter 4

1. Describe Augustine’s early explanations of evil and the view that was eventually his conclusion.
 - a. Manichaeism: dualism is the Persian solution to the problem of evil as follows:
 - (1) Good is passive light; evil is aggressive darkness.
 - (2) Evil invaded good, and good is impotent against the invasion, but afterwards good regains balance. This model is depicted in the phases of the moon.
 - (3) This philosophy impugns God’s power because evil has equal power.
 - b. Neo-Platonism.
In this philosophy evil did not have its own existence. It was instead a privation of good. This is basically a pantheism in which all creation is an emanation from God. This philosophy impugns God’s goodness because evil is within God’s ontology.
 - c. Christianity.
Evil in Christianity is a product of disordered love.
2. Describe and evaluate Augustine’s concept of disordered love.
Disordered love occurs when some object is loved more than God whether that object is yourself, your spouse, your child, your lifestyle, your car/house/hobby, etc. God should always be first when it comes to love. Lower-tiered love should come after the love of God. Evil arises from a disordered love—love in the lower tier getting ahead of one’s love for something in the upper tier; it is the love of an improper object.
3. Describe or illustrate Dialectical Materialism.
Dialectical Materialism is a monistic system, i.e. a system in which all reality is becoming united into a utopian two-class system, e.g. Communism. The materialism portion indi-

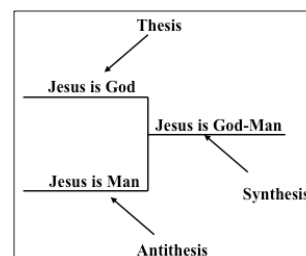
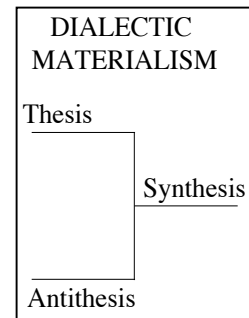
cates that material is all of reality; it, of necessity, embraces an atheistic or a pantheistic system. The Dialectical portion of this philosophy indicates the process in which there is continuous struggle between the thesis and the antithesis. Out of that struggle comes a synthesis, which unites the country under the tyrannical rule by its Communist Party. The Communist agenda is to repeat revolutions in other countries until reaching the final system—a perfect one-world utopian system.

4. The text described a good theological dialectic about Jesus being the God-Man. Illustrate or describe that dialectic.

You will take one thesis: Jesus is God, all God. The antithesis is: Jesus is Man, all man. But the synthesis is a good theology: He is the God-Man; He is both all God and all Man. That is a synthetic statement that shows the good use of dialectics.

A good synthesis occurs only when you pull the truth out of the two sides and create a single truth that is all truth. For example, the thesis could be false but contain a particle of truth, and the same could exist for the antithesis. The synthesis must contain only

those particles of truth. Dialectical thinking puts the truth from both positions into the conclusion that, in turn, becomes the new thesis for further thinking.



Chapter 5

1. What is the Ontological Argument for the existence of God?
 God is the greatest possible being that you can think of. If existence is greater than non-existence, then God has to exist. That, then, supposedly proves the existence of God for the infidel.
2. What are the five proofs (arguments) for God’s existence by Thomas Aquinas?
 - a. Motion: movement implies a first mover—God.
 - b. Efficient cause: sensible order had to have an efficient cause; nothing is an efficient cause of itself.
 - c. Existence: existence of beings implies a creator because nothing is self-existent.
 - d. Gradation: if there is a greater and lesser, then there is a greatest—God
 - e. Final ends: if all things seek their potential ends, then a guiding mind is needed.
3. What is the pincer movement within hermeneutics?
 There is the pincer movement of the Word and Spirit working together. The Word works objectively with the human reason, and the Spirit works subjectively with the human faith. The two divine elements must harmonize with the two human elements for us to have the correct understanding and true faith.
4. What is our hermeneutical problem?
 We tend to get out of balance in the pincer movement. We either get too objective and treat the Word as a code, or we get too subjective and make the Word say what we want it to.

