

**Christ is the only Religious Teacher who has
Dealt Radically with Human Wickedness:**

Part I

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C. S. Lewis:

“First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in” (*Mere Christianity*, p. 13).

Francis Schaeffer:

“Man is noble, but he is also cruel. So, we have a dilemma, the first dilemma is that man is finite, and yet he is personal. The second dilemma is the contrast between man’s nobility and man’s cruelty; or we can put it in modern terms, ‘the alienation of modern man from himself’ and from all other men in the areas of morals.” [Man is personal, finite, noble, abnormal, and has a mannishness (*personality*); in man there is good, and there is evil, and man is also cruel]. “So man is finite, and he is not a sufficient integration point for himself.” (*He Is There And He Is Not Silent*, p.1-2).

Evil human behavior (wickedness) has remained persistent throughout history, and wickedness has its roots in every person who has ever been born—except One –Jesus Christ! Man’s depravity and wickedness are displayed on today’s TV, in newspapers, the internet, magazines, in the arts, and literature—one can see the problems of: brutality, lust, pornography, greed, corruption, idolatry, murder, war, marital-breakdown, adultery, fornication, rape, sexual perversion, homosexuality, hatred, bitterness, racism, oppression, indifference to the needs of others, injustice – and many more.

It is unfortunately an endemic part of human nature, and it remains intractable despite the goodwill of governments, the improvement of social conditions and the ministrations of psychologists, and preachers, the effects of liberal humanism and the moralists. The problem of human wickedness will not go away—without a solution.

People of all religions agree that there is an abnormality in man, and the abnormality is seen in how he treats his fellow human being, but all religions do not hold a common view of man’s problem of sin. Even though there is an agreement on man’s sin-problem; there is only one way of life –Christianity, which identifies, and offers a solution to man’s problems of sin, guilt, shame, and abnormality.

Let's take a glance at what some of the world's religions offer man to counter the evil in human thoughts, words and actions:

All religions have no common view of evil and suffering: We start with ***Hinduism***. In Hindu thought one of the manifestations of God is Kali, a feminine representation of God with fangs and skulls hanging about her neck. Why do Hindus picture God this way? Because to them everything that exists now is part of what has always been, a part of that which the Hindus would call "God" – and, therefore, to them, cruelty is equal to non-cruelty.

Hinduism, from which Buddhism sprang, is somewhat similar except that it speaks of reincarnation rather than rebirth. Hindus believe in ***no*** personal God, but rather they believe in Brahman, an ***impersonal*** ultimate reality.

There is also in Hinduism, the doctrine of *karma*, which is, the law of moral consequences: It holds: "You pay for what you do." Hinduism also teaches *dharma*, which is: "One's duty one's individual right conduct." It also teaches *reincarnation*— *which is also called 'the embodied-self.'* There is no hope or morality in that, and not a lot of common logic either. *Karma* demands payment for misdeeds – and yet there is no personal-living God in Hinduism to ***exact*** that payment. All their gods are **abstract** and **impersonal**. In Hinduism there is no recognition of sin in man.

Confucianism. Confucius (c. 551 B.C.-c. 479 B.C.) was a Chinese philosopher. ***Confucianism***, like humanism, is inclined to brush human wickedness aside. Confucius had a high moral code: indeed, Confucianism is more a fine ethical system designed to help people get along with one another than a faith designed to reconcile God to humanity. It is full of teaching about the way of *Chun-tzu*, which means: "man at his best," and how man should behave. It contains the negative version of the Golden Rule: "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire" (Analects 15:24). But the question remains, what happens when I fail to do this? Confucianism has no satisfactory answer.

Confucius taught that human nature is essentially good: As his follower Meng-tzu put it, "Though water naturally flows downwards, it can be made to flow uphill but only as a result of external force. Likewise man's nature is basically good, but can be forced into bad ways through external pressure." This is a very shallow concept, and it has no substance. To suppose that wrong words, thoughts, actions, and attitudes are solely the result of external pressures is profoundly unrealistic.

How different is the analysis of good and evil given by Jesus Christ:

“For from within, out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man” (Mark 7:21-22).

“You have heard it was said . . . But I say unto you, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, . . . love you enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matt. 5:43-45).

According to Jesus Christ, a person does not become a liar when he tells a lie; he tells a lie because he already is a liar. He does not become a thief when he steals; he steals because he already is a thief. And so is, murder, adultery, covetousness, and every other sin. Committing sinful acts does not make us sinners; we commit sinful acts because we are sinners. Jesus confirmed this when He said, “The evil man out of his evil treasure brings forth what is evil” (Matt. 12:35). And the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts . . . (Matt. 15:18-20).

The apostle Paul, a follower of Christ tells man about the sins of the flesh in this manner:

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these, adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murder, drunkenness, revelings, and such like . . .” (Galatians 5:19-21).

Confucius failed to recognize the evil and wickedness in the heart of Man! His philosophy denies evil, human depravity, and wickedness. He places no value and worth on the human being.

