

The Beautiful History of the Faithful Church

A Response to the New Atheists

By Diana Lesperance

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Preface

My greatest hope is that this book would bring glory to God, and that all who read it will be amazed at His beautiful and faithful Word. I pray that it will inspire this generation of Christians to rise up with courage and reject any knowledge that is in blatant opposition to the truth found in the scriptures.

I also hope that when the teachings of the Bible appear to be wrong—according to politicians, scientists, philosophers, archaeologists, scholars, or even religious leaders—that this little work would inspire Bible-believing Christians to stand on the Rock of eternal truth and join with our heroic brothers and sisters of the past who loyally loved the Word even when, by doing so, they appeared to be fools.

Finally, it's my desire to encourage the saints to remain strong and to not compromise, because, as I hope to show in this book, when Christians falter, humanity suffers. Let us commit ourselves anew to keeping the Word of God pure, not blending it with philosophy or science or any other kind of knowledge that isn't in alignment with the obvious teachings of the Bible.

"Thy word is very pure, therefore thy servant loveth it." –Psalm 119:140, KJV

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Introduction

The September 11th terrorist attacks were the beginning of a great spiritual attack on Christianity—but it didn't come from Islam.

Muslims who shout “Allahu Akbar!” (God is great!) as they violently knife, bomb, hijack, and kill innocent victims have obviously given skeptics a reason to condemn Islam, but after 9/11 a group of outspoken skeptics didn't limit themselves to criticism of those who perpetrated the attack. Instead, they argued that ALL religion was evil.

Dubbed the “Four Horsemen of Atheism,” Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Sam Harris, and Daniel Dennett became zealous in pointing out the historical failures of all faiths, and because of the religious nature of the attacks on the Twin Towers they believed it was imperative that they become evangelistic in their efforts to spread the “new atheism.” The late Christopher Hitchens argued:

If I cannot definitively prove that the usefulness of religion is in the past, and that its foundational books are transparent fables, and that it is a man-made imposition, and that it has been **an enemy of science and inquiry** (emphasis mine), and that it has subsisted largely on lies and fears, and been the accomplice of ignorance and guilt as well as of **slavery, genocide, racism, and tyranny** (emphasis mine), I can most certainly claim that religion is now fully aware of these criticisms.¹

It's easy to understand why an atheist would be critical of faith, but the attack on religion didn't stop with the skeptics. Many *Christian* leaders also acknowledged the failures of religion. Brian McLaren, a founder of the emergent church movement, for example, would make a comment similar to Christopher Hitchens:

For us to be naïve about the “eye of the beholder” regarding the Bible renders us vulnerable to repeating yesterday's atrocities in the future. **Slavery, anti-Semitism, colonialism, genocide, chauvinism, homophobia, environmental plunder, the Inquisition, witch burning, apartheid** (emphasis mine)—aren't those worth taking care to avoid, for God's sake?²

¹ Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007), 229.

² Brian McLaren, *A New Kind of Christianity: Ten Questions That Are Transforming the Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 85.

While Hitchens accuses “religion” for the atrocities, McLaren goes even further and blames the *Bible*. Instead of honoring Jesus (*the Word* that became flesh), and studying to give a defense of the faith, McLaren concedes that the Bible indeed *has* been the cause of evil, but rather than tossing the claims of Christianity aside, instead he argues that we need to develop “a new kind of Christianity.”

Andy Stanley, pastor of one of the largest evangelical churches in the United States, has also struggled to respond to the assault on the Bible. In his sermon entitled “Aftermath,” Stanley calls the criticisms of the new atheists the “Achilles Heel” of the church because they argue convincingly that the God of the Old Testament is a “moral monster.”³ He says this attitude has now permeated college campuses and because of it the new generation of Christians isn’t as likely to believe in the authority of the Bible. His solution to this dilemma is to simply give in to the onslaught and to remove the Bible (especially the Old Testament) as the authority for the Christian faith. Instead, he suggests that our foundation should simply be the resurrection.

Rachel Held Evans, a New York Times best-selling Christian author, has also admitted she has doubts about the veracity of the Bible saying, “I have come to regard with some suspicion those who claim that the Bible never troubles them. I can only assume this means they haven’t actually read it.”⁴

I understand how difficult it may be to respond to some of the arguments of the new atheists. Unfortunately, Christians can’t deny that Catholic cardinals and bishops burned people at the stake, and lest Protestants become self-righteous, it’s a known fact that many Southern slaveholders were active in Methodist, Baptist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian churches. And Germany—the birthplace of the Protestant Reformation—must always live with the shame that it was her church altars that were decorated with swastikas. Many people who carried the name of God committed horrible sins against humanity.

While I’m able to face the failures of church history, unlike McLaren, Stanley, and Evans, I refuse to concede that the Bible is the cause of those failures. In fact, I would contend that the Bible has been the greatest source of *good* in the history of humanity, and as I argue in the pages of this book, I believe the church failed because she *disobeyed* the scriptures, not because she obeyed them.

I’ve spent many years debating atheists on blogs and websites. I got involved in this ministry because I watched Christopher Hitchens being interviewed on C-Span and as I listened to his attacks on Christian history, I thought, “How have others responded to this?”

³ Andy Stanley, “Aftermath, Part 1: Stand Alone” April 21, 2018.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jmoTAtH3zus>.

⁴ Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood: How a Liberated Woman Found Herself Sitting on Her Roof, Covering Her Head, and Calling Her Husband Master* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 2012), 51.

I went to YouTube and watched his debates with Christians and I noticed the ineffectiveness of their responses.

I was astounded when some of the Christians who debated Hitchens admitted that the church was responsible for the Inquisition, but then pushed back saying, in effect, “Yes, we killed thousands, but you atheists killed millions under communism!” I thought, “Whoa . . . we need to do better than that! Why should Christians have been responsible for ANY atrocity or injustice?”

I earned my degrees in religion and history from a small Christian college (before it moved away from its biblical roots as a 19th century missionary training school). I’m also one of those nerdy 90’s homeschool moms, and since teachers usually learn a subject better than their students, I absorbed a lot of historical knowledge—without the Christian parts being erased. For example, secular schools teach about Isaac Newton, but they don’t tell students about his motives or how his love for God inspired him, but because I was independent from secular institutions, I was free to learn and teach what I wanted.

What I learned was amazing. I discovered that the faithful church—who remained steadfast in their belief that the scriptures were the truth—changed the world! So many (if not most) of the heroes of history were Bible-believing Christians! So when Hitchens began to share history from his perspective, I was floored. I was so distraught that I decided to write my first book. It was during the writing of that book that I noticed a pattern starting to develop:

In every era, when philosophy, science, or other ideas are adopted by Christians, and merged with, or even allowed to prevail over, biblical doctrine, the result was catastrophic for humanity.

When I looked at the arguments used in each specific historical time period, and how they justified the extermination of heretics, kidnapping of slaves, or the systematic murder of Jews, I noticed that they had nothing to do with sound biblical doctrines.

Instead, while still carrying the name of God, parts of the church embraced popular scientific or philosophical ideas *alongside of, or instead of*, the gospel. The effect of this concession to worldly views was horrendous because wars, genocide, slavery, and racial abuse were all committed IN THE NAME OF GOD by Christian religious leaders who had compromised the truth.

It’s my contention that if believers would have kept their doctrines pure and unmarred the church would have been the light in the darkness and the salt that was needed to preserve society and keep it from falling back into barbarism. It was when the church caved in to the latest trends and refused to stand up for biblical truth that we became the scourges of history.

Whenever I watch a war movie and see the horrific battles scenes, I often picture a philosopher, theologian, “prophet,” professor, or scientist sitting in a dusty room stacked with books, writing down his latest brainchild (communicated with the most intelligent of words, of course) without any attempt to bind his thoughts to biblical truth, and I think: if only they would have remained faithful to the scriptures, maybe our young people wouldn’t have had to die in so many gruesome conflicts—because ultimately wars begin with the clash of ideas.

For some reason these “intellectuals” treated their ideas as though they were mere playthings, never seeming to realize that their proposals could lead to death and destruction. I contend that these “deep” thinkers have caused much of the carnage in the modern history of man. When they arrogantly snubbed God, they become fools...and the consequence of letting their imaginations go astray, rather than “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Cor. 10:5) has been bloody wars and massive human suffering.

On the other hand, whenever a scientist or philosopher tethered their thoughts to the Word of God (as I hope to show) great blessings came to humanity. Those who held fast to the Bible were the HEROES of history. They were the great scientists, statesmen, human rights advocates, and abolitionists. They led the way in kindness and compassion towards the poor, the sick, little babies, and the elderly. They led the great reform movements. They opposed communist and Nazi tyranny. They changed the world with the Gospel.

It is my hope that this book, while not comprehensive (it doesn’t cover all of history), will begin to lay out a case to support this thesis. I have focused on five eras of Christian history: The Inquisition, the Scientific Revolution, Slavery, Colonialism, and Nazism. These are the areas that have been under the strongest attack.

If you have heard . . .

- . . . that Christians burned people at the stake, perhaps you will rejoice when you discover that Bible-believing Christians were the primary opponents (and victims) of the Inquisition.
- . . . that Christianity was the enemy of science because Galileo went before the Inquisition and was exiled by the church, maybe your faith will be encouraged to know the truth—that Galileo never rejected the Bible, and Christianity was actually the *source* of the true Scientific Revolution!
- . . . that the Bible was the foundation for racism or Southern slavery, then maybe your faith will be encouraged when you discover that the Bible was the basis for *abolishing* slavery!
- . . . that Christians were colonialists and imperialists, and missionaries victimized the darker races, destroying their cultures, you may be amazed at the true stories of

evangelical missionaries and their efforts at opposing scientific views on racial superiority.