Chapter 6

1. Compare Humanism of today with Humanism of the 14th Century.
 Humanism of today is idolatry, but the Humanism of the 14th Century is a re-establishment, or the rebirth, of the value of man.
2. Reproduce Descartes Epistemology chart. See Chart 6.1.
3. What is the Reformation?
 The Reformation was a religious version of the Renaissance. It was the renewal of the worthiness of man to examine and question the sources of truth. As a result, when men returned to the Bible, they found a conflict between what it said and what the pope said. Thus the Reformation was the replacement of the pope’s body of truth with God’s Word.
4. Define:

Empiricism	Getting your data through the empirical senses. You measure it, see it, taste it, feel it. You read it, study it, get a magnifying glass and look at
------------	--

	it, describe it, draw it. Empiricism is inductive knowledge.
Rationalism:	Knowledge by deduction from soul memory. It is gathering information that you already know by remembering it and then applying logical deduction from it to new knowledge
Synthesis:	Synthesis is the product of a dialectic in which you pull the good out of each of two opposing ideas to form a synthetic conclusion. In this chapter, synthetic epistemology knows by both empirical induction and rational deduction.

Chapter 7

1. What is the significance of the Renaissance and the Reformation for philosophy?
The Renaissance and Reformation provided the following new things:
 - a. Thinking man.
 - b. The search for truth.
 - c. Value in man.
 - d. Value in original sources (Back to the Bible).
2. How do you witness to a rationalist?
Rationalists give great weight to scientific evidence. They will also value human reasoning very highly—to the point that they think that human reason can provide whatever answer is needed to whatever problem arises.
 - a. Appeal first to reason rather than Scripture, experience, and emotion.
 - b. Have him identify the absolute.
 - c. Use the Socratic method—ask questions that lead to a conclusion of human weakness.
 - d. Some parts of faith are easily argued.
 - e. Use the Scripture at the appropriate place. Do not close your argument without it.
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of a human-centered philosophy?
Weaknesses of a human-centered philosophy: (1) it is subjective (2) it is too optimistic (it gives too much credit to the human mind).
Strengths of a human-centered philosophy: (1) it is personal and pertinent; (2) it is not objective to the point of detachment and vacuum.
4. What is Deism?
Deism is Godism because Dei is Latin for God. Deism is the idea that Dei created the universe with its laws for operating. After creating it, Dei busied Himself with other divine issues and left it to operate on its own. The conclusion is that man can control the universe and move it towards utopia by discovering the creation's built-in laws of operation and changing the inputs in order to manipulate the outcomes.
5. What is Empiricism, and who started it? Where and when?
Empiricism is the gathering of knowledge via sensorial experience. Locke started it in England in the 18th century.
6. What results from Empiricism?
Deism and its closed continuum results from Empiricism. Next faith in God's involvement with mankind is eliminated. Man's progress becomes man's savior. Salvation is found in man's collective progress as a society towards utopia.
In Empiricism's purist form, as found in Hume, cause cannot be perceived. This pure form of Empiricism breaks the linkage between existence and perception. Thus, perception cannot be *caused* by existence or actions by something that exists, and therefore, existence of anything is conclusion, i.e. a matter of faith not of reality.
7. Where did the split between Empiricism and Rationalism occur, and where did that split re-join?
Empiricism was located in England, and Rationalism occurred in Germany and France. Both Empiricism and Rationalism came back together in America as the immigrants from England and the European Continent arrived in America.

Chapter 8

1. Describe the Categorical Imperative.
The Categorical Imperative is for each of us to act only on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it becomes a universal law.
2. Describe a lapse in the Categorical Imperative.
A lapse is when you forsake duty for happiness. You do your duty when it is an imperative, a yearning in your heart for justice as you see it, or you will be judged for your lapse of duty.

Chapter 9

1. What did Kierkegaard fight against?
His fight was against a state religion because faith was not required.
2. Which Bible character did Kierkegaard use and why?
He used Abraham as the Knight of Faith, to exemplify faith as over against Agamemnon as the Knight of Infinite Resignation.
3. When Existentialism enters into Christianity, what is the label that is applied to Christian doctrine? Also what is the doctrine of revelation called?
Neo-orthodoxy is the label for Christian doctrine that is influenced by Existentialism, and its doctrine of revelation is called personal or act revelation.
4. Is Existentialism subjective or objective?
It is subjective without any objective content.

