

# Forces of Secularity in the Modern World

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VOLUME 1

STEPHEN STREHLE

*Washington College*

STUDIES IN RELIGION, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

Vol. 11



Stephen Strehle is a leading scholar of church/state issues. In this volume, he focuses his rigorous historical analysis and philosophical acumen upon a topic of great interest today and source of cultural wars around the globe—the process of secularization. The book starts with a discussion of early capitalism and how it saw the real world functioning well-enough on its own principles of individual struggle and self-interest, without needing religious or moral principles to meddle in its affairs and eventually dispelling the need for any intelligent design or providential orchestration of life through the work of Darwin. The book then discusses the growth of the secular point of view: how historians dismissed the impact of religion in developing modern culture, how scientists conceived of the universe running on self-sufficient or mechanistic principles, and how people no longer looked to the providential hand of God to explain their suffering. The book ends with a discussion of how the Deist concept of human autonomy became a political policy in America through Jefferson's concept of a wall of separation between church and state and how the US Supreme Court proceeded to dismiss the importance of religion in shaping or justifying the values of the nation and its laws. The book is accessible to most upper-level and graduate students in a wide-variety of disciplines, keeping technical and foreign words to a minimum and leaving scholarly details or debates to its extensive notes.

“This fascinating, but scholarly and wide-ranging, account lays bare the tangled roots of secularity in the Western world over recent centuries. In so doing, it casts a clear light on some of the major forces that are shaping the world we live in now.”

—Roger Trigg, Ian Ramsey Centre, University of Oxford

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Forces of Secularity  
in the Modern World

# Washington College

STUDIES IN RELIGION, POLITICS, AND CULTURE

**Joseph Prud'homme**

*General Editor*

Vol. 11

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Stephen Strehle

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# Introduction

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Today many Christian people find the greatest threat to their existence within the growing secularity of western culture. They express less concern about the polemical differences that divided the church during the days of orthodoxy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and spend more time wondering about the prospects for basic Christianity surviving as a viable force of culture in the future. Indeed, they find Jesus expressing this same concern and warning about god-lessness in the “latter days,” where the people are living a worldly existence of “eating, drinking, marrying, and giving in marriage” (Mt 24:38), without any thought about a higher or transcendent calling in life and no fear of any imminent visitation from the heavens above (Lk 18:8). Here these Christians find Jesus expressing their same concerns over what people these days describe as “secularity.” Today sociologists use the term to describe a disposition that finds religious categories irrelevant, that interprets the world as a self-sufficient system, containing an autonomous causal nexus or immanent force, negating any need for divine intervention, let alone a cataclysmic coming of the Messiah. The process of “secularization” is described as a tendency to liberate culture from religious authority, control, and significance.<sup>1</sup> Bryan Wilson delineates certain aspects of this process in these “latter days”:

Secularization relates to the diminuation in the social significance of religion. Its application covers such things as, the sequestration by political powers of the property

and facilities of religious agencies; the shift from religious to secular control of various of the erstwhile activities and functions of religion; the decline in the proportion of their time, energy and resources which men devote to supra-empirical concerns; the decay of religious institutions; the supplanting, in matters of behavior, of religious precepts by demands that accord with strictly technical criteria; and the gradual replacement of a specifically religious consciousness (which might range from dependence on charms, rites, spells, or prayers, to a broadly spiritually-inspired ethical concern) by an empirical, rational, instrumental orientation; the abandonment of mythical, poetic, and artistic interpretations of nature and society in favor of matter-of-fact description and, with it, the rigorous separation of evaluative and emotive dispositions from cognitive and positivistic orientations.<sup>2</sup>

Modern sociologists spend a great deal of time debating whether the world is becoming more and more secular in its outward form. Some reject the religious concern over secularity and point to the steadfast nature of religious affections in Europe or the high rate of church attendance in the U.S. as indicating a relative stability in metaphysical beliefs within western civilization.<sup>3</sup> They readily admit some shift in the paradigm toward non-traditional expressions of inward spirituality, or “believing without belonging” to a specific fellowship but also try to broaden their tents in defining religiosity to include the non-traditional forms of faith as serious expressions and worthy of respect.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars are less than impressed with this turn toward other forms of faith. They look at the same data and formulate a much different interpretation. They see an inevitable decline in religious faith and practice, even if new prophetic movements might interrupt the general flow on occasion.<sup>5</sup>

There is no definitive proof on either side of the debate, but the so-called “secularization thesis” makes good sense for a number of reasons. It seems to many observers that the church is losing its former grip on society with declining rates of active participation in its denominations and the rise of agnostic, heterodox, and non-Christian expressions.<sup>6</sup> David Voas provides a detailed analysis of British and European surveys from the last decade and finds steady growth within the secular subpopulation, the decline of religiosity across generations, and the move away from conventional Christian faith and practice. Non-conventional “Christians” possess a “fuzzy fidelity” and tend to move toward the growing secular hegemony, while those who identify with the new spirituality are not able to deflect the general trend and end up displaying the same basic movement toward unbelief.<sup>7</sup> Some scholars counter the thesis by pointing to America as the great exception,<sup>8</sup> but Gallup Polls do not support the counterpoint and seem to indicate a slight decline in spirituality over the last few decades when considering the downturn in weekly church attendance and specific profession of orthodox faith.<sup>9</sup> A recent Pew Research Survey finds the number of adults identifying their faith with Christianity has dropped by a significant amount from 78.4 percent (2007) to 70.6 percent (2014), with only

a slight uptick in non-religious faiths, a decided increase in agnosticism, and the millennial generation leading the way.<sup>10</sup> Many scholars recognize this trend and point to the cultural revolution of the 1960s as providing a major impetus toward the general decline in religious expression. They point specifically to the mainline or “liberal” denominations, who most identified with the cultural message of the era and experienced a precipitous drop in membership during the subsequent decades.<sup>11</sup> They also point to a general trend that goes beyond recent developments and has a long legacy and decided momentum within the history of the modern western world. One can simply walk through an art gallery and notice the shift in focus over the centuries, beginning with iconic religious figures of the Middle Ages, proceeding to the realistic portraits of the Italian Renaissance and later period in the Netherlands, and ending with the subjective abstractions of inward dispositions, characterizing the modern period.<sup>12</sup> Direct metaphysical reference is less visible in modern times and appears to be declining when examining these works of art, as well as other works of literature, music, architecture, and so forth.

The lack of explicit reference to religion does not imply that its presuppositions have less meaning in the modern world. It might mean that its categories lie deeper underneath the surface, outside of any explicit confession of faith in those who identify with secularity. For example, Max Weber finds religious presuppositions within capitalism when analyzing the spiritual matrix out of which it arose in Europe and America.<sup>13</sup> The same might be said of communism, in spite of its denigration of religion as the “opiate of the people” and attempt to reduce life unto a dialectical and material struggle of economic forces. The outward expression of atheism seems to be sincere enough, but it also seems constantly controverted by other aspects of communist ideology that most people associate with religious ideals or presuppositions: the Communists’ Hegelian/teleological/non-Darwinian view of history, marching toward an ultimate, ideological goal; their prophetic call to change the world into a new egalitarian image; and their righteous indignation about the brutal conditions of industry and the exploitation of workers—all emphasized within the works of Marx and Engels, even while they continued to deny any empathy for religious categories like morality or ultimate meaning.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the fervor goes beyond simple religious ideals when the Communists embrace the work of Marx with cult-like devotion as if finding a unifying, totalitarian, and infallible vision within the final seal of prophecy.

[T]he Communist ideology constitutes a mythic framework of life, providing both a motivation for idealism and a validation of the existing social order; and the Communist party is, sociologically, a church with its own hierarchy, its sacred scriptures, its system of dogma, including doctrines of the fall (the development of capitalism) and eschatology (the eventual classless society), and having its exegetical disputes and heresies.<sup>15</sup>

The difficulty of identifying communism as religious or secular represents a mere example of the problematic nature of formulating simple definitions and categories confronting all interpretations in the postmodern world. Terms tend to slip and slide between simple categories for those who follow the modern understanding of hermeneutics, making it difficult to circumscribe meaning definitively and designate a final construct once and for all. Terms like “religion” and “secularity” no longer present a specific Platonic form or eternal essence to the modern intellect and live within a community of other ambiguous terms, providing space for any interpreter to work within the ambiguity and deconstruct the material in a fresh or unique way. The range of interpretive possibilities answers to the complexity and fluidity of the real world, which remains in a cacophony of many conflicting and competing forces, entangled with each other in producing its results and causing even a Christian like Martin Luther to speak of his own life as caught between God and the devil—*simul iustus et peccator*.<sup>16</sup> Religious and secular matters are difficult to separate in this world, beyond the capricious labels of those who try and limit real life to ideal forms, often for ideological considerations.

It is within this caveat that one can proceed forward with a discussion of secularity and venture to list some of its important forces. The forces ever remain ambiguous within their more complicated nature and are subject to much interpretation. One can only look at them from a certain angle, which most people seem to interpret or identify with secularity and its power to eliminate the significance and authority of religion in their lives; and one can only list some of them in providing a certain definitive form, given the vast scope of life and its numerous forces. It is not possible for any work to provide a definitive list, but it is possible to provide a representative sample of some important intellectual and social influences that have caused many people to move away from a religious perspective of the world and illuminate the process of secularization in significant ways. Within this spirit, the present study has chosen to illustrate the process in the realm of economics, science, history, and politics. It discusses modern expressions of these subjects and divides the discussion into three representative types of secularity: the first representing a disturbing intellectual reality in the realm of economics and science that caused people to doubt their faith and accommodate secular forces in understanding the world (chapters one and two); the second represents a growing cultural bias in history and science that made people look at the world through different lenses (chapters three, four, and five); and the third a more coercive political force that reduced the influence of religion and impelled society to embrace a more secular image of itself and corporate life (chapters six and seven). Of course, the types only serve as a tool in revealing the impetus toward secularity and guiding the reader

through the maze of human experience, which always remains ambiguous or slips and slides between simple categories.

The first chapter discusses the spiritual crisis that followed the new understanding of the world in terms of acquisitive or laissez-faire capitalistic forces in the seventeenth century. The chapter starts with the Jansenists and their recognition that self-interest served the community just as well as the typical altruistic motives of Christian charity in causing people to act civil, kind, just, and honest. Self-interest served society in stimulating commerce and circulating goods in meeting the needs of others, without resorting to acts of charity or requiring the government to interfere with the process and impose typical religious values.

This concept of self-interest brought a spiritual crisis over the next two centuries in western civilization as many early capitalists saw life developing well-enough on its own terms through the happenstance of individual struggle or self-interest, without the need for the typical religious or moral categories to meddle into its affairs. Many tried to handle the spiritual crisis by creating a severe dichotomy between faith and reason. Pierre Bayle accepted the verdict of the new acquisitive capitalism in recognizing that self-interest was sometimes more useful in promoting the welfare of the state than the typical virtues of austere and strict Christian piety. While he continued to preserve a place for religion, he did so at the expense of his philosophical musings by resorting to his Reformed understanding of faith and claiming that reason cannot penetrate its mysteries; but he was troubled by the disturbing way in which the real world seemed to work.

This same problem also haunted the work of Bernard Mandeville, the great apostle of early acquisitive capitalism, a Reformed Christian, and disciple of Bayle. In the *Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*, he saw the world in dark terms, following the Augustinian tradition of the Jansenists, the growing cynicism of French culture, and his own religious background as a Huguenot/Calvinist. He lamented the absence of true Christian virtues in the real world and was willing to admit in the spirit of *Realpolitik* that “no society can be rais’d into a rich and mighty kingdom, . . ., without the Vices of Man.” This social analysis presented a disturbing reality for him, even if he ended up persevering in his Reformed faith much like Bayle; He refused to take his rational analysis with utmost seriousness and continued to take refuge in the superior wisdom of divine revelation and discount his limited conception of the real world and its inner workings. Both Bayle and Mandeville continued to profess the Christian faith, while abandoning the medieval dictum of “faith seeking understanding” (*fides quaerens intellectum*), finding a more autonomous role for reason in separating its concepts and analysis from the realm of faith and forwarding a different and secular view of reality.

The second chapter discusses one of the more disturbing applications of acquisitive capitalism in developing the pitiless world of Social Darwinism and challenging the old moral reaction to human misery as counterproductive. This new approach to social issues received an early impetus from the work of Thomas Malthus (1766–1834), a Cambridge mathematician and rector of a parish. Malthus simply took a number of basic ideas from the acquisitive capitalism of Adam Smith and expanded them into a more sober and arresting view of life, as embodied in his controversial work, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798)—a book that “haunted,” “overshadowed,” and “darkened all English life for seventy years,” according to its critics. His basic thesis stated that a population tends to increase in a “geometric ratio,” while “subsistence increases in only an arithmetical ratio,” causing a “strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence,” which can hardly keep up with the growth. Malthus found it wise for the government to practice a *laissez-faire* policy and let nature take its course without trying to alter what works best on its own principles. Poor-laws involving public and private assistance only helped a few misfortunate souls and had no effect on the problem of starvation in the country among the general populace. Handing out money only helped those who received it, without increasing production, and made those who received nothing from the program starve by forcing them to pay more and more for less and less food according to the law of supply and demand.

This theory provided a significant impetus for Charles Darwin in developing his theory of evolution. In his writings, he clearly borrowed Mandeville’s analogy of a ship to illustrate his basic mechanism of evolutionary development and show how life can evolve in a piecemeal manner through a step-by-step process of trial and error, without an end in view or antecedent design, just like Mandeville’s concept of capitalism. He also spoke of Malthus’ significant influence upon him in developing the theory of natural selection in some passages. He spoke in these places of his fundamental agreement with Malthus concerning the geometric expansion of the species and the natural check upon the expansion, leading to starvation and selection. Malthus helped Darwin understand the importance of struggle within nature in evolving the species by showing the difficulty of supporting a large offspring in an environment and allowing the strong to triumph over the weak. Darwin even followed the Malthusian social program at times in rejecting human intervention on behalf of the weak, finding poor-laws and asylums “highly injurious to the race of man” and counterproductive to achieving the ultimate triumph of the strong.

In Social Darwinism, the dogma of non-interference was made complete in its rejection of typical religious sensibilities. For Malthus, suffering was a simple

fact of life and worked well on its own terms in controlling the population, without the government intervening and messing things up through acts of charity. For Darwin, life was like a ship, which evolved through the everyday struggles of self-preservation and found no need for creative planning or outside orchestration; thus, exorcizing the presence of God from any meaningful role in the development of humankind.

The third chapter considers the secular bias in the modern construction of history by examining some of its seminal works: Voltaire's *Essai sur le moeurs*, Raynal's *L'Histoire philosophique et politique*, Michelet's *Histoire de la Révolution française*, Hume's *History of England*, and Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Voltaire, Raynal, and Michelet clearly developed their "philosophical history" in accordance with their own enlightened bias against the Judeo-Christian tradition, or the religious sensibilities of most people. They conceived of history as leading western civilization in a teleological manner toward the present era of enlightened culture and leaving the intolerance and bigotry of the church behind. The Middle Ages was deprecated as a time of ignorance and darkness, filled with papal intrigues and superstitious dogma, with little appreciation for the overall mission of the church or its positive impact upon culture. The Italian Renaissance helped rescue Europe from the "Dark Ages" by diminishing the role of the Judeo-Christian tradition and rediscovering the tolerant and philosophical roots of western civilization in Graeco-Roman culture. England set the standard for enlightened government in the modern world and helped inspire its ascension in France during the Third Republic. Throughout this history, the *philosophes* treated the church as the great enemy of the French people and expressed no real appreciation or understanding of the decisive and all-important role that Puritans, Jansenists, and other religious groups played in developing the modern concept of government and social norms.

The great English historians displayed a more complex and objective approach to their analysis than the *philosophes*, although the bias against the church remained and tainted the general drift of their historiography. Hume made the most concerted effort in striving to preserve objectivity and was willing to give fundamental credit to the Puritans for establishing modern liberties in England, but his praise remained grudging in failing to link the social upheaval with distinct religious ideas. He was too much of an atheist to respect the importance of Puritan theology in fueling the change and too much of a Royalist and a Tory to appreciate the Puritan Revolution as a necessary birth pang in producing the new order. He preferred to work within time-tested traditions of the country and participate in a slow, gradual evolution of existing social institutions than create a radical upheaval or a whole new world. Gibbon also was a Tory and tended to lose objectivity

when discussing religious zealotry and its penchant for creating theological disputes and bringing unrest to social order over metaphysical ideas. He wrote his famous book on *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* with the distinct enlightened agenda of deprecating the Christian religion for destroying the greatness of a superior culture and replacing it with a millennium of fanatical piety and hierarchical corruption. At times, he protested the accusation of bias from the Christian community and said that he merely wanted to explain the collapse of Rome from a horizontal perspective, pointing to “secondary causes” as the reason for the ascension of the church in society, but it was hard to disguise the underlying bias. Even this “objective” and “secular” approach had a surreptitious way of making the supernatural accounts of the past and those who believed them look fanatical in explaining the “miraculous” growth and ultimate triumph of the church.

The fourth chapter discusses the development of a secular or mechanistic view of the universe in science and the subjective nature of this interpretation. The Puritans supplied an early impetus toward the secular point of view by dividing the study of nature from ultimate questions and so provided a pretext for others to proceed further and reduce life to naturalistic explanations. René Descartes presented the classical statement of the viewpoint by filling space with a plenum or body-like extension and rejecting the free movement of objects within the machine—shutting out any room for divine presence or activity in the world. Many sons of the Enlightenment promoted this mechanistic view of the universe in the name of science, but went beyond their limited, metaphysical purview in establishing the concept, and often misused the physics of Isaac Newton to do so. Newton clearly had nothing to do with it. He explicitly rejected Descartes’ mechanistic concept of the universe and its view of God as a “retired engineer.” He thought of God as present throughout the world and acting upon bodies as a spiritual force, even performing miracles on extraordinary occasions, unconstrained by the “eternal laws” of a “cosmic machine.” Newton’s metaphysical explanation was ignored by the sons of the Enlightenment, who preferred to misuse his physics and promote a secular view of life in terms of a self-sufficient machine. Their concept only ascended to the forefront of intelligentsia as a cultural bias, rather than a strict scientific judgment or direct empirical vision of the world. The sons of the Enlightenment were unable to demonstrate their point of view in any definite way since the relation or mechanism of causality ever remained beyond observation. David Hume provided the most scintillating criticism of the viewpoint by showing how the precise relation of the causal nexus escapes our rational capacity or empirical analysis, placing a question mark on all possible metaphysical explanations in general, whether the *philosophes’* or Newton’s. His analysis led to a more subjective understanding



of human knowledge and recognition in the postmodern world that any secular interpretation of physics is little more than a metaphysical leap into the unknown, based on the subjective, non-scientific preferences of culture. This postmodern analysis runs counter to the secular bias of Quantum theory, which attempts to replace mystical forces in physics and interpret attraction and repulsion as an exchange of particles. Quantum theory seeks to replace Newton's mystical force of "gravity" with a "graviton" in trying to explain the problem of action at a distance.

The fifth chapter addresses the age-old problem of innocent suffering and its role in exorcizing the presence of God from the modern understanding of the world. The Puritans embodied the religious perspective of the old school by interpreting horrific events as visible signs of divine displeasure in accordance with the book of Deuteronomy, bringing judgment upon the wicked and serving as a warning to God's people about fulfilling their mission in the world. This perspective was developed out of the Puritan emphasis upon OT Scripture and its fundamental view of history, but it always lived in tension with other aspects of the Reformed tradition, consonant with the theology of John Calvin, which saw the ways of God as mysterious and beyond human scrutiny. Even the OT was unable to support a simple version of the old theory without some form of reservation or protest from those who saw certain injustices in life as Job, or the preacher of the assembly in Ecclesiastes. For many people in Europe, the Lisbon earthquake of 1755 proved to be a pivotal point in questioning the basic view of life in the OT, with Voltaire wondering about the goodness of creation, John Mitchell limiting the discussion of tragic events to the phenomenological level, and much of the world wanting practical advice to avoid future catastrophes that dispensed with philosophical debates over theodicy or measures to propitiate divine wrath altogether. Even the Jewish community dispensed with the OT explanation for the most part, particularly after the Holocaust. The majority considered the Holocaust a unique event in human history, which had no rational explanation or possible basis within the sins of the Jewish people, ending all future belief in the providential dealings of God. Their faith imploded over the Epicurean triangle, finding the existence of YHWH incompatible with the magnitude of the evil. They rejected any possible solution or justification, including the emphasis of so many modern theologians in the Jewish and Christian community upon the presence of God in the midst of suffering.

Chapter six speaks of a more coercive form of secularism in the realm of politics and centers upon its development in America. This secular mentality first developed out of the early English Deists, French *philosophes*, and their disdain for revealed religion. They considered Christian theological tenets as offering little more than metaphysical mumbo-jumbo and containing no clear relevance to the

practical and moral needs of society. Thomas Jefferson followed their basic understanding in his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, referring to religion as a “matter which lies solely between Man & his God,” calling for a “wall of separation between church and state,” and thereby placing the church on the outskirts of political power and promoting a secular vision of life through the state that was consonant with the Deist concept of human autonomy. In his more militant moments, Jefferson thought of the church as creating turmoil in society and spilling “oceans of blood” over petty doctrinal issues and worked to eliminate its influence on society. He hoped the future would undergo a “quiet euthanasia” of Christianity and worked to this end as the father of public education in America, eliminating Christian instruction from the classroom and promoting Graeco-Roman antecedents as the real foundation of modern culture, not the Judeo-Christian tradition. However, this “darker” side of Jefferson clearly lived in tension with other views of religion that he expressed periodically throughout his career. The other side of Jefferson thought of religion in different terms as providing a moral foundation for society. He expressed this conviction most famously in his Declaration of Independence, where he found the fundamental purpose of government serving the God-given rights of natural revelation, just like John Locke. He also wanted to promote religion at times by enacting Puritan-type traditions like fasting, prayer, and Sabbatarian laws while serving as a legislator and governor in the state of Virginia. These and other illustrations demonstrate that Jefferson was not a simple monolith on the issue of church/state relations.

Chapter seven discusses the subsequent relation between church and state in America, and the eventual emergence of the strict separation concept of secularism as the fundamental paradigm. The Constitution rejected the establishment of a national church in America, but its most literal and historical reading made no explicit provision for creating a broader separation between the government and religion. It was not until 1947 that the United States Supreme Court decided to deconstruct the First Amendment in accordance with the new hermeneutical principles of the day and consecrate Jefferson’s letter to the Danbury Baptist Association as the authoritative interpretation of the text in calling for a “wall” of separation between church and state, which is “high” and “impregnable.” Since then, the Court experienced considerable difficulty in maintaining its wall and ended up reducing the metaphor of a “wall” to a “line,” which is “blurred, indistinct, and variable.” Lately, the Court has displayed a willingness to accommodate religious expression in public places, but it remains steadfast in forwarding the basic secular agenda of rejecting any “endorsement of religion” in the state and thinking of the government as serving a “secular purpose.” It typically uses an *argumentum ex ignorantia* to dismiss the importance of religion and label its own values as secular,

without displaying any serious historical analysis or philosophical justification for doing so beyond the will to power. The *argumentum ex ignorantia* asks the people to forget any connection of the secular establishment with religious history or ideology in order to privilege the values of the Court as an essential part of the nation and outside the fanatical realm of religion. The Court enters the cultural war on behalf of secularity in an attempt to denude life of religious meaning.

To develop the sample of secular forces in sufficient detail, the study has chosen to neglect other significant areas of research that are worth exploring. Some of these other forces will receive a fuller analysis in the next volume of the series. They are listed below to offer a more comprehensive view of what remains undeveloped in the present volume and provide a fuller appreciation and anticipation of what is forth coming in the series on modern secularity. The first three examples speak of a new intellectual reality; the next four a growing bias or subjective way of looking at the world; and the last one a more coercive social or political force. Here is what the reader might anticipate in the next volume:

One, the modern world has witnessed the rise of skepticism in the philosophical community regarding religious matters, silencing God-talk as no longer a part of the discipline. Immanuel Kant showed the limits of reason by rejecting any definitive proof or knowledge of God and treating metaphysical or noumenal ideas as unsubstantiated presuppositions. Ludwig Wittgenstein went even further and placed anything outside the concrete world of existence as defying the logic of language and off-limits for rigorous professional philosophy. He begins his *Tractatus* saying, “The World is all that is the case”; He ends by dismissing all metaphysical questions as nonsensical, “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.”<sup>17</sup>

Two, the plausibility of former religious expressions has collapsed under the weight of scientific and historical scrutiny of the literal message.<sup>18</sup> The story of Adam and Eve lost credibility to the Darwinian explanation of human origins; the story of Noah to the discovery of the Gilgamesh Epic as its basis in the myth-making world of the ancient Mesopotamian region. German higher criticism spoke of the non-Mosaic origins of the Pentateuch, the mythological nature of biblical miracles, and the many contradictions within the Synoptic Gospels,<sup>19</sup> forcing the liberal side of the church to compromise its message and the conservative side to live on the fringes of respectable society and modern scholarship. Unlike many other religions, the message of Christianity was based upon events that transpired in space and time (Lk 3:1–3, 1 Cor 15) and lost credibility when its history was challenged or reduced to a myth.<sup>20</sup>

Three, the need for religion tended to dissipate as dependence upon technology increased. One notices this progression when studying religiosity in various types of societies. “For example, the proportion of the population that attends

Church (or the equivalent) at least weekly is 44 percent for agrarian, 25 for industrial and 20 for post-industrial societies. Those who ‘pray each day’ declines from 52 percent in agrarian to 34 in industrial to 26 in post-industrial societies.”<sup>21</sup> Voas notes that nineteen of the twenty most technological nations are “becoming increasingly secular,” with the lone exception of America.<sup>22</sup> The increase in technological know-how leads society to search for answers within their expertise, rather than hope for some mystical or miraculous intervention from beyond. It causes them to fight HIV/AIDS within the laboratory, rather than speak of divine wrath and promote acts of penance in the hope of appeasing the heavens, like the Flagellants of the Middle Ages.<sup>23</sup>

Four, the rise of psychology or emphasis upon the inner self tended to negate the potency of outside powers—whether spiritual or nonspiritual. Sigmund Freud dismissed religious ideas as the mere product of illusions that develop from the “strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind.” He thought these ideas correspond to the helpless longing of children, looking for a benevolent father to protect their lives from the brutal realities of the world, except extending this childish need to the rest of life.<sup>24</sup> Today, postmodernists follow this psychoanalytic program to its final destination and erase the distinction between the subject and object. Charles Taylor says that this modern/postmodern self shapes its own reality and completely “buffers” itself against outside influences in the form of spirits or causal forces in general. No external agent or Platonic form constitutes its reality. The individual is left to explore the inner realm of thought and feeling, developing a “rich vocabulary of interiorization” in the process, unrelated to external objective knowledge.<sup>25</sup>

Five, nominalism of the late medieval period developed a dichotomy between God and the world. In so emphasizing the absolute power of God (*potentia dei absoluta*), the world lost much of its relation to God. It became the product of a capricious divine will and no longer revealed anything essential about a God who was able to produce something much different from what was created through ordained power (*potentia ordinata*). Objects lost their Platonic forms and received only capricious names (*nomina*) that possessed no ultimate or revelatory meaning. There was no evidence of God’s existence or essence in the world.<sup>26</sup>

Six, NT Christianity tended to limit its message to matters of personal faith and conviction, and leave legal rigor or the specifics of social living outside the parameters of the faith (Gal 5:1, 2; Rom 14:23; Col 3:23). Early Christianity rejected legalism in personal living and spurned any specific application of its message to political or social concerns (Jn 18:36; Rom 13:1–5; 1 Cor 7:20–24), leaving much space for its people to live their own individual lives before God, or separate their lives from specific religious demands in accordance with the pattern of western civilization.<sup>27</sup> Secular tendencies prevailed in the west under the space

of its dominant religion—a belief system that extolled freedom in its foundational documents and continues to live in marked contrast with many other religious expressions, which emphasize the complete nature of their revelation, the social direction of their message, and the process of legalization in developing practical application, stressing orthopraxy over orthodoxy.

Seven, the “liberal progressive” spirit has risen in popular culture. It thinks of traditional religion as based on the unconfirmed reports of people who were more ignorant than us.<sup>28</sup> It tends to champion the “new” and “improved,” while denigrating the old as “backward,” including the “superstitions” of the past.<sup>29</sup> It sees human culture evolving in a non-Darwinian manner toward higher forms of life, often pointing to the advances of technology as the paradigm for believing that all areas of life make similar progress toward the future. Its spirit follows the dictum of George Hegel: “World history [is] the world court of judgment.”<sup>30</sup>

Eight, “liberal toleration” has triumphed in modern culture with its tendency to dismiss theology or specific religious confession as a form of divisiveness and bigotry. The common schools and many American universities followed this trend at the end of the nineteenth century toward the nontheological, nonsectarian policy of inclusion to boost enrollment and eventually evolved into secular schools that tended to undermine and sometimes demean conservative believers.<sup>31</sup> Liberal toleration has a commission to fight bigotry, or live in the problematic paradox of not tolerating intolerance.<sup>32</sup> Societalization means acceptance and elimination of cultural diversity, often undermining serious religious confession.<sup>33</sup> Hollywood might serve as a greater force of secularity in America than the government or the public school system in pushing liberal toleration, with its acceptance of diverse sexual expressions and other non-traditional values.

These are just some of the possibilities that come to mind when discussing the process of secularization. Instead of trying to discuss them all and the many other possible forces superficially, the study has chosen to examine in some depth a few examples that serve as representative types of secularity and provide a general survey of the subject in this manner. The typology should serve as its own *et cetera* in allowing the reader to fill in the gaps with other examples, which are often implied or specifically mentioned within the text as a part of the discussion.

## Notes

1. Mark Chaves, “Secularization as Declining Religious Authority,” *Social Forces* 72/3 (Mar. 1994): 749, 752–53, 756; Steve Bruce, *God is Dead: Secularization in the West* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 2; José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularization, Secularism,” in *Rethinking Secularism*, Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen

(eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 54–58; “Introduction,” in *Rethinking Secularism*, 10; Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007), 1–2, 15. The Catholic Church provided an important impetus toward the modern understanding by distinguishing the “secular” clergy serving the laity in local parishes from those cloistered in monasteries. “Introduction,” 8–9; Casanova, “The Secular, Secularization, Secularism,” 56. Steve Bruce shows in his work that the declining power of religion in society directly impacts individual expressions of faith. Secular social and political institutions produce secular citizens. *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 2.

2. Bryan Wilson, *Religion in Sociological Perspective* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 149.
3. Philip S. Gorski, “Historicizing the Secularization Debate: Church, State, and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ca. 1300 to 1700,” *American Sociological Review* 65/1 (2000): 138–39, 142.
4. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 508, 513–14.
5. Gorski, “Historicizing the Secularization Debate,” 140–41.
6. *Ibid.*, 139; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 513. It is apparent that the Christian Right has dissipated and lost the cultural wars. Christianity is becoming increasingly secular and losing its social voice. Bruce, *Secularization*, 157–58; 166–72.
7. David Voas, “The Rise and Fall of Fuzzy Fidelity in Europe,” *European Sociological Review* 25/2 (2009): 155–59, 167; David Voas and Alasdair Crockett, “Religion in Britain: Neither Believing nor Belonging,” *Sociology* 39/11 (2005): 11–16, 22–25; Bruce, *Secularization*, 15–19; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 437, 461, 508, 513, 828–29. There is a high correlation between attendance in some religious assemblies and the person’s religiosity. There is little evidence for any serious “believing without belonging” to a specific group. Laurence Iannaccone studied thirty-four countries, analyzing data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP) and found none of them experiencing a steady increase in church attendance. “Looking Backward: A Cross-National Survey of Religious Trends,” 1–44 (plus Tables and Graphs), [https://www.chapman.edu/research-and-institutions/economic-science-institute/\\_files/ifree-papers-and-photos/Iannaccone-Looking Backward-20082008.pdf](https://www.chapman.edu/research-and-institutions/economic-science-institute/_files/ifree-papers-and-photos/Iannaccone-Looking%20Backward-20082008.pdf); Bruce, *Secularization*, 15–16, 54, 83. Bruce summarizes the precipitous drop in attendance/affiliation in Europe. In Britain, a census was taken in 1851 indicating that between 40–60% of the people attended public worship, while today it is below 10%.

According to the Mannheim Eurobarometer, the percentage of the population attending church once a week or more often changed between 1970 and 1999 as follows: in France from 23 to 5 per cent; in Belgium from 52 to 10 per cent; in Holland from 41 to 14 per cent; in Germany from 29 to 15 per cent; in Italy from 56 to 39 per cent; and in Ireland from 91 to 65 per cent. The actual numbers matter less than the pattern. In no cases has there been a reversal of the decline. *Ibid.*, 9–10.

8. Casanova, “The Secular, Secularization, Secularism,” 64; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 527.
9. Bruce, *Secularization*, 160; George Gallup, Jr. and Jim Castelli, *The People’s Religion: American Faith in the 90’s* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1989), 6–7, 29, 36, 63; George Gallup, Jr. and Sarah Jones, *100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Research Center, 1989), 2, 4–5, 70–71, 175, 202, 206. Cf. Rodney Stark,

- What Americans Really Believe: New Findings from the Baylor Surveys of Religion* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2008), 9, 62–64, 73, 117. Many sociologists think that Gallup Polls inflate the numbers of Americans attending churches. Americans are more proud of their religiosity and might tend to exaggerate their participation to pollsters. Bruce, *Secularization*, 158–59.
10. PewResearchCenter, “America’s Changing Religious Landscape,” <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/05/12/americas-changing-religious-landscape/>.
  11. Gallup and Jones, *100 Questions and Answers*, 198ff.; Gallup and Castelli, *The People’s Religion*, 17, 265; Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe 1789–1970* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 134–35, 139, 143; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 424, 816. New Age religion received much publicity in the 1960s and 1970s and might account for two percent of the U.S. population, but its “spirituality” is weak. Most view yoga and meditation as a form of relaxation. Bruce, *Secularization*, 101–2, 112ff.
  12. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 144–45.
  13. Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons (trans.) (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958); Stephen Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009) chap. 5.
  14. Stephen Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation: The French Revolution, Nazi Germany, and International Communism* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014), 308–10; Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *German Ideology*, 5.247 (3.329); *Anti-Dühring*, 25.87 (20.87–88); *Das Kapital*, 35.270ff. (23.279ff.); “To Jenny Longuet” (April 11, 1881), 46.83 (35.179); Allen W. Wood, *Karl Marx* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 151–60, 251; Leszek Kołakowski, *Main Currents of Marxism*, P. S. Falla (trans.) (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 2005), 266–67; *Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: On Religion*, Reinhold Niebuhr (intro.) (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), xi–xiv. The works of Marx and Engels come from *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1975), and the parentheses refer to the German edition: *Werke* (Berlin: Dietz, 1964). Max Weber was much more honest than Marx and Engels. He had a tendency to agree with atheism but recognized the significance of religion and presented himself as a mystic or religious wannabe. Julius I. Loewenstein, *Marx and Marxism* (London, Boston, MA and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 121.
  15. John Hick, *An Interpretation of Religion* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 22.
  16. This is the title of Heiko Oberman’s famous book *Luther: Man between God and the Devil*, Eileen Walliser-Schwarzbart (trans.) (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1989). See pp. 106, 156; *Luther’s Works*, Pelikan (ed.) (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1958– ), 34.152–53, 164; Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975), 242–44.
  17. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (trans.) (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 5, 19, 25–26, 56–57, 69–71, 73–74 (1, 4.003, 4.113–16, 5.6–5.61, 6.36, 6.37–6.372, 6.42–6.422, 6.432, 7).
  18. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 12; Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 590.

19. E.g., Julius Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1973) 1–2, 293; David Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, George Eliot (trans.), Peter C. Hodgson (ed.) (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), xxviii, 84–85, 255–57, 279, 402–3, 477, 677.
20. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 191; Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 25–26, 51–52, 111.
21. Bruce, *Secularization*, 194.
22. David Voas, “The Continuing Secular Tradition,” in *The Role of Religion in Modern Societies* Detlef Pollack and Daniel V. A. Olson (eds.) (New York and London: Routledge, 2008), 29. Scholars from the nineteenth century also note the materialistic trend. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, John Oman (trans.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), 8–12; Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Henry Reeve, Francis Brown, and Phillipps Bradely (trans. and eds.) (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 2.136.
23. David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 116–17; Bruce, *Secularization*, 44.
24. Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, W. D. Robson-Scott (trans.), James Strachey (ed.) (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1964), 47.
25. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 41, 182–83, 539.
26. Berndt Hamm, *Promissio, Pactum, Ordinatio: Freiheit u. Selbstbindung Gottes, in d. Scholast. Gnadenlehre* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1977), 359; Erwin Iserloh, *Gnade und Eucharistie in der philosophische Theologie des Wilhelm von Ockham* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1956), 77; William Ockham, *Sent.*, I, d.17, q.1, E, T; q.5, E, F; d.47, q.1, D; II, q.19, O, P; III, q.1, U; IV, q.3, F, Q; *Quodl.* VI, q.1, a.2, c.1, 2. The works cited from Ockham are in *Opera Plurima* (Lugdini, 1494–96, Reprinted in London: Gregg Press, 1962); *Opera Philosophica et Theologica* (St. Bonaventure: St. Bonaventure University Press, 1967–82). Duns Scotus was the first to emphasize the dichotomy between *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata* within God and lost much of the purpose and meaning of what transpired in history. In contrast, theologians like Anselm could seek the reason why events transpired in history because of their belief in the necessity of those events as revealing God’s essence, not some capricious choice. Thus, his famous treatise *Cur deus homo*, or *Why God became a Man*. See also *Proslogion*, chaps. X and XI (PL 233–34).
27. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, Maurice Cranston (trans.) (New York: Penguin Books, 2006), 159–65.
28. Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, 39–40.
29. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 301.
30. George Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, H. B. Nisbet (trans.), Allen W. Wood (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 371 (340).
31. George M. Marsden, “The Soul of the American University—A Historical Overview,” in *The Secularization of the Academy*, George M. Marsden and Bradley J. Longfield (eds.) (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 35–37; *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Unbelief* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 254, 267, 365; Steven Green, “The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment,” *Brigham Law University Review*, 2008/2 (2008): 305–9; “The Blaine Amendment



Reconsidered,” *The American Journal of Legal History* 36/1 (Jan. 1992): 46–47. In 2006, a survey was conducted among college professors and found that 53 percent expressed negative feelings toward Evangelical Christians. Gary A. Tobin and Argeh K. Weinberg, *Profiles of the American University: Religious Beliefs & Behavior* (San Francisco and Roseville, CA: Institute for Jewish & Community Research, 2007), 15, 82–83.

32. This is the paradox of those who emphasize toleration. See John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, Robert Maynard Hutchins (ed.) (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978), 35.17–18.
33. Bruce, *Secularization*, 35, 49, 144–45.



**I.**

**The Spiritual Crisis of  
Early Capitalism**



# The Rise of Acquisitive Capitalism in France

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The modern world brought a challenge to the religious and ethical categories of the metaphysical past in understanding how life worked in the real world and evolved on its terms, apart from outside rational intervention or moral restraints. Many advocates of an early form of capitalism came to argue that the economy worked well through its natural laws, apart from the government interfering with the basic flow of commerce; that questionable motives like self-interest often worked for the benefit of society and fueled the economy, alleviating any religious onus to cleanse the world from sin; that value was best determined by the law of supply and demand, freeing society from moral considerations in finding a just price or wage. This new type of economic thinking suggested the possibility of interpreting life in general as a secular process. It found little need to follow a metaphysical standard or posit that a miraculous force is intervening in the course of things to provide the world with design, purpose, or direction, and allowed life to use its efficacious means of producing results, regardless of intent or foresight. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution looked to the economic insights of the early capitalists and thought of life developing in a similar manner through the happenstance of individual struggle or self-interest. Social Darwinism combined the new economic and biological theories, showing their mutual dependence and proclivity to excise the need for religious categories from the modern world. While some continued to use and merge the old religious terms with these theories, the new

type of capitalistic thinking in its most literal form showed little need for moral categories to correct the way life evolved on its terms, or interject the existence of God to meddle into the affairs of what worked best from its chaotic proclivities toward higher forms. The old religious categories proved ineffectual in describing or enhancing the actual processes of life in the real world. Hereafter the secular capitalists could justify pursuing their own self-interest, or struggling for their existence and amelioration without suffering any severe pangs from a moral or religious conscience, believing it all worked out in the grand scheme of things, apart from any antecedent design or individual intent and motive.

## Christian Altruism

Of course, there were other ways of understanding and deconstructing capitalism in the modern world. Max Weber, the great sociologist of the last century, devoted a couple of famous articles in 1904–5 to the subject, rejecting the Marxist propensity to reduce all ideology to materialistic interests and interpreting capitalism in terms of a religious calling—at least in the early stages of its maturation. His interpretation emphasized the importance of the “Protestant work ethic” as providing the spiritual matrix for the development of capitalism, highlighting its exhortation to spurn an idle and cloistered life of monastic contemplation and serve God within the community through one’s profession (*Beruf*) or calling in the business world. In particular, the Puritans embodied this “worldly asceticism” of modern capitalism by emphasizing Luther’s priesthood of the believers and its special calling of each believer to fulfill their mission within the “hustle and bustle” of everyday life. Their divines rejected any sacramental means of cheap grace in receiving forgiveness and obtaining a propitious standing before God and encouraged the faithful to find assurance through working hard within the community—the true and only sign of divine grace and election. They found salvation outside of religious rituals in active community engagement and considered idleness the root of all evil, even the idleness of religious speculation, contemplation, and devotion. They especially despised the rich of their community for squandering their lives on frivolous entertainment like “sporting or gaming,” exhorting them to repent of narcissistic pursuits and invest their time and capital in helping create a better world for others. The Puritans’ form of capitalism shunned a life of pursuing self-interests in exercises of individual religious piety or hedonistic amusements of self-indulgence, preferring their people to lead an austere life of self-discipline and pursue altruistic and utilitarian goals of useful service in improving the society, believing that God’s people were involved in a historical process of creating a better world for their children.<sup>1</sup>

The Puritans reflected the spirit of capitalism not merely through hard work or worldly asceticism—the hallmark of Weber’s treatment—but also through their willingness to surrender present day security, take risks, and create something new and better in the future. They believed that change was good, the future was good, and they possessed a manifest destiny before God to bring all good things to pass. They were part of a historical process that would culminate in the dawning of the Kingdom of God.<sup>2</sup>

This vision of capitalism is rooted in the Christian concept of altruism or self-sacrifice and presents a clear alternative to the typical acquisitive image of capitalism associated with modern secular times and its emphasis upon self-interest.<sup>3</sup> The difference is similar to the way in which Anders Nygren opposes two basic concepts of love in Paul and Plato within his classic, two-volume work on the subject, *Agape and Eros* (1930–36).<sup>4</sup> Following the analysis of Friedrich Nietzsche, he says that Christianity brought a “transvaluation” of ancient values through its central doctrine of *agapē* or self-sacrificing love, overturning the Graeco-Roman emphasis upon *eros* or self-love.<sup>5</sup> The original Pauline doctrine of *agapē* contradicted the *eros*-motif of Plato and the later schools of Platonism in the most uncompromising terms, even if the church ended up producing a synthesis between them in the course of time through the process of Hellenization.<sup>6</sup> *Eros* was “essentially and in principle self-love.”<sup>7</sup> *Eros* was an egocentric, acquisitive longing to possess an object of desire, motivated by the will to obtain individual *eudaemonia* or happiness through something valuable or worthy of esteem. The *eros*-motif of Neo-Platonism emphasized climbing a “ladder” upward to the heavenly realm in longing for complete union with the divine as the true object of human happiness.<sup>8</sup> The divine reality remained aloof from the process of history and encased within a self-satisfied state of blessed *eros*, while the soul remained entrapped within an imperfect state, longing to satisfy its needs and ascend toward the ultimate reality for its natural and complete fulfillment.<sup>9</sup>

Nygren argues that Paul rejected this concept of *eros* when he put forth *agapē* as the central teaching of Christianity and the cross of Christ as the clearest example of its sacrificial nature (Rom 5:6–8).<sup>10</sup> He says that *agapē* emphasizes the love of God and understands it as a creative act, which creates fellowship with others *ex nihilo*, “indifferent to value” in the objects of its affection and unmotivated by the attractiveness of others.<sup>11</sup> Human beings only reflect the divine image by creating new relationships in the same spontaneous manner and proceeding to love others outside their worth as neighbors or enemies.<sup>12</sup> *Agapē* does not look for some divine spark of value within others as if finding something worthy of esteem.<sup>13</sup> It does not even long for God as the most satisfying object (*Summum Bonum*) of all as if seeking to obtain something from God.<sup>14</sup> “Agape recognizes no kind of self-love as legitimate” and “spells judgment on the life that centres round the ego and its interests.”<sup>15</sup>

Self-love is the natural perversity of human beings, and *agapē* requires the death of self-centeredness to find the true self within the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>16</sup>

According to Nygen, this NT concept of *agapē* was corrupted through the pervasive influence of Hellenism in the church, and the chief culprit for infecting the Christian faith with *eros* was Augustine due to the enormity of his stature and influence.<sup>17</sup> Much like the Neo-Platonists, Augustine thought of love as acquisitive or directed toward the object of its longing, with humans finding their ultimate fulfillment in possessing God as the *Summum Bonum*.<sup>18</sup> Augustine took this concept and forged an unholy alliance with the biblical concept of love. Neo-Platonism was only “able to show him the object of his love and longing, but not the way to gain it,”<sup>19</sup> forcing Augustine to combine divine grace or *agapē* with *eros* to obtain the ability to ascend unto the heavens and lay hold of God.<sup>20</sup> His entire *Confessions* testify to this synergistic concept of salvation, where divine grace liberates him from the “wrong love” or *cupiditas* of worldly existence and allows him to ascend unto the heavens with a “right love” or *caritas*, oriented towards the things of God.<sup>21</sup> In Augustine, love never sacrifices itself and always seeks its own, even if its own good is found within God, the ultimate ground of human happiness or *eudaemonia*.<sup>22</sup> Augustine only equivocates at this point when he treats self-love (*amor sui*) as the sin of pride (*superbia*),<sup>23</sup> but in these places he speaks of an ego-centric love of self, which tries to live in autonomy from divine grace, much like the teaching of Pelagius, which Augustine so unequivocally opposed and condemned in a series of works and councils.<sup>24</sup> Most often the love of God and love of self are related;<sup>25</sup> “For the self, Augustine would have us love is never the self in itself, but always the self in God;”<sup>26</sup> Without the love of God, self-love would be nothing but self-hatred.

The human mind is so constituted that it is never forgetful of itself, never fails to understand itself, never fails to love itself. But because one who hates another is anxious to hurt him, it is not unreasonable to describe the human mind as “hating” itself when it hurts itself. Certainly it does not know that it wills itself evil, for it does not think that what it wills is harmful. But it does will evil all the same, since it does will what is harmful. Hence the Scripture: “Who loveth iniquity, hateth his own soul.” So that if a man knows how to love himself, he loves God; but if he does not love God, even granting that self-love which is naturally instinct within him, yet he may be described not inappropriately as hating himself, since he does what is inimical to himself and persecutes himself like an enemy.<sup>27</sup>

Let us, then love not ourselves, but Him; and in feeding His sheep, let us be seeking the things that are his, not the things which are our own. For in some inexplicable way, I know not what, every one who loves himself, and not God, loves not himself; and whoever loves God, and not himself, he it is that loves himself.<sup>28</sup>



Of course, Augustine was circumspect enough to understand the difficulty of discerning one's motives, never knowing for certain throughout his career whether he was succumbing to the temptation of pride or truly loving his neighbor and self with true *caritas* unto God.<sup>29</sup>

## Jansenism

The Augustinian tradition provided some openings for those who wished to speak of self-love positively, but self-denial and self-sacrifice remained the central teaching of the church in light of the NT's emphasis on the suffering of Christ and his call to discipleship (Lk 9:23–25). The Puritan form of altruistic capitalism certainly worked within the basic NT theme of leading a life dedicated to self-sacrifice in serving the community, and even the early form of acquisitive capitalism found its emphasis upon self-love an unsettling aspect of the real world and recognized a higher calling of virtue in serving others as the fundamental message of the gospel. This moral concern was particularly acute among the Jansenists, who provided much of the early inspiration for acquisitive capitalism. The Jansenists were a sectarian group of Catholics, who emphasized the Augustinian doctrine of sin and grace in northern France and southern Netherlands. They were faithful to this aspect of his theology, but most of them were less empathetic with his ideas on *eros* and thought that true Christian piety involved the annihilation of the ego and deflected any reference to their person, preferring to substitute the indefinite French pronoun *on* and refer to their group as a whole when espousing a certain set of beliefs.<sup>30</sup> Blaise Pascal found the word “I” or “mine” hateful to Christian sensibilities and preferred to annihilate himself in looking to find true happiness within the God of all glory and grace.<sup>31</sup> Pasquier Quesnel contrasted “charity” with “self-love” throughout his comments on Paul's great chapter on love in 1 Corinthians 13. Charity “labours to forget her-self,” while “self-love, always intent on her own interests, forgets those of God and her neighbor, . . . always under the agitation of her own passions, . . . always ready to take fire against her brother upon the least occasion.” He thought self-love would not survive the eschaton for “no-thing will remain of that, but what may serve to torment the damned.”<sup>32</sup> However, this emphasis upon self-sacrifice presented the Jansenists with a spiritual crisis when turning to analyze the ways of the present world and recognizing the effectual nature of self-interest in stimulating its everyday state of affairs. This meant that the real world of economic and social relations seemed to work on different principles than the simple demands of Christian piety, creating a dichotomy between faith and reason for those Jansenists who accepted the acquisitive nature

of everyday existence and its role in stimulating intercourse and exchange. Eventually, many of those who suffered under the strain became more secular in the course of time and found it necessary to abandon the ideal world altogether, often embracing the way things happen to be in the real world of avarice and selfishness and leaving God-talk to the irrelevant metaphysical language of the past.

The earliest forms of this capitalistic system provided a path toward secularism by wrestling with religious scruples, displaying the equivocal judgment of the church towards self-interest, and leaving reason with more space to exercise an autonomous skepticism toward the faith. These tendencies are already seen within the works of Pierre Nicole (1625–1695), an early advocate of acquisitive capitalism and zealous apologist for the Jansenists. Nicole promoted the cause of the Jansenists by helping to edit their polemical works and produce with Antoine Arnauld some pro-Jansenist tracts defending Augustinian theology and its application to contemporary issues inside and outside the church. His most lasting contribution was a series of essays, entitled *Essais de morale*, which covered a whole range of moral, social, and political topics and helped promote future interest in a burgeoning genre of literature upon Christian living.

His *Essais de morale* is particularly important since it contains many elements of early acquisitive capitalism and must be considered a significant impetus in stimulating the movement, if not its founding document.<sup>33</sup> In *Essais de morale*, Nicole follows the Augustinian emphasis upon the total depravity of human beings, stressing the impurity of their motives in light of Adam's fall into sin.<sup>34</sup> He thinks of humankind as so depraved that desire (*cupidité*) and self-interest (*amour-propre*) have replaced the noble motive of charity (*charité*) in determining how human beings function in society and calculate their actions.<sup>35</sup> Humans present only an outward appearance of lofty motives and great humility when offering their services for the community to mask their true underlying desires, which usually long for the esteem of others, even when performing the most philanthropic endeavors.<sup>36</sup> Even so, inward motivations make little outward or practical difference in society. Both charity and self-interest engage in the same types of activities and carry the same effect in causing people to act civil, kind, just, and honest. Self-interest recognizes the need to treat others in a merciful and just manner as much as charity if it wants to remain in good standing within the community.<sup>37</sup>

If charity extends its benefits to those of whom it expects nothing, even to enemies alike, but it only regards their good, and not its own interest, self-interest does the same, because it knows that the more the benefits appear disinterested and exempt from all need for investigation, the more they attract a general affection, by the hope they give everyone in order to receive in like manner.<sup>38</sup>

“Enlightened” self-interest or cupidity lives in a reciprocal relationship and only gives to receive goods and services from others, but this is all that is necessary for society to function. It can serve as the basis of all human commerce, circulating and exchanging goods and services in meeting the needs of each other, without resorting to acts of charity.<sup>39</sup>

Because of this observation, Nicole finds it unnecessary to impose a religious or moral order upon others in society and develops a *laissez-faire* attitude toward the economy. He might condemn self-interest as an inward vice and corruption in the eyes of God, but he also remains convinced of its utility in the everyday workings of the social network, as long as its excesses are regulated or managed by the government when it becomes “unenlightened” or turns into a “wild animal,” “full of cupidity.”<sup>40</sup> In treating social morality in this cavalier manner, his approach presented a tension between the admonitions of the Christian faith and the practical realities of worldly existence, bringing the charge of Pyrrhonism or skepticism against him. The obvious dichotomy between the two realms was disconcerting to many of his critics, but he remained firm in his convictions and faithful to the authority of Scripture and the church—more willing than most to distinguish faith and reason, engage in open and honest discussions about issues, and recognize the limits of human sagacity in probing these and other questions.<sup>41</sup>

The basic themes of Nicole’s concept of capitalism must have resonated within much of the Jansenist movement for the same themes are found in several leading Jansenist authors at the time. Jean Domat (1625–1696), the renowned French jurist, was a friend of Pascal and sympathetic to the spiritual and theological mission of Port-Royal. In his works, he makes some capitalist-type comments like Nicole, maintaining that self-interest (*amour-propre*) brings about positive results in society; fear promotes obedient subjects; avarice stimulates the economy, and pride and the love of luxury engender “most of the progress in the arts and sciences.” One might think that self-interest and its many vices would tend to destroy the social fabric of human relations, but divine providence can bring good out of evil and use the devices of humankind to serve its purposes; in this case, creating a bond in society of mutual dependency out of selfishness in meeting the needs of each other.<sup>42</sup> Domat follows Nicole in this regard and creates the same division between the temporal and the spiritual realms to justify a policy of restraint in trying to cleanse the world from sin. The heavy-handed measures of government only become necessary when passions no longer prove useful in serving the community and proceed toward excessive or criminal behaviors in defrauding and pillaging one’s neighbor.<sup>43</sup>

Another good example of early acquisitive capitalism was Pierre de Boisguilbert (1646–1714). He was educated at the Petites Écoles of Port-Royal and continued expressing the religious and cultural sentiments of the Jansenists throughout his life,

finding particular inspiration in the writings of Pierre Nicole.<sup>44</sup> His writings display the dominant themes of Nicole and early acquisitive capitalism in emphasizing the pervasive nature of individual self-interest in commerce and its “reciprocal utility” in bringing about harmony within society.<sup>45</sup> However, unlike Nicole and Domat, he brings a fuller and more rigorous discussion of specific economic issues to the movement and receives considerable praise from later economists like the physiocrats for discussing and forwarding the “advantage of the freedom of trade,” the “advances required for useful work,” the “role or expenditure” or circulation of wealth, and so many other proto-capitalistic themes.<sup>46</sup> Much like the physiocrats he thinks of the universe as a perfect machine, with a “natural state” of optimal equilibrium, where money and wealth circulate in a liberal and perpetual movement, investing in the economy and exchanging hands, creating equilibrium by giving to some who lack and taking from others who possess a surplus.<sup>47</sup> In this natural state, the government has no special role to play in developing the fundamental rules of the game and finds its place relegated to a subordinate role of managing what is given in nature. Boisguilbert thinks that any heavy-handed regulation of the market place and burdensome system of taxation only serves to disrupt the flow of nature and cause problems for everyone, especially those at the bottom and edges of society. It is not government policies but free trade and free competition that neutralize extreme fluctuations and prevent disequilibrium within the market.<sup>48</sup> No miraculous intervention is needed from the heavens above or the earth below. As long as nature is “left alone” to the laws of secondary causality, divine providence will keep the equilibrium in place, and everyone will receive the necessities of life.<sup>49</sup>

The fissure between faith and reason grew in the course of time as the world seemed to function on its principles of causality, without any need for miraculous intervention, and function in a way that defied and disturbed the simple religious categories of the church. No longer was reason employed as a mere servant of faith, following the medieval dictum of Augustine and Anselm (*fides quaerens intellectum*) and using its resources to substantiate what was already believed; but reason became an autonomous avenue of truth or skepticism that might question the faith and eventually abandon the faith, proceeding from the self-reliance of Deism to the unbelief of atheism and secularism.

## Pierre Bayle

Leading the way toward a more independent and skeptical use of reason was a Huguenot refugee by the name of Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), author of the single most popular work of the eighteenth century, *Dictionnaire historique et critique*

(1696). Bayle exercised much influence over the *philosophes* of the Enlightenment in leading them to question the authority of priests and dogmatic rational formulas of theology in the name of religious toleration. He also exercised considerable influence over important proto-capitalists like Bernard Mandeville, who used Bayle's concept of faith and reason to question the wisdom of imposing ascetic or altruistic Christian standards on others when the economy often employed "private vices" to produce "public benefits" for society.<sup>50</sup> Both Bayle and Mandeville remained pious Christians in the midst of their doubts and continued to submit their ultimate understanding unto the revelation of God, but they also were rigorous enough in their application of reason to represent its results with integrity, admitting a number of problems in regard to their faith, causing distress within their souls and leading some to abandon the faith altogether.

Bayle's skepticism traverses a whole range of topics and issues within his famous *Dictionnaire*, making it difficult for the reader to miss this fundamental disposition of the author. In his more impious moments, he dismisses the typical religious appeal to divine providence as eschewing a serious response to the problem of evil in the world and questions the possibility of constructing a credible theodicy that truly addresses the problems of critics. He also questions the standard cosmological proofs of rational piety in the same context, finding them ultimately unconvincing in their attempt to establish the existence of God through the rigors of philosophical analysis.<sup>51</sup> Usually, he finds solace within the authority of special revelation and the grace of God and deprecates the power of human sagacity to probe the secrets of the Almighty. Only on certain occasions does he risk his source of solace and speak of the Scripture with the same candor and critical analysis as other matters of natural philosophy and worldly concern. The most infamous occasion was an article on "David," which he had to amend in later editions due to the public outcry. In the original article, he speaks of David in Machiavellian terms, showing the unscrupulous and "exceedly wicked" means he used in establishing his kingdom—all to reassure present-day monarchs about the impossibility of following "strict moralists" in exercising their office.<sup>52</sup> Here he thinks much like a proto-capitalist in recognizing the societal benefit of unseemly motives and actions and goes on to speak of self-interest in much the same way as a Jansenist. For example, he insists on some occasions that atheists can act as good and moral citizens since people tend to seek honor in their daily lives and have no need of God to motivate them in finding recognition among their fellow citizens. To substantiate the point, Bayle cites Augustine's reference to "pagans" who act from self-interest (*l'amour-propre*) in their worldly lives as committing "glorious sins" when accomplishing mighty and magnificent feats.<sup>53</sup> In fact, Bayle finds humans, in general, to be motivated by the "love of praise, the

fear of disgrace, the natural temper, punishments and rewards in the magistrates hands,” and other like-passions.<sup>54</sup> While true virtue emanates from the love of God, self-interest and other vices of depraved humanity are sometimes more useful in promoting the welfare of the state than the strict and austere virtues of Christian piety.<sup>55</sup> Of course, Bayle and the early capitalists give ultimate credit to divine providence, which can make the wicked deeds of human depravity serve the good purposes of society,<sup>56</sup> but they all seem to feel a certain vexation within their souls in recognizing the disturbing reality of the world and its vice-laden *modus operandi*.

Outwardly, Bayle lets none of this disturb his faith. For the most part, Bayle tries to remain triumphant in his profession and insulate it from criticism by making religion a matter of the heart and claiming that reason cannot measure or penetrate its mysteries.<sup>57</sup> In this context, he finds it necessary to give up the pretenses of philosophical hubris and endless rational disputes to find solace within the miraculous power of divine grace and enter the kingdom of God, just like a child.<sup>58</sup> Here he resorts to his Reformed understanding of faith with its emphasis on the irresistible grace of God and the total inability of human beings to find God or penetrate divine mysteries through their own capacities, making a great divide between faith and reason.<sup>59</sup> Only God can reveal God; only revelation can provide final answers. Otherwise, grace would not be grace. This position might limit his ability to offer a critical analysis of faith and reform its beliefs and practices, but it also liberates his philosophical musings from serving the dogma of the church and allows for some open-ended analysis of questions, knowing that the limitations of reason can never damage or destroy what is most sacred to him, even when it entertains some disturbing thoughts.

## French Authors

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, many French authors became obsessed with the dark side of human nature and the disturbing reality that much of human activity was motivated by baser passions and dominated by self-interest.<sup>60</sup> Among the earliest representatives of this genre, none captured a larger audience than François de La Rochefoucauld’s literary masterpiece *Maximes* (1665), which endured and developed a number of editions, alterations, and additions during his lifetime. In the work, he finds human beings completely self-absorbed or centered around the “assertiveness, acquisitiveness, and aggrandizement of the ego.”<sup>61</sup> He says self-love is a “part of every aspect and circumstance of life.”<sup>62</sup> “We would rather

run ourselves down than not speak of ourselves at all.”<sup>63</sup> “Whatever fine words we may apply to our affections, they all too often derive from selfishness and vanity.”<sup>64</sup>

La Rochefoucauld’s dark view of humankind works within the same Augustinian understanding of total depravity as the Jansenists.<sup>65</sup> He sees humans as fallen from the original design of creation and filled with inward corruption or *concupiscentia*, tainting all their activities and permeating their body, soul, and spirit, just like this Catholic tradition.<sup>66</sup> He says, “We should often be ashamed of our noblest actions if the world but knew all the motives that helped shape them.”<sup>67</sup> “We can say of all our virtues what an Italian poet has said of virtues in women, that it is seldom more than the art of appearing virtuous.”<sup>68</sup> “[Our] virtues are swallowed up by self-interest as rivers are lost in the sea.”<sup>69</sup>

In this work, La Rochefoucauld thinks of self-love (*amour-propre*) as refracted into a whole array of diverse passions that serve its one singular interest.<sup>70</sup> These passions are produced incessantly within the human heart and interpreted as “varying temperatures of the blood,” stimulating and controlling every aspect of life in a material and self-serving manner.<sup>71</sup> In fact, he often relates love to the self-interest of *eros* by speaking of it as a passionate, romantic, and capricious feeling that simply strikes the human heart with its arrow. He excuses the indiscretions of its victims from personal responsibility, claiming that humans have no will-power to withstand its corporeal lusts and self-serving desires.<sup>72</sup> Humans have no spiritual ability to transcend this material world and experience a pure love that exists outside their passions.<sup>73</sup> They can never separate “personal” or “mutual gain” from developing a friendship with another person, and even find the “misfortunes of our dearest friends...something not entirely displeasing.”<sup>74</sup>

Of course, many considered La Rochefoucauld’s portrait of the human condition horrid and pointed to the many good deeds individuals perform every day in society, but he rejected this rejoinder as shallow and remained skeptical and disillusioned about the true motivations of most people throughout the various editions of his work. He thought it was necessary to probe deeply within the human *psyché* in a Freudian-like manner to find the darker and more disturbing truth about human nature.<sup>75</sup> Through this psychoanalytic process, La Rochefoucauld sought to unveil the ugly, insidious truth about most people, finding them all filled with hypocritical and ulterior motives, even while standing for justice, seeming humble, exhibiting courage, and promoting philanthropic causes. He says, “We give praise only that we may get it”; “We refuse praise from a desire to be praised twice”; “We behave politely to be treated politely, and to be considered polite”; “We help others to make sure they will help us under similar circumstances.”<sup>76</sup> He defines humility as a “stratagem of pride” employed to bring domination over

others; gratitude as a way of obtaining greater benefits; and magnanimity as the “noblest means of gaining praise.”<sup>77</sup>

The emphasis upon self-interest took a more decided turn toward secularism in the eighteenth century among the *philosophes* and reached its most strident expression in the atheistic and materialistic philosophy of Claude Adrien Helvétius (1715–1771), a Parisian-born stalwart of the Encyclopedists, who represented the extreme edges of their philosophy. Helvétius embodied much of *philosophes*’ vitriol toward the church, accusing its priests of subjecting the people to their power, blaming them for all the intolerance and ignorance in society as peddlers of metaphysical dogma, and charging them with the destruction of the state by enslaving the king to their good pleasure.<sup>78</sup> His most caustic work was *De l’esprit* or *Essays on the Mind*, published in July of 1758. The *philosophes* failed to rally behind the work, believing Helvétius was premature in publishing its controversial opinions, even if they sympathized with much of its spirit and most of its ideas.<sup>79</sup> The Parlement and the Sorbonne immediately condemned the work upon its publication for promoting irreligion, forcing Helvétius several times to retract his temerity for publishing the book in the first place despite receiving prior approval.<sup>80</sup> The church spelled out the charges as “decimating the foundations of the Christian religion,” “adopting the detestable doctrine of materialism,” “destroying the dignity of man,” “annihilating the first notions of justice and virtue,” “substituting for sound moral doctrine [an emphasis upon] interest, passions, pleasures,” “favoring atheists, deists, and all types of unbelievers,” “containing a great number of hateful statements against the church and its ministers,” and so forth.<sup>81</sup> The church associated *De l’esprit* with the *Encyclopédie* as expressing the same essential message in a more brazen form and moved to ban both of them through the power of the state, but only succeeded for a short time and ended up spreading the notoriety of the *philosophes*’ perspective in the attempt to suppress it. In the aftermath, Helvétius avoided personal reprisals, Diderot completed the *Encyclopédie*, and *De l’esprit* became one of the most celebrated works of the era, honored with numerous editions and translations throughout Europe.<sup>82</sup>

Helvétius’ main concern is self-interest. He follows La Rochefoucauld and Mandeville in making self-interest (*amour-propre*) the principal motive of human action—both in *De l’esprit* and his other great work, *De l’homme* or *A Treatise on Man* (1772).<sup>83</sup> “If the physical universe be subject to the laws of motion, the moral universe is equally so to those of interest. Interest is, on earth, the mighty magician, which to the eyes of every creature changes the appearance of all objects.”<sup>84</sup> It is the “only sentiment that is engraved in our hearts in infancy.” It is the principal motivation behind the formation of moral, legal, civic, and social institutions.<sup>85</sup> All human passions and desires only represent the “application of self-love to particular objects”<sup>86</sup>: “We esteem only such ideas as are analogous to our own”;



“We help others” only to ensure “they will help us under similar circumstances.”<sup>87</sup> Compassion is merely an act of self-love in recognizing the suffering of oneself within others, not an altruistic act or expression of concern for the welfare of fellow human beings.<sup>88</sup> What distinguishes individuals in society and “most commonly sets them apart” is the pursuit of “honour” or the “passion for glory,” which Helvétius places above other self-interests as the “most desirous” motivation of them all—much more than the accumulation of wealth. Here he reiterates the sentiment of Mandeville on the subject and provides inspiration for the like-minded opinion in Adam Smith.<sup>89</sup> In these and other similar comments, Helvétius works within the acceptable limits of a controversial tradition and its teachings without pushing the edges too far.

Helvétius only incurs the wrath of authorities when he dares to push the envelope further and proceed in a more secular direction than many of his predecessors and immediate successors in interpreting the position. He does so by proceeding to reject the orthodox doctrine of human depravity and think of people as redeemable through better social legislation and public education, not the work of Christ.<sup>90</sup> “No individual is born good or bad.”<sup>91</sup> Self-interest is described as the one inherent “sentiment that is engraved in our hearts,” and it has no specific inclination toward evil. It has the potential to proceed in any direction, good or bad, given a certain set of circumstances and particular focus upon certain objects.<sup>92</sup> In fact, self-interest is the same inherent force in all people and only develops in different directions through the varying objects or opportunities presented to it in the environment and surrounding culture.<sup>93</sup> Helvétius attributes the inequalities between people and their intellectual development to the “effect of the difference of situation in which chance has placed them” and their passionate attention to the opportunities at hand. It is human passion excited by chance that sets people in motion and explains their differences in social, moral, and intellectual achievement.<sup>94</sup> All humans have the same aptitude to discover and comprehend the “highest truths” of the world around them, just like Isaac Newton, given the proper set of fortuitous circumstances, including an apple falling out of a tree.<sup>95</sup>

Helvétius ends up deifying human potential in the process, rejecting the typical strictures upon finite capacities, undermining the orthodox belief in human depravity, and proceeding to make the moral calling an expression of human nature, not the will of a transcendent deity. He rejects the Christian call for self-sacrifice and other ascetic practices that emasculate egoistic and primitive pleasures in the name of some higher ideal.<sup>96</sup> Self-love is liberated from its slavery to the Christian concept of corruption and now becomes much the opposite—the “only basis on which we can place the foundations of an useful morality.”<sup>97</sup> In this way, Helvétius lays the foundation for a new theory of ethics, representing an early form of the social

utilitarianism that became so popular during the French Enlightenment, making the greatest happiness principle the calculating sum of all moral behavior, and so transforming “egoistic self-love into socially useful self-love.”<sup>98</sup> He argues that the “love of self produces the desire for happiness,” developing from our corporeal sensibilities and controlling “our actions, our thoughts, our passions, and our sociability” in concert with one another, and so making the “happiness of the majority” the object of ethics.<sup>99</sup> This means that laws must be constructed or abolished in a society based upon the “supreme law” of public utility.<sup>100</sup> Helvétius rejoices over this new “science of morals” as it eliminates the need for philosophical or metaphysical speculation, rests upon a firm empirical basis within corporeal sensibility, and makes what is just or unjust a simple calculating sum of mathematics.<sup>101</sup> Ethics no longer needs religion as a motivating factor in prescribing or proscribing human conduct through its tactics of fear; it no longer needs to look outside of human interest and happiness for answers in a special revelation of God and a divine law inscribed within nature and the hearts of human beings.<sup>102</sup> Humans are more or less a social construction, forged through the power of government, and do not need special divine grace to redeem them or make them virtuous citizens.<sup>103</sup> Human self-interest has its own ethical and salvific quality in serving the public good.<sup>104</sup>

Helvétius went on to interpret all of life in these secular and materialistic terms.<sup>105</sup> Like most *philosophes*, he was enamored with the abstract physical laws of Isaac Newton and the epistemology of John Locke and the British empiricists, but he clearly went beyond his constituency and other Anglophiles by attempting to apply and expand British concepts to the human race in a thoroughgoing manner.<sup>106</sup> As a result, he reduced human ideas to an external material impulse, pleasure to corporeal sensations, and proceeded to deny altogether the presence of innate ideas within the mind, the freedom of the will to generate responsible behavior, and the existence of an immortal soul or any other transcendent reality.<sup>107</sup> Many *philosophes* like Rousseau and Diderot shuddered to proceed so far in destroying human dignity and considered his positions an extreme caricature of the “enlightened” philosophical tendencies in the era,<sup>108</sup> but his radical stance certainly represented the main current of the time in bold relief as it was sweeping Europe and proceeding toward a more secular future.

## Physiocrats

In the middle of the eighteenth century, the new field of economics began to emerge, developing more scientific and mathematical rigor under the work of the physiocrats, a closely aligned association of early capitalists in France. François

Quesnay, a royal physician, often receives credit for founding the group through his role in writing some leading economic articles in the *Encyclopédie* (1757) and his authorship of its most celebrated scientific work, *Tableau économique* (1758/59),<sup>109</sup> but he clearly collaborated in forging the movement with many other noteworthy figures like Vincent de Gournay, Marquis de Mirabeau, and Mercier de la Rivière.<sup>110</sup> Of these three, Mirabeau served as the most direct collaborator in forging the movement with him, writing its early best-seller, *L'ami des homes, ou traité de la population* (1757), and working with Quesnay on *La philosophie rurale* (1763), one of the movement's great works.<sup>111</sup> Over a decade later the group reached its zenith of power when Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot brought physiocrat policy to the government as the finance minister of France, even though the outward political success was short-lived. Turgot and the physiocrats were still ahead of their times in bringing "enlightened" policy to pre-revolutionary France and lost power when the rich and powerful complained about the erosion of their privileges and interference in their monopolies under his tenure, leading to his dismissal a couple of years later in 1776.<sup>112</sup> The prominence of the physiocrats waned after this time,<sup>113</sup> but their legacy continued to inspire future economists like Du Pont de Nemours and Adam Smith long after their heyday. Du Pont carried the physiocrat legacy for the next several decades on the world stage, spreading the message in France, Europe, and America as the "first important case of a professional economist turned policy maker." Du Pont claimed that he developed much of his economic insights on his own, but he admitted his excitement when first reading Quesnay's articles and great work in finding some support out there, and crystallized and refined his thinking through reading these and other works of the physiocrats.<sup>114</sup> Du Pont and the physiocrats were never alone in developing their economic concepts but belonged to the process of history and served a common tradition of ideas that were circulating throughout France, drawing particular inspiration from the native-born emphasis upon self-interest and the monumental success of Britain in creating an economy based on early capitalist principles.<sup>115</sup>

Of course, the physiocrats thought of their work as creating a "new science" of economics.<sup>116</sup> The *Tableau* was celebrated as a milestone in economic theory because of its attempt to bring a new academic rigor and forge a new discipline of study, even if its zigzag arithmetical chart was obscure and difficult to follow, even among the faithful.<sup>117</sup> Before the *Tableau*, the area of economics was deprecated as un-"disciplined," filled with unproven and flaccid hypotheses, coming mainly from loose and unreliable mercantilist intuitions, with its presentiments toward strong central government, large companies and guilds, the acquisition of bullion, the accumulation of wealth at the expense of others, and the policy of increasing exports, not imports through exacting duties upon them.<sup>118</sup>

The physiocrats wanted to challenge this old way of thinking with a new scientific system based on the facts of experience, although they brought their own set of metaphysical commitments and intuitions to their analysis, just like most scholars in working to forge a system.<sup>119</sup> Quesnay tried to base his theory upon “physical experiment” and avoid the Cartesian penchant for deductive system building, but the majority of the physiocrats were less inductive in methodology and wanted a complete systematic framework in presenting physiocracy as a total science of society.<sup>120</sup> After all, their creed was based upon the “natural and immutable order” that encompassed all of life and served as the “archetype of all governments” and social arrangements, that illumined the hearts and minds of humankind, allowing them to deduce all possible truth from it and let “nature rule” (*physiocratie*).<sup>121</sup> The physiocrats looked at the natural order as containing both physical and moral laws, intertwined and working together to the advantage of society. The “regular course of every physical event of the natural order” and the “rule of every human action of moral order conformable to physical order” are “most advantageous to mankind”; “They are immutable, irrefragable, and the best laws possible,” “the best foundation of the most perfect government,” working together for the material benefit of humankind and allowing the physiocrats to develop a total systematic view of life, covering all of its aspects and disciplines—the laws of nature and the laws of human society.<sup>122</sup>

The physiocrats saw the natural order as living in harmony between the interests of the one and the interests of many. Like Helvétius, they represented a most positive view of self-interest within the Jansenist tradition in merging the two interests, believing a well-ordered society arises behind the conscious plan of individuals and the pursuit of their own special interests—at least in most cases.<sup>123</sup> Individuals might think they are working solely in terms of their own particular goals and designs in pursuing what is best for themselves in each particular case, but they are unconscious of the ultimate effect of their actions and end up working for others in the grand scheme of divine providence. Individuals might think they are fixing their own value on commodities and setting their own prices through an act of free will, but God is working all along, above and beyond their designs, in balancing all values against each other and setting the natural level within an overall plan of equilibrium.<sup>124</sup> Prices of goods and the rate of interest are balanced by the law of supply and demand, rising or falling naturally, in accordance with the market value.<sup>125</sup>

This concept of natural equilibrium led the physiocrats to denounce government interference in the market place with pet slogans like “laissez faire” or “laissez aller,” which became part of the popular parlance of capitalism.<sup>126</sup> They felt it is best for the government to follow a policy of free trade as much as possible,

since “prices will always be regulated by competition of trade in the commodities,” allowing all to prosper in the end—both buyer and seller.<sup>127</sup>

All duties on exports and imports, all prohibitions and regulations which constrain external and internal commerce diminish the wealth of the State and the revenues of the sovereign; all imposition of duties prejudicial to commerce and the production of goods is destructive imposition.<sup>128</sup>

The general freedom of buying and selling is therefore the only means of assuring, on the one hand, the seller of a price sufficient to encourage production, on the other hand, the consumer, of the best merchandise at the lowest price.<sup>129</sup>

What is called the arrangements—i.e., fixing the number of pieces of woollen cloth a manufacturer can make and ship to the Levant, fixing the price and the number of people who may sell it—necessarily tends to diminish the number of merchants, manufacturers and workers, and ruins our wholesalers by depriving them of their calculating spirit and of the necessity to calculate. Therefore those arrangements tend to increase the number of beggars in our country.<sup>130</sup>

These and other ideas proved valuable over the course of time in helping future economists understand some basic principles, but they were never able to embody the total picture. Their ideas were never able to produce what they desired—a final and complete system of fundamental axioms, or even a single proposition that withstood all further scrutiny as an indubitable fact, suffering the same fate as the Cartesian system, or any other system offering its basic concepts as the building block of everything else. Their “new science” certainly helped promote the importance of economic theory by challenging Mercantilist assumptions and forwarding concepts that recognized the self-regulating nature of the economy, providing some valuable insight over time in understanding its inner workings and positive results for society—at least within certain limitations; but some of their ideas seemed incredulous to later generations. Perhaps, the most nonsensical was one of their leading ideas, that the source of wealth in a country is its agriculture, especially its wealthy farmers, which Quesnay and the physiocrats justified with copious “scientific” analysis.

These poor cultivators, of such little use to the state, do not represent the true laborer, the rich farmer, who cultivates land on a large scale, who governs, who commands, who multiplies the expenses to increase his profits, who does not neglect any means or personal advantage yet produces the general welfare, who employs in a useful manner the inhabitants of the countryside, who can choose and wait for a propitious time to deliver his grains, to buy and sell his livestock....

Manufacturing and commerce maintained by the deranged need for luxury accumulate men and wealth in the large cities, prevent the appreciation of property, devastate the countryside, inspire scorn for agriculture, augment excessively the expenses of private individuals, harm the support of families, prevent the propagation of mankind, and weaken the state.

The decline of empires has often closely followed a flourishing state of commerce. When a nation spends on luxuries what it gains from commerce, the only result is the circulation of money without any increase in wealth. It is the sale of superfluities that enriches the subjects and the sovereign. The products of our land must be the primary material for manufacturing and the object of commerce: any other kind of commerce which is not based on these foundations has little security; the more luster commerce acquires in a kingdom, the more it stimulates the emulation of neighboring nations, and the more it is shared.... Commerce at home is necessary to obtain the necessities of life, to maintain the production of luxuries, and to facilitate consumption; but it contributes little to the power and prosperity of the state. If a part of the immense wealth that it retains and whose use produces so little for the kingdom were to be distributed to agriculture, it would produce revenues that are much more real and considerable.<sup>131</sup>

Many later economists found this dogged belief responsible in part for impeding the modern industrialization of the country, undermining the importance of manufacturing and monetary transactions in the economy, and dishonoring the labor of artisans, craftsmen, and merchants.<sup>132</sup>

Furthermore, the physiocrats were not always so wise or prescient in their counsel and sometimes spoke from the provincial perspective of their world, displaying little comprehension of capitalism's radical implications for shaping society in the future. They tended to accept the present political and social order, never providing a serious or direct challenge to the basic structure of their world: the divine right of monarchical authority, the landowner as the king of the economy, the seigneurial system of privileges and its feudal property arrangements, and the monopolistic practices of guilds, except in certain instances.<sup>133</sup> They never expanded their vision or spoke of any revolutionary impulses within their *laissez-faire* economic system, leaving most of these implications to their British and American counterparts, who combined them into one movement.<sup>134</sup> Like most of the *philosophes*, they followed the typical political beliefs of the *Ancien Régime* and submitted intellect and will to justify the sovereign authority of kings, seeking only to transform it into a "legal despotism" by limiting interference in the lives of the people and checking it by the rule of natural and positive law.<sup>135</sup>

Nevertheless, they were purveyors of a tradition that exerted an enormous influence beyond their limited purview. They continued to espouse a belief in

divine providence to balance out the prices and interests to meet the needs of the entire society, but their laissez-faire economic policy contained a more secular message for future generations in eliminating the need for divine or moral intervention, seeing that life worked well-enough on its principles and required no further assumptions to explain its mechanism and results. The merging of individual and societal interests found a more consistent application in the atheistic and utilitarian schema of Helvétius, who was able to eliminate the paradox between the two by denying the depravity of self-interest and espousing the greatest happiness principle. This more secular and utilitarian approach will encompass the French Revolution and much of the world to come, allowing humankind to calculate its activities apart from divine revelation, or a transcendent Word from on high to discriminate between its interests, seeing that the “voice [or interest] of the people is the voice of God.”<sup>136</sup> The schema will no longer need to follow Kant and presuppose the existence of God or some outside force to reconcile virtue and happiness together since these two aspects of the *summum bonum* are the same.<sup>137</sup> In Britain, self-preservation will become the mechanism for the evolution of the species, merging biology and economics and exorcizing the need for divine intervention in the process of life, in general, to explain the development of order and complexity in the world—all evolving from the self-interest or chaos of individual struggle.