- . . . that fundamentalist Christians were Nazis, you may be interested to learn that the only internally organized opposition to Nazism was the Confessing Church, made up of Bible-believing Christians.

This book may not have all the answers you need, but I promise you, for any subject not found in this book, if you seek, you shall find! There were times when I was in a heated debate with an atheist and I lamented over a subject and felt deflated because they seemed to have me cornered, but God always came through! It's hard work, but I encourage you to believe that God is good, and that his Word is good. There ARE answers!

I also think it's important to realize that no human being is perfect. The plumb line against which I measured history wasn't a person or denomination. The plumb line I used was the Word of God. For example, even though Martin Luther led the church back to the belief in "scripture alone, Christ alone, faith alone, and grace alone," he also taught a view about the Jews that didn't align with scripture. Later, Hitler would point to Luther's teachings to support his anti-Semitic views. Does Luther's failure mean that God's Word failed? No! Luther didn't "rightly handle the Word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:16) and because of that he contributed greatly to human suffering.

Luther was like many other men and women of God who have had historical successes AND failures, but the Word of God never fails. The part of their teachings which aligned with the truth of the Word are now revered and looked back upon with endearment, but the part of their teachings that rejected or mishandled the truth are now abandoned and disdained.

It's my hope that this book might give Christians a new vision of the *beauty* of the Bible and of those believers who loved its truth. If somebody is searching for a righteous cause, perhaps they would like to join the same group of people whose commitment to the scriptures led them to conduct slaves on the Underground Railroad or hide Jews during the Holocaust. Perhaps they would like to join those missionaries whose commitment to the scriptures meant that they set out to disprove social Darwinism—and as a result, started nearly all of the first colleges in Africa and Asia.

There truly IS something that's ageless out there; something that's tried and true and faithful; something that has ALWAYS been on the right side of history. While change or progress is the mantra of our age, I would argue that all the greatest and best changes in history came as the result of Bible-believers who stood on the steadfast rock of the Ancient of Days.

It's the simple faith of each believer who perseveres in the face of darkness and persecution that changes the world. When the Body of Christ lives out the Word of God, we

are living out the mind of Christ, and aligning ourselves with the greatest and noblest causes of humanity.

CNN's *Belief Blog* carried an article by Rachel Held Evans entitled "Why Millennials Are Leaving the Church." The post went viral, and at the time of the writing of this book it has received nearly ten thousand comments. She explains the dilemma that many young Christians experience: "... research ... shows young evangelicals often feel they have to choose between their intellectual integrity and their faith, between science and Christianity, between compassion and holiness."⁵

I hope this book will reveal that it isn't necessary to make those choices. It isn't by faith that I'm asking Christians to hold fast to the Word; it's by looking at a demonstrable pattern in history. Bible-believers have often looked like they were the hicks or hillbillies of their day, but only hindsight revealed they were right. In fact, as I hope to show in this book, most of the greatest minds of history have been Bible-believers who were *deliberately* standing on the Word of God.

I admit that it is to the mind that I make the appeal of this book. There's an old adage that says, "The heart cannot embrace that which the mind rejects." After studying my arguments, I hope that you will have a faith that engages your whole being (heart, soul, and mind) which will cause you to rise up in passionate worship!

When I talk about the "truth" of the scriptures, a response I often receive is, "There's so many denominations, the church can't even decide on the "truth" as it's found in the Word! Christians always disagree." Well, this is true! Sometimes the church has internal debates over the interpretation of scriptures—this happens—even Jesus asked a lawyer who was questioning the law: "How do you read it?" (Luke 10:26) But I believe blatant disobedience, or abandonment of certain clear teachings because we want to be in line with the latest worldly trends, is a form of unfaithfulness to Jesus (James 4:4). And when we add to the pure Bible, we are committing a form of spiritual adultery. (ADD—ULTERY) This adultery has caused the name of our God to be defiled and vilified repeatedly down through the ages.

One final note...I'd like to mention that even though some of the facts I use to create the arguments in this book are not well-known, they can easily be checked out by a simple Google search. I'm not making up any new evidence that isn't known to experts in the specific time period of history that is being discussed. All I've done is organize these historical details using the scriptures as my plumb line. If you've ever debated an atheist, you know how important it is to provide original sources, so I tried to almost always use

⁵ Rachel Held Evans, "Why Millennials Are Leaving the Church" *CNN Belief Blog*, July 27, 2013. <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/07/27/why-millennials-are-leaving-the-church/>

them. I also tried to capture the flow of history and ideas, so each chapter will build upon the content of the previous chapter.

I pray that this book will equip the church and convince Christians to remain faithful to the truth, against all popular, philosophical, and scientific views, if these views don't align with the plain teachings of the gospel. I also hope it helps the church to respond to the new atheists without having to toss aside the Bible.

Questions to Think About:

1. Have you had any personal experiences with people who have attacked Christianity because of its history?

2. Have you ever felt perplexed or embarrassed over church history? (In a classroom or in encounters in social media, for example.)

3. Have you ever thought that Christians needed to develop a new form of Christianity? Why?

4. Have you ever experienced a book or movie that made you proud of Christian history? Explain why.

The Inquisition

The Lie:

Christians burned people at the stake during the Inquisition.

The Truth:

Bible-believing Christians were the ones who were burned at the stake! They were also the ones who were finally able to overthrow the power of the Inquisition.

One of my Facebook friends posted a meme called, “Ten Reasons Why Beer Is Better than Jesus.” Number six reads:

“Nobody’s ever been burned at the stake, hanged, or tortured over his brand of beer.”

This criticism is aimed at a period of time from the 12th to the 19th centuries, when Catholic leaders tried to stop other Christian groups (“brands”) from breaking away from the official church by labeling them “heretics.” Once individuals or groups were accused of heresy (a term which means to doubt or deny a core teaching of the Christian faith) they were made to appear before “The Inquisition,” a church court where they could either try to defend themselves, or admit they were wrong (“recant”). If they didn’t “recant,” the Catholic authorities would often torture them in order to pressure them into submission. If they still didn’t recant, they could be turned over to secular authorities who would often jail them, banish them, or even burn them at the stake while religious officials watched.

How could this happen? How could the followers of Jesus have become such cruel and horrendous tyrants?!!

From the very beginning of the church, the apostles battled against false doctrines. For example, Paul argued, in his letter to the Galatians, against Judaizers—those who thought the church needed to remain under Old Testament law (especially concerning circumcision). We also see the apostle John warning against the Gnostics. (These were teachers who claimed Jesus was a spiritual being who didn’t come as a flesh and blood person.)

And yet, even though false teachers were pervasive in the early church, the apostles never advocated murdering or torturing those with whom they disagreed! Instead, they battled for the hearts and minds of people through writing defenses of the faith and preaching the gospel.

After all Jesus said the tares should be allowed to grow up with the wheat (Matt. 13:24-30). The task of separating true believers from false believers was reserved for God alone. (This doesn't mean that Christians aren't supposed to discern the difference, but we are not the agents of God's judgment against what we perceive to be the "tares.")

Before going into a discussion on the Inquisition, I think it's important to see the beauty of the church before it became corrupt. The closer the church remained to the teachings of the apostles, the more vibrant and compassionate it was, but as time went on, and Christians began to blend the teachings of Jesus with other sources of "truth," such as Greek philosophy or science, the result was massive human suffering!

When the church was just beginning, it was radical. Believers shared everything they had. They had meals together. They sold their belongings in order to give money to the church. They cared for widows, orphans, the elderly, and sick people. The church was a force for love and kindness and provision.

This was a new thing!

While the Greeks and Romans may have contributed much to philosophy, governmental structure, architecture, community planning, military strategy, art, and various other secular pursuits, they didn't contribute to the *heart* of western civilization. The ancients enjoyed blood sport. This was the practice of watching gladiators fight to the death, or watching as wild animals gored innocent victims. (Christians were often victims of blood sport in the Roman Coliseum.) Over half of the population were slaves. They led aggressive wars. They worshiped many gods, and even emperor worship was demanded—upon pain of death. There was no religious freedom. They practiced infanticide, exposing unwanted babies, especially girls, to the beasts and the elements. They were brutal and used force to control their subjects. Flogging, crucifixion, burning, impaling, and torture were commonplace. The ancient world may have had a form of order, but they were NOT civilized.

Piercing through the darkness of this time was the Light of the World, Jesus of Nazareth. He was just a simple carpenter, but he has been the most civilizing influence humanity has ever known. Before Jesus came, most of the Gentile nations were living in terror and darkness. All over the world there was tribal warfare, cannibalism, human sacrifice, widow-burning, infanticide, and blood sport--and the nations remained in this condition until the gospel was preached to each area of the world. Missionaries in the twentieth

century were reaching people groups who were still cannibals! The only thing that set people free from their cruel ways was the good news of Jesus.

Charity

Christians became the salt and light of their societies. The teachings of Jesus burst forth into the world and everywhere they went, society was renewed and preserved. Instead of treating the poor as outcasts who were spiritually inferior (as the Hindus did with their caste system), Christians were taught that when they fed or clothed the “*least of these*” they were feeding and clothing Jesus! (Matthew 25:35-40)

The Greeks thought ugliness was bad, and avoided crippled, diseased, and mutilated people. Plato argued that his “Republic” (his ideal society) should set up judges who would “care for those of your citizens who have good natures in body and soul; while as for those who haven’t, they’ll let die the ones whose bodies are such.”⁶ On the other hand, Jesus taught:

*When you give a dinner or banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives, or rich neighbors; lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. **But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just.*** –Luke 14:12-14, ESV

As a result, in the book of Acts we see the apostles setting up food distribution sites where the poor, elderly, and sick were fed. The brother of Jesus, James, explained: “*Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: accepts as pure and faultless is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction . . .*” (James 1:27, ESV) James also said favoritism based on a person’s income level was prohibited. He forbade churches from treating the rich better than the poor when they entered into the place of worship (James 2:2-4).