Chapter 10

1. Describe and evaluate Existentialism.
Description
 - a. Existence is a struggle for decision.
 - b. Experience is with conflict and agony in the soul.
 - c. The cure for agony is a passionate commitment to one option. The option is not to an objective code but to the ultimate subject—God.
 - d. Choosing, not mere wishing is what moves the personality to realization. The choosing is without objective knowing; we are true subject. Truth is not objective because it would be without faith. Truth is discovered in decision.
 - e. True religion is not church going or belief in an objective truth, but a passionate commitment to God.Evaluation
 - a. Existentialism is too subjective; there is no room for objective truth. It is faith in faith, it is feeling over reason, and it allows no assensus.
 - b. The doctrine of inspiration changes—instead of the Word of God impacting both our intellects and spirits, the Holy Spirit impacts only our spirits.
 - c. The doctrine of salvation changes—it is a psychological experience of relationship rather than an ontological rebirth.
 - d. The doctrine of Christ changes—it neglects the completed objective work of salvation via Christ's blood.
 - e. Diffusion, as exemplified in this list, comes from the lack of an objective standard.
2. Contrast Marx's philosophy for change in the world with Hegel's?
Marx rejected Hegel's slow, gradual process of idealism as a debate between ideas. Instead, he opted for sudden, violent revolutionary wars in materialistic conquests by one class of man over another.

Chapter 11

1. What are the ten steps in the Communist Manifesto?
 - a. All land is owned by the state.
 - b. A heavy, progressive income tax.
 - c. Abolition of inheritances.
 - d. Confiscation of property from immigrants and rebels.
 - e. Central bank owned by the state.
 - f. Centralization of communication and transportation by the state.
 - g. Ownership by the state of factories and instruments of production.
 - h. Equal liability of all to labor.
 - i. Redistribution of population over towns and country.
 - j. Free education in public schools.
2. What are the characteristics of Pragmatism?
 - a. Pragmatism seeks to eliminate all *a priori* in decision-making (experience and time provide their own meaning).
 - b. There is no final truth because truth is in process.
 - c. As life's pendulum swings, so does truth.
 - d. There are no prior moral absolutes.

- e. If it works for me, it is true for me.
 - f. *Meliorism* is to make the world better through human efforts.
 - g. Pragmatism requires a *teleological* ethic, not a *deontological* ethic.
 - h. Liberalism is the victory of healthy mindedness over morbid and oppressive hell-fire theology.
 - i. Religion's truth is in its fruits (results).
3. Which philosophy was the source of the new science Quantum Physics, and who was the philosopher?
 Process Philosophy changed the primacy of process over that of ontology for existence. From that thinking, the study of Newtonian Physics was replaced with an emphasis on Quantum Physics. Alfred North Whitehead was that philosopher who did his work in the beginning of the Twentieth Century.
4. What is Wittgenstein's game theory?
- a. Language arises in a particular social context.
 - b. Any system of signs is a language in a social context.
 - c. If a language promotes its purpose, then meaning occurs.
 - d. Occasionally the meaning of a word may be an image of the thing named by the word
 - e. Understanding is in the use of language, not in its meaning.

GLOSSARY

- Abominations:** a thing that causes disgust or hatred; a feeling of hatred (dictionary).
- Adherents:** someone who supports a particular party, person, or set of ideas (dictionary).
- Adventitious:** happening or carried on according to chance rather than design or inherent nature; coming from outside; not native (dictionary).
- Agnostic:** a person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God or of anything beyond material phenomena; a person who claims neither faith nor disbelief in God (dictionary).
- Asceticism:** a method by which you can release the spirit from the body, and that would come in punishing the body or castigating the body.
- Assimilating:** act of integrating somebody into a larger group, so that differences are minimized or eliminated, or become integrated in this way (dictionary)
- Atrocities:** an extremely wicked or cruel act, typically one involving physical violence or injury (dictionary).
- Auxiliaries:** are the military enforcers of what the wise men say (text in the context of Socrates).
- Axiological:** is the study of quality or value. It is often thought to include ethics and aesthetics—philosophical fields that depend crucially on notions of value—and sometimes it is held to lay the groundwork for these fields, and thus to be similar to value theory and meta-ethics (dictionary).
- Castigating:** reprimand (someone) severely (dictionary). This can be self-castigation.
- Categorical:** unqualified, unconditional, unequivocal, absolute, explicit, express, unambiguous, definite, direct, downright, outright, emphatic, positive, point-blank, conclusive, without reservations, out-and-out. Antonym: qualified, equivocal (dictionary).
- Christology:** the branch of Christian theology relating to the person, nature, and role of Christ (text).
- Clichés:** a phrase or opinion that is overused and betrays a lack of original thought; a very predictable or unoriginal thing or person (dictionary).
- Constantinople:** the former name of Istanbul from AD 330 (when it was given its name by Constantine the Great) until the capture of the city by the Turks in 1453 (dictionary).
- Copernicus:** Nicolaus Copernicus, (1473–1543), Polish astronomer; Latinized name of *Mikolaj Kopernik*. He proposed a model of the solar system in which the planets orbit in perfect circles around the sun; his work ultimately led to rejection of the established geocentric cosmology (dictionary).
- Corpus:** a collection of written texts, esp. the entire works of a particular author or a body of writing on a particular subject: a collection of written or spoken material in machine-readable form, assembled for the purpose of studying linguistic structures, frequencies, etc.; anatomy the main body or mass of a structure; the central part of the stomach, between the fundus and the antrum (dictionary).
- Credence:** belief in or acceptance of something as true; the likelihood of something being true; plausibility (dictionary).
- Cynic:** a person who believes that people are motivated purely by self-interest rather than acting for honorable or unselfish reasons; a person who questions whether something will happen or whether it is worthwhile (dictionary).
- Deist/deism:** that God created the world and then turned his back on it.
- Depose:** remove from office suddenly and forcefully (dictionary).
- Dialectic:** the art of investigating or discussing the truth of opinions; inquiry into metaphysical contradictions and their solutions; the existence or action of opposing social forces, concepts, etc.
- Dichotomy:** a division or contrast between two things that are or are represented as being opposed or entirely different (dictionary).
- Dynamism:** adoptionist approach of Christology. Dynamism's approach was that when Jesus was baptized, He was adopted by God as His Son, and endued with power.
- Ecclesia:** called out of the world and called into God's kingdom to be used by Him as He sees fit (text).