## Notes

1. For a complete discussion of this matter, see chaps. 5 and 6 of Stephen Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009).
2. Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 213. See chap. 6 of the same book for a discussion of Puritans and their role in developing the modern concept of progress. Weber’s understanding of capitalism’s development also emphasizes the rational use of capital—balance sheets, efficient production, large turnover, consumer prices, and the division of labor as significant factors. Max Weber, “The Author Defines His Purpose,” in *Protestantism and Capitalism*, R. W. Green (ed.) (Boston: C. Heath and Co., 1959), 2; *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Talcott Parsons (trans.) (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1958), 25, 64, 67; Manfred Brocker, “Max Webers Erklärungsansatz für die Entstehung des Kapitalismus,” *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 43, no. 6 (1995): 495. However, his treatment fails to discuss the importance of finance, investment, and the charging of interest in developing capitalism or the rationalization of the money system. Of course, this oversight leads him to neglect the place of the Jews in developing modern capitalism. Jews were among the first in the western world to recognize the importance of commercial speculation, or the “merchant” who sits “on his sofa” and “promotes, occasions, or facilitates anything that may tend to the benefit or comfort of his fellow-creatures.” Moses Mendelssohn,

- “Response to Dohm (1782),” in *Jews in the Modern World*, Paul Mendes-Fohr and Jehuda Reinharz (ed.) (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 40. During the Middle Ages, the Jews became a merchant people, stimulating transregional trading networks and lending money at interest. Sometimes their rates of interest ranged from 33 to 60 percent per annum due to the scarcity of capital and high risk of moneylending. The rates often stigmatized capitalism when debts tended to mount during hard times and facilitated anti-Semitic sentiments among the Gentiles, who characterized the Jewish people as lazy, non-productive, avaricious, and selfish. The church lent its authority to the burgeoning anti-Semitism by proscribing usury at the time and helping to taint the practice among the critics of capitalism to the present day. John Calvin and the Swiss theologians provided the first important voices challenging the overall position of the church and helped ease the ecclesiastical stricture on the practice among Puritans and the modern capitalistic world. Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 186–91; Jerry Z. Muller, *Capitalism and the Jews* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010), 4–8, 15–17, 21–22, 25, 28–32, 52, 56–60, 99–100, 112.
3. Michael Locke McLendon, “Tocqueville, Jansenism, and the Psychology of Freedom,” *American Journal of Political Science* 50/3 (2006): 673.
  4. Anders Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, Philip S. Watson (intro. and trans.) (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 470; Gerald W. Schlabach, *For the Joy Set Before Us: Augustine and Self-Denying Love* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University, 2001), 4. He considers the two terms utterly opposed as they find their classical expression in Paul and Plato, but he does not engage in a philological enquiry to secure an exact range of meaning and makes no claim that *agapē* and *eros* have a simple set meaning.
  5. E.g., Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 202.
  6. *Ibid.*, 162–63.
  7. *Ibid.*, 216.
  8. *Ibid.*, 44, 175; Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 6.
  9. *Ibid.*, viii–ix, 51–52, 184, 201, 212, 197–99, 465–66.
  10. *Ibid.*, 47–48, 118–19, 140.
  11. *Ibid.*, ix, 75–80, 126, 210; Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 2. In *agapē*, the emphasis is upon God’s love for us, not our love for God. Human love is only a dim reflection of God’s love and really speaks of the sovereign grace of God establishing a relationship with us, which Nygren understands in terms of Luther’s concept of *sola fides* and *sola gratia*. *Ibid.*, 62–63, 67, 97, 126, 219.
  12. *Ibid.*, 96–97.
  13. *Ibid.*, 98–100, 214. Nygren makes a decided dichotomy within the greatest commandment between loving God and loving one’s neighbor.
  14. *Ibid.*, 94–95, 213.
  15. *Ibid.*, 100–1, 130–31, 217.
  16. *Ibid.*, xii–xv. Nygren’s favorite verse is 1 Cor 13:5: “[Love] does not seek its own.” See also Lk 9:24, Rom 6:4; 9:3, Gal 2:20. Schlabach counters Nygren’s argument by citing Heb 12:2, which says that Jesus “endured the cross for the joy set before him.” *Joy Set Before Him*, 143.
  17. *Ibid.*, 450–51, 458–59.



18. Augustine, *Sermo de Disciplina Christiana*, 6 (PL 40.672); *De Diversis Quaestionibus LXXXIII*, 35.2 (PL 40.24); Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 476, 486. PL stands for J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus [Series Latina]* (Paris, 1844–64).
19. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 471.
20. *Ibid.*, 22, 530–31.
21. Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 3.10.16 (PL 34.72); *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 31.2.5 (PL 36.260); Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 483, 495; Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 29–30. The world is seen as a vehicle to enjoy God. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, 11.35; 15.7.1 (PL 41.339, 443).
22. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 532, 538–39, 549; Robert Markus, “Augustine on Pride and the Common Good,” in *Collectanea Augustiniana*, Joseph C. Schnaubelt and Frederick Van Fleteren (ed.) (New York: Peter Lang, 1990), 248; Oliver O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love in St. Augustine* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 141–42, 151; Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 145.
23. Augustine, *De Musica*, 6.13.40 (PL 32.1184–85); Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 433, 536–37; O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love*, 93ff., 108–10; Markus, “Augustine on Pride and the Common Good,” 247–48.
24. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 41.12 (PL 36.472); *De Civitate Dei*, 14.13.1 (PL 41.421); Markus, “Augustine on Pride and the Common Good,” 249–51; O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love*, 100–2. Augustine’s rereading of Paul in the mid-390s was crucial in making his transition toward an emphasis upon divine grace. His *Confessions* are clearly an anachronistic interpretation of his experience with grace in light of his mature theology. See Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 84, 210–11 (n.123).
25. Augustine, *Epistolarum, classis tertia*, 155.4.15 (PL 33.672–73); O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love*, 38. Of course, Augustine also relates the love of neighbor to the love of God. Loving one’s neighbor is a special instance of loving God; i.e., loving a person as one who is grasped by God or fulfills some divine purpose. Love finds what is worthy in a person; it does not love the sinner. Nygren, *Agape and Eros*, 453–54, 449–50; O’Donovan, *The Problem of Self-Love*, 31–33, 36; Markus, “Augustine on Pride and the Common Good,” 38, 41.
26. Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 43–44, 47, 127; Augustine, *Sermones ad Populum*, 128.3.5 (PL 38.715).
27. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 14.12.16 (PL 42.1048–49).
28. Augustine, *Tractatus in Joannis Evangelium*, 132.5 (PL 35.1968).
29. Schlabach, *Joy Set Before Us*, 141.
30. *The Dictionary Historical and Critical of Mr Peter Bayle*, Reprinted from the second edition (London, 1734–38) (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 4.491–92.
31. Pierre Nicole, *Essais de Morale*, Laurent Thirouin (ed.) (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), 389; *Pascal’s Pensées*, T. S. Eliot (intro.) (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1958), 131–36 (470–94).
32. Pasquier Quesnay, *The New Testament with Moral Reflections*,... (London: R. Bonwicke et al., 1719), 4/2.559–64 (1 Cor 13:4, 5, 8). This passage has some tension with other comments in the Gospels, where he speaks of a “well-regulated love of ourselves” as a “Perfect Modal” for loving others “if not as much as ourselves, at least in the same rank, wherein we ought to love ourselves.” *Ibid.*, 1/1.254, 587 (Mt 19:19, Mk 12:31).

33. In classifying Jansenists with the label “acquisitive capitalists,” I am only trying to create a typology or broad generalization. In reality, the Jansenists have tensions and display elements of the Puritan position at times in their discussion. For example, the Jansenists were opposed to a frivolous lifestyle of dancing, gaming, entertainment, and pomp just like the Puritans. Many of them admired England and knew that Puritan industriousness was the most significant impetus toward commerce in the land, not the pursuit of luxury. Alexander Sedgwick, “Seventeenth Century French Jansenism and the Enlightenment,” in *Church, State, and Society under the Bourbon Kings of France*, Richard M. Golden (ed.) (Lawrence, KA: Coronado Press, 1982), 130; Pierre Nicole, *Traité de la Comédie*, Gourges Couton (ed.) (Paris: Société d’Édition “Les Belles Lettres”, 1961), 51–57; Vincent de Gournay, *Mémoires et Lettres*, Takuni Tsuda (ed.) (Tokyo: Kinokuniya Co. Ltd., 1993), 53, 61–62; Abbé Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, J. Justament (trans.) (London, 1777), 5.498–99; Gilbert Faccarello, *The Foundations of Laissez-faire: The Economics of Pierre de Boisguilbert* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 15–16. This holds true for later French authors who remain Anglo-philic and commend Puritan industriousness, while recognizing that luxury still can provide a stimulus to the economy. *The Works of Voltaire* (Paris: E. R. DuMont, 1901), 37.213; Henry Fielding, *An Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers,...* (London, 1751), 10; Helvétius, *A Treatise on Man: His Intellectual Faculties and His Education*, W. Hooper (trans.) (London: Albion Press, 1810), 2.257; Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 182–84, 193.
34. D. W. Smith, *Helvétius: A Study of Persecution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 131. Pascal and his *Pensées* serve as an important model for Nicole in writing this work, and are quoted throughout the *Essais. Essais de Morale*, 10. As a part of the Jansenist movement, Pascal emphasized the depravity of human beings and saw them caught between divinity and corruption, greatness and wretchedness. Richard M. Chadbourne, “Two Converts: Augustine and Pascal,” in *Grace, Politics, and Desire: Essays on Augustine*, H. A. Meynell (ed.) (Calgary, Canada: University Calgary Press, 1990), 33; Pascal, *The Provincial Letters*, W. F. Trotter and Thomas M’Crie (trans.) (New York: The Modern Library, 1941), 438–41; *Pensées*, 109–112, 121–22, 187 (409–23, 667).
35. Nicole, *Essais de Morale*, 213; Smith, *Helvétius*, 123. Sometimes he speaks of mixed motives in our actions or the difficulty of discerning whether we act from charity or self-interest. After all, God alone searches our hearts and knows our motives. *Ibid.*, 409; Anne Mette Hjort, “Mandeville’s Ambivalent Modernity,” *MLN* 106/5 (1991): 959. See Heb 4:12.
36. *Ibid.*, 390–91; McLendon, “Tocqueville, Jansenism, and the Psychology of Freedom,” 672. He cites a passage from Augustine, which finds vanity producing similar effects as charity in feeding and clothing the poor, et al. *Ibid.*, 406–7 (n.1); Augustine, *In Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos*, 8.9 (PL 35.2040–41). Pascal also has some understanding of how lust can serve the public weal. *Pensées*, 127 (451–53). Like many others in this tradition, Pascal believes people seek the esteem of others as a basic motivation in society. He criticizes the Jesuits for defending dueling, or killing for the sake of honor, and thinks the lives of Jansenists might be endangered by this type of teaching (i.e., for dishonoring their opponents’ dogma). McLendon, “Tocqueville, Jansenism, and the Psychology of Freedom,” 668; Pascal, *Pensées*, 45–47 (147–50, 158); *Provincial Letters*, 402–8, 412, 416–17, 507–9.

37. Ibid., 381, 395, 401–3; Jacob Viner, *Religious Thought and Economic Society*, Jacques Melitz and Donald Winch (eds.) (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978), 136.
38. Ibid., 403–4.
39. Ibid., 384; *Essai de Morale* (Geneve: Slatkine, 1971), 1.139–40; “Of Grandeur,” in *Moral Essays* (London, 1696) 2.97–98; Viner, *Religious Thought and Economic Society*, 135–36; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 27–28. Pascal can find vice or concupiscence useful, but this is hardly a leading theme in his great works. Smith, *Helvétius*, 125; Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before its Triumph* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 16.
40. Nicole, “Of Grandeur,” 2.98–99; Smith, *Helvétius*, 125; Nicole, *Essais de Morale*, 214; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 24, 25, 31; Louis Schneider, *Paradox and Society: The Work of Bernard Mandeville*, Jay Weintein (forward) (New Brunswick, NJ and Oxford: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 73; Timothy O’Hagen, “L’amour-propre est un instrument utile mais dangereux: Jean-Jacques Rousseau et Port-Royal,” *Revue de Théologie et de Philosophie* 138/1 (2006): 37.
41. *Historical Dictionary and Critical of Mr Peter Bayle*, 4.361–63; Alexander Sedgwick, “Seventeenth Century French Jansenism and the Enlightenment,” in *Church, State, and Society under the Bourbon Kings of France*, Richard M. Golden (ed.) (Lawrence, KA: Coronado Press, 1982), 134–35, 142–45.
42. *Oeuvres Complètes de J. Domat* (Paris: Alex-Gobelet, Libraire, 1835), 1.25; 4.96; Viner, *Religious Thought and Economic Society*, 138–39; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 26–29.
43. Ibid., 1.32–33; Viner, *Religious Thought and Economic Society*, 139.
44. Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 3, 14.
45. “Factum de la France, contre les demandeurs en delay,” in *Pierre de Boisguilbert ou La Naissance de L’Économie Politique* [NEP] (Paris: Institut National d’Études Démographiques, 1966) 2.748–49; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 28, 96.
46. Du Pont de Nemours, *Ephemerides du Citoyen* (Paris: LaCombe, 1769), 9.10–12; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 58, 146–47. Unlike the physiocrats, he does not center his system on agriculture. He finds the source of wealth in all sorts of products and wants taxes distributed over all commodities. “Factum de la France,” 2.896; “Traité de la Nature,” in NEP 2.830; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 70–71, 113.
47. “Factum de la France,” 2.891, 919; “Dissertation: De la nature des richesses, . . .,” in NEP 2.991; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 17–20, 72, 130. The leisure class causes particular disruption in the economy by protecting their luxuries at the expense of basic goods and sitting on their money rather than investing it. Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 111–13.
48. Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 41–42, 108, 138. Free trade was emphasized by many others in Puritan England. Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 176–77; R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1962), 187–88, 192, 254, 258, 262; William Walwyn, “Conceptions: Free Trade,” in *Writings*, Jack R. McMaël and Barbara Taft (eds.) (Athens, GA and London: The University of Georgia Press, 1989), 448–49. Tawney provides on pp. 319–20 in footnote 320 a mountain of research that deals with monopolies, exchange, speculation, and industry under the control

of the Star Chamber, Privy Council, and other powers of government both before and after the Puritan Revolution.

49. “Factum de la France,” 2.891–92; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 99–100. Of course, he believes in some government regulation to “provide protection and prevent violence,” but this is the exception, not the rule.
50. Elisabeth Labrousse, “The Political Ideas of the Huguenot Diaspora (Bayle and Jurieu),” in *Church, State, and Society*, 263; Bayle, Denys Potts (trans.) (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 11; Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 28–31; Bernard Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Virtue*, F. B. Kaye (intro.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 1.ciii, cv; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 67.
51. Labrousse, *Bayle*, 55, 41, 60.
52. Pierre Bayle, *Political Writings*, Sally L. Jenkinson (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 36, 39–40, 46. In the article, he condemns David’s cruelty and marrying for power, much like William of Orange. He speaks of David deceiving the king of Gath, stealing Nabal’s property, annihilating populations, et al.; yet he calls David a “good and great king.” *Ibid.*, 36, 39–43, 49–50.
53. *Dictionary*, 5.811–13; Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 30.
54. *Ibid.*, 4.441; 5.811.
55. *Ibid.*, 3.293, 965; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 73; Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 30–31.
56. *Ibid.*, 5.813–14; Pierre Réat, *Le Dictionnaire de Bayle et la lute philosophique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Société d’Édition “Les Belles Lettres”, 1971), 223–24.
57. *Ibid.*, 5.208, 811, 815–16, 821–22. Pascal’s defense of the faith proceeded in much the same direction. He says we must trust the intuitions of the heart, just like we trust the intuitive principles of mathematics. *Pensées*, 1, 79 (282). The heart has its reasons that exist beyond reason in loving God without knowing the reason why. These intuitions come from God as a gift of grace. *Ibid.*, xviii, 72–73, 78–79 (245, 248, 277, 279). Reason has its limits. It cannot prove the existence of God or the truth of the gospel. *Ibid.*, 66, 78, 145 (233, 273, 542).
58. *Ibid.*, 4.363; 5.831.
59. Labrousse, *Bayle*, 43, 46, Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, xlii. He was raised a Calvinist and destined for the ministry, although he ended up proceeding in another direction, at one time serving as a professor of philosophy at the Huguenot Academy of Sedan. For a very brief period, he converted to Catholicism and attended a Jesuit college but returned to the Reformed faith, rejecting the concept of transubstantiation, and went on to study at the Protestant Academy of Geneva. Bayle, *Political Writings*, xx–xxi; Labrousse, *Bayle*, 16–17, 22–23, 32–33; “The Political Ideas of the Huguenot Diaspora,” 235.
60. Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, lxxx–xc; Pierre Force, “Helvétius as an Epicurean Political Theorist,” in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2009), 108; Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, 42.
61. *The Maxims of La Rochefoucauld*, Louis Kronenberger (trans.) (New York: Random House, 1959), 24–26; W. G. Moore, *La Rochefoucauld: His Mind and Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 5–6, 32, 101; Hirschman, *Passions and Interests*, 42. The standard text was

established by the author in 1678, excluding and altering many of the maxims. Hereafter, the English edition is designated MLR, and the French edition OCR [*Oeuvres Complètes de La Rochefoucauld*, L. Martin-Chauffier (ed.) (Gallimard, 1950)].

62. MLR 141 (563); OCR 490.
63. MLR 58 (138); OCR 425.
64. MLR 76 (232–33); OCR 438.
65. Force, “Helvétius,” 109; Moore, *La Rochefoucauld*, 36, 41. La Rochefoucauld was sympathetic with the Jansenists and their dubious view of human nature. He was a personal friend of Jacques Esprit and attended the same salon as La Fontaine. Both of these relations place La Rochefoucauld within the Jansenist/French moralist tradition. Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 19–20, 23.
66. MLR 69, 132 (195, 523); OCR 433, 481–82. He typically adds qualifications like “most people” or “often” to his concept of depravity, probably allowing for some real virtue among a few people. He certainly does not proceed as far as Calvin and reject the possibility of any virtue among Christians and non-Christians alike. Cf. Louis Hippeau, *Essai sur la Morale de La Rochefoucauld* (Paris: Editions E.-G. Nizet, 1967), 97–99.
67. MLR 109 (409); OCR 461.
68. MLR 150 (605); OCR 496. He also says, “Virtuousness in women is often a love of their reputations and their peace of mind.” MLR 70 (205); OCR 434.
69. MLR 64 (171); OCR 429.
70. MLR 134 (531) 483. Albert Hirschman thinks that interest is more calculating than simple passion and serves as a wedge between reason and pure passion. *Passions and Interests*, 42–47.
71. MLR 33–34, 142 (6, 10, 142); OCR 407–408.
72. MLR 136, 144 (546, 577); OCR 484, 493. He often speaks of love affairs, mistresses, and the arts of coquetry in the work.
73. MLR 46 (69); OCR 416.
74. MLR 48, 146 (81–83, 583); OCR 418, 494; Donald Furner, “The Myth of amour-propre in La Rochefoucauld,” *The French Review* 43/2 (Dec. 1969) 229.
75. MLR 23, 26; Moore, *La Rochefoucauld*, 96, 101. He admits that self-love is difficult to see and recognize, and that only God can judge our motives. MLR 139 (563); OCR 488; Moore, *La Rochefoucauld*, 34.
76. MLR 60, 83 (146, 149, 264); OCR 426, 443. Of course, there are many other examples: A condemned person scoffing at death is only revealing an intense fear of the brutal reality; The clemency of a prince is typically a tactic to court the affection of his subjects; The scorn of wealth is a way of deflecting the humiliation of poverty; The love of justice shows the fear of encountering injustice; etc. MLR 35, 37, 43, 47, 145 (15, 21, 54, 78, 580); OCR 409–10, 414, 417, 493.
77. MLR 81, 87, 90 (254, 285, 298); OCR 441, 446–48.
78. Helvétius, *A Treatise on Man*, 1.9, 47–38, 41, 46, 350–51; 2.149, 361–64, 370, 379–82. Hereafter designated as TM.
79. Jean-Felix-Henri de Fumel, *Mandement et Instruction pastorale de Monseigneur l’Évêque de Lodève* (Monpellier: A.-F. Rochard, 1759) [cited in Smith, *Helvétius*, 51]. See also Smith, *Helvétius*, 1–3, 50–51.

80. Smith, *Helvétius*, 2, 27, 35, 41–42, 49.
81. Helvétius, *Mandement de Monseigneur l'archevêque de Paris, ...* (Paris, 1758), 27; “Archiepiscopo Farsaliae, Generali in Hispaniarum Regnis Inquisitori gratulatur, ...,” in *Bullari Romani continuatio summorum pontificum Clementis XIII, ...* (Romae, 1835), 1.209–10; Smith, *Helvétius*, 39–40, 44.
82. Smith, *Helvétius*, 60–63, 141, 148, 152–53, 222.
83. Helvétius, *De l'Esprit or Essays on the Mind and its Several Faculties* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), 42–43, 56–57; Jean Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius on Innate and Acquired Traits,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 40/1 (Jan.–March 1979): 32–33; Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, 42–43. Hereafter *De l'Esprit* is designated DLE. He is clearly influenced by La Rochefoucauld and probably Mandeville, among the many others who make up this tradition. *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1881), 42.141; Force, Helvétius, 106–107; “Self-Love, Identification, and the Origin of Political Economy,” *Yale French Studies* 92 (1997): 49; Smith, *Helvétius*, 165. See Mandeville, *Fable of the Bees*, cxliv–cxlv for a detailed discussion of Mandeville’s influence on Helvétius. Rousseau was certainly familiar with Mandeville’s work, although he finds it vile. Adam Smith connects their ideas together. “Letter to Edinburgh Review,” in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce (eds.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 250; Rousseau, “Preface [Narcise],” in *Oeuvres Complètes*, Bernard Gagnebin et Marcel Raymond (eds.) (Gallimard, 1969), 4.965ff.; “Preface to Narcissus,” in *Collected Writings* (Hanover, CT and London: University Press of New England, 1992), 2.191ff.; Donald Winch, “Adam Smith: Scottish Moral Philosopher as Political Economist,” *The Historical Journal* 35/1 (March 1992): 103; E. J. Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville and the Enlightenment’s Maxims of Modernity,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56/4 (Oct. 1995): 577, 592.
84. TM 279; DLE 42. Helvétius relates the terms *amour-propre*, *amour de soi*, and *intérêt*. Force, “Helvétius,” 107–109; Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 32–33. Rousseau tries to distinguish *amour de soi* from *amour-propre*. He sees the former as the positive basis of commiseration, the source of all other passions, and always good; the latter is “never satisfied” and selfish, “preferring ourselves to others.” Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 31–36.
85. Force, “Helvétius,” 107.
86. TM 1.289.
87. DLE 49; Force, “Self-Love, Identification, and Order,” 50.
88. TM 2.17–18. Rousseau thinks of the love of self (*amour de soi*), along with the compassion and identification with others as a “pure movement of nature” and basis of moral development. No innate sense of right and wrong exists in his overall thought. The natural law is founded upon a need that is natural to the human heart—its passions and compassions. Rousseau, *Émile ou De l'Éducation*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 2.491, 506, 522–23, 568, 586–88; *Émile: Or On Education*, Allan Bloom (intro., trans., and notes) (New York: Basic Books, 1974), 212–13, 234–35, 268, 280–82 [English hereafter in parentheses]; Jonathan Marks, “Rousseau’s Discriminating Defense of Compassion,” *The American Political Science Review* 101/4 (2007): 728, 731; Force, “Self-Love, Identification, and Order,” 51; Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 29–31.

89. DLE 235, 242, 323; TM 1.68–70, 361. He sees “luxury” as fueling the economy, but he does not believe that riches engender happiness, and often thinks of them as corrupting people. He also expresses concern about extreme luxury creating a severe inequality in society. DLE 15–17, 22, 322; Rousseau, “Fragments Politiques [Le luxe, le commerce et les arts],” in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 3.518 (208). Rousseau also sees humankind seeking honor within society. “Fragments Politiques [De l’honneur et de la vertu],” in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 3.503; *Émile*, 2.339 (104); Smith, “Letter to the Edinburgh Review,” 253–56; Marks, “Rousseau’s Discriminating Defense of Compassion,” 734; O’Hagan, “L’amour est un instrument utile mais dangereux,” 30.
90. TM 2.19, 23–24, 468, 473–74.
91. TM 2.11.
92. DLE 29, 70, 185–86; TM 1.279; Moore, *La Rochefoucauld*, 78; Smith, *Helvétius*, 32. Helvétius claims that this position represents La Rochefoucauld’s analysis. For Jansenists like Nicole, Domat, and Pascal, self-love was fundamentally a vice, a product of depravity. Smith, *Helvétius*, 132–35. Rousseau finds self-love (*amour de soi*) or self-preservation an innate quality of humans that manifests itself in society through relationships like mother/child, husband/wife, teacher/pupil, et al. As *amour-propre*, it has a dark side, but it can be managed and work for the common good. Rousseau, *Émile*, 2.488 (208); O’Hagan, “L’amour est un instrument,” 30–37; Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 28–29. A number of times Rousseau speaks of humans as born naturally good but disfigured, perverted, and shackled in society. *Émile*, 2.245, 253–55, 525 (37, 42–44, 235); *The Social Contract*, Maurice Cranston (trans.) (London: Penguin Books, 2004), 2–3, 20–21. Then Rousseau proceeds to speak of society and the state as a good thing, intended for the fulfillment of human beings, “preferable in real terms to what prevailed before” within the chaos of self-preservation, the difficulty of self-subsistence, and the need for fellowship. *Émile*, 2.467, 654 (193, 327); *Social Contract*, 36; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 2.538–40. Of course, he ends up subsuming the individual self under the general will of the people, the new “voice of God.” *Social Contract*, 19, 26, 31, 41, 127; Harvey Mitchell, “Reclaiming the Self: The Pascal-Rousseau Connection,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 54/4 (1993): 652.
93. TM 1.289, 362, 367–68.
94. TM 1.269, 277; 2.459.
95. TM 1.228–29; 2.457–58. According to Helvétius, Rousseau was simply wrong when he explained the gradation of the human race in terms of innate differences between organs of sensation. TM 2.1ff.
96. For example, see “Correspondence d’Helvétius avec sa femme” (Nov. 1900), in *Le Carnet historique et littéraire* (Paris, 1900), 437–38; Smith, *Helvétius*, 135. He thinks of sexual gratification as the supreme pleasure and rejects the exaltation of celibacy and the many other sexual taboos of the church.
97. DLE 179.
98. Smith, *Helvétius*, 14, 116. Even though he is an atheist, Helvétius can feign being a Deist at times with its exhortation to cultivate reason in seeking and discovering the truth, its proclivity to reduce religion to morality, and its emphasis upon happiness as the end of life. Deism thought of God as perfectly content and only willing to create human beings for

- their own well-being and happiness, not to gain something from them. Thus, happiness is the end of life. TM 1.56–58; Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as Creation*, reprint of 1730 edition (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1978), 2, 3, 6, 14, 20, 35, 38, 58ff., 65–66, 104–5, 115, 125, 179, 189, 283–84, 365, 368, 379, 424–26; Stephen Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation: The French Revolution, Nazi Germany, and International Communism* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014), 9–10.
99. DLE 103, 108, 135, 179; TM 124, 133, 138; 2.308.
100. TM 2.144–45, 148, 428, 433, 446.
101. TM 2.213, 432. He rejects the concept of a set body of laws and thinks morality can make progress just like science, delivering the people from the slavery of following local customs. However, he also thinks of standards as dependent upon local conditions/passions and varying from culture to culture. DLE 71, 76, 130–31, 172.
102. DLE 180–81; TM 2.5.
103. TM 1.302–304, 325.
104. DLE 62–63, 92, 96; Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 2.513–15; Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 32–33.
105. Diderot thinks of Helvétius as unbalanced. He thinks Helvétius exaggerates self-interest by eliminating an innate sense of right and wrong and denying the possibility of true sacrificial love. Smith, *Helvétius*, 212, 217.
106. TM 2.254–56; DLE 7; Smith, *Helvétius*, 101–3. The church did not condemn people like Locke and Condillac for reducing all mental processes to material operations, as long as they did not proceed much farther in exorcizing spirituality. *Journal des savants* (Sept., 1751) 625 [cited in Smith, *Helvétius*, 107].
107. DLE 7, 258; TM 1.92ff., 212–14; TM 2.454–56; Smith, *Helvétius*, 13, 107, 175–81, 208–9. He makes some distinction between the soul and the mind. The soul is the faculty of sensation and remains present even when one loses memory. The mind needs the soul to function but not vice versa. TM 1.101ff., 108.
108. See n.105. In *Émile*, Rousseau wants his pupil to start with the senses and learn from natural phenomena. Moral development takes place later in society when Émile develops relations with others. *Émile*, 53, 90, 127, 196; Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 29. Later in the *Profession de foi*, Rousseau rejects Helvétius’ materialism and creates a Cartesian dichotomy, finding a spiritual substance or *âme* within human beings and defending the concept of free will. Smith, *Helvétius*, 175–79; Bloch, “Rousseau and Helvétius,” 26, 31.
109. Thomas P. Neill, “The Physiocrats’ Concept of Economics,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 63/4 (1949): 532–33, 537; Guy Routh, *The Origin of Economics Ideas* (Dobbs Ferry, NY: Sheridan House, 1989), 70.
110. Pierre Du Pont de Nemours, *De l’origine et des progrès des science nouvelle* (A Londres: Desaint, Libraire, 1768), 12; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *The Origin of Physiocracy: Economic Revolution and Social Order in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1976), 14, 18, 37–38, 134–37, 146, 168–70; Henry Higgs, *The Physiocrats* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1968), 25, 35. Du Pont credits Gournay for setting an example of free trade and laissez-faire economic policies as an administrator, which



- Quesnay and the physiocrats followed. James J. McLain, *The Economic Writings of Du Pont de Nemours* (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 1977), 95.
111. Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 14, 37–38; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 51ff.
  112. Jacob Oser and William C. Blanchfield, *The Evolution of Economic Thought* (New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich, 1975), 37–38. Turgot was not an orthodox physiocrat. He followed the laissez-faire approach to government intervention but did not find the source of the nation's wealth in agricultural goods and raw materials. He was too eclectic to venerate the *Tableau* as a final solution to economic problems. *Ibid.*, 66; McLain, *Economic Writings*, 31–32.
  113. Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 58–59.
  114. Du Pont de Nemours, *L'Enfance et la jeunesse* (Paris: Plon-Nourrit et CIE, 1906), 183–86; McLain, *Economic Writings*, 57, 61, 65; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 35, 64; Routh, *Origin of Economic Ideas*, 69–70. McLain sees Du Pont as refining, clarifying, and spreading Quesnay's system, not as a speculative pacemaker. *Economic Writings*, 221.
  115. Gournay, *Mémoires et Lettres*, 57–61; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 313–14.
  116. François Quesnay, *The Economical Table [Tableau Économique]* (New York: Berman Publishers, 1968), 5; Du Pont, *De l'origine et des progrès d'une science nouvelle*, 12–16; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 3.
  117. Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 146. The *Tableau* represents the circulation of surplus or net value within the agricultural community and changes somewhat with each edition. Quesnay, *Economical Table*, 206; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 254.
  118. Oser and Blanchfield, *Evolution of Economic Thought*, 10ff., 28ff.
  119. “Euloge de Gournay,” in *Oeuvres de Turgot* (Paris: Guillaumin, Libraire, 1844), 1.288–90; *Commerce, Culture, and Liberty*, 474–75; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 248–49.
  120. Neill, “The Physiocrats’ Concept of Economics,” 535. Like a Puritan, Quesnay was dismissive of natural theology and preferred to limit the study of nature to empirical evidence. *Oeuvres Économiques et Philosophiques de F. Quesnay ...*, Auguste Onken (ed.) (Paris: Jules Peelman & CIE, 1888), 761–63, 777; “Évidence” (Jan. 1756), in *François Quesnay & la Physiocratie* (Paris: Institut National d’Études Démographiques, 1958), 2.409.
  121. François Quesnay, *A Treatise on Natural Right*, Francis Walker Gilmer (trans.) (Baltimore, MD: Fielding Lucas, Jun., 1828), 197–201; Le Mercier de La Rivière, *L'ordre naturel et essentiel des sociétés politiques* (A Londres: Jean Nourse, Libraire, 1767), 1.120–21; Routh, *Origin of Economic Ideas*, 70; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 9, 12, 47, 91; McLain, *Economic Writings*, 122–23; Neill, “The Physiocrats’ Concept of Economics,” 538–42, 546, 549–53. Quesnay was not a complete materialist. He saw intelligence as a gift of God and spoke of an immortal soul within human beings. Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 84–88. The group receives its name from Du Pont’s work *Physiocratie* (1767).
  122. *Ibid.*, 187, 197–98; Neill, “The Physiocrats’ Concept of Economics,” 535, 547–48.
  123. Gay *Enlightenment*, 350–51; Routh, *Origin of Economic Ideas*, 70; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 143.
  124. Turgot, “Euloge de Gournay Note,” 1.263; “Réflexions sur la Formation et la Distribution des Richesses,” in *Oeuvres de Turgot*, 1.24 (xxxiv); Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 301–2. Turgot gives credit to Gournay for this discovery of natural equilibrium, but we have already witnessed an antecedent of it among the Jansenists in Boisguilbert.

125. Turgot, “Réflexions,” 1.48 (lxxv). Josiah Child thought low interests and customs in the Netherlands were the chief source of its wealth. He will help influence Gournay, Turgot, and the physiocrats in developing a policy of letting the market fix the price of interest. Josiah Child, *A New Discourse of Trade* (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1751), 1, 4–9; Turgot, “Réflexions,” 1.48 (lxxv).
126. Gay, *Enlightenment*, 351. Vincent de Gournay (1712–59) is often given credit for using and emphasizing the phrase *laissez faire*. McLain, *Economic Writings*, 28, 95; Du Pont, *Éphémérides du Citoyen*, 1.xxxix; 2.vii–x; Oser and Blanchfield, *Evolution of Economic Thought*, 30. However, Boisguilbert, the Jansenist, uses the phrase and trumpets the doctrine well before him, and François Legendre is also credited with using the phrase “Laissez-nous faire” at the end of the eighteenth century. “Dissertation: De la nature des richesses, ...,” 2.992–93; Routh, *The Origin of Economic Ideas*, 58–60; *Commerce, Culture, and Liberty: Readings in Capitalism Before Adam Smith*, Henry C. Clark (ed.) (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 2003), 474 (n. 29); Gustav Schelle, *Vincent de Gournay: laissez faire, laissez passer* (Paris: Gillaumin et cie, 1897), 214–17.
127. Quesnay, “Grains,” in *Encyclopédie de Diderot et d’Alembert* (Parma: F. M. Ricci, 1970), G, 104; “Laboureur,” in *Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1765), 9.148; Gournay, *Mémoires et Lettres*, 51–52, 60; Turgot, “Euloge de Gournay,” 1.266–69; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 62; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 127; Oser and Blanchfield, *Evolution of Economic Thought*, 28ff.
128. Quesnay, “Impôts,” in *François Quesnay et la physiocratie* (Paris: Institut National d’Études Démographiques, 1958), 602.
129. Turgot, “Euloge de Gournay,” 1.271.
130. Gournay, *Mémoires et Lettres*, 56–57.
131. Quesnay, “Fermiers,” in *Encyclopédie*, F, 52.
132. Quesnay, “Grains,” G, 99–101; Turgot, “Réflexions,” 1.34 (lv); Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 16–18, 43; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 164. Physiocrats wanted to limit taxes to a simple and direct charge to the landowners, since their land produces the only net profit or surplus. All commerce and industry is “sterile” or non-surplus producing. Du Pont, *De l’origine et des progrès d’une science nouvelle*, 41–42, 77; Turgot, “Euloge de Gournay,” 1.278–79; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 50–51; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 44, 100.
133. Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 55–57, 61, 66.
134. Montesquieu, *De l’Esprit des lois* (Paris: Garnier Frères), IV, XX, 4 (2.11); *The Spirit of the Laws*, A. M. Cohler, B. C. Miller, and H. S. Stone (trans. and ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 340–41; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 310; Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 177. Some thought of the new economic system as compatible with monarchy. John Law, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Paul Harsin (ed.) (Paris: du Recueil Sirey, 1934), 3.86–88. Others thought free trade needed religious and political liberty, not capricious despots. John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, “Trade and Naval Power...” (Feb. 3, 1721), in *Cato’s Letters*, Ronald Hamoway (ed.) (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1995), 442, 446–48; Pieter de la Court, *Political Maxims of the State of Holland* (London, 1743), 5–6, 49–50. The physiocrats’ emphasis upon self-interest afforded some tension with the French Revolution and its emphasis upon the general will of the people as the “voice of God.” William Scott, “The Pursuit of ‘Interests’ in the French Revolution: A Preliminary

- Study," *French Historical Studies*, 19/3 (1996): 816, 823, 826; Stephen Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 47–52, 60.
135. Du Pont, *De l'origine et des progrès d'une science nouvelle*, 29–32, 66–67; Gay, *Enlightenment*, 2.494–96; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 182, 304; Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests*, 98. The physiocrats thought of natural laws/natural rights as a revelation of God and basis of governmental activity, much like Locke. Quesnay, *A Treatise on Natural Rights*, 185–86; Du Pont, *De l'origine et des progrès d'une science nouvelle*, 30–32; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 45–46; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 197, 206, 211.
136. Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 26–27, 30, 52–55.
137. Cf. Immanuel Kant, 'The Critique of Practical Reason', in *Great Books of the Western World*, Robert Maynard Hutchins (ed.) (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978), 339–40, 344, 345.



# The Development of Acquisitive Capitalism and Social Darwinism in Britain

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## Bernard Mandeville

One of the most pivotal figures in spreading the quintessential teachings of acquisitive capitalism abroad and turning its salient features into a matter of public debate was Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733). His ancestors were probably Huguenots, who emigrated from France to Holland looking for a more tolerant atmosphere to practice their Reformed faith and succeed in their professional life. His father rose to prominence in the culture as a leading physician, and Bernard followed his steps by studying medicine at Leyden, practicing the profession for a short time in the country, and then moving his practice to London during the early 1690s, where he stayed the rest of his life.<sup>1</sup> In this new environment, Mandeville began another career as an author and spread his controversial message about the public benefit of self-interest and private vice, restating the Jansenist thesis in a more brazen and caustic manner than its previous proponents. The thesis was first mentioned in a poetic piece entitled “The Grumbling Hive” (1705), then developed a few years later in *The Female Tatler* (1709–1710) as a response to Richard Steele’s *The Tatler*, and finally expanded, refined, and broadcasted with uncompromising clarity and candor in his great work *The Fable of the Bees: or, Private Vices, Public Benefits* (1714).<sup>2</sup> The *Fable* gained the *succès de scandale* a decade later when its new enlarged edition was published and immediately denounced by the *London Journal* on July 17, 1723,

catapulting it into the center of public disdain and providing it enough publicity to justify five more editions in the next ten years, with a volume of dialogues added to the first in 1729 supplementing the basic message. During this time, the work endured and prospered under the constant assault from a wide-range of sources: periodicals like the *Bibliothèque Britannique* and *Histoire des Ouvrages des Savans*, bibliographies like *Masch* and *Trinius*, encyclopedias like the *General Dictionary*, and a diverse array of significant scholars and political figures.<sup>3</sup> A number of the reviews referred to the work as making a “great noise in England,” and some saw the controversy spreading to other countries in Europe.<sup>4</sup> The *Fable* found its special significance in bringing to the forefront the Jansenist tradition of self-interest in bold relief,<sup>5</sup> causing people to reel from the dark rhetoric of the book while thinking about the issues and recognizing some validity in its overall thesis. Adam Smith devoted a whole chapter to attacking the “licentious system” of Mandeville,<sup>6</sup> but he was clearly influenced by its teachings and later acknowledged the important impact of its paradoxical defense of capitalism upon the leading figures of the day.<sup>7</sup> In the *Theory of Moral Sentiment* and *Wealth of Nations*, he followed a moderate form of the basic thesis in affirming the depraved motives of people and the salvific effect of self-interest in society, and directly paraphrased other discussions from the *Fable*, as in the case of his famous passages upon the division of labor.<sup>8</sup> Smith and others chose to mitigate the basic thesis of the *Fable* in reeling from a darker reality that might upset the need for an “invisible hand” and moral purpose in life. The new theory of economics lent its more disturbing view of reality to nineteenth-century biology and social sciences in showing how order might develop without design in the work of Thomas Malthus, Charles Darwin, and Herbert Spencer.<sup>9</sup>

Mandeville’s overall thesis developed out of a dark view of the human condition. Darkness characterized the anthropology of the church in general with its emphasis upon the fallen nature of humanity, the confession of sin, and the need for grace to rescue the *massa perditionis*, but some of its strongest expressions were found within the Augustinian tradition of the Jansenists, the growing cynicism in French culture,<sup>10</sup> and the Calvinist background of the Huguenots—all of which played a major role in shaping the worldview of Mandeville. Many of the early Deists and liberals began to question this view of Christianity and preferred a more positive interpretation of human nature—like Lord Shaftesbury, who saw a natural tendency or sentiment toward benevolence in society and accused Mandeville of turning the human race into a pack of “wolves”<sup>11</sup>; but Mandeville categorically rejected the optimistic portrait of the liberal community and remained faithful to the orthodox tradition of total depravity and its pessimistic view of human nature. In his works, he says human beings generally find “real Pleasures” within the “Mundane and Corruptible things” of this worldly existence, excepting a “few Devout Christians,” who

are “preternaturally assisted by divine grace.”<sup>12</sup> He particularly chastens the “well-Bred” gentlemen of the social elite for feigning virtue by making a grand production out of their generosity, while trying to hide their true, self-serving motives from public view.<sup>13</sup> Sometimes he finds an exception within a pious few, but other times he denounces all the activities of all human beings as filled with sordid motives, even the most pious and benevolent acts of human love.<sup>14</sup> Here his work is more consonant with the Calvinist doctrine of civil righteousness and its emphasis upon the total depravity of all Christians and non-Christians alike.<sup>15</sup> This view finds no possibility of human beings offering anything of true righteousness before the ultimate judgment of God while living in this fallen world—above and beyond the Augustinian tradition, which contains the genuine possibility of serving God and performing good deeds through divine grace or the power of the Holy Spirit. In fact, Mandeville applies the Calvinist doctrine to his own fallen nature and cannot find “one Christian virtue” when he examines its motives under the microscope of divine righteousness,<sup>16</sup> much like Paul in Romans 7. He and other human beings might cloak their “darling lusts” and “filthy Appetites” under a veil of “concern for the public Good” and act as if they are working for some noble or moral end, but they never obtain true self-denial in any of their endeavors and only end up deceiving others and themselves about the true reasons lurking behind their overt deeds.<sup>17</sup> Here Mandeville follows the Gospel tradition of denouncing humans as “hypocrites” and “white-washed tombs” (Mt 23) in trying to unmask the true motives of all people, hiding behind Pharisaical appearances, but his critics found him much too harsh in destroying human potential. His anthropology provided Mandeville with a pretext for developing a cynical view of life and satirical way of writing about it—at least according to his critics,<sup>18</sup> while others found him brutally honest.

As one might suspect, Mandeville’s concept of depravity follows the typical concern of acquisitive capitalism and focuses upon self-interest as the archetypal sin. His works expand the discussion to include the animal kingdom as he observes various species killing each other in struggling for their own life or kind and adapting to the natural environment.<sup>19</sup> Humans share this same common instinct for self-preservation in acting according to their own self-interest and selfish motives. All their apparent virtues only cover the underlying desire to satisfy the baser passions of a natural and self-serving impulse.<sup>20</sup> Compassion only comes from the natural instinct for self-preservation in its attempt to eliminate pain.<sup>21</sup>

Later in his works, Mandeville decides to distinguish this instinct for self-preservation or “self-love” from the pride of “self-liking,” which arises only in society when seeking the approval of others.<sup>22</sup>

Self-liking I have call'd that great Value, which all Individuals set upon their own Persons; that high Esteem, which I take all Men to be born with for themselves.... When

this self-liking is excessive, and so openly shewn as to give Offence to others, I know very well it is counted a Vice and called Pride.<sup>23</sup>

Self-love would first make it scrape together every thing it wanted for Sustenance, provide against the Injuries of the Air, and do every thing to make itself and young Ones secure. Self-liking would make it seek for Opportunities, by Gestures, Looks, and Sounds, to display the Value it has for itself, superiour to what it has for others; an untaught Man would desire evry body that came near him, to agree with him in the Opinion of his superior Worth, and be angry, as far as his Fear would let him, with all that should refuse it: He would be highly delighted with, and love evry body, whom he thought to have a good Opinion of him, ....<sup>24</sup>

Mandeville thinks of honor and shame as fundamental factors in moving human beings away from the primitive state of self-preservation and self-gratification toward a more advanced stage of interaction in society. The invention of honor proves more beneficial to society than simple religious admonitions to lead a virtuous life since few people care about practicing genuine humility or reverence toward God as a daily motivating factor in their lives.<sup>25</sup> In history, great civilizations were built through offering their citizens the reward of praise with its many triumphs, monuments, arches, trophies, statues, and inscriptions, not preaching to them pious platitudes or exhortations toward virtue.<sup>26</sup> Even in modern Christian Europe, few men can resist the temptation of restoring their honor through the dreadful practice of dueling, rather than following the biblical mandate to turn the other cheek.<sup>27</sup> Europeans clearly center much of their lives around this special form of self-interest, and Mandeville, along with other capitalists like Bayle and Smith, are just confronting the brutal reality of human conduct in society with as much candor as possible when making honor (or shame) the chief motivating factor in what they witness every day around them.<sup>28</sup>

Mandeville's work provides a direct challenge to Richard Steele's *Tatler* and its all-too-typical denunciation of vice in the public and private sphere, which characterized the Augustan era in England.<sup>29</sup> In his work, he shocks the moral scruples of the era by making a distinction between the private and public sector and showing how unsavory elements are necessary for the "Welfare of trade and Commerce" and the "Sociableness of man," that "Avarice and Prosperity are necessary to the Society," that private vices actually have public benefits.<sup>30</sup> He says those who make sanctimonious preachments against certain passions and want to inculcate the perfect virtue of a "Golden Age" only end up discouraging the very elements that create a "wealthy and powerful Nation," an "opulent and flourishing people."<sup>31</sup> Without English women coveting Asian silk, their trading partner would possess no capital to "purchase the vast Quantities of fine English Cloth," and both economies would suffer.<sup>32</sup> In the "Grumbling Hive," the many vices of



“Fraud, Luxury, and Pride” actually made the culture thrive with the “buzz” of economic prosperity and social interaction.<sup>33</sup>

Luxury Employ'd a Million of the Poor,  
 And odious Pride a Million more:  
 Envy itself, and Vanity,  
 Were Ministers of Industry;  
 Their darling Folly, Fickleness,  
 In Diet, Furniture and Dress,  
 That strange ridic'ulous Vice, was made  
 The very Wheel that turn'd the Trade.<sup>34</sup>

When the vices of the hive were decreased for a time through the miraculous intervention of the gods, all the occupants grew content with their possessions and settled into a lower standard of living.<sup>35</sup>

According to Mandeville, vices are necessary to produce a luxurious and felicitous lifestyle.<sup>36</sup> Money might be the root of all evil (1 Tim 6:10), but no economy can truly prosper without it, making the exigencies of the world much different from the spiritual admonitions of the gospel.<sup>37</sup> The state might express concern about certain defects within its social arrangements and forward interests that exceed the base material prosperity of its subjects, but no one wants complete moral virtue to fetter society; it would be foolish to try and fix every moral problem in trying to create a perfect world.<sup>38</sup> Mandeville thinks it is wiser to develop a balanced approach by accepting un-Christian motives and practices as a necessary part of a fallen world, without overtly trying to advocate criminal behavior or maintain that all vices are useful.<sup>39</sup> Sometimes he can say that “Virtue is more beneficial than Vice . . . for the Peace and real Happiness of Society in general” and “Temporal felicity of every individual,”<sup>40</sup> but he never thinks it is wise for society to try and cleanse the world from sin and often finds some evil necessary in order to prevent a much greater evil from presenting itself and so destroying the people. He finds dueling a necessary part of his particular world in keeping people more civil and courteous to each other, even if a few might die in the process.<sup>41</sup> “There would be twenty times the mischief done there is now, or else you have twenty times the constables and other officers to keep the peace [sic].”<sup>42</sup> He also finds “publick stews” a necessary evil in protecting and preserving virtuous women from the seduction of rapacious male appetites, allowing “Chastity” to be “supported by Incontinence” and a few prostitutes sacrificed for the general honor of most women. He maintains that wise politicians support or tolerate this practice, recognizing the need to protect society from the greater harm of rape, debauchery, and sexual immorality among the general populace.<sup>43</sup> He particularly dislikes artificial,

egalitarian measures to meddle in the natural differences between human beings and prefers a laissez-faire policy of letting nature take its course.<sup>44</sup> He finds the attempt to educate the poor and improve their lot in life the epitome of “pious smugness, self-righteousness, and stupidity.”<sup>45</sup> It is better for a “well-ordered society” that a “certain Portion of Ignorance” subsists within it to perform the menial tasks of labor, rather than develop a victimization complex by making the poor discontent with their important role in the economy. It is better for their children “to wear out their Clothes by useful Labour, and blacken them with Country Dirt for something, instead of tearing them off their Backs at play, and dawbing them with Ink for nothing.”<sup>46</sup>

...every Hour those of poor People spend at their Book is so much time lost to the Society. Going to school in comparison to Working is Idleness, and the longer Boys continue in this easy sort of Life, the more unfit they’ll be when grownup for down-right Labour, both as to Strength and Inclination.<sup>47</sup>

Many critics associated Mandeville with Tacitus, Machiavelli, and a disturbing trend toward *Realpolitik* that was destroying public morality in their mind.<sup>48</sup> George Blewitt accused him of making evil an “essential [component] of society,”<sup>49</sup> and it is difficult to defend him against this charge. Certainly, Mandeville’s work speaks over and over about the impossibility of forging a Christian nation, since few follow the precepts of the religion in their daily lives, and the basic tenets of the faith are incompatible with the pride and war-like instincts it takes to create a mighty nation—much the same way as Machiavelli characterized the situation.<sup>50</sup> In creating the dichotomy between public and private life, Mandeville eliminates the possibility, or even the need for virtuous behavior in the political realm,<sup>51</sup> maintaining the “no Society can be rais’d into such a rich and mighty kingdom, or so rais’d, subsist in their Wealth and Power for any considerable times, without the Vices of Man.”<sup>52</sup> He never proceeds in the direction of Helvétius or tries to eliminate the dichotomy in a utilitarian manner by justifying the political means in terms of a good social outcome, but remains content in representing the facts of life without attempting a simple reconciliation.<sup>53</sup> In many ways, Mandeville is paving the way toward the work of sociologists, who make a concerted effort in trying to detach their analysis from a moralistic viewpoint and concentrate on the effect of individual actions upon the collective whole, regardless of the personal intention of the actor or its ethical value. Mandeville’s religious and moral commitment remains steadfast throughout his work, but like many early capitalists, he paves the way for sociologists by dispensing with personal convictions and providing a new framework for thinking about social consequences, where rational or ethical intention seldom match the results.<sup>54</sup>

When Mandeville thinks of true religion, he disregards its effects on society and considers it an other-worldly existence regarding self-denial or resistance to the passions of this world.<sup>55</sup> Many critics questioned his ascetic concept of virtue,<sup>56</sup> but Mandeville insists that self-denial is the essence of spiritual virtue or true Christian piety.<sup>57</sup> His social analysis represents a disconcerting reality for him that most people spend their time pursuing the pleasures of this world; and those who practice the ascetic-type of lifestyle, the “sincere and real Christians,” are few and far between, possessing little impact on society.<sup>58</sup> Mandeville’s understanding of people clearly comes from his Reformed background, which finds it impossible to serve God apart from grace and sees few people elected unto this higher calling.<sup>59</sup>

Many modern scholars dismiss Mandeville’s clear and unequivocal testimony to his religious convictions. They often treat him as a religious subversive with a surreptitious plan to ridicule and undermine faith, but in doing so, they seem to reveal little more than their own secular agenda in subverting what is plainly in the text and wanting to claim such an important figure as one of their own. F. B. Kaye appears most responsible for advancing this bizarre interpretation of Mandeville and the *Fable* in his important introduction to the work, unveiling the author as an atheist or Deist, continually hiding under the mask of Christian faith to ward off persecution and secretly defend a secular, empiricist, and utilitarian point of view<sup>60</sup>; but such an interpretation would contravene Mandeville’s continuous profession of the faith and rejection of deism in just about all his works. Unless he is a pathological liar or engaging in the type of hypocrisy that is so reviled in the *Fable*, he can hardly be interpreted as a secularist. He clearly follows the Reformation and the basic cultural milieu of his day in using literal hermeneutical principles to interpret the Bible and support the historical account of Adam and Eve, Noah’s ark, and the Tower of Babel.<sup>61</sup> He accepts the typical Protestant shibboleths of *sola fides*, *sola gratia*, and *sola scriptura* in finding the human race unworthy and incapable of receiving the knowledge and salvation of God apart from grace.<sup>62</sup> He remains true to his Reformed background by endorsing the Pauline doctrine of predestination as the clear teaching of Scripture, even if he wants toleration to reign among the polemical sides of the debate.<sup>63</sup> He conducts a serious polemical campaign of his own against the Catholic Church, particularly denouncing its priests and rituals for enslaving the laity to Rome during the Middle Ages.<sup>64</sup> He promotes religious toleration and extends the same policy to atheists as moral citizens—much like Bayle, yet he hesitates in granting the courtesy to Catholics as an ardent polemicist against its priestcraft and propensity toward hierarchical authority in church and state—much like Locke.<sup>65</sup> All in all, he presents the picture of an ecumenical, non-denominational Protestant, who wants toleration to reign between conformists

and non-conformists in the land of England, while displaying a decided tendency toward the Reformed or anti-Catholic side of the debate in the struggle over the soul of the Anglican Church.<sup>66</sup> If all this is an elaborate ruse, he provides no real indication of it, or wavering over his convictions to allow scholars to understand him in a different manner.

Much of the misunderstanding comes from a failure to appreciate his clear distinction between faith and reason. Unlike the later *philosophes*, he never takes his musings with utmost seriousness so as to proceed into complete skepticism and undermine his faith.<sup>67</sup> He displays a dim view of natural human sagacity and its ability to possess the true knowledge of God, beyond some vague awareness of an “Invisible Cause” behind all things.<sup>68</sup> The truth of God only comes from a direct revelation, inducing the believer to forsake the power of reason and trust in what God has revealed in Scripture.<sup>69</sup> Its mysteries live above the arrogant pretenses of philosophy to judge the divine revelation and determine what is beyond human reach (1 Cor 1–2).<sup>70</sup> Even his philosophical musings remain a debatable and fallible witness to the limits of human reason and carry no absolute authority for the believer next to the Scripture.<sup>71</sup> In this way, Mandeville follows the same basic outline as Bayle in allowing reason to exercise its autonomous powers and present honest problems for a religious view of the world without going too far and undermining the faith itself. Both Bayle and Mandeville come from a Reformed theological community that provides a spiritual matrix for this understanding of faith and reason to develop in emphasizing the qualitative distinction between God and human beings (*solus deus*), negating the ability of a lost and fallen race to establish the true knowledge of God (*massa perditionis*), and making salvation/revelation dependent upon divine grace or the miraculous and personal activity of God (*sola gratia*). Mandeville follows the Reformed tradition and probably receives inspiration from Bayle to interpret the faith in this particular way as a basic source of his ideas.<sup>72</sup>

By far the chief of these [influences] was Pierre Bayle. In the *Fable* Mandeville cited Bayle and borrowed from him again and again—especially from his *Miscellaneous Reflections*; in his *Free Thoughts* Mandeville specifically confessed the debt which that book owed to Bayle’s *Dictionary*; and the germ of the *Origin of Honour* is to be found in *Miscellaneous Reflections*.... It is worth noting, too, that Bayle was teaching in Rotterdam while Mandeville was attending the Erasmian School there..., and that, consequently, Mandeville may have had personal contact with Bayle.<sup>73</sup>

Mandeville maintains his faith in the midst of rational arguments that might cast doubt upon his religion and erode its very foundation. He perseveres in the typical pious manner whenever intellectual problems arise and cause disturbances with simple piety by deferring to divine providence and its use of tainted means to

serve a greater purpose and bring about a good result for society<sup>74</sup>; but one can still wonder whether his system needs to explain the outcome of life miraculously when its normal chaotic forces can fit together and do the job on their own. His system finds government intervention unnecessary for the most part in following the basic laissez-faire economic policies of the early capitalists and believing that private interests reap public benefits.<sup>75</sup> Mandeville thinks it best not to meddle in the “Felicity, that would flow spontaneously from the Nature of every large Society” by interjecting the “short-sighted Wisdom” of “well-meaning people.”<sup>76</sup> The order of life evolves over a long period through slow changes or the “joynt Labour of many Ages,” making “morals, mores, reason and speech the product of an evolution that has taken” a long time.<sup>77</sup> In this way of thinking, life is more comparable to the production of a ship and less analogous to a rational machine with a complex mechanical design—the age-old basis of theistic argumentation. A ship evolves through numerous trials and errors of many civilizations, making small changes over a long period, without a specific end in view or antecedent mathematical design.<sup>78</sup>

Cleomenes: The Chevalier Reneau has wrote a Book, in which he shews the Mechanism of sailing, and accounts mathematically for every thing that belongs to the working and steering of a Ship. I am persuaded, that neither the first inventors of Ships and sailing, of those, who have Improvements since any Part of them, ever dream'd of those Reasons [ or technological improvements], any more than now the rudest and most illiterate of the vulgar do when they are made Sailors, which Time and Practice will do in Spight of their Teeth.... I verily believe, not only that the raw beginners, who made the first Essays in either Art, good manners as well as Sailing, were ignorant of the true Cause, the real Foundation those Arts are built upon in Nature; but likewise that, even now both Arts are brought to great Perfection, the greatest Part of those that are most expert, and daily making Improvements in them, know as little of the Rationale of them, as their Predecessors did at first.<sup>79</sup>

Horatio: If, as you said, and which I now believe to be true, the people, who first invented, and afterwards improved upon ships and sailing, never dreamed of those reasons of Monsieur Reneau, it is impossible that they should have acted upon them, as motives that induced them a priori to put their inventions and improvements in practice, with knowledge and design; which, I suppose, is what you intended to prove.<sup>80</sup>

This illustration of Mandeville will be used later in the work of Hume and Darwin in seeing life as evolving through a process of small adaptations and botched attempts, rather than one massive design like the famous watch of William Paley.<sup>81</sup>

## Adam Smith

Adam Smith (1723–1790) followed Mandeville and the basic tradition of acquisitive capitalism in composing its most celebrated work, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776). Smith was born in Kirkcaldy, a small fishing village near Edinburgh, and went off to study at the University of Glasgow when he was 14 years of age, sitting under Francis Hutcheson, and later attended Balliol College at Oxford. He served as a Professor of Moral Philosophy at the University of Glasgow for over a decade beginning in 1752 and then took a position as a tutor of the young duke of Buccleuch, where he traveled to France for a couple of years and met with important “enlightened” figures like Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin, Hume, Helvétius, Turgot, Quesnay, and other physiocrats, already sharing many of their ideas.<sup>82</sup> Upon his return to Britain, he began work on the *Wealth of Nations*, which took around a decade to finish writing, editing, and finally publishing it in 1776.

The work clearly emerged and operated within the tradition of acquisitive capitalism, but a more precise origin of its ideas is difficult to pinpoint, given the sparse references to specific sources in his writings.<sup>83</sup> With this reservation, one can still sense the relative significance of the physiocrats for Smith as prominent purveyors of the tradition. Smith considered the physiocrats’ system “with all its imperfections” a significant challenge to Mercantilist policy on free trade and the nearest approximation to the truth on the political economy.<sup>84</sup> They might have overreacted to Mercantilism by centering the economy upon agrarian concerns, but their belief in the liberty to pursue one’s economic interests and freedom from excessive taxation and regulation made a significant impression upon Smith in formulating his ideas.<sup>85</sup> In fact, he thought of dedicating the *Wealth of Nations* to Quesnay at one point as a testimony to his rigorous economic thinking and influential ideas, but the latter died before Smith’s work was finally completed.<sup>86</sup>

Of course, one must not exaggerate the influence of a single source like Quesnay or the physiocrats and show some deference to the many other sources of the tradition, pervasive in Smith’s era and elite circles. Early on, in his *Theory or Moral Sentiment* (1759), he specifically mentions the work of Rousseau, La Rochefoucauld, and Mandeville as a part of the tradition. He chooses at this time to deprecate the “licentious system” of Mandeville and La Rochefoucauld, focusing his ire particularly upon Mandeville’s ascetic view of morality, treatment of all human passions as evil, and over-emphasis upon self-interest as the center of society, preferring instead to promote the more sensible treatment of Rousseau upon the subject with his emphasis upon sympathy.<sup>87</sup> He tries to uphold a conservative moral stance within the work and distance his ideas from the darker moments of

the *Fable* in warding off criticism from his own opinions and presenting a more eclectic and balanced approach to the issues at hand. However, he already follows Mandeville and the tradition's more disturbing ideas by recognizing vanity as an essential impetus in society and finding some element of truth in the paradoxical relationship between private vice (or self-interest) and public benefit.<sup>88</sup> Later, Smith commends Rousseau because he “softened, improved, and embellished, and stript [Mandeville’s principles] of all that tendency to corruption and licentiousness which has disgraced them in [the] original author [of the *Fable of the Bees*],”<sup>89</sup> not that he overturned its fundamental truth. By the time he completes the *Wealth of Nations*, his writing reflects a more willing and open disciple of the tradition in expressing its more disturbing elements, without ever leaving a critical sense of proportion and balance in recognizing some of its defects.

Smith follows the tradition's accent upon self-interest or self-love as a fundamental principle in understanding human activity.<sup>90</sup> He finds this motivation understandable in human beings, given the need to sustain their lives as an indelible aspect of finite existence. Only a deity can afford to act out of benevolence in all external activities since the divine life exists in complete, self-sustained glory without any need of anything else to enhance its eternal perfection.<sup>91</sup> Much of human activity must be taken up with meeting its needs, and Smith finds this motivating factor particularly pervasive when explaining the economy.<sup>92</sup>

It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard for their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages.<sup>93</sup>

To Smith, these interests and passions are not evil but understood in the manner of Rousseau as natural aspects of the human condition, which manifest themselves “upon many occasions [as] very laudable principles of action” when used through the prudence of rational discrimination and moral judgment.<sup>94</sup> In this sense, he rejects the paradox between private vice and public virtue because it is based upon Mandeville's ascetic system of value, which turns self-interest into a vice and discounts the possibility of a positive application of its desires.<sup>95</sup>

Smith certainly tries to paint a brighter picture than the *Fable* in his discussion of self-interest, but he still recognizes the considerable truth in Mandeville's darker image and also goes on to speak of a morally corrupt side of it permeating society. Like Rousseau and others, he distinguishes the genuine natural needs of self-interest from those driven by the artificial pressures of society, where citizens long for the favorable “opinions of others,” seeking “honour without virtue.”<sup>96</sup> “It is vanity, not the ease, or the pleasure, which interests us.... The desire of becoming

the proper object of this respect...is perhaps the strongest of all our desires, [much more than] supplying all the necessities and conveniences of the body.... The rich man glories in his riches, because he feels they naturally draw upon him the attention of the world."<sup>97</sup> He admits that riches may serve as a partial motive inducing people to cultivate the soil, build houses and cities, and improve the arts and sciences, but this desire is secondary to the lust for honor, which serves Mandeville and many others within the tradition as a constant theme in describing what is most essential in depicting contemporary society and its corruption of simple human needs. Smith finds the lust for honor so pervasive in his world that he thinks of society as deriving its impetus and general rules of engagement from this basic concern over the approval and disapproval of others—"the love, the respect, or the horror of the spectator."<sup>98</sup> The rich might possess an "eye larger than the belly," but they "consume little more than the poor" and end up distributing much of their produce to those in need, wittingly or unwittingly, so riches cannot serve as the fundamental motive, even within these depraved souls.<sup>99</sup>

Smith views self-interest as the principal governing motive in explaining human economic affairs, even in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.<sup>100</sup> The economy generally runs upon self-interest in appealing to the advantage of each participant, who says, "Give me that which I want, and you shall have this which you want."<sup>101</sup> Thus, Smith follows the paradox of Mandeville in this particular sense by finding within the pursuit of individual advantage unplanned and unintended consequences resulting in the benefit of others and the welfare of the public on a larger scale.<sup>102</sup>

He finds this paradox somewhat miraculous and appeals like other members of the tradition to divine providence as guiding the process above and beyond the chaotic intensions of individual self-interest to ensure a rational and harmonious result for all. In both his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* and *Wealth of Nations*, he finds the conflict disturbing enough to find its resolution only within the mysterious activity of an "invisible hand." He says each individual "intends only his own security" and "gain" but is "led" by an "invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention ... [often] more effectively than when he intends to promote it."<sup>103</sup> He says the rich end up forwarding a benevolent intention to divide the earth's provisions in "equal proportions among all its inhabitants...without intending it, without knowing it" through the same secret guidance of an "invisible hand."<sup>104</sup> In all this, the economy finds its analogy within the larger workings of Nature, which also directs irrational instincts to "fulfill beneficent ends which the Director of nature intended to produce"—the passions of hunger, thirst, and pleasure driving their participants to fulfill the divine will without real knowledge of the ultimate purpose.<sup>105</sup> Nature provides sexual urges and paternal instincts as



a means of forwarding its true end in the propagation of the species, providing a quintessential example of the irrational way in which nature and the economy work in general, deriving its order from the chaotic nature of forces working below the surface.<sup>106</sup>

This concept of life might lead other commentators like Schopenhauer and Darwin to develop a more atheistic interpretation of the way nature works, but Smith remains committed to the basic tradition of his society and early capitalism in affirming a belief in divine providence. He speaks of the universe as a “great machine” with “secret wheels and springs,” God as the “great Architect of the Universe,” the “great Director of Nature,” or “Invisible Hand,” and uses the metaphor of a “watch-maker” to demonstrate a theistic, or teleological belief in the nature of life serving a final cause.<sup>107</sup> At times, he proceeds in this line of thinking as far as it goes and thinks of the universe as the best of all possible worlds, as if the cosmic force contrives and conducts the immense machine in such a way that self-interest perfectly matches the general welfare as “happiness and perfection of the species”; even the “weakness and folly of men” serve the greater design of the divine “wisdom and goodness.”<sup>108</sup> But one wonders whether Smith is holding on to a mythological explanation against the basic propensities of his understanding of the way life works in reality and on its terms, just like so many others in the early stages of the tradition. First of all, he admits that life does not always yield such sublime results in his way of thinking, so he finds it necessary to interject the government here and there to correct the abuses of self-interest through prudent and moralistic policies. Second, he often shows how self-interest results in societal benefits through offering simple examples but seems to defy the explanatory value of his own illustrations by interjecting a mystical force that no longer serves any real purpose. Why interject a *deus ex machina* when no real mystery remains about the fundamental mechanisms of the economy when the chaos of self-interest can explain the apparent order or design in a simple manner? Does the presupposition of a divine force serve any real purpose?

Like the physiocrats, Smith continues to persevere in understanding nature through theistic categories, emphasizing the natural law and exhibiting the same tensions as his predecessors in describing the divine role in it.<sup>109</sup> Sometimes the laws of nature refer to the machine of divine creation that can be described in a rational, mathematical, and scientific manner when studying the empirical form of its design and inner workings. Other times the natural law refers to divine imperatives, which God impresses upon all human beings, serving as a guide for success in receiving its rewards as if obeying the laws of karma. Smith says that “every virtue naturally meets with its proper reward, with the recompense which is most fit to encourage and promote it; and this too is so surely, that it requires a

very extraordinary concurrence of circumstances entirely to disappoint it,” making it “almost always true” that “honesty is the best policy,” that nature rewards the “industrious knave” over the “indolent man.”<sup>110</sup>

The tension within the natural law leads him to adopt a distinct dualism in his view of government policy. On the one hand, he advocates a *laissez-faire* policy as the fundamental disposition of the government toward the economy answering to his emphasis upon the way nature happens to work out best through its own design and maintaining that politicians should stay out of it and let the forces of nature set prices and wages according to the law of supply and demand.<sup>111</sup> In this way, he champions the cause of freedom: the freedom of choice in occupations through the absence of regulations and settlement laws, the freedom of trade in commerce by repealing restrictions on land transfers and abolishing import duties and local custom taxes, and the freedom from undue regulation in general, so much associated with the Mercantilist regime and its protection of special interest groups, inhibiting genuine competition and the freedom of all citizens.<sup>112</sup> On the other hand, he ends up rejecting a doctrinaire *laissez-faire* policy and finds a more positive role for government to play in the economy answering to his belief in the moral imperative within the natural law and recognizing that what transpires in the world of nature and self-interest does not always serve a wise, good, or prudent end.<sup>113</sup> Here he decides to list three basic duties as the specific responsibility of the sovereign: to protect society against foreign and domestic violence; to establish an exact administration of justice, and to erect “certain public institutions and certain public works.”<sup>114</sup> He also speaks of an “impartial spectator,” who judges the propriety of individual activity and makes it fit within the general rules of society.<sup>115</sup> The passions of self-interest must be tempered by a sense of “fair play” and the “laws of justice,” which discourage violence toward others and ensure a benevolent purpose for all.<sup>116</sup> These laws find a basis within an “immediate sense and feeling” of the divine will, and have no pretext within the empirical or rational calculations of utilitarianism. Smith rejects the attempt of David Hume and the early English Deists to restore a genuine sense of ethics through secular means and prefers the inconsistency of a moderate stance, which clings to the old religious and moral categories while subscribing to the basic principles of acquisitive capitalism.<sup>117</sup>

## Social Darwinism

Despite Smith’s concerns, the theory was extended into the social sphere to question the traditional moral approaches, and found one of its most disturbing applications within the pitiless world of Social Darwinism, which viewed the old

moral reaction to human misery as counterproductive. This new approach to social issues received an early impetus from the work of Thomas Malthus (1766–1834), a Cambridge mathematician and rector of a parish. Malthus simply took a number of basic ideas from Smith and expanded them into a more sober and arresting view of life, as embodied in his controversial work, *An Essay of the Principle of Population* (1798)—a book that “haunted,” “overshadowed,” and “darkened all English life for seventy years,” according to its critics.<sup>118</sup> The work was excoriated for its dark message in seeing misery as a fact of life and directly opposed by authors like William Godwin and the Marquis de Condorcet, who heralded an optimistic view of human “perfectability” and unlimited possibilities following the French Revolution.<sup>119</sup> In the work, Malthus acknowledges the disconcerting nature of his thesis and the heartfelt desires of his critics to paint a rosier picture of life and its future possibilities, but he also finds them disingenuous and wants to develop a more realistic conception about the prospects for success, given the indelible nature of human vice and weakness and the “unconquerable difficulties” of making genuine progress on certain issues.<sup>120</sup> He wants to face life with all the integrity and skepticism of Mandeville’s analysis, rather than escape its problems and try to create an illusory world of idealistic expectations, which only end up making the brute realities of everyday existence even worse.

Within this spirit, Malthus sees suffering as an integral aspect of life and essential part of the divine plan. He finds it impossible to remove its cruelties through idealistic government policies and better to embrace suffering as a necessary component of the grand scheme of things for stimulating “mental and corporeal” development of the species.<sup>121</sup> Malthus finds suffering most beneficial in checking the problem of population growth since humans tend to multiply beyond their food supply and need a means of reducing the number of mouths to feed.<sup>122</sup> According to the theory, population tends to increase in a “geometric ratio,” while “subsistence increases only in an arithmetical ratio,” causing a “strong and constantly operating check on population from the difficulty of subsistence,” which can hardly keep up with the growth.<sup>123</sup> Malthus finds it wise for the government to practice a *laissez-faire* policy and let nature take its course without trying to alter what works best on its own principles. Poor-laws involving public and private assistance only help a few misfortunate souls and have no effect on the problem of starvation in the country among the general populace. Handing out money only helps those who receive it, without increasing production, and makes those who receive nothing from the program starve by forcing them to pay more and more for less and less food according to the law of supply and demand.<sup>124</sup>

If one hears in these words some of the basic themes of acquisitive capitalism, it is because Malthus relates them to Smith’s economic theories<sup>125</sup> and stresses

many of the same themes of Smith and other capitalists within the text as bearing upon his social interpretation. He speaks of the basic capitalistic emphasis upon self-interest as the fundamental motivating factor of human beings. He rejects William Godwin's emphasis upon benevolence as the most important factor in society, along with the typical left-wing call for rich people to give the necessities of life unto the poor without exacting labor.<sup>126</sup> He also speaks with the same skepticism of capitalism toward the Mercantilist System, rejecting the need for the government to meddle in the economy and preferring to let the basic laws of nature "operate as a constant check to incipient population" in creating equilibrium.<sup>127</sup> Even his basic thesis finds some mention within the *Wealth of Nations*, where Smith speaks with some concern over population levels in wanting people and animals to multiply "in proportion to the means of subsistence" and the demand for labor to determine the rate of birth<sup>128</sup>—affording much the same sentiment as Malthus and indicating the clear affinity and relation between the works of these two scholars and their schools of thought.

Smith's form of capitalism was never an isolated theory of economics, but a part of a social tradition that contained ramifications for other disciplines as a total perspective upon life. Perhaps, most interesting was its relation to the emerging science of biology in the nineteenth century and the social theories that developed in light of this relationship, where science and economics merged with each other in significant ways. Charles Darwin saw the relationship in developing his theory of evolution and recognizing its larger social implications. In his writings, he borrows Mandeville's analogy of a ship to illustrate his basic mechanism of evolutionary development and show how life can evolve in a piecemeal manner through a step-by-step process of trial and error, without an end in view or antecedent design, just like Mandeville's concept of capitalism.<sup>129</sup>

When we no longer look at organic being as a savage looks at a ship, as at something wholly beyond his comprehension; when we regard every production of nature as one which has had a history; when we contemplate every complex structure and instinct as the summing up of many contrivances, each useful to the processor, nearly in the same way as when we look at any great mechanical invention as the summing up of the labour, the experience, the reason, and even the blunders of numerous workmen; when we thus view each organic being, how far more interesting, I speak from experience, will the study of natural history become.<sup>130</sup>

He and Wallace also speak of Malthus' significant influence upon them in developing their respective theories of natural selection. Wallace says,

But perhaps the most important book I read was Malthus's "Principles of Population", which I greatly admired for its mastery summary of the facts and logical induction to

conclusions. It was the first work that I had yet read treating of any of the problems of philosophical biology, and its main principles remained with me as a permanent possession, and twenty years gave me the long-sought clue to the effective agent in the evolution of organic species...without which work I should probably not have hit upon the theory of natural selection and obtained full credit for its independent discovery.... [W]hile again considering the problem of the origin of the species, something led me to think of Malthus' *Essay on Population* (which I had read about ten years before), and the "positive checks"—war, disease, famine, accidents, etc.—which he adduced as keeping all savage populations nearly stationary. It then occurred to me that these checks must also act upon animals, and keep down their numbers; and as they increase so much faster than man does, ... While vaguely thinking how this would affect any species, there suddenly flashed upon me the idea of the survival of the fittest.<sup>131</sup>

Darwin mentions reading Malthus's *Essay* on September 28, 1838, and proceeds to talk about its importance in developing his theory.<sup>132</sup>

In October 1838, that is, fifteen months after I had begun my systematic inquiry, I happened to read for amusement Malthus on *Population*, and being well prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence which everywhere goes on from long-continued observation of the habits of animals and plants, it at once struck me under these circumstances favourable variations would tend to be preserved, and unfavourable ones to be destroyed. The result of this would be the formation of a new species. Here, then, I had last got a theory by which to work; but I was so anxious to avoid prejudice, that I determined not for some time to write even the briefest sketch of it.<sup>133</sup>

As soon as I had fully realized this idea [of the power of selection], I saw, on reading Malthus on *Population*, that Natural Selection was the inevitable result of the rapid increase of all organic beings; for I was prepared to appreciate the struggle for existence by having long studied the habits of animals.<sup>134</sup>

You are right, that I came to the conclusion that selection was the principle of change from the study of domestic productions; and then, reading Malthus, I saw at once how to apply this principle.<sup>135</sup>

A struggle for existence inevitably follows from the high rate at which all organic beings tend to increase. Every being, which during its natural lifetime produces several eggs or seeds, must suffer destruction during some period of its life, and during some season or occasional year, otherwise, on the principle of geometrical increase, its numbers would quickly become so inordinately great that no country should support the product. Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life. It is the doctrine of Malthus applied with manifold force to the whole animal and vegetable kingdom.<sup>136</sup>

[My theory of evolution] ... is the doctrine of Malthus applied in most cases with ten-fold force.<sup>137</sup>

In these testimonies, Darwin speaks of his fundamental agreement with Malthus concerning the geometric expansion of the species and the natural check upon the expansion, leading to starvation and selection.<sup>138</sup> Malthus helps Darwin understand the importance of struggle within nature in evolving the species by showing the difficulty of supporting a large offspring in an environment and allowing the strong to triumph over the weak.<sup>139</sup>

Darwin makes more of a concerted effort to confine his work to the realm of natural history, but his ideas were formulated within a larger cultural context and were destined to precipitate into a larger social agenda.<sup>140</sup> John Maynard Keynes sees the Darwinians as simply outpacing the capitalists in advocating “the supreme achievement of chance, operating under conditions of free competition and *laissez-faire*” government policy, with Herbert Spencer and the “Social Darwinians” serving as the supreme example of this intimate relationship.<sup>141</sup> Even Darwin recognizes the relation and remains personally linked to the economic and social ramifications of his theory in accepting Spencer’s phrase “survival of the fittest” as a “more accurate” way of conceiving “natural selection,” while expressing admiration for Spencer’s general application of the theory to society.<sup>142</sup> Darwin can speak just like Malthus in rejecting human intervention on behalf of the weak, finding poor-laws and asylums “highly injurious to the race of man” and counterproductive to achieving the ultimate triumph of the strong.

We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their own kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man.<sup>143</sup>

In the case of corporeal structures, it is the selection of the slightly better-endowed and the elimination of the slightly less well-endowed individuals, and not the preservation of strongly-marked and rare anomalies, that leads to the advancement of a species. So it will be with the intellectual faculties, since the somewhat abler men in each grade of society succeed rather better than the less able, and consequently increase in number, if not otherwise prevented. When in any nation the standard of intellect and the number of intellectual men have increased, we might expect from the law of the deviation from an average, that prodigies of genius will, as shewn by Mr. Galton, appear somewhat more frequently than before.<sup>144</sup>

Lastly, I could show fight on natural selection having done and doing more for the progress of civilization than you seem inclined to admit. Remember what risk the nations of Europe ran not so many years ago of being overwhelmed by the Turks, and how ridiculous such an idea now is! The more civilized so-called Caucasian races have beaten the Turkish hollow in the struggle for existence. Looking at the world at no very distant date, what an endless number of the lower races will have been eliminated by the higher civilized races throughout the world.<sup>145</sup>

This world of Social Darwinism represented a much different perspective on life than the Pauline concept of self-sacrificing love for the weak and down-and-out (1 Cor 1). It represented a different social message than the Puritan concept of altruistic capitalism, which exhorted its followers to sacrifice the pleasure of narcissistic goals and work for others in building a “City on a Hill” and a better life for future generations. Social Darwinism developed out of a different tradition of capitalism, which was more pessimistic about redeeming society, given the innate darkness of human nature and the need to be realistic about future prospects. The acquisitive capitalists saw no possibility of cleansing the world from the tainted motives of self-interest or escaping its tribulations and imposing a religious order on society that might change human nature into a more sublime image. It was best to leave people alone and let them follow their own devices as they often work for a good social outcome above and beyond their desires, no matter how unseemly or selfish the motives in performing the task at hand. It was best to reject the heavy-hand of government intervention in their lives and its counterproductive measures of bolstering the economy or feeding the poor, and recognize the wisdom of a *Realpolitik* that lets life take its course and work things out on its terms. It was unwise to forget the brute realities of life and live in a Platonic, dream-like state of ideal perfection, trying to build a utopian or Christian nation and only making matters worse in an attempt to make all things right and prop up the weak and their wretchedness.