This attitude was merely a reflection of the Old Testament law that commanded kindness toward widows and orphans (Exodus 22:22) and wouldn’t allow the poor to be oppressed (Exodus 22:25, Leviticus 19:9-10, 25:36-39). The Old Testament prophets also demanded kindness toward the poor (Isaiah 1:16-17, Jeremiah 22:13-17, Ezekiel 22:29). Opening the New Testament, John the Baptist told his followers that, “*Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do the likewise*” (Luke 3:11, ESV). This attitude didn’t stop with the disciples. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest defenders of the faith, described the purpose and method of giving in the early church:

⁶ Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 88, 409e-410a.

Those who prosper, and who so wish, contribute, each one as much as he chooses to. What is collected . . . takes care of orphans and widows, and those who are in want on account of sickness or any other cause, and those who are in bonds, and the strangers who are sojourners among [us] . . . ⁷

Tertullian, an early church leader, also described giving in the early church:

On the monthly day, if he likes, each puts in a small donation; but only if it be his pleasure, and only if he be able: for there is no compulsion; all is voluntary. These gifts are . . . to support and bury poor people, to supply the wants of boys and girls destitute of means and parents, and of old persons confined now to the house; such too as have suffered shipwreck; and if there happen to be any in the mines, or banished to the islands, or shut up in prison . . . ⁸

Even the enemies of Christ recognized the love and kindness of the Christians. Lucian, the ancient Greek playwright, mocked them for their generosity. He said people who were “unscrupulous” would often “get among these simple souls and his fortune is pretty soon made; he plays with them.”⁹ There are always people who are willing to prey upon the flock, but at least the hearts of the Christians were tender, unlike the hearts of pagan ladies, says Clement (a bishop of Rome after Peter). He said the Roman women were abandoned to luxury and they “bring up parrots and curlews [a type of bird], but will not take in the orphan child.”¹⁰

Julian, the Apostate, (who worshiped the traditional Roman gods) was so upset about the charitable attitude of the church that he wrote in a letter to Arcadius (the high priest at pagan temple in Galatia) that he had observed how “the kindness of the Christians to strangers, their care for the burial of the dead, and the sobriety of their lifestyle has done the most to advance their cause.”¹¹ In fact, he lamented, “The impious Galileans support our

⁷ Justin Martyr, “First Apology of Justin,” *Early Christian Fathers: Volume I*, trans. Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1952), 287.

⁸ Tertullian, “Apology 39,” as quoted by Philip Schaff in *Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 3. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Erdman’s Publishing Co., 1973). Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/schaff/anf03.iv.iii.xxxix.html> (accessed 01/25/2009).

⁹ Lucian, “Lucian of Samosata: The Passing of Peregrinus,” *The Tertullian Project*, <http://www.tertullian.org/rpearse/lucian/peregrinus.htm> (accessed 02/09/2009).

¹⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *The Pedagogous*, *New Advent*, <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/02093.htm> (accessed 01/15/2009).

¹¹ Julian, “Letter to Arcadius.” Based in part on the translation of Edward J. Chinook, *A Few Notes on Julian and a Translation of His Public Letters* (London: David Nutt, 1901), 75-78, as quoted by D. Brendan Nagle and Stanley M. Burnstein in *The Ancient World: Readings on Social and Cultural History* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 314-315. Then Again: Primary Source, <http://www.thenagain.info/Classes/Sources/Julian.html> (accessed 02/07/2009).

poor in addition to their own.”¹² This inspired him to lead a campaign to get the pagan temples to care for the poor, but it failed miserably.

Lawrence, one of the deacons of Rome during the third century, was arrested by Emperor Valerian. Since he was a deacon, it was his job to distribute church money to the poor. His persecutor demanded to know where the money was. As the poor looked on during the trial, with outstretched arms Lawrence cried out:

These are the precious treasure of the church; these are the treasure indeed, in whom the faith of Christ reigneth, in whom Jesus Christ hath his mansion place. What more precious jewels can Christ have than those in whom he hath promised to dwell? For so it is written, ‘I was hungry and you gave me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me to drink; I was harbourless and ye lodged me.’ And again, ‘Look what ye have done to the least of these, the same have ye done to me.’ What greater riches can Christ our Master possess, than the poor people, in whom he loveth to be seen?¹³

After Lawrence spoke these words, John Foxe, author of *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs*, said it angered the persecutor so much that “he became enraged and tortured Lawrence with beatings, fiery tongs, burning plates, chains, fire-forks, and the grated bed of iron, on which the torturers were commanded to ‘roast him, broil him, toss him, turn him.’”¹⁴

During a plague in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century, Dionysius (the bishop of Alexandria) wrote about the care the church gave to those who were sick and suffering:

Most of our brethren did not spare themselves, so great was their brotherly affection. They held fast to each other, visited the sick without fear, ministered to them . . . and served them for the sake of Christ. Right gladly did they perish with them . . . Quite the reverse was it with the heathen. They abandoned those who began to sicken, fled from their dearest friends, threw out the sick when half dead into the streets, and let the dead lie unburied.¹⁵

Cyprian (the bishop of Carthage) also contrasted the attitudes of pagans with those who believed in Jesus. Speaking to Demetrianus (who claimed the destruction of Rome was caused by Christians who had angered the Roman gods) about the plague at Carthage, he says that the pagans, “shun the deathbeds of the dying, but make for the spoils of the dead.”¹⁶

¹³ John Foxe, *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* (Pittsburgh, PA: Whitaker House, 1981), 29-30.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 30.

¹⁵ Dionysius, “Letter to Eusebius,” as quoted by Arnold Harnack in *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity in the First Three Centuries*, trans. and ed. James Moffatt (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1972), 171.

¹⁶ Cyprian, “Letter to Demetrianus,” as quoted by Arnold Harnack in *The Mission and Expansion of Christianity*, 172.

Eusebius (the bishop of Caesarea Maritima) spoke of the Christian attitude towards the sick during an anthrax plague that happened during the reign of Maximinus Daza:

At the same time every race was given clear proof of the zeal and piety of Christians in all things. Amid the onset of these evils they alone revealed compassion and humanity in their deeds. Every day they carried on, nursing the dying and burying the dead, for there were countless numbers with no one to look after them. Into one place in every city they gathered the multitude of those who were wasted by hunger. They issued food to everyone. And all men began to speak of their work, and they gave glory to the God of the Christians.¹⁷

Slavery

Another change brought about by Jesus was the attitude toward slavery. In Athens, where nearly three-fourths of the population were slaves, Aristotle, the great Greek philosopher, didn't lament this state of humanity, instead he looked upon slaves as living tools. He thought men could be owned by other men because some men are merely "instruments of action" and that "from the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjection, others for rule."¹⁸

Plato, the teacher of Aristotle, also thought the need for slavery was a natural condition of humanity . . . but Jesus said that he came to set the captive free! (Luke 4:18) The Judeo-Christian faith stands alone in history as the friend of the slave.

So how did Jesus influence Christian attitudes toward slavery?

First of all, he had no slaves. Instead, he worked as a carpenter. None of his disciples were slave owners, either. They were fishermen and farmers. Jesus taught that those who were the greatest in the kingdom were those who served. The strong were commanded to care for the weak. There were rules that said a person couldn't eat if they didn't work. (2 Thes. 3:10) Fathers were called "infidels" if they didn't care for their children. (1 Tim. 5:8) *The Didache*, a first century pamphlet which claimed to be a consolidation of the teachings of the apostles, even claimed that traveling prophets were false if they wouldn't work.¹⁹ Christians were commanded to work quietly with their hands ... for the glory of God. (1 Thes. 4:11) This work ethic made labor an honorable pursuit, contributing to the

¹⁷ Eusebius, "The Ecclesiastical History," *The Essential Eusebius*. trans. Colm Luibheid (New York: The New American Library, 1966), 162-163.

¹⁸ Aristotle, "Politics," *The Basic Works of Aristotle*. ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941), 1131-1132.

¹⁹ "The Didache," *Early Christian Fathers, Volume I*, trans. and ed. Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 176.

development of a middle class, rather than two separate classes—the rich and the poor, or the slave and the free.

Secondly, he gave all Christians spiritual equality. The apostle Paul made it clear that in Christ all were equal before God.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” -- (Galatians 3:28)

This equality could be seen by all in the Roman Coliseum when Felicity (a slave woman) and Perpetua (a free woman) were both martyred together. Felicity had just given birth in the arena jail, and Perpetua was still a nursing mom, her breasts full and tender from not being able to feed her son. They were both sentenced to death for refusing to deny Christ.

At first, they were tossed about by a bull, who abused them with his horns, but they survived, so the executioner instead decided to kill them with a sword. The precious picture of a slave woman and a free woman, giving each other a last kiss as they prepared to die for Jesus, has lived on as a testimony in history of the equality and love existing in the Body of Christ.

While the church initially consisted mainly of a band of poor, weak Jews, there was no way they could overthrow the slave system through force or revolution. Rebellion had been tried before. The latest attempt was by Spartacus, whose forces consisted of trained gladiators, and yet they failed. Thousands crucified, their bodies lined the Appian Way (a Roman highway) for miles.