- Ecstasy: to stand out of (text).
- Ecstasy: an overwhelming feeling of great happiness or joyful excitement: chiefly archaic an emotional or religious frenzy or trancelike state, originally one involving an experience of mystic self-transcendence (dictionary). Ecstasy means to stand out of (text).
- Empiricism: the theory that all knowledge is derived from sense-experience. Stimulated by the rise of experimental science, it developed in the 17th and 18th centuries, expounded in particular by John Locke, George Berkeley, and David Hume. Compare with phenomenalism; practice based on experiment and observation; dated ignorant or unscientific practice; quackery (dictionary).
- Eon*: we usually think of an eon in terms of distance (text). An indefinite and very long period of time, often a period exaggerated for humorous or rhetorical effect (dictionary).
- Epistemology: the theory of knowledge, esp. with regard to its methods, validity, and scope. Epistemology is the investigation of what distinguishes justified belief from opinion (dictionary).
- Eschaton: the final event in the divine plan (dictionary).
- Esoteric: intended for or likely to be understood by only a small number of people with a specialized knowledge or interest (dictionary).
- Eucharist: the Christian ceremony commemorating the Last Supper, in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed; the consecrated elements, esp. the bread; the bread and wine are referred to as the body and blood of Christ, though much theological controversy has focused on how substantially or symbolically this is to be interpreted. The service of worship is also called **Holy Communion** or (chiefly in the Protestant tradition) **the Lord's Supper** or (chiefly in the Catholic tradition) **the Mass** (dictionary).
- Evangelical: of or according to the teaching of the gospel or the Christian religion; of or denoting a tradition within Protestant Christianity emphasizing the authority of the Bible, personal conversion, and the doctrine of salvation by faith in the Atonement; zealous in advocating something (dictionary).
- Evolutionist: a person who believes in the theories of evolution and natural selection; of or relating to the theories of evolution and natural selection (dictionary).
- Existential: of or relating to existence. Philosophy concerned with existence, esp. human existence as viewed in the theories of existentialism; Logic (of a proposition) affirming or implying the existence of a thing (dictionary).
- Existentialism: a philosophical theory or approach that emphasizes the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining their own development through acts of the will.
- Extrapolation: extend the application of a method or conclusion, esp. one based on statistics) to an unknown situation by assuming that existing trends will continue or similar methods will be applicable; estimate or conclude (something) in this way; Mathematics—extend (a graph, curve, or range of values) by inferring unknown values from trends in the known data (dictionary).
- False prophet: In religion, the term false prophet is a label given to a person who is viewed as illegitimately claiming charismatic authority within a religious group. The individual may be seen as one who falsely claims the gift of prophecy, or who uses that gift for demagoguery or evil ends. The label 'prophet' can be extremely subjective: Without exception, someone who is considered a 'true' prophet (dictionary). In this context, this false prophet arises in the eschaton, joins with the Antichrist to deceive the nations until the Antichrist no longer needs him.
- Flux: the action or process of flowing or flowing out; continuous change; Physics the rate of flow of a fluid, radiant energy, or particles across a given area (dictionary). Flux means it is changing, constantly moving or changing (text).
- Game theory: an abstraction; you are stepping out of your real pilgrimage, and you are doing a little deal on the side here that has no real meaning in life.
- Gnosticism: a prominent heretical movement of the 2nd-century Christian Church, partly of pre-Christian origin. Gnostic doctrine taught that the world was created and ruled by a lesser divinity, the demiurge, and that Christ was an emissary of the remote supreme divine being, esoteric knowledge (gnosis) of whom

