

Dominant Thoughts in Western Culture:

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Today, the Christian mind has succumbed to the current secular drift with a degree of weakness, that is, unmatched in Christian history. In 1963, the English author Harry Blamiers wrote of the Christian and his mind:

“There is no longer a Christian mind. There is still, of course, a Christian ethic, a Christian practice, and a Christian spirituality. . . . But as a *thinking* being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He *accepts* religion – its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he *rejects* the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which relates all human problems—social, political, cultural—to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God’s supremacy. . . .”¹

Today modern man is fighting against making the Word of God, the standard of his thinking, or the word of man as the standard of his thinking. The Word of God has the implicit claim of infallibility, and when man moves away from the Word of God, then, the word of man explicitly, becomes infallible. Consider some of man’s dominant thoughts today:

Worldliness: It is conforming to the thinking of the world, or allowing the world to press us into its thinking. It’s the world’s way of thinking. It’s a frame of reference reflecting secular/ungodly values. It has a **cardinal presupposition** in its conversation over what is petty. It’s the decay, and a total disappearance of any content of the origin, meaning, and value of life. Bishop Trent described worldliness this way: “It’s the conforming to that floating mass of thought, opinions, speculations, maxims, ideas, aims, morals, or immoral atmosphere; the spirit of the age.” This is very appealing, luring or alluring, and seductive, and it has no intellectual thought. The Bible asserts that “. . . this world will pass away and the lust of it . . .” (1 John 2:15-17).

What is the Christian response to worldliness? Paul said in Romans 12:2 “. . . Be not conformed to the world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of the mind. . . .” And in Philippians 4:8, he said, “. . . think on these things.” (See also, 1 Corinthians 2:16; Phil. 2:5). The Christian should see all of life through the “***mind of Christ***” because the mind is “***renewed in knowledge after the image of Christ***” (Colossians 3:10). The Master stated the meaning of the First Commandment: “. . . To love God with all your mind, all your heart, and all your soul . . .” (Matt. 22:37-40; Mark 12:30; and Luke 10:27). Solomon said in the Proverbs: “**As a man thinks, so is he . . .**” (Prov. 23:7).

Secularism: Is a philosophy which says there is no God, no spirituality, and that nothing is eternal. It holds to this common philosophy: “I did it my way,” made famous by an American singer. It also holds to “what matters **is now!**”

¹Harry Blamiers, *The Christian Mind: How should a Christian think?* Regent College Publishers, (Vancouver: British Columbia), 1963, pp. 3-4.

It was Carl Sagan, who indoctrinated millions of unsuspecting viewers with this humanistic final view of reality in the public television show *Cosmos*, in the 70's. "The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be." This was his creedal declaration as he opened the Television Series. He went on to build **all**, his subsequent conclusions upon it.

Secularism holds to **no** absolute moral standards, and if there is no absolute moral standard, then man cannot **say with finality**, that anything is right or wrong. There must be absolutes if there are to be **morals**, and there must be an absolute if there are to be **values**. If there is no absolute beyond man's ideas, then, there is no final appeal to judge between individuals and groups whose moral judgments conflict. We are merely left with conflicting opinions.

These two worldviews; one with **no absolutes** and the other **with some absolutes** are different concepts of final reality. They stand in antithesis to each other. They stand as separate entities; these two cannot be synthesized. There is no way to mix these two worldviews together—the secularist's with no absolutes, has **no final reality**, and Christianity, with absolutes, has **a final reality**, (what is real, and objective) –rooted in the character of the living God.

Humanism: Is the philosophy which looks at people without God, and without worth, values, meaning, or purpose. Leftist, Liberal-Humanism sees man at the height of his foolishness—that is; man is the center of all things; with this view of life, man constructs and lives in a universe of lies. An example of this can be seen in Daniel 4:30. Here we have king Nebuchadnezzar taking credit for all things: ". . . I have built, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my glory" (KJV). (See also, John 8:44).

The term humanism when used in the wider, and more prevalent way, means: "Man beginning from himself, with no knowledge except what he himself can discover, with no standards outside of himself." The ancient Greek philosopher Protagoras, in his work *Homo mensura* ("Man is the measure"), coined the phrase, "man is the measure of all things." Humanism was not invented by man, but by a *snake*, who suggested that the quest for autonomy—living without God—might be a good idea (Gen. 3).