In an empire that could strike such a crushing blow, the disciples instead taught their fellow brothers and sisters how to live as free men *within* the system—to live above the tyranny with dignity, and for a higher purpose—for the glory of God. Beyond this, they taught members of the church to live as equals. Perhaps in the outer world the poor and enslaved were despised, but within the bounds of the church there was love and brotherhood. Even Jesus, our King, was willing to serve his disciples and wash their feet.

One of the earliest bishops of Rome was Linus, a slave. Callistus, another early bishop of Rome, was also a slave. The church, unlike the Roman Empire, recognized slave marriages, and while pagans were always sure to distinguish the tombs of slaves from the tombs of the free, Christianity would make no such distinction.

The apostle Paul revealed his attitude toward slavery within the church when he said he could command Philemon to release his slave, but appealed to him from brotherly love to let him go because Onesimus was dear to him, both as *“a man, and a dear brother in the Lord.”* (Philemon 1:16)

So apparent was the disdain for slavery in the early church that when Paul wrote to Timothy, he had to command the slaves in the church to not disrespect their masters (since they were Christians and should have known better than to keep them in slavery) and to work even harder for them since they were beloved believers. (1 Timothy 6:2) The attitude in the church toward slavery wasn't positive, but rebellion wasn't an option either. In essence, the slaves were to trust that the Holy Spirit would work in the hearts of their masters. In the meantime, they were to trust God and be hard workers as a testimony to Christ.

This doesn't mean the church did nothing to overcome slavery. In fact, the early church would go overboard to fulfill these words of Jesus:

So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." (John 8:36, ESV)

Clement, bishop of Rome in the second century described the work of the church in trying to redeem slaves:

"We know many of our own number who have had themselves imprisoned in order to ransom others; Many have sold themselves into slavery and given the price to feed others."²⁰

Aristides the Just, the Athenian statesman, noted:

"If they hear that anyone of their number is imprisoned or in distress for the sake of their Christ's name, they all render aid in his necessity, and if he can be redeemed, they set him free."²¹

One of the virtues commanded in *The Shepherd of Hermas* (a popular piece of Christian literature written by a slave in the second century) was simply expressed in this way:

"Therefore, instead of fields, buy ye souls that are in trouble."²²

The Apostolic Constitutions, another group of early Christian writings from the fourth century, revealed this commandment:

All monies accruing from honest labour do ye appoint and apportion to the redeeming of the saints, ransoming thereby slaves and captives, prisoners, people who are sore abused or condemned by tyrants.²³

²⁰ Clement, "Letter to the Romans," *Early Christian Fathers*, Volume I, trans. Cyril C. Richardson (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), 176.

²¹ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Hebrews* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2002), 226.

²² "The Shepherd of Hermas," *Apostolic Fathers*, trans. J.B. Lightfoot and ed. J.R. Harner (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker House Books, 1967), Wesley Center Online, http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/noncanon/fathers/ante-nic/hermas1.htm (accessed 02/23/2008).

²³ Barclay, *Letter to the Hebrews*, 226-227.

Melania, a wealthy convert to Christianity who lived in the fourth century, sold all of her belongings and gave the money to the poor. She also set eight thousand slaves free. During the Barbarian invasions of the fifth to seventh centuries, captives from conquered cities were dragged away into slavery and the church intervened, redeeming them by the thousands.

The early church may not have led a slave rebellion in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense they were revolutionaries. They couldn't *overthrow* the Empire, but they could *undermine* it. The record of history is there for the entire world to see.

Would the church have behaved this way if they believed the teachings of Jesus affirmed slavery?

Infanticide

In the same way that the early church found value in the lives of the poor, elderly, sick, and enslaved, it also found value in the lives of children. This was in direct contrast to the pagan societies of the ancient world. To them, children, especially baby girls, were expendable. It wasn't unusual for infants to be left outside where they could be ravaged by wild animals or exposed to harsh weather. They were also drowned, sacrificed to idols, eaten by cannibals, or even left at the top of tall towers to starve or be fed to predatory birds.

According to Plutarch, the first century Greek biographer, the ancient Carthaginians sacrificed children to Saturn. Poor parents, he said would sell their babies "knowing they killed their own children . . . as if they were lambs, young calves, or kids, for the said purpose. At which sacrifice the mother that bare them in her womb would stand by without any show at all of being moved, without weeping or sighing for pity and compassion."²⁴ This was because the priest would threaten to not pay the parent if they showed any emotion. And to make sure no sympathy could be mustered as the baby was being roasted alive, Plutarch said:

The place resounded and rung again with the noise of flutes and hautboys, with the sound also of drums and timbrels, to the end that the painful cry of the poor infants should not be heard.²⁵

There was no sympathy in the ancient world. Those babies who were weak, deformed, or inadequate in any way were put out. Jesus changed this attitude when he said:

²⁴ Plutarch, "Of Superstition," *Plutarch's Moralia: Twenty Essays*, trans. Philemon Holland (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1911), 387-388.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 19:14, Luke 18:16; ESV)

And yet, Plato and Aristotle accepted infanticide as part of Athenian law. The Spartans also practiced infanticide, but it was left up to public officials to determine whether or not a child could be exposed. Roman law (the Twelve Tables) condoned infanticide if a child was deformed and even gave fathers the right to expose their infant daughters. Cicero, the great Roman orator, defended infanticide merely because it was in the law, and Seneca, the Roman philosopher, stated: “We drown children at birth who are weak and abnormal.”²⁶ In a letter written by a certain Greek man named Hilarion to his wife, the ancient attitude toward infanticide is captured:

I’m still in Alexandria . . . I entreat you and beg you to take good care of our baby son. As soon as I receive payment I’ll send it to you. If you go into labor and childbirth before I get back home, if it’s a boy keep it, if a girl discard it.²⁷

The early church, obedient to the words of Jesus, went about saving little children in the ancient world and raising them as their own. In the *Letter to Diognetus*, written in the second century by an unknown author, the writer described Christians this way: “Like other men, they marry and beget children, though they do not expose their infants.”²⁸

The Didache forbade abortion and infanticide.²⁹ The *Epistle of Barnabus* said that followers of the “Way” should “never do away with an unborn child or destroy it after its birth.”³⁰ Under the Emperor Constantine this law would be strengthened further. The *Theodosian Code*, established after Christianity was legalized in the fourth century, would make it easier for poor people to keep their children by giving them money from the imperial treasury to care for them.

Christianity truly provided the Gentile world with a tenderness it hadn’t known before. Those who hungered and thirsted for righteousness, rather than cruelty and selfishness, found a resting place in Christianity’s branches. If we are to know a tree by its fruit, as Jesus said, rescuing abandoned children, redeeming slaves, caring for the poor, and nursing the sick were all fruits of this tree.

Because Christians had new hearts of love and kindness, the gospel spread throughout the ancient world, but it wasn’t without opposition or danger. The church was under constant waves of persecution. Every disciple except John (who was boiled in oil, but didn’t

²⁶ Seneca, “De Ira,” as quoted by Alvin J. Schmidt in *How Christianity Changed the World*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2005), 49.

²⁷ G. Milligan, *Selections from the Greek Papyri*, p. 33

²⁸ “The Epistle to Diognetus,” *Early Christian Writings*, trans. Maxwell Staniforth, trans. Andrew Louth (London: Penguin Books, 1987), 145.

²⁹ “The Didache,” *Early Christian Writings*, 191.

³⁰ Barnabus, “The Epistle of Barnabus,” *Early Christian Writings*, 180.

die, and was then exiled to the barren island of Patmos) was slain in a violent way: beheaded, run through with a spear, pushed off a tall building, clubbed, crucified, and so on. Christians were also impaled, burned, or sent to the Coliseum. The church was vibrant and courageous . . . but then something began to go wrong . . . the church began to go astray.

The Logos

In the first chapter of John's gospel, the apostle refers to Jesus as the "Word." In the Greek language this is translated "Logos." John said:

In the beginning was the Word [Logos], and the Word [Logos] was with God, and Word [Logos] was God. – John 1:1, KJV

The Greeks had an idea, put forth by the Stoic philosophers, that the universe wasn't just physical, but it had an invisible source of reason and divine order behind it which they called the Logos. John argued that *Jesus* was the Logos and explained that "*the Word [Logos] became flesh and dwelt among us*" (John 1:14, ESV). Paul makes a similar argument in his letter to the Colossians:

He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; for by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things and in him all things hold together. –Colossians 1:15-17, ESV

Although Paul was describing Jesus, this passage could also be a description of the Logos. It's easy to understand why Christians would try to argue that Jesus was so wonderful that he could even accommodate the highest in philosophical and intellectual thought. Perhaps the Greeks would come to Christ if they could be convinced he was their Logos!

Paul also tried to convince the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers in Athens, Greece that the Jewish God was the "Unknown God" that they worshiped, and that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead proved it, but this was as far as Paul went. He never actually blended Greek philosophy with the Bible to develop a belief system. He merely pointed the philosophers to Christ and warned the Colossian church to not go any further and become seduced by philosophy. He warned:

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. –2 Corinthians 2:8-9, ESV

Trying to persuade the Greeks that Jesus was the Logos they had been searching for and turning them to *Christ* as their source of truth, hope, and wisdom is one thing, but it's

another thing to look to Greek philosophy as a *source* of truth, hope, and wisdom. This is exactly what happened to the church as time went on.

As more and more Gentiles were being converted, the church moved further away from Jerusalem (where societal ethics and beliefs were based on the Old Testament) and it became more and more important to accommodate the Greeks. After all, the Gentiles were more familiar with their philosophers (Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle) than they were with Abraham, Moses, and David of the Old Testament.