Because of this, many acquisitive capitalists ended up embracing a dichotomy between faith and reason, answering to their division between the spiritual admonitions of the Christian gospel and the practical realities of temporal existence. The old religious and moral categories had difficulty explaining the chaotic way of the world’s inner mechanism, bringing along with it a certain amount of skepticism to traditional theistic rationalizations of life’s difficulties. Reformed scholars like Bayle and Mandeville tried to rescue the faith from the criticisms of reason by applying their theological beliefs in the total depravity of humankind and the all-sufficient grace of God to develop a dichotomy between faith and reason. They permitted their philosophical musings to venture into questionable areas and posit dangerous ideas, like the social efficacy of self-interest, while confessing the frailty of human

reason, its inadequacy to penetrate divine mysteries, and the need for a special act of grace to receive the true and solid revelation of God. Almost all of the early capitalists deferred to divine providence when explaining the relationship between the beneficent end of life and questionable means that were employed to reach it as if witnessing a miraculous act of reconciliation beyond the reach of human imagination, but secularism was growing, and its apologists gaining ground: some beginning to mitigate the paradox in favor of reason, and others seeking to eliminate faith altogether. Smith mitigated the paradox by rejecting the depravity of self-interest and merging its desires with those of the public, even though he continued to embrace the moral law of the “impartial spectator” to rectify abuses in the system and refused to proceed any further and accept the atheistic and utilitarian schema of Hume. Helvétius was much more consistent in this line of thinking and rejected the basic dichotomy by forwarding the perspective of a thoroughgoing atheist, who no longer needed any innate ideas or moral categories and interpreted life in materialistic terms—far beyond the British empiricists and most French *philosophes*. Helvétius eliminated the paradox by centering society around the self-interest of the greatest happiness principle, denying the depravity of humankind and its desires, and making self-interest the efficacious means of virtue in the spirit of a thoroughgoing utilitarian point of view. In this more consistent perspective, laissez-faire capitalism meant that life worked fine on its own principles, without any need for an outside standard of righteousness or special help from the “invisible hand” to interfere or perform some extraordinary act. In Social Darwinism, the dogma of non-interference was made complete in its defiance of typical religious sensibilities. For Malthus, suffering was a simple fact of life and worked well on its own terms in controlling the population without the government intervening and messing things up through acts of charity. For Darwin, life was like a ship, which evolved through the everyday struggles of self-preservation and found no need for creative planning or outside orchestration, exorcizing the presence of God from any meaningful role in modern biological sciences.

The ruthless world of Social Darwinism lost favor and gave way to a more egalitarian spirit in western civilization after the defeat of Hitler’s racial policies in World War II. In America, William F. Buckley fought to preserve a religious element within the Republican Party and its basic allegiance to capitalist principles,<sup>146</sup> but he was swimming against the powerful stream of left-wing intelligentsia in the country, which was proceeding toward secularism and erected a wall of separation between church and state in 1947 through the mere fiat of the U.S. Supreme Court. Even the Republican Party was proceeding along with the current in a secular direction, only leaving God to a few footnotes and formulas of political rhetoric to satisfy the remnant of religious affection among the people. Ayn Rand



represented the secular side of the party in emphasizing acquisitive capitalism in its most atheistic form. She made her appeal to the modern consumer and the growing materialistic interests in the country while mitigating the racial aspect of Social Darwinism or the callous disregard for the poor as no longer offering a viable political alternative. She saw life within a Darwinian framework in finding self-preservation as its “single goal” and turned the pursuit of self-interest into a moral imperative.<sup>147</sup> She rejected any puritanical admonitions toward altruism as unnecessary in fulfilling the mission of capitalism, believing that commerce benefits all parties involved in the mutual exchange of goods and circulation of money and requires no one to sacrifice any of their needs for the sake of others.<sup>148</sup> She felt that true love always includes self-interest. It never involves an unconditional act of self-sacrifice or the granting of unconditional favors in spite of one’s feelings or respect. True love involves a personal affection and esteem, which experiences self-gratification in the presence of the beloved.<sup>149</sup> This favorable review of self-interest resonated with many Republicans,<sup>150</sup> but her form of acquisitive capitalism ran into some difficulty when attempting to explain sacred notions like individual property rights, which remained so much a part of the country and especially the Republican Party. Rand’s atheistic philosophy had to reject the historical justification for developing these rights within the will of God, and forced her to attribute the notion to an idea “derived from reality” and “validated by a process of reason,” making inalienable rights and social ethics an “objective, metaphysical” area of study.<sup>151</sup> However, much of her discussion seemed vacant on this point, unable to answer simple questions. How can a metaphysical notion like natural law or rights be derived from a simple description of nature? How can one find an imperative within this world as if it contained a transcendent commentary upon its own processes? Or, can reason transform its limited vantage point in describing what happens to transpire in nature and find a more exalted role in prescribing what “ought” to occur in reality, when no ideal world exists to anchor this type of judgment?<sup>152</sup> Such a problem has confronted atheism down through the ages and leaves some room for the place of religion in the modern world, which has yet to discover a coherent alternative.

## Notes

1. Henry Monro, *The Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 249; Louis Schneider, *Paradox and Society: The Work of Bernard Mandeville*, Jay Weinstein (forward) (New Brunswick, NJ and Oxford: Transaction Publishers, 1987), 29; M. M. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits: Bernard Mandeville’s Social and Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 28; Bernard Mandeville, *Fable of the*

- Bees: Or, Private Vices, Public Benefits*, F. B. Kaye (intro.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 2.382–84.
2. Bernard Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour and the Usefulness of Christianity in War*, M. M. Goldsmith (intro.) (London: Frank Cass and Co., 1971), x; *Fable of the Bees*, 1.xxxiii; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Virtues*, 25, 35, 37, 47. Hereafter *Fable of the Bees* is designated FB. He places the “Grumbling Hive” at the beginning of his *Fable* as the pretext for the controversy and basis of his book. Mandeville was influenced by that “Great Man in France, Monsieur de la Fontaine” in developing his genre and ideas. La Fontaine was influenced by the Jansenists/French *moralistes* and a member of the same salon as La Rochefoucauld. He saw human beings as controlled by passions, especially their pride. Mandeville was so inspired by La Fontaine that he translated the fables of La Fontaine in *Some Fables after the Easie and Familiar Method of Monsieur de la Fontaine* (1703) and some additional fables in *Aesop Dress'd* (1704). Thomas Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 25–26.
  3. FB 1.cxiv–vi; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Virtues*, 121. Goldsmith and Kaye contain a long list of important scholars who criticized the work.
  4. FB cxv (n.1). Kaye lists a number of these reviews.
  5. Horne, *The Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 19, 21–23; Faccarello, *Foundations of Laissez-faire*, 58. Mandeville’s work was widely publicized in Europe through a number of ways and means: quasi-official journals of the Enlightenment Republic of Letters, Jean-François Melon’s desire to forward his discussion of the utilitarian nature of luxury, Rousseau’s direct reference in *Discourse of the Arts and Sciences*, and Voltaire’s compilation of its arguments in his *Treatise on Metaphysics*, as well as his work on its translation and commentary. André Morize, *L’Apologie de luxe au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle et “Le Modain” de Voltaire* (Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1970), 78–80; Jean François Melon, *Essai politique sur le commerce* ([n.p.], 1734); *Les Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1989), 14.468–73; E. J. Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville and the Enlightenment’s Maxims of Modernity,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56/4 (1995): 588. Rousseau disliked the work as justifying modern Parisian luxury, passions, and general decadence in *La Nouvelle Héloïse*. Rousseau, *Le Nouvelle Héloïse*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 4.138; “Preface [Narcisse],” in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 4.405ff. (*Collected Writings*, 2.191ff.); Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville,” 577, 592. Adam Smith connects La Rochefoucauld and Rousseau to Mandeville as part of the same tradition. “Letter to the Edinburgh Review,” in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, N. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 250; Winch, “Adam Smith,” 102–3; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 2.
  6. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1976), 485–96; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 2.
  7. E.g., Smith, “Letter to the Edinburgh Review,” 242–54; David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, D. G. C. Macnabb (ed.) (Cleveland, OH and New York: The World Publishing Co., 1962), 1.12, 42, 338; Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville,” 591; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 57; FB 1.cxlii; Winch, “Adam Smith,” 103. Francis Hutcheson, Smith’s mentor at Glasgow, was obsessed with attacking Mandeville’s concept of self-interest and its alleged benefits for society, unwittingly helping to pique Smith’s interest.
  8. TMS 161, 166; FB 1.cxxxv, 169–70; 2.284.

9. F. A. Hayek, "Lecture on a Master Mind: Dr. Bernard Mandeville," *Proceedings of the British Academy* 52 (1966): 126–27; Hjort, "Mandeville's Ambivalent Modernity," 952.
10. Stephen Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation: The French Revolution, Nazi Germany, and International Communism* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014), 4; Hundert, "Bernard Mandeville," 580; Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, 243, 310.
11. Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times*, Lawrence E. Klein (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 43–44; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 184; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 55, 88. Hume also criticized his dark view of human beings.
12. FB 1.166.
13. FB 2.63, 91, 122. He thinks "these well-bred" people are particularly adept at concealing their superlative pride under a veil of "good manners."
14. FB 1.146.
15. Jean Calvin, *Institutio Christianiae Religionis*, II, ii, 12; iii, 4; v, 19; III, xiv, 3 (CO 2.195–96, 213, 247, 566).
16. FB 2.18–19.
17. FB 1.57; 2.12–13, 16–19, 33, 110–111, 235; *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 119; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 256.
18. Cf. Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 46–47.
19. FB 2.238–40, 249–50.
20. FB 1.lxii–lxiii, 75; 2.129.
21. FB 1.56; 2.182–83; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 135–37, 141. Rousseau rejects Mandeville's account and thinks of pity as the fundamental quality motivating "all social virtue." Rousseau, *Discours sur l'origine et les fondemens de l'inégalité parmi les homes*, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 3.155; Smith, "Letter to the Edinburgh Review," 251.
22. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, xiii, 6; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 140.
23. *Ibid.*, 3.
24. FB 2.133. Kaye believes that Bishop Butler pushed Mandeville into making this distinction between self-love and self-liking. FB 2.129–30 (n.1).
25. Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 7–8; FB1.42, 221–22; *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 18, 29–30, 39, 42–43; Hundert, "Bernard Mandeville," 589–93; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 51–53.
26. Hundert, "Bernard Mandeville," 589–93; FB 1.51, 68, 245–47, 264–65.
27. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 64, 79–80.
28. *The Dictionary of Mr Peter Bayle*, Reprinted from the second edition (London, 1734–38) (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 3.965. See chap. one, pp. 29–30.
29. Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 24, 27, 35, 37.
30. FB1.103–6, 250, 344; Hjort, "Mandeville's Ambivalent Modernity," 954; Force, "Helvétius," 108.
31. FB 1.6–7.
32. FB 1.251.
33. FB 1.24–26, 36, 48–49. Kaye thinks that Mandeville's position leads to utilitarianism, like it does in Helvétius' work. FB 1.lv, cxxxi–cxxxii. Mandeville's perspective on luxury became

fashionable among the educated elite in France through the work of Jean-François Melon and Voltaire. *Essai politique sur le commerce; Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, 14.468ff.; *The Works of Voltaire*, 36.171–72; Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville,” 588.

34. FB 1.251.
35. FB 1.35, 347. Mandeville thinks that wealth is increasing. What was once called luxury is now “enjoy’d by the meanest and most humble Wretches.” FB 1.169. What was criticized by moralists/philosophers in the past tends to gain acceptance later on. Many thought the concept of luxury was relative to culture. *The Works of Voltaire*, 37.216–18; Ferdinando Galiani, *Della Moneta Libri Cinque* (Napoli: Nella Stamperia, 1780), 12.29–30; Saint-Lambert, “Luxe,” in *Encyclopédie*, L, 84. John Brown views commerce as containing certain benefits in supplying mutual necessities, but also sees it degenerating in its final stage to create an avaricious people of vanity and “selfish effeminacy,” a people who extol refinement and luxury and lose their religion for the pursuit of pleasure. John Brown, *An Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* (Boston, MA: Green and Russell, 1758), 76–78.
36. FB 1.12; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 32.
37. FB 1.349, 353; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 19, 21.
38. FB 2.350; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 158–59; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 12, 19, 21.
39. Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 102–3; FB 1.10; E. D. James, “Faith, Sincerity, and Morality—Mandeville and Bayle,” in Irwin Primer (ed.), *Mandeville Studies: New Explorations in the Art and Thought of Dr. Bernard Mandeville (1670–1733)*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), 64.
40. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, ii, vii. He says, all the commandments, including the Ten Commandments, address the good of society. FB 2.283.
41. FB 1.217–21; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 47–48, 200–2. Dueling also toughens men up, giving them a bellicose nature in case of war.
42. FB 1.219–20.
43. FB 1.96–100; *A Modest Defence of Public Stews; or An Essay upon Whoring* (Glasgow, 1730?) xiii, 59; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 82; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 38; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 149–50. In a *Modest Defence of Public Stews, or An Essay Upon Whoring*, he put forth a plan for state-owned brothels. He lists a number of reasons, including the need for regulation and health concerns. Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 77ff., 80–81.
44. FB 2.353.
45. Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 93–94. He is referring to the charity schools. They were sponsored by the society in 1698 for the promotion of Christian knowledge and spread throughout England, reaching a total of 348 by 1718.
46. FB 1.285–89, 301–2, 311, 318, 322; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 153; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 96–97.
47. FB 1.288.
48. Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville,” 581–83.
49. George Blewitt, *An Enquiry whether a practice of Virtue tends to the Wealth or Poverty, Benefit or Disadvantage of a People?* (London: R. Wilkin, 1725), 10–11, 18; FB 1.cxxvi. Blewitt argues that society would be better off without thieves, sickness, disasters, et al. He

contends that locksmiths would not starve without thieves; they would find other useful means of employment, or at least their idleness would not matter since thieves would no longer exist. This means that vice is not necessary to society, nor is it the cause of wealth.

50. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, xiv, 81–83, 161–62; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 11. Mandeville mentions no public role for religion. He thinks of Oliver Cromwell as a supreme hypocrite, using religion to incite his army, not Christian principles. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 179ff., 204–5, 217–18, 230–31, 239.
51. Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 104, 110, 114.
52. FB 1.228–29.
53. FB 2.105–6.
54. Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 5–8, 13–14.
55. Bernard Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion, The Church, and National Happiness*, Irwin Primer (ed.) (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2001), 22; *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, ix–x, 129; FB 2.18–19; James, “Faith, Sincerity, and Morality,” 56–58; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 14, 132, 184.
56. Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 104. Hume, Hutcheson, Smith, and Johnson are among these critics. TMS 494; *Boswell’s Life of Johnson*, George Birbeck Hill (ed.) (New York: Bigelow, Brown and Co., 1887), 3.331–33; “Hibernicus’s Letters,” in Bernard Fabian (ed.), *Collected Works of Francis Hutcheson* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1971), 7.156–69.
57. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, x; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 208–9.
58. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 81; *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 18; FB 2.50, 56, 336, 340, 345–47; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 15, 132.
59. James, “Faith, Sincerity, and Morality,” 57; Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 56.
60. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, xii–xiii; FB 1.lv; 2.21–22. Goldsmith finds it difficult to believe the “fabulous elements of scriptural and classical mythology,” portrayed in the Mosaic account, and questions whether Mandeville believed this type of nonsense—at least as Cleomenes (Mandeville’s spokesman) portrays it in the second volume of the *Fable*. He thinks Horatio, the skeptical Deist, and his derision of Cleomenes’ belief actually represents Mandeville’s own ridicule; Mandeville only wants to hide his anti-Christian agenda by identifying with Cleomenes but making him look foolish. Monro thinks it is difficult to discern what Mandeville thinks about religion, but it is unlikely that he was a true believer. Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 148, 155–57, 177; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 65, 75; FB 2.307–308. Cf. James, “Faith, Sincerity, and Morals,” 51.
61. FB 2.307–308, 317; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 155.
62. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, xvi, 98–100.
63. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 3, 62–63, 72–75; FB 1.382; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 160–61. Cf. James, “Faith, Sincerity, and Morals,” 48. He does not like doctrinal schisms in general. He thinks even the arguments over the Trinity between Athanasius and Arius should not have caused a division in the church. After all, the Trinity is a mystery, like doctrinal matters in general. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 51–52, 55–56, 59.

64. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 46–47, 51–52, 113–14; *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 35; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 156; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 148. He criticizes the clergy throughout the work, particularly the priests of the Catholic Church, but he also includes Protestant clergy in this criticism, even Calvin for his authoritarian ways. He does not consider the Protestant clergy as wretched, but they need to be warned lest they drift into the abuses of Catholicism. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 46–50, 105–8, 118–19; *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 155, 165; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 152–53.
65. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, xxi, 16; Goldsmith *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 94–95.
66. *Ibid.*, 5, 141; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 160; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 65. He finds the dissenters too extreme in their anti-Catholicism. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 38–39.
67. FB 2.310–11.
68. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 26–27, 38; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 151.
69. FB 2.220–21; *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 30–31.
70. Mandeville, *Free Thoughts on Religion*, 2–3; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 166.
71. Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, i.
72. In his *Free Thoughts*, Mandeville draws many of his “concrete illustrations and documentary evidence” from the *Dictionnaire*, acknowledging the direct and continuous borrowing of material in the preface without bothering to provide credit in the main text. In his works, he displays a number of Bayle’s attitudes in discussing different subjects, including his metaphysical skepticism, religious toleration, and severe dichotomy between faith and reason. *Free Thoughts on Religion*, ii–iii, xviii–xix; Horne, *Social Thought of Bernard Mandeville*, 28. Bayle first came to Rotterdam when Mandeville was eleven years old and living there.
73. FB 1.ciii, cv.
74. FB 2.253, 256, 259–60.
75. FB 1.xcviii<sup>ff</sup>, cxxxix–cxl, 109–16, 299–300; *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, ix; Bernard Mandeville, *A Letter to Dion (1732)*, in *The Augustan Reprint Society* (vol. 41), Jacob Viner (intro.) (Los Angeles: University of California, 1953), 11–14 (intro.). He allows for more government interference, control of trade, and taxation than the later, more radical proponents of laissez-faire capitalism. He thinks the “dexterous management of a skilful politician” can ensure a good result, although his overall system proceeds against this trend of deferring to the government. FB 1.115–16, 204, 249; *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, xix; Nathan Rosenberg, “Mandeville and Laissez-Faire,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 24/2 (1963): 184–89.
76. FB 2 353.
77. FB 2.141–42; Goldsmith, *Private Vices, Public Benefits*, 64, 71–73.
78. Stephen G. Alter, “Mandeville’s Ship: Theistic Design and Philosophical History in Charles Darwin’s Vision of Natural Selection,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 69/3 (2008): 457; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 176–77.

79. FB 1.143–44.
80. Ibid.
81. Alter, “Mandeville’s Ship,” 441–65.
82. *Commerce, Culture, and Liberty*, 518; Gay, *Enlightenment*, 2.354; Jacob Viner, “Adam Smith and Laissez Faire,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 35/2 (1927): vii, 200. As early as 1749, he could say, “Projectors disturb nature in the course of her operations in human affairs, and it requires no more than to *let her alone*, and give her fair play in the pursuit of her ends that she may establish her own designs.” Gay, *Enlightenment*, 2.354; Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Cause of the Wealth of Nations* (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), xliii. Some say Smith became more of a materialist after leaving France, and it is true that the *Wealth of Nations* possesses a less religious/moral texture than the *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.
83. Winch, “Scottish Moral Philosopher,” 98–99.
84. Oser and Blanchfield, *Evolution of Economic Thought*, 59; Fox-Genovese, *Economic Revolution*, 101.
85. Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, 440–41, 450ff., 627. Hereafter the work is designated WN. Smith sees the land as constituting the most durable part of a nation’s wealth and even thinks of agriculture as “more productive” than the manufacturing sector, although he does not consider agriculture the only productive labor, unlike the physiocrats. He also thinks taxes should be levied on all goods. WN 241, 642, 851; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 125–29; Routh, *Origin of Economic Ideas*, 100.
86. Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 48.
87. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1976), 487–96. Smith does not consider the love of magnificence, the desire for elegant art, or the longing for a better life a simple vice. He thinks that virtue can be found in one who acts with the partial intent of receiving esteem or honor, as long as these rewards are sought in a praiseworthy manner and truly deserved. Human passions and self-interests are not “wholly vicious.”
88. See chap. 2, p. 54; Smith, “Letter to the Edinburgh Review,” 250; *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 112–13; Schneider, *Paradox and Society*, 56; Hundert, “Bernard Mandeville,” 591–92; Force, “Self-Love, Identification, and the Origin,” 53–54; Monro, *Ambivalence of Bernard Mandeville*, 2; August Oncken, “The Consistency of Adam Smith,” *The Economic Journal*, 7/27 (1897): 448; FB 2.414–15; A. L. Macfie, “Adam Smith’s Moral Sentiments as Foundation for His Wealth of Nations,” *Oxford Economic Papers* 11/3 (1959): 328; Winch, “Scottish Moral Philosopher,” 102–3. The first edition of the *Theory of Moral Sentiments* mentions La Rochefoucauld, although he is eliminated in later editions at the request of the Duke’s grandson. His charge against Mandeville is never withdrawn. *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, 485ff. Hereafter, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* is designated TMS.
89. Smith, “Letter to the Edinburgh Review,” 250.
90. R. H. Coase, “Adam Smith’s View of Man,” *Journal of Law and Economics* 19/3 (1976): 541–42. TMS and WN both stress self-interest, but the emphasis is stronger in the latter. TMS speaks more of the altruistic/sympathetic side of human beings. Macfie, “Adam Smith’s Moral Sentiments,” 227; Force, “Self-Love, Identification, and the Origin,” 60–61.
91. TMS 482.

92. Oncken, "The Consistency of Adam Smith," 446–47.
93. WN 14.
94. TMS 481–82; Coase, "Adam Smith's View of Man," 237; Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 103. Like Rousseau, Smith makes sympathy the central motif of his moral system and rejects deriving its altruistic desires from self-interest *in toto*. Sympathy might relate to an ability to "put myself in your situation," but the grief involves your pain, not mine. TMS 501–2; Mandeville, *An Enquiry into the Origin of Honour*, 251; Force, "Self-Love, Identification, and the Origin," 54–55; Coase, "Adam Smith's View of Man," 525. For Smith, human beings are motivated by all sorts of passions: "social passions, such as generosity, compassion, and esteem toward others; unsocial passions, such as hate and envy; and selfish passions, such as grief and joy." Patricia H. Werhane, "The Role of Self-Interest in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations," *The Journal of Philosophy* 86/11 (1989): 670–71. See TMS 76–77, 86–101.
95. TMS 493, 495; FB 2.414–15; Macfie, "Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments," 228.
96. Smith, "Letter to the Edinburgh Review," 253–54; Force, "Self-Love, Identification, and the Origin," 58. Cf. "Letter to the Edinburgh Review," 256.
97. TMS 113, 348–49. In TMS, he thinks one should seek God's approval, not that of other human beings. TMS 218, 226–27.
98. TMS 112, 303–4; Macfie, "Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments," 210–11.
99. TMS 264–65. See TMS 505–6.
100. Samuel Hollander, "Adam Smith and the Self-Interest Axiom," *Journal of Law and Economics* 20/1 (1977): 134; WN vii; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 212. Smith does not make substantial changes from 1759–1789 in the various editions of TMS, perhaps indicating its compatibility with WN in his mind. There are some differences in emphasis: ethics is more prominent in TMS, and self-interest in WN. Macfie, "Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments," 210–11; Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 112–13; Force, "Self-Love, Identification, and the Origin," 60–63. Cf. Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 201.
101. WN 14.
102. WN 14, 249, 423; Harvey C. Mansfield, "Self-Interest Rightly Understood," *Political Theory* 23/1 (1995): 53; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 209–13. Smith recognizes that certain manifestations of self-interest have dire economic consequences, like the indolence of aristocratic landowners and the institution of slavery. Slaves have little incentive to work. WN 365–66; Hollander, "Adam Smith and the Self-Interest Axiom," 147.
103. WN 423.
104. TMS 304–5.
105. TMS 152; Coase, "Adam Smith's View of Man," 539, 545.
106. TMS 152, 166; Coase, "Adam Smith's View of Man," 548.
107. Coase, "Adam Smith's View of Man," 538; TMS 168–69.
108. TMS 152, 195; Higgs, *Physiocrats*, 143; Gay, *Enlightenment*, 2.361; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 202, 206. WN tends to be less optimistic than TMS. The economic order is not always so harmonious in relating self-interest to the general welfare and happiness of each, but only works in "most cases." Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 208.



109. Smith lives in the eighteenth century and follows the basic propensity of the times in making no distinction between science and philosophy, the empirical and the ideal. Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 95.
110. TMS 128, 272–73, 276–79. Like a Deist, he reduces religion to morality. TMS 281–82. He thinks of general moral rules as having many exceptions, but prefers general theory over detailed casuistic lists. TMS 287, 527, 534–35.
111. WN 56, 423, 650–51. Regulating the price in one area only causes the price to increase in another. "Whatever regulations tend to sink the price either of wool or of raw hides below what it naturally would be, must, in an improved and cultivated country, have some tendency to raise the price of butcher's-meat." WN 233.
112. WN 249–50, 440–41, 625; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 213, 220. He rejects the concept of "Balance of Trade" as a silly notion that only protects the interest of some monopoly and hurts the consumer from purchasing at a cheaper price. Monopolies destroy fair market competition and often collude with the help of government to raise prices by under-stocking goods, depress wages, and increase their profits and emoluments. WN 424, 454–56, 625; Gay, *Enlightenment*, 2.366; Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 107–9. Smith also rejects the Mercantilist design to enrich a country through trade, not through industry or cultivation of the land. He thinks the sole end of production is the interests of the consumer for better and cheaper goods, although he has some sympathy with nations who retaliate with duties in response to like-policies of other nations. WN 434, 591, 625.
113. Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 231.
114. *Ibid.*, 214–18; WN 651. See WN 227–28 for some specifics. He supports public education as a means of creating better citizens and improving the lot of the poor. WN 740; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 227. He rejects the privileges of the certain few and wants a "level playing field." He thinks workers deserve an equitable distribution of the "produce of their own labor," but never proposes a system of economic redistribution." Patricia H. Werhane, "The Role of Self-Interest in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations," *The Journal of Philosophy* 86/11 (1989): 678; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 228; Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 111.
115. TMS 263–64; Werhane, "The Role of Self-Interest," 677–78; Macfie, "Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments," 215.
116. TMS 161–62, 452, 446; WN 651; Macfie, "Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments," 228; Viner, "Adam Smith and Laissez Faire," 206; Harvey S. James and Farhad Rassekh, "Smith, Friedman, and Self-Interest in Ethical Society," *Business Ethics Quarterly* 10/3 (2000): 663–64. He might acknowledge the benefits of vices like vanity, but he also withholds moral approval. Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 103–4.
117. Winch, "Scottish Moral Philosopher," 104; James and Rassekh, "Smith, Friedman, and Self-Interest," 661; Macfie, "Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments," 209.
118. William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age 1825* (Menston, UK: Scholar Press, 1971), 253–54; *Ideas and Beliefs of the Victorians* (London: 1950), 43. Kenneth Smith says that one could find in most issues of the Quarterly and Edinburgh Reviews an article, reference, or allusion to the Malthusian debate. *The Malthusian Controversy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1931), 49; Robert M. Young, "Malthus and the Evolutionists: The Common Context of Biological and Social Theory," *Past & Present* 43 (1969): 114.

119. Thomas Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, Philip Appleman (ed.) (New York and London: W. W. Norton and Co., 1976), 16; James Allen Rogers, "Darwinism and Social Darwinism," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 33/2 (1972): 269–70; Young, "Malthus and the Evolutionists," 112–13.
120. *Ibid.*, 11–18, 92.
121. *Ibid.*, 118–22, 129; Rogers, "Darwinism and Social Darwinism," 269–70.
122. *Ibid.*, xiv–xv, 52–54; Barry Gale, "Darwin and the Concept of a Struggle for Existence," *ISIS* 63/3 (1972): 338. Richard Cantillon (1680–1734), an Irish–French economist, had spoken of the relationship between subsistence and population, long before Malthus. *Essai sur la nature du commerce en general* (Londres: Fletcher Gyles, 1755), 96ff., 110.
123. *Ibid.*, 20–23. He thinks progress in creating larger and better crops is limited. *Ibid.*, 63.
124. *Ibid.*, 37–39, 54–55, 134–35. In his later editions, Malthus thinks it is possible to lessen the misery and add some "moral restraint" to society, hoping for some future improvement. *Ibid.*, xx, 131; Young, "Malthus and the Evolutionists," 140–41; Gale, "Darwin and the Concept of a Struggle for Existence," 339–40. "However formidable these obstacles may have appeared in some parts of this work, it is hoped that the general result of the inquiry is such as not to make us give up the improvement of human society in despair." Malthus, *An Essay on Population* [7th edition] (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1952), 2.262. Cf. Malthus, *An Essay on Population 1798* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1926), 7–10. For example, he thinks it is wise to educate people about nature and tell them to marry later in life, when they are able to support children. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, xviii, 132, 136–39.
125. E.g., *Ibid.*, 18, 97.
126. E.g., *Ibid.*, 97–101.
127. *Ibid.*, 44–47.
128. WN 79–80. He is not a simple disciple of Smith and expresses a number of differences throughout his account. Unlike Smith, he thinks the wealth of a nation might increase without benefiting the poor, especially if there is not enough food. Malthus, *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, 102–111.
129. FB 2.141–44. This analogy is also found in Hume. David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, J. C. A. Gaskin (ed.) (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 69 [Part V]. He read Hume's *Dialogue* in September of 1838 and Mandeville's *Fable* (vol. 2) in April of 1840. Other capitalists like James Steuart followed the deist line of thinking in comparing the economy/universe to a watch that has no specific need for intervention/fixing. Sir James Steuart, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Political Oeconomy* [1767], Andrew S. Skinner (intro. and ed.) (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 1.278–79.
130. Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*, Ernst Mayr (ed.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), 485–86. Both Malthus and Spencer offer critical comments about Mandeville's work, but this criticism was typical of the day in trying to distance oneself from its dark sayings, and does not exclude fundamental influence. FB 2.439; Herbert Spencer, *Social Statics* [1851] (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1969), 67–68; Mark Francis, "Herbert Spencer and the Myth of *laissez-Faire*," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39/2 (1978): 319, 325. Spencer wants to emphasize progress in his theory of evolution against Malthus.

- Young, "Malthus and the Evolutionists," 136–37; Rogers, *Darwinism and Social Darwinism*, 279–80. Malthus agrees with Mandeville that self-love is the primary impetus behind human activity, but he wants to leave some room for benevolence. *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (London, New York, and Melbourne: Ward, Locke, and Co., 1890), 533 (n.1).
131. Alfred Russel Wallace, *My Life: A Record of Events and Opinions* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1905), 1.232.
  132. Alter, "Mandeville's Ship," 459; Peter Vorzimmer, "Darwin, Malthus, and the Theory of Natural Selection," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 30/4 (1969): 30. Darwin certainly obtained inspiration from many other sources. His early interest in the problem of the adaptation of the species was stimulated by Charles Lyell's *Principles of Geology* in March of 1837 after his voyage on the Beagle. He particularly makes mention of Lyell's emphasis upon the struggle for existence, even if Lyell rejected the mutability of the species. Charles Lyell, *Principles of Geology*, Martin J. S. Rudwick (intro.) (Chicago, IL and London: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 2.56, 174–75; Vorzimmer, "Darwin, Malthus, and the Theory of Natural Selection," 532; Gale, "Darwin and the Concept of the Struggle for Existence," 332–34; Young, "Malthus and the Evolutionists," 129, 132. Many others saw life as a struggle before Darwin, with animals eating each other and controlling the population, like Erasmus Darwin, Charles Linnaeus, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Comte de Buffon.
  133. *The Autobiography of Charles Darwin and Selected Letters*, Francis Darwin (ed.) (New York: Dover Publication, 1958), 1.42–43.
  134. Charles Darwin, *The Variation of Animals and Plants Under Domestication* (London: John Murray, 1885), 1.10
  135. "To A. R. Wallace" (April 6, 1859), in *More Letters of Charles Darwin*, Francis Darwin (ed.) (New York and London: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1972), 1.118.
  136. Darwin, *Origin of Species*, 3.63.
  137. Darwin, *The Foundation of the Origin of Species: Two Essays Written in 1842–44*, Francis Darwin (ed.) (Cambridge, 1909), 88.
  138. TM 157–58; Darwin, *Origin of Species*, 3.62–79; *The Descent of Man and Selection in Relation to Sex* (Akron, OH: The Werner Co., ca. 1910), 145 (I, v), 621 (II, xxi).
  139. Peter J. Bowler, "Malthus, Darwin, and the Concept of Struggle," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 37/4 (Oct.–Dec. 1976): 635, 647–48; Rogers, "Darwinism and Social Darwinism," 270–71. Darwin also uses capitalist themes when discussing the evolution of social instincts/morals. He speaks of sympathy as beneficial to the evolution of the human species and the place of honor in developing the social instinct, which he relates to the "greatest happiness principle" in reconciling the "self-regarding virtues" with public benefit. *Descent of Man*, 625–26 [Part III, chap. xxi].
  140. Gale, "Darwin and the Concept of the Struggle for Existence," 344.
  141. John Maynard Keynes, *The End of Laissez-Faire: The Economic Consequences of the Peace* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 2004), 20–21, 31; Mark Francis, "Herbert Spencer and the Myth of Laissez-Faire," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 39/2 (1978): 319.
  142. *The Origin of Species by Charles Darwin: A Variorum Text*, Morse Peckham (ed.) (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1959), 145 (III, 15, 1:e), 164–65 (IV, 13:e, 14.1–2:c–14.9:c), 757 (xiv, 256:f); "To Herbert Spencer" (Nov. 25, 1858) and "To J. D. Hooker" (Dec. 10, 1866), in *The Life and Letters of Darwin*, Francis Darwin (ed.) (London:

- John Murray, 1887), 2.141; 3.55–56. Herbert Spencer began using the basic concept of “survival of the fittest” as early as 1852. Herbert Spencer, “A Theory of Population, Deduced from the General Law of Animal Fertility,” *Westminster Review* (April, 1852): 468–501; Rogers, “Darwinism and Social Darwinism,” 266. His usage and concept antedates Darwin’s natural selection by several years but draws inspiration from Malthus, much like Darwin and Wallace. J. W. Burrow, *Evolution and Society* (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1966), 183; Young, “Malthus and the Evolutionists,” 134. Spencer relates Darwin’s concept of natural selection to his own. *Principles of Ethics* (Osnabruck: Zeller, 1966), 1.548; Robert Perrin, “Herbert Spencer’s Four Theories of Social Evolution,” *American Journal of Sociology* 81/6 (1976): 1356. From the publication of *The Man Versus the State* (1884), he became a more radical advocate of laissez-faire political theory, rejecting policies that worked against nature in promoting the survival of the weak. Francis, “Herbert Spencer and the Myth of Laissez-Faire,” 328; Herbert Spencer, *The Man Versus the State* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Classics, 1981), 109–14.
143. Darwin, *Descent of Man*, 136 (I, v).
  144. *Ibid.*, 139 (I, v).
  145. Darwin, *Life and Letters*, 1.316.
  146. Jennifer Burns, “Godless Capitalism: Ayn Rand and the Conservative Movement,” *Modern Intellectual History* 1/3 (2004): 360; William F. Buckley, *God and Man at Yale: The Superstitions of “Academic Freedom”* (Chicago, IL: Regnery Co., 1951), xiv, 22, 35–36, 51, 56ff., 161–67, 171, 233.
  147. Ayn Rand, *The Virtue of Selfishness* (New York: Signet Book, 1964), x, 17, 30.
  148. Ayn Rand, *Atlas Shrugged* (New York: Plume Book, 2005), 370–71, 480; *Virtue of Selfishness*, 58; “What is Capitalism?,” in *Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal* (New York: Signet Book, 1967), 29–30.
  149. Rand, *Atlas Shrugged*, 883; *Virtue of Selfishness*, 51–52.
  150. Michael Novak, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 94, 122, 138, 162.
  151. Rand, *Virtue of Selfishness*, 24, 42.
  152. Einstein says, “Science can only ascertain what *is*, but not what *should be*.” Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 33, 45, 48, 54.

**II.**

**The Removal of Religion from  
Human Development and  
Natural Events**



## Enlightened History

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History is a discipline that cannot escape its humanity. It is continually involved in the all-too-human process of selecting and representing people and events to highlight what is significant for the “lesson” at hand. If science cannot know the “thing-in-itself” in the post-Kantian world, with all its direct and existential relation to the empirical object, then history cannot know the “past-in-itself” through the indirect testimony of its human records and documents.<sup>1</sup> No better illustration of this problem is the many and continuous quests of scholars to obtain objective or semi-objective information on Jesus of Nazareth—perhaps, the most pivotal or crucial figure in western civilization. Scholars find the humanity of the early reports disconcerting when trying to ascertain the exact historical truth about him. These reports were written in such a way that the subjectivity of the authors is woven together with the object of the inquiry, the style of the authors with the words of Jesus, the soteriological significance with the person, and the *kerygma* or message with the historical events, making it difficult to separate the Jesus of history from the Christ of faith.<sup>2</sup> Was it Jesus or John who proclaimed God’s love for the world in sending the only-begotten Son (Jn 3:16)? Was Jesus still speaking to Nicodemus about the Spirit and salvation, or John expanding the account and providing his metaphysical commentary when these famous words are related in the text? There appears to be no objective way of answering the question about this and anything else Jesus said or did. Jesus and John are tangled together within the

text, creating a problem that follows the quest for the historical Jesus wherever it turns and illustrating the same problem that follows all other historical research in varying degrees, since no one can speak in an objective way about events, or escape the human element of history. The subject and object are ever joined within the human condition.

In the United States, many people complain about the secular bias of modern textbooks, marginalizing religion and its people in a systematic manner.<sup>3</sup> Few people find their complaint without merit, given the religious sensibilities of many Americans and desire to represent all perspectives in an egalitarian and democratic society. Paul Vitz and the Department of Education led the crusade against secular bias in the 1980s by conducting an exhaustive study of the nation's social and history texts and complaining that these texts generally ignored religion as a motivating factor in the nation's fundamental beliefs and tended to associate it with antiquated colonial beliefs of a bygone era.<sup>4</sup> In a rare instance of political cooperation, both left-wing and right-wing forces joined the chorus in the next few decades in complaining about the secular bias or marginalization of religion in the texts.<sup>5</sup>

Probably the most egregious problem that many of these critics mention in their reviews is the overemphasis upon the concept of religious freedom in founding the country. Robert Bryan says,

*These textbooks are written to propound the thesis that America was settled for the sake of religious freedom, and that religious freedom means the absence of religion [emphasis in original].... Once the [early Eastern seaboard] settlement has been effected, and the population has escaped from the trammels of religion, religion need not be mentioned again. There are exceptions to this general rule, but they are so sporadic as to be incapable of conveying anything like the true importance of religion in America....<sup>6</sup>*

Bryan sees the strong emphasis upon religious freedom as a surreptitious attack upon religion, or a clandestine way of stressing that religion brings strife and division in society above all other social forces, and people need emancipation from its dogma in the public arena.<sup>7</sup> This doctrine of “toleration” feigns the high road of advancing the cause of liberty and diversity, but causes the reader to dislike religious people as an intended or unintended consequence by making them the sponsors of intolerance and bigotry in society.<sup>8</sup> The texts develop this notion of “tolerance” by viewing the world in a binary manner, adopting Jefferson’s “wall of separation between church & state,” and causing the reader to miss the intimate relationship between religion, politics, and culture, except in a negative way.<sup>9</sup>

The influence of the binary is best illustrated by the enormous credit given to certain eighteenth-century patriarchs or “Founding Fathers” for establishing the



American view of government while slighting any serious mention of the Puritan matrix of these ideas within the culture. It is abundantly clear that Puritans served as the fundamental social force in spreading concepts like liberty, equality, democracy, and the federal government in England during the seventeenth century and used these ideas to establish vital experiments in New England at that time, beginning with the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1629. It is also clear that their culture stimulated the revolt against Mother England during the next century, with Congregationalists representing up to nine-tenths of the churches and the Reformed around three-quarters of all churches in America. A previous study established these matters in some detail,<sup>10</sup> but other studies, typically older studies like David Hume's *History of England* and Alex de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, knew of this cultural influence and related it with much the same emphasis,<sup>11</sup> before the binary mindset began to skew the judgment of historians and eliminate the positive significance of religion in shaping the nation.<sup>12</sup> Today, the Puritan heritage is practically forgotten. The grave of John Winthrop, the first democratically-elected governor of the Puritans, lies hardly noticeable next to a Unitarian church and Boston's Freedom Trail, which celebrates the typical figures and events of the American Revolution, without much reference to Puritans. The "Founding Fathers" of the country are not Puritans but eighteenth-century "secular" politicians who helped lead the revolt and receive much credit for doing so through the erection of idols and colonnaded temples on the Washington Mall, the consecration of holidays in their honor, and the naming of buildings and landmarks—all to the glory of their role in history and the national consciousness. Sometimes their religion is mentioned to pacify certain quarters but only as a footnote and often separated from their "enlightened" political point of view.

This bias of modern American history began to develop at the end of the eighteenth century when the ideology and attitudes of French *philosophes* gained considerable stature among the intelligentsia and the learned public. The new enlightened disposition carried with it a decided bias against Christianity in general as the great obstacle to human progress and sponsor of bigotry and turmoil in society—part of which was grounded in the substantive shortcomings of the church but much of it in an exaggerated and unbalanced caricature of its history. Ironically, much of the criticism began within the church in Protestant circles, who wanted to reform their religion and not destroy it. The Puritans led the way in trying to reform the church of "Romish" practices in England but ended up creating a dark caricature of ecclesiastical history in their zealotry—a zealotry that was used by the enemies of the Christian faith to proceed even further and propose *écraser l'infâme* with Voltaire and his disciples in the French Revolution. John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* (1563) served as the most popular and celebrated

account of this conception of history, undergoing no less than nine editions and several abridgments before the Puritan Revolution in the 1640s.<sup>13</sup> His work dispensed with the typical hagiography of previous accounts and preferred to emphasize the dark side, revealing for the first time in a “full and complete history” the atrocities that developed in the church a thousand years after its inception—the corruption, bribery, graft, simony, and violence of this “dark age.” The papal church made a pact with the devil during this time and persecuted the small “rennaunt” of true believers, barely visible to the naked eye—“heretics” like Berengar of Tours, Joachim, William Ockham, John Wyclif, Lorenzo Valla, and John Hus.<sup>14</sup> The church developed into a thoroughly corrupt institution and needed serious reform in the mind of the Puritans—or maybe, a much more permanent solution as the early English Deists and French *philosophes* had in mind.

## Voltaire (1694–1778)

Voltaire and the French *philosophes* used this Protestant concept of history as conducive to their polemical struggle with the church and paved the way toward the modern version of history, which no longer looks to the Judeo-Christian tradition as the fundamental source of cultural inspiration. In his works, Voltaire is the first to recognize his bias or the subjective nature of human history and his account of it.<sup>15</sup> He admits quite openly that writing history involves a process of limiting the immense amount of material that encompasses all of life and selecting what is of “use” to the author’s purpose.<sup>16</sup> In fact, he finds it necessary to dispense with documentation to make the material accessible to the reader in creating a graceful narrative and highlighting what is truly significant or necessary to know.<sup>17</sup> Writing history involves the author in a “philosophical” process as one attempts to synthesize the material into a comprehensible unity for the reader and brings the imprint of moral judgment upon it, as one tries to characterize the past and provide “lessons” for future generations to follow.<sup>18</sup>

Voltaire’s “philosophical history” shows a distinct bias toward the present, as if all of history was leading up to his era and culture in a teleological manner.<sup>19</sup> The progress involves a desire to demythologize or exorcise any supernatural understanding of history and emphasize the autonomous “march of the human mind” in creating the world through the rational use of nature.<sup>20</sup> Of course, secular scholars tend to hail this move as a significant moment in the production of *modern* history as they follow Voltaire in using present standards to judge the past and promote the current secular view of life as the objective way to understand things.<sup>21</sup> They might be less pronounced in their bias, but the basic outline of the Voltairean program

remains much the same in exalting secularity. Voltaire thinks Western Europe is “now more populated, more wealthy, more enlightened than before, and even more superior to the Roman empire.”<sup>22</sup> In particular, the “age of Louis XIV” is the “dawn of good taste,” the “most enlightened century that ever was,” and embodies the standard by which one can judge all the other periods.<sup>23</sup> This era stands in stark contrast to the Middle Ages, where “human nature fell to a sub-bestial level in many respects” after the fall of Rome.<sup>24</sup> “Physics, astronomy, and the principles of medicine” were unknown in the “age of darkness”; its universities filled with “gibberish,” mixing theology and philosophy together to resolve the most inane scholastic disputes.<sup>25</sup> Toward the end of the thirteenth century, the Italians began to “shake off this barbarous rust,” and continued the “rebirth” up until the seventeenth century when Galileo brought “real philosophy” to Europe by using the “language of truth and reason” in his physics.<sup>26</sup> Italy preserved this flicker of light, while the Reformation devastated much of Western Europe, “retarding instead of forwarding the progress of reason.”<sup>27</sup> The Reformers brought a “tyrannical spirit,” “inflexible and violent” temper and “strong desire to distinguish themselves” in the hope of “attaining power over consciences.”<sup>28</sup> The modern world needed to throw off its “self-incurred tutelage” within the Judeo-Christian tradition to become truly “enlightened” through the power of autonomous or secular reason.<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the presentation, Voltaire displays his intense animosity toward the Judeo-Christian tradition as a primary motive underlying his historical analysis.<sup>30</sup> He wants to show how little value the West derived from its relation to Hebrew culture and how much havoc it endured from the Christian Church, the intolerant offspring of Jewish religious convictions.<sup>31</sup> His *Essai les Moeurs et l'Esprit des Nations* finds one of its main purposes in undermining the bigotry or provincial nature of the Judeo-Christian tradition by broadening the limited contours of western history into a universal perspective, which tries to encompass and appreciate all major cultural forms upon the globe.<sup>32</sup> The vast majority of the presentation still remains centered on European history, but he does his best to include a number of sections upon other cultures to reduce the problem of western ethnocentricity—a remarkable achievement given the knowledge and resources of the day. In trying to promote the study of other cultures, he lures in the audience by suggesting the West owes a considerable cultural debt to the East as the “nursery of all arts.”<sup>33</sup> In trying to promote religious toleration, he extolls Islam for creating a superior culture in Spain, exhibiting more openness to people than the Jews, and displaying more toleration than Christians toward each other throughout its empire.<sup>34</sup> As a good Deist, he wants the audience to believe that all human beings possess the same essential beliefs and values, and does so by portraying the Chinese, Mongols, Japanese, Indians, and other peoples as believing in one

supreme deity and sharing a similar ethical code, except exhibiting more toleration than Jews and Christians during much of their history.<sup>35</sup>

He thinks of Christianity as causing most of the violence within western society. Unlike the “pagan” religious community, the church was split with seditious disputes over dogmatic tenets throughout its history: bishops condemning each other to exile, prison, death, and eternal torment<sup>36</sup>; popes using trivial matters of contention to excommunicate their rivals—all for the sake of gaining power.<sup>37</sup> Christian emperors joined the zealotry by extending the religion through the force of arms. They ensured uniformity among the subjects by participating in the bigotry of Orthodox disputes, like the infamous iconoclastic controversy during and after the time of Charlemagne, the burning of heretics beginning at Orléans in 1022, and the Thirty Years’ War, which divided Germany with intolerance and chaos during the times of the Reformation. Voltaire likes to emphasize these dark chapters in Christendom and provides a darker interpretation of the events than what is typically presented in most accounts to diminish the church.<sup>38</sup> For example, his description of the crusades provides little sympathy for the Crusaders and tends to favor the Muslim side of the situation to promote this agenda. Voltaire speaks of the crusades as beginning with the “pathetic” and “imaginative” ravings of Peter the Hermit, who complained about the “exactions which he suffered in Jerusalem” and gave Urban II an excuse to incite enthusiasm and call Christians to arms against Muslims.<sup>39</sup> In taking Jerusalem on July 5, 1099, the Crusaders massacred all non-Christians without mercy and then “burst into tears” upon reaching the sepulcher of Christ, the ill-founded destination of their fanaticism.<sup>40</sup> Some of them were motivated by “their zeal and love of glory, others by their crimes and distresses; the fury of propagating religion by the sword.”<sup>41</sup> Voltaire contrasts this orthodox zeal with the generosity of Muslims like Saladin, who spared the lives of Crusaders, restored the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to the Orthodox, and loved all human beings as brothers, regardless of their specific religious profession.<sup>42</sup>

When Voltaire thinks of the church, he invariably has its hierarchy in mind and his intense dislike for its exercise of authority in the temporal sphere. He says that all humankind has some sense of the priesthoods’ oppressive nature and want to gain independence from the temporal lusts of popes, bishops, and priests.<sup>43</sup> In the desire to gain worldly power and possession, the hierarchy has corrupted the sanctity of the church and brought anarchy and bloodshed to society.<sup>44</sup>

In describing the church and its hierarchy, Voltaire’s particular focus falls upon the papacy as representing the entire mission of the church. His account tries to proceed in a fair and objective manner by praising the conduct and rule of certain popes and dismissing scurrilous reports of wickedness when sufficient historical documentation is lacking, but the general drift of the discussion contains a decided

agenda in directing the reader toward a dark view of the papal office and its history. A few good things are mentioned, but papal crimes and wickedness stand out in the account and include such infamous acts as immorality, incest, and debauchery; murdering the innocent, poisoning rivals, and torturing enemies; and selling relics, benefices, and absolution in order to gain a more opulent lifestyle<sup>45</sup>—the typical Protestant charges that contain some element of truth when kept within proportion.

Above all the charges, Voltaire centers his account upon the lust for temporal power. This passion has prompted the papacy to issue “false decretals” like the Donation of Constantine and moved some of its occupants to engage in the tragicomic image of leading armies into battle, with bishops serving as officers.<sup>46</sup> Voltaire finds the zenith of this impudence within the constant attempt of popes to make emperors, kings, and princes their vassals, subjecting them to chastisement or humiliating acts of penance—a matter that preoccupies his discussion.<sup>47</sup> The “superstition” of the day granted to the *pontifex maximus* absolute authority over the remission of sins, and the popes used the power to control princes and undermine their secular authority.<sup>48</sup> Gregory VII (1073–1085) was the first pope to raise his dignity above the state as the judge of all temporal rulers, claiming the sacred duty to reproach moral lapses in worldly powers and pull down their pride.<sup>49</sup> Voltaire rejects the papacy’s right to meddle in the affairs of the state and commends the response of “every secular prince endeavoring to render his government independent of the see of Rome.”<sup>50</sup> He chastens Gregory VII as an evil man with an “inflexible ambition,” believing that “every good citizen” should hold him in horror,<sup>51</sup> but shows considerable secular bias in failing to appreciate the depravity of civic rulers and their need for moral reproof.<sup>52</sup> He displays almost no understanding of the important relationship between the rise of canon law and papal power in the eleventh century and so expresses no appreciation for the papal office and its attempt to bring some semblance of moral order in Europe by chastening the wantonness of its rulers.<sup>53</sup> Gregory VII and his successors are attempting to make *lex rex*,<sup>54</sup> while Voltaire prefers to exalt the autonomous wisdom and powers of his “enlightened” despots in throwing off the yoke of the Vatican and its law.

Voltaire’s analysis of the church suffers from its continual preoccupation with the papacy and its failure to grasp the many dimensions and cultural ramifications of the religion as a whole. In his *Essai* and elsewhere, he proposes to write a history that steers away from the old emphasis upon the battles of worldly leaders and center upon the development of the human mind, as well as the customs and manners affecting the everyday life of the common person,<sup>55</sup> but much of his emphasis belies this type of expansive vision. Most of his history spends

its energy upon the power brokers of society, and only a small minority of sections are devoted to larger intellectual and sociological concerns in any explicit way. This deficit is particularly evident in his analysis of the church, which he tends to portray through papal intrigues or the power plays of its hierarchy—hardly representing its overall cultural impact or what the religion represents to the average person. For the most part, his discussion appears to ignore the political and cultural ramifications of the Christian faith, especially any positive impact on the maturation of society and prefers to think of the religion as a mere “pretense” for “perpetual slaughter and confusion” in Europe.<sup>56</sup> For example, he tends to characterize the Protestant faith as bringing more sectarian dissent into Europe and fails to recognize its decisive role in the emerging political order of the modern world, except in a few parenthetical comments. He describes the “first religious war between Catholics and the Reformed” without understanding Zwingli’s struggle for liberty against the Hapsburgs and the pope.<sup>57</sup> He discusses the massacre of Huguenots on Saint Bartholomew’s Day and empathizes with their suffering, but considers their religious ideas fanatical and shows little appreciation for the clear relationship between those ideals and their republican views of polity as a part of the conflict.<sup>58</sup> He recognizes the Protestant faith of Elizabeth I but shows no connection between her religious profession and policies of toleration—perhaps wanting to attribute this positive change of heart to some other factor than her understanding of Christian faith and practice.<sup>59</sup> He condemns the Puritans for executing William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury, over his preference for traditional Catholic ceremonies but ignores the deeper nature of the conflict, which concerns his support for the hierarchical government and his nefarious role in persecuting nonconformists as the chief inquisitor of the Privy Council.<sup>60</sup>

When he acknowledges the deeper connections, it typically leads to a wholesale condemnation of the political stance as a product of fanatical religious devotion. He condemns Thomas Muntzer for taking Luther’s priesthood of the believers or obsession with equality and preaching to the peasants that “all humans are created equal.”<sup>61</sup> He condemns the Puritans and Whigs for taking the same egalitarian emphasis, developing a republican polity, undermining the royalty, and leading the British nation into “barbarism.”<sup>62</sup> But he expresses his most vehement condemnation for those religious fanatics who deign to attack the king: Catholic fanatics for conspiring against Henry IV and James I, Jesuits for justifying regicide, and Puritans for deigning to execute Charles I.<sup>63</sup> Voltaire considers the rule of secular despots not so bad as to warrant their violent removal.<sup>64</sup> The real source of evil occurs when the church tries to meddle in the affairs of state and inflict its fanatical beliefs upon it.

## Guillaume Thomas François Raynal (1713–1796)

The *philosophes* continued the legacy of Voltaire’s philosophical history in writing a new account of its persons and events that diminished and demeaned the contribution of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Their most famous and influential work was *L’Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, which was first published in 1770 and substantially expanded a couple of times in 1774 and 1780. It was attributed to Abbé Raynal, although Diderot composed around a third of it and others collaborated with him in producing the massive six-volume work. Its immediate impact was enormous in spreading the *philosophes*’ point of view throughout France, Britain, and America, undergoing thirty official French editions and producing almost half that number in English during the first few decades.<sup>65</sup>

In the work, Raynal (and his colleagues) conveys the typical suspicion of priests that circulated among the *philosophes*.<sup>66</sup> He denigrates the Jewish priests of the OT as the forerunners of the Christian hierarchy,<sup>67</sup> but specifically focuses on the policies of Constantine in the fourth century and blames him for producing an “ecclesiastical despotism,” which afforded the clergy an unprecedented “share of wealth and authority” and “so many means of future aggrandizement.”<sup>68</sup> Thereafter these ministers became obsessed with power in regulating the conduct of others, disposing of their fortunes, and “securing to themselves in the name of heaven the arbitrary government of the world.” The power was used to enhance the ministers and provided no benefit to the rest of humankind in helping them lead a more felicitous life here on earth. It only served the priests in obtaining the things of this world and corrupting their spiritual ministry. It caused them to represent a corrupt moral example of “abuses, sophisms, injustices, and usurpations,” and serve as the “most dreadful enemies of the state and nation,” corrupting princes and all citizens alike.<sup>69</sup>

Raynal extends his animosity beyond the priests to encompass the entire Christian faith and its stifling effect on the culture. Christianity brought a metaphysics of doom and gloom into the world, which demolished the “gay divinities of Greece and Rome,” making western civilization a dark place.<sup>70</sup> It subjected all aspects of life to absolute religious surveillance with “prelacies of the Christian state...constantly informed of every commotion [and] every event” exercising “authority over every individual mind...in almost every transaction.”<sup>71</sup> Christianity (along with Islam) covered the nations with blood and ignorance, bringing “disputes, schisms, sects, hatred, persecution, and national as well as religious wars” over idle scholastic questions “devoid of all sense.”<sup>72</sup> The Italian Renaissance began to reverse the negative influence of Christianity by reviving the “arts of genius in

the republics of Greece and Rome” and extending the “rebirth” to the shores of the Thames River. Italy, France, and England are now leading Europe into a new enlightened age of continuous linear growth toward the truth through the auspices of great lights, such as Galileo, Descartes, Gassendi, Bacon, and Newton.<sup>73</sup> The destruction of Christianity and its priests have brought a new age of freedom and toleration, allowing the human race to follow the impulse of their conscience and extol the dictates of reason in making social progress.<sup>74</sup>

Raynal thinks that modern culture is making special progress in its understanding of the operations of good government. He expresses great admiration for the English system as the best regulated constitution “upon the face of the globe,” with its separation and balance of powers in the tradition of Locke and Montesquieu and its allocation of “real legislative power” in the Parliament.<sup>75</sup> The English were the first to discern the “injustice and insufficiency of ecclesiastical power, the limits of regal authority, and the abuses of federal government,” basing their system upon the “rights of the people” and a “social compact.”<sup>76</sup> This view of government was extended into the private sector, where a policy of free trade and rewarding hard work provides an enlightened concept of the inner workings of a vibrant economy. Raynal says it is these capitalist principles that increase the wealth of a nation, rather than the age-old pursuit of gold or the pillaging of other peoples through wars of conquest.<sup>77</sup>

In comparison to this account of England, his review of America and its policies is somewhat mixed. He follows the “noble savage” tradition of Rousseau and a natural humanitarian conscious that decries the ruthless treatment of native populations by the European colonists and inspires many of his readers to do likewise. The protest includes a strong denunciation of Spanish exploits in the southern hemisphere and the entire institution of slavery in North America.<sup>78</sup> He provides the most excoriating analysis of these and other practices, and yet he also finds much the opposite in the New World that is worthy of praise. In particular, he holds out the Quakers of Pennsylvania as the one shining light for all of humankind, producing genuine policies of full toleration, liberty, and democracy.<sup>79</sup> They disestablished religion and made their plantation a joint partnership of “Quakers, Anabaptists, members of the church of England, Methodists, Presbyterians, Moravians, Lutherans and Catholics”—all loving and cherishing each other in the city of “brotherly love.”<sup>80</sup> William Penn and the Quakers chose to purchase much of their land from the natives, rather than take what belonged to others through violence and bloodshed. Their tolerance set an “example of moderation and justice in America, which was never thought of before in Europe.”<sup>81</sup> However, his exaltation of the Quakers is made at the expense of the Puritans. He recognizes the democratic nature of the northeast colonies in making their own laws and electing



their own officials,<sup>82</sup> but denigrates the republics for the most part as run by religious fanatics and filled with intolerant practices, which are accented and exaggerated in the narrative.<sup>83</sup> In doing so, he misses their cultural significance and only reveals his own deist prejudice in preferring to exalt non-dogmatic expressions of faith like the Quakers and their social impact. His narrative fails to mention that the Quakers grew up during the Puritan Revolution and simply extended the egalitarian, democratic, and antinomian tendencies that were already an integral part of the former religious movement.<sup>84</sup> It also fails to remain consistent with its own sympathy toward the upcoming revolution in America<sup>85</sup>—a revolution that was spearheaded by the Puritans or Congregationalist of the northeast. Raynal recognizes that the “cry of liberty” and the “violent exhortations against England” are leading the way toward revolution,<sup>86</sup> but he fails to acknowledge the role of Northeast Congregationalists in promoting the cause, or the legacy of Puritanism in developing the justification for revolution in the first place.<sup>87</sup> It is clear that Puritans took the lead in fighting for liberty, while Quakers remained in the minds of most Americans after the war all-too-passive. Raynal’s account is shortsighted in failing to appreciate these and other points because of its secular and religious commitments.

## Jules Michelet (1798–1874)

France was deeply divided over the *philosophes* and their legacy in the nineteenth century. The *philosophes*’ vitriolic style incited angry critics from the other side of the cultural debate, with some libraries “forced to bowdlerize their shelves by throwing out volumes of Voltaire and Rousseau,” while others simply warned the readers of their connection with the horrors of the Revolution and its Reign of Terror.<sup>88</sup> Napoleon and his successors tried to lessen the significance of the *philosophes*, expressing concern about certain aspects of their thought and the radical nature of the subsequent Revolution, but this spirit was kept alive by a remnant of intellectuals in opposing the general tendency of those regimes. They were led by Jules Michelet, who used historical research as an apologetic weapon to defend the legacy of the eighteenth century and help reverse the cultural trend toward the ascendancy of the *philosophes*’ ideals.<sup>89</sup> In developing his history, he conducted massive research, perusing official documents in the National Archives and municipal records at the *Hôtel de Ville* as a conscientious historian, but showed few footnotes in his work and used the sources more like a lawyer who is pleading a case and mentioning only what suits his client than a faithful narrator of the simple facts.<sup>90</sup> He and those who read him were the product of an ideology that they wanted to

support by all means and were willing to find material and develop an interpretation conducive to their cause. His seven-volume *Histoire de la Révolution française* (1847–53) was used as the central text in the cultural war and kept the vision of the French Revolution alive among liberal leaders of the Second Empire. When the Third Republic came to power, its ideology became the law of the land and gained a wide readership that included many political leaders at the time like Jules Ferry, Jean Jaurès, and Jules Simon, who cut their teeth on its patriotism, republicanism, etatism, and anti-clericalism.<sup>91</sup> Today the ideals are firmly implanted into the hearts and minds of the French people, and many of them consider Michelet the greatest of their historians.<sup>92</sup>

His work starts out making a shameless appeal to the ethnic prejudices of the French people in exalting the country and its roots in the Revolution. He claims to have demonstrated through the strict application of “logic and history” that “my glorious country is henceforth the pilot of the vessel of humanity.” This sublime destiny was set during the times of the Revolution, which lives as a vital force in the souls of the French people revealing its inner mystery and fundamental source of being.<sup>93</sup> Those who prefer a more critical approach to the Revolution and like to emphasize the horrible bloodshed of the period are deprecated as “vampires of the *ancien régime*,” trying to turn its victims into martyrs for the monarchy.<sup>94</sup> The Revolution should be remembered for its deeper essence as “the advent of the Law, the resurrection of Right, and the reaction of Justice.”<sup>95</sup>

The specific impetus behind the Revolution comes from two different directions, which are never completely reconciled in the account. The first is the influence of the *philosophes* providing the rational justification for the movement through the exercise of a superior intellect. “Whatever ideas the Revolution possessed it owed to the eighteenth century, to Voltaire and Rousseau.”<sup>96</sup> These and other *philosophes* used their reason to penetrate the social order and prescribe the law, “bearing the tables of law in [their] hands” as the new version of Moses.<sup>97</sup> “Philosophy found man without right, or rather a nonentity, entangled in a religious and political system, of which despotism was the base. And she said, ‘Let us create man, let him exist through liberty.’”<sup>98</sup>

The second impetus is the people, who became the real impulse behind the Revolution, moving with their leaders as one voice in “marvelous unanimity” toward creating one nation. Here Michelet follows Rousseau in viewing the “general will” of the people as the “voice of God.” The people moved upon the Bastille through a divine impulse according to his highly romanticized version of events, acting outside of reason (*philosophes*?) and beyond the National Assembly in fulfilling their spiritual destiny. The people showed great restraint in dealing with their enemies and must be viewed as an untainted spiritual force in spite of the bad

press, acting outside the evil schemes of Robespierre and Saint-Just, who brought such disrepute upon the Revolution and the nation as a whole.<sup>99</sup>

For Michelet there is only *la patrie* and *la fraternité*. The French nation is the “real,” the “natural,” and the “eternal image of the good which we possess within us.”<sup>100</sup> It was born when the first cannon was fired at the Bastille, when the people emerged from the isolated posture of egotism and awakened their souls to live in a fraternity, when they discovered the fundamental basis of human nature within society, before any laws or power could unite them together as one nation.<sup>101</sup> The “great family of the nation” undermines all other traditional loyalties to immediate kin, local community, and disparate religious or ethnic customs.<sup>102</sup> Michelet employs religious language to describe the “new religion” of the state, urging the creation of more symbols and festivals to replace the “old” and “pale” ones of the moribund Christian religion.<sup>103</sup>

The “enemy” of the Revolution was the Christian faith and remains so to this day, “far more than the royalty.”<sup>104</sup> Michelet rejects the so-called “Catholic Robespierrists” like Philippe-Joseph-Benjamin Buchez and Prosper-Charles Roux, who try to merge the principles of the Revolution with the church or believe it is possible to reform this implacable enemy.<sup>105</sup> “The dead church has no heirs”; it has brought nothing but darkness into the world.<sup>106</sup> Christianity opposed reason and justice from its very beginning in the NT. It viewed God as allotting grace and forgiveness to a chosen people, outside of true virtue and merit, and justified the capricious reign of tyrants through this concept of God, with their similar policies of arbitrary favoritism.<sup>107</sup> With the destruction of the Roman empire, Christianity ushered in a time of chaos, where civil order and justice perished from the earth and the righteous were crushed for a thousand years under “hate and malediction.”<sup>108</sup> The medieval church taught that “souls redeemed at the same price are all worth the blood of a god; then debased these souls, once recovered, to the level of brutes, fastened them to the earth, adjudged them to eternal bondage, and annihilated liberty.”<sup>109</sup> The church went on to torture many of those who would not conform to its oppression. The Reign of Terror and its guillotine were merciful in comparison to the “millions of men butchered, hanged, [and] broken on the wheel.” The Bastille represented the typical torture chamber of the church, serving much the same purpose as convents in the Middle Ages. It was run by Jesuits to torture their enemies in its “subterranean dungeons,” where monks meted out their arbitrary sense of justice with *lettres-de-cachet* to get rid of people and bury their victims alive.<sup>110</sup> The Massacre of Saint Bartholomew’s Day represented the modern day policy of Rome in persecuting Huguenots and all other Protestants who would not conform to its will.<sup>111</sup> The clergy are described as little more than conniving hypocrites who possess no real faith and keep the people in darkness.<sup>112</sup>

The French people had an “incontestable right” to take away their estates during the Revolution, given the monstrous injustice the church exhibited in the last thousand years of seizing this property from the nation. If anything, the French people showed great acts of kindness to the priests by giving them a livelihood through the state in exchange for the loss of property, leveling the pay of the hierarchy, and shutting down monasteries that imprisoned many of them for centuries.<sup>113</sup> Bishops rewarded the kindness of the French people with inciting the civil war that tore apart the country, and remain to this day enemies of the people in trying to divide and conquer them.<sup>114</sup>

## David Hume (1711–1776)

The English also produced their share of eminent historians during the period of Enlightenment. The standard text of English history was written by David Hume, the well-known Scottish philosopher, who gained notoriety for a penetrating intellect and probing skepticism. His *History of England* was first published in six volumes from 1754 to 1761 and underwent more than fifty editions of the complete work through the course of the next century as the basic source on the subject.<sup>115</sup> In the work, Hume displays his typical intellectual honesty by making every effort to provide an objective and critical analysis of the material in presenting his results. He finds French *philosophes* like Voltaire “sometimes sound, & always entertaining” when relating the people and events of the past, but also finds them all-too-willing to run roughshod over the facts of history in order to support a specific agenda.<sup>116</sup> If he contains any political bias, he readily admits the problem in describing himself as “a Whig, but a very skeptical one,” hoping to place his work “above any regard to Whigs or Tories” and criticize all excesses within the political spectrum.<sup>117</sup> In keeping with this spirit, he hopes to write an objective, empirical, and secular account of history, which skews *a priori* prejudices of value and meaning and spurns the presumption of abstract philosophical theories in forcing an artificial unity upon the complexity of human history.<sup>118</sup>

The quest for honesty leads him to present a more complex portrait of historical figures than Voltaire provides in his “philosophical history.”<sup>119</sup> A good example of this tendency might be found in the sections on Elizabeth I, where he provides the typical praise of her character and leadership during the period,<sup>120</sup> but also recognizes that it is only possible to extol her by restricting the commentary to the standards of her day, since she clearly exercised her dominion contrary to what the English understand as constitutional at present.<sup>121</sup> She was no lover of liberty in the present sense of the term. She persecuted Puritans and Papists; she ran the Star

Chamber and High Commission, extorted money, bought monopolies and exclusive patents; she voided the acts of Parliament and produced obsequious subjects under her imperious temper, capricious rulings, and unlimited authority. Hume refuses to condemn her for ruling within the limitations of a bygone era, but also refuses to sanitize the story or create an image to fit a later political agenda—the typical vice of his day.<sup>122</sup>

Many historians commend Hume's example in trying to reduce the subjective element of his work as paving the way toward the modern discipline of historical writing. Hume certainly provides considerable inspiration for those who seek to render the complexity of facts more faithfully and objectively than previous efforts in the field, but in commending the effort, no scholar can pretend that Hume or anyone else eliminates subjective abstractions and metaphysical judgments in assembling and relating the material at hand. In many ways, his work reflects the same cultural prejudices that infect every other person's point of view. In fact, it boldly and continually puts forth the British social system as the paradigm of the past and future—"if not the best system of government, at least the most entire system of liberty, that ever was known amongst mankind," betraying an intense ethnocentric commitment and uniform philosophical prejudice of his enlightened intellectual circles.<sup>123</sup>

His distinctive prejudices also come out in the narrative and often relate to the particular means of evolving the present system. Here he speaks much like an English gentleman in preferring a moderate approach of "gradual and slow steps" that stay within a "happy medium," rather than making a qualitative leap into the unknown.<sup>124</sup> This attitude disposes him to extenuate the cruelties of despots and justify the security of the established order over the calls and cries for liberty.<sup>125</sup> Like a good English gentleman, he expresses great admiration for the tradition of common law in establishing order and stability in the country. Law and order evolve gradually through the collective wisdom of the nation and its time-tested traditions, developed through centuries of statutes, writs, and customs.<sup>126</sup> History evinces "the long way that the British people had traveled before achieving the political liberty, stability, prosperity, and secularity at home and abroad that they enjoyed in the eighteenth century."<sup>127</sup> Those who honor the process of traditional evolution and the gravitas of "persons of higher quality" achieve more lasting results in the final analysis than the impetuous demand for immediate and radical change through "insurrections of the populace."<sup>128</sup>

This prejudice causes him to complain about nonconformist and radical Protestant groups, who want "total abolition of Monarchy" and "total abolition of episcopacy and even of the aristocracy" for the sake of leveling society in the name of their absolute doctrine of equality.<sup>129</sup> He particularly abhors their continuous

polemical battles against matters of indifference or “inoffensive observances” within the church—“Romish” ritual practices, clerical garb, “images, altars, crucifixes,” and other aspects of high church Anglicanism, unable to appreciate the symbolic power of these matters or the need of radicals to fuel change through challenging the small things that matter so much to the multitudes and represent the old hierarchical order.<sup>130</sup>

The fanaticism of the independents, exalted to a higher pitch, abolished ecclesiastical government, disdained creeds and systems, neglected every ceremony, and confounded all ranks and orders [going beyond] any bounds of temper and moderation. The soldier, the merchant, the mechanic, indulging the fervors of zeal, and guided by the illapses of the spirit, resigned himself to an inward and superior direction, and was consecrated, in a manner, by an immediate intercourse and communication with heaven.<sup>131</sup>

This type of attitude leads Hume to deprecate all radical Protestant groups and their leaders. John Knox is described as a man “full of sedition, rage, and bigotry,” representing the “highest fanaticism of his sect,” preaching against Catholic idolatry, causing iconoclastic riots, and denigrating Mary Queen of Scots as a “Jezebel” in spite of her “gracious condescension to win his favor.”<sup>132</sup> Oliver Cromwell is also deprecated in the typical style of the day, following the Restoration of the monarchy in England and the need to yield obeisance to royalty. Cromwell attained his power through “fraud and violence” and used religion as an “instrument of his ambition,” possessing the “most profound dissimulation” to cover “his natural temper, magnanimity, grandeur, and imperious and dominating policy.”<sup>133</sup> He and the Puritans accused Charles I of erecting a “tyrannical government” and waging war against the Parliament and the people, but this accusation was merely a pretext to justify the religious prejudices that drove them to execute the innocent king. Hume again shows his “royalist” leanings in allowing the people to resist tyranny as long as it does not proceed too far and result in the execution of the king. The beheading of Charles I was the “height of depravity.”<sup>134</sup>

His religious prejudice also helps skew the account in certain other areas. The prejudice never matches the anti-Semitic and anti-Christian hatred of the French *philosophes*, but it is sufficient to taint the account and cause him to miss many instances of Christianity’s positive influence on society. The “Scottish skeptic” finds religious questions subject to serious doubt, believing it is impossible to establish the existence of God in any rigorous philosophical manner—let alone speculate about the nature of God’s being and engage in passionate arguments about one’s point of view.<sup>135</sup> The Christian religion has caused much turmoil in society by engaging in these theological flights of fancy and making its speculations

and superstitions a matter of official dogma for the rest to follow.<sup>136</sup> He continually refers to Catholicism as “abject superstition”<sup>137</sup> and develops a rather negative review of the church’s place in society because of this harsh and simplistic assessment.

But we may observe, the few ecclesiastical establishments have been fixed upon a worse foundation than that of the Church of Rome, or have been attended with circumstances more hurtful to the peace and happiness of mankind.

The large revenues, privileges, immunities, and powers of the clergy rendered them formidable to the civil magistrate, and armed with too extensive authority an order of men, who always adhere closely together, and who never want a plausible pretence for their encroachments and usurpations. The high dignities of the church served, indeed, to the support of gentry and nobility; but by the establishment of monasteries, many of the lowest vulgar were taken from the useful arts, and maintained in those receptacles of sloth and ignorance. The supreme head of the church was a foreign potentate, guided by interests, always different from those of the community, sometimes contrary to them. And as the hierarchy was necessarily solicitous to preserve an unity of faith, rites, and ceremonies, all liberty of thought ran a manifest risqué of being extinguished; and violent persecutions, or what was worse, a stupid and abject credulity took place every where.<sup>138</sup>

He goes on to speak of Christianity in general as the basic sponsor of intolerance in society, but in highlighting this negative portrait, he seldom provides sufficient space for counterexamples, where the church served an important role in developing a more loving and tolerant world. For example, in the sixteenth century, he illustrates the evils of Christian dogma through the cruel and horrid persecutions of Mary Tudor but fails to connect the more benevolent policies of Elizabeth I with her understanding of the faith.<sup>139</sup> He knows that Elizabeth is a devout Protestant but fails to connect the dots, preferring instead to dismiss Protestants with a continuous epithet as “fanatics,” only considering them a little less superstitious than Catholics.<sup>140</sup>

With that said, Hume is much too honest a scholar to dismiss the clear connection between Puritan struggles and the modern British system of governance. He recognizes that the seventeenth-century Puritans brought about a radical change in society and rejects the type of revisionist history that imposes a modern political agenda on the past or tends to idealize and exaggerate the importance of antecedents like Germanic roots, Saxon law, or Magna Carta in developing the present version of liberal government.<sup>141</sup>

Those who, from a pretend respect to antiquity, appeal at every turn to an original plan to the constitution, only cover their turbulent spirit and their private ambition

under the appearance of venerable forms; and whatever period they pitch on for their model, they may still be carried back to a more ancient period, where they will find the measures of power entirely different, and where every circumstance, by reason of the greater barbarity of the times, will appear still less worthy of imitation. Above all, a civilized nation, like the English, who have happily established the most perfect and most accurate system of liberty that was ever found compatible with the government, ought to be cautious in appealing to the practice of their ancestors, or regarding the maxims of uncultivated ages as certain rules for their present conduct.<sup>142</sup>

The credit is somewhat surprising for a man who emphasizes the gradual development of institutions and despises the religious zealotry of Puritans, but his study leads him to this conclusion, which he expresses over and over again in no uncertain terms.<sup>143</sup>

So absolute, indeed, was the authority of the crown, that the precious spark of liberty had been kindled, and was preserved, by the puritans alone; and it was to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous and habits so ridiculous, that the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution.<sup>144</sup>

The evidence forces him to admit that the “noble principles of liberty took root” only under the “shelter of puritanical absurdities” and their “fanaticism”<sup>145</sup>—a fanaticism that he clearly does not understand. He displays almost no understanding of the theological matrix for developing the new constitutional principles—no real understanding of covenant theology, the priesthood of the believers, the Protestant work ethic, or any other doctrine that led the Puritans in this direction.<sup>146</sup> The deficit clearly reflects the enlightened attitude toward theological discussions as worthless speculations and prevents his discussion from developing a fuller understanding of Puritanism and its political ideals, but it should not undermine the true greatness of Hume’s work or his sincere attempt at objectivity. In fact, he must receive much credit for his integrity and willingness to recognize what few sons of the Enlightenment in the past or present want to admit—that the church had a positive influence in creating the modern world and their binary way of separating church and state is not so faithful to the historical evidence.

## Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)

Another English historian of similar disposition was Edward Gibbon. Like Hume and Burke, he rejected extreme political expressions and preferred to balance the interests of left-wing and democratic impulses with the gravitas of a publically-spirited nobility in creating a healthy society of moderation and stability. This basic



disposition made him side with the Tories and represent their interests for a while as a member of Parliament, but he soon grew disillusioned with all the rancor of active political involvement and left it for a more “tranquil” life of “repose” and “ease” within the “enlightened and amiable culture” of intelligentsia.<sup>147</sup> The result was one of the great books of the western world, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The first volume appeared in 1776 and gained him instant notoriety, along with some infamy for its critical analysis of the church in chapters 15 and 16. A couple of volumes were added in 1781, and a few more in 1788 to complete the massive six-volume edition.<sup>148</sup>

His thoughts reflected the moderate tone of his political life while displaying a distinct leaning toward the enlightened ideas of the day. He met with Raynal several times at Lausanne and read his work; he frequented the salons of France and conversed with the *philosophes*; but he never engaged in their ultraisms, considering the world much too complex for the bigotries of Voltaire or the extreme atheistic dogmatism of d’Holbach and Helvétius.<sup>149</sup> He joined them in preferring the power of reason to the dubious assertions of blind faith, but also recognized the limits of all human attempts to address metaphysical concerns, making him much more like Hume than the typical *philosophe* in admitting his problems and remaining skeptical.<sup>150</sup>

His religious convictions followed this basic pattern. He grew up in the Anglican Church, but he began to read Catholic literature while studying at Oxford and was so impressed with its traditions that he converted to the religion and received baptism on June 8, 1753—much to the chagrin of his father.<sup>151</sup> Later his father sent him to study under a Calvinist minister in Lausanne, who dissuaded him from his Catholic faith and brought him back into the Protestant fold. He attended a local parish church after that according to the “pious and decent customs of the family,” but eventually developed into a skeptic by the time he reached twenty-three years of age.<sup>152</sup> In his work, he expressed considerable suspicion toward miraculous accounts in Scripture and disdain for theological controversies as the cause of much bigotry, but spurned those who dismissed him as an “infidel” and claimed to relate only “a simple narrative of authentic facts,” which the readers must consider in formulating their own perspective.<sup>153</sup>

Despite this denial, his narrative selects and interprets its “facts” within an agenda that stands opposed to theology as a non-edifying discipline for humanity. A good example is his discussion of the doctrine of the Trinity, where he relates its evolution in the most unflattering light to denigrate its place in the church. According to Gibbon, the doctrine was a simple product of Plato’s absurd metaphysical musings over the “first cause, the reason, or the *Logos*, and the soul or spirit of the universe,” and possesses little connection with the account of Jesus in the

Synoptic Gospels.<sup>154</sup> Athanasius and the Alexandrian school of theology stirred up the controversy as the leading see of Platonism in the Graeco-Roman world, ending a period of tranquility and ushering in a new age of orthodox bigotry.<sup>155</sup> After the Nicene Creed established the doctrine in the fourth century, the church inculcated it with the force of the empire, making the numerous sects conform to Catholic orthodoxy, prohibiting the assemblies of those who dissented from the confines, and eventually spilling much Arian blood with its superior numbers and power, which Gibbon exaggerates with his many unprovable “facts.”<sup>156</sup> Throughout the account, he displays no real appreciation for any practical ramification of the doctrine, or the need for a fellowship to define its nature and set parameters.<sup>157</sup> He displays no real understanding of the important differences between the Athanasian and Arian viewpoints, of viewing Jesus as the incarnation of God or a mere creature, of viewing Jesus as the revelation of God or looking elsewhere and outside of Jesus to find the divine nature.<sup>158</sup>

Many historians hail Gibbon for developing a more critical use of sources and so paving the way toward the modern scientific practice of historiography.<sup>159</sup> No doubt he is a decided improvement over the many propagandists of the past in recognizing the necessity of sifting through all sides of a story and mixing negative and positive commentary when speaking of real people and real events, but his discussions hardly escape the subjective, moralistic, and transcendent aspect of other works.<sup>160</sup> In fact, his narratives have a particular tendency to lose its objectivity when it comes to religion, leading critical readers to recognize the need of deconstructing the text and finding the “whirlpools underneath” the “placid waters on the surface.” Often the bias remains implicit within the overall drift of the material, but sometimes it erupts to the surface in certain moments of candor, where “discreet sneers and mockeries are followed by sallies of caustic irony.”<sup>161</sup> These eruptions reveal that the general tenor of his secular style is only feigning objectivity in presenting a “neutral” front and calculating all along to make religious passion look fanatical and irrational in comparison to its “dispassionate” discourse and “detached” criticism.<sup>162</sup>

Gibbon likes to contrast the enlightened worldview of his day with the miraculous universe of the primitive church. “They...fancied, that on every side they were incessantly assaulted by daemons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and surprisingly delivered from danger, sickness, and from death itself.”<sup>163</sup> In rejecting the three-story universe, he presents ecclesiastical history from an enlightened point of view, which prefers to credit the triumph of Christianity in western culture to “secondary causes,” rather than attribute its remarkable growth to the efficacious nature of its supernal teachings or the miraculous power of divine intervention, as it was portrayed in the book of Acts and much of church history.<sup>164</sup>

The result is a secular history where God is not a factor, where the power of the Holy Spirit no longer serves as the fundamental explanation in spreading the religion and turning the world upside down (Acts 17:6).<sup>165</sup> Gibbon's work prefers to view the world as a self-contained shell and wants to accent a chain of cause and effect within a natural understanding of events, contriving all along to discredit the miraculous version of the church by providing a successful alternative.<sup>166</sup> His mistake comes from taking his causal reasoning much too seriously and failing to appreciate Hume's excoriating analysis of human rationality and its ability to penetrate the world of cause and effect in the first place. Hume sees every causal explanation as a metaphysical leap into the unknown, making any explanation of historical events a matter of faith—religious or non-religious alike.