Humanism opposes God and is hostile to Christianity. It **defies** everything about God, His revelation, and the origin of the universe. Humanism comes from *secularism*. Humanism seeks also to get rid of God by "burying His revealed truth" (Rom. 1:18-20). If /when that is accomplished, then, man assumes the place of God. Humanism seeks the deification and idolizing of **Man**. In the *Humanist Manifesto I, II, and III*, all three state, that; "humanism is a religion, it is a faith."

In humanism, human beings are debased, and there is a devaluing of human worth, and what follows is the according of rights for animals, and the environment (Rom.1:22-23).

Humanism is a quest for self-fulfillment. It is an all out effort to serve self. As we think of serving self, and the fulfilling of self, we destroy others and relationships in the process. Solomon in Proverbs 23:7 declares: "As a man thinks in his heart, so is he." That is really most profound.

What is the Christian answer to humanism? The answer is: Christianity is true. By true I mean, it is true to total reality—the total of what is, beginning with the central reality, which is the objective existence of the personal-infinite God. Christianity is not just a series of truths, but *Truth*—Truth about all of reality, and it is about holding to that

truth intellectually. Christian truth is revealed truth. Truth is a Person --Jesus (John 14:6), and this Truth can be known.

Therefore, Christians **must do battle on the basis of Truth**. Not just religious truth, but truth as final reality. Are we going to accept the lies of modern science, that creation is from impersonal matter—nothing, and that its claim of evolution is true? Or are we going to accept the truth that the infinite-personal, living God—is the Creator of the universe?

Relativism: It holds to no God, no absolutes, and they say, “There is no way to judge morality and religion.” They say that, by our own human speculations man must opt for *relativism*. Relativism is **the view that, there is no fixed reference point by which morality and religion can be judged**. Therefore, all cultures, and ultimately all lifestyles, must be private and largely beyond evaluation.

Relativism has no room for divine revelation, right or wrong, absolutes, morals, or truth. It thinks and lives with lies, in a dead-end cul-de-sac. It is a closed-system of thinking. It has no consensus on what is “best” for mankind. Add to that the selfishness and the wickedness that is in the human heart. We must confess that, left to ourselves, each of us will do whatever “. . .seems right in his own eyes,” as the author of the book of Judges put it (Judges 21:25).

Materialism: This is the accumulation and love of things above everything else. It was T. S. Elliot who said, “There are two kinds of materialism.” First, it is all out Communism, and Socialism, which is the removal of God and replacing Him with the state, with man, and/or, the government. The philosophy of materialism says: ‘there is no God,’ which leads to the dead-end of *atheism* —*the belief in no God*. Atheism is a mental disease; it’s also psychological. Atheism is the belief and philosophy in nothingness and meaninglessness (to the end). Second, there is practical materialism at heart, which is the acquiring of material things, goods, wealth, (toys, and trophies)—to the destruction of ones health and spirituality. It’s the constructing of modern “graven images” as Israel did in the Wilderness (Exodus 32). The modern church has not been immune from pursuing *materialism* and of ‘graven images.’

As a consequence of pursuing materialism, Schaeffer wrote: “We in the church have embraced **two** impoverished values: (i) *personal peace*, and (ii) *affluence*. **Personal peace** means, I want just to be left alone, and not be troubled by the troubles of others, whether they are across the world, or across the city. Personal peace also means, not having my personal life patterns disturbed. **Affluence** means, overwhelming and ever-increasing prosperity—a life made up of things, and more things—and success in life is judged by an ever-higher level, of and possession of material abundance.”

Naturalism: As the name itself implies, naturalism *defies* the existence of God, the supernatural origin of life, and every event in life is viewed by/through natural causes. It holds that nothing is “super –natural.” Therefore, it is up to mankind to understand how nature works so that he will be able to harness its powers for the improvement of human life. Naturalism also holds to the philosophy of meaninglessness!

This view of nature, however, does not absolve the naturalist from grappling with the *two* basic questions concerning the physical universe: (i) From where did the universe come? (**This is the question of origin**); and (ii) Why is there order, form, and beauty in the universe? (**This is the question of design**). This universe has: form, unity, beauty, order, and harmony, and man is personal—he has a personality and language (see, Acts 14:14-17, and Acts 17, Paul on Mars Hill to the Greek philosophers of his day).

The naturalist has **no** credible answers for; (i) what is *the origin of the universe*? And (ii) *what is the origin of life*? So the naturalist explains ***the universe, and life, as natural. (Something cannot come from nothing, and there is objective evidence that the universe had a definite beginning)***.