Buddhism. Gautama Buddha (563-483 B.C.), was the Indian founder of Buddhism. He was born near the present borders of India and Nepal. He rejected certain features of his native Hinduism, particularly the caste system, animal sacrifice, and undue asceticism.

Buddhism, does not recognize evil and wickedness in the human heart either. It is more inclined to atheism, but sets out to be a practical guide for life. In Buddhism there is no such thing as sin against a Supreme Being, for there is no Supreme Being. To the Buddhist, there is a moral law of cause and effect, (you inherit moral capital debt, from your previous life, and you add to it [or reduce it] by your actions in this life). So the sum of your good deeds and bad deeds will reappear in another life. You have made your deposit into an account that will be drawn from in a re-born life. And so the depressing process goes on, for hundreds of lives, until and unless you manage to break out into enlightenment, like the Buddha himself. ***But how do you come to enlightenment?***

Thus, Buddhism imposes endless rules for acquiring merits: 30 rules to curb greed, 75 rules for the novice seeking admission to become a monk, 227 rules for the male monks and 311 rules for the female monks. But Buddhism has **no** answers for human evil and wickedness, and **no** answers for suffering except through the cessation of all desire, and eventually the elimination of the self, altogether.

Buddha said of the mind of man, “The mind of man is like the wind in a pine tree in a Chinese ink drawing.” Buddha’s system is based on one word – “***do***” so one can escape from this world to another. There is no recognition of evil, sin or wickedness in the human heart –in this religion.

Taoism is a Chinese religion founded in the 6th c. B.C., Classic Taoism is based on the concept of Tao, the universal force harmonizing nature. To achieve harmony, man should identify himself with the basic spirit of nature by contemplation.

Pantheism, part of Pantheism is the belief that “God is everything’ or ‘everything is God.’ It is one of the assumptions of Eastern religions. Colin Chapman wrote of Pantheism: “1. ‘Everything there is --is God.’ (Absolute Pantheism), 2. ‘God is the reality or principle behind nature.’ (Modified Pantheism), 3. ‘God is to nature as soul is to body.’ (Modified Monism), 4. ‘Only God is reality. All else is imagination’ (Absolute Monism).” (*The Case For Christianity*, p. 202). [Monism, is the doctrine that there is only one ultimate substance or principle, whether mind, matter, or something that is based on both].

The nearest word for ‘God’ in Hinduism is ‘Brahman,’ the Universal Spirit. He is also described as the; “one Divine Being . . .hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the self within all beings, watching over all works, dwelling in all beings, the witness, the perceiver, the only one, free from all qualities. He is the one ruler of many who (seem to act, but really) do not act; he makes the one seed manifold.” In the many traditions of Hindu philosophy, ‘God’ may be either personal, or impersonal (abstract), or both personal and impersonal.

The difference between Pantheism and the Christian idea of God is: pantheism believes that God, so to speak, animates the universe as you animate your body: that the ***universe almost is God, so that if it did not exist He would not exist either; and anything you find in the universe is a part of God.*** Pantheism has always been foreign to the Christian tradition of the West which emphasizes the distinction between God and the universe. For the Christian, believes that God, a personal, living God, created the universe, like a man making a picture or composing a tune. A painter is not a picture, and he does not die if his picture is destroyed.

Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) introduced Pantheistic ideas into Western philosophy; he said: “God is All and All is God. . . All that is, is in God, and nothing can be, or be conceived, apart from, God. God is thought; God is extension, and man, body, and soul, is a mode of Being.”

Christians hold that God made the world—that space and time, heat and cold, all the colors and tastes, beauty, and order, and all the animals and vegetables, are things that God ‘created out of His head’ as a man creates a story. God made the universe, and created man, in His image, and many things have gone wrong with the world that God

made, and ***God insists, and insists very loudly, on our putting them right again,*** through His moral order, and through Jesus Christ.

Islam: Mohammed (c. 570-632), the founder of Islam, was born in Mecca. *Islam* recognizes a Supreme Being, *Allah*. The Qur'an reveals that he is both compassionate and holy. It realizes that sin, and human wickedness, have to be punished. The Qur'an speaks a lot about judgment in the flames of Hell.

But what is revealed in the Qur'an is Allah's laws, and not Allah himself. The Qur'an say, 'Allah is the unknowable one.' So how can a human being come to know him and have a relationship with him? Because Allah is unimaginably great and entirely separated from his creation says the Qur'an; how can his followers come love a being who has veiled himself behind his laws?

Sin in the Qur'an is not seen as breaking God's heart, but is seen as rebellion against his will. Submission to Allah is commanded. Love is not mentioned. What does the Qur'an say about Allah's moral character? It says to convert or kill all pagans, and unbelievers, and enslave them. *Pagans* in the Qur'an are all Jews, all Christians, all infidel unbelievers, (Sura 9: 26-28).