One of the principal motives for writing the book is to demonstrate a cause and effect relationship between the rise of Christianity and the fall of Rome. Gibbon follows the basic enlightened perspective on Rome that views it in an idealized form as arising from Greek city-states and developing a prototypical form of republican government and superior philosophical culture, although he never spends much time discussing the actual history of the early phase.<sup>167</sup> Instead, he begins in the second century C.E., which he describes as the “most happy and prosperous” in the “history of the world.”<sup>168</sup> At this time, Rome ruled the “fairest part of the earth” with a “disciplined valour,” the “advantages of wealth and luxury,” and the “gentle, but powerful influence of law and manner.”<sup>169</sup> Whatever darkness crept in after reaching the zenith of its power, the light of the “invigorating air of the republic” remained extant in the Roman law to provide some semblance of order and civility, even in the Middle Ages.<sup>170</sup>

Gibbon's main purpose is to show how the greatness of Rome came to ruin. His *Autobiography* underscores this very purpose.

It was at Rome, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.<sup>171</sup>

The reasons for its demise are multiplied and detailed throughout the book, making them difficult to summarize in a simple list, but some of the more important reasons include the destruction of time and natural forces, the decay of military virtue, the decadence of luxury and lasciviousness, the loss of political liberties, the chaos of civil wars, the invasion of barbarians, and the spread of Christianity.<sup>172</sup> The triumph of Christianity is one of the main reasons and is often coupled with the conquest of “barbarism” to underscore the menacing nature of this uncivil threat to Roman culture.<sup>173</sup> Christianity is singled out for its leading role in the destruction as it “erected the triumphant banner of the cross on the ruins of the

Capitol,” symbolizing the complete victory and utter destruction of the glorious city.<sup>174</sup> Five specific reasons are listed for its ultimate success and triumph.

I. The inflexible, and, if we may use the expression, the intolerant zeal of the Christians, derived, it is true, from the Jewish religion, but purified from the narrow and unsocial spirit which, instead of inviting, had deterred the Gentiles from embracing the law of Moses. II. The doctrine of a future life, improved by every additional circumstance which could give weight and efficacy to that important truth. III. The miraculous powers ascribed to the primitive church. IV. The pure and austere morals of the Christians. V. The union and discipline of the Christian republic, which gradually formed an independent and increasing state in the heart of the Roman empire.<sup>175</sup>

He goes on to say that early Christianity corrupted the public spirit by preaching an other-worldly asceticism. It opposed everyday business and preferred trusting God for sustenance in seeking the kingdom of God (Mt 6:24–33). It also disregarded the military and courts of law by practicing an extreme form of pacifism that threatened the public safety. This “criminal disregard for the public welfare” brought concern among the neighbors, who saw within its “pusillanimous spirit” a secret longing for the destruction of the empire.<sup>176</sup> As Christianity ascended to power in the fourth century, it changed its early emphasis on pacifism and brought condemnation on others through numerous theological controversies, which destroyed the philosophical spirit and unity of the empire with superstitious and fanatical intolerance.<sup>177</sup> “At the head of the class” stands the iconoclastic controversy that ended up dividing the empire and led to the complete demise of the eastern part.<sup>178</sup>

Gibbon contrasts the Holy Roman Empire with the ancient world and its tolerant treatment of various religious expressions and their superstitions.<sup>179</sup> Christianity developed its bigotry out of Judaism—the mother of the religion and enemy of Voltaire and the *philosophes* for this very reason.<sup>180</sup> The Jews possessed an “implacable hatred for the rest of human-kind” as the chosen people of a jealous God and developed a legal economy to inculcate this animosity, which included the command to extirpate idolatrous people, the prohibition of alliances and marriages with other people, and special ritual and dietary observance, designed to promote segregation. The Romans tried to indulge the Jewish superstition, but could not dissuade them from their “unsocial manner,” “detestation of foreign religions,” and obstinate unwillingness to relate their speculations to other Graeco-Roman mythology and join the cosmopolitan ethos of the empire.<sup>181</sup>

The Romans experienced the same problem with Christians, who inherited from the Jews an obstinate refusal to participate in pagan religious institutions and the total life of the community.<sup>182</sup> Christians tried to blame the problem on the

Romans as if they were the victims of bigotry, but their accounts have a “total disregard of truth and probability” in exaggerating whatever harm was done to them and end up imputing to the Roman magistrates their own “implacable and unrelenting zeal” in persecuting heretics.<sup>183</sup> The actual number of martyrs was “very inconsiderable”—usually just a few bishops, presbyters, and abject individuals, not the innocent multitudes of ecclesiastical fiction.<sup>184</sup> In fact, Christians “inflicted far greater severities on each other than they experienced from the zeal of infidels.... If we are obliged to submit our belief to the authority of Grotius, it must be allowed that the number of Protestants who were executed in a single province and a single reign far exceeded that of the primitive martyrs in the space of three centuries and of the Roman Empire.”<sup>185</sup> The emperors tended to practice a policy of moderation in their punishment whenever it was necessary to exact certain measures and mostly ruled over extensive periods of peace and tranquility, without resorting to any steps at all against this clear and imminent threat. Whatever measures were taken, it was not for religious reasons, not even in the case of Nero’s fits of rage.<sup>186</sup>

Gibbon follows the program of the *philosophes* in exalting Roman culture and its policies of toleration to deprecate the intolerance of the church. The early church failed to treat those who participate in other forms of religious expression with equal respect as grappling with the same ultimate mystery and cursed them as *mécéants* or “unbelievers,” who worship something much different from the true faith. Through this attitude, Christians “infused a spirit of bitterness” into their religion and proceeded to deliver the “greater part of the human species” into eternal torment, including the “wisest and most virtuous of pagans.”<sup>187</sup> Eventually, the hatred of others turned on their own fellowship during the ages of orthodoxy as “the principle of discord was alive in their bosom,” creating one doctrinal dispute after another and inflicting “far greater severities on each other than they had experienced from the zeal of infidels.”<sup>188</sup> In the fourth century, Constantine convoked an ecumenical council at Nicea to determine Trinitarian orthodoxy and punished ministers and assemblies who refused to follow the confines. By the end of the century, Theodosius expelled all non-conforming bishops, yet “his penal edicts were seldom enforced” and little bloodshed ensued from the policy.<sup>189</sup> Maximus was the first to take the more dire step and inflicted death upon Piscillian and his heretical group of disciples.<sup>190</sup> More bloodshed soon followed and continued to escalate after the first century of orthodoxy, with the Catholics fighting the Arians (barbarians) during the sacking of Rome and setting a precedent for continuous bloodletting over other doctrinal issues in the years to come.<sup>191</sup>

Most scholars view Gibbon’s work as being preoccupied with this and other attacks upon Christendom.<sup>192</sup> They point to his unrelenting assault upon its “fictitious miracles” and “falsification of history,” its fanatical superstitions and puerile

rites, its authoritarian leadership and irrational dogmatism, and its intolerant spirit and murder of those who would not conform.<sup>193</sup> Other scholars find the charge of bias unfair or at least unbalanced in pointing out some positive comments about Christianity that are sprinkled throughout the account,<sup>194</sup> but it is hard to dismiss the overall direction of the discussion. The positive comments are overwhelmed within the text by the programmatic agenda and appear somewhat disingenuous to the critical reader as if Gibbon is only feigning objectivity to hide the overall condescending attitude of a secularist—at least in many instances. Gibbon might excuse his basic negativity as the “melancholy duty” of a historian to discover the “inevitable mixture of error and corruption” in the “weak and degenerate race of [human] beings,”<sup>195</sup> but the dark side overwhelms his analysis of the church and hardly represents a faithful rendition of the multifaceted nature of life. Early Christians appear as little more than killjoys, despising the pleasures of sex and luxurious living, questioning earthly institutions like marriage and other social structures, and spurning the exercise of human reason—and whatever else is useless for salvation.<sup>196</sup> The Church Fathers appear more like secular leaders with worldly ambitions than spiritual teachers with real convictions, and the ascetic ideal of the time is continually denigrated in the typical manner of a Protestant, without much appreciation for the mystical quest of pious meditation or the intense dedication of a hermit who is looking for inward purity and shunning the things of this world.<sup>197</sup>

The Middle Ages receives the most contempt as the period in which the church was the guardian of culture. It is brutalized in the typical style of a *philosophie* as a time of ignorance and darkness, with few important individuals or events counterbalancing the discussion with noteworthy achievements.<sup>198</sup>

During the ages of ignorance which followed the subversion of the Roman empire in the West, the bishops of the Imperial city extended their dominion over the laity as well as clergy of the Latin church. The fabric of superstition which they had erected, and which might long have defied the feeble efforts of reason, was at length assaulted by a crowd of daring fanatics, who, from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, assumed the popular character of reformers. The church of Rome defended by violence the empire which she had acquired by fraud; a system of peace and benevolence was soon disgraced by the proscriptions, wars, massacres, and the institution of the holy office. And as the reformers were animated by the love of civil as well as of religious freedom, the Catholic princes connected their own interest with that of the clergy, and enforced by fire and the sword the terrors of spiritual censures.<sup>199</sup>

If we compare the era of the crusades, the Latins of Europe with the Greeks and Arabians, their respective degrees of knowledge, industry, and art, our rude ancestors must be content with the third rank in the scale of nations.... Some rudiments of mathematical and medicinal knowledge might be imparted in practice and in figures;

necessity might produce some interpreters for the grosser business of merchants and soldiers; but the commerce of the Orientals had not diffused the study and knowledge of their languages in the schools of Europe.... The belief of the Catholics was corrupted by new legends, their practice by new superstitions; and the establishment of the inquisition, the mendicant orders of monks and friars, the last abuse of indulgences, and the final progress of idolatry, flowed from the baleful fountain of the holy war. The active spirit of the Latins preyed on the vitals of their reason and religion; and if the ninth and tenth centuries were the times of darkness, the thirteenth and fourteenth were the age of absurdity and fable.<sup>200</sup>

He characterizes monastic spirituality as finding its fundamental inspiration through an insatiable enthusiasm for the ascetic ideal, which saw “man as a criminal and God as a tyrant” through its “rigid facts,” “abstemious diets,” and “bloody flagellations.” The monastic life turned guilt and pleasure into synonymous terms by waging war against the “desires of the flesh” and creating ridiculous legends about those devoted to its rigor. Far from promoting true spirituality, it did little more than infuse a “cruel, unfeeling temper” in the monks and a “blind submission” to the abbots, habituating the type of “religious hatred” and “merciless zeal” that led to Dominican inquisitions. The “servile and pusillanimous reign” of the monks suppressed all manly virtues in the Middle Ages and “seriously affected the reason, the faith and the morals of the Christian,” deserving “the contempt and pity of a philosopher” and the esteem of the “infirm minds of children and females.”<sup>201</sup>

Above all, Gibbon follows the Enlightenment in his account of the early and medieval church by focusing his wrath upon the clergy as filled with avarice and rapacious lusts, who feigned a spiritual calling in recognizing the “very lucrative” nature of the profession.<sup>202</sup> Gibbon identifies the bishopric of Cyprian as the particular time and place where moral corruption set in and the clergy began to siphon off the riches of the church for their private gain and sensual pleasure. Cyprian ruled like a tyrant, using the power of penance and excommunication to wield “imperious declamations” over the conscience of others, much like Moses commanding the earth to swallow all those who refused obeisance to his authority. Cyprian held absolute sway over the North African church and wanted to expand his power and wealth just like Hannibal in the Punic Wars, except using “invectives and excommunications” as weapons against the ambitions of the Roman pontiff.<sup>203</sup> After this time, much of the church history is marked by Bishops vying for ecclesiastical preeminence as the “genuine motive of episcopal warfare” and trying to expand their power into the temporal realm, producing an entire culture submissive to their authority.<sup>204</sup> What the church meant to the culture, in general,

is often represented through the ambition of bishops and seldom discussed positively.

Gibbon's work represents the type of secular and anti-Christian bias that pervaded the modern world after the Enlightenment. Today's U.S. textbooks are subject to much the same criticism for their treatment of religion, although they reflect the biases of a pervasive post-Enlightenment culture and its leading historians in a less brazen and caustic manner. The texts certainly make a concerted effort to mitigate any appearance of prejudice when narrating the history of western civilization: they do not wish to offend the audience or alienate specific communities; they do not wish to relate theology in any direct way to bigotry; they do not recognize any slight to Christian people in extolling religious freedom and neglecting the importance of Puritan culture; but they still leave a trace of the bias within the white of the page by mentioning what is important to enlightened thinking and neglecting what it dismissed as part of the fanatical past.

This enlightened history has a vested interest in marginalizing the Judeo-Christian tradition, which we have witnessed over and over within its most celebrated accounts.<sup>205</sup> Voltaire sees history progressing linearly away from the darkness of medieval religion toward the light of human reason. His hatred of Christianity is a motivating factor in writing a universal history and guiding the audience to seek truth elsewhere in the world, outside the legacy of Hebraic culture. It also causes him to miss the important impact of Christianity on modern European society, as seen in his exaltation of the modern British system of governance, without recognizing the central place of Puritan theology in its evolution. Raynal follows much the same program as Voltaire in condemning the reign of Christianity as a period of ignorance and darkness and exalting the advent of the Italian Renaissance as bringing a new age of truth and toleration to the world. He also expresses the same admiration for the English system of polity, while failing to grasp the impact of Puritan culture upon the process due to the same theological prejudices. In the nineteenth century, Michelet leads the charge of defending the *philosophes'* view of life as expressing the inward truth of the French spirit and its glorious Revolution. He feels that Christianity's view of a capricious deity prompted its infamous history of torturing innocent victims and wants his audience to condemn the religion as the number one enemy of the people and their longing for justice and equality.

In England, Hume and Gibbon represent a more civil approach to historiography in trying to bring some semblance of objectivity to the study, but religious and political bias still has a way of intruding upon the best of intentions and marking their "moderate" approach to these issues. Hume represents history through the eyes of a Tory by expressing reverence for tradition and the gradual evolution of society, and brings considerable metaphysical judgment to bear upon all those who



disrupt its institutions through popular and radical change. However, his political prejudices seldom overpower the narrative or prevent him from acknowledging the central role of radical “fanatics” like the Puritans in establishing modern liberties. He is willing to acknowledge the positive impact of religion upon culture, even if he expresses deep misgivings about the existence of God and understands very little about theology or its specific impact upon society. Gibbon tries to emulate the moderate approach of Hume as a Tory and views life in a more complex manner than the *philosophes*, but his theological prejudices often interfere with historical judgment and provide an overall agenda that makes his positive comments about Christianity look insincere. As his basic agenda, he wants to debase the church by exalting the Roman empire as a tolerant and enlightened culture, and only does so by glossing over its oppressive nature and blaming Christianity for the destruction of the empire and superior cultural values in general through its lust for power and continuous theological disputes. He tries to pigeonhole the question of divine intervention in history and emphasize “secondary causality,” but fails to recognize that cause and effect reasoning involves a metaphysical leap into the unknown, that divine miracles are not so easily dismissed on historical grounds, that a secular approach is hardly neutral in dismissing God as a factor. In fact, all historiography involves a leap of faith and carries the subjective convictions of the author along with it. No one sees life in an objective manner as if beholding the “thing-in-itself,” or observing events outside a certain paradigm that configures the world into its narrow image.<sup>206</sup>

## Notes

1. Eric Brooks, “Hagiography, Modern Historiography, and Historical Representation,” *Fides et Historia* 42/2 (2010): 22, 25; Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 191–92.
2. Rudolf Bultmann, et al., *Kerygma and Myth*, Reginald H. Fuller (trans.), Hans Werner Bartsch (ed.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1961), passim; *Theology of the New Testament*, Kendrick Grobel (trans.) (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1951–55), 1.3; 2.240; Walter Schmithals, *An Introduction to the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*, John Bowden (trans.) (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1967), 35, 176–79, 197–208. After Bultmann, the Third Quest for the Historical Jesus developed more objective criteria for determining historicity but never loses the subjective human element. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 1.5–6, 196ff.; 2.4.
3. Muslim jihadists show great concern over western secularization coming to the Middle East and marginalizing Islam, much like it does to Christianity within its domain. Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, John B. Hardie (trans.) (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 2, 245–47, 258.

4. Paul Vitz, *Censorship: Evidence of Bias in Our Children's Textbooks* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Books, 1986), 14–16, 39–41, 58–59, 75–78. Vitz, a professor of psychology at New York University, was funded by the government (NIE) to examine bias in textbooks. He examined “ninety widely used elementary social studies texts, high school history texts, and elementary readers” to arrive at his conclusions.
5. Carleton Young, “Religion in U.S. History Textbooks,” *The History Teacher* 28/2 (1995): 265–66; Daniel B. Fleming, “Religion in American History Textbooks,” *Religion & Public Education* 18/1 (1991): 80–81; Eloise Salholz, “Timid Texts: Short Shrift for Religion,” *Newsweek* 108 (1986): 20; *Religion in the Curriculum: A Report from the ASCD Panel...* (Alexandria, VA: ASCD, 1987), 7, 24–25. Warren Nord analyzes forty-two high school textbooks, written from 1989–1992 and used by his state of North Carolina, in the areas of American and world history, economics, home economics, biology, physics, and physical science. All these texts are published by major publishers and represent standard works used nationwide. Similar studies by Timothy Smith, Paul Gagnon, and even the People for the American Way arrive at the same conclusion. Nord, *Religion and American Education: Rethinking a National Dilemma* (Chapel Hill, NC and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Smith, “High School History Adopted for Use in the State of Alabama: The Distortion and Exclusion of Religious Data,” *Religion and Public Education* 15 (1988); Gagnon, *Democracy's Untold Story: What the World History Textbooks Neglect* (Washington, DC: Education for Democracy Project, 1987); Podesta, “The Uphill Battle for Quality Textbooks,” *Religion and Public Education* 13 (1986): 60–62.
6. Robert Bryan, *History, Pseudo-History, Anti-History: How Public School Textbooks Treat Religion* (Washington, DC: Learn, Inc. The Education Foundation, 1984), 3, 10. David Fischer speaks of four major waves of immigrants coming to this country. The first major wave was the Puritans from East Anglia wanting to build a new Zion or “City upon a Hill” when Charles I disbanded Parliament in 1629. The second was led by a small royalist elite and included a large number of indentured servants, who came from Southern England seeking a better way of life and showing some concern over the Puritan takeover in the 1640s and 1650s. The third wave was mostly Quakers from the Northern Midlands of England and Wales (as well as later German was Anabaptists, Pietists, et al.), who settled in New Jersey and the Delaware Valley, believing in religious pluralism and fleeing persecution or the marginal status of a non-conformist in England, but this was not the only motivation. The fourth wave came from northern England, Scotland, and northern Ireland to the Appalachian backcountry seeking a better material life. The myth of all these groups coming to America and seeking religious freedom is based upon a historical exaggeration, only characterizing the third wave in general. *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 6, 18–22, 212–43, 332–34, 424, 436, 594, 611, 621, 634, 821.
7. According to Charleton Young, nineteenth-century textbooks would disappoint religious people today. They focused on great leaders with little emphasis upon social forces and hardly any mention of religion after the colonial period, except to emphasize the struggle for religious toleration. “Religion in U.S. History Textbooks,” 268–69. Daniel Fleming finds that the emphasis upon religious freedom dominates the discussion in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century textbooks. There is consistent mention of religion during the colonial

period, “with some texts doing more than others with reform movements and institutional changes and development” after the time. He finds today’s textbooks to be no worse or better than their predecessors. “Religion in American History Textbooks,” 84–101.

8. Europeans are farther along in this process than Americans. According to an ISSP public-opinion survey in 1998, more than two-thirds of them think of religion as intolerant. José Casanova, “The Secular, Secularization, Secularism,” in *Rethinking Secularism*, Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan Vanantwerpen (eds.) (Oxford: University Press, 2011), 69. A number of British authors have written popular works expressing this sentiment. Bertrand Russell, a Cambridge professor and spokesman for the secular left, concurs with Marx’s criticisms of religion in general and adds a most vitriolic attack upon Christianity, portraying it as the great enemy of left-wing ideals, human evolution, and open-minded seekers of truth.

The knowledge exists by which universal happiness can be secured; the chief obstacle to its utilization for that purpose is the teaching of religion. Religion prevents our children from having a rational education; religion prevents us from removing the fundamental causes of war; religion prevents us from teaching the ethic of scientific co-operation in place of the old fierce doctrines of sin and punishments. It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age; but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door, and this dragon is religion.

He describes Christianity as the “principal enemy of moral progress in the world.” It has thwarted “every single bit of progress,” and whatever improvement it has made through the centuries has come through “the influence of those who attack the church.” *Why I Am Not a Christian: And Other Essays on Religion and Related Issues*, Paul Edwards (ed.) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 20–21, 35, 47, 198. Richard Dawkins informs his audience that “atheists” like Hitler and Stalin “may do evil things but they don’t do evil things in the name of atheism.” He prefers to blame religion as the basic cause of conflict throughout western civilization, and promotes secular ideas as the reason behind its advancement. *The God Delusion* (Boston, MA and New York: Houghton Muffin Co., 2006), 278. Christopher Hitchens finds it “statistically extremely high” that secular opinions cause one to promote justice in the world, while religious opinions lead in the opposite direction.

The worse the offender, the more devout he turns out to be.... This is because religions could never have got started, let alone thrived, unless for the influence of men as fanatical as Moses or Muhammad or Joseph Kony, while charity and relief work, while they might appeal to tenderhearted believers, are the inheritors of modernism and the Enlightenment. Before that, religion was spread not by example but as an auxiliary to the more old-fashioned methods of holy wars and imperialism. *god is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York and Boston, MA: Twelve, 2007), 12, 180.

9. George W. Carey, “Religion and American Government Textbooks,” in *Studies on Religion and Politics*, James V. Schall and Jerome J. Hanus (eds.) (Lanham, MD and London: University Press of America, 1986), 6, 9. Some publishers avoid religious topics as divisive and affecting the bottom line. Young, “Religion in U.S. History Textbooks,” 265; Fleming, “Religion in American History Textbooks,” 82.
10. Stephen Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009).

11. Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, Henry Reeve, Francis Brown, and Phillips Bradley (trans. and eds.) (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963), 1.43–44, 300–7, 322; 2.20; Sanford Kessler, “Tocqueville’s Puritans,” *The Journal of Politics* 54/3 (1992): 776–78, 782–84. Hume’s ideas are related later in this chapter. Some of the problems must be attributed to the popular fixation upon leaders rather than more complicated social forces.
12. According to Dan Fleming, the nineteenth-century textbooks display the same disdain for the Puritans. “Religion in American History Textbooks,” 89–90. The French Enlightenment brought much of this disdain with its continuous polemic against the Judeo-Christian tradition and the deist belief in human autonomy. Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 14–15, 37–38. Enlightenment scholars often pick up the vitriol and represent it in their own work. Peter Gay’s famous two-volume work on the Enlightenment recognizes that the *philosophes* were Anglo-philic but prefers to give credit to Enlightenment figures for modern ideas and fails to notice that the same ideas already permeated Puritan England and New England. E.g., *Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967–69), 1.11–12; 2.9–10, 559–61. Gay writes a book on Puritan historiography, deprecating Mather’s *Magnalia* as “pathetic” and speaking of the Puritan errand in America as a “failure.” He ends his book by saying, “Edwards’ chiliastic prediction was fulfilled and in his lifetime. Only it was Jonathan Edwards’ world, and with it the world of Puritanism, that came to end.” *A Loss of Mastery: Puritan Historians in Colonial America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 65, 70, 77, 81, 93, 110, 117. Of course, Gay shows no knowledge of Edwards’ postmillennial eschatology and its relation to the modern concept of progress, which he assigns to the Enlightenment. *Enlightenment*, 2.98–99, 120, 169–72. Cf. Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, chap. 6 (especially 221–22).
13. *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, William Byron Forbush (ed.) (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1963), xii–xiv; Avihu Zayai, *Exile and the Kingdom: History and Apocalypse in the Puritan Migration in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 31; Christopher Hill, *The Intellectual Origins of the Puritan Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 178.
14. John Foxe, *The First Volumes of Ecclesiastical History Contayning the Actes and Monumentes* (London: Iohn Day, 1570); “A Protestation to the Whole Church of England”; *Actes and Monumentes* (London: Iohn Day, 1563) 7–11, 85; Donald McKim, “The Puritan View of History or Providence Without and Within,” 223; Gay, *A Loss of Mastery*, 14.
15. Siofra Pierse, “Discarding Convention: Voltaire’s Repositioning of Truth in History,” in *Religion, Ethics, and History in the French Long Seventeenth Century*, William Brooks and Rainer Zaiser (eds.) (Oxford and Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 253–54; Paul H. Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians: A Comparative Study of the *Essai sur les mœurs* and the *History of England*,” *PMLA* 73/1 (1958) 51. Voltaire wrote a number of historical works and pieces, but his two most significant are *The Age of Louis XIV* (ca. late 1730s) and *Essays on Manners* (ca. mid–1740s). The latter is the most mature and expansive.
16. Gerhart Niemeyer, “History and Civilization,” *Review of Politics* 19 (1957): 95; Pierse, “Discarding Convention,” 255; Voltaire, *Essai sur les Mœurs et l’Esprit des Nations*, in *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1878), 11.158. Hereafter designated as EMEN. Of course, this recognition also becomes an excuse for force-feeding the narrative with bias. Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume,” 68.

17. Voltaire, "Historiographe," in *Les Complètes de Voltaire* (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1987), 33.219; EMEN 11.457–58; Paul Sakmann, "The Problems of Historical Method and of Philosophy of History in Voltaire [1906]," *History and Theory* 11 (1971): 25–26; Pierse, "Discarding Convention," 244, 257.
18. EMEN 13.462; "Historiographer," in WV 10.59 (OCV 19.371–72); Sakmann, "The Problems of Historical Method," 25–27. WV refers to *The Works of Voltaire* (Paris: E. R. DuMont, 1901); OCV refers to *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877–85).
19. Pierre Force, "Voltaire and the Necessity of Modern History," *Modern Intellectual History* 6/3 (2009): 478–79. Many criticize Voltaire for this, but few escape their own ethnocentricities. R. N. Stromberg, "History in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12/2 (1951): 299–302; Meyer, "Voltaire and Hume as Historians," 56.
20. EMEN 11.12, 222; Niemeyer, "History and Civilization," 93–95. His narrative displays some concern over the probable truth of the material. The miraculous goes against natural law and must be excluded *a priori*. He also distrusts ancient and medieval reports as unreliable in relating portraits and speeches. Sakmann, "The Problems of Historical Method," 31, 35–36; Pierse, "Discarding Convention," 245. He expresses the conviction of Pierre Bayle that hearing both sides is important in verifying an account, but he also admits that doubt must reign in history. Absolute truth is beyond us. Voltaire, "Fragment sur l'Histoire Générale," in OCV 29.248; "Histoire de l'empire de Russie sous Pierre le Grand," in *Les Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (1999) 47.729; *Siècle de Louis XIV*, in OCV 14.421 (WV 23.109–111); "La Henriade," in OCV 8.52–53; Pierse, "Discarding Convention," 247–48, 256–57; Sakmann, "The Problems of Historical Method," 35.
21. Friedrich Meinecke, *Historicism: The Rise of a New Historical Outlook*, J. E. Anderson (trans.) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 54; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 2.385ff.; Wilhelm Dilthey, "The Eighteenth Century and the Historical World," Patricia Van Turyl (trans.), in *Hermeneutics and the Study of History*, Robert Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (eds.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996) 348; Force, "Voltaire and the Necessity of Modern History," 458–60.
22. EMEN 12.154; 13.183.
23. *Siècle de Louis XIV*, in OCV 14.155 (WV 22.5); EMEN 11.158; *Lettres Choises de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1883), 2.232–33; Jerome Rosenthal, "Voltaire's Philosophy of History," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 16/2 (1955): 154–55; Force, "Voltaire and the Necessity of Modern History," 468–69.
24. EMEN 11.162; Rosenthal, "Voltaire's Philosophy of History," 158; Meyer, "Voltaire and Hume as Historians," 56.
25. EMEN 11.277; 12.181.
26. EMEN 12.53–54, 249.
27. EMEN 12.249–50. Voltaire shows his extreme prejudices toward religious convictions at this point. He commends Italy for producing architectural wonders like Saint Peter's (built through indulgences), while claiming the pretext of the Reformation was a dispute between Augustinian friars (like Luther) and Dominicans over who would receive the proceeds from the sale of indulgences. EMEN 12.249–50, 283.

28. EMEN 12.304–306.
29. This last sentence comes from Immanuel Kant's famous commentary on the Enlightenment. *Werke* (Wiesbaden: Insel-Verlag, 1958), 6.53.
30. See Stephen Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation: The French Revolution, Nazi Germany, and International Communism* (Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014), chaps. 1 and 2; Harvey Chisick, "Ethics and History in Voltaire's Attitudes Toward the Jews," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 35/4 (2002); Allan Arkush, "Voltaire on Judaism and Christianity," *AJS Review* 18/2 (1993).
31. EMEN 11.113–14, 129–30; Rosenthal, "Voltaire's Philosophy of History," 164–65.
32. "Plan d'une Histoire de l'Esprit Humain" et "Supplément à l'Essai sur les Moeurs," in *Essai sur les moeurs* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1963), 2.817, 903; Sakmann, "The Problems of Historical Method," 43; Piere, "Discarding Convention," 244, 246, 255.
33. EMEN 11.158–59, 182–83, 214.
34. EMEN 11.208–209; 12.404, 409–11; 13.33, 150. He also has a sanitized view of Graeco-Roman culture, often dismissing many of its darker realities. For example, he dismisses early Christian complaints about religious persecution and considers the Romans "great friends of toleration." EMEN 11.223–29; Rosenthal, "Voltaire's Philosophy of History," 169; OCV 25.41–49, 54, 58 (WV 4.162, 165–77, 184, 192). He finds the accounts of Christians about their martyrs to be little more than works of fiction.
35. EMEN 11.175, 187, 480; 12.92, 362–63; 13.164, 182; Rosenthal, "Voltaire's Philosophy of History," 159–60, 170; Meyer, "Voltaire and Hume as Historians," 55. He shows some obtuseness about the differences between people's values and nature, but he has some criticism of the superstitions and practices of non-Christian religions. E.g., EMEN 11.203ff.; 13.161. Much of his information is erroneous, romanticized, or simplistic as any first-year student of world religions can tell from a simple perusal of the synopsis in the text above. In fact, he bases much of his concept of Indian religion upon the so-called Ezour-Veidam, a forgery of a Christian missionary. Sakmann, "The Problems of the Historical Method," 59.
36. EMEN 11.254–55, 510–11.
37. EMEN 12.63–71.
38. EMEN 1.277, 321, 336, 341–43, 379; 12.346ff.; 13.41–51.
39. EMEN 11.440.
40. EMEN 11.447.
41. EMEN 11.455.
42. EMEN 11.454–55, 458. Another example is his excuse for the Japanese persecuting Christianity at the end of the sixteenth century and thereafter. He blames the persecution on the fear created by the Spanish and their invasion of Latin American. EMEN 13.169–71. He speaks much of the religious cruelty of the Spanish and has little respect for their culture. EMEN 12.349–51, 401–2, 459–60, 463–64, 468, 471–72; 13.37–38.
43. EMEN 11.495.
44. EMEN 11.295; 12.227. Voltaire also denigrates the supreme authority given to abbots. He says that they only want to increase the number of monks under their charge and condemn their underlings to the "most cruel and dreadful torments," like "burning out their eyes." While he can speak of some monks and their orders in a positive way, he thinks the

- monastic life “robs the civil society of too many of its members” from productive service by preferring the “good of the order” over the “real good of the country.” EMEN 11.284; 12.336–37, 345–46.
45. EMEN 11.338, 343, 533–34, 545, 551; 12.483. He provides some accolades for certain popes like Sixtus Quintus and questions the veracity of some scurrilous accusations, like the well-known story of Alexander VI dying from the poison he had concocted for another. EMEN 12.491–92; 13.101–2.
  46. EMEN 11.281, 357–58; 12.498.
  47. EMEN 11.297, 301–2. Voltaire rejects the papacy’s right to depose kings. EMEN 12.574.
  48. EMEN 11.394.
  49. EMEN 11.391–93.
  50. EMEN 11.504–7, 516; 12.277.
  51. EMEN 11.396.
  52. For example, his account of the martyrdom of Thomas à Becket treats him like an insubordinate to the king and exonerates Henry II from all culpability in the murder. EMEN 11.415–16. He also has little appreciation for the strictures on lay investiture of bishops in canon law, leading to the excommunication of Henry IV by Pope Gregory VII. Larry Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual: The Origins of Western Liberalism* (London: Allen Lane, 2014), 202–3.
  53. Siedentop, *Inventing the Individual*, 200–7. Voltaire has some sense of the moral power of canon law. He speaks of it condemning barbarous customs, trial by ordeal, dueling, tournaments with knights, et al. EMEN 11.387; 12.241–42.
  54. *Lex, Rex* is the famous title of Samuel Rutherford’s work, published during the time of the Puritan Revolution. The work rejected the divine right of kings and said that kings must submit to the law. *Lex, Rex or The Law and the Prince* (Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1982), 54, 59–60, 101–6, 115.
  55. EMEN 12.72; Voltaire, “Remarques sur les Moeurs,” OCV 24.543–48; Sakmann, “The Problems of the Historical Method,” 39–42. See EMEN chaps. 19, 81, 173, 176 (11.273ff.; 12.53ff., 525ff.; 13.1ff.); *Siècle de Louis XIV*, chaps. 31–34 (14.534ff.). Voltaire likes to give credit to the genius of great men or the enlightened minority, rather than the ignorant multitudes. “Remarques sur les Moeurs,” OCV 24.548; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 54, 61.
  56. EMEN 13.66.
  57. EMEN 12.294; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 65.
  58. EMEN 12.498–500, 505ff., 527–28. See Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 14–23.
  59. EMEN 12.324, 489–93.
  60. EMEN 13.67.
  61. EMEN 12.299–300. Voltaire rejects equality among the races. EMEN 11.5, 7; 12.237, 380ff.; OCV 21.462; 27.484–87 (WV 27.167, 200); Strehle, *Dark Side*, 270–71. He shows some sympathy toward democracy late in his life, after it was safe to do so, although most of his career he spends as a sycophant of kings. Peter Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics: The Poet as a Realist* (New York: Vintage Books, 1963) 89, 225–26, 236; *The Enlightenment*, 2.67, 462–63, 483–84; David Strauss, *Voltaire: Sechs Vorträge* (Leipzig: s. Hirzel, 1870), 109–11; Strehle,

- Dark Side*, 7. In *Essai*, he expresses strong support for the Third Estate in France as representing the vast majority of the nation and also the House of Commons in England. EMEN 12.69–71.
62. EMEN 13.55–56, 66, 68–69.
63. EMEN 12.554ff., 557–61; 13.74, 83–84. Of course, he joins the chorus of sycophants during the era and besmirches the character of Oliver Cromwell as a man of “fraud and violence.” EMEN 13.80–81. Cf. Christopher Hill, *God’s Englishman: Oliver Cromwell and the English Revolution* (New York: The Dial Press, 1970) for a more objective and scholarly perspective.
64. Sakmann, “The Problems of the Historical Method,” 59; EMEN 12.535.
65. Dallas D. Irvine, “The Abbé Raynal and British Humanitarianism,” *The Journal of Modern History* (Dec. 1931): 565–66, 573; *Lectures de Raynal: L’Histoire des deux Indes en Europe et en Amérique au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Hans-Jürgae Lüsebrick et Manfred Tietz (eds.) (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1991); Cecil P. Courtney, “Les metamorphose d’un best-seller: *l’Histoire des deux Indes* de 1770 à 1820,” in *Raynal, de la polémique à l’histoire* Giles Bancarel et Gianluigi Goggi (eds.) (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2000), 109–20; Guillaume Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu: Raynal and Diderot’s ‘Histoire des deux Indes’ and the American Revolution,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 70/3 (2009): 399–401.
66. Abbé Raynal, *A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in East and West Indies*, J. Justamond (London, 1777), 5.545ff. Hereafter designated PPH.
67. PPH 5.390–400.
68. PPH 5.402.
69. PPH 5.518–19, 593–95. Like the policy of the French Revolution, he proposes to take away the property of the church and give it to the nation for productive labor. PPH 5.546–47.
70. PPH 5.571.
71. PPH 5.452.
72. PPH 5.584. He says that Socrates, Plato, et al. muddled philosophy with religion and morality, rather than emphasizing nature as the moderns. Aristotle did not liberate the Middle Ages since the Schoolmen “blindly follow[ed] him through the darkness of theology.” PPH 5.582–83, 590.
73. PPH 5.586–90. Jules Michelet is the first historian to coin the term “Renaissance,” but the basic attitude has antecedents.
74. PPH 5.403, 410.
75. PPH 5.426–27; Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 403–4.
76. PPH 5.415–16.
77. PPH 5.495, 498–501, 505, 507–11, 521–22. He expresses his concepts within the basic framework of physiocrat ideology. He sees agriculture as the real source of wealth in a nation. “Every thing depends upon and arises from the cultivation of the land.” He also thinks that the best system of taxation is assessing the land. PPH 5.511–16, 558–59.
78. PPH 5.348–49, 404; Irvine, “Abbé Raynal and British Humanitarianism,” 566, 571. He says the Spanish have besmirched the Catholic faith through their actions, yet he does not see religion as their primary motivation. PPH 2.403; 5.404.



79. PPH 5.236–37, 255; Voltaire, “Lettres Philosophiques,” in OCV 22.91–95 (“Lettre sur les Quakers,” IV); Montesquieu, *De l’Esprit des lois* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961), 1.40 (IV, iv); Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 403.
80. PPH 5.244.
81. PPH 5.235–36; Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 417.
82. PPH 5.358.
83. PPH 5.192–99. For example, the following generalization is made out of few instances:  

[Puritan intolerance] was supported by the services of the law, which attempted to put a stop to every difference of opinion, by inflicting capital punishment on all who dissented. Those who were convicted or even suspected of entertaining sentiments of toleration, were exposed to such cruel oppressions, that they were forced to fly from their first asylum, and seek refuge in another. PPH 5.194.
84. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972) 259, 273; Wooton, “Democracy,” 75. Baptists and Quakers represent a radical expansion of certain Puritan ideals. Baptists work with the notion of “visible saints” but apply it in a more consistent manner than the Congregationalists. They simply postpone baptism to a later time when the candidates have professed and demonstrated their faith, eliminating the problem of the infamous Half-Way Covenant. Quakers extend the egalitarian and antinomian tendencies of certain Puritan groups like the Separatists and Levellers. Lilburne, Wistanley, and other dissidents practiced egalitarian gestures like using the second person or refusing to remove the hat to superiors, long before the Quakers. Ian Gentiles, “London Levellers in the English Revolution: The Chidleys and Their Circle,” *Ecclesiastical History* 29/3 (1978): 285; Richard Baxter, *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1962), 8; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 198. Many Puritans spoke of the witness of the Spirit to all believers as the most essential means of obtaining assurance before God. The Quakers simply extend the program to include the entire life of the believer and one’s relation to God. This process is most readily seen in the trials and tribulations of Anne Hutchinson. She was a devout disciple of John Cotton but was banished from the Puritan community when she followed his antinomian tendencies beyond acceptable limits. She began to talk much like a Quaker, professing to experience immediate revelations from God, outside the confines of Scripture. Stephen Strehle, *The Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel* (Leiden, NJ and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995), 47–48. John Winthrop thought she was one of the Grindletonians, who appeared in England during the time and emphasized the role of the Spirit more than the Word of God. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 65–67.
85. PPH 5.89, 371–72, 396–97; Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 410.
86. PPH 7.456 [XVIII] (London, 1783).
87. For the Calvinist/Puritan role in developing the concept of revolution, see Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, xv–xvi, 83–98, 105.
88. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 150–51, 157. Dale Van Kley finds French historians reacting against the Enlightenment in the nineteenth century before the Third Republic. “Varieties of Enlightened Experience” (unpublished paper).
89. *Ibid.*, 154–55.

90. Jules Michelet, *History of the French Revolution*, Gordon Wright (ed. and intro.), Charles Cocks (trans.) (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), xiv–xv.
91. Arthur Mitzman, *Michelet: Rebirth and Romanticism in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1990), xv, 278–79. His other great work is *Histoire de France (1833–1867)*. Roland Barthes, *Michelet*, Richard Howard (trans.) (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 224.
92. *Ibid.*, 283. For a brief history of the relationship between church and state after the revolution, see Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, chap. 5.
93. Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* (Paris: Chamerot, Libraire-Éditeur, 1847), i–ii, xvii–xix. Hereafter designated HRF.
94. HRF 2.178–79.
95. HRF “Introduction,” xiii.
96. HRF “Introduction,” xcii, xcvi–xcviii, 3.130.
97. HRF 2.201.
98. HRF ix–x.
99. HRF ix–xviii; 1.106–10, 131. Owen Chadwick describes Michelet’s historiography and depiction of the fall of the Bastille as follows:  

This passion for the people, love of the dramatic, genius for the vivid, could make him very misleading. The famous instance is his account of the fall of the Bastille. He was writing it when he heard the news of his father’s death, and in an earlier chapter I mentioned how that death affected his mind. The Bastille fell when the common people of Paris rose spontaneously and heroically against an impregnable fortress, to end tyranny and win their freedom—the most gripping passage in the works of the most gripping historians—where almost every detail is erroneous, almost every fact misstated; it did not happen like that at all, it was not so dramatic, so romantic, so noble or moreover so spontaneous; ideal, symbol entered into creed, it ought to have happened like that. Examine the narrative and it will not do. Yet totality, legend, stood for a reality of the French Revolution, and became the cherished possession of every republican heart. *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 198–99.
100. HRF 3.150–52.
101. HRF 3.150–63.
102. Mitzman, *Michelet*, 123; HRF 3.176–77. This emphasis upon etatism is indicative of modern French policy. See Strehle, *The Dark Side*, 104–7.
103. E.g., HRF 3.167–69.
104. HRF “Introduction” xxx–xxxii; 3.128–29; Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 199–200.
105. HRF 2.221–22; 3.130–37; Mitzman, *Michelet*, 120.
106. HRF 2.223–25.
107. HRF xxvii, xxxiii–xl; Mitzman, *Michelet*, 127–28. He thinks of Protestantism as much worse than Catholicism in this regard with its emphasis upon *sola fides* or *sola gratia*, but both Christian movements believe much the same nonsense.
108. HRF xxxix–xlvi.
109. HRF 2.194–95.
110. HRF “Introduction” cxii–cxiii; 3.17–18.

111. HRF “Introduction” li–lii; 3.113–16.
112. HRF 1.29–30; 3.105–106, 153–54.
113. HRF 2.226–27; 3.14, 91–92, 128–29. He describes the body of the clergy as a “monster of injustice and inequality,” even though the lower members were “meagre and starving” because the head was swollen with pride and riches. He speaks of the Assembly’s enormous generosity in dealing with the clergy and proposing to provide them with salaries, but he forgets to emphasize one important detail: the promised salaries were not delivered, and officially denied several years later in September of 1794, even to the conventional priests. Jean Baubérot, *Histoire de laïcité en France* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2007), 15–16; John McManners, *The French Revolution and the Church* (London: SPCK, 1969), 39, 118; Timothy Tackett, *Religion, Revolution, and Regional Culture in Eighteenth-Century France: The Ecclesiastical Oath of 1791* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 91.
114. HRP 3.22–23, 126, 148. The bishops coerced the lower clergy to follow them and submit to the Holy See.
115. Phillipson Nicholas, *David Hume: Philosopher as Historian* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), 131.
116. *The Letters of David Hume*, J. Y. T. Grieg (ed.) (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1983), 1.325–26; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 51.
117. *Letters of David Hume*, 1.111, 180, 237; David Hume, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution of 1688*, Rodney W. Kilcap (intro.) (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1975), xvi–xviii.
118. Hume, *The History of England*, xx, xxiv. Of course, he provides moralistic commentary throughout the account that certainly speaks of some transcendent values in expressing his approval and disapproval. He also thinks of human nature as much the same in all cultures and motivated by the same values and interests, even if his history might see things in a more complicated manner than his earlier work. *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, in *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978), 479–80 (65); Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 55; Hume, *History of England*, xxvi–xxxii.
119. For example, Voltaire treats Sir Thomas More as a “superstitious and cruel persecutor,” who justly died for treason, while Hume can admire his “integrity, genius, elegance, courage, and conduct however misguided” by his religious beliefs. *Essai*, in OCV 12.346; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 54; David Hume, *The History of England from the Invasion of Julius Caesar to the Revolution in 1688* (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Fund, 1983), 3.222. Hereafter this edition of Hume’s *History of England* is designated HE.
120. HE 4.351–53.
121. Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 59.
122. HE 4.145, 354–56, 362, 371.
123. HE 6.531; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 62.
124. HE 4.119–20; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 61. This attitude is reflected later on in Edmund Burke’s famous critique of the French Revolution—*Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). See Strehle, *The Dark Side*, 58–61.
125. HE 6.533; Meyer, “Voltaire and Hume as Historians,” 61.

126. HE 2.140ff.; Hume, *The History of England* (1975), xxv; Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 130.
127. Meyer, "Voltaire and Hume as Historians," 67.
128. HE 2.293; Meyer, "Voltaire and Hume as Historians," 61.
129. HE 5.301–303, 443.
130. HE 4.120–22; 5.251–53, 301–303, 441–42.
131. HE 5.442.
132. HE 4.22–23, 40–44. For Knox's position, see Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 88–91.
133. HE 5.449–50; 6.58, 108. Cf. Hill's *God's Englishman* for a much different portrait.
134. HE 5.213, 535, 544–45, 548; 6.110. He also considers the Puritan execution of Archbishop William Laud the "greatest tyranny and injustice" of "popular assemblies." He thinks that Charles I and Laud were basically good men, but maybe flawed and certainly not great enough to make sufficient changes to suit the times. HE 5.457–58, 542–43.
135. HE 3.432. See Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* and *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 498–502. He also says that the miracles of Scripture are a "violation of the laws of nature," and their testimony in the past is not sufficient to overcome their incredulity. *Enquiry*, 491–92, 495, 497 (90–93, 98, 100–1).
136. HE 3.436.
137. E.g., HE 1.306.
138. HE 3.136. He does credit the clergy for preserving Roman law as the one great inheritance of the Middle Ages. He contrasts it with Saxon law, where money bought justice, revenge was authorized, ordeals served as proof, and justice dispensed without due process. HE 2.518–21.
139. HE 3.434–41, 450, 461; 4.4, 21; 6.500–501. The rise of toleration is not a simple linear development in the modern world. Protestants tended to lead the way, although Catholics had a number of scholars who championed the cause and a few Catholic countries that outpaced Protestant lands at certain times in their history. In England, it was more a Protestant phenomenon. During the Puritan Revolution, Cromwell extended toleration to a wide variety of communities: Catholics, Jews, Quakers, Ranters, Socinians, skeptics, and other unorthodox groups. The year 1644 witnessed the publication of some of the great classics on the subject: William Walwyn's *The Compassionate Samaritane*, Roger Williams' *The Bloody Tenent*, Henry Robinson's *Liberty of Conscience*, and John Milton's *Areopagitica*. See Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, chap. 7.
140. HE 3.364–65; 6.108. He thinks the arguments between Arminians and Calvinists over predestination provide another example of the ridiculous nature of Christian speculation. HE 5.131–32, 211–12.
141. HE 2.522–25; Hume, *History of England* (1975), xxxvii–xxxiv.
142. HE 2.525.
143. HE 4.124.
144. HE 4.144–45.
145. HE 4.368; 5.215–16, 256–57. He sees the Puritans gaining dominance over the House of Commons at the end of the sixteenth century and pushing "pure democracy" during the Long Parliament. HE 5.212, 293.

146. Some scattered thoughts make certain connections. For example, he recognizes the Reformation concept of “submitting private judgment” to the people as “dangerous” to sovereign authority. HE 3.212. Cf. Hume, *History of England* (1975), xxxiv–xl. See Strehle’s *Egalitarian Spirit* for a full discussion of the relationship between Puritanism and modern government.
147. *Private Letters of Edward Gibbon (1753–1794)*, Rowland E. Prothero (ed.) (London: John Murray, 1897), 2.37; Per Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon: His View of Life and Conception of History* (Oslo: Akademisk Forlag, 1953) 15, 27–28, 80–81, 86, 92–94; Andrew Lossky, “Introduction: Gibbon and the Enlightenment,” in *The Transformation of the Roman World: Gibbon’s Problem After Two Centuries*, Lynn White (ed.) (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), 19.
148. Lossky, “Introduction,” 13; Duncan S. Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment: Edward Gibbon on Christianity,” *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 52/4 (1983): 396. His second edition mitigated some of the offensive language and egregious tone against the church and the priesthood, but there was not a profound remodeling of the two chapters. David Womersley, *Gibbon and the ‘Watchmen of the Holy City’* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 17–20, 23–27, 30, 40, 142–43.
149. Edward Gibbon, *Memoirs of My Life*, Georges A. Bonnard (ed.) (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1966), 127; *Letters of Edward Gibbon*, J. E. Norton (ed.) (New York: Macmillan Co., 1956), 2.375, 384 (605, 608); 3.2, 9, 17 (619, 623–24); Girolamo Imbruglia, “‘My Ecclesiastical History’: Gibbon Between Hume and Raynal,” M. Rogers (trans.), in *Edward Gibbon: Bicentenary Essays*, David Womersley (ed.) (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1997), 74–75; Dallas Irvine, “The Abbé Raynal and British Humanitarianism,” *Journal of Modern History* 3/4 (1931): 569–70.
150. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 20, 25–26; Edward Gibbon, *Essai sur l’étude de la littérature: A Critical Edition*, Robert Mankin and Patricia Maddock (eds.) (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2010), 108 (xxv).
151. Paul Tumball, “The ‘Supposed Infidelity’ of Edward Gibbon,” *The Historical Journal* 25/1 (1982): 25; Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 11; Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 393.
152. Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 394; Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 114–15; Tumball, “The ‘Supposed Infidelity,’” 26–27.
153. “To Joseph Priestly” (Dec. 28, 1783), in *The Letters of Edward Gibbon*, J. E. Norton (ed.) (London: Cassell and Co. 1956) 2.320–21; B. W. Young, “‘Scepticism in Excess’: Gibbon and Eighteenth-Century Christianity,” *The Historical Journal* 41/1 (1998): 10; Lossky, “Introduction,” 18; Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 120–21; David Wooten, “Narrative, Irony, and Faith in Gibbon’s Decline and Fall,” in *Edward Gibbon: Bicentenary Essays*, 232. He seems to posit the existence of God as the foundation of morality, but he discounts any real proof beyond this utilitarian concern. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 116–17.
154. Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: The Modern Library, 1932), 1.676; Womersley, *Gibbon and the ‘Watchmen of the Holy City’*, 124–25, 132–33. Hereafter Gibbon’s great work is designated GE.
155. GE 1.683.

156. GE 1.671–73, 686; 2.8, 369–75. The Catholic Church also manufactured fraudulent texts like the Athanasian Creed and 1 Jn 5:7 to defend their Trinitarian dogma. GE 2.375–76.
157. Motimer Chambers, “The Crisis of the Third Century,” in *The Transformation of the Roman World*, 66.
158. Modern theologians are enamored with the doctrine of the Trinity. Karl Barth considers it the pivotal doctrine of church theology and concept of revelation. Jürgen Moltmann spends much time speaking of its social ramifications. Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrence (eds.) (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1977), 1/1 300–1, 309; Moltmann, *The Trinity and the Kingdom of God: The Doctrine of God*, Margaret Kohl (trans.) (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), 150, 155, 195, 215–16.
159. Wooten, “Narrative, Irony, and Faith,” 205–8, 215.
160. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 33–34, 234; Jan N. Brenner, *The Rise of Christianity Through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack, and Rodney Stark* (Groningen: Barkuis, 2010), 23–24; Deno J. Geanakoplos, “Edward Gibbon and Byzantine Ecclesiastical History,” *Church History* 35/2 (1966): 185; Imbruglia, “My Ecclesiastical History,” 73–75; Lossky, “Introduction,” in *The Transformation of the Roman World*, 15.
161. Fuglum, *Edward Gibbon*, 111.
162. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 286.
163. GE 1.410; Eric Brook, “Hagiography, Modern Historiography, and Historical Representation,” *Fides et Historia* 42/2 (2010): 7–9; Imbruglia, “My Ecclesiastical History,” 77. He expresses some skepticism about the miracles of the NT. He says Seneca, Pliny, and other ancient historians fail to confirm the biblical account of the darkness covering the earth during the crucifixion scene. GE 1.444; Wooten, “Narrative, Irony, and Faith,” 77. He follows Protestants in questioning the miraculous deeds of the saints. For example, in regard to the “miracles” of Saint Bernard: “At the present hour such prodigies will not obtain credit beyond the precincts of Clairvaux; but in the preternatural cures of the blind, the lame, and the sick, who were presented to the man of God, it is impossible for us to ascertain the separate shares of accident, of fancy, of imposture, and of fiction.” GE 3.479; Wooten, “Narrative, Irony, and Faith,” 216.
164. GE 1.383.
165. Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 1997), 20–25, 728–29.
166. Womersley, *Gibbon and the Watchmen of the Holy City*, 4; Fuglum, *Edward Gibbon*, 24, 39–40.
167. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 86–87, 143.
168. GE 1.70; Chambers, “The Crisis of the Third Century,” 31; Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 132, 157. Marcus Aurelius seems to serve as the supreme example of Plato’s philosopher-king.
169. GE 1.1.
170. GE 2.669–670; 3.786.
171. *Gibbon’s Autobiography*, M. M. Reese (ed.) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 85.
172. GE 3.66–71; 863–72, 879–80; Lossky, “Introduction,” in *The Transformation of the Roman World*, 26; “Impact of Christianity,” 62.
173. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 191; Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 397.

174. GE 1.382.; Fulgum, *The Rise of Christianity*, 126. During the Enlightenment, Abbé Galian was considered the best church historian. He also blames the church for the fall of Rome. Imbruglia, “My Ecclesiastical History,” 86–88.
175. GE 1.383. See also GE 1.411–12, 430; Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity*, 7; Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 397–99.
176. GE 1.416–17, 490–91. Gibbon might be correct in this regard. The most questionable aspect of his analysis is his inflated esteem of Rome and his deprecation of the church, not that Christianity substantially changed the culture or destroyed the old Roman Empire.
177. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 126.
178. GE 3.1, 504.
179. GE 1.383.
180. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity*, 8; Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 5–6, 29, 33.
181. GE 1.384–87, 446–47. Like many sons of the Enlightenment, Gibbon speaks of Egyptian influences on Moses (or at least the possibility) to undermine the uniqueness of the Jewish faith and explain its bigotries. Young, “Scepticism in Excess,” 187–88.
182. GE 1.396–98, 446–49; Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 399. Christians had to avoid idolatry, which was so much a part of everyday commerce, art, and social intercourse.
183. GE 1.467.
184. GE 1.467–68, 474, 503; Womersley, *Gibbon and the ‘Watchmen of the Holy City’*, 22. He estimates the total number of martyrs during the persecutions of Diocletian, Galerius, and Maximin to be less than 2,000.
185. GE 1.504; Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 400. The fact is that no one really knows the number of people killed in the persecutions of the early church or the later inquisitions/religious wars, but Gibbon has a vested interest in making the former numbers small and the latter numbers as large as possible. Bremmer speaks of Gibbon’s selective and disingenuous reading of Eusebius in neglecting passages that speak of much higher numbers, even *myrioi* or “tens of thousands” during the times of Diocletian. The Romans burned many earlier accounts of this and other persecutions. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity*, 20–23.
186. GE 1.454, 460, 463. Gibbon extols the memory of Julian the Apostate. According to his account, Julian renounced Christianity as oppressive and repugnant, and tried to restore the ancient philosophical spirit of tolerance and egalitarianism as the emperor from 361–363 C.E. GE 1,736–37, 746–85.
187. GE 1.406; 3.448 (n.35).
188. GE 1.409; 2.805.
189. GE 1.723; 2.8, 12–13, 16. The typical persecution in the era was exiling the bishop. The sons of Constantine and Theodosius were more zealous against paganism in demolishing some of its temples and prohibiting sacrifices. GE 1.722–25; 2.46, 51–54, 61.
190. GE 1.17–18.
191. GE 2.369–75.
192. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 110.

193. GE 1.669; Ferguson, “Historical Understanding and the Enlightenment,” 401. Like a Protestant, Gibbon particularly ridicules the growth of relics in the church. GE 2.65–71.
194. See Hugh R. Trevor-Roper, “Edward Gibbon: An Appreciation,” 666; *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1963), xxvi–xxix (intro.); Owen Chadwick, “Gibbon and the Church Historians,” in *Edward Gibbon and the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, G. W. Bowersock, Jon Clive, and Stephen Graubard (eds.) (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1977), 221–23; Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 127. For example, his account of Chrysostom is very favorable. GE 2.207ff.
195. GE 1.382–83.
196. GE 1.413–15. Whatever “simple and sublime theology” existed in the primitive church, it was “gradually corrupted through the metaphysical subtleties of the trinity.” GE 2.69.
197. Fulgum, *Edward Gibbon*, 122–23; Chambers, “The Crisis of the Third Century,” 67.
198. *Ibid.*, 151–53. He admits there existed “some science not unworthy of notice.” GE 3.786
199. GE 1.504.
200. GE 3.565–66.
201. GE 2.347, 352–64. Of course, he shares the enlightened contempt for the crusades. Myth-making has always found fertile ground in the “history” of the crusades, and Gibbon is no different. On the opposite side, the Romantic view of Sir Walter Scott sees crusading as filled with romance, adventure, and heroism. Christopher Tyerman, *Crusades* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 2–3; Habib C. Malik, “The Crusades Between Myth and Reality: Revisiting a Troubled Historiography,” *Theological Review* 32 (2011): 99, 110–12. Gibbon begins his account of the crusades with Peter, a hermit, visiting the holy sepulcher and complaining about his injuries and the treatment of other pilgrims at the hand of the Muslim infidels. His fanatical stories and visions persuade all segments of the church and society to defend the pilgrims and deliver the Holy Land from the “impiety of their pagan and Mohomedan foes.” The pope and the clergy join in and place their imprimatur upon the effort as the “will of God,” offering at the Council of Clermont “a plenary indulgence to those who should enlist under the banner of the cross; the absolution of all their sins, and a full receipt for all that might be due of canonical penance [sic].” GE 3. 417–19, 422–23, 426.
202. GE 1.483–84, 864–67; 2.14.
203. GE 1.426–30; 3.7, 11, 14; Wootton, “Narrative, Irony, and Faith,” 223; Womersley, *Gibbon and the ‘Watchmen of the Holy City’*, 113.
204. GE 1.486, 669; 2.815–19.
205. William Robertson (1721–1793), the Scottish historian, is often mentioned alongside Hume and Gibbon but was omitted for a lack of space.
206. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 112, 121–22.



## The Mechanistic Universe

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Modern science no longer looks out in nature to ask ultimate questions about the existence of God and the overall meaning of life. This modern view has a number of reasons, but some of its deepest historical roots developed within the early Puritans and their rejection of the scholastic attempt to probe the mysteries of God within nature outside the direct revelation of Scripture. The Puritans thought it was better to search for the meaning of life in Scripture and spurned the innate capacity of autonomous human beings to seek out the hidden things of God through their reason. The philosophy of nature should recognize its limits and “reflect upon the mundane questions of secondary causality or practical concern, which it could resolve with some certainty or at least make some progress through testing answers.”<sup>1</sup> And so, the Puritans ended up advancing the new experimental method of the seventeenth century and encouraging a practical and utilitarian view of education, rather than waste time in idle metaphysical speculation about matters of empirical concern.<sup>2</sup> This new approach was inspired by heartfelt religious convictions, but it also helped facilitate modern science and its move toward a more secular view of life. The modern scientific community simply followed the Puritans’ understanding of human limitations by ignoring any quest for higher or deeper significance within the object of its study and preferred to treat “Being” as an instrumental means for technological skills and utilitarian purposes.<sup>3</sup> It was content to set the goals of life within the inward dispositions of the human subject

and its desires, and let objective existence lose all meaning—at least for those who limited their understanding to the new approach and abandoned the “spectacles” of Scripture and its deeper commentary on life.<sup>4</sup>

The dichotomy between faith and reason soon gave way to complete unbelief in those individuals who wished to reduce all matters of life to materialistic concerns. Thomas Hobbes saw naturalism emerging in the future, where religious superstition would fade into the ignorance of past generations and implode before the power of palpable, materialistic explanations. He said the future would replace the miraculous hand of God with natural phenomena, the work of the Spirit with “affections of the mind or body,” angelic apparitions with dreams or visions, demonic possession with mental illness; and for the most part, he was right.<sup>5</sup> The modern world tended to proceed in this direction. It tended to view nature as interdependent; natural explanations as good enough; and supernatural elements as incredulous, or at least an unnecessary divergence that defied Ockham’s Razor.<sup>6</sup> In the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte led the charge toward extolling the omniscience of science in addressing all human problems and replacing the need for religion.<sup>7</sup> Historians and biblical critics like David Strauss disparaged the miraculous accounts of the Gospels and led many in the church to abandon any literal interpretation of the faith and its sacred text.<sup>8</sup> Even a twentieth-century theologian like Rudolf Bultmann disparaged the cosmology of the NT as mythological and spoke of God as unworldly or transcendent, leaving “the closed weft of history...undisturbed” by spiritual activity.<sup>9</sup> Of course, many non-religious scholars went further than Bultmann’s program of demythologizing the Scripture and chose to dispense with God-talk altogether and reduce the sum and substance of life to physics or matter in motion, even including human beings within the reduction.<sup>10</sup> They rejected any human outcry and particularly disparaged the attempt of people like René Descartes to preserve some aspect of human dignity in the midst of the cosmic machine, rejecting the concept of a soul or “Ghost in the machine,” discarding all “internal mysteries,” preferring functional descriptions, and reducing our thought to chemical or neurological interactions.<sup>11</sup> They rejected any dichotomy in the cosmos, particularly the idea that human life consisted of a “double series of events taking place in two different kinds of stuff.”<sup>12</sup>

The materialistic view of life owed much of its early impetus to the growing mechanistic imagery of certain physicists and those scholars who wished to use it as a means of undermining the presence of God in the universe and turn life into a self-sufficient system.<sup>13</sup> The theory is often associated with some of the great names in the western canon—Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Gassendi, Descartes, and Boyle, although any account of its historical development depends upon the interpretation of complexities and inconsistencies in their works. These scientists

might reduce life to matter in motion or some efficient causality in certain places and then turn around and make room for the existence and activity of spiritual entities in others, making it difficult to trace a simple lineage of the theory and their place in it.<sup>14</sup>

Above all its foundational figures, René Descartes stands out as the one person most identified with the early formulation and propagation of the theory. He provides a mature statement of it in his *Principles of Philosophy* (1644) and tries to maintain some consistency with it throughout the rest of his other works while struggling to preserve some semblance of human dignity and the religious beliefs of the day. In this and other works, he portrays space as a plenum or body-like extension of size, shape, and motion, and rejects those who conceive of objects as moving freely in the vacuum of space, attracting one another at a distance, or providing their own causal impulse as substantial forms.<sup>15</sup> Whatever happens to corporeal entities is the result of impacts. A body only falls to earth as a result of the impact of other bodies.<sup>16</sup> The world is a massive machine of integrated parts and mechanical laws and contains no space for divine intervention to perform its miracles—once the divine will decided to create the whole. The world is a closed-shell and separated from its Creator.<sup>17</sup>

To a large extent, the theory represents Descartes' answer to a problem that plagued the physics of his day concerning planetary motion, ever since Kepler debunked the existence of crystalline spheres. How is it possible for planets to circumambulate the sun in a regular pattern through the immense reaches of space? In answering the question, Descartes found it necessary to turn the universe into an enormous interconnected machine of vortices. He posited the existence of a huge whirlpool or vortex in our immediate solar system that carried all material in its wake, including planets and comets.<sup>18</sup> This plenum helped answer the problem of Kepler's observation, but it also proceeded to cause difficulties in other areas that were near and dear to Descartes' ideology—like the place of God and the freedom and influence of the human soul. Of course, these other areas eventually receded into the background as the image of a machine was applied consistently and permeated many levels of society with dogmatic force during the next few centuries.

More important than the influence of Descartes was the popular association of the mechanistic universe with the physics of Isaac Newton, promulgated by Deists, *philosophes*, and secular-types, all in the name of their ideology.<sup>19</sup> Newton's physics would reign for the next few centuries as the supreme systematic statement of "objective" science, and its association with the clockwork universe was crucial in forwarding the secular view of life. But in this case, the move toward secular-ity had little pretext in any "objective" reading of science and more to do with a

highly subjective interpretation creating its own illusions about it. In fact, recent scholarship has demonstrated the distorted and misleading nature of the interpretation by pointing to Newton's unpublished manuscript, *De gravitatione et aequilibrium fluidorum*, which served as the basis of his mature statement in *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* and directly repudiates the Cartesian system. The treatise analyzes Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy* in some detail and refutes many of its central ideas point-by-point.<sup>20</sup> Newton displays particular concern about its notion of God as a "retired engineer" and berates it as one step away from complete atheism.<sup>21</sup> Descartes leaves no room for God to exercise dominion over the creation by making matter and extension indistinguishable, rejecting the existence of any void between material elements, and attributing motion to loops or direct material contact.<sup>22</sup>

Newton thinks of space as a meeting place between the material and immaterial world, without confusing the two together (Spinoza) or tearing them apart (Descartes and Leibniz).<sup>23</sup> God is said to be present everywhere as the Lord of creation and ruling nature actively and directly, "creating, preserving, and governing according to his good will and pleasure."<sup>24</sup> The regular motion of bodies finds its fundamental explanation in positing the existence of an "intelligent agent" moving objects through the power of a rational and purposeful will.<sup>25</sup> The divine omnipresence acts like an immaterial aether that moves bodies by its will without affecting the immutable nature of God or offering material resistance to the objects.<sup>26</sup>

Newton thinks of space and time as coming into existence from an eternal act of divine emanation.<sup>27</sup> Space and time always exist because God always exists. They never exist as separate subsistences outside the Ground of Being and find an ultimate purpose in establishing divine ubiquity as an immediate and co-eternal affection of God.<sup>28</sup> This line of thinking allows Newton to conceive of space and time as "absolute," making them oblivious to what happens with material bodies and remaining constant throughout all eternity—independent of all objects, but radically dependent upon God.<sup>29</sup> It causes Newton to think of matter as created *ex nihilo* and located or placed *within* an absolute framework, which is extra-mental and non-relative.<sup>30</sup> It makes him think of motion as a change of place in absolute space, rather than a change in an object's relation to surrounding bodies.<sup>31</sup>

Newton's system of physics runs into difficulty when trying to explain the relationship between objects in material terms. It develops this difficulty because he rejects Descartes' hypothesis of a vortex or the idea of a medium like aether filling the spatial void.<sup>32</sup> Newton speaks of a force like gravity in relating bodies at a distance, but he insists that gravity is a non-mechanical cause. It relates bodies at a distance outside of impact. It does not act on the surface of an object like a

mechanical cause in relating to the mass of an object and diminishes with distance, unlike other physical quantities.<sup>33</sup> All Newton can do is speak of “attractive Powers,” “Virtues of Forces” between objects, without supplying a specific physical answer to “whatsoever be the Cause.”<sup>34</sup> He admits his ignorance at this point in the discussion and concedes the absurdity of believing that objects attract one another at a distance without the existence of some medium conveying the action.<sup>35</sup>

It is inconceivable that inanimate brute matter should, without the mediation of something else which is not material, operate upon and affect other matter without mutual contact.... That gravity should be innate, inherent, and essential to matter, so that one body may act upon another at a distance through a vacuum, without the mediation of anything else, by and through which their action and force may be conveyed from one to another, is to me so great an absurdity that I believe no man who has in philosophical matters a competent faculty of thinking can ever fall into it.<sup>36</sup>

The use of the term *gravitas* only designates a mysterious force that has no material explanation.<sup>37</sup>

The problem only finds its resolution because Newton is not limited to material explanations in his attempt to explain phenomena. Modern physicists might prefer for Newton to leave well enough alone and speak of gravity within the limits of science as a mathematical postulate or simple regularity that is defined by the inverse square law,<sup>38</sup> but Newton is much bolder in his approach and willing to engage in metaphysical speculation about the forces of life and its causal nature. He starts natural philosophy in the phenomenal world and conducts experiments in the typical scientific manner to derive his results, but he has no problem using physics to ascend into a more universal and metaphysical realm and speculate over the First Cause of all things.<sup>39</sup> At these more speculative moments, Newton is willing to find a definitive explanation within the existence of God as the immaterial power behind action at a distance.<sup>40</sup> Here he posits God as the omnipresent force that permeates space like a spiritual aether, moving objects in accordance with the divine intention and explaining the beauty, order, design, and symmetry that scientists observe in the material world, without a specific material cause.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, Newton views his work as promoting belief in the existence of God.<sup>42</sup> He considers the “framework of nature,” especially the “contrivance of the bodies of living creatures,” providing the best evidence for the existence of God from the philosophy of nature.<sup>43</sup> However, this view of God is clearly enhanced by a lifetime study of Scripture, above and beyond all his philosophical pursuits.<sup>44</sup> His devotion leads him to produce a substantial body of theological material, which continually speaks of the “God of Israel” as the Lord of all creation. This God actively exercises dominion over the world in a free and voluntary manner, unconstrained by

the eternal laws of a clockwork universe and more than capable of intervening and producing miraculous effects on extraordinary occasions, just as it is recorded in the Bible.<sup>45</sup> Newton's theological works include a detailed perusal of the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation, which are interpreted in a literal manner and stoked with the typical millenarian expectations of the Puritan community and its belief in an ultimate intervention of God in the near future.<sup>46</sup>

In certain ways, this appeal to special revelation is divided from his work in physics as he follows the basic tendency of Puritans in separating the two fields and their methods,<sup>47</sup> but he is never faithful to a strict or absolute distinction between the two. In following the division, he speaks of the Bible as a non-scientific book, written to accommodate the experiences of common people and addressed to utilize what appears true to them in a "relative" way about space, time, and motion.<sup>48</sup> His scientific works display the same division by defending the autonomous nature of experimental philosophy against metaphysical prejudices<sup>49</sup> and mentioning God and Scripture only once in the first edition of *Principia*, thinking it "better to let his readers draw [religious consequences] for themselves."<sup>50</sup> But this division is violated on other occasions and hardly expresses his overall sentiment on the subject. He certainly avoids speaking about God in the first edition of *Principia*, but his General Scholium of the second and third editions adds explicit theological comments to make clear his overall understanding of the subject at hand.<sup>51</sup> He goes on to speak of God as the basic presupposition of rational science in providing order and simplicity to the object of study<sup>52</sup> and rejects any strict division between religion and science. He rejects any notion of science that would exorcize the presence of God from the universe or justify a secular view of life as if consonant with scientific inquiry.

Newton's view of science is never able to divorce its analysis from his religious concerns and so divide the results of dispassionate research methods from ideological commitments. The problem of mixing cultural commitments with scientific work ends up skewing his objectivity, but he is not alone in wrestling with the subjectivity of his results and represents to a large extent the problem of all scientists, who can never claim complete immunity from cultural and ideological commitments that surround them, as if living in an unbiased world of gathering facts from simple observations. Even using the experimental method makes Newton and the scientific community a part of a specific culture that tries to divide prejudice from objective fact; and after adopting the method, the bias only continues as the scientists choose objects of interest based upon social pressures that arise outside the research and focus on a specific cause as the center of attention, while ignoring the many other influences that life presents to every object or effect.<sup>53</sup> Thomas Kuhn thinks that facts or objects of research can never exist outside a scientific theory that

alters entities to fit its basic paradigm. A new theory “requires the reconstruction of prior theory and reevaluation of prior fact.” It requires the selection of facts that interest the researchers and secures an exalted status among the scientific community only by resolving a few problems that a group of researchers finds particularly acute.<sup>54</sup> Karl Popper says that the universal laws of science cannot be forged through following its singular statements and empirical experiences inductively. No empirical statement exists apart from universal reference and metaphysical commitment; “no matter how many instances of white swans we may have observed, this does not justify the conclusion that *all* swans are white.”<sup>55</sup> Albert Einstein certainly agrees with these sentiments in rejecting the approach of Bertrand Russell and other empirical atheists who dismiss conceptual or metaphysical thinking out of their fear for religious mysticism. Physics always arises above a simple inductive approach toward the experiences of the senses and finds stimulation within the free creations or intuitions of human imagination to make progress within the discipline.<sup>56</sup>

Most often these intuitions arise from a cultural climate that stimulates and correlates science with many different ideological factors outside the specific discipline. This process certainly develops when Darwin relates his observations in nature to the economic theories of the day; it also develops when Newton cross-pollinates physics with the Puritan ideology of his day; and it continues to develop with contemporary scientists who are no different than their predecessors, even if they try to feign objectivity and hide or discard “religious” baggage. Quantum physicists have a clear secular bias in their desire to eliminate the mystical language of the past. They want to eliminate all talk of forces or fields and replace it with more concrete material terms, which provide an all-sufficient explanation in reducing life to particles or quanta. They want to eliminate Newton’s mystical talk of “gravity” and explain attraction (or repulsion) in terms of particle exchange, even though no direct empirical evidence exists up to this point to suggest the presence of a “graviton.”<sup>57</sup> Today’s scientists come from a more secular reconstruction of reality that develops after the time of Newton and causes them to look at the world differently through a new cultural perspective that is hardly neutral. No matter how much they protest by making a conscientious and concerted effort to remain neutral in their methods and research, none of them ever provides a dispassionate rendering of the facts that is free from the ideological frameworks of their inner and outer life.<sup>58</sup> No physicist can graze upon the ultimate reality of life or the ultimate force of the universe directly and objectively. The modern proclivity to view the forces of life as a part of the material world only speaks from the modern secular tendency to ignore divine presence and interpret nature as a self-contained unit with its own appetency. It speaks more of a cultural bias than the results of empirical observations or a direct scientific vision into the world of cause and effect.

The forces of life remain as metaphysical and mysterious as ever. The popular culture denies this problem and imputes to matter its own efficacy, but much of academia has rebelled against scientism and recognizes the limitations of the scientific method in explaining metaphysical questions about causal mechanisms, or the why and wherefore of life. Modern philosophers take particular pleasure in pointing out this problem to their audience and debasing the exalted status of science in the modern world by showing certain limits within its methods of inquiry and ability to answer certain questions from a strict empirical analysis of nature. According to their analysis, science has particular difficulty when addressing teleological questions concerning the final cause or the *why* and wherefore of life that so preoccupied Aristotle and many others in the ancient world; even early modern questions concerning the causal mechanism of *how* things work in everyday life seem to escape its limited purview. In the eighteenth century, David Hume brought the most devastating analysis to the capacity of causal reasoning to develop definitive conclusions by demonstrating to the satisfaction of most philosophers the inability of pure reason to analyze an effect in mundane experience and derive its cause without resorting to the custom or habit of experience that associates the two events together. Hume demonstrated in this simple way that the nature of the causal mechanism escapes us in everyday experiences of life, let alone in regard to the final cause of the entire universe, where no one has experienced its origin or even comprehended its phenomena.<sup>59</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein followed Hume and represented the sentiment of the philosophical community in saying,

All definitions are made a priori.

One elementary proposition cannot be deduced from another.

There is no possible way of making an inference from the existence of one situation to the existence of another, entirely different situation.

There is no causal nexus to justify such an inference.

We *cannot* infer the events of the future from those of the present.

Superstition is nothing but belief in the causal nexus....

It is an hypothesis that the sun will rise tomorrow: and this means that we do not *know* whether it will rise.

There is no compulsion making one thing happen because another has happened. The only necessity that exists is *logical* necessity.

The whole modern conception of the world is founded on the illusion that the so-called laws of nature are the explanations of natural phenomena.