Some Christians, such as Justin Martyr, realized this and (like Paul or John) appealed to the Greek Stoics by simply arguing that Jesus was the Logos, but Clement of Alexandria, of the second century, and Origen, the Egyptian theologian of the third century, went further, and argued that Christianity and Greek philosophy could be synthesized (blended together).

In the third century, Plotinus, while not a Christian, developed new teachings on Plato's philosophy and his thoughts had a great influence on Augustine, one of the most important theologians of Western civilization. Because of Augustine's influence on the medieval church, the synthesis between Plato's philosophy and Christianity would remain as a stronghold in church doctrine for over a thousand years.

After Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity in 313 A.D. (in the "Edict of Milan"), the Romans also began to have an influence on Christianity. They influenced it in a different way, though. While the Greeks had an influence on theology through their philosophers, the Romans had an influence on the church through their pagan rituals. Many of the former temples dedicated to the Roman gods now became Christianized. The blend of Christianity with other religions can be seen in the vestments (religious clothing), the priesthood, the holidays, the burning of incense and candles, chanting, and many other religious activities that aren't found in the New Testament. And because the Bible wasn't accessible to the common man (or even most of the priests), the church relied on rituals to live out the faith. The Word was hidden in monasteries and universities, so instead of a lively faith, based on the teachings of Jesus and the apostles, a ritualistic faith developed. Foxe described the deterioration:

The world, forsaking the lively power of God's spiritual Word, was altogether led and blinded with outward ceremonies and human traditions; in these was all the hope of obtaining salvation fully fixed; insomuch that scarcely any other thing was seen in the temples or churches, taught or spoken of in sermons, or finally intended or gone about in their whole life, but only heaping up of certain shadowy ceremonies upon ceremonies; neither was there any end of this their heaping.³¹

³¹ Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 50.

Instead of hearing the good news that Jesus paid the price for their sins, the medieval church taught that a person could be saved through following rituals. Rituals, without the preaching of the gospel, do not lead to a lively faith that creates newness in the hearts of people, causing them to love God and love their neighbor in obedience to the truth. And this ritualism, blended with the corrupted theology that would continue to grow in the church, would finally lead to the horrors of the Inquisition. Blended theology would reach its peak in the works of Thomas Aquinas.

Thomas Aquinas

In the twelfth century, a revival of Greek philosophy would come to the church through a Muslim scholar named Averroes. His commentaries on Aristotle (who was largely forgotten in the west) were eventually burned by Islamic religious leaders because they saw them as being corrupting influences on Islam. In the Catholic Church, however, Aristotle's teachings, especially on logic, were slowly introduced to the European universities. As time went on, more and more of Aristotle's teachings were allowed to be studied, and Thomas Aquinas would end up using them as a foundation for his epic theological treatise, *Summa Theologica*.

Thomas Aquinas was the greatest of the medieval "scholastics." The aim of scholasticism was to reveal the harmony between faith and reason. In the 13th century, Aquinas took the Aristotelian philosophy re-discovered by Averroes (which represented logic and "reason") and used it in conjunction with Plato, Roman law, the Bible, and the writings of earlier church theologians, such as Augustine, to create a cohesive system of thought which would represent the highest in medieval theology. Some highlights of Aquinas' thought as found in his *Summa Theologica*:

- Aquinas thought both types of knowledge, reason and faith, had their source in God. Since both were a form of truth, they couldn't be in conflict with one another. This was why he worked so hard to create a harmonious union between the Greek philosophers and the scriptures.
- Aquinas accepted Aristotle's opinions on biology, psychology, astronomy, and physics as the final authority for scientific endeavors. This meant that the earth must be at the center of the universe, the world was made up of only four elements (earth, wind, fire, and water), living beings were spontaneously generated out of nothing, and all scientific pursuit of knowledge must start with philosophical truth, rather than with empirical (physical) data.
- Aquinas based his ethics on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. He also adopted the list of "seven deadly sins" as created by the desert monk Evagrius Ponticus.
- Aquinas argued that a monarchy was the best form of government, and that the secular government should be subject to the church.

- Aquinas also believed the Pope should be the highest authority of all, even higher than kings.
- Aquinas believed that slavery was a righteous institution, necessary because of the fall of man, and that Christians could justifiably defend it.
- Aquinas taught that heretics corrupt the truth, and if they are unwilling to yield to church dogma, spiritual authorities were acting properly if they were to “be not only excommunicated but even put to death.”³²
- Aquinas referred to the views of St. Gregory of Nysaa when developing his arguments in support of purgatory.

Fifty years after he died, Thomas Aquinas was declared a saint, and since then several popes have claimed that he was a source of authoritative doctrine. To this day the teachings of Thomas Aquinas are still honored by the Catholic Church. In the *Summa Theologica* we can see how far Aquinas’ doctrine had strayed from the scriptures, but this is to be expected since the Bible was only ONE source of truth in his writings. (Before he died, Aquinas looked back on his life’s work with dismay and called it “straw.”³³)

In the writings of Aquinas we also see how the Inquisition was empowered. Church leaders were put into positions of higher authority than civic leaders. The church had the power to exterminate heretics. Aristotle’s scientific philosophy would be turned into church doctrine, causing anyone, such as Galileo (as we’ll see in a later chapter), who opposed it, to be labeled a heretic.

We also see how the concept of purgatory (which was based on Greek thought) was abused. When Pope Leo X needed money to build St. Peter’s Cathedral in Rome, he sent out a Dominican monk named Tetzal to collect money through the selling of indulgences. This was based on the idea that there was an account of excess good deeds that had been performed by the saints which a person could purchase in order to get their loved ones out of purgatory, where they were painfully paying for their sins. Tetzal’s motto was “As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs!”

The Protestant Reformation

Tetzal didn’t know it, but a young Augustinian monk named Martin Luther was watching, and because he knew the truth of the scriptures, Tetzal’s lie enraged him so much that he wrote up *95 Theses* (95 Arguments) against the practice of indulgences and pounded it on the door of the Wittenberg Church. This courageous act of protest (“protest” is the root word for Protestant) caused an uproar—especially in a society living under the authority of

³² Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*. Vol II. (Chicago: William Benton, 1952), 440.

³³ Alister E. McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 114.

the Inquisition. Because of the newly-invented printing press, Luther's arguments spread like wildfire throughout Europe.

There were forerunners to Luther who also had conflicts with the doctrines of the Catholic Church. John Wycliffe, who is called the "Morning Star of the Reformation," would be one of the first to oppose the corrupt Catholic religion of the medieval era. He was a priest and a scholar at Oxford University, therefore he was also able to read the Bible. The main argument of Wycliffe was that the Bible was the only reliable guide to truth, and that Christians should rely on the scriptures rather than on the pope as the ultimate authority in spiritual matters. Wycliffe had friends in high places, so he was protected from the Inquisition's flames. His followers, the Lollards, on the other hand, were *not* spared.

John Huss was influenced by Wycliffe's arguments. He was a priest at the University of Hague and he also stressed the importance of scripture as the only authority of the church. He thought that popes or cardinals were wrong to create doctrine that was contrary to the Bible. He also made a statement about the condition of the Roman church by hanging pictures of the pope in all his rich clothing next to the image of the poverty-stricken Christ. As a result of his outspoken criticism of the Catholic Church he would be called before the Inquisition. Foxe described how Huss tried to answer a question that was put to him during his trial:

As he was about to open his mouth, all this mad herd began to cry out upon him, that he had not leisure to speak one only word. The noise and trouble was so great and so vehement, that a man might have called it a bruit of wild beasts, and not of men, much less was it to be judged a congregation of men gathered together to determine so grave and weighty matters.³⁴

The crowd that was acting like beasts wasn't an angry mob of commoners, but the council of cardinals and bishops! Huss refused to recant on his views, so he was arrested and burned at the stake. It was in this atmosphere that Luther courageously took his stand.

Luther was a priest, therefore he had access to the scriptures. It was on their authority that he stood when he was called before the Inquisition. He was commanded to denounce his writings and recant. His response would forever change the history of the world.

Unless I am convinced by scripture or by clear reason—for I do not trust the pope or church councils, since everyone knows they can make mistakes and contradict themselves—I **am bound by the scriptures** (emphasis mine) I have quoted. My conscience is held captive by the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything,

³⁴ Foxe, *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, 110.

because it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. On this I take my stand. I can do no other. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me.³⁵

With these brave words, the whole corrupt foundation of the Roman Catholic religious monopoly would begin to crumble, and its powerful stronghold on the western world would be broken. Luther's movement, known as the Protestant Reformation, would split the church. After many Catholics began converting to Protestantism, the Catholic Emperor Ferdinand II wanted to *impose* Catholicism on unwilling Protestant territories. The Thirty Years War that resulted was one of the worst religious wars ever fought. Over eight million people died—most of them Catholics. It was reported that even the land was ravaged by the war and could no longer produce a harvest.

After many decades of death and destruction a series of treaties were worked out. This became known as the Peace of Westphalia. It allowed for each territory to determine its own religion and allowed for any person who believed something different from each state's official religion to be guaranteed a level of spiritual freedom, essentially crushing the power of the Catholic Inquisitors.

The rallying cry of the Reformation was "Sola Scriptura!" (Scripture alone!) The blessings that resulted from the spread of the pure gospel are incalculable. It led to advances in education (so the Bible could be read), religious freedom and toleration (so that an Inquisition could never happen again), a newfound respect for honest work (since *whatever* a person did [not just religious activities] could be done for the glory of God), the destruction of the power of the priesthood (since each individual believer could gain access to God on his/her own), to political freedom (so that a church/state theocracy might not rule again), and to the growth of science (since, as we'll see in the next chapter, the church was now free from the stronghold of Catholic/Aristotelian philosophy as its source of scientific truth).