- enabled the redemption of the human spirit (dictionary).
- Hermeneutics: concerning interpretation, esp. of the Bible or literary texts; a method or theory of interpretation (dictionary).
- Holiness: to be set apart for God (text). The state of being holy (dictionary)
- Immortality: living forever; never dying or decaying; deserving to be remembered forever (dictionary).
- Impede: delay or prevent (someone or something) by obstructing them; hinder (dictionary).
- Imperative: of vital importance; crucial; giving an authoritative command; peremptory; Grammar denoting the mood of a verb that expresses a command or exhortation, as in *come here!* Noun: an essential or urgent thing; a factor or influence making something necessary; a thing felt as an obligation (dictionary).
- Impugning: dispute the truth, validity, or honesty of (a statement or motive); call into question (dictionary).
- Incarnate: (esp. of a deity or spirit) embodied in flesh; in human form (dictionary).
- Intuition: the ability to understand something immediately, without the need for conscious reasoning; a thing that one knows or considers likely from instinctive feeling rather than conscious reasoning (dictionary).
- Iterations: the repetition of a process or utterance; repetition of a mathematical or computational procedure applied to the result of a previous application, typically as a means of obtaining successively closer approximations to the solution of a problem; a new version of a piece of computer hardware or software (dictionary).
- Kant, Immanuel: (1724–1804), German philosopher. In the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) he countered Hume's skeptical empiricism by arguing that any affirmation or denial regarding the ultimate nature of reality (“noumenon”) makes no sense. His *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) affirms the existence of an absolute moral law—the categorical imperative.
- Language Analysis: See Logical positivism.
- License: in polemical methodology comes from the dichotomy between body and spirit. For Christians, *Gnosticism* is a license to sin that comes out of a *Gnostic* belief
- Logical positivism: you are having a positive identification or verification that is logically tied to this word picture; words that are proven true through actual verification (text).
- M.O.: *Modus Operandi*. Method of operation. A particular way or method of doing something, esp. one that is characteristic or well-established; the way something operates or works (dictionary).
- Manichaeism: a war between light and dark (text).
- Maxim: a short, pithy statement expressing a general truth or rule of conduct (dictionary).
- Metanoia*: a change of mind (text).
- Monasticism: resembling or suggestive of monks or their way of life, esp. in being austere, solitary, or celibate (dictionary).
- Notorious: famous or well known, typically for some bad quality or deed (dictionary).
- Noumenal: (in Kantian philosophy) a thing as it is in itself, as distinct from a thing as it is knowable by the senses through phenomenal attributes (dictionary).
- Ontology/Ontological: the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being (dictionary)
- Ontology: the branch of metaphysics dealing with the nature of being (dictionary).
- Papal: of or relating to a pope or to the papacy (dictionary).
- Perception: the ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses; the state of being or process of becoming aware of something in such a way; a way of regarding, understanding, or interpreting something; a mental impression; intuitive understanding and insight (dictionary).
- Phenomenon: Experiencing something that is there (text).
- Philosophical: concerned with the study of the nature of life and reality, or of related areas such as ethics, logic, or metaphysics; concerned with or given to thinking about the larger issues and deeper meanings in life and events' showing calmness, restraint, or resignation, especially reacting to adversity in a restrained or resigned way (dictionary).
- Philosophy: a quest for answers to important questions. (*Phileo* is love; *sophia* is wisdom) (text).
- Pluralism: a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., coexist; a form of society in