Thus people today stop at the laws of nature, treating them as something inviolable, just as God and Fate were treated in past ages.<sup>60</sup>



Many other disciplines joined the philosophical community in its polemic against scientism and its attempt to absorb all other aspects of life under the simple matrix of a mechanistic universe. After Newton, scientism reared its ugly head and created in many ways its own backlash by ascending to the top of Mount Olympus and deigning to replace all the other gods as the true and only discipline worthy of pious devotion. Newtonians like Pierre Laplace displayed the zenith of scientific arrogance by deprecating belief in the existence of God as an unnecessary postulate and declaring that the new science was able to comprehend all events—past, present, and future.<sup>61</sup> Other reductionists appeared in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the same hubris but soon ran into complications as the microscope and telescope revealed the rich diversity and complexity of life surpassing all previous expectations. Quantum physics finally imploded the myth of scientism altogether by discovering a strange world that lies beyond all calculation and determinacy.<sup>62</sup> Werner Heisenberg disavowed the possibility of prying into this world through his famous Uncertainty Principle and abandoned all attempts to depict its atoms beyond mathematical matrices. He said, “Not only is the Universe stranger than we think, it is stranger than we can think.”<sup>63</sup> Niels Bohr agreed and added his skepticism by declaring that no clear boundary exists between the measuring apparatus and the system measured when examining this tiny world. Whether light is a particle or wave depends on what type of experiment a physicist wishes to conduct.<sup>64</sup> Of course, other disciplines attacked the hubris and questioned whether science was ever capable of handling the total spectrum of human experience through its various images and symbols. William James thought that scientific materialism dealt with a very limited part of the spectrum and missed the deeper spiritual reality that resonates within the human soul. The totality of human consciousness finds it necessary to describe experience through many different images and disciplines. It might even let in messages that come from exceptional phenomena, coming outside the limited purview of the physical world and transcending the naked eye, much like ultra-red and ultra-violet rays. Certainly, something is missing when a scientist listens to a “Beethoven string-quartet” and describes the experience as a “scraping of horses’ tails on cats’ bowls.”<sup>65</sup> Science might do a pretty good job in discussing certain local regularities, making empirical discoveries, and creating technological effects, but its wider-claims are far from compelling and require other disciplines or perspectives to fill out the entire human experience.<sup>66</sup>

Modern philosophy has come to question the objectivity of all human knowledge by emphasizing more and more the place of human subjectivity in appropriating the empirical world. Immanuel Kant helped inspire this new direction by announcing a “Copernican Revolution” in the study of epistemology;

instead of assuming that “all our knowledge must conform to objects,” he thought it was more enlightening to assume the exact opposite and see the mind as imposing its nature or *a priori* categories on the objects of the world.<sup>67</sup> This revolutionary turn was followed for the most part by the philosophical community and ended up destroying whatever remnant of belief remained in viewing the human mind as a simple arbiter of objective truth or *tabula rasa*. The next generation of Neo-Kantians saw George Hegel turn history and its philosophical inquests into a process of gaining knowledge of one’s inward subjectivity, or eliminating the alienation that exists between the subject and object.<sup>68</sup> “What is rational is actual and what is actual is rational.”<sup>69</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer reduced the phenomenal world to a mere representation of our conscious life, comparing it to the illusive images of a dream or the Hindu concept of *maya*. He thought of space, time, and causality as appearing with the opening of the eye and expressing nothing more than the functions of the brain.<sup>70</sup>

Today’s postmodernists take this process as far as it can go by eliminating all distinction between the subject and object and relegating belief in the dichotomy to a fundamental error of the past, committed by classical metaphysics.<sup>71</sup> Postmodernists reject all traditional western attempts to develop a “mirror-image” of reality or find “objective cognition” from some ideal world of truth subsisting in the heavens above. Humans relate to each other through the art of conversation and possess no ground to justify their language-games as if pointing to something solid.<sup>72</sup> Their ideas only exist within the “fantasy-frame” of a “virtual reality,” which no longer finds a substantial difference between fantasy and the outside world, between the erotic illusion about a “fantasy-object” and the experience of making love to a “real partner.”<sup>73</sup> Their ideas arise in dialogue with culture and develop along with it in a non-rational way through the accidents of history—the arbitrary constraints of the past and the power-plays of political and social forces in the present.<sup>74</sup> All human ideas develop from a certain cultural perspective, representing the “shared background information” of a community and making it impossible to “get away from force, from the pressure exerted by a partial, non-neutral, nonauthoritative, ungrounded point of view.” No one can eliminate bias and adjudicate differences between various people and their ideas.<sup>75</sup>

Scientists tend to resist this postmodern analysis as an extreme expression of philosophical disdain for their discipline. Almost all physicists believe in some external reality that answers to their methods and theories. Even in quantum theory, few physicists understand the presence of the observer as actually creating the initial reality or potentiality, even if the method and act of experimentation influences the results. In fact, the physical world often stands recalcitrant in thwarting their prior expectations and serves as an important empirical check to

their work, allowing them to start anew and make genuine progress in developing a better or more satisfying explanation. In the seventeenth century, Cardinal Bellarmine tried to press Galileo into admitting the Copernican revolution was a simple mathematical convenience in calculating the relationship between the sun and the earth, but scientists will have none of this and take the language of mathematics much more seriously than a mere calculating device that is indifferent to the reality of the world.<sup>76</sup> Even the early Wittgenstein saw language as touching reality in describing its logical relationship or states of affairs,<sup>77</sup> and scientists have shown the power of mathematical language time and time again in describing and predicting these relationships in making certain aspects of life more intelligible.

These scientists make a good point and do well in remaining within the mathematical limits of their discipline but tend to fall upon more questionable footing when overstepping the warning of the philosophical community and taking their metaphysical leaps into the world of causality all-too-seriously. *How* and *why* things work remains as much a mystery as ever in the fundamental sense of these questions—no matter how many technological marvels are produced and put forth by the apologists of science in claiming the omniscience of the scientific enterprise. Understanding the physical world remains a much more difficult task than simply using it through a process of trial and error or mathematical prediction in finding out what works. Understanding the electromagnetic force is a much more difficult problem for physics than building and using a generator. Those scientists who view life as a self-contained unit of mechanical forces often speak from the hubris of their discipline in trying to reduce all of life to physics and represent little more than the modern secular culture's point of view, based upon many non-scientific factors. In all the bluster, physicists remain as blind as ever to the efficient and final cause(s) of the universe. Their metaphysical flights of fancy involve little more than a leap of faith into the realm of the unknown, and theistic or Newtonian alternatives remain as viable as ever.<sup>78</sup> Any popular belief in a mechanistic universe is based on subjective criteria.

## Notes

1. Stephen Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 227.
2. *Ibid.*, 224–28. Robert Merton, an American sociologist, first observed the dominance of Puritans in seventeenth-century science and then posited a connection between their religion and the birth of modern science. *Science, Technology & Society in Seventeenth Century England* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1970), xii, 112–14, 119, 122–23, 128, 134–35. He particularly looked at *The Dictionary of National Biography* (London: Smith, Elder and

- Co., 1885), which contains 29,120 biographical notes that provide some indication of the occupation, except in 120 cases.
3. Martin Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy*, Joan Stambaugh (trans.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1973), 86, 93, 100, 104–6; Bernard Eugene Meland, *The Secularization of Modern Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 68–69; Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA and London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2007), 97–99, 247, 353–54, 359, 761.
  4. Calvin uses the metaphor of "spectacles" to describe how the Scripture clarifies our bleary-eyed understanding of God in nature. *Inst.*, 1.6.1–4; 14.1. Both Calvin and Luther rejected the ability of philosophical prowess to find God apart from revelation. Their position contradicted the basic Thomistic/Aristotelian tradition of finding God through philosophical reasoning.
  5. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Nelle Fuller (ed.), in *Great Books of the Western World*, Robert Maynard Hutchins (ed.) (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978), 79, 174, 188, 259; Ronald Numbers, "That Creationism is a Uniquely American Phenomenon," in *Galileo Goes to Jail, and Other Myths About Science and Religion*, Roland L. Numbers (ed.) (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2009), 225.
  6. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 30, 539, 620, 633.
  7. *The Crisis of Industrial Civilization: The Early Essays of Auguste Comte*, Ronald Fletcher (intro.) (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1974), 89–90, 99; Philip S. Gorski, "Historicizing the Secular Debate," in *American Sociological Review* 65/1 (2000): 140; Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 233; Steve Bryce, *Secularization: In Defence of an Unfashionable Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.
  8. E.g., David Strauss, *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*, Peter Hodgson (ed.), George Eliot (trans.) (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1972), 316, 442; *The Life of Jesus for the People* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1879), 1.201.
  9. Rudolf Bultmann et al., *Kerygma and Myth: A Theological Debate*, Hans Werner Bartsch (ed.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1961), 1; Walters Schmithals, *An Introduction to the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann*, John Bowden (trans.) (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), 169, 255.
  10. Willard Van Orman Quine, *Word and Object* (Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), 4; Christopher Hookway, *Quine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), 3, 25, 65, 70–71, 75.
  11. Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of the Mind* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 11, 45–51, 159, 247–48, 254–55, 270, 318–20; John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 22; B. F. Skinner, *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), 9, 188, 200, 205; Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, Paul Edwards (ed.) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 50–51, 90.
  12. *Ibid.*, 167.
  13. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 329.
  14. Margaret Osler, "That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion," in *Galileo Goes to Jail*, 94–95; Enrique Dussel, "From Secularization to Secularism: Science from

- the Renaissance to the Reformation,” in *Sacralization and Secularization*, Roger Aubert (ed.) (New York and Paramus, NJ: Paulist Press, 1969), 102.
15. René Descartes, *Principles of Philosophy*, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 1.288 (203); Robert Rynasiewicz, “Newton’s Views on Space, Time, and Motion,” 6–7, in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/newton-stm/>; Edward Slowik, “Descartes’ Physics,” 3–4, in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/descartes-physics/>.
  16. Andrew Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 102.
  17. S. G. Hefelbower, “Deism Historically Defined,” *The American Journal of Theology* 24/2 (1920): 221; Osler, “That the Scientific Revolution Liberated Science from Religion,” 97; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 103, 155.
  18. *Cosmology: Historical, Literary, Philosophical, Religious, and Scientific Perspectives*, Noriss S. Hetherington (ed.) (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), 263–64; Slowik, “Descartes’ Physics,” 18, 21; Andrew Janiak, “Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy in Descartes and Newton,” *Foundations of Science* 18/3 (2013): 406. Unlike Galileo, Descartes maintained his orthodoxy by saying it is the surrounding vortex that moves, not the earth.
  19. Edward Davis, “That Isaac Newton’s Mechanistic Cosmology Eliminated the Need for God,” in *Galileo Goes to Jail*, 121; Stephen Snobelen, “The Theology of Isaac Newton’s Principia Mathematica: A Preliminary Survey,” *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 52/4 (2010): 377–78, 410; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 178.
  20. Andrew Janiak, “Newton’s Philosophy,” 2, in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/newton-philosophy/>; Snobelen, “The Theology of Isaac Newton,” 378; Rynasiewicz, “Newton’s View on Space, Time, and Motion,” 8; Janiak, “Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy in Descartes and Newton,” 8.
  21. Cf. E. J. Dijksterhuis, *The Mechanization of the World Picture*, C. Dikshoorn (trans.) (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1961), 491.
  22. Isaac Newton, “De Gravitatione” (ca. 1685), in *Philosophical Writings*, Andrew Janiak (ed.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 30–32; Edward Davis, “Newton’s Rejection of the ‘Newtonian World View’: The Role of Divine Will in Newton’s Natural Philosophy,” *Science and Christian Belief* 3/2 (1991): 11–12, 17. Leibniz held to a similar whirlpool theory.
  23. Alexandré Kayré, *From the Closed Universe to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1957), 242; Ernst Cassirer, *The Platonic Renaissance in England*, James Pettegrove (trans.) (Edinburgh: Nelson, 1953), 149ff.; Steffen Ducheyne, “Isaac Newton on Space and Time: Metaphysician or Not?,” *Philosophica* 67/1 (2001): 107–8.
  24. Newton, “De Gravitatione,” 25–26; Yahuda MS. 21, fol. 1r [Quoted in Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton: The Fremantle Lectures 1973* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974) 2]; Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, I. Bernard Cohen and Anne Whitmann (trans.) (Berkeley, CA: University of California, 1999), 940–41; Andrew Janiak, “Space, Atoms and Mathematical Divisibility in Newton,” *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 31/2 (2000): 221–22; Davis, “Newton’s Rejection of the ‘Newtonian World View,’” 9.

25. Janiak, "Newton's Philosophy," 12; Snobelen, "The Theology of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*," 404; Davis, "Newton's Rejection of the 'Newtonian World View,'" 11–12.
26. *Cosmology*, 272–73; Newton, *Principia*, 491–92.
27. Royal Society, Gregory MS. 245, fol. 1a [Trans. in J. E. McGuire, "Force, Active Principles, and Newton's Invisible Realm," *Ambix* 15 (1968): 190]; "Dr. Clarke's Fourth Reply" (June 26, 1716) and "Dr. Clarke's Fifth Reply" (Oct. 29, 1716), in *The Leibniz-Clarke Correspondence*, H. G. Alexander (ed.) (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), 47, 104; Janiak, "Newton's Philosophy," 4–5.
28. Newton, *Principia*, 941; Ducheyne, "Isaac Newton on Space and Time," 98–101; Snobelen, "The Theology of Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*," 401–2; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 143–54.
29. *Ibid.*, 77, 87; Rynasiewicz, "Newton's Views," 1–2, 9–10, 20; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 152–53. Einstein's theory relates space and time together, whereas Newton is unable to create a relationship. For Newton, motion can be accelerated or retarded, but not absolute time.
30. Newton, "De Gravitatione," 35; Ducheyne, "Isaac Newton on Space and Time," 83, 98–101; *Cosmology*, 273. Newton thought of the universe as infinite. William Charleton provided essentially the same concept of space and time in his *Physiologia Epicuro-Gassendo-Charltoniana*, with which Newton was familiar as an undergraduate student. Rynasiewicz, "Newton's Views," 6.
31. Janiak, *Newton as Philosophers*, 30, 137. While one cannot measure the true velocity of an object, its acceleration can be measured.
32. At several points, Newton postulated the existence of aether, but later abandoned it when experimenting with pendula, because its existence would end up hindering motion. Any aether in Newton would need to bear a non-negligible mass. (Otherwise, its mass would exert a gravitational pull.) It would need to be non-mechanical, or able to penetrate the surface of an object. Newton, "De Gravitatione," 34; Ducheyne, "Isaac Newton on Space and Time," 80, 97; Davis, "That Isaac Newton's Mechanistic Cosmology," 120; Janiak, "Newton's Philosophy," 19; *Newton as Philosopher*, 18, 100–1. At times he speaks of objects "attracting" or "gravitating" toward each other.
33. Newton, *Principia*, 943; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 9–10, 27–28, 75, 78, 87–88, 120. For Descartes, each body of a given volume has the same extension and *quantitas materiae*. He thinks the quantity of matter cannot be calculated by simply weighing an object. Newton thinks of objects as possessing extension and density. "Quantity of matter is a measure of matter that arises from its density and volume jointly." Mass can be measured by weighing it. The inertial mass involves its resistance to acceleration. Newton, *Principia*, 403; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 103–4.
34. E. W. Strong, "Newton and God," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13/2 (1952): 161; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 95.
35. *Cosmology*, 272; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 33–34.
36. Newton, "Correspondence with Bentley" (Feb. 25, 1692/3), in *Philosophical Writings*, 102–3.
37. *Ibid.* (Jan. 17 and Feb. 11, 1692/3), 100–1; Janiak, "Newton's Philosophy," 9, 15–16; *Newton as Philosopher*, 6–7; Strong, "Newton and God," 152. Leibniz criticizes Newton for

- using this occult entity, without showing a material cause. “Newton to Leibniz” (Oct. 16, 1693), in *Philosophical Writings*, 112.
38. A. J. Ayer, *Hume: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000) 68ff., 85, 89–90; Anthony O’Hear, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 102–4. Berkeley speaks of gravity as a mathematical postulate, not a physical quantity. Newton also emphasizes mathematics in his description of nature, believing that geometry and matter belong together. This type of number mysticism goes back to the Pythagoreans and pre-Socratic philosophy. At times, Newton spurns any speculation over the “physical” cause and makes gravity “purely mathematical.” Here he is most consistent with his scientific method, where *hypotheses non fingo* (“I feign no hypotheses”), even if he insists that gravity “really exists.” Newton, *Principia*, 381, 407–8; *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, Andrew Motte (trans.) (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1968), 2.392 [General Scholium]; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 15–16, 26, 55; Stephen D. Snobelen, “‘The True Frame of Nature’: Isaac Newton, Heresy, and the Reformation of Natural Philosophy,” in *Heterodoxy in Early Modern Science and Religion*, John Brooke and Ian Maclean (eds.) (Oxford: University Press, 2005), 236–39.
  39. Newton, *Principia*, 943; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 4, 11–13, 113. For Descartes, metaphysics precedes physics.
  40. Ernan McMullan, *Newton on Matter and Activity* (Notre Dame, IN and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1978), 101; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 39–44, 166; *Cosmology*, 272–73; Davis, “That Isaac Newton’s Mechanistic Cosmology,” 120. His letters speak openly about the ground of universal gravitation within the divine presence. This relation is also found in the first draft of the Scholium (Proposition ix) and the later General Scholium of 1713.
  41. Newton, *Principia*, 940; Janiak, *Newton as Philosopher*, 37. Of course, the modern world often scoffs at this type of *argumentum ex ignorantia*, which attributes to God unknown causes, or makes the existence of God depend upon gaps in our knowledge. Rev. G. L. Marriot, “Isaac Newton: Scientist and Theologian,” 216; Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1975), 1.6.
  42. Newton, “Correspondence with Berkeley” (Dec. 10, 1692), 94.
  43. Newton, “Scholium Generale” (MS Add. 3965 fols. 361–62), in *Unpublished Scientific Papers of Isaac Newton*, A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (eds. and trans.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962), 358 (363); Snobelen, “The Theology of Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica*,” 3987; Davis, “Newton’s Rejection of the ‘Newtonian World View,’” 10–11.
  44. Marriot, “Isaac Newton,” 216; Frank E. Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), 14.
  45. Newton, *Principia*, 940–41; “Mr. Leibnitz’s First Paper” (Nov. 1715) and “Dr. Clarke’s First Reply” (Nov. 26, 1715), in *Leibniz–Clarke Correspondence*, 11–14; Davis, “That Isaac Newton’s Mechanistic Cosmology,” 116; “Newton’s Rejection of the ‘Newtonian World View,’” 17–19. Newton has a tendency toward the voluntarism of the Franciscan/Nominalist tradition of the late medieval period. God could make the world with different laws through a free and voluntary act. Stephen D. Snobelen, “God of Gods, and Lord of Lords’: The Theology of Isaac Newton’s General Scholium to the *Principia*,” *Osiris* 16

- (2001): 176; “The Theology of Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica*,” 393; Davis, “Newton’s Rejection of the ‘Newtonian World View,’” 19. At one time he thought the cosmos was not self-regulating. God might be needed to correct irregularities in mutual attraction and maintain the system. Leibniz mocked Newton’s belief as requiring occasional miracles. Newton typically sees the world in terms of order and symmetry. *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, A. Rupert Hall and Laura Tilling (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 6.261; *Cosmology*, 273–74; Davis, “Newton’s Rejection of the ‘Newtonian World View,’” 14–15.
46. Davis, “That Isaac Newton’s Mechanistic Cosmology,” 118; Manuel, “The Religion of Isaac Newton,” 63, 97–99. Newton set a specific timetable for the coming early on, but later became more cautious—just like the Puritan community. Throughout his study of Scripture, he remained within the basic parameters of a general orthodoxy on most issues, but his biblical piety made him question the doctrine of the Trinity as an impious and irrational theological construct, based upon Platonic theories of divine emanations, rather than the simple reading of the biblical text. He ended up embracing the ancient heresy of Arius, but kept it quiet, probably to avoid controversy and maybe ostracism. Newton, Yahuda MS 15.5, fol. 154r [cited in Snobelen, “God of Gods,” 183]; Manuel, “The Religion of Isaac Newton,” 7, 12, 74; Snobelen, “The True Frame of the Universe,” 233; “God of Gods,” 171–72, 181–83, 187; Davis, “That Isaac Newton’s Mechanistic Cosmology,” 117. Clark, the main apologist of Newton, also followed him on this matter.
  47. Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning* (Kila, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 1994), 14; Snobelen, “The Theology of Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica*,” 410; Manuel, “The Religion of Isaac Newton,” 30–32; Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 226–27.
  48. “Newton to Burnet” (Jan. 1680/1), in *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, H. W. Turnbull (ed.) (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1960), 2.331; Janiak, “Metaphysics and Natural Philosophy in Descartes and Newton,” 413–14; *Newton as Philosopher*, 159–60. This relative perspective is found in Gen. 1 with its description of the two great lights, or in Josh. 10 with its depiction of the sun standing still in the heavens. Absolute space and time are not subject to sensory perception. Ducheyne, “Isaac Newton on Space and Time,” 92.
  49. Strong, “Newton and God,” 157.
  50. William Whiston, *A Collection of the Authentick Records Belonging to the Old and New Testaments* (London, 1728), 2.1073–74; Snobelen, “God of Gods,” 173.
  51. Isaac Newton, *The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, 2.388–93 [General Scholium]; Snobelen, “God of Gods,” 169; “The Theology of Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica*,” 381; Strong, “Newton and God,” 149–50.
  52. Yahuda MS 1.1, fol. 4r [cited in Manuel, *The Religion of Isaac Newton*, 48–49]; Manuel, “Religion and Isaac Newton,” 47–48; Strong, “Newton and God,” 159–60.
  53. Hilary Putnam, *The Many Faces of Realism* (LaSalle, IL: 1995), 20, 37ff.; O’Hear, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 16ff., 55, 210–11.
  54. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of the Scientific Revolution* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 7, 18, 23, 158; O’Hear, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 64–66.
  55. Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 27, 35–36, 95. Popper thinks a good scientific theory can be refuted or falsified by experience, whereas Kuhn thinks all theories have problems or anomalies. *Ibid.*, 40, 113, 124;



- Kuhn, *The Structure of the Scientific Revolution*, 146–47; O’Hear, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 83. Scientists held to Newton’s theory of gravity before Einstein, in spite of observing anomalies in Mercury’s orbit. Albert Einstein, *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, Robert W. Lawson (trans.) (New York: Bonanza Books, 1961), 103, 123; Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), 85–86; Albert Einstein and Leopold Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 238–39.
56. Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 24, 337, 355; Einstein and Infeld, *Evolution of Physics*, passim.
  57. Jim Baggott, *Higgs: The Invention and Discovery of the ‘God Particle’*, Steven Weinberg (forward) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), xi–xii, 38, 143, 220–21.
  58. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 565, 569–74. Wittgenstein thinks that our initial picture of the world comes from our inherited background. Our language–game has nothing to say about other hypotheses or worldviews. *On Certainty*, G. E. M. Anscombe and G. H. von Wright (eds.), Denis Paul and G. E. M. Anscombe (trans.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1969), 15 (94), 28 (203).
  59. David Hume, *Dialogues and the Natural History* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 36–37, 46, 50, 53, 78–79, 84; *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Co., 1965), 24ff., 64, 147ff.
  60. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (trans.) (London and Healey: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 39 (5.135–5.1361), 70 (6.36311–6372). Those scientists who engage in metaphysical analysis about causality have no justification to complain about proponents of Intelligent Design for engaging in the same philosophical leap. Cf. Michael Ruse, “That ‘Intellectual Design’ represents a Scientific Challenge to Evolution,” in *Galileo Goes to Jail*, 206–14.
  61. W. W. Rouse Ball, *A Short Account of the History of Mathematics* (New York: Dover Publications, 1960), 414–15, 417–18; John Polkinghorne, *Quantum Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1.
  62. A good example is Russell’s attempt to reduce logic to mathematics, until Kurt Gödel published his revolutionary paper in 1931, showing that no arithmetic system is complete and internal contradiction is an indelible aspect of mathematics. Gödel constructed a true but indemonstrable formula, showing that arithmetic axioms are necessarily incomplete. Ernest Nagel and James R. Newman, *Gödel’s Proof* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1986), 3, 6, 58–59, 86–92, 94, 100. One application of his proof might say that human brains can do more than machines, since a machine can only work within a fixed direction or manipulate formal, meaningless symbols. John Searle, *Minds, Brains, and Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 31, 44; Hilary Putnam, *Words and Life*, James Conant (ed.) (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1995), 392, 441ff., 444–45, 448.
  63. J. P. McEvoy and Oscar Zarate, *Introducing Quantum Theory*, Richard Appignanesi (ed.) (Cambridge: Icon Books, 1996), 127ff.
  64. Andrew Whitaker, *Einstein, Bohr and the Quantum Dilemma* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 171–73; McEvoy and Zarate, *Introducing Quantum Theory*, 160; Polkinghorne, *Quantum Theory*, 36.

65. William James, *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2005), 48, 63, 68, 104–5, 248–51, 272–73.
66. O’Hear, *Introduction to the Philosophy of Science*, 203–4.
67. Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*, in Robert Maynard Hutchins (ed.), *Great Books of the Western World* (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978) 7; Frederick Copleston, *Kant*, in *A History of Philosophy* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1964), 6/2.20, 59.
68. *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit*, A. V. Miller (trans.), J. N. Findlay (forward and analysis) (Oxford University Press, 1977), 477, 491 (803).
69. George Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, T. M. Knox (trans.) (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1977), 6.
70. Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, E. J. Payne (trans.) (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 1.3, 31, 171ff., 352, 419; 2.7, 8.
71. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (trans.) (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), lix, 14, 71–73, 315. This paragraph glosses over some significant differences between the postmodernists. Many of the postmodernists point back to John Dewey and American pragmatism as an early inspiration for eliminating the distinction between fact and value. The pragmatists considered theories to have validity only as tools or instruments, not dogmas, emphasizing their capacity to work or shape the world into whatever purpose humans have in mind (since the world has no fixed purpose). John Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1962), 70; Putnam, *Word and Life*, 152.
72. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 12–13, 126, 299, 371–72; *Consequences of Pragmatism* (Minneapolis, MN: The University of Minnesota Press, 1994), xvii, xliii. Harry Frankfurt finds an epidemic of “bullshit” these days in our culture and blames postmodernism to some extent. *On Bullshit* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2005), 64–67.
73. Slavj Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 43–44.
74. Rudi Visker, *Michel Foucault: Genealogy as Critique*, Chris Turner (trans.) (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 57–59, 66–67, 104; Gary Gutting, *Foucault: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 50; Lydia Alix Fillingham, *Foucault: For Beginners* (London: Writers and Readers Publishing, 1993), 102–3. His numerous books all illustrate this general point.
75. Stanley Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1989), 13, 20, 291, 353–54, 432–33, 487–88, 519; *Is There a Text in This Class?: The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1980), 14–16, 285, 292. A good illustration of this point is the type of mass commentary that develops after presidential debates. No one sitting in an isolated room knows exactly what to think, but in the public a consensus is usually reached sometime after the debate and everybody seems to repeat it. The first Nixon/Kennedy debate is interpreted through the consensus. Nixon’s eyes are shifting around, his face is sweaty, he needs makeup, he won the debate if you were listening on the radio focusing on the specific substantive

points, et al. Kennedy looked confident or “presidential,” he stared into the camera, he won on style with the viewing audience, et al.

76. Polkinghorne, *Quantum Theory*, 83–85, 91–92.

77. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 8 (2.0271), 9 (2.15–2.17), 10 (2.19–2.2).

78. Einstein’s image of warped space is just a metaphysical image of free creation, helping him understand its geometry.



# Innocent Suffering

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Atheism often develops as a reaction to the inexplicable nature of evil or suffering in the world. The problem of evil hits people on an existential and visceral level, where life has brought a great deal of pain to those experiencing continuous suffering, meaningless toil, and unanswered prayers. Epicurus receives credit for providing the classical formulation of the problem by finding the presence of evil incompatible with a divine reality claiming to be good and all-powerful.<sup>1</sup> The presence of evil demonstrates that power and goodness have no ultimate ontological reality in a single being; otherwise, evil would be eliminated. Modern atheists like Bertrand Russell accept this argument and experience dark moments when they draw out the consequences for humankind with brutal logic.<sup>2</sup>

Brief and powerless is man's life; on him and all his race the slow, sure doom falls pitiless and dark. Blind to good and evil, reckless to destruction, omnipotent matter rolls on its relentless way.... That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labors of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond

dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.<sup>3</sup>

## The Puritans

The opposite point of view is found within the Judeo-Christian tradition, where God works within history and directs it with meaning and purpose toward the dawning of the kingdom of heaven.<sup>4</sup> Here God takes the life and deeds of people and places them within the divine nature to participate in its immortality and live forever.<sup>5</sup> This point of view permeates and motivates many followers of the Christian faith, but found its deepest expressions among Puritan authors who were so energized by their place within the divine economy that they conceived of their community as receiving a special calling and playing a leading role in the divine drama to redeem humanity and make a lasting impact on the world. The Puritans saw England and New England as the epicenter of God's activity and hoped to "reform" all aspects of society in creating a better world.<sup>6</sup> They came to think of their community as a "City on a Hill" that reflected the future and served as the center of a historical process, where genuine progress was made in all areas of life and continued to evolve until it fulfilled its purpose of establishing the kingdom of God, even without the personal intervention of Christ in their post-millennial scheme of things.<sup>7</sup> All along the way, Puritans discerned the "signs of the times" and witnessed God's providential dealings among them, taking notice of earthquakes, tempests, eclipses, and other natural phenomena as special divine admonitions to fulfill their mission.<sup>8</sup> They envisioned their community in terms of the ancient people of Israel, possessing the same special role within the divine economy, complete with their national covenant before God, and attended with the same visible blessings and curses upon their faithfulness to its stipulations. Their divines centered their understanding of the divine will upon covenant theology and preached Jeremiads, which exhorted the people to remain faithful to the covenant and prognosticated disaster if they refused to repent of their infidelity to the founding principles.<sup>9</sup>

The Puritans based much of their teachings upon faith in the sovereignty of God. They identified their ideas with the theology of John Calvin and followed his strong emphasis upon predestination, except preferring to engage in more speculation about God's specific intent or purpose behind the actual decree.<sup>10</sup> Like Calvin, the Puritans thought of God working all things according to the good pleasure of the divine will,<sup>11</sup> but many of them were not content to recognize the simple truth of God's ultimate control over the forces of life and wanted to engage

in some speculation and discern why God had ordained certain events to transpire within the divine counsels—an impiety Calvin certainly questions and repudiates several times in his *Institutes*. Calvin says that “nothing takes place by chance” or “without his deliberation,” including the fall of Adam, the evils of humanity, and the damnation of the reprobate,<sup>12</sup> but he rejects those who speculate over the why and wherefore behind the “secret plan.”<sup>13</sup> Calvin feels that true piety must limit its study to following what God reveals in Scripture and spurn any attempt to speculate about the intent or meaning of historical events apart from a specific divine word or commentary.<sup>14</sup>

Here, surely, the fall of Adam is not presupposed as preceding God’s decree in time; but it is what God determined before all ages that is shown, when he willed to heal the misery of mankind. Suppose our adversary again objects that this plan of God depended on the ruin of man, which he foresaw. It is quite enough for me to say that all those who propose to inquire or seek to know more about Christ than God ordained by his secret decree are breaking out in impious boldness to fashion some new sort of Christ....With Augustine I say: the Lord has created those whom he unquestionably foreknew would go to destruction. This has happened because he has so willed it. But why he so willed, it is not for our reason to inquire, for we cannot comprehend it.<sup>15</sup>

After Calvin, this type of biblical piety waned, and the next generation of Protestants reverted to scholastic and philosophical means of constructing their system of doctrine, dividing biblical studies from theology.<sup>16</sup> In the most famous instance, Theodore Beza exhibited this tendency as the successor of Calvin at the Academy in Geneva and produced a grand supralapsarian scheme of history, based upon Aristotelian logic and the scholastic theology of Duns Scotus. Through this philosophical scheme, he explained the reasons why God destined the majority of the human race to the pits of hell and designed the fall (*lapis*) of Adam to condemn them, along with the other significant matters of biblical history and salvation.<sup>17</sup>

The Puritans also had a tendency to search out the “secret plan” of God in their works. They emphasized the OT more than other Christian groups<sup>18</sup> and tended to embrace the view of the Mosaic economy, which sees the blessings of life as a sign of divine favor and the curses as much the opposite (Dt 28).<sup>19</sup> Thomas Beard, a Puritan divine, provided an extreme example of this viewpoint in his influential work, *The Theatre of Gods Judgments* (1597). As an early schoolmaster and later friend of Oliver Cromwell, his ideas and work naturally exerted an important influence upon his pupil, as well as the subsequent Revolution, which published a revised and expanded edition in 1648—the year before Charles I’s execution.<sup>20</sup> The book contains special exhortations to rulers about serving the will of God and warnings about divine wrath punishing “wicked offenders against the

law of God and the laws of kingdoms.” It warns against those rulers who hinder the “worship and service of God,” pointing to the plagues that fell upon Pharaoh and the agonizing death of Herod the Great as a fitting judgment for the enemies of God’s people.<sup>21</sup> The “heavy and revenging hand” of God is sure to fall upon all those who spurn the Word and persecute the ministers of the sacred message, and Beard finds it most typical for the Lord to broadcast his righteous indignation in a direct, cause-and-effect manner, linking specific acts of disobedience with certain results: “we may plainly see that few persecuting enemies of Christ & his servants, have escaped without some remarkable token of God’s wrath and heavy displeasure.”<sup>22</sup> The visible tokens are provided throughout the book *ad nauseam*, boldly illustrating the moral lessons or intent of God in history and often emphasizing the *lex talionis* of the Mosaic economy (Ex 21:23–25, Nm 32:23). Here is a sample:

Likewise we may read of Felix, Earle of Wartemberg, who swore to his companions at a supper, that ere he died he would ride vp to the spures in the blood of the Lutherans, that is, true Christians; But in the same night Gods hand was vpon him, for hee was strangled and choked with his owne blood. Harken to this, yee bloody and murdering Papists and quake for feare Illiricus.<sup>23</sup>

Likewise we may read of one John Martin Trumbant of Briquerras in Piamont, who would vaunt himselfe, and brag of his crueltie against professors of Christs Gospell. And further, how hee most barbously cut off a faithfull ministers nose, for which wicked deede, the Lord sent a mad Wolfe to bite off his nose, and so he died himself mad. This wolfe was never knowne to harme any man before.<sup>24</sup>

A certaine fellow, hearing a godly Preacher in a Pulpit say much against periury, greatly condemning the same, and shewed how it neuer escaped vnpunished, scoffingly saide, I haue often forsworne my selfe, and yet my right hand is not a whit shorter than my left, which words scarce vttered, but an inflammation rose in that hand which would neuer be cured. But was cut off, to saue the rest of his body, and so at length his right hand through the iustice of God was made shorter then the left.<sup>25</sup>

A certaine Noble-man would vsually hunt on the Saboath day, but as hee loued dogs more then the service of God vpon his holy Saboath, so the Lord rewarded him: for hee made his wife to bring forth a childe with the head like a dog, that seeing he preferred his dogs before Gods worship, he might haue a dogge of his owne getting to play withall.<sup>26</sup>

It is reported that a wicked sonne did beate his old father, and trailed him by the haire of his head to the threshold of the doore, which wretch when he was olde, was seruued of his sonne and worse, for his sonne dragged him out of doores into the dirt in the streetes, . . . , so we see heere, like sin, like punishment.<sup>27</sup>



Cirus, King of Persia, was a man of blood, but his ende was according to his life, for a woman overcoming him, and killing him, threw his head into a sacke full of blood, saying, now glut thy selfe with blood, which thou hast thirsted after, so long time.<sup>28</sup>

Theodeberius, eldest sonne of Clotharius, died amongst his whores: . . . The like befell on one Barteau Ferrier, a great learned man at Barselon in Spaine, who hauing locked himselfe in his study with a whore, was found dead vpon the strumpet.<sup>29</sup>

Now Gods fearfull iudgements vpon the persons of wretched sinners of this kind according to vndoubtd histories. In the Bishopricke of Coline, a notable vsurer, lying sicke, moued his lips and mouth, as though he chewed somewhat, and being asked what he did eate he answered his money, and that the diuell thrust it into his mouth perforce, so that he could neither will, nor chuse, but deuoure it, and in this temptation he died miserable.<sup>30</sup>

It were to long to call all or halfe of the Popes to account for their abominations more then heathenish therefore let vs end with Pope Alexander the 6, which came to the Papacie not by desert, but by briberie and faire promises to the Cardinals, for he was a man, or rather a monster, full of all horrible vices and beastly conditions, hauing neither sinceritie, faith, religion nor ciuill honestie, but couetousnesse, ambition, more then barbarous crueltie: he set benefices and promotions to sale: he poisoned Iohn Michel Cardinal of Venice for his treasure: he perswaded Charles the 8. King of France to warre, and afterward himselfe turned to the contrary party: he deuised poison for Cardinall Adrian his familiar freind, which his Butler mistaking, instead of the Popes cuppe gaue his murdering Maister that which Cardinall Adrian should haue drunke, which the Pope drinking, and being poisoned as his freind should haue bin, died miserably, according to his iust derseruings, by his wicked behaiour.<sup>31</sup>

All these examples are meant to instill the fear of God within the godly and ungodly alike—all of whom experience the chastisement of the Lord. Beard ends with a final warning to the readers concerning a “greater punishment then any (as yet) spoken of, for the wicked, and that is eternal torments in hell fier,” making the horror of divine wrath much greater than the foreboding tokens of his own book.<sup>32</sup>

This position also made its way into New England as a source of vigilance within the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Cotton Mather, their most prolific and famous author, saw the community playing a leading role in a divine drama and continually pointed to providential signs of deliverance and judgment in spurring the people to persevere and fulfill their special calling before God.<sup>33</sup> In *The Voice of God in Stormy Winds*, Mather attacks the insidious “Atheism” among the people by inculcating the fear of divine sovereignty and excoriating any attempt to limit these phenomena to “Second Causes only” like the innate “Disposition of the Air, the season of the Year, or the Influence of the Constellations in the Heavens.”<sup>34</sup> The

people must heed these “dreadful providences” as signs from God.<sup>35</sup> At times they represent something positive for the community in exhibiting the type of mercy and deliverance “that happened on our Coast Yesterday and the Day before,” when “the *French Privateer* designing to do us hurt...suffered shipwreck,”<sup>36</sup> but more often they bring fear and foreboding with their display of divine power. They bring swift justice to the godless, as seen in the recent case of two blasphemers, who were struck dead by a lightning bolt after defying the heavens.<sup>37</sup> They also serve as a sign of divine displeasure or threat of a coming judgment and tribulation, as happened in so many instances throughout the history of the church.<sup>38</sup> The basic purpose of storms is to arrest the people from their present complacency and make them recognize the fragility of their situation—that it is possible for God to bring disaster and even extinguish the community, as Mather illustrates throughout the work showing past and present examples of utter destruction through these divine tempests.<sup>39</sup>

In *A Discourse Concerning Earthquakes*, he points to another type of sign from God that needs careful analysis to discern its multifaceted meaning for the community.<sup>40</sup> Sometimes earthquakes show divine displeasure with human behavior, and Mather cites a number of OT verses and passages to confirm this kind of meaning;<sup>41</sup> other times they bring judgment upon the world in delivering the people of God from oppression, and Mather points again to many specific instances in the OT to display this possibility;<sup>42</sup> and still other times they contain a direct “Metaphorical sense” and portend “state-quakes,” “church-quakes,” “kingdom-quakes,” and other great changes that are about to transpire. Mather particularly focuses upon this latter dimension of their significance in the sermon as an opportunity to exhort the people in light of the signs and wonders around them. He interprets recent earthquakes in terms of the Olivet Discourse, where Jesus made “Great Earthquakes” a portent of his coming, warning his disciples to remain vigilant and discern the signs of the times. Mather wants to awaken his people by recalling the words of Jesus’ prophecy, helping them discern the present fulfillment, and providing a number of examples indicating the increase of earthquakes around the world—just as Jesus predicted concerning the latter days. Even New England has experienced several earthquakes of late and must recognize the signs of the times through practicing vigilant and diligent service to God.<sup>43</sup> Mather uses these and other providential signs as a means of encouraging his people to be thankful for God’s mercy in delivering them from harm. He points out some contemporary examples of affliction to underscore the real and present danger, but his approach remains less condemnatory than *The Theatre of Gods Judgements*; he merely wants the people to consider their ways and serve the kingdom of heaven given the fragility and ephemeral nature of the world.<sup>44</sup>

## Lisbon

Eventually, the Calvinist view of life faded over time as people imputed more autonomy to natural events and thought of God as more remote and less responsible for everyday affairs.<sup>45</sup> The suffering of life lost any real sense of meaning or purpose and called into question the fundamental religious notion of divine providence or an ultimate sovereign plan. Instead, the concern over human suffering summoned people to take responsibility and employ their best effort to alleviate whatever natural objects impeded their way on the road to progress or a more felicitous state of affairs.<sup>46</sup>

A pivotal moment was the great earthquake that rocked Lisbon, Portugal on November 1, 1755. It happened on All Saints' Day when all the churches of the city were crowded for the morning's mass, ensuring maximum carnage and producing a death toll of over 50,000.<sup>47</sup> Some like John Wesley reacted with the theological and rhetorical style of a Puritan by underscoring the sovereignty of God in all things, the divine right to take vengeance upon those responsible for the Inquisition in Portugal, and the need to take refuge in the Almighty, not the ability of humans to control the forces of nature.<sup>48</sup> But others started to question this old-school approach to a more complex and disturbing reality. A couple of months after the event, Voltaire wrote a poem questioning the supercilious optimism of the church and modern philosophical thinkers like Leibniz and Lord Shaftesbury, who simply dismissed real and senseless tragedies like Lisbon by believing that all things are just and work for the good in the counsels of God. Is it possible to tell those who witnessed the death of so many loved ones that "all is well" in the grand scheme of things and dismiss the cruelty of life around them as a mere chimera?<sup>49</sup> Three years later, Voltaire returned to the subject of Lisbon and composed *Candide* or *Optimism*—a novel that resonated with the public and warranted 43 editions in the next few decades.<sup>50</sup> In the novel, Candide is the protagonist, who undergoes some tragedies in his life, forcing him to question the teaching of his mentor that this is the "best of all possible worlds," that "everything is made for the best purpose."<sup>51</sup> Candide finds it difficult to reconcile this optimism with the brutal death of so many good people, including Pangloss, his mentor and the "greatest of philosophers,"<sup>52</sup> but he (and Voltaire) refuses to sink into complete pessimism in spite of the evidence around him. Candide chooses to go on and "cultivate the garden" at the end of the novel, deciding to continue working with the prospect of finding meaning. Voltaire displays through Candide the indomitable hope that still beats within the human spirit. He finds it difficult to end his work on a pessimistic note or yield to the darkness of complete atheism, even if his thoughts are leading him elsewhere.<sup>53</sup> He still wants to believe in God or something that is essential to the

existential and social needs of the people in spite of all reasons to the contrary. He protests the need to continue believing in some nebulous form of faith, which has little proof or definition. He later provides a utilitarian justification and cries, “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him”<sup>54</sup>; in all this indicating a need for God that is growing more difficult to justify and floundering as an abstraction within his new anti-theological world of Deism and other modern expressions of faith.

More typical of the modern world was the tendency to pigeonhole the question of God altogether and limit the discussion of tragic events to the realm of secondary or natural causality as a practical means of resolving or alleviating the problem.<sup>55</sup> John Mitchell, an English clergyman and natural philosopher, represented this new secular emphasis by providing a detailed explanation of the Lisbon earthquake in 1760, which limited the discussion to secondary causality and brought him much credit from the scientific community as a father of modern geology and seismology. In his work, the cause of earthquakes begins with subterranean fires heating up underground water rather than the will or moral indignation of some divine force. The process of heating the water produces pent-up vapors that eventually erupt at an epicenter and travel in a “wave-like motion” across the surface of the earth. In the case of Lisbon, the earthquake was caused by an eruption at great depths in the Atlantic Ocean traveling to a nearby city, which remains vulnerable to a future episode. As a practical matter, Mitchell wants the people to recognize that certain places experience earthquakes at regular intervals, and low-lying, hilly regions receive the most violence or damage.<sup>56</sup> The “Spaniards, at their first settling there [in Lisbon], were told by the old inhabitants when they saw them building high houses that they were building their own sepulchers.”<sup>57</sup> The exhortation is to plan accordingly, and the concern about pleasing God seems less relevant in the hope of averting the next disaster.

This secular and scientific point of view has come to dominate the religious and non-religious community in the modern world. No longer are earthquakes seen as “acts of God” in any serious or literal sense of the phrase. Those who search out the “secret plan” of God and ask ultimate teleological questions about the purpose of earthquakes run the risk of receiving much ridicule from a public that is becoming more and more secular, just like their view of the world. Earthquakes are interpreted these days as natural phenomena within a cosmic machine that humans can mitigate only through proper precautions of a practical nature. Any mention of God’s hand in the matter is considered pre-scientific and condemned as judgmental. No better example is the continuous public ridicule of Pat Robertson, who professes to possess a “word of knowledge” as a charismatic minister and

periodically tries to connect certain natural disasters with divine acts of retribution like some prophet of old.<sup>58</sup> This type of interpretation is best left to bygone days.

## Holocaust

No religious community suffered a greater disturbance or challenge to their beliefs in the modern world than the Jewish people. The anti-Semitism of the diaspora reached a zenith in the middle of the twentieth century with the elimination of a third of their people in death camps, leaving the survivors to question the existence of God and the meaning of their own existence as a “kingdom of priests and holy nation” (Ex 19:6). Some continued to follow the traditional belief of a sovereign God working on behalf of the chosen people, but many other Jewish people felt betrayed by the horrific scope of the Holocaust and proceeded to adopt a more secular view of life, which no longer saw the biblical concept of divine providence as a credible alternative and chose to dismiss or revise the ancient faith.

The *haredi* or ultra-orthodox tended to resist the general trend in representing the most entrenched part of Judaism and following the traditions of the religion and its ancient view of history. The *haredi* continued to find inspiration in the Hebrew Scripture and followed its understanding of tribulation as a divine act of punishment for the sins of the people.<sup>59</sup> In this line of thinking, Hitler served the will of God as the rod of divine anger, fulfilling much the same purpose of Nebuchadnezzar in the prophecies of Jeremiah by chastening the iniquity of the Jewish people. The Holocaust was an act of justice, even if its ultimate purpose was redemptive in leaving a remnant to renew the sacred covenant and traditions of faith, rather than annihilate Jewish life forever. It was necessary for God to chasten the people because of their secular ways and lead them back to rediscovering their religious identity as the chosen people. Modern times brought the adulteration of the faith by the Reform and other liberal Jewish people through forsaking the traditional understanding of the faith and adopting an enlightened way of thinking.<sup>60</sup> It saw many Jews forsaking their communities to assimilate into the new nation-states as citizens and becoming like “all the other nations” (1 Sm 8:5)<sup>61</sup>; it saw them engaging in pseudo-messianic movements like secular Zionism, which sought to resolve Jewish problems through the political methods of the world, rather than wait for a future apocalyptic deliverance that promises the full and true experience of salvation—both spiritual and corporeal.<sup>62</sup> In blaming secularism, this ultra-orthodox explanation found the locus of the problem within the vices of their polemical enemies within Judaism but had some difficulty understanding why the actual locus of Hitler’s wrath seemed to be centered elsewhere. The extermination

was mainly conducted in Eastern Europe, where a higher portion of Orthodox Jews lived at the time, and the total operation eliminated 80 percent of the Rabbis, scholars, and students of Judaism, mainly living in that region and less influenced by the Enlightenment.<sup>63</sup>

Today the mainline view of Judaism tends to reject the traditional understanding of the ultra-orthodox and find no fault with the Jewish people at all. The Holocaust contains no lesson or message that they need to discern from the heavens above. Those who suffered from Nazi atrocities simply “fell victim to a crime motivated by an evil fantasy,” which “had no intrinsic meaning” whatsoever for an individual to study and take to heart.<sup>64</sup> This point of view often speaks of the Holocaust as if it had no antecedent in past events and defies any attempt to find a rational basis for it, calling the existence of a providential God into question. The Holocaust represents an unprecedented and unique manifestation of evil, making it difficult to explain or justify from a rational point of view—religious or scientific, social or psychological. Above all, it calls into question those who continue to believe in a grand rationality for all things and precludes any simple reversion back to the old understanding of history when evil was “limited in scope” and possible to explain away through “God’s overall plan for Jewish and world history.”<sup>65</sup> If anyone is to blame for the extermination, it is the Gentiles, not its innocent victims. The Jewish people are exonerated from all culpability in the matter, or even responsibility for preventing it as those who were blindsided by an inexplicable and irrational force that came from nowhere.<sup>66</sup> German reasons for disliking the Jews are seldom mentioned in this account or immediately dismissed as arising from a mentality that wishes to “blame the victim.” One finds little mention of German complaints about Jewish people possessing a disproportionate amount of power in the land or controlling the arts, banks, the press, and any number of important professions.<sup>67</sup> One also finds little mention of the Enlightenment and its clear role in fueling modern anti-Semitism, maybe because this criticism hits too close to home for these enlightened Jews and makes them complicit in anti-Semitism—at least to some degree.<sup>68</sup> If anyone is culpable for laying the foundation of Nazi death camps, it is typical of this interpretation to blame the church. Nazi anti-Semitism was little more than a “cancerlike mutation of the Christian anti-Semitic ideology,” which demonized the Jewish people for murdering their Messiah and produced “the death camps [as] the terminable expression of Christian anti-Semitism.”<sup>69</sup> The basis for the hatred is found within the NT and its conception of Jews as “Christ-killers,” making anti-Semitism an indelible aspect of the religion and explaining why this scurrilous accusation “has been repeated *ad nauseam* for almost two thousand years.”<sup>70</sup> Richard Rubenstein says, “As long as there is Christianity, Jews will be the potential objects of a special

and ultimately pernicious attention which will always have the potentiality of exploding in violence.<sup>71</sup> However, the problem with his assessment is the lack of substantial proof. There is little evidence that the church sponsored anti-Semitism throughout its history and much that speaks to the contrary when considering the basic ecclesiastical policies of the papacy.<sup>72</sup> Because of this problem, Rubenstein and the many liberal Jews who follow him often resort to employing psychobabble to find the pretext for blaming the church on a “deeper” subconscious level.

Even without Hitler, the Judas story is destined to continue to play a vital role in unconsciously poisoning Jewish–Christian relations. The Judas tale is part and parcel of the Passion drama, which is retold and relived by every practicing Christian during Holy Week. From the cradle to the grave, few stereotypes are as consistently reinforced under the most emotionally potent environments as these. The high point of the Christian religious calendar rehearses, amidst utterly magnificent music, frequently aesthetically overpowering architecture and ceremonial grandeur, the terrible tale of the Jewish betrayal and the Jewish murder of the Jewish God!... The Judas story created the psychological ground which made it possible for Germans under stress to believe that the Judas–Jews had betrayed their country and caused her defeat in World War I. It was futile for Jewish defense and veterans’ groups to point to Jewish sacrifices on behalf of the Fatherland during the war. After all, Judas had betrayed his Lord with a kiss. The appearance of loyalty in a Jew could not be credited, even when that appearance was purchased through death on the battlefield.... I do not love my sons the less because I am aware of the unconscious parricide dwelling in their psyches. When I see Christian Heilsgeschichte as leading potentially to murder, I do not forget its Jewish origin. I can sense the potential murderer in my brother only because I have intuited it in myself. As Christian and Jew we cannot be united in innocence. Let us at least each be united in guilt.<sup>73</sup>

Today many Jewish people find it necessary to revise their theology after the Holocaust. They find it difficult to cite the book of Deuteronomy or develop a simple calculus like Jeremiah in assigning the specific punishment of seventy years in captivity for certain transgressions as if knowing the mind of God and verdict of ultimate justice in minute detail. Most Jewish people wish to mitigate this part of the tradition and emphasize other aspects of it, which allow for some latitude and inconsistency in understanding the overall mystery of God.<sup>74</sup> They can point to the book of Job and view the ways of God as numinous or beyond the capacity of finite human beings to comprehend with simple moral constraints.<sup>75</sup> They can say with John Calvin that humans should follow the will of God as revealed in Scripture and refuse to speculate over ultimate divine purposes as the zenith of human blasphemy and hubris.<sup>76</sup> They can follow Immanuel Kant and find their moral duty in performing the dictates of the law as obedient servants, without any prospect of receiving a specific reward.<sup>77</sup> Maybe, the Holocaust represents the destiny

of the chosen people to suffer with God in the world and accept the difficult mission of a martyr, leaving them to live as a suffering servant, without incentives from respondent and operant conditioning.<sup>78</sup>

Some Jewish people look in another direction and find the accent upon human responsibility and freedom an important aspect of their tradition and better option in providing a possible or partial solution. The Hebrew Scripture portrays God as giving to the people commandments, expecting their cooperation in fulfilling the divine will, and warning them of dire consequences if they go astray. Because of this bilateral arrangement, Judaism is able to think of God as restricting the exercise of omnipotent power when dealing with humankind, allowing space for genuine freedom and moral responsibility, and shifting the onus of creating evil away from the divine person toward the unfaithfulness of the covenant partner or vices of human beings in general.<sup>79</sup> In trying to explain the Holocaust, Irving Greenberg speaks of this tension between God and human beings as lying at the root of the Jewish experience. He prefers to explain evil through the bailiwick of human responsibility and resolve the Epicurean triangle by sacrificing the typical metaphysical concept of omnipotence, rather than lose a more essential attribute like justice or goodness.<sup>80</sup>

In the 1960s, the tension soon gives way to a more radical theological expression that denies the providence of God altogether. These Jewish theologians see the dialectical movement proceeding away from the belief in a transcendent God toward an emphasis on human freedom and autonomy.<sup>81</sup> Emil Fackenheim follows many other radical theologians and proclaims that “God is dead,” like so many other radical theologians of the 1960s. It is no longer possible for Jews to believe in the God of history or their special calling from heaven as the “chosen people.” It is the obligation of all Jews after the atrocities of Auschwitz to stop praying as if God is connected to the world and has some special relation to them.<sup>82</sup> Richard Rubenstein agrees with these sentiments and the emphasis upon the death of God, believing that Auschwitz broke the “thread uniting God and man” and sentences everyone to live in a “cold, silent, unfeeling cosmos” with no “meta-historical meanings” whatsoever. He finds it better to live in an absurd and meaningless universe than pretend to go on believing in an almighty and capricious deity who had the cruelty to inflict Auschwitz upon an innocent and unsuspecting people.<sup>83</sup> And yet, Rubenstein and other radical theologians are unable to proceed any further in this line of thinking and reject the typical response of Camus and like-minded atheists, who discard religion in the name of the absurd. They continue to remain within the religious community as an essential aspect of human existence, but they find it impossible to continue believing in a personal God and necessary to demythologize the sacred history of the past.<sup>84</sup>



Many of the Jewish people who experienced the Holocaust firsthand also display the same tendency in renouncing all faith in the personal God of Hebrew Scripture.<sup>85</sup> Elie Wiesel represents this perspective in his classical work, entitled the *Night*. Wiesel was a Hungarian Jew, who was deported to Auschwitz and Buchenwald as a child and related his horrific ordeal some ten years later as a survivor. In the book, Wiesel relates the process of losing his faith, of coming to Auschwitz, of beholding the “little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky,” of smelling the foul odors of the crematory, of viewing “those flames which destroyed my faith,” “which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams into dust.”<sup>86</sup> Before Auschwitz, he was a pious student of the Talmud, who expressed a desire to learn Kabbalah at a young age from his teacher, Moshe the Beadle.<sup>87</sup> He speaks of the Germans entering his town in the spring of 1944, creating a ghetto out of it, and eventually deporting all the people, who remained optimistic at first in the midst of so much uncertainty.<sup>88</sup> But through the long and exhausting ordeal, involving months of starvation and death, it was no longer possible for him and others to accept the silence of the heavens and believe in the ancient Hebrew traditions and its God of absolute justice.<sup>89</sup> He might pray at times, hoping to receive enough moral strength and continue helping his father survive, but his animosity toward “that God in whom I no longer believed” became more and more palpable.<sup>90</sup> In one telling incident, he describes his faith dying with three prisoners, who were executed for possessing arms.

One day when we came back from work, we saw three gallows rearing up in the assembly place, three black crows. Roll call. SS all round us, machine guns trained: the traditional ceremony. Three victims in chains—and one of them, the little servant, the sad-eyed angel.

The SS seemed more preoccupied, more disturbed than usual. To hang a young boy in front of thousands of spectators was no light matter. The head of the camp read the verdict. All eyes were on the child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw its shadow over him.

This time the Lagerkapo refused to act as executioner. Three SS replaced him.

The three victims mounted together onto the chairs.

The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses.

“Long live liberty!” cried the two adults.

But the child was silent.

“Where is God? Where is He?” someone behind me asked.

At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over.

Total silence throughout the camp. On the horizon, the sun was setting.

“Bare your heads!” yelled the head of the camp. His voice was raucous. We were weeping.

“Cover your heads!”

Then the march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive....

For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes were not yet glazed.

Behind me, I heard the same man asking:

“Where is God now?”

And I heard a voice within me answer him:

“Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows....”<sup>91</sup>

The majority of Jewish people have moved toward atheism or secularism in their everyday thoughts and actions. The process received an impetus from the attitudes of the French Enlightenment and the policies of its Revolution against the Judeo-Christian tradition, and culminated in the dark days of the Holocaust, which sealed most Jews into seeking a secular salvation from a secular world.<sup>92</sup> This process left the Jewish community asking questions about the significance of their identity as a people and the possibility of defining its nature in the future if religion was no longer the fundamental basis. The Jewish people had begun to move away from a religious identification by the time of the Holocaust and even proceeded to interpret Hitler’s hatred of their people during and after the war in the exclusive terms of race, rather than religion, politics, and social standing, as the new and basic way of describing what it means to be Jewish.<sup>93</sup> Rubenstein follows this secular tendency and admonishes Jews to abandon their religious identity since it

continues to serve as a pretext for Christians murdering Jewish people or viewing Hitler as an instrument of divine chastisement. It is better for the Jewish people to enter “simple humanity” than continuing to experience the pernicious hatred of “philo-Semitism” and “anti-Semitism” alike.<sup>94</sup> And yet, Rubenstein and other secular Jews find it necessary for the community to survive even after reducing its people to nothing special. Fackenheim claims to hear a voice emanating from Auschwitz and admonishing secular and religious Jews to confirm their “Jewishness” as a sacred duty. In a famous passage, he exhorts the people to survive and not hand Hitler a “posthumous victory” in allowing Judaic life to perish altogether—a message that all authentic Jews take to heart.<sup>95</sup>

In many ways, Jewish people are those who survive in the midst of hardship, making suffering an indelible feature of “Jewishness” down through the ages. They are a religious and secular community that emphasizes and celebrates their suffering, even if this testimony is not unique to the community and unable to capture the entire essence of their experience. The Jewish people are certainly related to Christians in this regard. The Christian faith first developed out of Judaism and presented the prospect of suffering to its early followers through the NT’s emphasis upon the cost of discipleship (Mt 5:11–12; 16:24–26; 2 Tm 3:12). The theme of suffering dominated the first three centuries of the church’s existence in the age of martyrs and continued to find a prominent place in certain quarters, perhaps finding its most consistent expression in the Reformation among a pacifist wing like the Anabaptists, who interpreted the NT in a literal manner and took its words about suffering to heart.<sup>96</sup> The Black Church has represented this theme in more recent times with its struggle against discrimination and racism, making their experience related to the synagogue and other fellowships who share the same understanding of their plight in society.

The problem with the position is the difficulty of keeping a balanced or objective perspective on the suffering. The position certainly gains an audience from those who condemn violence and sympathize with its victim, but it fails to keep a balanced perspective about the complex nature of people, who like to exaggerate the sins of others and exonerate their own shortcomings. Anabaptists like to recount the heroics of their martyrs in suffering horrific torment for their faith, but often neglect the seditious behavior of their ancestors as a pretext for the persecution in disrupting society and slandering Christian magistrates as infidels.<sup>97</sup> The Israelites suffered four hundred years of bondage in Egypt and spent much of the time crying to the Lord for deliverance, but found it difficult to leave the habit of grumbling during their forty years in the wilderness and lodged complaint after complaint against the Lord.<sup>98</sup> This type of grumbling reaches its zenith in those who find their suffering unbearable, or without comparison to the rest of human

experience, moving them to slander divine providence or deny the existence of God altogether. Many Jews who interpreted the Holocaust as a unique event of unprecedented evil moved toward the rejection of their historic faith, but one must wonder whether the interpretation was necessary, or just the final expression of discontent. Even in their own history, one finds instances of horrific evil, like the brutal policies of the Assyrian empire and the destruction of the “ten lost tribes of Israel” in the eighth century B.C.E., without the Jews losing the faith of their fathers, without Hezekiah surrendering the last vestige of their life in Jerusalem.

In the larger scheme of things, the facticity of death might represent the ultimate problem that all human beings must face in their lives with its certainty and finality. Often, humans are shortsighted when comparing their lives with others and judging unfairness by the treatment of their immediate associates. They forget that the ephemeral nature of life makes all the relative differences pale into complete insignificance. The Buddha recognized that suffering was a common lot of humankind, that everyone was going to become old and sick and die, and exhorted the people to find peace within their mind, rather than dwell upon the throes and vicissitudes of life.<sup>99</sup> Blaise Pascal found the ephemeral nature of life the most disturbing question of all and wondered why humans spend so much time dwelling upon trifling matters when this one horrific reality contains the only vital matter of concern for us all.<sup>100</sup>

When I consider the short duration of my life, swallowed up in the eternity before and after, the little space that I fill, and even can see, engulfed in the infinite immensity of spaces of which I am ignorant, and which know me not, I am frightened and am astonished at being here rather than there;... The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me.<sup>101</sup>

In this simple mathematical fact, the quantity and quality of any life are reduced to a meaningless nothing when divided by the infinity of time.

The Bible engages the question of death and asks about the ultimate metaphysical justification for this final tragedy of life—a question the secular ideology of today no longer entertains in its predilection for mechanical explanations. The Bible thinks of God as the measure of all perfection and human beings as worthy of death because of their failure to live up to the righteous and eternal standards of divine glory (Gn 3; 6:5; Ps 51:4; Rom 3:23; 6:23; Eph 2: 1–3). The death-sentence is universal, embracing the whole human race—both Jewish and Gentiles alike. The prophets of Judah might think of Gentiles as living outside the special revelation of God and walking in darkness, but they never exonerated the Jewish people as free from the bondage of sin and unworthy of the chastisement that befalls them from time to time at the hands of the very wicked (Hb 1). In fact,

Amos thinks their sacred covenant entails a greater accountability before God and results in a stricter form of punishment, which is necessary to redeem the people and purify their ways (Amos 3:2). This message comes to the forefront in the NT, where God's people are summoned to take up their cross and undergo the most severe process of chastisement as a sign of their election and means of redemption (Mt 5:11, 12; Lk 9:23–25; Acts 5:41; Heb 12:6; 1 Pt 4:13–17). In following this important theme, most Christians understand suffering as a part of redemption and find it difficult to accept the simple cause-and-effect reasoning of Thomas Beard and his predilection to condemn those who endure hardships as more wicked than others.<sup>102</sup> The words of Jesus seem most explicit in rejecting self-righteousness and reviling judgments (Mt 7:1–3), and preferring his followers to concentrate on their own sins, rather than spend time speculating over the pretext of God's dealings with others (Lk 13:1–6; Jn 9:1–3). In fact, Christians see Jesus enduring the fullness of suffering, particularly during the last week of his life and death on the cross. Here Jesus experiences the cruelest form of punishment, dying as an innocent victim, bearing the sins of others, feeling abandoned by God, and crying out to the heavens for an ultimate reason, without receiving an answer or aid of any kind (Mk 15:33–34).<sup>103</sup> This understanding of the cross becomes high theology when Christians recognize the fullness of deity within Jesus of Nazareth and find it necessary to reinterpret their understanding of God in terms of the suffering and death of their Messiah. Martin Luther calls this reinterpretation the “theology of the cross,” where one crucifies the former understanding of divine glory and takes seriously the revelation of God in Christ Jesus as seen in the events of his earthly existence. This revelation forces one to abandon the former “theology of glory,” which “makes God the devil,” dwelling in self-sufficient transcendence and imperial majesty. It forces one to forsake *a priori* theological notions, which find greatness within the prowess of human reason, turning God into Cyrus the Great, Alexander the Great, and Herod the Great. It forces one to forsake the exaltation of human arrogance and meditate upon the humble and com-passionate God of the cross, hidden from philosophical pretense within a servant, who suffers, bleeds, and dies together with the people (1 Cor 1, 2).<sup>104</sup> Modern theologians like to emphasize this theme and think it provides an answer to atheism and its continual protest about the problem of evil since God is no longer impassible or outside the realm of suffering. Even some Jewish mystics follow the theme by finding the presence of Shekinah in the wilderness, wandering and suffering with the people, and resolving the old Epicurean triangle with a different conception of God, who is no longer living outside the human condition as Graeco-Roman philosophy had taught the western world, but actually exists as a com-passionate presence within their darkest hours.<sup>105</sup> While the modern secular world fails to

find God any longer in the midst of its suffering, these Jewish and Christian theologians prefer to find Jehovah suffering together with the people and bringing an ultimate deliverance from the things that would destroy their souls.

## Notes

1. This argument is related by Lactanius, a Christian apologist, who clearly misrepresents the original words of Epicurus, since the latter was not an atheist or monotheist. Pierre Bayle and David Hume are famous for developing their own version of the argument in the modern world.
2. Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, Paul Edwards (ed.) (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), 29ff.
3. *Ibid.*, 107, 115.
4. Donald K. McKim, "The Puritan View of History or Providence Within and Without," *Evangelical Quarterly* 52 (1980): 216–17.
5. Shubert Ogden, *The Reality of God and Other Essays* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 35–36.
6. Thomas Case, *Two Sermons Lately Preached at Westminster* (London: I. Raworth, 1642), 2.13, 16; John Foxe, *The First Volumes of Ecclesiastical History Contayning the Actes and Monumentes* (London: John Daye, 1570) "Four Questions Propounded to the Papists"; *Actes and Monumentes* (London: John Daye: 1563) "The Preface to the Quene"; Jonathan Edwards, *Polypoikilos Sophia. A Compleat History Or Survey Of all the Dispensations and Methods of Religion* (London, 1699), 689–91; Robert Nisbet, *History of the Idea of Progress* (New York: Basic Books, 1980), 195–98; Janice Knight, *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts: Rereading American Puritanism* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1994), 132; Perry Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 470; William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 19; *The Elect Nation: The Meaning and Relevance of Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (New York and Everston, IL: Harper and Row Publishers, 1963), 224–25; Stephen Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 49, 216, 221–22. Reform meant the reestablishment of the divine kingdom on earth transforming all of humankind—body, soul, and spirit. John Knox says, "A public reformation, as well in the religion as in the temporal government were most necessary." *John Knox's History of the Reformation in Scotland*, W. C. (ed.) (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), 1.149.
7. Joseph Mede, *The Key of the Revelation*, R. More (trans.) (London: R. B., 1650); Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Millennium and Utopia: A Study in the Background of Progress* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), ix, 76–78; Theodore Olsen, *Millennialism, Utopianism, and Progress* (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 203; McKim, "The Puritan View of History," 224–26; Stephen Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots*

- of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 68–73, 213–23, 235–36.
8. Ronald J. VanderMolen, “Puritan Philosophy of History: Providence as History—Providence as Revelation,” in *Conference on Puritanism in Old and New England*, Thomas Moore College, Ft. Mitchell, KY (1975): 1–2, 12; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 228–31, 463. Miracles were associated with biblical times, but divine activity within the confines of typical natural phenomena was interpreted as containing special messages. John Winthrop, the famous governor, found these messages in everyday life, like in the case of a mouse gnawing on the *Book of Common Prayer*, or the case of a Sabbath-breaker, whose child fell down a well. This tradition is seen all the way through the nineteenth century, where Ralph Waldo Emerson limits revelation to nature and draws moral/spiritual lessons from it. Emerson, *Selected Essays*, Larzer Zief (ed. and intro.) (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 41, 46–53, 270–73; Miller, *The New England Mind*, 481–82.
  9. Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 25–26, 54–75; Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 475ff., 481–82; *The New England Mind: From Colony to Providence*, 21ff., 29–30, 36–37, 482–83; Kevin Phillips, *The Cousins’ Wars: Religion, Politics, and the Triumph of Anglo-America* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), 28; John Morrill, *The Nature of the English Revolution* (London: Longman, 1993), 83–84. It is the doctrine of the covenant that dictates the close relationship between the nation of Israel and the Puritan community. More than any other Christian fellowship the Calvinists followed the example and teaching of the OT, believing that the old and new covenant had one and the same essential message. Christopher Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin Press, 1993), 266–69; Keith L. Griffin, *Revolution and Religion: American Revolutionary War and the Reformed* (New York: Paragon House, 1994), 22.
  10. Most Calvinists and Puritans rejected Calvin’s doctrine of double predestination. The Puritan doctrine of covenant also mitigated the force of single predestination and brought a synergistic element to their theology. Stephen Strehle, *The Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel: Encounter between the Middle Ages and the Reformation* (Leiden and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995), 50–61.
  11. McKim, “The Puritan View of History,” 233; Miller, *The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century*, 4; VanderMolen, “Puritan Philosophy of History,” 3–4.
  12. John Calvin, *Institutiones Religionis Christianae*, I, xvi, 3–5, 7; xviii, 1–2; III, xxi, 5; xxii, 1; xxiii, 1 (CO 2.146–51, 168–70, 682–83, 687–88, 698–99); VanderMolen, “Puritan Philosophy of History,” 5–7.
  13. *Ibid.*, I, iv, 1; xiv, 1; xvii, 2; II, xii, 5; III, xxiii, 2, 5, 7–8 (CO 2.38, 117–18, 155–56, 344, 700, 702, 704–5).
  14. *Ibid.*, I, xiii, 21; xiv, 4 (CO 2.108, 120); VanderMolen, “Puritan Philosophy of History,” 2.
  15. *Ibid.*, II, xii, 5; III, xxii, 5 (CO 2.469, 691).
  16. Pontien Polmen, *L’Élément Historique dans la controverse religieuse du XVI<sup>e</sup> Siècle* (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1932) 127; Jean Aymon, *Tout les Synodes Nationaux des Églises Réformées de France* (The Hague, 1710) 2.210; Walter Kickel, *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Theodor Beza* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), 158ff.

17. Theodore Bèze, *Tractationes Theologicae* (Genevae, 1582), 1.170ff.; 3.403ff.; *Confession de la Foy Chrestienne* (Geneve, 1563), 5–7, 15–16; *Correspondence de Theodore de Bèze*, Hippolyte Aubert (ed.) (Genève: E. Droz, 1960), 1 (40), 170; 4 (74), 182; Walter Kickel, *Vernunft und Offenbarung bei Theodor Beza* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1967), 100–2, 120, 167–68; Brian Armstrong, *Calvinism and the Amyraut Heresy* (Madison, Milwaukee, and London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 38ff., 129. His grandiose *Tabula Predestinationis* or *Summa Totius Christianismi* provides the whole supralapsarian agenda of God in one chart.
18. See n.9.
19. Some Puritans expressed reservations about this simple calculus, recognizing how the Lord tests the most beloved with much suffering. *The Works of Thomas Goodwin* (London: J. D. and S. D., 1681–1704), 1.48–50; *The Complete Works of Thomas Brooks*, John C. Miller (intro.) (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1866), 2.28–30, 39–40; *The Works of Richard Sibbes*, Alexander Grosart (intro. and ed.) (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), 7.141–50.
20. McKim, “The Puritan View of History,” 234–36; VanderMolen, “Puritan Philosophy of History,” 1. Beard drew material from a previous work entitled *Histoire memorables des grans et merueilleux jugemens et punitions de Dieu* (1586) by Jean Chassanion, a Huguenot pastor. Our text is drawn from Edmund Rudierde’s abridged version.
21. Thomas Beard, *The Thunderbolt of Gods Wrath Against Hard-Hearted Sinners, or An Abridgement of the Theater of Gods Fearfull Judgements Executed Upon Notorious Sinners*, Edmund Rudierde (intro. and ed.) (London: W. I., 1618), 5, 9, 92–95. Hereafter designated as TGW. Beard spurns the curse of many people, who label his position as “puritan, precision.” He speaks much like a Puritan in condemning Sabbath-breaking, gambling, plays, sports, et al. TGW 2, 40–41, 77.
22. TGW 4, 9–12. Among the sins that receive a specific judgment he discusses the following: oppressing God’s people, cruelty, unjust war, backsliding, heresy, atheism, conjuring, blasphemy, hypocrisy, lying, swearing falsely, gluttony, thievery, murdering, adultery, usury, gambling, and Sabbath-breaking.
23. TGW 13.
24. TGW 15.
25. TGW 34.
26. TGW 41–42.
27. TGW 47.
28. TGW 51.
29. TGW 63.
30. TGW 83.
31. TGW 89–90.
32. TGW 95.
33. Increase Mather, *Remarkable Providences* (London: John Russell Smith, 1856) preface [Some Proposals concerning the Recording of Illustrious Providences, II]; Herbert Wallace Schneider, *The Puritan Mind* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1958), 32.



34. Increase Mather, *The Voice of God in Stormy Weather* (Boston, MA: T. Green, 1704), 15, 36–37, 42–43, 46–47. He speaks of stars, as well as angels playing a causal role in tempests. *Ibid.*, 18–22.
35. *Ibid.*, 5–6, 14.
36. *Ibid.*, 26–30.
37. *Ibid.*, 6.
38. *Ibid.*, 3, 4, 31, 33.
39. *Ibid.*, 49–54, 57. The OT serves as the source of many illustrations, although the dreadful storm that recently fell upon Europe serves as a particular foreboding example to the community at the close of his work.
40. Increase Mather, *A Discourse Concerning Earthquakes* (Boston, MA: Timothy Green, 1706), 5–8. He speaks of two kinds of earthquakes. One kind is the result of a direct or supernatural act of God, and the other is due to “Natural causes,” involving “great Caverns,” “mighty Lakes and Rivers,” or “subterraneous Fires” with “bituminous, sulphurous Exhalations”; but even these natural quakes are described as the “awful Works of God.”
41. *Ibid.*, 11ff.
42. *Ibid.*, 15ff.
43. *Ibid.*, 18–19, 24–28.
44. *Ibid.*, 30–35. Harsher words are generally reserved for the Jews and papists. E.g., *Ibid.*, 4, 34–35.
45. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 262.
46. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 650–51.
47. Edgar Brightman, “The Lisbon Earthquake: A Study in Religious Valuation,” *The American Journal of Theology* 23/4 (1919): 500, 503; Voltaire, *Candide or Optimism*, John Butt (trans. and intro.) (London and New York: Penguin Books, 1947), 7–8.
48. John Wesley, “Serious Thoughts Occasioned by the Late Earthquake at Lisbon,” in *The Works of John Wesley, A.M.* (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1872), 11.12–13, 16–17, 21; Brightman, “The Lisbon Earthquake,” 513–14. Wesley thinks of these “shakings” as caused by God in a direct way and dismisses natural explanations. He rejects those who limit their explanation to natural means as impious. All things serve God’s will.
49. Voltaire, “Preface du Poème sur le Désastre de Lisbonne,” in *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877–85), 9.465–67; Brightman, “The Lisbon Earthquake,” 505.
50. Brightman, “The Lisbon Earthquake,” 506.
51. Voltaire, “Candide, or, The Optimist,” in *The Works of Voltaire* (Paris: E. R. Dumont, 1901), 1.62, 79 (21.138, 148). The parenthesis refers to the French edition [Voltaire, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Paris: Garnier Frères, Libraires-Éditeurs, 1883)]. Hereafter, it is designated OCV or found in parenthesis. Much of Voltaire’s work is aimed at the extreme intellectualist position of Leibniz. For Leibniz, God produces good out of evil. One might not know why God chose Peter over Judas to their respective end, but whatever God decides works out for the perfection of the universe. The world is not the capricious choice of the divine will but a reflection of the divine essence. *Leibniz: Discourse on Metaphysics/Correspondence with Arnould/Monadology*, George R. Montgomery (trans.) (La Salle, IL: The Open Court Publishing Co., 1973), 4–5, 12, 53–54, 71.

52. Ibid., 1.82 (21.149).
53. Ibid., 1.207–208 (21.217–18); *Candide* (Butt edition), 10–11; Brightman, “The Lisbon Earthquake,” 508. Albert Camus has a similar message about the struggle to find meaning in the face of the absurdity of life. *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, Justin O’Brien (trans.) (New York: Knopf, 1955), 53–55, 93, 119–23.
54. OCV 10.403 (*Épître à l’auteur du livre des trois imposteurs*, 104).
55. David A. Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 90. Of course, moralistic commentary is never eliminated in toto. E.g., When the Titanic went down, a few voices spoke of divine judgment upon human hubris, but just a few. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 261–62, 279; Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 262.
56. John Mitchell, *Conjectures Concerning the Cause, and Observations upon the Phaenomena of Earthquakes: Particularly of That Great Earthquake of the First of November, 1755... , Philosophical Transactions (1683–1775) 51 (1759–1760): 566, 569, 580, 588, 592–94, 600, 617–22. He associates volcanoes with earthquakes as seen in the release of vapors, although they are the effect rather than the cause of earthquakes—at least in most cases. Ibid., 579–80.*
57. Ibid., 570–71.
58. “God’s Wrath Caused Katrina: Top 10 Pat Robertson Gaffes,” [content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1953778\\_1953776\\_1953771,00.html](http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1953778_1953776_1953771,00.html).
59. Immanuel Jakobovitz, “Faith, Ethics and the Holocaust’: Some Personal, Theological and Religious Responses to the Holocaust,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 3/4 (1988): 371–81; Yehoyada Amir, “The Concept of Exile as a Model for Dealing with the Holocaust,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust on Jewish Thinking*, Steven T. Katz (ed.) (New York and London: New York University Press, 2005), 232; Joseph A. Turner, “Philosophical and Midrashic Thinking on the Fateful Events of Jewish History,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 64–65; Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 27, 192–93, 203–7, 210–11; Emil L. Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York: New York University Press, 1970), 26. Some Rabbis viewed the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 CE much like the prophets in the sixth century BCE as a judgment of God upon the sins of the Jews, even if no prophets existed any longer in their community to speak a specific word from God about the matter. The Mishnah still followed this line of thinking in some parts, but eventually the Jewish community thought of their plight in the world in terms of victimization at the hands of the Gentiles. Richard L. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz: Radical Theology and Contemporary Judaism* (Indianapolis, IN and New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1966), 64–65; Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History*, 7, 26–27.
60. See *A Path Through the Ashes*, Nissan Wolpin (ed.) (New York: Mesorah Publications, 1996); Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 193–94, 241, 302 (n. 6), 307 (n. 52).
61. David Novak, “Is There a Theological Connection Between the Holocaust and the Reestablishment of the State of Israel?,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 252; Gersohn Greenberg, “Between Holocaust and Redemption: Silence, Cognition, and Eclipse,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 111, 123–25. The National Assembly of Paris offered the Jews full citizenship in September of 1791 as long as they abandoned the peculiar status of their community and underwent a process of *régénération* to end their Hebrew identity and become a part

- of *la grande famille française*. Stephen Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation: The French Revolution, Nazi Germany, and International Communism* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014), 69–77.
62. Rabbi Bernard Maza, *With Fury Poured Out: A Torah Perspective on the Holocaust* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 1986), 26–27, 123–24; Stephanie Brenzel, “Jewish Martyrdom and the Creation of Meaning in the Holocaust,” *Journal of the Theta Alpha Kappa* 36/2 (2012): 15–16.
  63. Irving Greenberg, “Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire,” in *Holocaust: Religious and Philosophical Perspectives*, John K. Roth and Michael Berenbaum (eds.) (New York: Paragon House, 1989), 306; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 187, 194; Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History*, 73. Even in the east, the majority were not orthodox or ultra-orthodox, although they were found in greater numbers there.
  64. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 126–27; Shalom Rosenberg, “The Holocaust: Lessons, Explanation, Meaning,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 84. According to Steven Katz, the seminal works of post-Holocaust theology appeared in the 1960s and 1970s. The authors are Richard Rubenstein, Emil Fackenheim, Ignaz Maybaum, Eliezer Berkovits, and Irving Greenberg. Most Holocaust theologians reject understanding it in terms of divine punishment for sin. Steven Katz, *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 1; “The Issue of Confirmation and Disconfirmation in Jewish Thought After the Shoah,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 20.
  65. Turner, “Philosophical and Midrashic Thinking,” 63; Rosenberg, “The Holocaust,” 89–92; Fackenheim, *God’s Presence in History*, 69.
  66. Shalom Ratzabi, “Is There a Religious Meaning to the Rebirth of the State of Israel After the Shoah?,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 213; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 266; Rosenberg, “The Holocaust,” 96–97.
  67. E.g., Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 48–51. See Strehle, *The Dark Side*, 252–54 for an analysis of German accusations by sociologists.
  68. See S. Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation* for an extensive and detailed discussion of the relationship between the *philosophes*’ and the Nazis’ anti-Semitism. Typically, liberal/secular Jews like to reduce Nazi anti-Semitism to race in order to distance this form of anti-Semitism from the Enlightenment and preserve their identity as Jewish people, since the religion is not so important to them. However, it is unlikely that Hitler’s anti-Semitism was based on race. The Darwinians at the time did not consider the Jews a special inferior race of people, and Hitler’s racial cursing of Jews develops after his ideological objections to them as a form of piling on and later identifying them for the purposes of discrimination and punishment, much like one sees in the writings of the proto-Nazi Bruno Bauer. See Strehle, *Dark Side*, 120–21, 221–24, 280.
  69. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 266; Richard Rubenstein, “The Dean and the Chosen People,” 278; *After Auschwitz*, 20.
  70. Yehoyada Amir, “The Concept of Exile as a Model for Dealing with the Holocaust,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 226; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 42–43; Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 20; Daniel Goldhagen, *Hitler’s Willing Executioners* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1996), 42, 49; “Introduction,” in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*, Sander L. Gilman and Steven T. Katz (eds.) (New York and London: New York University Press, 1991), 14–15, 18; Nicolas de Lange, “The Origins of Anti-Semitism,” in *Anti-Semitism in Times of Crisis*,

26–27. There are two examples that are used by the Jewish people: John Chrysostom's *Homilies Against the Jews*, which speaks of Jews as “Christ-Killers,” although it does not recommend persecuting the Jews on this or any other basis; and unorganized crusaders, who persecuted Jews in 1096 under this pretext according to much later and unreliable reports among Jews—an episode strongly condemned by the church. See Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 237ff.