The Christian system holds that there is evidence and proof for the origin of this universe, and for the origin of creation of human life. This universe was set in motion by the living God. He created this universe (Gen.1:1; Psalm 19:1-6; John 1:1-3; Rom.1 and 2; Colossians 1:14-17), and how He made His creation is objectively **clear** for all to see. All life came from Him. This is claim the naturalist must reject, because the naturalist ***thinks and lives in a closed-system.***

How then does the naturalist respond to the question of origin? (i) Richard Dawkins' in his book, *The God Delusion*, (ii) Christopher Hitchens' *God Is Not Great*, and (iii) Sam Harris' *The End of Faith*, all contend that, ***“Western society would be better off, if we could eradicate from it the last vestige of Christianity.”*** And what will they replace Christianity with? What has atheism given to mankind?

Christianity is largely responsible for many of the sciences, principles, and institutions that even the secular-humanist, and atheistic believers cherish—chief among them are, ***liberty*** and ***equality***.

Cambridge University physicist, Stephens Hawking (a notorious atheist) responded in a truly naturalistic way; he says in his naturalism, “. . .this universe is not infinite and eternal, but, rather finite and temporal with no boundary and no beginning.” He continued; “If the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end; it would simply be. What place then, is there for a creator?”² The atheistic-naturalist has **no** answer(s) for life, at best; in his/her opinion, all man can do is to live his life to the fullest and not concern himself with questions for which there are no answers.

Bertrand Russell wrote: “That man is the product of causes which had no provision 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 collocation(s) of atoms. . . .”

Friedrich Nietzsche: He denied the whole system of Christian beliefs, and he began by proclaiming, “God is dead.” In his arrogance, and in the folly of his pride, he said: “They have got rid of the Christian God. . . The most important of more recent event(s)—that ‘god is dead,’ that the belief in the Christian God has become unworthy of belief—already begins to cast its shadows over Europe. . .” And now, that dark shadow has cast it self across the United States.

²Stephens W. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Press, 1988), p. 141.

Summary:

What is the answer? The only answer is the Christian answer! Where do we start?

We start with the cardinal facts, the tenets of the Christian faith, the indisputable Truth. The living God has spoken true-truth, as revealed in the Bible! Consider some of the cardinal tenets of the Christian Faith:

1. ***The doctrine of God:*** He is the answer to all the “isms.” The universe started with Someone –the living God, instead of *nothing*. Nothing is what the sleeping rocks think of! Nothing means no-thing. Just no-thing!
2. ***The doctrine of revelation:*** Revelation is a point of reference. How do we know anything? We know something because God is there, and He has spoken. That’s how we know! He created the universe, and He is not silent –He is in His universe. He has spoken objective Truth, true-truth. Revelation is the answer to ‘all’ the aforementioned “isms.” (The Christian lives under God’s laws. Moral issues matter. The humanist lives under his own laws—which are no laws at all).
3. ***The doctrine of man:*** God created Man in “His own image” (Gen 1:26-27), and the Bible says that man has worth and infinite value. Outside of the Biblical worldview, Man disappears. No other religion places value on man.

The Bible points to man’s problem, and says that man’s problem is the problem of sin, along with man’s cruelty, guilt, and shame (Gen. 3 and 4). **Man** also has a personality, and a *profound inner intuition* that makes him aware of his Creator (see, Romans 1:18-19; 3:14-15). This knowledge about his Creator is not *abstract, but real*.

Man is above the animals, and he has language with the ability to communicate. **Man** is a moral being, with the ability to: love, with nobility, freedom and responsibility. **Man** is also a spiritual being, created with the ability to worship his Maker –that’s man’s glory; it is to glorify his Creator –to reflect the “image of his Maker.” The *Secular-humanist* takes this away from man; he devalues man, and says, “that man is an animal.”

4. ***The doctrine of sin:*** This is man’s problem. There is the gravity of sin, the universality of sin, the consequences and the penalty of sin. There is also a cure and a solution for sin. The cure is Christ, His blood, and the cross, and His resurrection.
5. ***The doctrine of redemption:*** Redemption is in Christ through His Cross. We confess our sins, and repent, and place our faith and trust –fully, in the infinite value of the work of Christ, and there is the sure promise of forgiveness—in Christ – alone!