Luther, who had a radical conversion when he discovered that the grace of God came only through faith, and not through human effort, loved the precious Word which taught him that truth. When atheists say that Christians burned people at the stake, I want to encourage Christians to argue:

Yes...people who called themselves Christians burned people at the stake, but these Christians weren't faithful to the scriptures. They corrupted the teachings of Christ with philosophy and man-made traditions. They disobeyed the Bible. It wasn't atheists who finally conquered the Inquisition; it was men and women of God, courageously giving their lives in faithfulness to Jesus and his wonderful Word, who were finally able to bring down the stronghold of the Inquisition.

³⁵ Roland H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1978), 141.

Questions to Think About:

1. Can you name a New Testament scripture the early church was obeying when they were being charitable?

2. Can you name a New Testament scripture the early church was obeying when they redeemed slaves?

3. Can you name a New Testament scripture the early church was obeying when they opposed infanticide?

4. How (and why) did the early church begin the process of corrupting (or blending) the scriptures with other views?

5. How did Constantine change Christianity?

6. Can you name a scripture Aquinas obeyed when he claimed heretics should be exterminated? Can you name a scripture he disobeyed?

7. Can you name a scripture which taught that souls could be redeemed from purgatory through giving monetary donations? Can you name a scripture that would refute this teaching? How were the souls of men actually redeemed?

8. How did the Protestant Reformation change western civilization?

The Scientific Revolution

The Lie:

Christianity is the enemy of science.

The Truth:

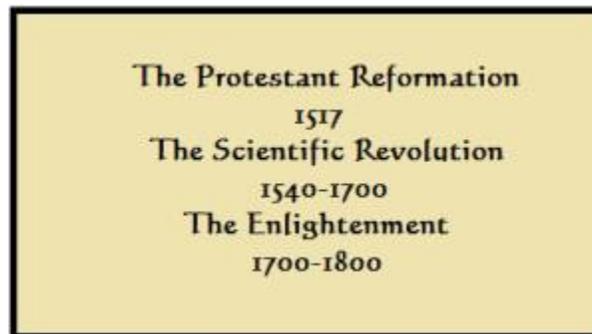
Bible-believing Christians gave birth to true science.

There's a meme on the internet that goes something like this:

Christians: Atheists shouldn't share our Christian holiday. Just work instead.

Atheists: And you shouldn't share our medical research. Just pray instead.

Some of the atheists I've debated believed that the Enlightenment period led to the Scientific Revolution, implying that skeptics gave birth to science, but the truth is that the Christians of the Protestant Reformation gave birth to the Scientific Revolution! The Enlightenment happened more than 150 years *after* the beginning of the Scientific Revolution.



The Influence of Monastic Mysticism on Science

One expression of the Catholic experience of the medieval era was monastic mysticism. It was the belief that Christians could separate themselves from the evil, physical world of temptations and enter into the presence of God through ecstatic contemplative activity.

(This is the attempt to empty the mind of all intruding thoughts so that the person praying can place all their focus on attaining a state of “divine union” with God.³⁶)

One consequence of this belief was an attitude of spiritual superiority, as though the further a person got away from the earthly, physical world and delved into the silent, ascetic world of mystical pursuits the closer they were to God. This perspective wasn’t conducive to the study of earthly, material, or scientific things!

Some of the monks lived as hermits, beat themselves with chains, went on long fasts, and even acted like animals and fed on grass. Symeon the Stylite would live atop a column (yes, like those in front of a building) for thirty years. Not to be outdone, Daniel would live atop a column for thirty-four years. In response to some of these excessive attempts to overcome the physical “flesh,” Benedict would establish his “Benedictine Rule.” One rule insisted that monks ate, since in their attempt to spiritually outdo one another, many monks had destroyed their digestive systems.

The Catholic contemplative Teresa of Avila also tried to escape the physical world. She wandered through the many rooms of the “Interior Castle” of her heart and tried to achieve a spiritual marriage with God. She would become so lost in her pursuits that she was known to levitate!

Because Luther taught that salvation came through God’s grace, rather than works (spiritual effort) and the Protestant reformers emphasized “solo scriptura” (scripture alone) over mystical experience, one of the first by-products of the Protestant Reformation was the growth of physical knowledge. After all, in the book of Genesis, God created the world and then declared that it was good (Gen. 1:31) and that it even gave glory to God. John Calvin,³⁷ one of the Protestant reformers, remembered Psalm 19:1 and declared that nature was the theater of God’s glory and encouraged Christians to see proof of God’s existence in His creation, saying:

³⁶ The pathway to the presence of God was now ritualistic, repetitive, mind-emptying prayer—rather than the blood of Jesus. Even the goal of “divine union” is out of order since the church isn’t married yet! We are still in the betrothal stage. Instead, it’s a form of spiritual fornication. Ann Voskamp is an example of a modern-day mystic who makes the mistake of believing that she can be married to God and make love to him now:

Mystical union. This, the highest degree of importance. God as Husband in sacred wedlock, bound together, body and soul, fed by His body, quenched by His blood—this is where *eucharisto* [emphasis hers] leads . . . God, He has blessed—caressed. *I could bless God* [emphasis hers]—caress with thanks. It’s our making love. – Ann Voskamp. *One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Right Where You Are* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 213.

³⁷ Atheists will be sure to point out that Calvin was responsible for burning the anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus at the stake “in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.” Calvin also led a tyrannical theocracy in Geneva, but his willingness to encourage Christians to discover the glory of God in His creation aligned with the scriptures (Romans 1:20, Psalms 19:1). Even though men may fail in their endeavors, the Word of God never fails.

In attestation of his wondrous wisdom, **both the heavens and the earth present us with innumerable proofs** (emphasis mine) not only those more recondite proofs which astronomy, medicine, and all the natural sciences, are designed to illustrate, but proofs which force themselves on the most illiterate peasant, who cannot open his eyes without beholding them.³⁸

The Influence of Aristotle on Catholic Science

Another way the Catholic Church stunted scientific growth was by blending Christian beliefs with Greek philosophy. As I mentioned in the last chapter, Aristotle was introduced to the church through the Muslim scholar Averroes. The Catholic scholar Thomas Aquinas blended Aristotle's philosophy into his work, *Summa Theologica*, and as a result, Aristotle's "natural philosophy" became an entrenched part of Catholic theology.

This was one of the main reasons why Galileo was rejected by the Catholic church. Galileo didn't think the Bible was his enemy, but he *did* have a problem with the Greek philosophical view of the universe. In his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (the writing that was being inspected by the Inquisition), Galileo's heliocentric (sun-centered) views (in which he agreed with Copernicus) were represented by the character Salviati, and the Aristotelian geocentric (earth-centered) viewpoint (which came from the Greek astronomer Ptolemy) was held by the character "Simplicio" (a name which was insulting in itself). Galileo juxtaposed the two positions in the opening paragraph of his argument:

Yesterday we resolved to meet today and discuss as clearly and in as much detail as possible the character and efficacy of those laws of nature which up to the present have been put forth by **the partisans of the Aristotelian and Ptolemaic position on one hand, and by the followers of the Copernican system on the other** (emphasis mine).³⁹

Galileo wasn't arguing against God! In fact, he often gave glory to God in his *Dialogue*. Because Galileo was clashing with the Catholic Church, it would also seem he was clashing with the Bible, but this wasn't the case. He was actually clashing with the Greek philosophy that had infiltrated the Catholic Church. Although the Inquisition prosecuted Galileo partly on the grounds that his views violated the scriptures, Galileo never believed that they did.

He argued that the scriptures were merely describing astronomical events from a human perspective, rather than from a scientific perspective. For example, when Joshua described

³⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes*, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.html> (accessed 02/08/2009).

³⁹ Galileo Galilei, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, trans. Stillman Drake, ed. and cond. by S.E. Sciortino. (<http://www.famous-trials.com/galileotrial/1010-dialogue>.) (accessed 11/13/17).

the sun standing still, Galileo reasoned that the story was merely being told from the perspective of Joshua's experience, so it shouldn't be used as a scientific explanation.

The Scientific Method

Francis Bacon was also rebelling against the Catholic/Aristotelian blend when he developed the scientific method. He is now known as the "Father of Empiricism" because he established the use of experimentation, observation, and making inductions from what can be sensed or measured, rather than starting with a set of philosophical beliefs and making deductive conclusions, as Aristotle did. His *Novum Organum*, outlining the *new* scientific method, was a direct challenge to Aristotle's *Organum*. Most people don't know that the person who made such a great contribution to science loved God and his Word. Yet Bacon declared:

There are two books laid before us to study, to prevent our falling into error: first, the volume of Scriptures, which reveal the will of God; then the volume of creatures [his creation], which express his power.⁴⁰

Bacon believed the mind of God could be discovered in his creation!

Robert Boyle, whose *Skeptical Chymist* would become the foundation of modern chemistry, and who was a charter member of the Royal Society of Great Britain (whose motto was "Nullius in Verbia" which means "nothing in word," emphasizing the importance of inductive experimentation, rather than deductive philosophy) was rebelling against the Catholic/Aristotelian viewpoint that all things were composed of the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water. He rejected the Greek basis for science and preferred using a truthful method of experimentation in order to know how God designed the universe. He explained why he rejected Aristotelianism:

I ignore not that not only Leucippus, Epicurus, and other atomists of old, but of late some persons, for the most part **admirers of Aristotle's writings** (emphasis mine), have pretended to be able to explicate the first beginning of things [referring to Aristotle's belief in spontaneous generation] and the world's phenomena, without taking in or acknowledging any divine Author of it.⁴¹

A New and Exciting Attempt to Discover the "Mind of God"

Because the Protestant Reformation freed men from the constraints of the Catholic/Aristotelian and monastic/mystical worldview, science exploded. A new respect for the material world, coupled with the thought that God had revealed himself through his

⁴⁰ Henry Morris, *Men of Science, Men of God* (San Diego, CA: Creation Life Publishers, 1982), 35.