71. Rubenstein, “The Dean and the Chosen People,” 286.
72. See Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 237–41 and endnotes for a detailed discussion of the matter.
73. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 30–31, 88. See also *Ibid.*, 70–74. Jewish people often interpret their religion in terms of myth or depth psychology. During the Seder or Passover celebration, Jews experience the Exodus once again, without any miraculous causal nexus uniting the present salvation with the past experience, except through divine presence. Martin Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1958), 75–78; Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 11–13, 43. Rubenstein interprets the myths of old as an attempt to deal with the “deepest psychic and interpersonal dilemmas.” He finds the truth of religion to lie in its psychological, not historical reality. Religion reveals the “deepest fears, aspirations, and yearnings of the individual and group.” It is a way of sharing the universal human predicament, like the hope of finding meaning in a meaningless universe. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 145, 196, 229–30, 263. Rubenstein admits that his participation in the synagogue is “highly subjective.” “Myth and ritual are the domains in which we express and project our unconscious feelings concerning the dilemmas of existence.” *Ibid.*, 222. He rejects the preference for the moral elements of the religion in liberal Judaism and includes the “absurd” elements like the sacrificial system in his understanding of the faith, as long as they are interpreted correctly through depth psychology. After all, divine revelation is a psychological truth. *Ibid.*, 121, 125–27, 130–31, 145.
74. Elliot N. Dorff, “God and the Holocaust,” 22, 34.
75. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 186; Dorff, “God and the Holocaust,” 31–32.
76. Michael Rosenak, “Theological Reflections on the Holocaust: Between Unity and Controversy,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 163. Typically, this position sees all things coming from the hand of God and exhorts the faithful to remain thankful no matter what transpires, knowing God is in control (Is 45:7, Lam 3:37–38). *Berakoth* 9:5, in *Mishnah*, Herbert Danby (trans. and notes) (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1974), 10; Dorff, “God and the Holocaust,” 30–32.
77. Dorff, “God and the Holocaust,” 33–34. Dorff is not sure that good will triumph in the end.
78. Rosenak, “Theological Reflections on the Holocaust,” 163; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 195; Brenzel, “Jewish Martyrdom,” 18–19.
79. Thus, the famous saying of R. Hanina: “Everything is in the hand of heaven, except the fear of heaven.” *Berakoth* 33b [Babylonian Talmud]. See also Eliezer Berlovits, *Faith After the Holocaust* (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1973), 107–13; Dorff, “God and the Holocaust,” 29; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 190, 202; Katz, “The Confirmation and Disconfirmation,” 37; Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 303.

80. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 191; Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 18.
81. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, 59; Rosenak, "Theological Reflections on the Holocaust," 163.
82. *Ibid.*, 6, 69–71, 78–79. Certain Christian theologians first made this radical move in the 1960s and spoke of the "death of God." E.g., Paul M. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel* (New York and London: Macmillan Co., 1963), 99–103. Martin Buber tries to distance his ideas from Nietzsche and Christian theologians who speak of the death of God, but he also partakes of their position when he speaks of the "eclipse of God," the "hiding of God's face," or the voluntary removal of divine presence (*tzimtzum*). Martin Buber, פני אדם [*Pnei Adam*] (Mosed Bialik: Jerusalem, 1966) 221–322; Emil Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology* (Bloomington, IN and London: Indiana University, 1968), 229–43; Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust*, passim; Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 151–52; Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 189; Amir, "The Concept of Exile," 238. My own Lutheran denomination (ELCA) endorses this idea in its catechismal instruction, saying of the OT,

The violence and cut-and-dried pronouncements of these [OT] stories can be disturbing. This does not seem to be the God of justice and mercy we see in Jesus. Instead, we see a taskmaster who has very little patience with human limitations, who manipulates national tides to suit God's purposes, and who orchestrates death and shame for those who have sought to serve their own purposes. We need to remember that the author's purpose was not journalistic or even historic in nature. The author writes from a very different worldview than the one we hold. In a prescientific era, every turn of fate, every natural event, was seen as coming from God's hand and intention. This is not how we interpret the world. We know about the moral indifference of natural disaster, for example. It is not divine punishment for the sins of the people. We understand that history unfolds as a collision of circumstance and human power. We may look back and see God's redeeming hand at work, but we do not generally say that God's will has been done because this or that leader died or a certain candidate won or lost. "A Split Kingdom," in *Here We Stand* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2010), 2.

83. Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 49, 69–70, 225, 246; "An Exchange," in *Holocaust*, 355; Katz, "The Issue of Confirmation and Disconfirmation," 13–14.
84. *Ibid.*, 68–69, 87.
85. Leila Levenson interviewed 24 Jewish GIs, who helped liberate the death camps, and noticed a move toward atheism among them. "The Loss of Faith Among the Jewish GI Liberators," *Cross Currents* 61/1 (2011): 34–37.
86. Elie Wiesel, *Night*, Stella Rodway (trans.) (New York: Bantam Books, 1960), 32.
87. *Ibid.*, 2–3, 34.
88. *Ibid.*, 6–9, 13, 19–20.
89. *Ibid.*, 42, 66.
90. *Ibid.*, 87.
91. *Ibid.*, 61–62.
92. Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 33, 73–77. The relationship between the Holocaust and the establishment of the nation of Israel is somewhat ambiguous in Jewish

- thought. Certainly, Zionists believed that the need for a Jewish state was underscored by the Holocaust, and it seems as if the vast majority of Jewish people have now embraced this point of view. Rosenberg, “The Holocaust,” 84–85; Dan Michman, “The Holocaust and the State of Israel: A Historical Review of Their Impact on and Meaning for the Understanding of the Behavior of Jewish Religious Movements,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 265–66. The state of Israel gave to the Jews a “doorway of hope” during and after the Holocaust. Ratzabi, “Is There Meaning to the Rebirth of the State of Israel After the Shoah,” 218. For some, it gave hope beyond any Messianic or religious ideals. Ratzabi, “Is There Meaning...?,” 212, 220; Rosenberg, “The Holocaust,” 90. For others, it became a context where Jews can restore their historical religious identity, regardless of the motives of secular Zionists. Maza, *With Fury Poured Out*, 123–27; Brenzel, “Jewish Martyrdom,” 16–17; Ratzabi, “Is There Meaning...?,” 212, 214, 223; Yosef Achituv, “Theology and the Holocaust: The Presence of God and Divine Providence in History from the Perspective of the Holocaust,” in *The Impact of the Holocaust*, 279, 283.
93. Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust*, 11–12; Benzel, “Jewish Martyrdom,” 15.
  94. Rubenstein, “The Dean and the Chosen People,” 287–88; Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 58, 71, 84. Mordecai Kaplan and the Reconstructionists also see no particular status in being Jewish and prefer to emphasize the survival of the people in the secular state of Israel above any special religious concerns.
  95. Emil Fackenheim, “The 614th Commandment,” in *Holocaust*, 293–95; *God’s Presence in History*, 83–86; Katz, “The Issue of Confirmation and Disconfirmation,” 22; Rosenak, “Theological Reflections on the Holocaust,” 163. He calls this admonition the 614th commandment, adding it to the 613 commandments in the Mosaic law according to ancient rabbinic calculation. Irving Greenberg thinks the choice to persevere and renew the covenant is voluntary or optional, since God is no longer in a position to require Jewish obedience/suicide. “Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire,” in *Holocaust*, 303; Katz, “The Issue of Confirmation and Disconfirmation,” 48ff.
  96. *Anabaptism in Outline: Selected Primary Sources*, Walter Klaasen (ed.) (Scotsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1981), 23, 85ff., 102ff., 108–9, 140, 166–67, 232ff., 265–67, 282, 302. Their great work is entitled *The Bloody Theater or Martyrs Mirror of the Defenseless Christians, ... From the Time of Christ to the Year A.D. 1660*, T. J. van Braught (compiler) and J. F. Sohm (trans.) (Scotsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1950). Their literal following of the NT message is seen in their rejection of infant baptism as not specifically taught in the NT, refusal to take oaths, based on the literal words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:33–37), and desire to establish a NT church, which shared its resources (Acts 2:44–45; 4:32), excommunicated the immoral (Mt 18:15–17, 1 Cor 5), refused to bear the sword (Mt 5:39), and suffered for the kingdom of God (2 Tm 3:12).
  97. Their persecution dissipated after they stopped slandering the magistrates as godless.
  98. Ex 14:10; 15:23; 16:3; 17:2, Nm 11:1, 4; 12; 14; 16; 20–21.
  99. Antony Fernando and Leonard Swidler, *Buddhism Made Plain: An Introduction for Jews and Christians* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), 11, 94.
  100. *Pascal’s Pensées* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1958), 56 (194).
  101. *Ibid.*, 61 (205–206). Miguel de Unamuno also expresses this fear of annihilation and passion for eternal life. *The Tragic Sense of Life in Men and Nations*, Anthony Kerrigan (trans.)

- (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1972), xxxix, 12, 49, 202–3. The quest for immortality is ancient. The Gilgamesh Epic, the basis of the biblical story of Noah, speaks of this longing for immortality among Semitic people.
102. There are some biblical passages and verses that proceed in Beard's direction. Deuteronomy 28 lists blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience; Proverbs thinks of certain behaviors as possessing positive or negative consequences (industriousness/laziness, moderation/gluttony, et al.); The Prophets relate the conduct of the people to certain consequences in their lives. Most Jews and Christians think this type of prophetic insight dissipated when the time of direct revelation ended.
  103. Jürgen Moltmann, *The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ As the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology*, R. A. Wilson and John Bowden (trans.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1974), 148–49. Christians think of Jesus as suffering the only innocent death and laying down his life in a voluntary manner (Jn 10:18; 15:13). Anselm wrote the first disquisition upon the atonement of Christ in his *Cur deus homo* and emphasized the death of the God-man as the only real act of supererogation in history. Even Jesus owed all his obedience to God as a human obligation, except for his death. Only sinners deserve death, and so his death received merit, which was applied in a vicarious way unto the salvation of his elected people. *Libri Duo Cur Deus Homo*, PL 158.410–28 (2.11–19).
  104. LW 31.52–55; 54.335, 155 (WA 1.361–63; WA, TR 2.127 [no. 1543]); Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, Robert C. Schultz (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1975).
  105. Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 223–27; *The Trinity and the Kingdom: The Doctrine of God*, Margaret Kohl (trans.) (San Francisco, CA: Harper and Row, 1981), 28–29, 40–41, 47–48; Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrence (eds.) (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1975), IV/1.130, 159, 192, 199–201, 422; Eberhard Jüngel, *God as the Mystery of the World: On the Foundation of the Theology of the Crucified One in the Dispute Between Theism and Atheism*, Darrell L. Guder (trans.) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 60–63, 74, 101–3, 214; Abraham J. Herschel, *The Prophets* (New York and Evanston, IL: Harper and Row, Publishers), chaps. 12–13, 18 (221ff., 307ff.); Peter Kuhn, *Gottes Selbsterniedrigung in der Theologie der Rabbinen* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1968), 89–92; Franz Rosenzweig, *The Star of Redemption*, William W. Hallo (trans.) (New York, Chicago, and San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart, and Wilson, 1971), 409–11; Gershom G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1967), 232, 249–50. Hegel is often given credit for introducing the death of God. For Hegel, the abstract essence of God must enter the sphere of alienation (death), in order to accept a sensuous or objective form, and then rise above it in pure universality (resurrection). Death belongs to the divine essence as a self-negation in order to promote history or becoming. This understanding of God lays the groundwork for Alfred North Whitehead and Process Theology. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, A. V. Miller (trans. and analysis) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 471 (779), 475 (784–85). Hegel also uses the expression “God is dead” to describe the feeling of the unhappy conscience that has lost all substance and worth, that can no longer see God in the idols, sacraments, and rituals of religion. *Ibid.*, 455 (752–53), 476 (785).





**III.**

**The Marginalization of  
Religion in American Society  
as a Private Matter**



## Mr. Jefferson

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The modern doctrine of church/state separation developed out of concerns over the temporal powers of the papacy. In the fifteenth century, the Conciliar Movement was successful at the Council of Constance in diminishing the authority of the pope through establishing the independent rights of the state and its people. In the sixteenth century, Protestant Reformers called for the separation of the church from the state, believing that the church had lost much of its original purity and fundamental spiritual mission in the Middle Ages by seeking the dominion of this world and using the coercive measures of temporal power to obtain it. The Reformers wanted to separate church and state for the sake of the church. They thought of the state as corrupting the church but were much less willing to reverse the equation and speak of the church corrupting the state or society. They never thought of the state existing outside the will of God, independent of a special metaphysical commission, or free to lead its citizens in secular autonomy, divorced from religious concern.

This secular view of life was a product of the Enlightenment. Deism arose at the time and rejected the biblical concept of the world's dependence upon God. The Bible summoned its people to depend upon God for their "daily bread" as representing the ultimate force behind the sun, the rain, and the abundance of life (Dt 11:11–17; Ps 65:9–13; Mt 5:45, 6:11, 25–33), but Deism tended to conceive of the world in a much different manner—much like a Cartesian machine

of interrelated parts that ran upon its own principles or natural laws, rejecting the biblical concept of God's general providential care or special miraculous intervention in life. This secular view of the world and its forces was extended to human beings, who received the same autonomy from their Maker as the rest of creation and no longer needed divine grace or revelation to lead their lives. Human beings possessed a self-sufficient capacity to lead a moral life and discover through their God-given reason whatever transcendent, metaphysical, and ethical principles that were necessary for their society, without requiring an intimate knowledge of the divine nature or receiving special illumination from the heavens.<sup>1</sup> Morality was discovered through the eternal principles of nature, or reduced to the simple calculating sum of utilitarianism, making it independent of special revelation and abasing revealed religion as unnecessary for society to function.<sup>2</sup> Deism believed that their people were able to know the will of God apart from the knowledge of God and deemed all theological discussions as speculative, divisive, and unnecessary. Only a Deist like Thomas Jefferson could say, "...it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no god," or, "religion is a matter that lies solely between a man & his God"—as if one's conception of the ideal had no relation to one's conduct in society or political point of view. Deism enabled human beings to live outside of God within their separate sphere of power, proceeding to the antithesis of the church's radical dependence upon God for revelation and grace, creating a secular world of absolute autonomy, and laying the foundation for the complete separation of the church and state.

French culture led the way toward secularization in the modern world with its war upon the Judeo-Christian tradition in the French Revolution and the establishment of the secular *état* as the new "voice of God." The country followed their *philosophes* in blaming the church and its priests as the fundamental source of past transgressions in the *Ancien Régime* and demanded that the citizens leave their religious communities behind for a process of cultural *régénération* and accept a new *laïque* identity within *la grande famille française*. The law of 1905 made secularity official by establishing "the Separation of Churches and State," claiming that religion had no role to fulfill in the future of the culture; the future belonged to the *état* and *laïcité*. Many Europeans found France's treatment of the church severe, but the basic trend of modern western culture proceeded in the same general direction.<sup>3</sup> The state became the "absolute power on earth,"<sup>4</sup> assuming the dominant role in the affections of the people by separating, subjugating, and assimilating the former role of the church in education, morality, philanthropy, health care, and ever-increasing areas of life.<sup>5</sup>

## Voltaire

The spirit of the French Enlightenment and subsequent culture centered much of its devotion on the life and teachings of one man. Many of the other great figures of the Enlightenment like Diderot and d'Alembert afforded their unique contribution to the times, but they often deferred to this one man as if serving his legacy.<sup>6</sup> Toward the end of his life, the Parisians crowned a bust of him and celebrated the man with godlike accolades.<sup>7</sup> His life and work seemed to embody all that was fashionable among the social elite of the day—the cynicism, the satire, and the wit—the love of toleration and the hatred of the church.<sup>8</sup> He led his people down the path of irreverence, demeaning the Christian piety of simple peasants, encouraging impious blasphemy among those who were capable of mastering the art of cynicism, and extolling the power of human reason to establish its divine truth. His prominence only grew throughout his life, beginning with the success of his first tragedy in 1718. Thereafter he adopted the enigmatic name of Voltaire and developed along with it an enormous ego and reputation, which grew to become the leading *philosophe* of human prowess and reached God-like immortality upon the occasion of his death. His influence upon the French Revolution and its Civil Constitution of the Clergy (1790) was immortalized when his body was exhumed and enshrined as the first and foremost deity in the *Panthéon* of leading Enlightenment figures. The apotheosis was accompanied with a cavalcade of “military and civil organizations carrying banners and flags, a model of the Bastille, busts of Rousseau and Mirabeau, a statue of Voltaire surrounded by pyramids bearing the titles of his works, and a golden casket containing the seventy volumes of the edition published by Beaumarchais at Kehl.”<sup>9</sup>

Voltaire and the French had a pretext within the many transgressions of their church to develop this extreme and blasphemous aversion to the religion. The revocation of the Edict of Nantes haunted the liberal sensibilities of the *philosophes* during the era and brought considerable justification for those who wished to turn against the church and heap aspersions upon it.<sup>10</sup> The hatred of this policy and others like it seemed to well up in Voltaire from his youth, forming a deep-seated resentment toward the faith; but what drove him over the edge and shocked him into action was a particular event, the unjust execution of a kind and benevolent man from Toulouse. His name was Jean Calas. He was a Protestant cloth merchant and was accused by his fellow citizens of murdering his son for converting to Catholicism, even though all the evidence pointed to an apparent suicide. Voltaire successfully helped to overturn the verdict in the Council of State and clear the name of the father and his family, even if no one could change the initial wrongdoing. Out of the experience, he wrote the widely distributed and esteemed *Treatise*

*upon Toleration* (1763), which recounts the episode in detail at the beginning of the work and proceeds to develop a broad theory of religious “toleration” on the subject, filled with much anti-Christian venom.<sup>11</sup>

The work launches into a particular tirade when it comes to sectarian religious fanaticism. Any religion that divides the human race against itself is wicked and false. He thinks that all religions contain the same basic concept of God, and whatever differences arise in the course of time are the product of the non-essential speculations of dogmatic theologians. There is no reason why Jews, Muslims, and the many sects of Christianity cannot live in harmony under a general theism or deism and a basic code of ethics, which is the most important matter in religion, not doctrine.<sup>12</sup> Religion is essential in creating social order and providing moral orientation through its belief in the ultimate judgment, but it deteriorates into a destructive force when its theologians engage in sectarian disputes over non-essential matters of faith. Ethics unites us together under one God, while doctrine divides us into warring factions.<sup>13</sup>

Of course, Voltaire’s own beliefs are much in harmony with what he wants all others to believe in order to obtain coalescence. True religion is confined in his works to a belief in the goodness of one, true God, the unity of the human race through acts of kindness, and the expectation of divine judgment, which discriminates between the good and the bad.<sup>14</sup> Religion consists of heartfelt reverence and basic acts of justice, not trips to a holy land or an altar, where mystical graces descend from the utterance of magical formulas.<sup>15</sup> True religion is based upon a most rational belief in the order and design of the cosmos and does not require a childlike act of faith in mythical stories, miraculous events, and the contradictory doctrines of biblical revelation. Faith is based on the power of the human intellect and its ability to discover what is revealed for all to see in nature.<sup>16</sup> No grace or special revelation is needed.

The Bible received much criticism in Voltaire’s later writings when it was safer for him to vent his wrath against the entire Christian faith and its sources. He believes that the miraculous nature of the biblical account drives many honest scholars to atheism, who simply find it incredible to believe in talking serpents and donkeys, or prophets eating excrement and marrying prostitutes.<sup>17</sup> The OT is described as a mangle-mangle of teachings that withstand all purity, charity, and reason.<sup>18</sup> The NT is described as a mishmash of inept reason, outright lies, and contradiction in “almost every fact,” and its stories are considered juvenile, superstitious, and fanatical.<sup>19</sup> The Bible is a book of wickedness and inferior literary style, leading Voltaire to deprecate its authors by expressing the typical anti-Semitic epithets of the Enlightenment. The Jewish people are denigrated as a cruel and barbarous enemy of the whole human race, much inferior

to other people in cultural, artistic, and scientific achievement.<sup>20</sup> The only Jewish or biblical figure who is spared the tirade is Jesus of Nazareth, and he receives a favorable review through Voltaire's reduction of his message to liberal toleration and rejection of many other elements in the church's account.<sup>21</sup> His portrait of the historical Jesus is set in contrast with the account of the canonical Gospels, which were written after the fall of Jerusalem and used Platonic categories to turn the simple carpenter from Nazareth into the eternal Son of God.<sup>22</sup>

The severe criticism of the Bible is a by-product of Voltaire's contempt for what the Christian faith represented in his society. The Church of France had supplied its enemies with many reasons to hate it—Dominican Inquisitions, the massacre of Huguenots, Jesuit and Jansenist polemics, and all the rest. During the last year of *l'Ancien Régime* (1789), the French government employed 178 censors to control publications and make sure all of them were compatible with sound faith, public order, and good morality. Voltaire himself had some of his works censored for unsound theological opinions and spent eleven months in the Bastille.<sup>23</sup> No wonder that Voltaire could describe Christians as “the most intolerant of all men.”<sup>24</sup> Their religion should be the most tolerant of all others, considering the words and deeds of its benevolent founder, but instead of following his example it became much the opposite—“a virulent infection, a terrifying madness, a bloodthirsty monster.”<sup>25</sup> Voltaire sees the history of Christianity as filled with little more than “fraud,” “errors,” and “disgusting stupidity,” and so “every sensible man...must hold the Christian sect in horror.”<sup>26</sup> In his *Sermon des Cinquante* (1762), he declares war upon *l'infâme*. He wishes to “terminate and destroy the idol from top to bottom.”<sup>27</sup> This solution is summarized in his famous cry *écraser l'infâme* (crush the filth), which he incessantly repeats throughout his later works. The self-professed man of tolerance is now willing to have certain enlightened despots develop a final solution and destroy the infamous religion as a necessary step in creating a better world.<sup>28</sup>

Throughout his analysis, Voltaire never seems to blame the despots for their own policies. He was too much of a sycophant to go after the main source of oppression and become a martyr for the cause of liberty. He only supported democracy late in his life, when it was safe to do so, and his career was insured.<sup>29</sup> Instead, Voltaire prefers to blame the Christian religion and its clergy as responsible for most of the bloodshed spilled over the last six centuries in Europe.<sup>30</sup> He wants national independence from the Christian religion in general and the political impotence of the clergy in particular. He wants the priestly aristocracy removed from any place of authority in the state. They prey upon the superstitions of the multitude and fill the king's ear with their ambitious plans and petty sectarian disputes, causing continual turmoil within the land. It is the fault of the clergy, not the king, that intolerance continues to fill the land.<sup>31</sup>

In spite of the best efforts of American clerics, the influence of Voltaire migrated to the New World and “corrupted” their constituency with its religious and anti-religious attitudes. The popular newspapers and magazines of the day showed a widespread interest in his controversial ideas. Tobias Small and Thomas Franklin produced an English edition of Voltaire’s works somewhere between 1761 and 1769, making the entire corpus accessible to a wider range of American readers. Libraries contained many of his works, and interest in those works quadrupled by the end of the century if one simply tallies the many catalogue announcements of the day.<sup>32</sup> Voltaire and the French Enlightenment were becoming a major force throughout the colonies and helping to change the ideological commitments of the people. In fact, the influence was so powerful that many of the leading figures or “Founding Fathers” identified as much with the French attitude toward religion as they did with the religion of their forefathers, who migrated to the land. Some remained openly Christian (Patrick Henry and Alexander Hamilton), some attended church but were non-communicants (George Washington and John Marshall), others embraced the religion of the Enlightenment (John Adams and Benjamin Franklin), and still others went all the way, accepting the new religion of reason and using it to assault the Christian faith (Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson).<sup>33</sup> Most were guarded about their religious beliefs in public, too clever as politicians to alienate voters or launch a direct attack on their constituency’s most sensitive subject. Thomas Paine, the irrepressible gadfly of the American and French Revolution, was the great exception. He chose to publish the politically incorrect *Age of Reason* against the advice of friends and suffered the political fallout for his indiscretion. In the work, Paine conducts a Voltairean tirade against the Judeo-Christian tradition and calls the Bible a “book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy.”<sup>34</sup>

Of all the rest, Thomas Jefferson came the closest to adopting the anti-Christian sentiments of Voltaire and Paine, even though he was more discreet about expressing it during his public career. Some like the Federalists detected his Voltairean disaffection with Christianity, calling him an anti-Christ and a Francophile during political campaigns, but found it difficult to make their suspicions resonate with the voters.<sup>35</sup> Jefferson was much too cagey for them. He preferred to remain silent about his religious opinions for the most part and offer some equivocations to please the public whenever necessary, but there is no doubt about the fundamental veracity of the charge once one considers the total weight of his writings. The only question concerns the exact form, time, or setting in which these ideas came to enter his life in an age where historical records were scanty, and footnotes were few and far between. Some point to William Small, who served as Jefferson’s mentor at William and Mary, quickened his interest in



the Enlightenment, and “probably fixed the destinies of my life,” although we know little about his influence beyond these vague generalities.<sup>36</sup> Others mention his tenure in France as a minister plenipotentiary from 1784 to 1789, where he experienced first hand the “misery of kings, priests, and nobles.”<sup>37</sup> Still, others speak of his respect for Voltaire, pointing to the extensive use of Voltaire’s works in the *Commonplace Book*.<sup>38</sup> But whatever the source or sources, the culture provided plenty of opportunities to learn the new ideology of the *philosophes* from the pervasive influence of French culture, and Jefferson gravitated in its direction.

## Viscount Bolingbroke

Perhaps, the clearest and earliest indication of its influence and importance is found in Jefferson’s literary notebook (1765/66). Here he makes continuous use of the *Philosophical Works* of Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke (1678–1751), as providing a direct inspiration for his own enlightened, philosophical orientation. Bolingbroke served as a member of the Tories in the English Parliament, beginning in 1700, and later became a secretary of state during the reign of Queen Anne. In 1714, he fell out of favor with the government when the Whigs gained power and spent the next decade as a political exile in France—a country he grew to admire and love as a young man in the late 1690s during the first of his many visits to the center of the Enlightenment. During his stay there, he developed a friendship with major figures of the French Enlightenment like Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Levesque de Rouilly, his mentor, and became an important conduit between cultures, conveying French ideas to the English-speaking world, and vice versa.<sup>39</sup>

Thomas Jefferson was one of the many exposed to the ideas of the English Deists/French *philosophes* through the writings of Bolingbroke. In the first part of his early notebook, the *Philosophical Works* of Bolingbroke provides “the largest section from any single author—54 excerpts and over 10,000 words.”<sup>40</sup> The excerpts display the impact of Bolingbroke on Jefferson, especially in awakening him to the skeptical, rational, and natural religion of the Enlightenment.<sup>41</sup> Many of these excerpts focus on Bolingbroke’s disdain for the Judeo-Christian tradition, revealing Jefferson’s animus and proclivity toward a hostile analysis of the faith at a very early age.

In the account, the anthropocentric nature of the tradition is emphasized and chastened as an unenlightened, unscientific way of thinking. Bolingbroke contends that human beings are not the sole purpose of the creation or the end of divine activity in this world. In fact, there are inhabitants on other planets in the

universe, and these places are populated with a myriad of creatures superior to us and our limited capabilities.<sup>42</sup> No people are more anthropocentric and display more human arrogance than the Jews. They speak of themselves as the chosen people of God, elected to receive the one unique revelation from on high, as if God remained unknown to other nations and only worked in their “little corner of the world.”<sup>43</sup> This hubris might not matter in and of itself, but it works to the detriment of others when people like the Jews see divine providence working for their own benefit; it made the Jewish people particularly cruel and unjust in their treatment of the non-elect, blinding their hearts and minds to their own imperfections.<sup>44</sup> In fact, “no people was less fit than the Israelites to be chosen for this great trust on every account.”<sup>45</sup> They were an avaricious people, who lived for materialistic “appetites and passions,”<sup>46</sup> lacking any fear of ultimate judgment and any real motive to enhance genuine piety here on earth.<sup>47</sup> They were so occupied with laying up their treasures on earth that they failed to develop a concept of immortality until Hellenistic times and its influences, revealing an ignorance that characterizes their Scripture in general<sup>48</sup> and making the so-called pagans more enlightened and better equipped to accept the Messiah than these fanatics.<sup>49</sup>

The Jewish people receive much of this vitriol because their culture produced the fundamental source of divine revelation for the church—the true enemy of Bolingbroke, Jefferson, and the sons of the Enlightenment. The animosity toward the church leads to the defamation of Hebraic culture and its greatest literary achievement—the Old and New Testament. According to Bolingbroke’s (Jefferson’s) account, the Hebrew Torah displays little knowledge of the true God and contains “palpable falsehoods” on “almost every page.”<sup>50</sup> Its stories are simply fantastic and incredible, defying all rational belief in this modern era.<sup>51</sup> Certainly, Moses’ account of creation must be considered absurd by any person possessing a modicum of education and acquaintance with the Copernican system of modern astronomy.<sup>52</sup> His narration is incredulous, and his concept of law even worse, “more ineffectual than any other law, perhaps, that can be quoted.”<sup>53</sup> The laws of nature contradict the Mosaic economy at important junctures and utterly repudiate the bigoted admonitions of Deuteronomy 13 to slay idolaters,<sup>54</sup> making it impossible to equate the God of nature with the God of the Old or New Testament.<sup>55</sup> The God of Moses is “partial, unjust, and cruel; delights in blood, commands assassinations, massacres, and even exterminations of people”; and the God of Paul “elects some of his creatures to salvation, and predestines others to damnation, even in the womb of their mothers.”<sup>56</sup> Jesus tried to rescue the world from this Jewish nightmare,<sup>57</sup> but his “gospel is one thing [and] the gospel of Paul, and all those who have grafted after him on the same stock, is another.”<sup>58</sup> Paul perverted the teachings of Jesus, turning him into a mystical divine Savior, who satisfies the

angry Jewish God through blood atonement and redeems us from original sin by an act of divine grace. This God of cheap grace still acts with the same injustice as the God of the OT.<sup>59</sup>

The true God of nature never dispenses with justice in seeking the salvation of the sinner, preferring “the repentance of the offender” as the means of atonement to the bloodthirsty need for vengeance through an ignominious spectacle like crucifixion.<sup>60</sup> The theology of nature uses “right reason” and stays within the boundary of proper ethical discourse.<sup>61</sup> It rejects Pauline flights of mysticism as corrupting the original message of Jesus. Pauline theology resulted from the process of Hellenization as the Christian faith moved away from Palestinian soil and injected the theological and speculative mysticism of Platonic philosophy into the faith.<sup>62</sup>

Bolingbroke displays his virulent displeasure with Platonism at this point, rejecting it as a philosophical system and considering it an instrument through which Paul, Augustine, the Cambridge School, and all those who tried to synthesize it with Christianity eventually corrupted the faith.<sup>63</sup> Imagination should never “leave the sensible objects” of this world and climb a “mystic ladder...to a region of pure intellect.”<sup>64</sup> One should never create abstract forms, take mystical flights of fancy, and substitute them for the concrete voice of nature.<sup>65</sup> What is inspirational about the Bible really comes outside of it through the true exercise of reason in its submission to the natural law. In true Christianity, God submits revelation to the sound judgment of our rational faculties.<sup>66</sup> The exercise of right reason provides us with a more reliable source of finding God than submitting ourselves to religious authorities and their blind speculations outside of nature.<sup>67</sup> It is better to use *a posteriori* reasoning and appeal to the “miracles” all around us than trust in the testimonies of others concerning fantastic events that offer no empirical or existential verification.<sup>68</sup>

With this exhortation, Jefferson finds much wisdom and becomes a faithful disciple of Bolingbroke and the religious thought of the Enlightenment. His writings provide a continuous testimony to the same type of religious expression found in the work of Bolingbroke and other sons of the like-minded French spirit.<sup>69</sup> His works include similar remarks that deprecate the Jewish people and their faith, find inspiration within the teaching of the historical Jesus, lament the Platonism in Paul and the church, reduce religion to morality, and extol the ability of reason to discover God in nature and lead a moral life. If there is any significant difference, it involves the place of politics and the means of implementing the message, not the basic nature of their religious convictions. Both Bolingbroke and Jefferson exhibit a kindred spirit in opposing the Judeo-Christian tradition and wanting to promote a more rational religion in its place, based on the evidence of nature. The only significant difference concerns the political means of achieving the goal and

leaves Jefferson looking and finding inspiration from other sources. Bolingbroke appears to respect the place of the church in the Erastian world of British society, while Jefferson wants to use political power to create a new and enlightened order. Jefferson wants to change the religion of America by erecting a wall against the participation of the church in society and substitute his own faith as the wave of the future, placing him squarely within the more extreme and virulent measures of Voltaire and his disciples.

## Religious Opinions

Most of Jefferson's religious beliefs function within the basic parameters of enlightened religion with its emphasis upon reason, morality, and ecumenicity. He grew up in the Episcopalian Church, but never subscribed to any one group and calls himself at various points in his career a "Deist," "Theist," "Unitarian," "Epicurian," "real Christian," "rational Christian," et cetera.<sup>70</sup> As a Deist, he rejects theology as speculative and irrational and dislikes sectarian dogma most of all, which he identifies with the narrow-minded views of Presbyterians, Puritans, and the rest of Calvin's disciples. He prefers a less definitive view of God than Calvin offers in his *Institutes*, and so reserves most of his "dogmatic" statements for the rational analysis of moral, social, and political life, dividing a knowledge of the divine will from theological speculations about the divine essence.<sup>71</sup> He wants religion to emphasize the rational and moral instincts of all humankind, not the speculative constructs of Reformed theologians and their many creeds. Reason is the "umpire of the truth." It is the seat of divine revelation.<sup>72</sup> In a letter to Peter Carr, he encourages his nephew to examine the claims of the Bible in a critical manner and develop his conclusions about its stories, apart from any theological prejudice.<sup>73</sup> Christianity has enslaved the minds of its constituency for two thousand years with its ridiculous stories, stifling dogmas, and "incomprehensible Trinitarian arithmetic."<sup>74</sup> It is time for western society to free itself from this bondage and find the God who is available for all of us to see in nature.

After all, it is morality, not dogma, that comprises the real essence of true religious affection.<sup>75</sup> All human beings are endowed by their Creator with a basic sense of what is right and wrong, whether they serve the divine will as "a plowman [or] a professor."<sup>76</sup> These "moral instincts" are related more to the affections of the heart than the specific rational acuity of each and every individual.<sup>77</sup> In fact, all religions agree on the same essential morality, which God has implanted in each and every one of us. It is metaphysical speculation and ritualistic practices, along with a host of other trivial matters that divide religious people into warring sects

and cause division among the human race.<sup>78</sup> While society needs religion to provide a sufficient basis for its moral laws, there is no need to endure the many acts of religious uniformity in society and much to speak against the continued practice of inculcating a specific profession of faith. The salvation of society and its people is found through a gospel of works, not faith.<sup>79</sup>

In following this emphasis, Jefferson finds in Jesus of Nazareth the greatest of all moral teachers. All religions might follow the same moral code, but the teachings of Jesus represent “the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man,” “more pure than those of the most correct philosophers.”<sup>80</sup> Jesus reformed a religion that was rotten to the core. More than any other faith, Judaism was enslaved to an authoritarian priesthood, a depraved historical record, the materialistic pleasures of this life, and “many idle ceremonies, mummeries, and observances, of no effect towards producing the social utilities which constitute the essence of virtue.”<sup>81</sup> He particularly opposed the monstrous view of a “cruel, vindictive, capricious and unjust” God, which the Jewish people inherited from Moses and their forefathers, as well as their anti-social attitudes toward other nations as the “chosen people” of God. Jesus rejected the ethnocentric nature of their religion and extended his gospel of “universal philanthropy” to all humankind, “gathering all into one family, under the bonds of love, charity, [and] peace.”<sup>82</sup> This emphasis upon universal love and moral goodness is what Jefferson finds most appealing in the life of Jesus, not other parts of the biblical story or the church’s own account of him. Jefferson refers to himself as a “real Christian” in this context, since he follows the moral teachings of the historical Jesus and not the corrupted version of the later church.<sup>83</sup> Those who wrote about Jesus in Scripture were illiterate and uneducated, and composed unreliable accounts long after his life and ministry were over. They disfigured the simple beauty of his instruction through Greek metaphysical categories, transforming him into a mythical divine being and miraculous wonder-worker.<sup>84</sup>

Jefferson decides at this point to launch a quest for the historical Jesus, hoping to rid the gospel account of all its later ecclesiastical corruptions and find “the diamond in the dunghill.” These aspirations sound high-minded and academic at first glance in its attempt to obtain scientific results in the midst of dogmatic prejudice, but his research largely becomes a testimony to the same *a priori* prejudices of the orthodox church and the early liberal efforts in the field. Whatever offends his religious sensibilities is eliminated from the account, and the remaining image of Jesus sounds more like an eighteenth-century *philosophe*, rejecting scholastic views of God and reducing religion to morality, than any real Jew living in the first century.<sup>85</sup> He proposes to cut out all the “Platonising” elements of the later Greek church, which turned the simple carpenter into a metaphysical ideal,<sup>86</sup> but falls into the same trap

by projecting his own modern ideals upon Jesus and incurring the same criticism he levels against the Hellenistic church. He uses Jesus as a receptacle for his own ideas, recreating a first-century Jew in his own enlightened image.<sup>87</sup>

Like the *philosophes* and the later liberals of Germany, Jefferson bases much of his analysis upon a certain understanding of science that was prevalent at the time. Jefferson uses this scientific understanding to reject the possibility of God intervening in history, although he offers no real historical analysis to justify his conclusion. All miraculous narratives are expunged from the text as contradicting “our experience of the laws of nature.”<sup>88</sup> Jefferson simply cuts and pastes and creates an image of a simple, moral teacher worthy of esteem among his peers. His first attempt is found in a modest syllabus of the “genuine” ethical teachings of Jesus, which he composed over “an evening or two” during his tenure as president and entitled “The Philosophy of Jesus” (1804).<sup>89</sup> Later on, after his retirement to Monticello, he sat down and revised his earlier effort creating a much larger version, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth* (ca. 1819), which emphasizes the ethical teachings in Luke and Matthew.<sup>90</sup> He points to Joseph Priestly’s writings, especially his “Corruptions of Christianity and Early Opinions of Jesus,” which he read “over and over,” as a special source of inspiration in his work and means of gaining academic credence.<sup>91</sup> The Unitarian theologian certainly creates a similar picture of the historical Jesus as a mere man. Priestly says that the person of Jesus was transformed by the Alexandrian school of theology into the divine Logos of Platonism,<sup>92</sup> and claims his message of repentance and obedience was changed by Augustine into a doctrine of grace.<sup>93</sup> Jefferson follows the same basic understanding of Jesus and the process of Hellenization in his account, except in regard to the question of miracles. Priestly still holds to the resurrection and the rest of Christ’s miracles as recorded in the Gospels,<sup>94</sup> whereas Jefferson rejects them as scientifically impossible and removes them from the text.

The admiration for the teachings of Jesus is contraposed by his disdain for the orthodox portrait of him. He rejects the divine incarnation, the virgin birth, the vicarious atonement for sin, and the resurrection from the dead.<sup>95</sup> He hopes that “the day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus by the supreme being as his father in the womb of a virgin will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter.”<sup>96</sup> Along with the miracles, he mocks the special doctrines of the church, especially the Trinity, which he compares to the “hocus-pocus phantasm of a God like another Cerberus, with one body and three heads.”<sup>97</sup> These and all the other “creeds, formulas, [and] dogmas” of the church pervert the simple Jesus of history and transform him into the Christ of faith.<sup>98</sup> The process started with the Apostle Paul, “the first corrupter of the doctrine of Jesus,” and only increased in the later church with its hierarchical structure, sacramental powers, and

wicked priesthood.<sup>99</sup> It is this development that constitutes the “real anti-Christ” and should incur the wrath of all true followers of Jesus and his teachings.<sup>100</sup>

Jefferson reserves most of his venom for the clergy as the leaders of the apostasy and sponsors of great evil in society. In a Freudian slip, he refers to them as “priests” throughout his works, regardless of their denomination, revealing his deep-seated French resentment toward them.<sup>101</sup> His special wrath is exercised against the “priests” of New England, who propagate the Calvinist faith, the most bigoted of all religions, and support the Federalist opposition to his civil policies.<sup>102</sup> The solution is to eliminate them from the state, and so he proposes legislation at several points in his career to exclude the clergy from holding public office.

The clergy are excluded, because, if admitted into the legislature at all, the probability is that they would form it's majority. For they are dispersed through every county in the state, they have influence with the people, and great opportunities of persuading them to elect them into the legislature. This body, tho shattered, is still formidable, still forms a corps, and is still actuated by the esprit de corps. The nature of that spirit has been severely felt by mankind, and has filled the history of ten or twelve centuries with too many atrocities not to merit a proscription from meddling with government.<sup>103</sup>

James Madison, John Leland, Noah Webster, and many others criticize the proposal as a basic violation of civil rights, which causes him to back down for a time. Jefferson offers some equivocations to please their legitimate concerns and then returns to the agenda, adding new proposals that would eliminate the clergy from school boards and censor political sermons from the pulpit.<sup>104</sup>

Jefferson also hopes to undermine the power of the clergy and the Christian faith by creating a public school system that would exclude religious instruction.<sup>105</sup> In his *Notes on Virginia*, he proposes to take the Bible out of “the hands of children” and replace it with “the most useful facts from Grecian, Roman, European and American history.”<sup>106</sup> Like all sons of the Enlightenment, he hopes to exalt a secular view of history, which finds its cultural roots in the Graeco-Roman world and eliminates from the consciousness of the citizens whatever positive influence developed out of the Judeo-Christian tradition. His new view of history treats religious groups as creating schisms among the human race and spilling “oceans of human blood” over the pettiest doctrinal issues.<sup>107</sup> The new history dismisses any vital “enlightened” concerns to the religious struggles of the past and refuses to consider that many of these struggles were fought over the sacred canon of modern ideals like liberty, equality, and democracy—ideals that Jefferson shares with many of these religious combatants. Jefferson only identifies religious zeal with unjust persecution. He has no idea where the ideals of liberty developed in his own country, claiming

at certain times that the North continues to suppress the spirit of liberty and rights of humankind, which first arose in the South!<sup>108</sup> Like Voltaire, he tends to identify all of Christendom with one specific expression of faith within a certain provincial struggle of his. In Jefferson's case, the Puritans are considered the most intolerant of all religious sects because of the early persecution of Quaker missionaries and the rejection of Jefferson's political agenda, but any positive aspect of the religion is dismissed through the negative stereotype. Jefferson considers the forefathers of Massachusetts and their descendants as nothing but bigots, and his history of the march toward freedom has nothing else to say about them.<sup>109</sup>

## Public Education

To inculcate the new view of history, Jefferson hopes that the public will fund a government-sponsored educational program. Jefferson is hailed in many circles as the "father of public education" in America and deserves much credit for his attempt to educate all citizens, but it is clear that much of his concept of education is devoted to instilling a catechism.<sup>110</sup> Of course, there are many inspiring words that speak much to the contrary: "I have sworn upon the altar of God, eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man,"<sup>111</sup> it is unconscionable "to compel a man to furnish contributions of money for the propagation of opinions which he disbelieves,"<sup>112</sup> et alia; and Jefferson is truly devoted to protecting civil liberties and promoting freedom of speech in the classroom for the most part. But when it comes to inculcating his own agenda the noble sentiments are set aside by practical necessity to serve the greater good—the greater good in this instance being a democracy, or at least Jefferson's version of it. Jefferson certainly understands that people need to receive instruction in a democracy if they are expected to make informed decisions.<sup>113</sup> The aristocratic governor of Virginia, William Berkeley, maintained his power for so many years by refusing to educate his people through the press and proper schooling.<sup>114</sup> The need for education presents itself wherever the people are empowered to rule over their own affairs. "Wherever the people are well-informed, they can be trusted with their own government.... Whenever things get so far wrong as to attract their notice, they may be relied on to set them to rights."<sup>115</sup> However, the problem with Jefferson's proposal is that its specific motivation tends to color the curriculum with his own philosophy of life. He truly wants to provide a forum for free discussion and inquiry, but he also wants an educational system to counteract the Federalist and Christian influence from the North and instill his own political/religious ideology as a form of catechism.<sup>116</sup> For example, he makes the following statement to a member of the Board of Visitors at the University of Virginia.



In most public seminaries text-books are prescribed to each of the several schools, as the *norma docendi* in that school; and this is generally done by authority of the trustees. I should not propose this generally in our University, because I believe none of us are so much at the heights of science in the several branches, as to undertake this, and therefore that it will be better left to the professors until occasion of interference shall be given. But there is one branch in which we are the best judges, in which heresies may be taught, of so interesting a character to our State and the United States, as to make it a duty in us to lay down the principles which are to be taught. It is that of government. Mr. Gilmer being withdrawn, we know not who his successor may be. He may be a Richmond lawyer, or one of that school of quondam federalism, now consolidation. It is our duty to guard against such principles being disseminated among our youth, and the diffusion of that poison, by a previous prescription of the texts to be followed in their discourses.<sup>117</sup>

Of course, he claims within this rationale that the agenda will cover only a part of the curriculum, but in his mind it covers an essential reason for launching the school in the first place; and as he knows all-too-well, this and other aspects of his agenda will tend to make their way into other areas of the curriculum in a more surreptitious manner.

The interest in using education is displayed right from the start of his time in public service. In October of 1776, he became a member of the committee to revise the legal code of Virginia and proposed three bills to encourage the growth of education in the Commonwealth: The Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge (no. 79), The Bill for Amending the Constitution of the College of William and Mary (no. 80), and The Bill for Establishing a Public Library (no. 81). The first bill was the “most important” and sought to subdivide all Virginia counties into wards, with each ward providing elementary education to all “free children” for three years at the public’s expense. Reading, writing, and arithmetic would serve as the fundamental courses of instruction, and the history of western culture would provide sufficient examples of moral exhortation, rather than turning to the message of Scripture for answers. After the completion of this level, the better pupils would be eligible for more advanced subjects in secondary schools, and the best of these students would be sent to the university and receive training for roles of leadership in the state.<sup>118</sup> However, the bill was attacked from a number of quarters, including Presbyterian ministers concerned about the place of religion in society, Methodist ministers believing that Sunday School could teach literacy just as well, and taxpayers who preferred charity to a coercive measure that would tax the rich to support the children of another.<sup>119</sup> A less effective measure was passed a couple of decades later in 1796, which left its implementation to the discretion of local court officials and provided only for primary education. Since these officials were unlikely to increase the tax burden for themselves and their rich cronies, Jefferson’s dream was “completely defeated,” leaving its fulfillment to another time and place.<sup>120</sup>

Jefferson's Bill no. 80 was designed to "secularize" the College of William and Mary by reducing Anglican control over its board and faculty.<sup>121</sup> The college was chartered in 1693 with the expressed purpose of producing "complete gentlemen and good Christians." The faculty consisted of ministers for the most part and was appointed by the church and its bishops to serve the interests of the ecclesiastical establishment.<sup>122</sup> Jefferson wanted to change the basic purpose of the school by ending its association with the church, eliminating the school of theology, purging it of Tory influences, replacing the governing board, and making the administration responsible to the legislature, not the kingdom of England or its church. In the place of the divinity school, he proposed a professor of "history, civil and ecclesiastical" and a professor of "moral philosophy," who could serve as Jefferson's Trojan horse in the curriculum to inculcate his religious principles.<sup>123</sup> Of course, the proposal upset the religious establishment and was defeated by the legislature in 1779, but what Jefferson could not secure through the normal democratic process he did through his executive powers the same year as a visitor to the college and governor of the state. He converted the Indian mission into the study of cultural anthropology, added "the law of Nature & Nations, & Fine Arts to the duties of the Moral professor," and eliminated the two professors of divinity, substituting "others of law and police, of medicine, anatomy, and chemistry, and of modern languages" in their stead.<sup>124</sup> With these and other measures in place, the fundamental direction of the school changed over the course of time into much the opposite, serving now the ideology of Jefferson rather than that of the church. After visiting the college in 1811, Bishop William Meade made the following observation.

Infidelity, indeed, was then rife in the State, and the College of William and Mary was regarded as the hotbed of French politics and religion. I can truly say, that then, and for some years after, in every educated young man of Virginia whom I met, I expected to find a skeptic, if not an avowed unbeliever. I left Williamsburg, as may well be imagined, with sad feelings of discouragement....

The grain of mustard-seed that was planted at Williamsburg, about the middle of the century, had taken root there and sprung up and spread its branches over the whole state,—the stock still enlarging and strengthening itself there, and the roots shooting deeper into the soil. At the end of the century the College of William and Mary was regarded as the hotbed of infidelity and of the wild politics of France.<sup>125</sup>

Later in 1816, Jefferson supported the state of New Hampshire in its attempt to arrest Dartmouth College, a private Congregationalist institution, away from the board of trustees, although the United States Supreme Court decided otherwise.<sup>126</sup>

Jefferson's most famous and successful project in education was the University of Virginia, one of the first public institutions of higher education in the

country.<sup>127</sup> Jefferson affords a number of exhortations about the importance of free inquiry at the school in January of 1819,<sup>128</sup> but there is no doubt that its curriculum, textbooks, and faculty must submit to his basic philosophical orientation—a framework that is evident from the very outset of the planning stage. The school finds its initial justification not so much in the love of learning or the advancement of knowledge,<sup>129</sup> but in Jefferson’s concern over the influence of the Federalist opposition in northern schools. The school finds its calling in counteracting the nefarious influence of the Federalists in education and promoting the Republican principles of Jefferson, especially in the law school, hoping to stack the state and federal legislatures with a team of his disciples.<sup>130</sup> The fulfillment of the dream is insured in the course of its development by Jefferson and the Board of Visitors, insisting that the law professor share the correct political vision and prescribing specific texts for the classroom, including Locke’s *Two Treatises on Government*, Sidney’s *Discourses on Government*, *The Federalist Papers*, Jefferson’s *Declaration of Independence*, and Madison’s *Virginia Report of 1799–1800, touching on the Alien and Sedition Laws*.<sup>131</sup> Jefferson speaks of his desire for liberty to reign at the school and leaves the choice of books to individual professors in most instances, but when it comes to risking the Jeffersonian program of liberty itself, he was less willing to take any chances. Censorship was always a viable option if circumstances allowed the opposition a forum to undermine the basic mission. In one infamous episode, Jefferson urged an editor to publish an abridged edition of David Hume’s *History of Great Britain*, the “manual of every student” in the country, because it was laden with Tory ideas and needed to be “republicanized.”<sup>132</sup>

At the University of Virginia, the program of censorship was exercised with a special vengeance against the church and its many denominations. The private correspondence of Jefferson speaks in a direct and forthright manner about his dream of witnessing a “quiet euthanasia” upon the fanatical beliefs of the church as a means of restoring a religion of “peace, reason, and morality” in the country, and his plans of using public education in fulfilling the dream.<sup>133</sup> At the University of Virginia, the dream came to fruition under the guise of advocating liberty and non-discrimination through policies that really favored the religious agenda of Jefferson in the end at the expense of the church and its participation in the school. His ultimate design was to eliminate the Christian faith and replace it with his own, and this is exactly what he proceeded to do at the university with the power of the state and its tax dollars providing a considerable source of income. In the name of constitutional freedom, Jefferson freed his university of Christian influence by refusing to appoint a divinity professor or teach “theology, apologetics, and Scripture” against the customary practice of the time.<sup>134</sup> In the name of secularity, he prevented ministers and religious services from obtaining access to the centers of power on campus, only agreeing after

considerable pressure to make sectarian instruction available outside of his famous serpentine wall for those who wanted it.<sup>135</sup> In the absence of the Christian faith, Jefferson commissioned the professor of ethics to teach “the proofs of the being of a God, the creator, preserver, and supreme ruler of the universe, the author of all the relations of morality and the laws and obligations those infer”—all the religion he deemed necessary to believe. Religious instruction was made a part of the curriculum but only in a surreptitious manner to represent Jefferson’s own proclivities, which accent the “most interesting duties” of “every human being” and neglect theological discussions as divisive.<sup>136</sup> The liberal/deist point of view was couched as if representing everybody and placed under a category other than “religion.” Of course, Jefferson refused to acknowledge the specific or sectarian religious nature of the instruction, but as a master of the name game he could hide his hypocrisy under different labels like “ethics” and advocate church/state separation all at the same time.<sup>137</sup> The Presbyterians recognized the underlying danger that Jefferson’s designs represented to their faith and raised a significant opposition to the plans throughout the Commonwealth. An ally of the school, Joseph Cabell, chastened Jefferson in several letters about the legitimate nature of the Presbyterian complaints, informing him that they only wanted their fair share of a public community if their tax dollars were used as a means of support, but the objections went unheeded for the most part,<sup>138</sup> and Jefferson continued his final solution with only a few setbacks. One of the few defeats was the elimination of Thomas Cooper, a virulent anti-Christian and son-in-law of Joseph Priestly, from obtaining a professorship in law and chemistry. Cooper felt that doctrines like “the Trinity and transubstantiation may no longer be entitled to public discussion”—a viewpoint that Jefferson hoped to instill within his students.<sup>139</sup> Those who advocated a strict doctrine of church/state separation tended to agree with Jefferson’s policies. James Madison recognized the problem with denying representation to sectarian groups, but he also felt the discrimination was necessary for maintaining the peace at a public university and religion separate from the power of the civil government.<sup>140</sup>

## Church and State

The exact relationship between religion and the government is subject to the same type of equivocation and duplicity throughout his career. All depends on what suits his political or religious purpose at the moment. On the one hand, he wants to reduce religion to morality like most sons of the Enlightenment and then speak of its importance as the foundation of society. In the Declaration of Independence, he claims that God has endowed all of humankind with inalienable rights and the

purpose of government is found in serving that sacred foundation.<sup>141</sup> In the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, he speaks in this way, claiming that the statute is based upon the “plan of the Holy author of our religion” to create human beings with a free mind and grant them liberty as a natural right. On the other hand, when religion is understood in terms of the Judeo-Christian tradition, then it suddenly becomes a private matter between “our God and our conscience,” which has no social ramifications whatsoever. He can say that “our civil rights have no dependence on our religious opinions, any more than on our opinions in physics or geometry,” contradicting the very words of his two famous documents.<sup>142</sup> He can treat religion and politics as if they are two different subjects, calling for the complete separation of the two realms and building his famous wall.<sup>143</sup>

One of Jefferson’s proudest achievements was the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* (1786). It received worldwide acclamation, and his tombstone listed it along with the founding of the University of Virginia and the writing of the Declaration of Independence as the three great achievements of which posterity should remember him.<sup>144</sup> The statute disestablished the Anglican Church in Virginia, promoted freedom of religious expression, and eliminated religious tests for public office.<sup>145</sup> Patrick Henry, the chief spokesman of the Anglican Church, had opposed the legislation in favor of multiple establishments, which would support the Christian religion as the one, true faith and provide public assistance to support its various denominations in accordance with the discretion of each and every taxpayer. Henry garnered significant support for his proposal from clerics across the church as well as a number of political heavyweights, including Washington, Marshall, and Lee, but Jefferson’s complete disestablishment would prevail through his considerable political and intellectual talents in the end.<sup>146</sup> Indeed, it was one of Jefferson’s finest hours. The statute rejected any religion from controlling the government through a litmus test or *a priori* commitment to its perpetuity. No special privilege or stature would be accorded to any ideology in the ongoing contest for gaining public support.

However, Jefferson’s position becomes more controversial when he tries to expand the program *a posteriori* by excluding the church from influencing policy or participating in the public arena. This concept of church/state separation finds its most famous expression in a letter he wrote to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut, dated January 1, 1802. The occasion of the letter was a concern on the part of the Northern Baptists that Jefferson was proceeding too far in his desire to separate church and state by refusing to proclaim a national day of fasting and prayer, unlike his two predecessors in the office of the presidency.<sup>147</sup> Jefferson tries to explain his position by making a distinction between the policies of the federal and local governments, emphasizing the word “congress” in the First

Amendment: “*Congress* shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.” This amendment is interpreted as establishing a secular national government, free from any religious concerns or practices, leaving him with a built-in excuse to omit the proclamation of a special religious observance as a federal official. The amendment is interpreted in a broad and legalistic manner as “building a wall of separation between church & state,”<sup>148</sup> which includes in his mind a prohibition on the federal government from enacting anything of a religious nature, not just creating a national church. He hopes that his expansive interpretation will “make progress” in the future and encompass the other sectors of government, even if he feels restricted by its precise language in limiting the separation to a specific domain. The wall of separation and its consistent application develop from his concept of religion as a “matter which lies solely between Man & his God.” It is a fundamental presupposition he mentions at the beginning of the letter, right after the greeting, and also shares with some of the Baptist leaders in Virginia as common allies in the struggle. This concept of religion can lead in no other direction than the complete secularization of government in all its sectors, and Jefferson is certainly correct in drawing this conclusion, given the questionable nature of his supposition, which remains a matter of considerable debate within the nation today.<sup>149</sup>

The wall of separation represents the most indelible legacy of Jefferson’s thoughts and actions upon the relation between church and state, but he is not without contradiction on the issue. He is a good case in point for those who follow the hermeneutical approach of deconstructionism and find writing filled with complexity or ambiguity in meaning; authors involved in numerous contradictions or blind spots;<sup>150</sup> and interpreters needing to psychoanalyze their subjects and search for underlying motives that sometimes subvert the outward intent.<sup>151</sup> This type of hermeneutical approach will allow the many sides of a person like Jefferson to emerge, without feeling the onus to reconcile the tensions or contradictions. Here are just three ways to look at Jefferson and his view of church/state relations:

One, there is the Jefferson who wishes to forward his religious convictions. This side of Jefferson makes it clear that government cannot exist apart from religion.<sup>152</sup> Here religion refers to his concept of universal morality, and not some special theological set of dogmas associated with sectarian expressions of Christianity. Here religion refers to his convictions about an innate or *a priori* sense of right and wrong that God has implanted in the hearts of all human beings, that Jesus inculcated among his disciples in the most sublime form, and Jefferson finds “necessary for a social being.”<sup>153</sup> Religion is a positive good and necessary aspect of society, as long as it exists *in abstracto*, without making concrete connection with a specific theological dogma in understanding the divine nature, and follows the liberal/

deist penchant in reducing religion to morality—the typical religious conviction of enlightened intelligentsia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Two, there is the political side of Jefferson that must accommodate the will of the people to forward his public career or obtain a larger civil agenda. For example, he helped craft a “Bill for Appointing Days of Public Fasting and Thanksgiving” in the state of Virginia, authorizing magistrates to honor the “Almighty God” in this manner, and even proclaimed one of these days of divine worship while serving as its governor.<sup>154</sup> This simple example contains an obvious refutation of the notion that Jefferson championed the absolute secularization of the government throughout his political career. The endorsement of a Puritan-type tradition withstands the possibility of understanding his overt words and actions consistently, as advocating a complete divorce between church and state and interpreting disestablishment to mean the end of religious influence on all levels of the government. The proclamation, along with some other political/religious initiatives, present a problem for those who wish to interpret Jefferson as a strict separationist and provide a uniform interpretation of him on the issue;<sup>155</sup> but it could be that Jefferson simply lacks consistency, or presents a duplicitous position on the issue, which must accommodate the affections of the people. Certainly, as a Deist and proponent of an “eternal wall,” he might find it difficult to embrace the Christian practice of giving thanks (*eucharisteō*) for divine blessing or grace (*charis*), but as a politician, he might have a motive to steer away from his doctrinaire political/religious conviction and find a need to placate or galvanize his people in serving an ultimate objective, accepting a certain amount of compromise along the way. No one can discern his motives; they are hidden and subject to the interpretive difficulties of all deconstruction or psychoanalysis, but it is only the worst sort of American hagiography that protects the name of Jefferson from unveiling the deeper and sometimes darker motivations of his policies. Only the most naïve citizen accepts the overt sincerity and literal truth of a politician’s words and actions.

Three, there is the Jefferson who develops a Voltairean-type of animosity toward the Judeo-Christian tradition and wants to perform a “quiet euthanasia.” The strict doctrine of separation certainly has a pretext in this motive and appears throughout his life, beginning with his literary notebook or *Commonplace Book*.<sup>156</sup> However, the doctrine and hatred only seem to escalate later on in his life during and after the presidential campaign of 1800 because of the clerical assault upon his French ideals, exploding into the public domain and serving as a pretext for his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association. At this time, he makes it clear that politics have no place in the pulpit since Federalist ministers are criticizing him; that religion is a private matter, since he does not want to confirm their suspicions about him.<sup>157</sup> He is now able to understand disestablishment in the broadest sense

and practice it with literal obedience as President of the United States, contradicting his previous policies in Virginia, accenting the strict doctrine of separation on the federal level, and hoping to see its application to the states in the near future. The first draft of his letter implies a general disapproval of ongoing religious practices in the respective northern states by preferring “voluntary regulations and discipline of each respective sect,” and is only stricken for political reasons.<sup>158</sup> The final draft leaves the broad statement intact that religion is a “matter that lies solely between Man & his God,” making all forms of religion irrelevant to all levels of the government.

The attempt of Jefferson to diminish the role of the church and create a secular government is an important aspect of his legacy, but it only represents one side of his multifaceted and complicated career. By emphasizing this side, there is no attempt in this work to provide an overall portrait of the man and his career, or even present a fair and balanced view of his overall position on church/state relations. Certainly, Baptists, Quakers, and other persecuted groups would want to speak of the considerable debt that they and all lovers of freedom owe to Jefferson as a great champion of religious liberty and a powerful advocate of their cause against ecclesiastical establishments. In emphasizing the secular side of Jefferson, there is no intention to dismiss the positive contributions of his legacy regarding religious toleration, which all sides of the present debate have come to admire. In emphasizing the darker side of his relation to the church, the Jefferson Memorial remains secure within the pantheon of religious/political devotion in America, which also must recognize the frailties of its founders and a side of their beliefs and attitudes that remain muted within the plethora of hagiography often surrounding them. There is no understanding of Jefferson and his famous wall without placing it within his context and relationship to the church and state, which included the anti-Semitic/anti-Christian attitudes of the Enlightenment and a clear attempt to marginate the Judeo-Christian tradition through political means.

## Notes

1. Matthew Tindal, *Christianity as Old as Creation*, reprint of 1730 edition (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1978), 14, 35, 38, 58ff., 104–105, 125; Arnold Ages, “The Dark Side of the French Enlightenment,” *Toronto Journal of Theology* 15/2 (1999): 139; d’Alembert, “Discours Preliminaire des Editeurs,” in *Encyclopédie de Diderot et d’Alembert* [Paris, 1751–1772] (F. M. Ricci, 1970–), 13.xxvi; Daniel Brewer, *The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 36–37. This chapter represents a revised version of a previous article entitled



- “Jefferson’s Opposition to the Judeo–Christian Tradition” in Peter Lang’s series *Major Concepts in Politics and Political Theory* (Vol. 29), and is published with their permission.
2. Abbé Yvon, “Athées,” in *Encyclopédie*, A, 13.230–31; Diderot, *Oeuvres Complètes* (Nendeln: Kraus Reprint Ltd. 1966), 15.253–54; Kingsley Martin, *The Rise of French Liberal Thought* (New York University Press, 1954), 177–91; Charles A. Gliozzo, “The Philosophes and Religion: Intellectual Origins of the Dechristianization Movement in the French Revolution,” *Church History* 40/3 (1971): 283; Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1967–69) 2.459. E.g., Helvétius, *De l’Esprit*, Guy Besse (intro. et notes) (Paris: Éditions Sociales, 1959), 115–16. Science was proceeding toward moral neutrality. Gay, *The Enlightenment*, 2.163.
  3. See Stephen Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation: The French Revolution, Nazi Germany, and International Communism* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2014), chaps. 3–5; Ian Bartrum, “Religion and the Restatements,” *Brooklyn Law Review* 79/2 (2014): 579; David Martin, *The Religious and the Secular: Studies in Secularization* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), 98–99.
  4. George Hegel, *The Philosophy of Right*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, Robert Maynard Hutchins (ed.) (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1977), 108.
  5. Charles Taylor, “Western Secularity,” in *Rethinking Secularity*, 34; Philip S. Gorski, “Historicizing the Secularization Debate: Church, State, and Society in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe, ca. 1300 to 1700,” *American Sociological Review*, 65 (2000): 139–40. See also Robert Bellah’s *Beyond Belief*; Peter Berger’s *The Sacred Canopy*; Steve Bruce’s *Religion in the Modern World*; Jose Casanova’s *Public Religions in the Modern World*; Auguste Comte’s *Cours de philosophie positive*; Emile Durkheim’s *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*; Marcel Gauchet’s *The Disenchantment of the World*; Thomas Luckman’s *Das Problem der Religion in der modernen Gesellschaft*; Talcott Parson’s *The Evolution of Societies*; Herbert Spencer’s *The Principles of Sociology*; Bryan Wilson’s *Religion in Secular Society*.
  6. A. J. Ayer, *Voltaire* (New York: Random House, 1986), 171–72. Diderot was most famous for his *Encyclopédie*, which he began in 1746. He was a strident critic of Christianity and was imprisoned in the Chateau Vincennes for unorthodox and subversive opinions on religion and morality. P. France, *Diderot* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 7–9, 35–36. Early in his career he followed the mechanistic view of Descartes and sounded much like a Deist, accepting the teleological and moral arguments for the existence of God in *Philosophical Thoughts*. Later on, beginning with *Letter on the Blind* (1747), he questioned the veracity of these theistic proofs. At that time, he began to follow another aspect of current science, which imputed to matter its own “spontaneous generation.” He also thought it possible that the perfection we see today is the result of a long process, where defective animals become extinct and the best equipped remain. *Pensées Philosophiques* (1746), in *Oeuvres Complètes de Diderot* 1.132–36 (xviii–xxi); *Lettre sur les Aveugles* (1749), in *Oeuvres Complètes*, 1.308–309 [*Diderot’s Selected Writings*, L. G. Crocker (ed.), D. Coltman (trans.) (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1966), 4–6, 14, 20, 22]; A. Vartanian, “From Deist to Atheist: Diderot’s Philosophical Orientation, 1746–1749,” in *Diderot Studies* (Syracuse, NY: University Press, 1949), 47–50, 54, 58–60; P. France, *Diderot* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 59, 67. Diderot serves as a good example of the propensity of Deism to proceed toward atheism or complete autonomy from God.

7. Daniel Mornet, *Les Origines intellectuelles de la Révolution française 1715–1787* (Paris: Librairie A. Colin, 1967), 225–26; R. O. Rockwood, “The Legend of Voltaire and the Cult of the Revolution, 1791,” in *Ideas in History*, Richard Herr and Harold T. Parker (eds.) (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1965), 111; Peter Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics: The Poet as a Realist* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965), 334–35.
8. Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics*, 243, 310; Rockwood, “The Legend of Voltaire,” 113.
9. M-M. H. Barr, *Voltaire in America 1744–1800* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins Press, 1941), 55; Rockwood, “The Legend of Voltaire,” 132; Gliozzo, “The Philosophes and Religion,” 275.
10. Jürgen von Stackelberg, “1685 et l’idée de la tolérance,” *Francia* 14 (1986) 230. Pierre Bayle wrote one of the first negative reactions to the revocation. He wrote two pamphlets in 1686: “Ce que c’est que la France toute Catholique sous le règne de Louis le Grand” and “Commentaire philosophique sur ces paroles de Jésus-Christ: ‘contrain-les d’entrer.’” *Ibid.*, 230–31; Geoffrey Adams, “Myths and Misconceptions: The Philosophe View of the Huguenots in the Age of Louis XV,” *Historical Reflections* 1/1 (1974): 65–66.
11. *Traité sur la Tolérance*, in *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877–85), 25.18–26; *The Works of Voltaire* (Paris: E. R. DuMont, 1901), 4.118–34; Barr, *Voltaire in America*, 119; Perez Zagorin, *How the Idea of Religious Toleration Came to the West* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 295–96. Hereafter the French edition of Voltaire’s work is designated OCV and the English edition WV.
12. OCV 20.494–95 (WV 12.154–56); OCV 24.439; OCV 25.32 (WV 4.145). Theological disputes are “the most terrible scourge of the world.” Atheism is a monstrous evil, but there is nothing worse than the fanaticism of meaningless, speculative dogma. Voltaire enjoys mocking doctrines like the Trinity, transubstantiation, supralapsarianism, et al. OCV 17.359–61 (WV 4.20–23); OCV 17.475–76 (WV 6.126); OCV 20.467 (WV 14.36–37); OCV 18.412–13 (WV 8.153–54); Ayer, *Voltaire*, 136–38; Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics*, 268.
13. OCV 19.549 (WV 11.29); OCV 18.413 (WV 8.154–55); Ronald I. Boss, “The Development of Social Religion: A Contradiction of French Free Thought,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 34/4 (1973): 582–84. Voltaire sees the necessity of religion in society, unlike some radicals who want religion expunged entirely. *Ibid.*, 586–89; OCV 21.573. Voltaire’s famous quip speaks to the importance of religion in society. “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.” His basic tendency is to reduce religion to morality. He accepts the fact that those who espouse a different religion from the prince might be treated as second class. OCV 25.33 (WV 4.147–48).
14. OCV 24.453. The basic rule of thumb is the fewer the dogmas the better. OCV 25.102 (WV 4.269). He expresses the typical doubts of a Deist concerning the belief in an afterlife and divine judgment. Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics*, 266–67.
15. OCV 20.507–508 (WV 14.82–83).
16. OCV 17.476 (WV 6.126); OCV 18.105 (WV 9.87–88); OCV 19.155–56 (WV 8.326–27).
17. OCV 17.476 (WV 6.127); OCV 20.355 (WV 13.84–85). Voltaire does not find God embodied in history or performing miracles, but he rejects those who categorically dismiss the possibility of the supernatural in the name of science. OCV 20.77ff. (WV 11.272ff.); Gay, *Voltaire’s Politics*, 266.

18. OCV 24.439ff.
19. OCV 24.449–50; OCV 20.186–87 (WV 12.146–48).
20. OCV 20.517–18 (WV 14.102); Ayer, *Voltaire*, 70–71, 97.
21. OCV 20.521 (WV 14.104).
22. OCV 20.523 (WV 14.108), OCV 24.451; Ayer *Voltaire*, 132; Zagorin, *Religious Toleration*, 297.
23. Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, 70–78.
24. OCV 20.517ff., 521 (WV 14.100ff., 104).
25. Gay, *Voltaire*, *Voltaire's Politics*, 271–72.
26. OCV 26.298; Ayer, *Voltaire*, 99.
27. OCV 24.252.
28. Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, 170, 239, 244–46, 252; Ayer, *Voltaire*, 27; Gliozzo, “The Philosophes and Religion,” 275 (n.12). There is some controversy over the precise interpretation of the phrase *écrazer l'infâme*, but the apparent meaning is to extirpate Christianity. He says in his *Notebooks* (324) that if Frederick of Prussia, his patron, was more daring he could have destroyed the religion.
29. *Ibid.*, 89, 225–26; Ayer, *Voltaire*, 27–28.
30. OCV 20.272 (WV 12.303); Stackelberg, “1685 et l'idée de la tolerance,” 236–39.
31. OCV 20.195 (WV 12.155–56); Rockwood, “The Legend of Voltaire,” 116; Stackelberg, “1685 et l'idée de la tolérance,” 239; Gay, *Voltaire's Politics*, 108, 269, 354, 355, 455. He finds Jesuits a most depraved lot. They cause civil wars wherever they go, and he favors a government policy to disband them. OCV 25.35, 96–97 (WV 4.151, 158).
32. Barr, *Voltaire in America*, 12, 17ff., 32–59.
33. Alf J. Mapp, *The Faiths of Our Fathers: What America's Founders Really Believed* (Laham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 61–63, 66–67, 72, 83, 95, 106–9; Darren Staloff, “Deism and the Founders,” in *Faith and the Founders of the American Republic*, Daniel Dreisbach and Mark David Hall (eds.) (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 18–30. Hereafter the last reference is designated FFAR. Only a tiny minority of the leaders of the Revolution were militant Deists. Franklin was a militant Deist, materialist, determinist, and anti-Christian in his youth, but he became more tolerant as he matured and even overturned many of his previous convictions, embracing free will, divine providence, and the immortality of the soul. At the Constitutional Convention in 1787, he promoted a type of “civil religion” by speaking of the special divine providence in “our Favour,” exhorting the members to offer thanksgiving and chastening them for impiety. Benjamin Franklin, “Motion for Prayers in the Convention” (June 28, 1787), in *Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1987), 1138–39; Daniel Dreisbach, “The Bible and the Political Culture of the American Founding,” in FFAR, 158–59.
34. He starts out his work by proclaiming, “My own mind is my own church.” Through the powers of human reason, we all can discover the majesty of God in creation, the eternal laws of nature, and all that is necessary for us to lead productive lives. There is no need to rely upon written texts of old. In fact, the Bible is filled with stories of rapine and murder, including the “horrid assassination of whole nations.” It inspires “the most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the great miseries that have afflicted the human race.” He calls the Jews “a nation of ruffians and cut-throats,” their patriarchs “monsters and

- imposters,” the Apostle Paul a “fool,” and Christians “infidels to God.” The wicked deeds of these wicked men are what the Bible offers us, and beyond this, there is little else other than stupidity. No enlightened mind could possibly believe in its mythological and miraculous stories, or its mystical doctrines, such as the Trinity and the divine incarnation, which defy all logic. *The Complete Religious and Theological Works of Thomas Paine* (New York: Peter Eckler, 1954), 1:5ff, 18–19, 29–31, 43, 39, 60, 67, 91, 103–4, 159, 166, 173, 176, 185, 249, 261–62, 355–56, 378, 398, 415–16.
35. John Thayer, *A Discourse, Delivered, at the Roman Catholic Church in Boston* (Boston, MA: Samuel Hall, 1789), 9ff.; Timothy Dwight, *The Duty of Americans, at the Present Crisis* (New Haven, CT: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1798), reprinted in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era*, Ellis Sandoz (ed.) (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991), 1381–85; David Osgood, “Some facts evincive of the atheistical, anarchical, and in other respects, immoral principles of the French Republicans, ...” (Boston, MA: Samuel Hall, 1798); Alden Bradford, *Two Sermons* (Wiscasset: Henry Hoskins and John W. Scott, 1798), 19; Noble E. Cunningham, “Election of 1800,” in *History of American Presidential Elections, 1789–1968*, Arthur M. Schlesinger (ed.) (New York: Celesea House, 1971); *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Harold C. Syrett (ed.) (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1974), 21.402–404; 24.405; Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 274–77; Henry W. Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1960), 3, 46; Robert M. Healey, *Jefferson on Religion in Public Education* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1962), 164; Carles Ellis Dickson, “Jeremiads in the New American Republic: The Case of National Fasts in John Adams Administration,” *The New England Quarterly* 60/2 (1987): 201; Charles B. Sanford, “The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, Garrett Ward Sheldon and Daniel Dreisbach (eds.) (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 61; Daniel Dreisbach, “Mr. Jefferson, a Mammoth Cheese, and the ‘Wall of Separation Between Church and State’: A Bicentennial Commemoration,” *Journal of Church and State* 43/4 (2001): 733–36; Thomas E. Buckley, “The Political Theology of Thomas Jefferson,” in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History*, Merrill Peterson and Robert Vaughan (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 75. Hamilton made religion a central issue in the 1800 campaign, warning the voters of Jefferson’s relationship to the French Revolution and its “atheism.” The Federalists preferred the British model of an evolving society, while the Republicans looked to the radical revolution of France in the political and religious realm.
36. Jefferson, “Autobiography,” in *The Works of Thomas Jefferson*, Paul Leicester Ford (ed.) (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1904), 1.4; Jennings L. Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education* (Charlottesville, VA: Thomas Jefferson Foundation, 2004), 21; Mapp, *The Faiths of Our Fathers*, 4; Allen Jayne, *Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence: Origin, Philosophy and Theology* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 19; Douglas Wilson, “Jefferson and Bolingbroke: Some Notes on the Question of Influence,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, 110; Edwin S. Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar of God: A Religious Biography of Thomas Jefferson* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996),

- 16–17. Small came to Virginia from Scotland and was the only member of the college who was not an Anglican clergyman. Hereafter the Ford edition of Jefferson is designated F.
37. “To George Wythe” (Aug. 13, 1786) F 5.153–54. Jefferson’s hate for the clergy grew in Paris, even if it had antecedents in his earlier training. His letters from France are filled with venom toward them. *Jefferson and Madison on Separation of Church and State: Writings on Religion and Secularism*, L. Brenner (ed.) (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade, 2004), 100–106.
38. *The Commonplace Book of Thomas Jefferson*, Gilbert Chinard (intro. and notes) (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1926), 10, 328 (849), 334–43 (852–61); Barr, *Voltaire in America*, 116. The *Commonplace Book* is designated as CB hereafter. It is hard to assess the direct influence of Voltaire upon his attitudes. Jefferson considers Voltaire a genius, which testifies to some direct knowledge, but the basic influence probably developed through the many secondary sources of the pervasive, Voltairean culture. *Notes on Virginia* (1782) F 3.459–61. Cf. CB 48–49, 58.
39. Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 14–15, 265; David G. James, *The Life of Reason: Hobbes, Locke, Bolingbroke* (London, Toronto, and New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1949), 177, 193.
40. “Jefferson’s Literary Commonplace Book,” in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Douglas L. Wilson (ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 5, 8. Hereafter referred to as LCB. See Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar of God*, 22–23; Wilson, “Jefferson and Bolingbroke,” 109–11. The excerpts make up almost 40 percent of the material. John Adams told Jefferson that he “read [Bolingbroke] through more than five times in his life.” Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle*, 262.
41. LCB 11.
42. LCB 29 [16], 43–44 [46]; Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, *Philosophical Works 1754–77* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1977), 2.154–55, 4.316–20; Jayne, *Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence*, 23. Hereafter *Philosophical Works* is designated PW. In the footnotes, LBC is mentioned first and then the reference Jefferson is making in PW. If PW stands alone, it means the idea comes from Bolingbroke and is not cited by LBC.
43. LCB 30–31 [20]; PW 2.220–21, 230–32; 5.333.
44. PW 5.357–59.
45. PW 2.232.
46. PW 5.359.
47. PW 5.356.
48. LCB 40–41 [37]; PW 4.153–54.
49. LCB 31–32 [20–21]; PW 2.232–34, 237–38. Jewish people often followed the concepts and customs (e.g., circumcision) around them. LCB 23 [1], 24 [4]; PW 1.135.
50. LCB 55 [58]; PW 5.367. Jefferson and the Founding Fathers supported the full civil rights of Jews, but his antipathy toward Judaism reflected the Voltairean type of anti-Semitism that will lead to modern bigotry and atrocities against this people. See Strehle, *The Dark Side*, passim; *Letters of Certain Jews to Monsieur de Voltaire*, Philip Lefanu (trans.) (Dublin: William Watson, 1777), 61, 64; “To Benjamin Rush” (Aug. 21, 1803) L 10.384–85; “To John Adams” (Oct. 13, 1813) L 13.389; “To Charles Thompson” (Jan. 9, 1816) L 14.386; “To Ezra Stiles” (June 25, 1819) L 15.203; “To William Short” (Aug. 4, 1820) L 15.260–61; David Dalin, “Jews, Judaism, and the American Founding, in FFAR, 66–76;

Steven Waldman, *Founding Faith: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America* (New York: Random House, 2008), 75. L stands for *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Andrew A. Lipscomb (ed.) (Washington, DC: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905).

51. LCB 53, 55 [58]; PW 5.332–70.
52. LCB 55 [58]; PW 5.370; Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*, 22.
53. PW 5.361.
54. LCB 40 [36]; PW 4.148; Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 28–29.
55. PW 2.221.
56. LCB 50 [56]; PW 5.217.
57. Bolingbroke does not trust the New Testament canon. It is a later and capricious act of the church (LCB 36–38 [31–33]; PW 3.37–39), and the Gospel accounts are filled with contradictions (LCB 33 [23], 41–42 [40]; PW 2.262; 4.257–59). The ethics of Jesus are not so complete or coherent as some philosophers (LCB 35 [28]; PW 2.305–306), but Bolingbroke can still think of Jesus as the Messiah, Savior, and messenger of God. The original message of Jesus was consonant with reason and the system of nature, even if the church corrupted it (PW 2.328, 332). He even seems to think at one point that the miracles of Jesus established the veracity of the message and speaks of his coming again to reward and punish us in accordance with our faithfulness (PW 2.328–29), although his basic posture is skepticism when it comes to miraculous accounts due to insufficient proof or a violation of natural law (LCB 25 [6]; PW 1.155; Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 23, 32–33).
58. PW 2.328; James, *The Life of Reason*, 257–58.
59. Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration*, 27–28, 34–35.
60. LCB 42–43 [44]; PW 4.268–71.
61. PW 5.216.
62. PW 2.332–33; James, *The Life of Reason*, 244.
63. James, *The Life of Reason*, 241; Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle*, 84.
64. PW 2.359.
65. James, *The Life of Reason*, 241–47.
66. PW 2.222–23, 248–49, 256; 4.147–48.
67. Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle*, 86–87. Bolingbroke follows the voluntaristic tradition of the late medieval period, which sees God's will establishing the law and not the eternal essence. The commands of God do not express the divine nature, but simply represent a capricious act of the will toward us. In concert with this view, Bolingbroke often speaks of a qualitative distinction between God and human beings, in which the two have nothing in common. *Ibid.*, 85–86; James, *The Life of Reason*, 253–56; e.g., PW 4.307. And yet, he can turn around and submit religion to rational demonstrations, as if the world and its moral code partake of some absolute truth, as if the world is a revelation of God's just ways, not a capricious act of irrationality and immorality. LCB 28 [14–15]; PW 1.30–31. Such contradictions cause many detractors to deprecate his philosophical abilities as more driven by temper tantrums against opponents than sober philosophical discourse. David James finds his work arrogant, contradictory, and unfair, “animated by as much hatred of religion as of the speculative intelligence.” *The Life of Reason*, 207, 234, 240.
68. LCB 34 [26–27]; PW 2.279–82.