What does the Bible say about God's moral character? It says, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 16). The Bible commands man "to love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, love your enemy; love your neighbor; and love yourself (**Matt. 6:40; 22:37-40**). **Only Christianity commands love for: God, neighbor, self and one's enemy!**

Important questions for the followers of Islam: Is there any point of contact between Allah and man? Is it possible to know Allah? What is the significance of the individual before Allah? How can we know the Qur'an is the word of Allah? What is the basis of the Moral Law? What is love? What kind of life after death can a follower of Islam look forward to? And what is the Muslim answer to the problem of Suffering and Evil?

Muslims under Islam operate under a legalistic works system. Islam is a religion of "do" and Allah will accept you. So Muslims embrace Five Pillars of works, they are: the Creed, the performance of prayer and fasting, almsgivings, and the pilgrimage to Mecca, which chiefly make up the practice of Islam to the average Muslim.

They believe that on Judgment Day, Allah will put your good deeds on one side of the scale, and your bad deeds on the other (Sura 23:102, 103), and you may or may not find mercy: "Allah punishes whom he pleases and grants mercy to whom he pleases" (Sura 2:284; 3:129; 5:18). Accordingly, *no* Muslim has any assurance that Allah, however compassionate, will accept him into the delights of paradise rather than condemn him to the flames of hell.

Consequently, in popular Islam there are constant efforts to gain assurance of forgiveness. In some places today Muhammad is raised to semi-divine status: he will perhaps intercede for you with Allah. What about the prophet Muhammad's assurance of forgiveness before Allah? Was there any? Is there any? Where in the Qur'an, did Mohammed speak of his assurance of forgiveness as Allah's prophet? Nowhere is there any assurance of his own, or anyone else's forgiveness in the Qur'an!

Today, Islam practices a ***compulsion*** even though the Qur'an says there is no compulsion. What is the compulsion? The followers of Islam are ***compelled*** to believe in Islam, and if they don't, then, there are severe consequences.

The Qu'ran says that should be 'no compulsion.' Consider these *Surahs*, (which means chapter). (Surah 2:256; 6:119; 16:106; and 24:33). Surah 2:256, "*Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah hath grasped the most trustworthy handhold, that never breaks. And Allah heareth and knoweth all things.*"

The religion of Humanism recognizes that man has a dilemma, a quandary, and there is an abnormality in man. The humanist says that man has guilt, but it is just in the context of guilty feelings, not true guilt. The *Humanist Manifesto I* (1933), and The *Humanist Manifesto II* (1973), both state that humanism is a religion (it is declared a faith).

Liberal-humanism looks at people without God. It holds to the material-energy, evolutionary, chance concept of reality. Therefore, this is their final concept of reality; it is their *creedal declaration*—*there is nothing outside the thinking of man –there is no God*. Their concept of man is not what Man is. To them, *man is a complex (chance of mass) whose existence is by blind chance*. They don't see man as someone who is great and significant even in his sinning. They see man as a competitive animal, who has no other basic operating principles than natural selection brought about by the strongest, the fittest, ending up on top. Humanism is opposed to God and hostile to Christianity.

Liberal-humanism, teaches, *Sola Humana*, (Latin for, *Man beginning from himself, with man as his own integration, or fixed reference point, with no knowledge except what he (man) himself can discover, and no objective moral standards outside of what man himself creates*. It asserts that final reality is **in man's** knowledge alone. In this view, Man is the measure of all things. The best example of this can be seen in king Nebuchadnezzar's statement in **Daniel 4: 30**. "I have built . . . for my power, and for my honor." This worldview has no fixed, final, right or wrong, and holds to no absolutes, morals, or values for everyone. Humanism makes man God (Gen. 3).

Humanism, having man as god, has no point of reference, or integration point, (something big enough and permanent enough on which to relate both our thinking and living). Humanism puts something at the center, and it is inevitably: man, and /or society, and/or government, and/ or the state. Without a sufficient integration point in its worldview, humanism has produced a sickness in society.

Humanism, then, continues to offer more of the same kind of medicine for a cure; and the medicine the humanist is offering for social sickness, is **absolutely no cure** for society's ills.

Humanism in its Man-centeredness has moved from objectivity to **Relativism**. Relativism is a worldview, with no God, no absolute, and which holds that all truth is relative. Real education is the sifting through error to find truth. In relativism, there is no fixed reference by which morality can be judged. Therefore, all cultures, and ultimately all lifestyles, must be private and largely beyond evaluation, (and you can't judge others).

Now we go from Relativism to **Materialism**: Materialism is the accumulation of things, and valuing life by things. This leads to nothing short of **Worldliness**. It is, **conforming to the thinking of the world, or allowing the world to press us into its thinking**. This way of thinking is **Secularism**. This is the mental outlook of how man, without God, looks at the moral framework of the world. It is a philosophy; in the words

of Carl Sagan: “The cosmos is all that is, and all there will ever be.” There is no God, no spirituality, no eternal time, all that is –is now!

In part two of this article we will examine the Christian understanding of Man’s sin and wickedness and the solution.