⁴¹ Robert Boyle, *Selected Philosophical Papers of Robert Boyle*, ed. M.A. Stewart (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1991.)

creation, opened up a whole universe filled with excitement and discovery as people now attempted to find proof of the mind of God in the world around them. In this, the scriptures didn't hinder; they helped. New meaning was gathered from verses such as Romans 1:20, KJV:

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and God-head; so that they are without excuse.

They also pointed to Colossians 1:17, KJV, and looked to God as the miraculous force that holds the physical world together:

And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

One example of the impact of the scriptures on scientific endeavor was the pursuit of the gulf stream by Matthew Maury. After reading Psalm 8:8, which speaks of “*the paths of the seas*,” Maury, a sea captain, decided to believe the Word and document the rivers that ran through the oceans. He enlisted the help of other captains and began the process of charting the seas. This is just one example of how the Bible impacted these early scientists.

Another example of the Bible being used as a source for scientific advancement was through the work of James Simpson, a British obstetrician who was searching for a way to help women experience less pain in childbirth. He used the example of God putting Adam to sleep in order to remove a rib and create Eve, as a justification for administering anesthesia, which he said was a gift from God.

Recently, a scientist who helped to decipher the genetic code through the Human Genome Project, Francis S. Collins, explained that he felt as though his work was like learning the “language of God.”⁴² This was similar to the attitude of Isaac Newton, who said that his work was such an exciting pursuit for him it was like child's play.

I was like a boy playing on the sea-shore, and diverting myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.⁴³

Johannes Kepler (who was excommunicated by the Catholic Church in 1612) discovered the laws of planetary motion because he wanted to understand the mind of God in his creation, and he was thrilled to find out that God was a designer!

⁴² Francis S. Collins, *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* (New York: Free Press, 2006), 3.

⁴³ https://www.brainyquote.com/authors/isaac_newton (accessed 11/13/17).

We see how God, like a human architect, approached the founding of the world according to order and rule and measured everything in such manner.⁴⁴

Isaac Newton was also inspired by his desire to know the mind of God and believed that his research proved the universe was intelligently designed.

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets, and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent Being . . . ⁴⁵

I've debated atheists who didn't know that Isaac Newton was a believer, or if he was a believer, argued that his love for God had nothing to do with his scientific pursuits, yet Newton, when speaking of his greatest work, *Principia Mathematica*, said it was his desire to prove the existence of God that gave inspiration to his work:

When I wrote my treatise about our Systeme I had an eye upon such Principles as might work with considering men for the beleife of a Deity & nothing can rejoyce me more then to find it usefull for that purpose.⁴⁶

Modern day skeptics point to the trial of Galileo as evidence that having faith in God is a hindrance to science, but true science was precipitated by men of faith. It was their desire to discover the mind of God in creation and to find truth based on the Bible and physical evidence, rather than relying on Greek philosophy, which led them to discover and understand the workings of the universe—from the smallest atom to the limitless galaxies.

Because the Scriptures told them that God was a God of order, not confusion (1 Cor. 14:33), they began to search for that order, and as a result of their studies, Isaac Newton, for one, could confidently assert: "He is a God of organization not of disarray."⁴⁷ The list of scientists who would declare that it was their faith in God which led them to their scientific knowledge could read like a virtual "Who's Who" of scientific advancement and discovery:

Antiseptic Surgery – Joseph Lister (1827-1912)

Bacteriology – Louis Pasteur (1822-1895)

Calculus, Dynamics – Isaac Newton (1642-1727)

Celestial Mechanics – Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)

⁴⁴ J.H. Tiner, *Johannes Kepler: Giant of Faith and Science* (Milford, MI: Mott Media, 1977), <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v15/il/kepler.asp> (accessed 02/02/2009).

⁴⁵ Isaac Newton, *Newton's Principia: The Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy*, trans. Andrew Motte (London: Benjamin Notte, 1729), 504.

⁴⁶ Isaac Newton, "Original Letter from Isaac Newton to Richard Bentley, Dated 10 September 1692." The Newton Project, Trinity College Library, Cambridge, <http://www.newtonproject.ox.ac.uk/view/texts/normalized/THEM00254> (accessed 11/13/2017).

⁴⁷ Gale E. Christiansen, *In the Presence of the Creator—Newton and His Times* (London: The Free Press, 1984), 261.

Chemistry, Gas Dynamics – Robert Boyle (1627-1691)
Comparative Anatomy – Georges Cuvier (1769-1832)
Computer Science – Charles Babbage (1792-1871)
Dimensional Analysis – Lord Rayleigh (1842-1919)
Electronics – John Ambrose Fleming (1849-1945)
Electrodynamics – James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879)
Electromagnetics – Michael Faraday (1791-1867)
Energetics – Lord Kelvin (1824-1907)
Entomology of Living Insects – Henri Fabre (1823-1915)
Fluid Mechanics – George Stokes (1819-1903)
Galactic Astronomy – Sir William Herschel (1738-1822)
Gas Dynamics – Robert Boyle (1627-1691)
Genetics – Gregor Mendel (1822-1884)
Glacial Geology – Louis Agassiz (1807-1883)
Gynecology – James Simpson (1811-1870)
Hydraulics – Leonardo Da Vinci (1452-1519)
Hydrography – Matthew Maury (1806-1873)
Hydrostatics – Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)
Ichthyology – Louis Agassiz (1807-1873)
Isotopic Chemistry – William Ramsey (1852-1916)
Model Analysis – Lord Rayleigh (1842-1919)
Natural History – John Ray (1627-1905)
Non-Euclidean Geometry – Bernard Riemann (1826-1866)
Oceanography – Matthew Maury (1806-1873)
Optical Mineralogy – David Brewster (1781-1868)
Paleontology – John Woodward (1665-1728)
Pathology – Rudolph Virchow (1821-1902)

Physical Astronomy – Johannes Kepler (1571-1630)

Reversible Thermodynamics – James Joule (1818-1889)

Statistical Thermodynamics – James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879)

Stratigraphy – Nicholas Steno (1631-1686)

Systematic Biology – Carolus Linnaeus (1707-1778)

Thermodynamics – Lord Kelvin (1824-1907)

Thermokinetics – Humphrey Davy (1778-1829)

Vertebrate Paleontology – Georges Cuvier (1769-1832)⁴⁸

To many of these great scientists, unlocking the secrets of the universe was like an adventure. It inspired wonder and respect for the sheer genius and elegance of the Creator. Is there not magnificent order in the universe? And is it not governed by powerful and dependable laws such as the point at which water boils, or the gravitational pull necessary to hold things in place?

The Scientific Revolution was initiated by an attempt to discover evidence for God in the material realm, and it blessed humanity in ways too numerous to count, but it took men who stood on the Word of God alone--not the Word blended with worldly philosophy--to unlock the truths of the physical universe. And they did it for a simple reason: they loved God and wanted to know more of Him and the glory of His mind as seen in His creation.

The Rejection of Spontaneous Generation and the Advance of Medicine

Christopher Hitchens, the infamous atheist, speaking of the beliefs of the American people on an interview with Bill Maher (before he died) said:

They tell the pollsters they believe in Satan more than they believe in Darwin's theory of evolution, but they don't know anything about either, and when they go to the hospital, they act as if they think Darwin is probably more likely to be right.⁴⁹

The implication of that statement is that medical advancements were a result of the work of Darwin. This is revisionist history!

One of the greatest blessings to humanity, in the form of medical advancements, came as a result of the work of scientists who were trying **specifically** to disprove spontaneous generation—the Aristotelian idea that living things such as fleas or maggots, could arise from dead flesh or even dust.

⁴⁸ Morris, *Men of Science*, 121-123.

⁴⁹ "Bill Maher Interviews Christopher Hitchens" Jan. 5, 2010. <https://youtu.be/EoRxnZ8wgpw>.

For example, the experiments of Francesco Redi proved that maggots didn't spring forth from rotten, decaying meat; they came from eggs that were laid *on* the rotten, decaying meat. And it was a Christian, Antony van Leeuwenhoek, the father of microbiology, who developed microscopes which were able to reveal the existence of bacteria, explaining how life came from life, even though the naked eye couldn't see it.

John Ray, one of the earliest biologists, opposed the Aristotelian concept of spontaneous generation also, saying: "My observation and affirmation is that there is no such thing in nature"⁵⁰ and that it was "the atheist's fictitious and ridiculous account of the first production of mankind and other animals."⁵¹

Louis Pasteur was trying to disprove spontaneous generation when he performed a series of experiments to prove that bacteria don't magically appear in a sterile environment. His simple "swan-necked" bottles showed again that life only produces life. He believed that his experiment (establishing the law of biogenesis) struck a "mortal blow" to the "doctrine of spontaneous generation." Pasteur, who is known as the founder of modern medicine and one of the founders of microbiology, was actually a creationist who was attempting to disprove Aristotle!