69. Paul Conkin, Merrill Peterson, and Douglas Wilson have developed the same fundamental conclusion after reviewing the material in Bolingbroke and Jefferson. Wilson, "Jefferson and Bolingbroke," 109–10, 115–16; Paul Conkin, "The Religious Pilgrimage of Thomas Jefferson," in *Jeffersonian Legacies*, Peter Onuf (ed.) (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia, 1993), 23–25.
70. Mapp, *Faiths of Our Fathers*, 15; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 26, 136; "To William Short" (Oct. 31, 1819), F 12.140; "To Doctor Benjamin Rush" (Sept. 23, 1800), F 9.148; "To Charles Thomson" (Jan. 9, 1816) F 11.498. Jefferson considers materialism (Epicureanism) compatible with religion. In his *Commonplace Book*, he provides an excerpt from Tertullian that speaks of the corporeal nature of God and the soul. CB 374 (904). Early in his life, he seems to think that consciousness ceases with death and prefers the Stoic attitude in the face of its horror, citing the counsel of Cicero. CB 328–30 (849–50); LCB 17, 56, 58–59 [60–62, 67–68, 71–72]; "To John Adams" (March 14, 1820) L 15.240–41; "To Thomas Cooper" (Aug. 14, 1820) L 15.266–67; "To Judge Augustus B. Woodward" (March 24, 1824) L 16.18–19; Sanford, "The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson," 80–81. His belief system was far from orthodox, but he was baptized, married, and buried in the Anglican Church, and attended church services regularly throughout his life. Thomas Buckley, "Religion and the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson," in *Religion and the American Presidency: George Washington to George W. Bush with Commentary and Primary Sources*, Gastón Espinosa (ed.) (New York: Columbia Press, 2009), 89–90; Sanford, "The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson," 61–62.
71. "To Doctor Benjamin Waterhouse" (June 26, 1822) L 15.385; "To Ezra Styles, Esq." (June 25, 1819) L 15.203–204; Sanford, "The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson," 72; Buckley, "The Political Theology of Thomas Jefferson," 90; Cushing Strout, "Jeffersonian Religious Liberty and American Pluralism," in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, 201; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 38, 162; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 134, 144. In his *Commonplace Book*, he cites a reference from Voltaire about Calvin burning Michael Servetus at the stake. This excerpt points to a negative image and prejudice toward Calvinism that Jefferson learned and preferred at a young age. CB 339 (859).
72. "To Peter Carr" (Aug. 10, 1787) F 5.323; "To John Adams" (Oct. 13, 1813) L 13.391–392; "To Miles King" (Sept. 26, 1814) L 14. 197; J. Judd Owen, "The Struggle Between Religion and Nonreligion," *American Political Science Review* 101/3 (2007) 497; Sanford, "The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson," 66–67, 70. Like the *philosophes*, he provides only vague cosmological and teleological proofs for God's existence. "To John Adams" (April 18, 1816) L 14.468–69; "To John Adams" (April 11, 1823) L 16.427; Robert M. Healey, "Jefferson on Judaism and the Jews," *American Jewish History* 78/4 (1984) 363.
73. *Ibid.*, 325–26.
74. "To John Adams" (Jan. 22, 1821) F 12.198; "To Timothy Pickering, Esq." (Feb. 27, 1821) L 15.323.
75. Owen, "The Struggle Between Religion and Nonreligion," 500.
76. "To Peter Carr" (Aug. 10, 1787) F 5.323; Adrienne Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1957), 16.
77. *Ibid.*; "To Thomas Law, Esq." (June 13, 1814) L 14.142–44; "To John Adams" (Oct. 14, 1816) L 15.76; Bernard Mayo, *Myths and Men: Patrick Henry, George Washington, Thomas*

- Jefferson* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1959), 66; William B. Huntley, "Jefferson's Public and Private Religion," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 79/3 (1980) 296; Sanford, "The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson," 76–78; Buckley, "The Political Theology of Thomas Jefferson," 87. Morality is an *a priori*, "self-evident" part of "our constitution." (This conviction clearly inspired the edited version of the Declaration of Independence concerning its self-evident truths, which is attributed to Franklin.) Jefferson's position is similar to what one reads in the writings of Frances Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, Lord Kames and other members of the Scottish Enlightenment. Jefferson uses Lord Kames' work extensively in his *Commonplace Book*. CB 16–18, 96–135, 167 (559–68, 694); Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 32, 34, 137; Jayne, *Jefferson's Declaration of Independence*, 66–68. In a letter to Thomas Law, Jefferson refers to Kames' "Principles of Natural Religion" and concurs with its position that "a man owes no duty to which he is not urged by some impulsive feeling." "To Thomas Law" (June 13, 1814) L 14.144. See Henry Home, Lord Kames, *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Natural Religion* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and A. Donaldson, 1751), 60, 69; *Principles of Equity* (Edinburgh: A. Kincaid and J. Bell, 1767), 30–31.
78. "To James Fishback" (Sept. 27, 1809) L 12.315–16 (along with Jefferson's missing composition draft in *Jefferson and Madison on Separation*, 195).
  79. "To Thomas Parker" (May 15, 1819), in *Jefferson and Madison on Separation*, 273. Jefferson rejects the emphasis of Jesus upon repentance and forgiveness. He rejects any doctrine of cheap grace and emphasizes the necessity of doing good works as a means of reward. He is more of a materialist than Jesus, but later in life he entertains the possibility of an afterlife when he reaches the time of his own death. "To William Short" (April 13, 1820) L 15.244; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 31–34; "Jefferson on Judaism and the Jews," 369; Mapp, *The Faiths of Our Fathers*, 20; Owen, "The Struggle Between Religion and Nonreligion," 498–99.
  80. "To Benjamin Rush" (April 21, 1803) F 9.462, "To William Canby" (Sept. 18, 1813) L 13.377–378; Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*, 32; Huntley, "Jefferson's Public and Private Religion," 295.
  81. "To William Short" (Aug. 4, 1820) F 15.257; Healey, "Jefferson on Judaism and the Jews," 363, 366.
  82. "To Joseph Priestly" (April 9, 1803) F 9.458–59; "To Edward Dowse, Esq." L 10.376–377; "To Doctor Benjamin Rush" (April 21, 1803) L 10.382–85; "To William Short" (Aug. 4, 1820) L 15.260; Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 45, 54ff.; Healey, "Jefferson on Judaism and the Jews," 365.
  83. "To Charles Thomson" (Jan. 9, 1816) F 11.498; "To Benjamin Rush" (April 21, 1803) L 10.380.
  84. *Jefferson and Madison on Separation*, 166–70.
  85. Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 118.
  86. "To John Adams" (Oct. 13, 1813) L 13.390; "To John Adams" (July 15, 1814) F 11.397–98; "To Charles Thomson" (Jan. 19, 1816) F 11.498–99; "To F. A. van der Kemp" (April 25, 1816) L 15.2–3; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 118.
  87. Albert Schweitzer, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus: A Critical Study of Its Progress from Reimarus to Wrede* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1968), 309, 319.



88. "To Peter Carr" (Aug. 10, 1787) F 5.324–25; "To William Short" (Aug. 4, 1820) F 15.257; Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 57. In more recent times, the Third Quest for the historical Jesus has developed more objective criteria. John P. Meier, a leading figure in the quest, says that miraculous narratives go back to the time of Jesus. There are too many independent, first-century sources that speak of Jesus as a miracle worker to discount these narratives as later additions. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 2.619, 622.
89. "To Charles Thomson" (Jan. 9, 1816) F 11.498; "To Francis van der Kemp" (April 25, 1816) L 15.2–3.
90. *Jefferson and Madison on Separation*, 257, 277–331; Sanford, "The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson," 63–65; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 126, 130–31; Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 65; Mapp, *The Faiths of Our Fathers*, 16. See Foote's discussion on pp. 61–67 for the evolution of the work. It consists of clippings from the four canonical Gospels in Greek, Latin, French, and English, arranged in parallel columns. It was published later on as "Jefferson's Bible"—a Bible that omits the OT and letters of Paul.
91. "To John Adams" (Aug. 22, 1813) F 11.333–34; "To William Short" (Oct. 31, 1819) F 12.141–42; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 112.
92. *The Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Joseph Priestly* (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1972), 5.14, 16–19, 25–30, 87; 18.9, 17, 19, 25–27. Priestly says that the Apostles and the early Jewish Christians (Ebionites and Nazarenes) did not revere Jesus as divine. Justin Martyr was the first to personify Jesus as the *Logos* of John 1.
93. *Ibid.*, 2.386, 408–409.
94. *Ibid.*, 2.109, 130–39; 5.103–106.
95. "To William Short" (Oct. 31, 1819) F 12.142; "To Ezra Styles, Esq." (June 25, 1819) L 15.203–204; Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 57–59.
96. Mapp, *The Faiths of Our Fathers*, 19.
97. "To James Smith" (Dec. 28, 1822) L 15.408–409; "To John Adams" (Aug. 22, 1813) F 11.326–29.
98. George H. Knoles, "The Religious Ideas of Thomas Jefferson," in *Thomas Jefferson: A Profile*, Merrill D. Peterson (ed.) (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 253.
99. "To William Short" (April 13, 1820) L 15.245.
100. "To Samuel Kercheval [William Baldwin]" (Jan. 19, 1810) L 12.345, 356.
101. Mapp, *The Faiths of Our Fathers*, 11; "To Benjamin Rush" (April 21, 1803) F 9.457.
102. *Jefferson and Madison on Separation*, 240–41, 368–69; "To Doctor Benjamin Waterhouse" (June 26, 1822) L 15.384–85. Calvin "was indeed an atheist, which I can never be, or rather his religion was daemonism." "To John Adams" (April 11, 1823) L 15.425.
103. *Ibid.*, 75 ["To Marquis de Chastellux" (Sept. 2, 1785)]. It is worth noting that the early Puritans of New England also barred the clergy from holding public office, even if their motives were much different. Lambert, *The Founding Fathers*, 82–83.
104. *Ibid.*; "To P. H. Wendover" (March 13, 1815) L 14.282–83; Leonard W. Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1994), 70–72; Hamburger, *The Separation of Church and State*, 81–88, 135; David N. Mager, *The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 165; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 136–37, 227–28. He rejects his former

- position of excluding the clergy from office in the face of mounting criticism but then reinstates it in his Bill for Establishing a System of Public Education (1817). “To Jeremiah Moor” (Aug. 14, 1800) F 9.142–43.
105. Leonard W. Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties: The Darker Side* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), 9.
  106. *Notes on Virginia* (1782) F 4.62; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 35.
  107. “To Rev. Thomas Whittemore” (June 5, 1822) L 15.373–74; “To James Fishback” (Sept. 27, 1809) L 12.315–16 (along with Jefferson’s missing composition draft).
  108. E.g., *Autobiography* (1743–1790) F 1.156.
  109. *Notes on Virginia* (1782) F 4.74–75; “To Marquis de Lafayette” (May 14, 1817) F 12.62; “To John Adams” (May 5, 1817) L 15.108–109.
  110. “To Governor Wilson C. Nicholas” (April 2, 1816) L 14.454; Caleb P. Patterson, *The Constitutional Principles of Thomas Jefferson* (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1967), 173–76.
  111. “To Doctor Benjamin Rush” (Sept. 23, 1800) F 9.148.
  112. *Virginia Statue of Religious Freedom* (1786). While he is often portrayed in the hagiography of American history as a defender of religious tolerance and freedom of speech, a more sober account cannot affirm this portrait so simply. John Quincy Adams, after reading Jefferson’s *Autobiography*, wondered whether the hero of the story had forgotten about his “double dealing character” and “deep duplicity.” Leonard Levy lists a number of hypocritical practices that marked Jefferson’s career. He did not always support the cause of liberty. For example, he sought to prosecute Aaron Burr, based on mere rumor and suspicion after the courts had exonerated him; he supported a bill of attainder, which would convict a suspect without trial, against Josiah Phillips, an alleged Tory outlaw. Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 18, 35, 49–51, 59, 70–71, 158; *Constitutional Opinions: Aspects of the Bill of Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 111, 167, 174–90.
  113. “To P. S. DuPont de Nemours” (April 24, 1816) F 11.523–24; “To George Wythe” (Aug. 13, 1786) F 5.153; Edward J. Power, *Main Currents in the History of Education* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962), 560; Patterson, *The Constitutional Principles*, 174–75.
  114. Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 18.
  115. “To Richard Price” (Jan. 8, 1789), in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Julian P. Boyd (ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 14.420. Hereafter this edition is designated B.
  116. Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 195–96.
  117. “To \_\_\_\_\_” (Feb. 3, 1825) L 16.103–104.
  118. Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 33–38; Robert O. Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation of the Opposition to Jefferson’s Educational Proposals in the Commonwealth of Virginia” (Ph.D. dissertation, Washington, DC: The American University, 1974), 37–44; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 186–87; Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 18.
  119. *Ibid.*, 10–12; Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 197ff.
  120. *Ibid.*, 42.
  121. Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 50.
  122. *Ibid.*, 145.
  123. *A Bill for Amending the Constitution of the College of William and Mary*, B 2.539; Levy, *Jefferson and Civil Liberties*, 9–11; Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 51–52.

124. *Autobiography* (1743–1790) F 1.78; Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 10–11; Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 53–54, 148; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 40.
125. Bishop Meade, *Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1857), 1.29, 175; Thomas Thompson, “Perceptions of a ‘Deist Church’ in Early National Virginia,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, 43–49. Presbyterians reacted to Jefferson’s policies at William and Mary by establishing Transylvania Seminary in Kentucky.
126. Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 166–67.
127. The University of North Carolina was the first state-supported school. Kentucky and Georgia also had public universities before Virginia. James B. Conant, *Thomas Jefferson and the Development of American Public Education* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), 27; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 123.
128. Conant, *Jefferson and the Development of American Education*, 26; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 105.
129. Of course, Jefferson speaks much to the contrary. Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 9.
130. “To James Madison” (Feb. 17, 1826) F 12.456; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 125, 137; Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 148–50.
131. “From the Minutes of the Board of Visitors” (March 4, 1825), in Thomas Jefferson, *Writings* (New York: The Library of America, 1984), 479; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 87, 137–38; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 199–201. Every candidate for the law chair was regarded as a “strict constructionist, states’ rights advocate of the old Dominion school: Thomas Cooper, Francis Walker Gilmer, Henry St. George Tucker, Philip P. Barbour, Peter Carr, William Wirt, and John Taylor Lomax.” Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 153.
132. *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Adrienne Koch and William Peden (eds.) (New York: The Modern Library, 1944), 725–26; Levy *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 144–45.
133. “To William Short” (Oct. 31, 1819) F 12.142; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 157–58, 161ff., 204–5.
134. “Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia” (Aug. 4, 1818), in *Writings*, 467; “To Dr. Thomas Cooper” (Oct. 7, 1814) L 14.200; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 139–40.
135. “To Doctor Thomas Cooper” (Nov. 2, 1822) L 15.405; “From the Minutes of the Board of Visitors” (Oct. 7, 1822), in *Writings*, 477–78; Mayer, *The Constitutional Thought*, 166; Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 139–40; Levy, *The Establishment Clause*, 74–75; *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 12; Garrett Ward Sheldon, “Liberalism, Classicism, and Christianity in Jefferson’s Political Thought,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, 100; Robert Cord, “Mr. Jefferson’s ‘Nonabsolute’ Wall of Separation Between Church and State,” in *Religion and Political Culture*, 179.
136. “Report of the Commissioners for the University of Virginia” (Aug. 4, 1818) and “From the Minutes of the Board of Visitors, University of Virginia” (Oct. 7, 1822), in *Writings*, 467, 477–78; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 170–72, 205–9, 216ff.; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 163; Sanford, “The Religious Beliefs of Thomas Jefferson,” 79.
137. Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 17, 209, 225–26, 253; Levy, *The Establishment Clause*, 73.
138. *Early History of the University of Virginia as Contained in the Letters of Thomas Jefferson and Joseph C. Cabell*, Nathaniel F. Cabell (ed.) (Richmond, VA: J. W. Randolph, 1856), 215–16

- (letter 122, “J. C. C. to T. J.”); 230–231 (letter 130, “J. C. C. to T. J.”); Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 114; Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 179.
139. *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine*, John H. Rice (ed.) (Richmond, VA: Franklin Press, 1820), 3/1 (Jan. 1820), 49; 3/2 (Feb. 1820), 63ff., 72 (“Review” of the *Memoirs* of Joseph Priestly, containing “observations on his writings,” by Thomas Cooper); 3/6 (June 1820), 265–70 (“Instructors of Youth. On the Choice of Instructors of Youth”); Wagoner, *Jefferson and Education*, 102–3, 140–41; Healey, *Jefferson on Religion*, 231ff.; Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 174ff.; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 175–76.
  140. “To Edward Everett” (March 19, 1823) in *Letters and Other Writings of James Madison* (Philadelphia, PA: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1865), 3.307.
  141. Koch, *The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson*, 133–34, 137–38; Evans, *The Theme is Freedom*, 35; David Barton, *Original Intent: The Courts, The Constitution, and Religion* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilder Press, 1997), 319ff.
  142. *Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom* (1786); “To Richard Rush” (May 31, 1813) F 11.292; “To Mrs. M. Harrison Smith” (Aug. 6, 1816) L 15.60. One of the reasons that he is so adverse to making his own religion public is his sense of personal persecution.
  143. *Ibid.*; “Second Inaugural Address” (March 4, 1805), in *Writings*, 519–20; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 109.
  144. “To James Madison” (Dec. 16, 1786) L 6.10–11; “Epitaph” [1826], in *Writings*, 706. Jefferson’s statute was proposed in 1779, but did not become law until 1786. In many ways, it was the culmination of a legislative process with a number of struggles and actors along the way. For example, the Bill of Nov. 1776 already replaced the requirement of church attendance and tithing; but the Anglican Church remained established and the matter of a general assessment to support religion was still an open question. Daniel Dreisbach, “Church-State Debate in the Virginia Legislature: From the Declaration of Rights to the Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom,” in *Religion and Political Culture*, 142–43, 148.
  145. Foote, *The Religion of Thomas Jefferson*, 25–29. Again, Jefferson says, “It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty, or no gods.” *Notes on Virginia* (1782) F 4.78. In its narrowest meaning and in concert with the statute, it means that there is no harm in holding any theological opinion; problems develop with the statement only when the meaning is expanded to deprecate religion or one’s theology as irrelevant to one’s actions or corporate life. Only a Deist could make this kind of ridiculous comment. Jefferson tried in the first draft to establish his own religious sensibilities by submitting future religious expression to the judgment of “reason alone,” but the surreptitious attempt was deleted from the final draft. “A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom,” in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Julian P. Boyd (ed.) (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1950), 2.545; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar of God*, 63–64; Buckley, “The Political Theology of Thomas Jefferson,” 86.
  146. Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 55–59; Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 5; *The Establishment Clause*, 61–62; Woodburn, “An Historical Investigation,” 131.
  147. “To Mssrs. Nehemiah Dodge and Others, a Committee of the Danbury Baptist Association in the State of Connecticut” (Jan. 1, 1802), in *Writings*, 510; “To the Attorney General (Levi Lincoln)” (Jan. 1, 1802) L 10.305; Daniel Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation Between Church and State* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2002), 17, 41ff., 46, 48, 56, 185; Dreisbach, “Mr. Jefferson, a Mammoth Cheese, . . .,” 738;

- Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 159–62; Levy, *Jefferson & Civil Liberties*, 7. He drops a specific reference to his refusal to make the proclamation in an earlier draft, lest he offend his Republican constituency up North by going too far. He also strikes out the adjective “eternal” in front of the term “separation,” as well as references to the role of the federal government as “merely temporal” and secular. His practice in regard to fast days is marked by political pragmatism. *Autobiography* (1743–1790) F 1.12; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 58, 59. His northern constituency is less radical than Jefferson in regard to church/state relations. Isaac Backus, the leader of Baptists in the North, does not advocate the severe, Jeffersonian position of John Leland and some Virginia Baptists on public religion. Backus never accepted the Deism and anti-clericalism that divorced religion from public life, and even accepted the privileged status of Protestant Christianity. He never “opposed the fact that the Westminster Confession of Faith was mandatory for all Massachusetts school children, nor did he object to laws against ‘profanity, blasphemy, gambling, theater-going, and desecration of the Sabbath, which [he] accepted as within the domain of the government in its preservation of a Christian society.’” Owen, “The Struggle Between Religion and Nonreligion,” 500; William G. McLoughlin, *New England Dissent 1630–1883: The Baptists and the Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), 2.103; Isaac Backus, *A Door Opened to Christian Liberty* (Boston, 1783), in *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism*, McLoughlin (ed.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968), 436–38; *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Baptists* (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 2.321; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation*, 49, 53; Joe Cocker, *Isaac Backus and John Leland: Baptist Contributions to Religious Liberty in the Founding Era*, in *FFAR*, 319–20, 324–27; Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar*, 107; Stephen Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 259–60; *The Writings of John Leland*, L. F. Greene (ed.) (New York: Arno Press and The New York Times, 1969), 118–19, 122, 182, 184, 354, 441, 446, 475, 564. A couple of days after writing the letter, Jefferson attended a service in the House of Representatives, where Leland spoke of the president as wiser than Solomon. Hamburger says that the dissenters did not endorse a separation of church and state. They led the fight against establishment but saw religion as the moral fabric of society. Even strict separationists were forced to back down on this specific point. The Baptists ignored Jefferson’s letter, and no Baptist organization advocated church/state separation. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 19–20, 29, 65–78, 92, 177.
148. The concept of a wall antedates Jefferson. It is used by some notable authors: Richard Hooker, Menno Simons, Roger Williams, and James Burgh. The specific source matters little in understanding Jefferson’s concept, but a good guess is James Burgh (1714–1775), a dissenting Scottish schoolmaster, whom Jefferson read and admired. Burgh thought of religion as a private matter and used the metaphor extensively in his works. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 71–81; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 56–57, 63. Separatist groups spoke of a wall to protect the church from worldly influence. Burgh was concerned with the power of established churches. James Burgh, *Crito, or Essays on Various Subjects* (London, 1766–67), 1.7; 2.116–19.

149. His severe position develops early on, as we can see in his *Commonplace Book*. The excerpts reject that Christianity played a role in the common law tradition of England. He cites the work “Houard in his Coutumes Anglo-Normandes, I.87,” which speaks of the “alliance between church and state” as a fraud of the clergy and refers to their falsification of Alfred’s laws with “four surreptitious chapters of Exodus [20–23].” The Bible and its Decalogue are not part of the common law. CB 351ff. (873–79), 362–63 (879); Ethan Bercot, “Forgetting to Weight: The Use of History in the Supreme Court’s Establishment Clause,” *Georgetown Law Journal* 102/3 (2014): 847; Buckley, “The Political Theology of Thomas Jefferson,” 101.
150. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (trans.) (Baltimore, MD and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), xxxi–xxxii, xxxvii–xxxviii, 145, 239, 255.
151. Derrida, *Limited Inc*, Samuel Weber (trans.) (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 58, 133, 149.
152. E.g., “To De Witt Clinton” (May 24, 1807) F 9.63. Of course, this statement is contradicted elsewhere. He tells his nephew Peter Carr that it is possible to find “incitement to virtue” without belief in God. Religion only provides “additional incitement.” “To Peter Carr” (Aug. 10, 1787) F 4.431–32.
153. “To John Adams” (May 5, 1817) L 15.109; Buckley, “Religion and the Presidency of Thomas Jefferson,” 88–89.
154. *Autobiography*, L 1.9–10; “Resolution of the House of Burgesses Designating a Day of Fasting and Prayer,” in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 1.105–106; “Bill for Appointing Days of Public Fasting and Thanksgiving,” in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 2.556; “Proclamation Appointing a Day of Thanksgiving and Prayer,” in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 3.177–79; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 58–59; “Mr. Jefferson, a Mammoth Cheese, . . .,” 738–39; “Religion and Legal Reforms in Revolutionary Virginia,” 199–202; Cord, “Mr. Jefferson’s ‘Nonabsolute’ Wall,” 173. He also sponsored a “Bill for Punishing Disturbers of Religious Worship and Sabbath Breakers,” punishing those who labor or employ labor on Sunday with a fine of ten shillings per offense. Even as president, he provided assistance for a Presbyterian school among the Cherokee. He also approved of a treaty that provided “support of a priest” ministering to the Kaskaska tribe and 300 dollars to erect a church.
155. Daniel Dreisbach supplies the best attempt at a uniform interpretation of his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, although he admits to some tension within his position. He says the letter is advocating federalism. Jefferson understands the First Amendment as leaving religion to the states. The letter allows for a broad interpretation but only on the federal level. Dreisbach also points to his policies in Virginia to show that disestablishment does not imply strict separation—at least on the state level. *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 54, 63–65, 192–94; “Mr. Jefferson, a Mammoth Cheese, . . .,” 739–40; “Religion and Legal Reforms in Revolutionary Virginia,” 201–2. At the very least, one can say that Jefferson has enough integrity not to abuse the First Amendment and pretend that it calls for a strict separation on the federal and state level, even if he wishes the country would proceed in this direction.
156. See n.149.

157. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 111–12, 144ff.; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 28–29; Thompson, “Perceptions of a ‘Deist Church,’” 46; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 109ff., 121–22. See nn.103–104. Some Republicans like Tunis Wortman and Abraham Bishop joined Jefferson in wanting to silence the Federalist clergy. Tunis Wortman, “A Solemn Address to Christians and Patriots” [New York, 1800], in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era 1730–1805*, E. Sandoz (ed.) (Indianapolis, IN: Liberty Press, 1991), 1481–85; Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 261–62.
158. Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 34, 44–45.





# The Development of the Wall

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## James Madison

There was no greater political ally in helping to forward the basic agenda of Jefferson on religious issues than James Madison. The two Virginians shared almost identical convictions on the issues, although the precise nature of Madison's "private" religious opinions remains much more obscure than those of his distinguished colleague, whose "private" letters were published and filled with theological commentary. Unfortunately, Madison says very little about the subject in his public words and writings, only some vague testimony about his belief in a "God All Powerful, wise and good," who is "essential to the moral order of the World" and a terse comment later in life about Christianity being the "best and purest religion."<sup>1</sup> And yet, it is well-known that religion played an important role in his early and overall maturation. At the age of twelve, he was sent to a boarding school and tutored by Rev. Donald Robertson, the Scottish Presbyterian headmaster, who instructed him in the classics, literature, science, and Reformed theology. Four years later, he went to Princeton, the academic bastion of New Light Presbyterianism, and experienced particular inspiration from its president, John Witherspoon, who applied his religious convictions to the "general principles of law and politics" and inspired many future leaders of the nation with his criticism of Tory policies and firm belief in religious liberty.<sup>2</sup> As a Virginian, Madison also experienced the

surge of Baptists, Presbyterians, and other dissidents entering the state during the times of the Great Awakening and dominating his region as the majority of the citizens. Both he and Jefferson attended their meetings and joined their push for religious freedom as faithful representatives of the people.<sup>3</sup>

Madison's concern for the issue escalated into a zealous crusade when certain Baptist ministers were jailed in Anglican-controlled Culpepper County for simply preaching their version of the gospel, causing him to develop the most uncompromising position. He began to speak out as early as 1774 about this type of injustice within the established order and developed an extreme view of religious freedom for the time, exceeding the expectations of many reformers, rejecting all talk of toleration as the halfway measure of a religious establishment, and wanting to end its privileges altogether.<sup>4</sup> At the revolutionary convention of Virginia in the summer of 1776, Madison sought to amend George Mason's version of the *Declaration of Rights* with much stronger language about the "free exercise of religion" as an "absolute right." Mason's proposal provided the "fullest toleration" to "all men," whereas Madison went beyond this condescending language of an established order and afforded the "full and free exercise" of everyone's religion, rejecting the "peculiar emoluments or privileges" of a specific religious expression, not just its overt acts of persecution.<sup>5</sup>

Much of the battle came to a head a few years later when a majority of the Virginia legislature wanted to help financially strapped religious institutions through a general assessment supporting "Teachers of the Christian Religion." The measure was sponsored by Patrick Henry and supported by many distinguished politicians in the state, including George Washington, John Marshall, Edmund Randolph, and Richard Henry Lee. With Jefferson serving as a plenipotentiary minister in France, the task fell on the shoulders of Madison to lead the Baptists and other dissident groups in opposing the bill.<sup>6</sup> In the spring of 1785, Madison wrote his famous "Memorial and Remonstrance" attacking establishments in general and Henry's assessment in particular. He argued that the legal establishment of Christianity has led to political tyranny throughout its 1500 years of existence. "In some instances they have been seen to erect a spiritual tyranny on the ruins of civil authority; in many instances they have been seen upholding the thrones of political tyranny; in no instances have they been seen the guardians of the liberties of the people."<sup>7</sup> His solution was to disestablish the Anglican Church, as well as deny public support for the Christian religion and its many sects.<sup>8</sup> His "Memorial and Remonstrance" collected over 1,500 signatures in the central Piedmont, Shenandoah Valley, and Northern Neck, helping to turn the tables and develop overwhelming state-wide disapproval of the bill. Because of Madison's leadership, the measure was defeated and used to forward Jefferson's earlier "Bill

for Establishing Religious Freedom” (*Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*), which was signed into law on January 19, 1786, and served as an important symbol of disestablishment throughout the country.<sup>9</sup>

Alongside his struggles in Virginia, the name of James Madison is forever linked with the cause of religious liberty through his sponsorship of the first ten amendments to the Constitution. Within his first draft, Madison proposed a couple of amendments that would guarantee freedom of religious beliefs and practices, prohibit the establishment of “any national religion,” and extend the “equal rights of conscience” to the many states.<sup>10</sup> After a number of counter-proposals and drafts, the delegates approved a single amendment upon religious liberty, which reads, “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.” The final version represents the work of the entire Convention, although Madison served as the guiding light in the overall process and became known as the “Father of the Constitution.” The actual wording seems to pacify the concerns of northern delegates and sounds much like the proposals made by Fisher Ames of Massachusetts and Samuel Livermore of New Hampshire, both wanting to protect local establishments from the intrusion of federal policies.<sup>11</sup> Because of this and other concerns, Madison was unable to extend the dominion of the amendment to the many states, even though his fundamental goal was reached by protecting the free exercise of religion and prohibiting the establishment of a national church. Certainly, if Jefferson and Madison obtained all that they wanted in their most doctrinaire moments, the amendment would have called for the complete secularization of government in all its realms, but this doctrine would go far beyond the political realities of the day. Even Madison’s comments during the debate, as recorded in the annals of Congress on August 15, 1789, appear to limit the scope of the amendment and follow a narrow reading of its intention.<sup>12</sup> There is no talk of separating the sacred and the secular.<sup>13</sup> There is only the desire to prevent the American government from following the example of Europe and establishing a religious institution of its own. While the states are free to continue their practice—many of which allowed townships to establish a church in their districts—the federal government would not seek to establish such an institution; and that is all. If more was intended (and the words are ambiguous), there is little direct proof of a broader reading at the Convention or during the ratification process among the many states, which lean toward the narrow reading of the text, if anything.<sup>14</sup> If one wants to follow a broader meaning, one must find its justification within modern hermeneutical principles, which allow greater freedom and seek to expand or deconstruct the meaning of the text in other directions, beyond the original intentment.

Did Madison intend to proceed all the way in the paradigm toward a complete separation of church and state? The total evidence involves the same equivocations

that Jefferson also expressed throughout his career and writings, with a more doctrinaire position appearing only later in Madison's life, once political motives were set aside and no longer served as an obstacle in expressing his heartfelt convictions. For those who reject the wall of separation and look to Madison as an authority in favor of their viewpoint, there is plenty of evidence to support their interpretation. There is his belief that religion is essential to the moral order—a conviction he shares with Jefferson and the rest of the Founding Fathers.<sup>15</sup> There is the continuous God-talk in his public addresses, referring to “Divine Providence,” the “Divine Author of Every Good and Perfect Gift,” the “Sovereign of the Universe, and Benefactor of mankind,” testifying to a belief in a personal and Christian concept of deity and expressing gratitude for divine grace and goodness to the nation.<sup>16</sup> He exhorted the American people to

...offer, at one and the same time their common vows and adorations to Almighty God...for the devout purpose of rendering to the Sovereign of the Universe and the Benefactor of Mankind the public homage to His holy attributes; of acknowledging the transgressions which might justly provoke the manifestations of His divine displeasure; of seeking His merciful forgiveness, and His assistance in the great duties of repentance and amendment, and especially of offering fervent supplications that in the present season of calamity and war He would take the American people under His peculiar care and protection; that He would guide their public councils, animate their patriotism, and bestow His blessing on their arms; that He would inspire all nations with a love of justice and of concord and with a reverence for the unerring precept of our holy religion, to do to others as they would require that others would do to them; ...<sup>17</sup>

There is evidence of him supporting civil religious practices. While serving in the Virginia state legislature, he endorsed the use of chaplains and days of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving, exacting a penalty of fifty pounds upon non-conforming ministers who refuse obeisance to the civil religion.<sup>18</sup> As President of the United States, he issued four proclamations of prayer and fasting, beginning on July 9, 1812, with the outbreak of British hostilities and recognizing in all of them the need to seek divine guidance and blessing.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, Madison's absolute and unequivocal position of total separation appears to emerge later in his life, only when political considerations and practical compromises no longer interfere with his intentions. Here he speaks in unequivocal terms of a “total separation of the Church and the State” as a Constitutional principle.<sup>20</sup> “In the Papal System, Government and Religion are in a manner consolidated, & that is found to be the worst of Govts.”<sup>21</sup> He considers any coalition between religion and government as destructive to both institutions and wants the separation applied to the many states, along with other “rights of conscience.”<sup>22</sup> In his “Detached Memoranda,” he rejects military and congressional chaplains as a

violation of the First Amendment and even repudiates his former proclamations of prayer and thanksgiving, offering a number of excuses for his lapse: he only followed the precedent of Washington and Adams while serving in office; he was “disinclined” to do so until Congress forced his hand; he left the observance “up to the people to express it” according to “their own faith & forms;” he always made the proclamations non-sectarian and voluntary, and so forth.<sup>23</sup> What emerges from his explanation is a person who wanted to please the majority while serving as the president and knew the majority rejected his absolute view of church/state separation, making it necessary to compromise and seek divine blessing as a nation in uniting the people.<sup>24</sup> He might find it difficult to “trace the line” and avoid all collisions between the rights of religion and civil authority,<sup>25</sup> but his basic proclivity is found in separating the two realms as much as possible; this doctrinaire position appears to represent his mature and fundamental position.

## John Adams

It was the power of the French Enlightenment and the process of secularization that brought to fruition the basic designs of Jefferson and Madison more than any statute or government policy. Many of the leading figures of eighteenth-century America were convinced secularists and preferred to attribute the creation of the Constitution to the powers of reason or secular historical antecedents than theological dogma. These sons of the Enlightenment produced many works that demonstrate the overall bias, but one of the best examples of the mentality is found in John Adams’ *Defence of the Constitutions of the United States of America*. The first volume was finished just in time to enjoy a wide circulation among the delegates at the beginning of the Constitutional Convention, and the next two volumes were completed a year later.<sup>26</sup> The work represents the growing secularity of America, even more so than Jefferson’s writings, as it simply neglects to mention the religious moorings of the country and looks to other “secular” sources for inspiration, rather than conduct an open or direct assault upon the church. In the preface of the work, Adams claims that the American way of government resulted from the hard work of reason and consultation with scientific writers in the field, not “interviews with the gods” or the “inspiration of Heaven.”<sup>27</sup> He bestows much credit on a number of “secular” experiments in history, extending back to Ancient Greece and Rome, as well as his own considerable ability to analyze their strengths and weaknesses. No direct assault is launched upon the Judeo-Christian tradition *per se*, but through his neglect of mentioning anything significant in the tradition, the work reflects the anti-Semitic and anti-Christian bias of the Enlightenment.

Adams begins his history in the Graeco-Roman world. He mentions the experiment of Solon in Athens as inspiring the Romans and later European models toward a nascent form of democracy and mixed government. The Athenian experiment and other ancient republics are commended as providing an invaluable source of inspiration to Rome and the many Italian republics in the Middle Ages, even if they ultimately failed in the march toward perfection because of an inadequate system of checks and balances.<sup>28</sup> The Puritan Revolution is afforded just a few lines and only mentioned to dismiss its importance as an “unsuccessful and injudicious attempt to abolish monarchy and aristocracy.” Cromwell, Ireton, and all its other leaders are treated as “mad with enthusiasm” and discarded as irrelevant, providing no source of inspiration or example worthy of emulation for the coming era.<sup>29</sup> Instead, Adams prefers to exalt those who offered a more sober, scientific analysis of government than these religious zealots. He gives special credit to Machiavelli for reviving the rational approach of Plato and Aristotle to political discourse. He also mentions many others like Harrington, Milton, Sidney, Locke, Montesquieu, Swift, Franklin, and Price as the “greatest lights of humanity” for helping to establish the modern concept of republican government.<sup>30</sup> Harrington is given much credit for the discovery of checks and balances—“a noble discovery, of which the honor solely belongs to him, as much as the circulation of the blood to Harvey, printing to Laurence Coster, or the invention of guns, compasses, or optic glasses to the several authors.”<sup>31</sup> (Of course, the honor belongs to him because the other authors of the Puritan Revolution used Bible verses to prove practically the same point, and secular or philosophical approaches are what Adams wants to honor as worthy of esteem.)

Adams believes that the evolution of political thought has reached a level of perfection in England and America unsurpassed by all others with its clear separation of executive, legislative, and judicial branches.<sup>32</sup> Most of his work is devoted to spelling out the reason why a proper separation and balance is necessary for preserving a free republic.<sup>33</sup> His argument is filled with detailed historical analyses and rational disputation, which exhibit extensive learning and a considerable amount of thought,<sup>34</sup> but what he fails to understand in all its ratiocinations is the significant debt he and his country owes to the Christian faith, especially to the Puritans of his state of Massachusetts. Regardless of his belief in objective research and rational analysis, he like any other interpreter of history or literature reads texts and considers ideas through the context of a cultural background.<sup>35</sup> His own Puritan culture believed in the separation and balance of powers, and he reads the past and reasons to conclusions like anyone else in a certain *Sitz im Leben*, ever remaining within the interpretive matrix of that culture. Adams might provide further justification for the doctrine and develop his unique statement or idiom.

He might serve the culture as an unconscious or unwitting member of its point of view. He might have no idea how much a role Christianity played in developing the basic outline of government in his country or his own way of thinking, but the evidence of this influence is beyond dispute. Even his mode of argumentation remains indebted as much to faith as it does to his rational acuity. No better illustration of this influence is found than the continuous accent upon human depravity throughout his work as providing the fundamental rationale for separating and balancing powers. Human depravity is a unique doctrine of Christian anthropology, strongly emphasized by the Reformed theology of New England and most essential in distinguishing its confession from all other religions and philosophies in the world. Christianity teaches a darker view of the human condition than other ideologies with its emphasis upon original sin, the accent upon confession, and the complete dependence upon divine grace. Adams argues throughout his work from this concept of human depravity, believing no set of circumstances or values can alleviate the dark condition in which all of us are born. The selfish impulses are much stronger than any positive affection that public service might inflame toward the good of our fellow citizens. The ambitions of politicians cannot be eradicated in this life, but only held in check by a system of government that prevents the hubris of one person or group from obtaining uncontrolled power.<sup>36</sup> This same argument is repeated time and again in Montesquieu, Madison, and all those who defend the need for balancing and separating powers in the modern world—an argument indebted in a most decided way to the dark image of the human condition in Christian anthropology.<sup>37</sup>

In contrast to his secular works, Adam's overt political stance often represents or accommodates the religious affections of his constituency. His exact motives are difficult to ascertain and subject to the same sort of deconstruction that recognizes the contradictions in Jefferson and Madison and problems dividing their actual (or changing) point of view from the reality of political posturing. A good example is the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, which was drafted, edited, and enacted under the leadership of John Adams, and reflects the need for compromise between elements within the constituency—the Congregationalists who want an establishment to bolster their small, struggling churches and the dissenters who want religious liberty but think of Protestantism as the necessary foundation of that liberty.<sup>38</sup> The new Constitution reflects these concerns and stipulates that all state officials and appointees “believe and profess the Christian religion” and “abjure all allegiance” to any foreign power—civil or ecclesiastical.<sup>39</sup> It says that all human beings have a sacred duty to worship God at “stated seasons” in the public forum. The “publick Worship of God” and “publick instructions in piety, religion, and morality” are necessary in preserving “good order” and “civil government.”<sup>40</sup>

It supports the rights of conscience for dissidents but allows local officials to continue the colonial practice of requiring attendance and financial support of their Congregational churches, with a possible exception for dissidents, if they are able to establish their own fellowship within a community.<sup>41</sup> Later Adams describes the arrangement as providing a “most mild and equitable establishment”<sup>42</sup> and provides some apologetic testimony for its provisions in his writings,<sup>43</sup> but it remains difficult to separate his endorsement from the desires of his constituency and ascertain what he really thinks in an ideal world. On the surface, the interpreter is left with the contradictions of a man who is caught between his own Puritan culture and the ideology of the French Enlightenment—a man who finds religion the foundation of civil government and then turns around and disavows the Puritan background of his own political ideas in the name of rational secularity.

## Liberals and Republicans

The Christian roots of the nation started to fade into distant memory as the tide of secularization began to engulf the whole country. By the second half of the nineteenth century, a number of groups began to advocate a revision of the First Amendment, calling for a complete separation of church and state. One of the most strident groups was the National Liberal League, founded in 1866 by Francis Abbot. Its main goal was the “TOTAL SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE,” as “the very corner-stone of the American Republic.”<sup>44</sup> At their convention that year, they decried “any interference by religion in the affairs of society and the State.”<sup>45</sup> “Christianity...is by its very nature hostile to individual and national liberty, and to equal individual rights.”<sup>46</sup> “Christianity...is averse to republicanism, [and so] the education of the masses out of [the] religion is an absolute necessity for the perpetuation of this Republic.”<sup>47</sup> “Universal education is the only safeguard of universal liberty; no child in the republic should be permitted to grow up without at least a good common school education; the public school system cannot be sustained in equal justice to all except by confining it strictly to secular instruction.”<sup>48</sup> Our public institutions are degraded by the very presence of religion.<sup>49</sup> America was founded by “liberals and free thinkers,” who rejected the hatred of sectarian religious groups, and “succeeded in placing the general government upon a purely secular basis.”<sup>50</sup> The Liberal League wanted to replace the First Amendment with a new amendment, which rejected any union between church and state in all levels of government. The articles of the amendment spelled out some specific demands, including the end of religious tests and tax support for religious sects, schools, and charities.<sup>51</sup> Alongside the amendment, the league also listed a



number of additional demands in their Convention of 1876: (1) the taxation of churches, (2) the elimination of public chaplains, (3) the end of Bible-reading in schools, (4) the rejection of all laws based upon “Christian” morals, (5) the end of Sabbatarian laws, (6) the end of religious fasts and holidays, and (7) the elimination of judicial oaths.<sup>52</sup>

## The Blaine Amendment

Shortly after the liberals began to organize and exercise their political muscle, the President of the United States, Ulysses S. Grant, adopted the essential spirit of their agenda as a part of his Republican platform. On September 30, 1875, he rallied some of his former troops in Des Moines, Iowa for the coming election and warned them concerning the divisive nature of religious superstition in the Republic, hoping to prevent a new “civil war.”

Comrades: It always affords me much satisfaction to meet my old comrades in arms ten to fourteen years ago, and to live over again in memory the trials and hardships of those days,—hardships imposed for the preservation and perpetuation of our free institutions. We believed then and believe now that we had a government worth fighting for, and, if need be, dying for.... Let us, then, begin by guarding against every enemy threatening the perpetuity of free republican institutions.... If we are to have another contest in the near future of our national existence, I predict that the dividing line will not be Mason and Dixon’s, but it will be between patriotism and intelligence on one side and superstition, ambition and ignorance on the other. Now, in this centennial year of our national existence, I believe it is a good time to begin the work of strengthening the house commenced by our patriotic forefathers one hundred years ago at Concord and Lexington. Let us all labor to add all needful guarantees for the perfect security of free thought, free speech, and free press, unfettered religious sentiments, and of *equal rights and privileges to all men, irrespective of nationality, color, or religion*. Encourage free schools, and resolve that not one dollar appropriated to their support, no matter how raised, shall be appropriated to the support of any sectarian school. Resolve that neither the State or nation, nor both combined, shall support institutions of learning other than those sufficient to afford every child growing up in the land the opportunity of a good common school education, *unmixed with sectarian, pagan, or atheistical tenets. Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private school, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the Church and State forever separate*. With these safeguards I believe the battles which created the Army of Tennessee will not have been fought in vain.<sup>53</sup>

In December of 1875, Grant went to Congress and urged them to pass a new constitutional amendment that would make “Church and State for ever separate and

distinct,” that would require the states to provide “free public schools” for all children, that would forbid religious and anti-religious instruction in the classroom, that would prohibit any level of government from using “school funds or taxes” to benefit a “religious sect or denomination.”<sup>54</sup> A week later James G. Blaine, who was a congressman from Maine and presidential hopeful within the Republican Party, seized upon the popular momentum and offered an amendment for legislative consideration.<sup>55</sup> The amendment read,

No State shall make any law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; and no money raised by taxation in any State for the support of public schools, or derived from any public fund thereof, nor any public lands devoted thereto, shall ever be under control of any religious sect, nor shall any money so raised or lands so devoted be divided between religious sects or denominations.<sup>56</sup>

The amendment enjoyed broad support at the time and particularly appealed to the many sides of Blaine’s constituency. Many Republicans preceded the nation in advocating the Jeffersonian doctrine of church/state separation from the very beginning of the party in the early nineteenth century, showing a tendency to apply his strict interpretation of the First Amendment to all levels of government, encouraging the development of a public/secular system of education, and hoping to prevent religious schools from receiving public funds. The Jeffersonian agenda experienced some success in places like Michigan, which led several other states to promote a secular view of government and adopt the strict doctrine of separation in its constitutional framework of 1835; but much of the impetus among other states came later when Catholic immigrants poured into the country and presented an imminent danger to the Protestant hegemony and its concerns over preserving the American way of life.<sup>57</sup> These Americans viewed Protestantism as the foundation of Republican government and Catholicism as a threat to individual freedom. They saw Catholicism and its hierarchical system of polity undermining the democratic spirit of most Protestant churches and challenging the quasi-Protestant character of the common schools.<sup>58</sup> Few of them were able to divorce religion and morality, or denude an educational system from the basic principles that supported good citizenship and their basic view of government and culture.<sup>59</sup> This meant that the common schools must inculcate their general Protestant values through preaching liberty, equality, and democracy, and must add religious exercises like the singing of Protestant hymns, daily prayer, and the reading of the King James Bible to underscore the message.<sup>60</sup> When Catholics challenged these religious practices and set up their own parochial schools, Protestants sought to preserve their privileged status and prevent Catholics from siphoning off public funds away from the common schools toward a sectarian purpose through devices like the Blaine

Amendment. The congressional debate included vitriolic, anti-Catholic polemics concerning the un-American nature of the religion, clearly hoping to capitalize on Protestant fears and bigotry.<sup>61</sup>

The results of the debate were mixed. The measure failed to garner the necessary two-thirds majority in the Senate by a slim margin, after roaring through the House with an overwhelming majority of 180 to 7. However, Congress proceeded in subsequent sessions to compel the new territories into adopting Blaine-like amendments as a condition for entering the union, and some thirty states enacted similar measures by the early part of the twentieth century—some preceding, while others followed the congressional debate.<sup>62</sup> At the turn of the century, the process of watering down religious content within the common schools was transpiring on its own, apart from Catholic complaints, as the culture sought to include as many children as possible and adopt a non-sectarian or secular approach to teaching.<sup>63</sup> With the defeat of the amendment, the attempt to create a more secular government on the federal level was set aside—at least for the time being, and it was left up to the states or local municipalities to pass their own versions. While liberal newspapers and organizations continued to press the issue throughout the rest of the century, the political will soon collapsed after 1876, and liberal Americans were left looking for another avenue to help change the federal government into their secular image and establish secularism as the law of the land.<sup>64</sup>

## The Court

What the liberals could not accomplish through the legislature they were able to secure through the courts of the country as it moved into the twentieth century. For the most part, the liberals of the nineteenth century understood that the First Amendment required a substantial change in its wording to develop a stronger doctrine of separation. But tactics changed when new hermeneutical procedures allowed the courts to become more flexible and activist in applying the law to present circumstances.<sup>65</sup> Legal realists like Oliver Wendell Holmes began to sanction the practical realities of his profession, admitting that judges seldom act in accordance with the authorial intent of the Constitution but often fill in gaps, make deductions, and work for a good social outcome. In the 1920s and 1930s, this position worked its way through the most prestigious law schools of the land and made its impression upon the United States Supreme Court, redefining its nature.<sup>66</sup> As early as 1934, Chief Justice Charles Evans Hughes could say,

It is no answer to say that this public need was not apprehended a century ago, or to insist that what the provision of the Constitution meant to the vision of that day it

must mean to the vision of our time. If by the statement that what the Constitution meant at the time of its adoption it means today, it is intended to say that the great clauses of the Constitution must be confined to the interpretation which the framer, with the conditions and outlook of their time, would have placed upon them, the statement carries its own refutation. It was to guard against such a narrow conception that Chief Justice Marshall uttered the memorable warning—"We must never forget that it is a constitution that we are expounding... [,] a constitution intended to endure for ages to come, and consequently, to be adapted to the various crises of human affairs."<sup>67</sup>

With hermeneutics no longer restricted to its original intention, the jurists were free to deconstruct or expand the meaning of the Establishment Clause beyond its limited purview and erect a wall between church and state, based on their own "interpretation," cultural biases, and the genuine need to apply the letter of the law to a new and contemporary situation. The jurists were given the freedom to expand the scope of the First Amendment and go beyond its simple rejection of a national church or providing *a priori* privileges to a specific denomination. They broadened the meaning to promote a much more secular agenda and erected a Jeffersonian wall, which proceeded to bar the majority of Americans from expressing their faith in the public square through sacred symbols and rites, promote a secular concept of life through funding non-religious education, and create a secular establishment in the place of religion in general, maintaining that religion has no serious or beneficial influence upon public policy, as if the government existed outside metaphysical concerns. The wall of separation was not erected by the founders of the Constitution but the secular, activist members of the Court, who wished to "read" the First Amendment in that way, using a more flexible set of hermeneutical principles.

The first mention of the wall is found in *Reynolds v. United States* (1879), just after Grant's administration and its call for the separation of church and state, already indicating the political nature of any interpretation provided by the Court.<sup>68</sup> In this case, the Court ruled against the Mormons and outlawed the practice of polygamy, claiming it violated social norms, disturbed public peace, and represented the despotic practices of the past that were inimical to democratic principles.<sup>69</sup> The Court helped substantiate its case by referring to the words of Madison and Jefferson in their original debate over religious establishment in Virginia and quoting the famous paragraph concerning the wall of separation in Jefferson's letter to the Baptists, treating it as if it contained an authoritative interpretation of the "scope and effect" of the First Amendment. Its verdict was important in helping to open a door toward the doctrine of separation, although it only cited the words of Jefferson without endorsing any specific interpretation or

expanding on what it found so meaningful in the letter. It took the Supreme Court another seventy years before it erected the wall in more unequivocal language. The Court referred to *Reynold v. United States* in its decision as setting an important precedent, although it was not until this later time that the consciousness of the Court was changed decisively through the use of the famous metaphor.<sup>70</sup>

The latter decision was the work of Justice Hugo Black, a New Deal Democrat from the great state of Alabama. As a populist, Black was furious with the elitist Court early in his political career for turning down New Deal legislation and even approved of Roosevelt's attempt to pack the Court by appointing more jurists than stipulated by the Constitution.<sup>71</sup> When this strategy failed, Roosevelt proceeded along the more typical political lines of waiting for a vacancy and appointing a jurist in favor of one's overall political philosophy. Eventually, Hugo Black was tapped and became an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 1937. Black certainly represented a basic commitment to the left-wing ideology of the administration, which was leading the country into secular, egalitarian, and socialist policies.<sup>72</sup> In his early days, there were some problems with his profile as a member of the Baptist Church and the Ku Klux Klan,<sup>73</sup> but Black clearly distanced himself from his past and matured into much the opposite during his tenure in Washington, leaving his former religious convictions back in the Bible Belt, becoming a secular liberal progressive, and identifying with the ideology of authors like Dewey, Russell, and Camus—the foremost atheists of the day.<sup>74</sup> Roger Newman, his leading biographer, describes him as basically an “irreligious man,” who “drifted from organized religion,” except for an occasional visit to All Souls Unitarian Church.<sup>75</sup> The constant force in his life was Thomas Jefferson, whom he admired as a Bible-believing Baptist and a secular atheist in his attempt to separate the government from the corrupting influence of religion. According to the testimony of his son, Jefferson was his father's “number one, number two, and number three” historical hero, especially regarding First Amendment issues.<sup>76</sup>

It is no surprise, given this background, that Black used an opportunity in *Everson v. The Board of Education* (1947) to erect a wall of separation between church and state.<sup>77</sup> The case concerned a statute that authorized the payment of tax dollars for the transportation of Catholic children to and from parochial schools. The Protestant majority had no interest in sectarian education and wanted to keep tax dollars within their own public domain. They were represented by groups like the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs and the predecessor of the National Council of Churches—all united in denying any form of aid to parochial schools and pushing the country toward a strict doctrine of separation out of concerns over the spread of the Catholic menace.<sup>78</sup> Black ruled in favor of the statute since transportation is “indisputably marked off from the religious function” of the schools

and all citizens should receive equal treatment under the law in secular matters. However, the specific ruling was not so memorable as his protestations in trying to pacify the left-wing members of the Court and his constituency, reaffirming in spite of the decision his firm belief in the separation of church and state. It is these comments that set an important precedent in the consciousness of the Court and the land up to the present-day. During this part of the opinion, he declares that the First Amendment “has erected a wall between church and state,” which is “high and impregnable.”<sup>79</sup>

At this point, Justice Black and the rest of the Court felt some sense of obligation to justify their decision by appealing to the intention of the Founding Fathers, rather than underscoring their new freedom and activism in accordance with modern hermeneutical methods. It was here that they particularly went astray, abandoning a more credible appeal to interpretive ambiguity and appealing to the old method of seeking the original intent of the author(s). This decision forced them into practicing the worst sort of revisionist history, pre-selecting and weighing evidence to fit their *a priori* interpretative designs. Thus, to fit their theory, they spoke of the First Amendment as a “direct culmination” of struggles for religious liberty in Virginia, and Thomas Jefferson and James Madison as the “leading” actors in the state and national debate, inflating their secular agenda as much as possible, while ignoring the opinions of legislative bodies and everyone else in the process. They particularly pointed to Madison’s “Memorial and Remonstrance” and Jefferson’s Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom, but ended up conflating the basic argument for disestablishing the Anglican Church in these documents with the more strict doctrine of a wall, which the two Virginians wanted to erect later on and often violated throughout their career in trying to please the *majority*.<sup>80</sup> Of course, the Court used much the same historical argument as their pre-selected sources, blaming sectarian religious groups for most of the “turmoil, civil strife, and persecution” that filled Europe in the past centuries,<sup>81</sup> ignoring the positive contributions of Puritans and other religious groups to their own view of government, and turning a blind eye to the infamous secular atrocities right before them, committed by Hitler and Stalin—both militant atheists and ardent supporters of church/state separation.<sup>82</sup> The Court thought of religion as injurious to the public welfare, based upon the Voltairean view of history, and found it necessary to keep it away from the centers of power at all cost and provide it with no tax support. “No tax in any amount, large or small, can be levied to support religious activities or institutions, whatever they may be called, or whatever form they may adopt to teach or practice religion.”

Thereafter, the concept of separation became an agenda of the Court in its quest to create a secular public arena. The next year, the Court carried out its

intentions with legalistic precision as it declared voluntary religious instruction within the public schools “unconstitutional.” It maintained that church and state “best work to achieve their lofty aims if each is left free from the other within its respective spheres”; it is just that the “lofty aims” of the church need to work without tax dollars and outside the power of government. The case involved a local school board in Champaign, Illinois that provided space during regular school hours for students to receive religious instruction in the faith of their choice. Students could opt out of this instruction if their parents objected to their participation, but these students would need to attend secular classes during that period. In spite of the voluntary nature of the program, the Court struck it down in the name of its wall, maintaining that non-participating students would feel a sense of alienation from their classmates.<sup>83</sup> By using this rationale, the Court clearly moved away from the democratic process in expressing the will of the majority toward emphasizing the “rights” of minorities or non-conforming individuals who feel excluded from the basic religious sentiments of the community.<sup>84</sup> In fact, this argument became normative and fundamental to the Court in subsequent decisions and was sure to shut down any expression of religion if carried out with draconian precision. In rejecting any civil expression or endorsement of religion, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor attempted to make offense the sole criterion. “Endorsement sends a message to nonadherents that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community.”<sup>85</sup> With this type of litmus test, anything the Court labeled as religious must be excluded from the public square as offensive to some minority interest group, whose “rights” not-to-be-offended now trumped the freedom of the majority to express its religious point of view.

In the numerous cases that followed, the Court attempted to eliminate religion from a public sphere that was steeped in its traditions, and the decisions began to lack consistency because of it. For example, the Court allowed chaplains to continue serving the state legislature of Nebraska, pointing to the “unambiguous and unbroken history of more than two hundred years” of this ministry and looking to the heavens for “guidance on the legislative body.”<sup>86</sup> This kind of historical reasoning proved sufficient to create a crack in the wall and some hesitation toward establishing complete secularism in the government, allowing certain long-standing practices to form an exception to the general rule—practices like legislative and military chaplains, tax exemptions for churches, and public displays of historical and religious meaning.<sup>87</sup> In *Lynch v. Donnelly* (1984), a crèche was allowed to continue standing alongside other “secular” symbols of the yuletide season. Justice Warren Burger and the Court thought it necessary to engender a “friendly spirit of good will in keeping with the season” and accommodate the

“historical origins of this traditional event” or “National holiday,” rather than deny its connection through an extreme process of secularization.<sup>88</sup> Justice O’Connor agreed with Burger and said the crèche was more like a museum piece in a display case. It did not endorse a particular religious message.<sup>89</sup> And yet, five years later in *Allegheny County v. the ACLU of Pittsburgh* (1989), Justice Harry Blackmun decided that the role of government is not so friendly toward religious displays. The purpose of government is to secularize society or denude holidays of religious meaning.

...Christmas and Chanukah are part of the same winter-holiday season, which has attained secular status in our society.... In sum, *Lynch* teaches that government may celebrate Christmas in some manner or form, but not in a way that endorses Christian doctrine. Here, Allegheny County has transgressed this line. It has chosen to celebrate Christmas in a way that has the effect of endorsing a patently Christian message: Glory to God for the birth of Christ.<sup>90</sup>

In this specific case, involving two separate displays, the Court ruled against a crèche that stood alone in the “Grand Staircase” of the Allegheny County Courthouse and conveyed a direct message of specific religious meaning; but it ruled in favor of an eight-foot tall Menorah standing only a few blocks away in an adjacent public building since its religious message was denuded by the proximity of a forty-five-foot Christmas tree and a sign saluting the cause of liberty—both acting as a sufficient means of secularizing the Jewish holiday of Hanukkah in the mind of the Court.<sup>91</sup> In both parts of the ruling, the Court provided the government with the possibility of joining the *Kulturkampf* but only on behalf of non-religious forces. The same type of legal reasoning followed similar cases both before and after this decision, with the Court considering the relationship of the display to cultural tradition and its proximity to other “secular” symbols or messages.<sup>92</sup> In all its cases, the Court showed the capricious nature of their name game in declaring what was religious and what was not without much justification. Black declared the Christmas tree and the menorah to be secular; O’Connor declared the Christmas tree secular and the menorah religious; Brennan declared both symbols religious;<sup>93</sup> but none provided much support for their position beyond, “Yes, it is,” or, “No, it is not.”

The one area the Court proved most vigilant in protecting the wall was the public school system as the most impressionable training ground for the next generation of Americans. Regarding prayer, the hostility toward the presence of religion only seemed to escalate in the course of time.<sup>94</sup> The Court began by prohibiting the government from composing an official prayer for teachers and students as an exercise in the classroom (1962); then it prohibited the voluntary recitation of the



Lord's Prayer and Bible reading (1963); then it rejected a public school from creating a "moment of silence" if it included the mere mention of "voluntary prayer" as an option (1985); then it outlawed religious leaders from praying at graduation (1992); and finally it proscribed student-initiated, student-led prayers at football games (2000).<sup>95</sup> In each case, the right not-to-be-offended was able to trump the will of the majority in its desire to express the basic religious sentiment of the community. Public school prayer was said to place undue pressure upon dissenters at a young age, "jeopardize freedom of conscience," and place the "imprimatur" of the state upon certain religious practices in excluding others.<sup>96</sup> The conservative members of the Court like Antonin Scalia mocked the very notion that standing in a respectful silence during a public prayer constituted serious psychological coercion. Historical establishments of old involved real "force of law and threat of penalty," not listening to a nonsectarian prayer at a public event, where one is free to agree or disagree.<sup>97</sup> Justice William Brennan admitted that the Founding Fathers had nothing to say about devotional exercises and were preoccupied with more serious transgressions of a religious establishment than public prayer or the type of minimal coercion that now concerned the Court.<sup>98</sup>

A number of recent cases have involved the question of "parochialism" or the giving of financial aid to religious schools.<sup>99</sup> The fundamental position of the Court remained committed to facilitating the advancement of secularism in the public schools, but it ran into difficulty along the way maintaining its strict wall and denying all aid to sectarian schools and was forced to compromise and moderate the stance in certain cases. In the mid-1980s, the Court rejected the idea of state-paid teachers going to sectarian schools and teaching "secular" subjects like art, music, reading, and math—fearful that these teachers might take the opportunity to sanction and promote a religious perspective in a non-secular environment.<sup>100</sup> However, it turned around over a decade later and vitiated the earlier position in a Title I case by allowing government aid to benefit disadvantaged children and facilitate remedial instruction at religious schools, as long as sufficient safeguards were enacted to ensure compliance with secular goals.<sup>101</sup> In most cases, the Court refused to alleviate the additional financial burden of parents who sent their children to religious schools, except through some incidental costs like tax deductions and travel expenses.<sup>102</sup> However, in an astonishing reversal of its fundamental philosophy, the Court upheld a program in the state of Ohio that allowed parents to use vouchers in religious and non-religious schools alike.<sup>103</sup> This decision represented the first time the Court allowed a substantial amount of money to flow from the government to private religious schools and might portend a substantial reevaluation of its strict doctrine of separation in the future.

In the meantime, the Court continued to maintain a secular view of the government as its basic presupposition, while many of its actual decisions appeared wavering and arbitrary to outsiders.<sup>104</sup> Justice William Rehnquist was one of the few jurists to derail the decisions, mocking their capricious nature and calling for an end to the wall as an incoherent metaphor, based upon poor history and poor legal analysis.

[A] State may lend to parochial school children geography textbooks that contain maps of the United States for use in geography class. A State may lend textbooks on American colonial history, but it may not lend a film on George Washington, or a film projector to show a history class. A state may lend classroom workbooks, but not lend workbooks in which parochial school children write, thus rendering them nonreusable. A State may pay for bus transportation to religious schools but may not pay for bus transportation from the parochial school to the zoo or natural history museum for a field trip. A State may pay for diagnostic services conducted in the parochial school but therapeutic services must be given in a different building; speech and hearing ‘services’ conducted by the State inside the sectarian school are forbidden, but the State may conduct speech and hearing diagnostic testing inside the sectarian school. Exceptional parochial school students may receive counseling, but it must take place outside the parochial school, such as in a trailer parked down the street. A State may give cash to a parochial school to pay for the administration of state-written tests and state-ordered reporting services. Religious instruction may not be given in public school, but the public school may release students during the day for religion classes elsewhere, and may enforce attendance at those classes with its truancy laws.<sup>105</sup>

It is impossible to build sound constitutional doctrine upon a mistaken understanding of constitutional history, but unfortunately the Establishment Clause has been expressly freighted with Jefferson’s misleading metaphor for nearly 40 years. Thomas Jefferson was of course in France at the time the constitutional Amendments known as the Bill of Rights were passed by Congress and ratified by the States. His letter to the Danbury Baptist Association was a short note of courtesy, written 14 years after the Amendments were passed by Congress. He would seem to any detached observer as a less than ideal source of contemporary history as to the meaning of the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment.... Notwithstanding the absence of a historical basis for this theory of rigid separation, the wall idea might well have served as a useful albeit misguided analytical concept, had it led this Court to unified and principled results in Establishment Clause cases. The opposite, unfortunately, has been true; in the 38 years since *Everson* our Establishment Clause cases have been neither principled nor unified. Our recent opinions, many of them hopelessly divided pluralities, have with embarrassing candor conceded that the “wall of separation” is merely a “blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier,” which “is not wholly accurate” and can only be dimly perceived.... The “wall of separation between church and State” is

a metaphor based on bad history, a metaphor which has proved useless as a guide to judging. It should be frankly and explicitly abandoned.<sup>106</sup>

Unfortunately, not even Rehnquist understood that the “bad history” went far beyond the relationship between the First Amendment and Jefferson’s wall of separation to the very telling of the American story, which centered upon the “wisdom of the Founding Fathers” as if they were born in a spiritual vacuum.

Jurists like Rehnquist and Burger abandoned the strict doctrine of separation as hostile to religion and incompatible with the basic notion of equality or fairness.<sup>107</sup> Rehnquist moved toward a more moderate position, known as “accommodationism,” which gives to the various levels of legislative bodies in the country the right to exercise their discretionary powers in accommodating religion and subordinate concerns over the Establishment Clause to the fair treatment of religion in the public square.<sup>108</sup> On the state level, the legislatures adopted the new perspective by providing a greater space for religious participation and expression in the form of public displays, rites, and access to government facilities and funding.<sup>109</sup> On the federal level, the United States Congress passed the Equal Access Act in July of 1984, requiring local school boards to provide the same access to their facilities and properties that non-curricular clubs receive from the districts.<sup>110</sup> In *Board of Education v. Mergens* (1990), the Court declared the act to be constitutional and ruled in favor of a Bible study club wanting like-access to the facilities of an Omaha high school.<sup>111</sup> In *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia* (1995), it reiterated the position, ruling against the wall that Jefferson erected at the school and ordering the university to treat a student-run Christian organization with the same rights as any other campus organization; if the university paid the printing costs of a secular group, it must pay the same costs for a religious group.<sup>112</sup>

This type of accommodationism was not completely new to the Court. Justice Burger represented a less bellicose form of the Rehnquist position in some earlier decisions. He tried to accommodate religious tradition and admitted some difficulty in drawing a simple distinction between church and state.<sup>113</sup> In *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971), he suggested changing the metaphor of a “wall” to a “line,” which is a “blurred, indistinct, and variable barrier.”<sup>114</sup> He felt most judicial decisions were based on the “cumulative criteria” of many cases, assembled over a sufficient period from the nuanced interaction with the complexities of real-life problems. In this way, he pointed to three fundamental criteria that the Court had used in the past when determining matters of church/state relations.

Every analysis in this area must begin with consideration of the cumulative criteria developed by the Court over many years. Three such tests may be gleaned from our cases. First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or

primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion,...; finally, the statute must not foster 'an excessive government entanglement with religion.' Walz, *supra*, at 674, 25 L.Ed.2d at 704.

These criteria resonated with the members of the Court as it tried to move forward as a more consistent body,<sup>115</sup> but problems continued to abound in settling specific cases, indicating to some observers that the Court's fundamental presupposition from 1947 in establishing the secular nature of the government might present an insurmountable obstacle in developing consistent verdicts and a just relationship between church and state. Is it really possible to divide religion and politics into two separate subjects? Is it possible or even desirable for human beings to lead their corporate lives in the state outside of religious concern as if fulfilling some "secular purpose"?<sup>116</sup> Is a secular establishment really neutral toward religion in denying it serious representation in the public square? Maybe, there is a fundamental problem with all establishments, religious and non-religious alike.

In all these cases, the Court seldom engaged in any clear analysis of the nature of secularity.<sup>117</sup> Too often it used an *argumentum ex ignorantia* to label an idea or symbol as secular by refusing to acknowledge its total history, ignoring any religious connection, and discounting any serious philosophical justification or problem.<sup>118</sup> It preferred not to think of the origins of Santa Claus (Saint Nicholas), or the relation of a Christmas tree to the birth of Christ. It preferred not to think about the Puritan origins of its own conception of government, or any philosophical justification of metaphysical concepts like liberty and equality. It preferred just to assign a label and claim as secular whatever is essential to its vision of society or the government. For example, the Court decided during the 1960s that Sabbatarian or blue laws were constitutional by saying the laws serve a secular, non-religious purpose in giving people a day of rest, without explaining in any coherent manner why rest is a secular idea.<sup>119</sup> In keeping with the charade, the Court must tell the citizens to forget about religion as members of the state: not to remember that the Lord rested after six days of work (Gn 2:2; Ex 20:11), not to recognize rest (Heb. *Shabbath*) as a biblical admonition, not to see religious laws as serving a societal purpose (Mk 2:27), and not to consider the simple fact that admonitions to work or rest involve metaphysical values, or some type of religious leap into transcendental or mystical knowledge, outside a simple scientific or secular view of the world.<sup>120</sup>

The *argumentum ex ignorantia* allowed the Court to label as secular whatever it found beneficial to the nation without explaining why a certain statute or symbol is considered non-religious. The *argumentum ex ignorantia* often declared the values of the Court or the values that Americans possessed as a people to be non-religious without providing any justification for doing so. The list of these "secular" matters,

which served a “secular purpose,” included the following: safety and expeditious travel, “ordinary police and fire protection, public highways and sidewalks”;<sup>121</sup> “solemnizing public occasions, expressing confidence in the future, and encouraging the cognition of what is worthy of appreciation in society”;<sup>122</sup> “education”;<sup>123</sup> “protecting the health” of children and “providing a fertile educational environment” in school;<sup>124</sup> charitable work, social services, relieving poverty, and assisting the handicapped;<sup>125</sup> “liberty,” “academic freedom,” “freedom from indoctrination”; the promotion of “democratic values” in public schools, which nourish “dialog” and “dissent,” not religious dogma;<sup>126</sup> recognition of “religious and cultural diversity” and the “message of religious pluralism”;<sup>127</sup> promoting “secular moral values” like the second table of the Ten Commandments (honoring parents and the proscription on murder, stealing, adultery, false witness, and covetousness).<sup>128</sup> In this list, the Court merely declared through the “will to power” the secular nature of these values, without supplying any justification. In labeling all these and other values “secular,” the Court rejected the Mosaic Law, the Hammurabi Law Code, and the basic Semitic mentality of connecting moral law with the will of God.<sup>129</sup> The Court rejected the analysis of their own Founding Fathers, who thought of religion as the basis of moral valuation and spoke of the divine laws/rights given to all humankind in nature as providing the matrix for the government’s existence and purpose.<sup>130</sup> The Court rejected the former religious foundation of morality and the government and ignored any serious philosophical discussion to determine a new basis for the government and the moral perspective. It ignored the difficult philosophical problem of deriving “ought” from “is”—or, how to derive a transcendent commentary on life from a secular perspective of the world.<sup>131</sup> Instead, the Court preferred to leave that problem to philosophers and lose God at the least possible expense, discounting any problematic nature to their ethical presuppositions or capricious labeling of their values as secular. It wanted to believe that ethics can exist apart from any mystical, religious contemplation of the ideal or ontic reality of the ideal, without explaining how this is possible. It preferred to argue from silence, or use the “will to power.”

This *argumentum ex ignorantia* continued into the Court’s disuse/misuse of history.<sup>132</sup> The Court maintained its doctrine of separation by ignoring or displaying little knowledge of the broad history and development of western ideas. Its use of historical analysis was provincial and ethnocentric, typically relegated to the exaltation of the American government and its leaders. It displayed no real knowledge or acknowledgment of the Puritans, the real spiritual founders of the country, who formed its basic vision and view of government and spearheaded the democratic revolutions in England and New England.<sup>133</sup> Even those jurists who acknowledged religious origins of the culture appeared to possess little

understanding of the specifics and often denied the ongoing religious significance today as if important cultural ideas lose religious connection over time through the process of secular re-education and inculcating ignorance.<sup>134</sup> The very doctrine of church/state separation demanded a rejection of positive religious influence from the past and constant reminder of its shortcomings, as the sponsor of persecution in society. The Court preferred to spin its own story rather than engage in serious historical analyses concerning the evolution of ideas and recognize any complexities or entanglements. The Court liked to tell and reiterate a story that was more false than true, that the early settlers came to this country fleeing religious persecution to provide a negative view of the church and its political influence.<sup>135</sup> The Court told this story to establish its secular concept of church/state separation. It wanted to present freedom as the opposite of the religious impulse and sentence religion to the margins of society as the source of “divisiveness,” especially within the realm of politics.<sup>136</sup> Liberty must be understood as non-religious, even anti-religious.<sup>137</sup>

The Court’s historical understanding of church/state separation also suffered from the same limitations, displaying little understanding of the broad history and problems of the doctrine. Typically, the Court centered its historical analysis upon Jefferson and Madison as the “architects of the First Amendment”—the only Founding Fathers who held to the strict doctrine.<sup>138</sup> It ignored the anti-Semitic/anti-Christian motives behind Jefferson’s position, the inconsistent political careers of both Virginians in patronizing the majority’s religious sensibilities,<sup>139</sup> and preferred to select and cite works like Madison’s “Detached Memoranda” that “proved” their strict position. In all this, the Court failed to acknowledge any dark side to the doctrine of church/state separation. It preferred to think of persecution as a religious disease but failed to note twentieth-century regimes like the Nazis and Communists, who also erected the same French concept of absolute separation in an attempt to destroy the church and slaughtered tens of millions of people in the name of developing an a-theistic, secular state.<sup>140</sup> Most members followed the same doctrine of secularization (*laïcité*) as these regimes. They did so in a more passive way, performing a “quiet euthanasia,” without resorting to militant atheistic propaganda in state-sponsored institutions, or inviting a reaction. They tried to distance their policy from the Nazis and Communists, but the net effect of refusing to represent religion in the burgeoning power of the state and denying its positive social influence is not much different in the long run. (The French idea was originally conceived as a means of forging a *fraternité* of citizens as an alternative to the body of Christ. The French Revolution denuded the culture of all Christian symbols and exchanged them for a new secular identity under the *cocarde tricolore* of the nation-state. In a most telling moment, Abbé Grégoire and the National Assembly offered the Jewish people citizenship as long as they

underwent a process of *régénération*, or leave their distinctive religious community behind and adopt French ways and customs.<sup>141</sup> The process certainly worked as Jews became a secular people after this time. The Third Republic made the process of secularization (*laïcité*) and the “Separation of the Churches and the State” the official *modus operandi* of the state at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and the French people were transformed through this process into secular subjects of the state, just like the Jewish people.<sup>142</sup>)

The Court engaged in a great deal of double-talk about its role in the secularization of the culture,<sup>143</sup> but it clearly endorsed a secular message and picked the secular side of the cultural war.<sup>144</sup> Occasionally, it ran into a political hot potato and found it necessary to retreat from the basic agenda. For example, the Court engaged in political calculations by refusing to eliminate the Pledge of Allegiance from the public schools. It certainly knew that this devotional exercise was much more coercive than public prayer as it invited the audience to participate with their hands over their hearts, their eyes wide open, and their mouths confessing sacred words, binding the people to the nation, not just asking them to stand and listen.<sup>145</sup> This oath (Lat. *sacramentum*) was intended to bind the audience’s allegiance to the state and confess the unity of the nation in serving the will of God. The phrase “under God” was added to the pledge during the Eisenhower administration in a deliberate and clear attempt to withstand the godless etatism of the Communists, but the Court found it difficult to expunge a direct violation of its strict interpretation, given the power of the civil religion and the basic desire to promote devotion to the state. Justice William Brennan attempted to reconcile the pledge with the secular establishment by claiming that the oath served a secular purpose and the phrase “under God” had lost all “religious significance” through “rote repetition.” He suggested that the public schools substitute the pledge, patriotic material, and a catechism on national values for the former devotional exercises in the Bible and prayer.<sup>146</sup> His suggestion worked within the basic schema of the French Revolution and the Third Republic by wanting the secular state to use its power and replace the former devotion to God with the new religion on the block—etatism.

## The American Civil Liberties Union

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) became the principal group that sponsored the separation of church and state in the courts during the twentieth century, beginning with the famous “Monkey Trial” in the summer of 1925. The group was founded just a few years earlier in January of 1920 and has grown into a formidable force ever since, boasting over 500,000 members, 200 staff attorneys,

hundreds of local chapters, and thousands of volunteers on its latest website. The group started as the brainchild of one man, Roger Baldwin, who grew up in a Unitarian family within the inner circle of Boston and attended Harvard University, where he received a B.A. and M.A. in Social Science and then began a career in social work.<sup>147</sup> He developed into a social activist during World War I, working with the American Union Against Militarism (AUAM) in the spring of 1917 and forming his own group, the National Civil Liberties Bureau (NCLB), in the fall of that year to fight against the war and defend the rights of protestors.<sup>148</sup> Baldwin rejected the use of force to resolve conflicts and was sentenced to a year in prison for resisting the draft and rejecting any form of alternative service as a consistent pacifist, who refused to aid and abet the war effort in any way.<sup>149</sup>

After the war, he decided to expand the scope of his activities beyond the basic mission of the NCLB and formed the ACLU to protect the civil liberties of all citizens, although his concept of civil rights was marked by a social conscious that gravitated toward left-wing political interests. The ACLU particularly focused in its early days upon the “rights” of workers to form unions.<sup>150</sup> Baldwin became an influential player in some left-wing groups that had strong ties with Communism in America and Russia and even served on the board of the Kuzbas Industrial Colony, which tried to plant collective communities in the Urals.<sup>151</sup> In the 1920s and 1930s, he described his political views as “anti-capitalist and pro-revolutionary,” sympathetic to the “economic system being worked out in Soviet Russia,” where “civil liberties [are] far greater than elsewhere in the world,” and wrote a book, *Liberty Under the Soviets*, defending the repressive measures of the Soviet Union as “weapons of struggle in a transition period to socialism.”<sup>152</sup> Even though Baldwin never joined the Communist party, two original members of the ACLU, William Z. Foster and Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, actually served later on as chairs of the party;<sup>153</sup> and the government found it necessary to raid the offices of the ACLU periodically over concerns about subversive Communist activities. Because of this, the ACLU found it necessary to moderate its public image during the heights of the Red Scare, rejecting open communists from joining the group and serving on the board.<sup>154</sup>

The connection with left-wing political goals engendered a tension within the purposes of the ACLU. The group took a leading role throughout its history in defending the cause of freedom and individual liberty, and yet often worked at cross-purposes in expanding the role of the federal government and reducing the space in which the exercise of liberty can operate.<sup>155</sup> Under the Free Exercise Clause, the ACLU defended the rights of non-traditional groups to practice their peculiar religious faith against the tyranny of the majority, earning considerable praise from those who champion religious liberty.<sup>156</sup> Under the Establishment



Clause, the ACLU tried to establish an “a-theocracy,” or its belief in secularity as the ideology of the American people by cleansing the government of all religion, using the public school system to inculcate its beliefs in secularity, and denying any modicum of representation to religious ideas and symbols in the public arena. It interpreted the First Amendment as prohibiting the public endorsement of a religious viewpoint and establishing secularity as the *modus operandi* of the government. Public values, symbols, rituals, and access must be reserved as a forum for representing secular people and their ideas.<sup>157</sup>

The doctrine of church/state separation became the fundamental means used by secular people in the modern world to refashion society into their image. The doctrine was designed during the times of the Reformation to protect the church from the corrupting powers of the state, but the French Enlightenment turned the doctrine around and used it to marginalize the power of the church, eliminate its place in society, and create another version of life in its stead. This motive prompted Jefferson to erect a wall of separation between the two realms and use public education to forward his anti-Christian agenda. He and Madison were unable to eliminate the presence of the church in the federal, state, and local governments during their lifetime, but sympathetic jurists found it possible to resurrect this conception years later and “reinterpret” the words of the Constitution to align with the doctrine of the Enlightenment and their own secular, deistic, or a-theistic point of view. Today, secular groups like the ACLU represent this new interpretation of the Court in a most severe and draconian manner. They might work to defend individual liberties for those who live on the margins of society, but they also work to eliminate the space where those liberties function by consigning more and more power to the state in advancing a left-wing agenda. Christians tend to accept the role of the government in secularizing society, offering little resistance and preferring the NT’s image of the church as a remnant in this world. Muslims have no tradition of church/state separation and fight the introduction of this process of secularization in the Middle East, committing horrible acts of brutality in an attempt to protect their religious traditions and culture. The terrorists and the many who sympathize with their cause do not want the “Great Satan” to destroy the central place of the Mosque as it destroyed the role of its own church in western civilization.<sup>158</sup>

## Notes

1. *The Writings of James Madison*, Gaillard Hunt (ed.) (New York and London: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1910), 1.230–31; “To Rev [Jasper] Adams” (1832), in *Writings*, 9.485; Ralph L. Ketchem, “James Madison and Religion: A New Hypothesis,” in *James Madison on Religious*

*Liberty*, Robert S. Alley (ed. and intro.) (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1985), 175–80; Garrett Sheldon, “Religion in the Thought of James Madison,” in *Faith and Politics in America*, Joseph Prud’homme (ed.) (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 93, 96, 112; Lance Banning, “James Madison, The Statute for Religious Freedom, and the Crisis of Republican Convictions,” in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom: Its Evolution and Consequences in American History*, Merrill D. Peterson and Robert C. Vaughan (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 110. Like Jefferson, he was baptized in the Anglican Church at a local parish.