- which the members of minority groups maintain their independent cultural traditions; a political theory or system of power-sharing among a number of political parties; a theory or system of devolution and autonomy for individual bodies in preference to monolithic state control (dictionary).
- Polemical methodology:** to use tradition as authority (text).
- Propagated:** breed specimens of (a plant, animal, etc.) by natural processes from the parent stock; reproduce in such a way; cause (something) to increase in number or amount; spread and promote (an idea, theory, knowledge, etc.) widely; transmit (motion, light, sound, etc.) in a particular direction or through a medium (dictionary).
- Proposition:** a group of words put into a meaningful order so that you can understand what is being said (text).
- Psychologize:** analyze or regard in psychological terms, esp. in an uninformed way; theorize or speculate concerning the psychology of something or someone (dictionary).
- Purgatory:** (in Roman Catholic doctrine) a place or state of suffering inhabited by the souls of sinners who are expiating their sins before going to heaven; mental anguish or suffering (dictionary)
- Quantum:** Physics a discrete quantity of energy proportional in magnitude to the frequency of the radiation it represents; an analogous discrete amount of any other physical quantity, such as momentum or electric charge (dictionary).
- Rationalism:** a belief or theory that opinions and actions should be based on reason and knowledge rather than on religious belief or emotional response; **Philosophy:** the theory that reason rather than experience is the foundation of certainty in knowledge; **Theology:** the practice of treating reason as the ultimate authority in religion (dictionary).
- Relativism:** the doctrine that knowledge, truth, and morality exist in relation to culture, society, or historical context, and are not absolute (dictionary).
- Renaissance:** the revival of art and literature under the influence of classical models in the 14th–16th centuries; the culture and style of art and architecture developed during this era: a revival of or renewed interest in something (dictionary).
- Rudiments:** (the rudiments of) the first principles of a subject; an elementary or primitive form of something (dictionary).
- Sacraments:** a religious ceremony or act of the Christian Church that is regarded as an outward and visible sign of inward and spiritual divine grace, in particular; (in the Roman Catholic and many Orthodox Churches) the rites of baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist, penance, anointing of the sick, ordination, and matrimony; (among Protestants) baptism and the Eucharist; (also the Blessed Sacrament or the Holy Sacrament) (in Roman Catholic use) the consecrated elements of the Eucharist, esp. the Host; a thing of mysterious and sacred significance; a religious symbol (dictionary).
- Sacramentum:** a mystical transference of powers (text).
- Sacrosanct:** very holy and sacred; not to be criticized or tampered with (dictionary).
- Sapientia:** World of Eternal truth; God operates in the Doctrine of Illumination to know eternal truth (text).
- Satan:** the Devil; Lucifer (dictionary).
- Scientia:** which is knowledge through induction; detect knowledge through your senses (text).
- Syllogism:** an instance of a form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn (whether validly or not) from two given or assumed propositions (premises), each of which shares a term with the conclusion, and shares a common or middle term not present in the conclusion; deductive reasoning as distinct from induction (dictionary).
- Syllogistic:** an instance of a form of reasoning in which a conclusion is drawn (whether validly or not) from two given or assumed propositions (premises), each of which shares a term with the conclusion, and shares a common or middle term not present in the conclusion; deductive reasoning as distinct from induction (dictionary).
- Tabula rasa:** blank tablet (text).
- Theocratic:** God rules (text).
- Theodicy:** the judgment of God. It is really about the difference between God having the power to eliminate evil but not doing it because of a lack of goodness (text).

Veneration: a feeling of great respect or reverence for somebody or something; the expression of respect or reverence for somebody or

something in words or actions; the condition of being respected or revered (dictionary).
Vienna Circle: See Logical positivism.

**PERSONAL LEARNING ASSESSMENT PLAN
FOR CREDIT TOWARD THE CERTIFICATE IN DISCIPLESHIP STUDIES**

If you want credit for this course toward the Certificate In Discipleship Studies, you will need to write an answer to the following three questions and email them to:

cd.iac@4disciples.org

Save your answers in either Word or in Rich text format (RTF) and send them as an attachment to your email message. To save in RTF, just click save as and then choose rich text format in the drop down window.

List the full name of this course, and then answer the following questions:

1. What are the main truths and insights I have learned through this course on Philosophical Systems?
2. In what ways will this course help me in my personal Christian experience?
3. How will my service as a Christian disciple be improved as a result of this course?

Note: Except for the first question at least one page per question would be appropriate.

A 4D Instructor will evaluate your answers and determine whether or not you have demonstrated satisfactory learning, personal growth, and approach to ministry. If the instructor evaluates your answers as “satisfactory,” then a certificate of course completion will be sent to you. When you have successfully completed all ten courses in the Discipleship Program, then the Certificate in Discipleship Studies will be awarded.