2. Garrett Sheldon, “Religion in the Thought of James Madison,” in *Faith and Politics in America*, Joseph Prud’homme (ed.) (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 91–95; Mary-Elaine Swanson, “James Madison and the Presbyterian Idea of Man and Government,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, 122–28.

Many young men were similarly stimulated by Witherspoon’s teaching on law and government, as is witnessed to by the fact that so many of them later became active in American politics, including a president of the United States (Madison), a vice-president, ten cabinet officers, twenty-one senators, thirty-nine congressmen, a Supreme Court justice, an attorney general of the United States, and twelve governors. It has been estimated that nearly one-fifth of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, one-sixth of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and one-fifth of the first Congress under the Constitution were graduates of the College of New Jersey [Princeton]. *Ibid.*, 122.

James Madison, John Adams, and Montesquieu were the most significant individual figures in influencing America to adopt a system of checks and balances. Their analysis was based upon a dark view of human nature. John Witherspoon also made this connection and probably influenced Madison in adopting and stressing the system. E.g., *The Works of the Rev. John Witherspoon*, John Rodgers (intro.) (Philadelphia, PA: William N. Woodward, 1802), 4.351; Sheldon, “Religion in the Thought of James Madison,” 97–99.

3. Jefferson, *Autobiography*, L 1.58; *Notes on Virginia*, L 2.219; Mark A. Beliles, “The Christian Communities, Religious Revivals, and Political Culture of the Central Virginia Piedmont, 1737–1813,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, 4–5, 18–20; Daniel Dreisbach, “Church-State Debate in the Virginia Legislature: From the Declaration of Rights to the Statute for Establishing Religious Freedom,” in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson’s Virginia*, Garrett Ward Sheldon and Daniel Dreisbach (eds.) (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 142; Michael McConnell, “Taking Religious Freedom Seriously,” *First Things* 3 (1990) 30. L stands for the *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, Andrew A. Lipscomb (ed.) (Washington, D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1905).
4. “To William Bradford” (April 1, 1774), in *Papers of James Madison*, 1.111–12. See *Ibid.*, 1.170–72; Rob Boston, “James Madison and Church-State Separation,” *Church & State* 54/3 (2001): 10; Sheldon, “Religion in the Thought of James Madison,” 101–138.
5. “Declaration of Rights and Form of Government in Virginia [16 May–29 June 1776],” in *Papers*, 1.170–79; Bellies, *The Christian Communities*, 20–21; Dreisbach, “Church-State Debate,” 139; Robert S. Alley, “The Despotism of Toleration,” *Madison on Religious Liberty*, 147; Sheldon, “Religion in the Thought of James Madison,” 102.

6. "From John Page" (Aug. 23, 1785), in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 8.428–29; Richard Beale Davis, *Intellectual Life in Jefferson's Virginia, 1790–1830* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1964), 128–31; Sheldon, "Religion in the Thought of James Madison," 102–3; Dreisbach, "Church-State Debate," 149–50. The Episcopal Church was in favor of Henry's bill. Many Presbyterians were initially for it and then turned against it. "To James Monroe" (April 12, 1785), in *Papers*, 2.261; Banning, "James Madison, . . .," 123; Sheldon, "The Religious Thought of James Madison," 103. Henry was a Christian and conducted a campaign throughout the state warning of the dangers of Deism undermining the faith. Thompson, "Perceptions of a 'Deist Church' in Early National Virginia," 46–47.
7. "Memorial and Remonstrance Against Religious Assessment," in *Writings of James Madison*, G. Hunt (ed.) (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1901), 2.188. Joseph Prud'homme provides a good counter-example to Madison's extreme statement, showing how John Bray and Maryland's establishment actually promoted toleration and religiosity. "Rev. Thomas Bray, Colonial Maryland, and the Role of Religion in Public Life," in *Faith and Politics in America*, 41–48.
8. *Ibid.*, 186–87.
9. "To the Honorable the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia A Memorial and Remonstrance" (ca. 20 June 1785), in *Papers*, 8.298–99; Donald Drakeman, "Religion and the Republic: James Madison and the First Amendment," *Journal of Church and State* 25/3 (1983): 436; Belilies, "The Christian Communities," 24; Banning, "James Madison, . . .," 109, 122–23; Gary Wills, *James Madison* (New York: Times Books, 2002), 16–18; Ralph Ketcham, "James Madison and Religion—A New Hypothesis," *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* 39/2 (1960): 81.
10. *Jefferson and Madison on Separation of Church and State: Writings on Religion and Secularism*, L. Brenner (ed.) (Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade, 2004), 125–26; Drakeman, "Religion and the Republic," 233; Wills, *James Madison*, 39; Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, Mass. And London: Harvard University Press, 2002), 104–5.
11. *The Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States*, J. Gales and W. W. Seaton (eds.) (Washington, DC: Gales and Seaton, 1834), 1.796; Drakeman, "Religion and the Republic," 233–35. Barbara McGraw's *Rediscovering America's Sacred Ground* contains a good summation of the various drafts in Appendix C, pp. 199–202.
12. *Ibid.*, 1.451–52; John T. Noonan, *The Believer and the Powers That Are* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1987), 124. Cf. Levy, *The Establishment Clause*, 7, 86ff., 95, 98–99. The Anti-Federalists of Virginia read the amendment in this way and rejected it, because they wanted to exclude religion from receiving any federal support. "The 3rd amendment [the First Amendment], recommended by Congress, does not prohibit the rights of conscience from being violated or infringed; and although it goes to restrain Congress from passing laws establishing any national religion, they might, notwithstanding, levy taxes to any amount, for the support of religion or its preachers; and any particular denomination of Christians might be so favored and supported by the General Government, as to give it a decided advantage over others, in process of time render it as powerful and dangerous as if it was established as the national religion of the country." *Journal of the Senate of the Commonwealth of Virginia; Begun and Held in the City of Richmond on Monday, the 19th day of October, . . . 1789, . . .* (Richmond, VA: Thomas W. White, 1828), 62.

13. Michael McConnell, "Why 'Separation' Is Not the Key to Church-State Relations," *The Christian Century* 106/2 (1989): 43.
14. Of course, Article VI, sect. 3 rejected religious tests for holding office in the federal government.
15. "To Frederick Beasley" (Nov. 20, 1825), in *Writings*, 9.230.
16. See "Thanksgiving Proclamations" (July 9, 1812, July 23, 1813, Nov. 16, 1814, and March 4, 1815), in *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, James D. Richardson (ed.) (New York: Bureau of National Literature and Arts, 1905), 1.513, 532–33, 558, 560–61; "Special Message to Congress" (Feb. 18, 1815) and "Seventh Annual Message" (Dec. 5, 1815), in *Writings*, 8.326, 343; Mary-Elaine Swanson, *The Education of James Madison: A Model for Today* (Montgomery, AL: The Hoffman Education Center for the Family, 1992), 262–65; Sheldon, "Religion in the Thought of James Madison," 104–7.
17. "A Proclamation" (July 9, 1812), in *Messages and Papers*, 1.513.
18. "Bill for Punishing Disturbers of Religious Worship and Sabbath Breakers" (no. 84) and "A Bill for Appointing Days of Public Fasting and Thanksgiving" (no. 85), in *Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, 2.555–56; Drakeman, "Religion and the Republic," 441; "James Madison and the First Amendment of the Religion Clause," in *Religion and Political Culture in Jefferson's Virginia*, 226.
19. See n.16; Boston, "James Madison and Church-State Separation," 14; Sheldon, "Religion in the Thought of James Madison," 106; Cord, "Mr. Jefferson's 'Nonabsolute Wall,'" 167, 183; Drakeman, "James Madison and the First Amendment," 226. Cf. with George Washington's "Proclamation: A National Thanksgiving" (Oct. 3, 1789), in *Messages and Papers*, 1.64–65.
20. "To Robert Walsh" (March 2, 1819) and "To Edward Livingston" (July 10, 1822), in *Writings*, 8.431–32; 9.101–103; "Detached Memorandum," in *James Madison on Religious Liberty*, 90; Drakeman, "Religion and the Republic," 437; "To Reverend Jasper Adams" (Spring, 1833), 9.484–88.
21. "To Jasper Adams" (Spring, 1833) 9.485. In contrast to this statement, as well as the belief of most Americans at the time, he says elsewhere that Catholicism is not innately hostile to republicanism. *Papers of James Madison*, 15.432–33 (Jan. 1, 1795). Cf. Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 250–53.
22. *Annals of Congress (1789–90): Proceedings and Debates...*, at the First Session of Congress, 730–31 (Aug. 15, 1789) and 755 (Aug. 17, 1789); "To Edward Livingston" (July 10, 1822) 9.101–103; Alley, "The Despotism of Toleration," 147; "The Protestant Establishment," in *James Madison on Religious Liberty*, 253–55. Jasper Adams and so many others thought Christianity served as the foundation of civil, legal, and political institutions.
23. "To Edward Livingston" (July 10, 1822) 9.100–103; "Detached Memorandum," 93–94; Drakeman, "James Madison and the First Amendment," 226; "Religion and the Republic," 440; Leo Pfeffer, "Madison's 'Detached Memoranda': Then and Now," in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, 304–5. Madison also exhibits his proclivity for church/state separation by opposing theological instruction and prayer at public schools. His motives are more difficult to discern than Jefferson's. Maybe, his strict position represents his attempt to ride a consistent paradigm to its extreme like many Virginia Baptists, rather than any underlying malice toward the Judeo-Christian tradition. The only clear hint of animosity

- is his opposition to the church acquiring property. He expresses concern over the church obtaining too much power, and thinks it is necessary for public authorities to exact measures and limit church property and wealth. As president, he vetoed a bill reserving a parcel of public land for the Baptist Church and its usage, claiming it violated the First Amendment. "To the House of Representatives" (Feb. 28, 1811) and "To Edward Everett" (March 19, 1823), in *Writings*, 8.133; 9.126–27; Pfeffer, "Madison's 'Detached Memorandum,'" 287–88; *Jefferson and Madison on Separation*, 51, 133, 207, 232, 263–68; Drakeman, "Religion and the Republic: James Madison and the First Amendment," 238; Ketcham, "James Madison and Religion," 81–82; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 182–83; Frank Lambert, *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), 271–73; Leonard Levy, *The Establishment Clause: Religion and the First Amendment* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 123.
24. Prud'homme, "Rev. Thomas Bray, . . .," 16–17.
  25. "To Jasper Adams" (Spring, 1833) 9.487; Sidney E. Mead, "Neither Church nor State: Reflections on James Madison's 'Line of Separation,'" *Journal of Church and State* 10/3 (Aut. 1968): 350–51. Some consider this metaphor of a "line" less stringent than Jefferson's "wall," but it seems unlikely that Madison intended to depart from a strict position in using the term. The line is certainly not "blurred, indistinct, and variable" in his mind as Justice Warren Burger suggested in *Lemon v. Kurtzman* (1971).
  26. C. Bradley Thompson, *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 93, 252–53, 260.
  27. *The Works of John Adams* (Freeport, NY: Books for Libraries, 1969), 4.292–93, 559. He can make an offhand comment about the importance of the Christian religion, but such a testimony is out of character with the overall secular direction of his work. Cf. *Ibid.*, 4.283. His religion is much like Jefferson's and other Deists of the day, except for a belief in some of the biblical miracles. He favored toleration of different religious persuasions, but he accepted the Congregationalist establishment of his constituency, maybe as a fact of life or a necessary political compromise. Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial Virginia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 103.
  28. *Ibid.*, 4.477–78, 491, 541, 548–49; 5 passim; 6.217. He sees the world as marching toward perfection in science, commerce, philosophy, and religion. Athens developed a popular form of assembly during the time of Solon in the sixth century B.C.E., and Kleisthenes sought to involve all of Attica in the decision-making process with slogans like *isegoria* (equality of speaking) and perhaps *demokratia* (people-power). S. Hornblower, "Creation and Development of Democratic Institutions in Ancient Greece," *Democracy: The Unfinished Journey 508 BC to AD 1993*, J. Dunn (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4–8. The philosophers and intellectuals of the day enshrined these ideas in their works for future generations to study and to follow. In particular, Aristotle advanced the doctrine by lending his considerable authority to the polity during Hellenistic times and providing a possible source for its dissemination throughout the world. He certainly preferred the collective wisdom of the masses to the wantonness of one man. He accorded the "mass of free-men and citizens" the right to select officers and magistrates, even if most were not worthy to run. Aristotle's *Politics* helped further the cause as it became available throughout Italy at the end of the thirteenth. Aristotle, *Politics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, R. McKeon (ed.),

(New York: Random House, 1941), 1281a, 1281b, 1286a, 1286b, 1318 (1190–91, 1200, 1268–69). At the end of the eleventh century, many Italian cities to the north began to form republics in accordance with the *polis* of Athens and Aristotle’s vision. They rejected the divine right of papal and imperial authorities, complaining about their abuse of power, lack of interest in local affairs, and unconcern for the welfare of the average citizen. They preferred to elect their own officials and councils at the local level. Q. Skinner, “The Italian City-Republics,” in *Democracy*, 57–63. The most celebrated works of the day—Marsilius’ *Defender of Peace* (1324) and Machiavelli’s *Discourses* (1520?)—show a decided Aristotelian influence in their push for democratic ideals. *Marsilius of Padua, the defender of peace* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1956), 45–47; N. Machiavelli, *Discourses*, B. Crick (ed.), L. J. Walker and B. Richardson (trans.) (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 1.20, 58 (167–68, 255–57). However, a problem develops in the course of this study when one tries to connect these early sources with what transpires in later times. The parallel is striking and interesting and might have served in the nebulous realm of a remote cause, but there is little, concrete proof that the ideals of Athens or Italy served as the basic impetus toward the development of democracy in the world to come. Huguenots and the Puritans pointed to religious concerns in their push for democracy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not Athenian or Italian antecedents. If anything, the primary sources of modern democracy point more toward Germanic roots when searching for a cultural identity and only mention Graeco-Roman antecedents later on as an anachronistic or scholastic device to justify what has developed for other reasons. Of course, this criticism does not mean that the Graeco-Roman world had no influence whatsoever in shaping modern times. Its doctrines of natural law and mixed government make an important contribution to the modern notion of countervailing political forces. Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 35 (n.134), 92, 107, 112, 120 (nn.119–20), 134–36, 149–50.

29. *Ibid.*, 4.462, 465–66.

30. *Ibid.*, 4.385ff. (chap. 4), 416ff.; 5.95, 183; 6.4.

31. *Ibid.*, 4.428.

32. *Ibid.*, 4.358, 380–81, 440.

33. *Ibid.*, 4.290, 298, 370, 462–63. Certain passages were quoted by Jefferson and other opponents to prove that Adams believed in a monarchy, but these citations clearly overlooked the general context of the work and his overall ideas. David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), 429ff., 443–44. Adams rejects hereditary government and hierarchical rule. He feels the people have a right to appoint a monarch for life, but they never abdicate their right to depose a ruler if it is necessary. *Works*, 4.276–77, 358–59; 6.117. Adams does not like to quibble over words like “king,” “president,” or “republic” since so much depends on the context in which these terms are used. *Ibid.*, 5.452–54; 6.183. He accepts a certain hierarchy of birth, genius, and wealth among the people but grants citizenship to all “people” who owned at least a small amount of property. *Ibid.*, 4.393ff., 397, 414; 5.456–59. See Thompson, *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*, 93, 167, 169, 172–3, 183–4, 207, 248, 252, 253, 260, 266ff., 272–3.

34. C. Bradley Thompson points to certain unpublished papers where Adams explains his method as following the empirical reasoning found in Bacon and Newton. His method is much like Machiavelli’s, who created an empirical political science, making inductions

from historical examples, rather than fashioning a system out of pure deduction. *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*, 110–13, 123.

35. This point is the constant refrain of American postmodernists. It is a truism, even if it can be over-exercised. Stanley Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally* (Durham, NC and London; Duke University Press, 1989), 129, 301, 304. Of course, Adams rejects many of the literal tenets of Calvinism, as well as the need for divine revelation to guide us in finding our way. Adams believes that “[God] has given us Reason, to find the Truth, and the real Design and true End of our Existence,” along with “all Endeavors to promote them agreeable to our minds.” *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1961), 1.43; Thompson, *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*, 14, 86. These statements cause some scholars like Thompson to discard his Puritan background and place him more within the enlightened views of “Bacon, Newton, and Locke.” Other scholars like Bernard Bailyn and Edmund S. Morgan still consider him a Puritan first and foremost and cite his Protestant work ethic as a good case in point. *Ibid.*, 3–5; Bailyn, “Butterfield’s Adams: Notes for a Sketch,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 19/2 (1962): 244–45; E. S. Morgan, “John Adams and the Puritan Tradition,” *New England Quarterly* 34/4 (1961): 523–27. Adams is clearly a son of the Enlightenment in his outward profession, but like all its children he remains indebted to the past influences of a Christian culture, just like Bacon, Newton, and Locke, who also are difficult to classify with one simple term.
36. *Works*, 4.356, 406, 407; 5.40, 49; 6.57, 61, 97, 99, 211ff. He is most interested in the passions that drive men to seek power—the “notoriety,” the “celebration,” the admiration and applause of others, etc. Thompson, *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*, 158–60. The Founding Fathers were very distrustful of human nature in general. Evans, *The Theme is Freedom*, 98ff.
37. In concert with his secular interpretation of Adams, Thompson discounts any Puritan influence upon Adams’ view of human nature. *John Adams and the Spirit of Liberty*, 149.
38. John Witte, “‘A Most Mild and Equitable Establishment of Religion’: John Adams and the Massachusetts Experiment,” *Journal of Church and State* 4/2 (1999): 234; Coker, “Isaac Backus and John Leland,” 314, 325. See chap. 6, pp. 212–13, n.147 for further discussion on the Baptists and their position.
39. Adams, *Works*, 4.241–42, 245, 251, 260–62; Witte, “‘A Most Mild and Equitable Establishment’,” 226–27. Quakers are exempted from taking the oath. Later on, Adams expresses regret over this anti-Catholic provision.
40. *Ibid.*, 4.221; Witte, “‘A Most Mild and Equitable Establishment’,” 216, 226.
41. Art. III; Witte, “‘A Most Mild and Equitable Establishment’,” 228–31, 242. Apparently, Adams told Isaac Backus, “We must as soon expect a change in the solar system as to expect [the Congregationalists] would give up their establishment.” *Isaac Backus on Church, State, and Calvinism*, 12; McLoughlin, *New England Dissent*, 1.560.
42. Adams, *Works*, 2.399.
43. In his writings, he sees religion and morality as a foundation of society and thinks the government should encourage right belief and conduct. *Works*, 4.293; 9.636. As president, Adams emphasized the need for national repentance in his proclamations of prayer and thanksgiving, unlike Washington and closer to the original idea of a Puritan-style Jeremiad. “Proclamation” (March 23, 1798 and March 6, 1799), in *Messages and Papers*,

- 1.268–70, 284–86; *Works*, 9.291; Charles Ellis Dickson, “Jeremiads in the New American Republic: The Case of National Fasts in the John Adams Administration,” *The New England Quarterly* 60/2 (1987): 188, 191.
44. *Equal Rights in Religion. Report of the Centennial Congress of Liberals, and Organization of the National Liberal League* (Boston, MA: The National Liberal League, 1876) 22, 37, 175; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 293ff.; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation*, 97. Abbot was a former Unitarian minister, who developed an extreme disdain for traditional Christian teachings. Some liberal religious groups like the Reform Jews joined their number in calling for a strict separation of church and state, while others were militant agnostics. Tisa Wenger, “The God-in-the-Constitution Controversy: American Secularism in Historical Perspective,” in *Comparative Secularisms*, Linell E. Cady and Elizabeth Hurd (eds.) (New York: Macmillan, 2010), 97–101.
  45. *Ibid.*, 145.
  46. *Ibid.*, 72.
  47. *Ibid.*, 80.
  48. *Ibid.*, 135.
  49. *Ibid.*, 126, 129.
  50. *Ibid.*, 164.
  51. *Ibid.*, 5.
  52. *Ibid.*, 7.
  53. *American State Papers Bearing on Sunday Legislation*, W. A. Blakely (New York: The National Religious Liberty Association, 1891), 202–4.
  54. “Annual Message (Dec. 7, 1875), in *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, John Y. Simon (ed.) (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1967), 26.388; *New York Tribune* (Dec. 8, 1875) 6.
  55. “Two ‘Favorite Sons’,” in *The Nation* (March 16, 1876) 173–74; Steven K. Green, “The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment,” *Brigham Law University Review* 2008/2 (2008): 322; “The Blaine Amendment Reconsidered,” *The American Journal of Legal History* 36/1 (1992): 54; Mark Edward DeForrest, “An Overview and Evaluation of State Blaine Amendments: Origins, Scope, and First Amendment Concerns,” *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 26 (2003): 565–66. When Blaine lost the presidential nomination of his party, he lost interest in his amendment and did not participate in the final vote, showing the proposal was a political ploy. Liberals were not pleased with the amendment because the separation was not total and allowed Protestants to continue dominating the school system. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 298–300.
  56. *Congressional Record* [44th Congress, 1st session, 4/1 (Dec. 14, 1785)] 205. See Cushing Strout, “Jeffersonian Religious Liberty and American Pluralism,” in *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, 215; Green, “The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment,” 295. A number of people were concerned about the question of states’ rights, or allowing the federal government to meddle in education. Blaine knew he was changing the First Amendment in imposing strict separation and applying it to the states. Few saw the Fourteenth Amendment as applicable to this issue at the time. It took two more decades before the Supreme Court applied the Bill of Rights to the states. Green, “The Blaine Amendment



Reconsidered," 39, 50, 68; "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 320–21; DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation," 604.

57. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 10–11; Toby J. Heytens, "School Choice and State Constitutions," *Virginia Law Review* 85/1 (2000): 135–37; DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation," 561; Green, "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 296–98, 304, 312–15. John Jeffries and James Ryan say,

At the time of the Revolution, 30,000 Catholics lived in the new United States, barely one percent of the population. By 1830, that number had increased to 600,000. By 1850, there were 1.6 million U.S. Catholics, and twice that many ten years later. The number quadrupled to twelve million in 1900, and doubled again by 1930. This population was mostly immigrant, in the early days mostly Irish, and mostly poor. "A Political History of the Establishment Clause," *Michigan Law Review* 100 (2001): 299–300.

Of course, the papacy's rejection of modernity, democracy, and the American way of life helped in fueling the Protestant concerns. R. L. Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 49, 57, 69.

58. Timothy L. Smith, "Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800–1850," *The Journal of American History* 53/4 (1967): 679–81; Stephen Macedo, *Diversity and Distrust: Civic Education in a Multicultural Democracy* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 60–63; Jeffries and Ryan, "A Political History of the Establishment Clause," 297, 302; DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation," 563–64; Green, "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 316–17; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 10–11, 204–18, 234ff. American Catholics tried to show their love of freedom and rejected the pope's temporal powers over the country.
59. Benjamin Rush, "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper to a Republic," in *Essay on Education in the Early Republic*, Frederick Rudolph (ed.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 17–18; Noah Webster, "On the Education of Youth in America," in *Essays on Education*, 65–66; Green, "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 300–2; "The Blaine Amendment Reconsidered," 45.
60. Lymann Abbott, "Secular and Sectarian Schools," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 40 (May, 1870) 910; Green, "The Blaine Amendment Reconsidered," 41; "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 303; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 220–29, 372–75.
61. "The Alarm About the Schools," in *The Nation* (Dec. 16, 1785) 383–84; "The Catholics and the Free Schools," *Harper's Weekly* 20/992 (Jan. 1, 1876): 11; "The Rights of the Church Over Education," *Catholic World* 21/126 (Sept. 1875): 738–39; "Anti-Catholic Movements in the United States," *Catholic World* 22/132 (March 1876): 817, 822; "The Catholic Church in the United States," *Catholic World* 23/136 (July 1876): 446–49; Diane Ravitch, *The Great School Wars: A History of the New York City Public Schools* (New York: Basic Books, 1988) passim; Green, "The Blaine Amendment Reconsidered," 41–43, 51–52; DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation," 565, 569. The Senate version of the amendment protected the "reading of the Bible" in the common schools. It wanted to appease those who felt the secularization process was proceeding too far.

62. Heytens, "School Choice and State Constitutions," 134; DeForrest, "An Overview and Evaluation," 554–55, 567–68, 573, 576; Green, "The Blaine Amendment," 67; "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 296–98.
63. Green, "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 305–9; "The Blaine Amendment Reconsidered," 46–47. Horace Mann wanted to include every Christian and spurned sectarian doctrines in his vision for the common schools. Mann also insisted on reading the Bible without comment. Horace Mann, et al., *Annual Report on Education* (Boston, MA: Horace B. Fuller, 1868), 129–30 (Report of 1848); Noah Feldman, "Non-Sectarianism Reconsidered," 28 *Journal of Law and Politics* 65 (2002): 80–81; Jefferies and Ryan, "A Political History of the Establishment Clause," 298; Green, "The Insignificance of the Blaine Amendment," 305–7.
64. For further discussion of this and other matters in this section, see W. M. McAfee, "Historical Context of the Failed Federal Blaine Amendment of 1876," *First Amendment Law Review* 2 (2003): 1–22; Thomas E. Buckley, "A Mandate for the Anti-Catholicism: The Blaine Amendment," *America: The National Catholic Weekly* 191/8 (2004): 18–21; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 323–28, 334.
65. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 285, 335ff.
66. G. Bassham, *Original Intent and the Constitution: A Philosophical Study* (Savage, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1992), 7–11.
67. *Home Building & Loan Association v. Blaisell* 290 US 442–43.
68. Donald L. Drakeman, "Reynolds v. United States: The Historical Construction of Constitutional Reality," *Constitutional Commentary* 21 (2004): 723–24.
69. Since the 1860s, the U.S. Congress tried to reign in polygamy and the power of the Mormon Church through various measures like the Morrill Act and Poland Act. The territory of Utah was subject to federal jurisdiction, allowing Congress to regulate matters like marriage, usually left up to the states. Drakeman, "Reynolds v. United States," 700–702.
70. *Reynolds v. United States* 98 US 164; Barton, *Original Intent*, 13, 51; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall*, 1–5, 97–100, 120; Ronald B. Flowers, *That Godless Court?: Supreme Court Decisions on Church-State Relationships* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 22. Drakeman thinks Chief Justice Waite was influenced by the great American historian George Bancroft and Robert Howison's *History of Virginia* in pointing to Jefferson, Madison, and Virginia as the basic source of authority in this matter. Why Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptist Association became a basic authority is not so clear. "Reynolds v. United States," 697–98, 704–16.
71. Roger K. Newman, *Hugo Black: A Biography* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1994), 154ff., 209–11.
72. The administration begins to adopt terms like "liberal" and "progressive" to describe its policies. Thomas L. Krannawitter and Daniel C. Palm, *A Nation Under God? The ACLU and Religion in American Politics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005), 46.
73. Newman, *Hugo Black*, 20, 91, 94, 97–98. A furor broke out over his membership in the KKK shortly after he was confirmed. He almost was forced to resign. *Ibid.*, 247ff., 258. Hamburger believes that his anti-Catholic past in the KKK moved him to erect the wall of separation, but it appears as if his connection to the group was motivated more by political

interests than sincere heartfelt convictions. Whether it is a factor remains open to question, but there is no doubt that his increasing secularity played a vital role. Cf. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 399ff., 422ff., 451; Catherine M. A. McCauliff, "Religion and the State," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 58 (2010): 32–33. Hamburger is certainly right that anti-Catholicism played a role in Black and the nation in developing church/state separation, and maybe his relation to the KKK helped further this bigotry.

74. *Ibid.*, 463.
75. *Ibid.*, 521; C. Mauney, "Justice Black and the First Amendment Freedoms: Thirty-Four Influential Years," in *The Emporia State Research Studies*, 35/2 (1986): 45.
76. *Ibid.*, 67, 141–43, 448–50.
77. *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 1.
78. Richard E. Morgan, *The Politics of Religious Conflict: Church and State in America* (New York: Pegasus, 1968), 54; Ronald James Boggs, "Culture of Liberty: History of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, 1947–1973" (Ph.D. Dissertation: The Ohio State University, 1978), 5–9, 42–43; Paul Blanshard, *Religion and the Schools: The Great Controversy* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1963), 120ff.; Jefferies and Ryan, "A Political History of the Establishment Clause," 313, 315, 318.
79. The dissent only wanted to proceed further and deny Catholics the use of buses in the name of the wall. The dissent was spearheaded by Felix Frankfurter, a secular Jew, a founder of the ACLU, a left-wing socialist, and Harvard professor. Black's decision went through eight drafts in his attempt to please the opposition and reiterate his commitment to church/state separation. James F. Simon, *The Antagonists: Hugo Black, Felix Frankfurter, and Civil Liberties in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 81; Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 461, 465–68, 474–75; Newman, *Hugo Black*, 361. For a discussion of Frankfurter and the ACLU, see Krannawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, 60–63. The ACLU and the National Council of Catholic Men and Women both filed briefs as *amici curiae*, representing the opposite sides of the issue. The ACLU pointed the Court to Jefferson's letter to the Danbury Baptist Association and its "wall of separation"—maybe, inspiring Black's usage of the metaphor. The Catholics recognized the metaphor as containing some "validity," but felt that it was not undermined by the transportation law and should not become an "iron curtain." *Brief of American Civil Liberties Union as Amicus Curiae* (Nov. 14, 1946), in *Everson v. Board of Education*, 4, 7, 12, 26–27, 32, 34–35; *Brief Amici Curiae of National Council of Men and National Council of Women* (Nov. 18, 1946), in *Everson*, 4, 32–36; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation*, 100.
80. Ethan Berot, "Forgetting to Weight: The Use of History in the Supreme Court's Establishment Clause," *Georgetown Law Journal* 102/3 (2014): 859; Sidney Hooks, *Religion in a Free Society* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1967), 43–44, 64–67; Strout, "Jeffersonian Religious Liberty and American Pluralism," 228; A. E. Dick Howard, "The Supreme Court and the Establishment of Religion," in *James Madison on Liberty*, 280. Of course, Jefferson was not present in the country during the writing or signing of the U.S. Constitution, and his letter to the Danbury Baptist Association was written a decade later.
81. Noah Feldman, "From Liberty to Equality: The Transformation of the Establishment Clause," *California Law Review* 90/2 (2002): 681; Ervin, "Colonial History and the First Amendment," 216–17; Prud'homme, "Rev. Thomas Bray, . . .," 21. Among the books Black

- recommended to his law clerks was Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* (*Actes and Monuments*, 1563), which emphasized the persecutions of the church down through the ages. Howard, "The Supreme Court and the Establishment Clause," 280.
82. For a discussion of the religious opinions and policy of church/state separation in Hitler, Nazism, Lenin, Stalin, and Communism, see Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 123–26, 243–48, 343–44.
  83. *McCullum v. Board of Education* 333 US 203. In a subsequent case, *Zorach v. Clauson* (1952), the Court allowed for religious studies, which were not taught upon school grounds. Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 101.
  84. *McCullum v. Board of Education* 333 US 227–28. Frankfurter is the first to raise this principle of offense. He thinks of public schools as the training ground for the "secular habits of the community." Children who opt out of the program feel the scorn of the community in this peer-pressure-laden environment. Both Jackson and Reed question Frankfurter's criterion and wonder whether the Constitution really protects a person from embarrassment. *McCullum v. Board of Education* 333 US 233, 241.
  85. *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 688, 695; *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* 542 US 34; *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 628–29; *Wallace v. Jaffree* 105 S. Ct. 2479, in Robert T. Miller, *Toward Benevolent Neutrality: Church, State, and the Supreme Court* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 1987), 439 [TBN hereafter]; Feldman, "From Liberty to Equality," 694, 697–98. Feldman mocks this standard: "Is Veterans' Day to be celebrated? This may send a message of identity exclusion to pacifists. Labor Day? Exclusion of homemakers (or perhaps capitalists). Columbus Day? Native peoples. Many governments require the teaching of evolution in biology courses, an alliance with secularist ideology that excludes those who adhere to biblical literalism in matters of creation" (713). See also *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 708; *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe* 530 US 305. Kennedy rejects O'Connor's endorsement test. He says it comes only from her concurring opinion in *Lynch v. Donnelly*; it is based on her idea of offense or exclusion; it ignores the numerous government practices that offend minorities. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 668–69. He finds the displays of the crèche and menorah "purely passive," one is free to ignore them or not. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 662–64. Rehnquist and others agree with this line of reasoning. *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 691.
  86. *Marsh v. Chambers* 463 US 783, 792.
  87. Witte, "Publick Religion," 32; Pfeffer, "Madison's 'Detached Memoranda,'" 298.
  88. *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 668, 680–81.
  89. *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 691–92. Brennan accuses Blackmun and O'Connor of taking "Christ out of Christmas" by denying the religious origins of the tree and disconnecting the crèche from the divine incarnation. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 639; *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 708ff. Then Brennan turns around and declares with O'Connor that Thanksgiving is "unquestionably a secular and patriotic" holiday. It celebrates "patriotic values" rather than "particular religious beliefs," "despite its religious origins." *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 631; *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 371.
  90. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 575, 601–2, 616.
  91. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 573; Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 152–53.

92. E.g., Supreme Court decisions on the Decalogue. *Stone v. Graham* 449 US 39 (1980); *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 677 (2005); *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 844 (2005); Keith Gunnar Bentele et al., “Breaking Down the Wall Between Church and State: State Adoption of Religious Inclusion Legislation, 1995–2009,” *Journal of Church and State* 56/ 3 (2014): 513; Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 118.
93. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 616–17, 633–34, 639.
94. Jeffries and Ryan, “A Political History of the Establishment,” 290; Howard, “The Supreme Court and the Serpentine Wall,” 336.
95. *Engel v. Vitale* 370 US 421 (1962); *Murray v. Curtlett* 228 Md. 139, 179 A. 2d 698 (Md. 1962); *Abington Township v. Schempp* 374 US 203 (1963); *Wallace v. Jaffree* 472 US 38 (1985); *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 577 (1992); *Santa Fe Independent School District v. Doe* 530 US 290 (2000); Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 104, 108–13; Charles J. Russo and Ralph D. Mawdsley, “The Supreme Court and the Establishment Clause at the Dawn of the New Millennium: ‘Bristl[ing] with Hostility to All Things Religious’ or Necessary Separation of Church and State?,” *Brigham Young Education and Law Journal* 2001/2 (2001): 235–36, 241–45.
96. *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 592–93, 597–98, 605–606; *Engel v. Vitale* 370 US 442.
97. *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 637–42.
98. *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* 374 US 237–39; *Marsh v. Chambers* 463 US 798–99.
99. Howard, “The Supreme Court and the Serpentine Wall,” 340–41. Ca. 85 percent of private schools are religious. The majority of the schools remain Catholic, but Evangelical Christians started forming their own Christian academies in the next few decades. They also felt disenfranchised by the public school system as it proceeded in the 1960s toward complete secularization. They now represent a significant portion of the private religious schools and have joined Catholics, Orthodox Jews, and a growing number of Blacks in supporting vouchers or some form of financial aid for these private schools. For all the statistics and details, see Jefferies and Ryan, “A Political History of the Establishment Clause,” 327–61; Stephen L. Carter, *The Culture of Disbelief: How American Law and Politics Trivialize Religious Devotion* (New York: Doubleday, 1994) 194–97.
100. *Grand Rapids School District v. Ball* 473 US 373 (1985); *Aguilar v. Felton* 473 US 402 (1985); Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 82–83; *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 617–18; McConnell, “Why ‘Separation’ Is Not the Key to Church-State Relations,” 43. Most members of the Court find it easy to identify and separate secular and religious education. *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 613; *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 205; *Zorach v. Clauson* 343 US 314. The Court’s problem with sectarian education is the mixing of the two together in its schools. *School District of the City of Grand Rapids v. Ball* 105 S. Ct. 3216, 570 [TBN]; *Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Regan* 444 US 668–69. The members say that sectarian schools are given over to proselyting and present a “theocentric” view of subjects like history. Some jurists fear that this sectarian bias will make its way into the nation’s textbooks. *Board of Education v. Allen* 392 US 260–66, 270; *Tilton v. Richardson* 403 US 694; *Zelmann v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 685; *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of University of Virginia* 515 US 895. The battle over curriculum and textbooks shows that no curriculum is neutral. In the postmodern world, the distinction between subjects has

- broken down; the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity (reason and faith) has broken down; and the justification for excluding religion along with it. Paul J. Toscano, *Invisible Religion in the Public Schools: Secularism, Neutrality, and the Supreme Court* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon Publishers, 1990), 33, 82–83; Michael McConnell, “The Influence of Cultural Conflict on the Jurisprudence of the Religious Clauses of the First Amendment,” in *Law and Religion in Theoretical and Historical Context*, Peter Cane, Carolyn Evans, and Zoë Robinson (eds.) (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 109, 118. Jackson recognized the problem with this simple dichotomy early on. He recognized that religious bias permeates academia and its many disciplines. “. . .nearly everything worth transmitting, everything which gives meaning to life, is saturated with religious influence, derived from paganism, Judaism, . . . Christianity, [et al.]” Brennan tries to reduce secular education to the transmission of “certain skills, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, as well as a minimum amount of information and knowledge. . .,” as if skills and “facts” exist outside of ideology, theory, and content. *McCollum v. Board of Education* 333 US 235–37; *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 655. Kennedy says a strict view of separation must exclude the teaching of philosophers like Plato, Spinoza, Decartes, Marx, Sartre, et al., and reduce education to making “pasta or peanut butter cookies.” *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of University of Virginia* 515 US 836–37.
101. *Agostini v. Felton* 521 US 203 (1997); Donald A. McFairlane, “The State, Religion, and Schools: Enduring Constitutional Battles and Political and Legal Ideologies in American Democracy,” *Franklin Business & Law Journal* 2012/3 (2012): 85; Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 93–94; Russo and Mawdsley, “The Supreme Court and the Establishment Clause,” 240, 252–53; McConnell, “The Influence of Cultural Conflict. . .,” 15–16. See also *Mitchell v. Helms* 530 US 793 (2000).
  102. *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 1 (1947); *Board of Education v. Allen* 392 US 236 (1968); *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 602 (1971); *Sloan v. Lemon* 413 US 825 (1973); *Meek v. Pittenger* 421 US 349 (1975); *Wolman v. Walter* 433 US 229 (1977); *Committee for Public Education v. Regan* 444 US 646 (1980); *Mueller v. Allen* 463 US 388 (1983); *Aguilar v. Felton* 473 US 402 (1985); *Grand Rapid School District v. Ball* 473 US 373 (1985); *Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills School District* 509 US 1 (1993); Jeffries and Ryan, “A Political History of the Establishment Clause,” 288–89; Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 83–85; Russo and Mawdsley, “The Supreme Court and the Establishment Clause,” 236.
  103. *Zelman v. Simmon-Harris* 536 US 639 (2002); Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 97–98; DeForrest, “An Overview and Evaluation of the State Blaine Amendments,” 552–54; McFairlane, “The State, Religion, and Schools,” 85.
  104. Jeffries and Ryan, “A Political History of the Establishment Clause,” 289; Bentele et al., “Breaking Down the Wall Between Church and State,” 506.
  105. *Wallace v. Jaffree* 472 US 110–11.
  106. *Wallace v. Jaffree* 472 US 92, 106–7. See Howard, “The Supreme Court and the Serpentine Wall,” 340.
  107. Phillip E. Hammond, “American Church/State Jurisprudence from the Warren Court to the Rehnquist Court,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 40/3 (2001): 457, 460–61; Russo and Mawdsley, “The Supreme Court and the Establishment Clause,” 254–55;

- Howard, "The Supreme Court and the Serpentine Wall," 318; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation*, 103–5; Witte, "Publick Religion," 32.
108. Derek Davis, *Original Intent: Chief Justice Rehnquist and the Course of American Church/State Relations* (Buffalo, NY: Prometheus Books, 1991), 127–28.
  109. Bentele et al., "Breaking Down the Wall Between Church and State," 503–4. This study counts 87 religious inclusion laws passed between 1995 and 2009, mainly sponsored by Evangelical groups and conservative legislators. *Ibid.*, 508–9, 515, 529–32.
  110. Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 120; Howard, "The Supreme Court and the Serpentine Wall," 324.
  111. *Board of Education v. Mergens* 496 US 226. See also *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District* 508 US 384 (1993); *The Good News Club v. Milford Central School* 533 US 98 (2001); Howard, "The Supreme Court and the Serpentine Wall," 318–21, 327, 345.
  112. *Rosenberger v. University of Virginia* 515 US 819; Hammond, "American Church/State Jurisprudence," 458.
  113. He speaks of "accommodation" and "benevolent neutrality." *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 673; *Walz v. Tax Commission of New York City* 387 US 676.
  114. *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 602. For other jurists who sympathize with Burger, see *McCollum v. Board of Education* 333 US 239, 244, 254–55 [Reed]; *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 642 [Brennan]; *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* 374 US 241, 294 [Brennan]; *Board of Education v. Allen* 392 US 242 [White]. The metaphor of a line is heartening to those people who find the situation complex and the distinction between church and state harder to find. The metaphor goes back to Madison, although he never meant for a few exceptional problems and the use of this metaphor to undermine his basic view of strict separation. See n.25; Richard P. McBrien, *Caesar's Coin: Religion and Politics in America* (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1987), 65–66; Mead, "Neither Church nor State: Reflections on James Madison's 'Line of Separation'," 350–51; Dreisbach, *Thomas Jefferson and the Wall of Separation*, 88–89.
  115. *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 612–13. The criteria come from earlier verdicts. *Engel v. Vitale* 370 US 421, 423, 433; *Walz v. Tax Commission* 397 US 664, 670; Ronald Flowers, "The Supreme Court's Three Tests of the Establishment Clause," *Religion in Life* 45/1 (1976): 41–42, 46–48; Josh Blackman, "This Lemon Comes as a Lemon: The Lemon Test and the Pursuit of a Statute's Secular Purpose," *Civil Rights Law Journal* 20 (2009–10): 355. Burger listed the criteria already in *Tilton v. Richardson* 403 US 672, where a fourth criterion is also mentioned (whether a statute inhibits the free exercise of religion). A number of justices had problems with the Lemon test, even if the Court continually came back to it. O'Connor wanted to replace the Lemon test with a simple endorsement test, forbidding the government from approving or disapproving of religion. The test had some traction in subsequent cases. *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 687–90 (1984); Russo and Mawsdley, "The Supreme Court and the Establishment Clause," 260–62; Feldman, "From Liberty to Equality," 694ff. Rehnquist rejects the Lemon test as based on false history. *Wallace v. Jaffree* 105 S. Ct. 2479, 450 [TBN]. Scalia and Thomas also reject the Lemon test and believe the government can advance religion. *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 887–89, 893; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 692; *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of University of Virginia* 515 US 860–61. For an evaluation of Scalia's view of "inclusive nonaccommodation," see

- Andrew Koppelman, "Secular Purpose," *Virginia Law Review* 88/1 (2002): 122; McConnell, "Taking Religious Freedom Seriously," 32; Micah Schwartzman, "What If Religion Is Not Special?," *The University of Chicago Law Review* 79/4 (2012): 1363, 1395–96. Those who reject Lemon's blurred line and want a firm wall include Frankfurter, Kennedy, Stevens, and Souter. *McCollum v. Board of Education* 333 US 213, 231; *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 649; *Van Orden v. Perry* 546 US 709 (n.4), 729, 731; *Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Regan* 444 US 671; *Agostini v. Felton* 521 US 244, 254; *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 717; *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 613–15.
116. Philosophers have difficulty looking outside the text and finding some mystical, mental "purpose." Even if motives are available for interpretation, a multitude of motives lie behind any statute in a democratic process, filled with compromise. *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 636–37; *Epperson v. Arkansas* 393 US 112–13; Blackman, "This Lemon Comes as a Lemon," 363–68. Some jurists selectively read a legislative history and find what purpose they are looking for in order to justify their verdict. Blackman, "This Lemon Comes as a Lemon," 395–99. Other jurists try to find the "purpose" through what a "reasonable" or "objective observer" might discern about a given law, display, or ritual, although the philosophical community lives in a more subjective, postmodern world than these jurists. *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 862–63, 866–68; *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 630. Scalia is particularly interested in the objective effect or result of a statute, not its *a priori* subjective purpose. *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 636–38; Susanna Dokupil, "Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness': 'Sham' Secular Purposes in Ten Commandments Displays," *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 28 (2005): 625ff.: Koppelman, "Secular Purpose," 158.
117. The Christian Right got a particular hoot out of Hugo Black's recognition of "Secular Humanism" and "Ethical Culture" as a religion in an opinion's dicta. With one slip of the pen, he completely demolished his wall. *Torcaso v. Watkins* 367 US 488, n.11 (1961); Flowers, *That Godless Court?*, 117. Many view secularism as a religion. Phillip Hammond, "The Courts and Secular Humanism," *Society* 21/11 (1984): 11; Toscano, *Invisible Religion in the Public Schools*, 17, 46, 131. The Court also prefers to use rather than define "religion," although the position of strict separation demands a clear definition and clear distinction between it and secularity. For the problem of defining religion, see Stephen Strehle, *The Separation of Church and State: Has America Lost Its Moral Compassion* (Lafayette, LA: Huntington House Publishers, 2002), 13–21.
118. This problem causes a philosopher like Richard Rorty to want a political discourse that brackets philosophical justifications since he wants to privilege his own secularity, and his postmodern view of life is unable to justify his or any views. Life and politics would be based on groundless assertions or the will to power, much like Thomas Hobbes' political philosophy. "The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy," in *The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom*, 261–62; *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979), 392–94; Koppelman, "Secular Purpose," 134–35. Certainly, sociologists like Durkheim and Weber reject the notion that reason can eliminate religion and find society's ultimate values beyond the sacred. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 6–7. The Court clearly engages in some type of metaphysical judgment in trying to distinguish religion and non-religion.



119. *McGowan v. Maryland* 366 US 420, 433–36, 443, 483 (1961).
120. See the first paragraph of the Conclusion for the problems with this type of argumentation in religion and secularity. The Court shows skepticism toward Creation Science, which uses the *argumentum ex ignorantia* when pointing to the sudden and inexplicable appearance of certain things in nature and asserts some sort of miracle created them. This argument of Creation Science is bad because further evidence might explain the phenomenon and no longer need the miracle. *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 600.
121. *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 17–18; *Board of Education v. Allen* 392 US 252–53. Of course, these matters exist only within an ethical framework that lowers speed limits to save lives or raises them to save time, that widens the sidewalks to protect children or forgoes the sidewalk to save money.
122. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 625; *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 693.
123. *Wolman v. Walter* 433 US 236; *Mueller v. Allen* 463 US 395.
124. *Wolman v. Walter* 433 US 236.
125. *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 649; *Walz v. Tax Commission of New York City* 387 US 687–89; *Witters v. Washington Department of Services for the Blind* 106 S. Ct. 748 [TBN]; *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 25.
126. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 619, 635–36; *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 627–28; *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 607; *McCullum v. Board of Education* 333 US 231; *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* 374 US 242–43.
127. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 619–20; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 741 (n.4). Brennan recognizes how deeply offensive this inclusive message is to conservative religious groups who refuse to participate in ecumenical services. *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 645. The liberal religious bias on the Court seems to gloat over their perception that diversity is growing in America.
128. *McGowen v. Maryland* 366 US 443; *McCreary County v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 869, 874; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 715–16; *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* 374 US 224; *Stone v. Graham* 449 US 41–42.
129. Souter specifically forbids connecting ethics and God together in prayer as deeply offensive. *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 617.
130. Stephen Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity: The Sacred Roots of American and British Government* (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Transaction Publishers, 2009), 111–13, 134–49. In the early part of the nineteenth century, even those dissenters and Jeffersonian Republicans who espoused a strict separation were forced to back down when confronted with the problem of separating God and morality. They were accused of destroying the moral fabric of society. Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State*, 77.
131. See Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 33, 45, 48, 54. Immanuel Kant tries to make reason prescriptive rather than descriptive of the world and his inner subjective appropriation of it. He tries to rescue scientific law (the category of causality) and make it an expression of objective universal reality, but his synthetic *a priori* is considered a failure. He also tries to create a universal moral imperative, but he can never transcend the way his mind happens to work and make it truly prescriptive. Utilitarian philosophers like J. S. Mill try to make ethics a calculating sum, but they are ultimately unsuccessful in establishing the goal or “end” that humans must achieve in determining the

- “means”; or, in the case of Mill, he commits the “naturalistic fallacy” by trying to make our desires “desirable.”
132. O'Connor tries to emphasize in her decisions that the relevant viewpoint is that of a “reasonable observer, fully cognizant of the history, ubiquity, and context of the practice in question.” *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* 542 US 40. She has little appreciation of her historical bias and ignorance.
  133. I cannot present the details in this chapter, but they are presented in my book *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*. Kennedy says a religious group cannot “persuade the government to adopt an idea.” Brennan says that “one religious denomination cannot be officially preferred over another.” *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 591, 599; *Larson v. Valente* 456 US 244. These statements are patently false. The Puritans (Congregationalists) have everything to do with the American view of government. Other groups certainly joined them like the Quakers (who grew out of the Puritan movement) and Presbyterians (who were radicalized by them). Even their opponents, the Catholic Church, made significant contributions like the concept of natural/inalienable rights, which grew out of the work of William Ockham, Jean Gerson, and the Decretalists in the late medieval period. See Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, chaps. 1–4.
  134. Douglas, writing for the majority, said, “We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being.” *Zorach v. Clauson* 343 US 313. Conservative members like Rehnquist speak of the close identification of religion with our nation’s history and government but offer few details. *Stone v. Graham* 449 US 46; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 687–88. Brennan acknowledges the early connection but sees religion and the government losing connection over a period of time. The Court sees the development of our society and government in secular terms. *Marsh v. Chambers* 463 US 821–22; *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* 374 US 303–304; Dokupil, “Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness,” 628.
  135. *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 605; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 725–26; *McCreary v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 881–82; *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 685–86, 718–19. David Hackett Fischer’s work *Albion’s Seed* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) provides an analysis of the four major waves of immigrants who came to this country in its formative years and shows the specious nature of the Court’s simplistic point of view. See chap. 3, pp. 88, 114 (n.6) for details.
  136. *McCreary v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 883; *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 607; *Meek v. Pittinger* 421 US 372; *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 685–86, 718–19; *Engel v. Vitale* 370 US 432–35. “Divisiveness” is now part of the Lemon test and continually used by the Court to rid the government of religion. *Lemon v. Kurtzman* 403 US 622; *Zelman v. Simmons-Harris* 536 US 718–19. Rather than considering religion the backbone of society, much of the Court considers it the enemy. Even Voltaire would disagree with this assessment. “If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him.” “Égyptre,” in *Oeuvres Complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877–85), 104.
  137. This certainly would be news to the “Protestants” of the Schmalkald League, who fought for religious liberty in the early sixteenth century, following the admonitions of Martin Luther. It would be news to William Walwyn and the many non-Conformists of Puritan England, including Oliver Cromwell, who dreamed of religious pluralism, or a society founded upon liberty, following Paul’s admonitions in Rom 14. It certainly would be news

to all those individuals who looked to the example of Jesus as most essential in the development of religious toleration in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. The example of Jesus was followed by the many sectarian and dispensational groups (Anabaptists, Arminians, Baptists, and Levellers) and many of the early champions of toleration (Sebastian Castellio, Desiderius Erasmus, Roger Williams, and John Locke). It was even followed by those who rejected the basic dogma of the church—all still admiring the simple, moral teachings of the carpenter from Nazareth (Diderot, Voltaire, and Jefferson). Both Jesus and Paul emphasized freedom in their ministry in rejecting the heavy-handed legalism of the Pharisees (Mt 11:28–30 and Gal 5:1), and both rejected violence in spreading their message (Mt 5:39 and Rom 12:14–13:5).

138. *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 11–13; *Marsh v. Chambers* 463 US 807–8; *Abington Township School District v. Vitale* 374 US 214; *Lee v. Weisman* 505 US 620; *McCreary v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 878–79; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 724–25. The Court points to Madison's defeat of the general assessment in Virginia to support "Teachers of the Christian Religion." The Court concludes that no taxes can go to support religion, even on a nonpartisan basis. *Everson v. Board of Education* 330 US 41–45.
139. This clearly shows that the majority disagreed with the strict position.
140. On church/state separation among the Nazis and communists, see Strehle, *Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, 123, 244–48, 307–8, 326–27, 344.
141. *Ibid.*, 73–78.
142. *Ibid.*, 101–7.
143. *Abington Township School District v. Schempp* 374 US 225. Much of the Court speaks of its "neutrality" in regard to religion and irreligion. *Epperson v. Arkansas* 393 US 104; *Rosenberger v. Rector and Visitors of University of Virginia* 515 US 846; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 735; *Walz v. Tax Commission of New York City* 387 US 701–4, 707–8. Some like Rehnquist, Scalia, Thomas, and Burger (to a lesser degree) can prefer religion to non-religion. *Wallace v. Jaffree* 105 S. Ct. 2479, 450 [TBN]; *Edwards v. Aguillard* 482 US 639–40; *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District* 508 US 398–99; *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 683. O'Connor, along with the conservatives, thinks that "sweep[ing] away all government recognition and acknowledgement of the religion in the lives of our citizens...would exhibit not neutrality but hostility." *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 623; *Van Orden v. Perry* 545 US 697; *McCreary v. ACLU of Kentucky* 545 US 897–99.
144. *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 692, 709–11, 717, 725; *Allegheny v. ACLU of Pittsburgh* 492 US 610, 643–44.
145. *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* 542 US 46–49.
146. *Lynch v. Donnelly* 465 US 716–17; *Abington Township District v. Schempp* 374 US 279–81, 294. O'Connor essentially agrees with this sentiment concerning the Pledge. *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* 542 US 40, 41. Even a conservative jurist like Rehnquist engages in the claptrap. "Reciting the Pledge, or listening to others recite it, is a patriotic exercise, not a religious one; participants promise fidelity to our flag and our Nation, not to any particular God, faith, or church." *Ibid.*, 31. It might be true that certain matters are drained of religious significance over a period of time (e.g., names of cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco), but the Court's secularization is hardly neutral; it sponsors this worldview through government and public education. It is not neutral to favor non-religious

- expression of matters. Koppelman, “Secular Purpose,” 109, 153; Rafael Palomino, “Legal Dimensions of Secularism: Challenges and Problems,” *Contemporary Readings in Law and Social Justice*, 4/2 (2012): 211; Toscano, *Invisible Religion in the Public Schools*, 77–78; Michael McConnell, “Equal Treatment and Religious Discrimination,” in *Equal Treatment of Religion in a Pluralistic Society*, Stephen Monsma and J. Christopher Soper (eds.) (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1998), 33. Cf. *Epperson v. Arkansas* 393 US 103–4.
147. Garey, *Defending Everybody*, 24–26.
148. Samuel Walker, *In Defense of American Liberties: A History of the ACLU* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990), 11–12, 17, 28–29; Krannawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, 60; Donohugh, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, 28–29; Garey, *Defending Everybody*, 35.
149. Garey, *Defending Everybody*, 43; Walker, *In Defense of American Liberties*, 39–40.
150. *Ibid.*, 55, 70.
151. Krannawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, x; Garey, *Defending Everybody*, 91–93.
152. Roger N. Baldwin, “Freedom in the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.,” *Soviet Russia Today* (Sept. 1934): 11; *Liberty Under the Soviets* (New York, Vanguard Press, 1928), 4; Cletus Daniel, *The ACLU and the Wagner Act* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University, 1980), 81, 129–30; Donohue, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, 138, 230; *Twilight of Liberty*, 134; Krannawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, 62–63; Garey, *Defending Everybody*, 93. He would confess at times, “I am for socialism.... I seek the social ownership of property, the abolition of the propertied class and sole control of those who produce wealth. Communism is the goal.” In an article for *Soviet Russia Today*, he says that the “class struggle is the central conflict of the world; all others are incidental.” While he prefers non-violent means of creating a socialist state, he recognizes that “violent tactics” against the ruling class are necessary and “some suppression” of civil liberties are necessary to achieve “the only ground on which liberty really matters—economic.” “Thirty Years Later” (Harvard Class Book of 1935), quoted in Peggy Lamson, *Roger Baldwin: Founder of the American Civil Liberties Union* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1976), 192; Krannawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, 63. Baldwin follows this American version of the socialist program in his work on *Liberty Under the Soviets* (1928). He continues to emphasize civil liberties, preferring to work at a slower pace than compromise ethical standards through revolutionary tactics, but he lauds the Soviet experiment in accordance with the title of the book as seeking and accomplishing the same ultimate goal. He recognizes and lists a number of problems with Soviet policy in compromising civil liberties but proceeds to provide a favorable review of its overall direction, considering the “basic economic freedom of workers and peasants and the abolition of privileged classes based on wealth” more significant than these other issues. The Soviet policy represents the “interests of the overwhelming majority of the population” and the “most heroic piece of social reorganization in history.” In contrast to the suppression of cultural life under the Czars, the many nationalists of the Soviet Union are enjoying “unparalleled freedom” at the present time, and much of the criticism directed at the Communist Party is based upon exaggerated accounts of its methods, which fail to appreciate what is requisite in leading a successful revolution. Stalin and the majority of the Party are steering a “middle course between right and left extremes,” exhibiting an

“amazing capacity for self-criticism,” and displaying a “freedom from the outside dictation of a propertied class practically eliminat[ing] the corruption and big graft which marked the czar’s regime, and which, let Americans bear in mind, mark politics in the United States.” Baldwin appears to endorse the Politburo with these types of comments and even patronizes the tactics of its state police (G.P.U.), given the ongoing threat of foreign governments and counter-revolutionaries like the Mensheviks or Social-Democrats. While he clearly prefers the more genteel method of a pacifist in accomplishing the goal, he accepts the Soviet rationale as a way of justifying the means and tends to believe the party line that speaks of its measures as only transitional, imposed by the necessity of a temporary dictatorship and meant to dissipate with the dawning of a classless, democratic state. Baldwin, *Liberty Under the Soviets*, 2–6, 11–12, 19–23, 34–35, 58–60, 72, 134, 195–96, 206–209, 219, 234–35, 272.

Of course, his concern for the restoration of civil rights shows little interest in the religious community. Baldwin speaks of the Soviet censorship of religious material, the end of religious ceremonies from public view, and the promotion of anti-religious propaganda among Jews and Christians by the state, without expressing much indignation. All this seems justified in his eyes because of the need to rid the “peasant masses” from “primitive superstitions” and “childlike belief” in “miracles,” “rites,” and “prayer” through inculcating a social scientific view of life. He even accepts the persecution of the Orthodox Church as a necessary measure in ending its former status as the church/state monopoly and undoing its place as a bastion of anti-communist sentiment. *Ibid.*, 74–75, 91–100. In his summation, he writes,

[I]t is evident that religious liberty under the Soviets is vastly greater than it was under the czar, despite the fact that the czar was for religion and the Soviets are against it. Freedom for anti-religion is naturally much greater than anywhere else in the world, since it is officially encouraged and directed as part of the Communist program—although it is still a weak force except as it opposes scientific agriculture to peasant superstition.

The sectarians, evangelicals, and non-Christian oriental religions enjoy about as much freedom as in other countries, and more than in most with a state church. The old Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches alone suffered severe restrictions, primarily due to their anti-Soviet political activity. Such restrictions on general religious activity as exist, are not aimed at religious freedom. They are restrictions common to the licensing of all private organizations and the censorship of all journals and books in the interest of promoting the Communist program.

On the other hand, the state is freer of religious influence than in any other country in the world—which is something to be said even in comparison with the United States, where the legal separation of church and state does not prevent the interference of sectarian interests in education—for instance through the prohibition of teaching evolution and through the compulsory reading of the Protestant Bible in public schools, to say nothing of the power of religious prejudice in elections. *Ibid.*, 103–104.

Baldwin endorses the Soviet doctrine of “complete separation of church and state,” hoping to eliminate the influence of the church as an effective force in society and endorse his own social “scientific” viewpoint through the power of an expanding state. *Ibid.*, 91, 97.

153. Walker, *In Defense of American Liberties*, 52, 132; Robert C. Cottrell, *Roger Nash Baldwin and the American Civil Liberties Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 176; Krattawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, x, xiii, 61.
154. Garey, *Defending Everybody*, 74–76, 103–4, 107, 131. The Smith Act of 1939 made it illegal to advocate the overthrow of the government or even join a group that advocated revolution. Baldwin continued to defend the civil liberties of communists, but he did not want them on the board. In 1968, the ACLU rescinded the decision and reinstated Flynn a decade later. *Ibid.*, 111–12. Since the 1960s, the group began a more concerted march to the left and has provided high marks for left-wing senators and representatives in public. Today it still claims to have no specific political orientation as a group, but most of their people clearly have left-wing sympathies. Donohue, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, 3–5; *Twilight of Liberty*, ix–xi.
155. When the very concept of civil liberties was established in the Middle Ages by William Ockham and the Decretalists, it rested upon the strong belief in property rights. These scholastics withstood the Pope's claim to a "fullness of power" over the possessions of his subjects and believed that all human beings were entitled to their life, liberty, and possessions as an inalienable or natural right; and so, it would seem to many of Baldwin's critics that a civil libertarian should defend property rights as a necessary hedge against the power of government controlling and determining the thought, decisions, and activities of the citizens, but it appears as if most of the ACLU's activities have defended much the opposite. Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 137–41; Ockham, *De Imperatorum et Pontificum Potestate*, 4.7–11; 7.157–60; 26.36–41; *Breviloquium de Principatu Tyrannico*, 1.3, 26–28; 4.10–11; Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997), 184–85, 190–91. Ockham's works are found in *Opera Politica*, Hilary Seton Offler (ed.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963).
156. This is not without duplicity. For example, the ACLU denies the Boy Scouts, Catholic schools, and the Salvation Army the right to refuse homosexuals. Donohue, *Twilight of Liberty*, 118–19, 130–33. The ACLU would never think of suing Ivy League schools for practicing religious and political discrimination against right-wing intellectuals.
157. Barry Lynn, Marc D. Stern, and Oliver S. Thomas, *The Right to Liberty: The Basic ACLU Guide to Religious Rights* (Carbondale and Edwardsville, IL: Southern Illinois University, 1995), 1–2, 11–12, 15, 20, 25, 73–74; Krattawitter and Palm, *A Nation Under God?*, 1–2; Donohue, *The Politics of the American Civil Liberties Union*, 304–305. In addition, the ACLU rejects "shared time" (public students going to religious schools for education) and "released time" (students from religious schools attending public schools to meet state standards). It also rejects the tax-exempt status of churches but not for non-profit organizations. Donohue, *The Politics of the Civil Liberties Union*, 305–306; *Twilight of Liberty*, 98; Lynn, Stern, and Thomas, *The Right to Liberty*, 44. The pretext for many of its cases is the offense religion presents to certain people, although the ACLU shows less concern about the offense generated by anti-religious material. Lynn, Stern, and Thomas, *The Right to Liberty*, 14, 16, 24–25.
158. Sayyid Qutb, *Social Justice in Islam*, John B. Hardie (trans.) (New York: Octogan Books, 1970), 2–11, 245–47, 258; *Milestones* (Indianapolis, IN: American Trust Publications, 1990), 6, 119. Qutb is the godfather of modern Islamic terrorism in the Middle East. He

certainly says a number of disturbing things that remain worthy of condemnation from a western viewpoint, but it is not as if everything he says is false. Unfortunately, westerners spend too much time speculating over the motives of the jihadists rather than reading their actual words. Most people prefer to condemn rather than understand their enemies; Understanding them would mean “blaming the victim” or mitigating the responsibility of their enemies, who must be condemned as evil. This attitude makes issues difficult to resolve.







# Postscript

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The problem with any strict doctrine of church/state separation is the failure to understand how religion tends to permeate all levels of society. Its influence is felt within a wide range of institutions, inspiring its rituals from birth to death, promoting certain types of behavior and actions, while condemning others as unacceptable.<sup>1</sup> Its ideas are integrated within the forces of life and often served as a necessary and critical part of the past when evolving modern beliefs and practices, making it difficult to label current institutions as secular or sacred and creating a coherent division between the two realms. Often those who label certain aspects of life as secular are presenting little more than an argument from ignorance (*argumentum ex ignorantia*) by failing to acknowledge or find any connection with religion in certain areas of interest due to their inability or unwillingness to discern it. Any argument from ignorance fails to account for the possibility of future historical or philosophical insight into the nature of things and discovering what was missing. Religious apologists made this same mistake in the past when inserting God into the gaps of their scientific knowledge to explain the inexplicable in the universe, but the modern theological community showed the basic fallacy of this approach and now tends to abandon the argument from silence for the most part.<sup>2</sup> This type of argument is no longer considered valid among modern religious thinkers, and its secular counterpart is no different and must be rejected similarly. Ignorance never serves as a sufficient reason for proving much of anything.

Those who believe in God tend to see God everywhere through the eyes of faith. They do not discover the presence of God dwelling in an isolated corner of the universe or existing within certain gaps of our scientific knowledge, but think of God as an omnipotent and omnipresent force who exceeds all possible limitations in ruling the entire universe. Their faith beholds the presence of God in all dimensions of life, from the depths of Sheol to the farthest reaches of the heavens, from the innermost recesses of the heart to the outward affairs of everyday business at the city gates (Pss 24:1, 7; 139; Is 66:1). George Hegel viewed reality as the external expression of the divine Spirit and found the relationship growing more intimate through the historical process of reconciling divine subjectivity and objectivity into an ultimate unity.<sup>3</sup> Ralph Waldo Emerson found revelation within the everyday occurrences of life. He thought the world develops from a transcendental center of spiritual life and exemplifies its origin like a parable or metaphor, inviting the pilgrim to soar beyond the external scientific surface and develop a metaphysical eye in searching for its ultimate meaning.<sup>4</sup> Paul Tillich thought of God as the ground of all being, providing the ultimate justification of life or depth of the human spirit. God is not a being alongside other beings as if circumscribed within a limited dimension of existence, but comprehends all things and defines their very being as *esse ipsum*, *verum ipsum*, and *bonum ipsum*.<sup>5</sup>

Religion provides those who can believe in God with an answer to the heart-felt need of most human beings in their quest for some sense of value and meaning in life. A simple scientific description finds no real imperative to change the way things happen to exist in the world. It provides no real standard of perfection to distinguish between what happens to occur in the natural course of events and what “ought” to transpire in creating a better world from an ideal point of view.<sup>6</sup> In recognizing the dichotomy, many people have found it necessary to look beyond the phenomenal world and the many secular ways to describe it and find a firm foundation for their society and its norms within some ideal ontic dimension. The Hammurabi Law Code and the Hebrew Torah represent the most famous examples of this longing by looking to the revelation of the divine will in founding the laws of their people. The western philosophical tradition contains the same longing for a metaphysical basis of society, reaching back to the Graeco-Roman world and extending to modern times via the Middle Ages. Plato thought of an ideal realm existing apart from the sensible world as embodying universal concepts. He particularly related the ideal good to the existence of an ultimate or supreme form to provide ethical statements with some transcendental and ontic dimension.<sup>7</sup> Cicero followed the Platonic tradition and spoke of a natural law that first develops out of the mind of God and provides the basis of justice in all of the society.<sup>8</sup> Christians carried on the tradition of natural law and deconstructed it in

the Middle Ages through the work of William Ockham and the Decretalists into the modern concept of natural rights.<sup>9</sup> John Locke made these divine rights the basis of good government and influenced the Founding Fathers of America, who constantly refer to the importance of religion in providing a basis for the moral life and justification for the social order.<sup>10</sup>

The nineteenth century ushered in a more skeptical era with many philosophers expressing doubt about the existence of God and placing the former emphasis on the moral life under serious question.<sup>11</sup> The skepticism of the academy was burgeoning during the era and reached a fervid pitch in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, who provided the most scintillating presentation of its brutal logic as the manifestation of the “Antichrist,” but only to reel from the utter darkness of the position in the end. In his work, Nietzsche announces on behalf of the academy that “God is dead,” even if it takes some time for the multitudes to receive the news and accept the full ramifications of the new reality.<sup>12</sup> At first, Nietzsche tries his best to accept the verdict and offers a consistent anti-metaphysical confession, which finds no goal or meaning in life and dispenses with the presence of a moral conscience as the remnant of the old theistic point of view, wanting the *Übermensch* to live “beyond good and evil” and question the “value of moral values.”<sup>13</sup> However, his “revaluation of values” soon reverses its course and decides to offer a new moral truth to replace the old religious values, rather than dispense with moral categories once and for all.<sup>14</sup> Derrida says that Nietzsche destroys all metaphysical truth, then forgets what he says or erases the previous comments so that he can speak the truth once again with great boldness.<sup>15</sup> This inconsistency gives rise to the type of multiple readings associated with Derrida’s approach to the reading of a text, but it also reveals a human problem or weakness that prefers to remain inconsistent and reel from the utter darkness of a meaningless existence than face all the brute logic of an atheistic point of view.

The modern world is caught between its head and its heart. The reasons for unbelief appear much more serious than the possibility of faith, given the clear limits of philosophical inquiry in addressing metaphysical concerns, the plausibility of finding any historical truth in many biblical stories, the power of alternative explanations in fields like science and economics, and the growth of technology replacing former spiritual resources. For these and many other reasons, it appears as if the process of secularization is gaining momentum and sure to overwhelm the religious community if the trend continues in its present direction, with no sign or prospect of significant reversal. And yet, religion has a way of hanging around as an indispensable element in addressing the basic needs of the human heart, which remain unfulfilled in the secular world of instrumentality, or treating human beings as a means without ends, only leaving one to wonder, “Is that all

there is?”<sup>16</sup> Faith wants to believe too much and prefers to reject the limitations of a secular answer. It would rather be wrong with those who accept the possibility of meaning in life and the hope of immortality than sink into the secular abyss with the boast of being right about the utter futility of one’s existence. It would rather cling to the words of Jesus and the promise of eternal life than give up all hope and follow the path of oblivion (Jn 6:60, 66–68). It rejects the secular answer because it refuses to entrust its soul to the natural course of events or follow the path of rational expectation toward the inevitable conclusion. It refuses to limit its hope to the principalities and powers of this world as if dwelling in a self-contained system of cause and effect, preferring to look beyond these forces to the apocalyptic and catastrophic activity of God making all things new. It sees real possibility within the future activity of a God who can contradict the present course of things with supernatural power, pronouncing the poor blessed and giving hope to the hopeless through a simple word of promise. It has no reason to believe that the promise will find fulfillment, given the present state of affairs and its natural course, and no expectation that the process of secularization will change in any significant way since faith is never able to capture God dwelling in the present through a direct vision and prove its point.<sup>17</sup> It must rest content in the promise and continue to believe despite all the evidence to the contrary—“in hope against hope” (Rom 4:18).

## Notes

1. *Rethinking Secularism*, Craig Calhoun, Mark Juergensmeyer, and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (eds.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 11.
2. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1975), 1.6.
3. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, A. V. Miller (trans.), J. N. Findlay (Analysis) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 12, 356–57, 417, 457, 487, 492, 587, 774 (22–23, 584–85, 684, 755, 801, 808).
4. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Selected Essays*, Larzer Ziff (ed.) (New York: Penguin Books, 1985), 18, 43, 53, 60, 242, 260.
5. Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 1.172–73, 207–9; *The Courage To Be* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 187; *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 5–7, 13–16.
6. Albert Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions* (New York: The Modern Library, 1994), 12, 33, 45, 48; Hilary Putnam, *Words & Life*, James Conant (ed.) (Cambridge, MA and London: 1995), 156, 217; John Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (Harmondsworth, UK and New York: Penguin, 1977); Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985).

7. Plato, *The Republic*, Paul Shorey (trans.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1963), VI, 509–18 (105–33) 385, 389, 427–28; Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Greece & Rome* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1962), I/1.192, 202–3, 216ff.
8. Cicero, *De legis*, in *The Loeb Classic Library*, C. W. Keyes (trans.) (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1928), 1.18–35, 42–43; 2.8–10; Strehle *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 135.
9. Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, 135–41.
10. John Locke, *Concerning Civil Government, Second Essay*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, Robert Maynard Hutchins (ed.) (Chicago, IL: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1978), 135 (56); Strehle, *Egalitarian Spirit*, 111–13, 147–49.
11. There are some philosophers who try to base morality on human reason, but their treatments are unsatisfying. Ludwig Wittgenstein represents the most rigorous approach to philosophy in modern times by exorcising all metaphysical concepts like God and ethics from the discipline as defying the logic of language, which must remain rooted in the things of this world. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (London and Henley: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), 3, 5 (1, 2, 2.01), 19 (4.003), 25–26 (4.112–4.1212), 56–57 (5.6–5.61, 5.632–5.633), 67–74. Immanuel Kant tries to ground the moral life within a categorical imperative of practical reason but fails to keep reason within its proper limits in doing so. At best, reason can *describe* what it observes around it in a human way, but it can never transcend the situation and *prescribe* what is right or wrong. Beside this fundamental error, Kant's work still finds a connection between God and morality. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he postulates the existence of metaphysical ideas as representing the “natural disposition of the human mind.” In *Critique of Practical Reason*, he postulates the existence of God as a means of “promoting the *summum bonum*,” connecting happiness and virtue together since the phenomenal world possesses no particular reason in rewarding the moral life with its just deserts. In *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, he thinks of God as a “holy Legislator,” who destined humankind to serve the divine will and inscribes the moral duties upon each and every heart. Here the autonomy of practical reason and its categorical imperative is set aside for a more traditional concept of the relation between God and morality, creating some tension with his previous statements in *Critique of Pure Reason* and *Critique of Practical Reason*. *Critique of Pure Reason*, in *Great Books of the Western World*, 19, 178, 200; *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Great Books*, 260, 268, 291–92, 302, 317, 339–45, 348; *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, Theodore M. Greene and Hoyt H. Hudson (trans.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1960), 3–5, 95, 130–31, 142, 170–71; Copleston, *A History of Philosophy: Kant*, 6/2.97, 219. Utilitarianism attempts to reduce ethics to a calculating sum, but it has difficulty establishing the end as worthy of moral approval. For example, J. S. Mill proposed a utilitarian scheme that would identify what was good with what we desire or produces pleasure. “The sole evidence...that anything is desirable is the people do actually desire it.” However, this solution commits the “naturalistic fallacy” by mixing what we ought to desire with what we do in fact desire, which might include many unseemly things. *Mill's Utilitarianism*, J. M. Smith and E. Sosa (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing, 1969), 34, 60–61. John Searle proceeds in another direction and tries to demonstrate that some value judgments are descriptive, not just metaphysical. In the case of a promise, he finds an implicit obligation, but he later admits that

the entire institution of making a promise might be questioned. *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: University Press, 1990), 182, 189. Jürgen Habermas also tries to find meaning and ethics in a world that has lost its metaphysical moorings. As part of the Frankfurt School, he looks to the community and its ability to reach agreement and coordinate actions through communicative reason or action. He thinks the give-and-take of mutual intersubjective recognition contains a binding force of universal validity, but he ends up having the same problem as Kant in trying to make reason prescriptive. *The Theory of Communicative Action*, Thomas McCarthy (trans.) (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984), 1.xxii, 26, 86, 137, 180, 193, 219, 230, 264, 287; 2.77, 290; *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, Frederick Lawrence (trans.) (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1993), 198, 314–15, 324. See also Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 255–61 for the same type of argument and fallacy.

12. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.) (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 167, 181–82, 279 (108, 125, 343); *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (New York: Penguin Books, 1978), 14. Zarathustra uses this phrase to mock the God of Christianity, who suffocated on the cross from excessive pity and compassion for the lowly. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 249, 272–73; *Beyond Good and Evil*, Helen Zimmern (trans.) (New York: The Modern Library, 1917), 68–70 (61–62). Nietzsche is a disciple of the atheism and voluntarism of Arthur Schopenhauer.
13. Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 7 (1), 140 (244); *The Gay Science*, 280, 289 (343, 347); *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (trans.) (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 20, 110, 161, 236, 280, 283, 312.
14. *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, 33–34, 52–53, 258, 261, 270, 283; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 40, 87–88 (34, 149, 154); *Twilight of the Idols*, Anthony Ludovici (trans.) (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), 33; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 218–19; *Will to Power*, 129, 522 (221, 1008); Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), 110–12.
15. Jacques Derrida, *The Ear of the Other: Otobiography, Transference, Translation*, Avital Ronell and Kamuf (trans.), Christie MacDonald (ed.) (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), 30–31; Steven Ascheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany: 1890–1990* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994), 11, 19. Jean-Paul Sartre serves as another example of this inconsistency. He admits that all ethical ideals disappear if God does not exist and “man is condemned to be free”—free to do anything, but he spends much of his public life on moral crusades, joining the French resistance, supporting the Communist Party, and condemning the “unjust” actions of his own government in Algeria or America in Vietnam. Cf. *Existentialism and Human Emotion* (New York: The Wisdom Library, 1957), 21–23. Bertrand Russell confesses his own inconsistency on this matter.

I am accused of inconsistency, perhaps justly, because, although I hold ultimate ethical valuations to be subjective, I nevertheless allow myself emphatic opinions on ethical questions. If there is an inconsistency, it is one that I cannot get rid of without insincerity; moreover, an inconsistent system may well contain less falsehood than a consistent one.... In the first place, I am not prepared to forego my right to feel and express ethical passions; no amount of logic, even though it be my own, will persuade me that

I ought to do so. There are some men whom I admire, and others whom I think vile; some political systems seem to me tolerable, others an abomination. Pleasure in the spectacle of cruelty horrifies me, and I am not ashamed of the fact that it does. I am no more prepared to give up all this than I am to give up the multiplication table. Paul Schilpp, *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell* (Evanston and Chicago, IL: Northwestern University, 1944), 720.

16. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, 311, 503, 533, 595, 598. This is the question that the singer Peggy Lee poses in her famous song. Max Weber sees the modern technicalizing world as robbing life of all meaning. He is skeptical whether modern reason can supply values through ethical naturalism and thinks that a moral conscience arises from religion alone. Only a “few big babies” pretend otherwise. *Max Weber’s ‘Science as a Vocation’*, Peter Lassman and Irving Velody (eds.) (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 17; Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987), 194; Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, 1.168, 229, 254; 2.302, 312.
17. Jürgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope: On the Ground and Implications of a Christian Eschatology*, James W. Leitch (trans.) (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975), 18, 22–23, 30–32, 58, 103ff., 69, 85–86, 92, 176–79, 281–88.





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