As a result of his work, humanity has been blessed with germ-free food through the process which has come to be known as "pasteurization." Pasteur, who also discovered a cure for rabies, wasn't an atheist. He was a creationist who claimed:

The more I study nature, the more I stand amazed at the work of the Creator.⁵²

Joseph Lister (of whom we get the name Listerine), was a British abolitionist who made medical advancements in surgical sterilization based on the rejection of the concept of spontaneous generation. His use of carbolic acid (which kills bacteria without being too harsh on the skin) in combination with covering wounds with sterile bandages has saved countless lives. He also introduced the use of sterile catgut, allowing the thread to dissolve without having to upset the abrasion. Lister wasn't an atheist either; he declared:

I am a believer in the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.⁵³

Canned food is another blessing that came from rejecting the concept of spontaneous generation. Germ theory, the foundation for modern medicine, is also based on the creationist principle that life comes from life and isn't spontaneously generated. John Snow, who traced London's cholera outbreak in 1854 to a dirty water well, is now known as the

⁵⁰ John Ray, *The Wisdom of God Manifested in the Works of Creation, Part II, etc.* (London: J.F. Dove, 1827), 246.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Allan L. Gillen and Frank J. Sherwin III, "Louis Pasteur's Views on Creation, Evolution, and the Genesis of Germs," *Answers Research Journal*, Vol. 1, 2008, 43-52, <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/ari/v1/louis-pasteurs-views> (accessed 02/13/2009).

⁵³ Morris, *Men of Science*, 89.

father of epidemiology. As a result of Snow's efforts, clean water has been made a priority throughout the world. Hygiene, cleanliness, and health owe much to the belief that God was the Creator.

And yet, Darwin tried to take us right back to the concept of spontaneous generation. Writing in a letter to Joseph Dalton Hooker, he suggested that life may have begun in a "warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, lights, heat, electricity, etc . . . present so that a protein compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes."⁵⁴ This primordial soup theory hasn't been able to be replicated in a laboratory even though there have been numerous attempts (such as the Miller-Urey experiment)—all of which have failed.

The attempt to associate the origins of the Scientific Revolution with the Renaissance or Enlightenment periods are false. The Renaissance was a rebirth of the classical (Greek/Roman) era, and any contributions to science in that era came from the Aristotelian world view which had been recovered as a result of contact with Averroes, but science didn't advance as a result of this knowledge, in fact it was stunted as the medieval church attempted to blend this knowledge in with the scriptures. Instead, it was the direct attempt to overthrow the stranglehold that Greek philosophy had on the Catholic Church, by the men of the Reformation, that led to the explosive growth in science.

The Enlightenment was a *consequence*, not a cause of the Scientific Revolution. To the philosophers, God was Newton's "First Cause" who had set the universe in motion like a grand watchmaker and then stood back, without intervening. Their faith was based on reason and the highest understandings that human knowledge had attained, and yet, as we'll see in the next chapter, the Enlightenment philosophers were scientific racists! They cherry-picked the scriptures that fit with their worldview and discarded those they disagreed with. Unfortunately, when they abandoned biblical truth, they were able to justify human slavery.

Most of the atheists I debated over the last decade had no idea that Christians had such an impact on science. Somehow, they absorbed the idea that a "conflict" exists between science and religion. Perhaps this came from the mocking influence of the agnostic reporter H.L. Mencken as he covered the Scopes Trial (which determined whether evolution could be taught in Tennessee schools), or perhaps the "conflict theory," promoted by John Draper and Andrew Dickson White at the end of the nineteenth century⁵⁵ permeated the

⁵⁴ Darwin Correspondence Project, "Letter no. 7471," accessed on 14 November 2017, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/DCP-LETT-7471>.

⁵⁵ John William Draper is an example of an author who tried to equate Christianity with scientific oppression. In his book, *History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science*, he cast the Galileo incident "not as divisions between different scientists, but as theologians on the one side and scientists on the other, and they were made to typify all relations between the two groups" [Jonathan Hill, *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 36]. Andrew Dickson White also attempted to assert this "conflict theory" between

educational atmosphere of the twentieth century. Even though this belief in a conflict between science and religion has been discarded by most historians, it still continues to influence popular culture and thought.

I hope this conflict theory will no longer influence the minds of Christians, and that if an atheist tries to argue that Christianity is a hick religion that has hindered science, remember that Christianity-- loosed from the bonds of philosophy—and tethered to the truth of the Bible—gave birth to true science.

and science in his book, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, but Gary Ferngren, in his 2002 volume on the relationship between science and religion, dispels this myth: “While some historians had always regarded the Draper-White thesis as oversimplifying and distorting a complex relationship, in the late twentieth century it underwent a more systematic reevaluation. The result is the growing recognition among historians of science that the relationship of religion and science has been much more positive than is sometimes thought. Although popular images of controversy continue to exemplify the supposed hostility of Christianity to new scientific theories, studies have shown that Christianity has often nurtured and encouraged scientific endeavor, while at other times the two have co-existed without either tension or attempts at harmonization. If Galileo and the Scopes trial come to mind as examples of conflict, they were the exceptions rather than the rule.” [Gary Ferngren, “Introduction,” *Science and Religion: A Historical Introduction* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2002), ix.]

Questions to Think About:

1. Which came first: The Scientific Revolution or the Enlightenment?
2. How did Aristotle's "natural philosophy" become part of Catholic doctrine?
3. What was Galileo actually fighting against when he was called before the Inquisition?
4. In what two ways did Catholic teaching or practices discourage scientific activity?

5. How did the Protestant Reformation contribute to scientific endeavor?

6. Why did Francis Bacon, the founder of the scientific method, entitle his work *The Novum (new) Organum*?

7. How did the attempt to refute spontaneous generation bless humanity in very practical ways?

Southern Slavery

The Lie:

Bible-believing Christians were slaveholders.

The Truth:

There were two groups of people who carried the name of Jesus during the slave era:

- 1) The abolitionists, who studied the “whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27, ESV) and made a practice of “rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (2 Timothy 2:15, KJV).
- 2) The slaveholders, who cherry-picked scriptures which seemed to agree with their views on slavery, while ignoring or disobeying scriptures which disagreed with their views, and who gave precedence to the authority of science or reason over the authority of the Bible.

There are some (even in the evangelical community) who argue that the Southern slaveholders were biblical literalists who looked at the “letter of the law” while abolitionists could only rightly refer to the “spirit of the law.” They say that Christians who tried to abolish slavery were ignoring the actual words of the biblical text in contrast to non-specific commands concerning love and freedom, thereby discounting the “plain meaning” of the Bible.

This argument insists that slavery was justified by a literal reading of the Bible, but abolitionists, such as Andrew McLeod, in his popular book (eleven editions were printed) *Negro Slavery Unjustifiable*, directly challenged this view. McLeod says he wrote his book to counter the “deceptive error” of the slave owners’ biblical arguments.⁵⁶ He didn’t do this by appealing to “love” or to the spirit of the law, but by quoting a **direct commandment** of God:

Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper’s possession. – Exodus 21:16, NIV

This means, if Southern slaveholders were obeying the whole counsel of God, anyone who kidnapped Africans and tried to sell them should have been arrested as soon as their ship came into port with its illegal cargo of human flesh. Since they defended their so-called “biblical” right to hold slaves, they should have also defended the biblical command to not

⁵⁶ Andrew McLeod, *Negro Slavery Unjustifiable, A Discourse*. (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1802), 4. (<http://www.covenanter.org/reformed/2015/8/14/alexander-mcleods-sermon-on-negro-slavery-unjustifiable>)

kidnap someone against their will. If they were *actually* biblical literalists, Southern slavery would have been shut down immediately, but the Southern slaveholder “cherry-picked” the scriptures.

McCleod also pointed out this literal commandment from God:

If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master. Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them. – Deuteronomy 23:15-16, KJV

In fact, any slave who ran away from the surrounding nations was to be given *refuge* by the Israelites. They were to be taken in, protected, and allowed to live amongst them. Israel was a sanctuary for those who were oppressed and enslaved. If the Southern slaveholder was *actually* following biblical law, their cities and homes would have had to become places of refuge for slaves. The Fugitive Slave Act, which was used to round up slaves who escaped from the South, would never be allowed under the Old Testament law.

While the Southern slaveholders ignored this scripture (or didn’t take it literally) evangelical abolitionists heroically heeded these words from the Bible and risked their own safety and security in order to be obedient to the Bible and care for runaway slaves. The Underground Railroad was set up as a way to be obedient, not only to the command to love our neighbor or set the captive free, but to a **specific law** from the Old Testament which commanded the Jews to protect runaway slaves from their masters.

McLeod then argued that the Old Testament law made a distinction between enslaving innocent people and causing people who had injured others to make restitution. For example, if a person stole money from someone and they couldn’t pay it back, the Hebrew justice system demanded that he/she must work for a period of time (up to six years) to pay the money back. (My kids got in trouble with the law and had to pay restitution by working at our local thrift shop. It’s the same concept.) The condition of the person who was making restitution was called slavery, but it was actually a form of civil justice.

Even so, there’s no denying that Southern evangelicals (Baptists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, and members of other denominations) believed they had biblical permission to hold slaves, and they pointed to scriptures such as this one, found in Leviticus 25:44-46, KJV (in the Old Testament) to support their case:

Both thy bondmen, and thy bondmaids, which thou shalt have, shall be of the heathen that are round about you; of them shall ye buy bondmen and bondmaids. Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy, and of their families that are with you, which they begat in your land: and they shall be your possession. And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever: but over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.

These verses seem to give permission to the ancient Israelites to become involved in the slave trade, but in reality the exact opposite is true!

First of all, Old Testament law never allowed Jews to SELL slaves. They could only PURCHASE them! I believe God allowed the Hebrews to purchase people from the surrounding tribes in order to give them REFUGE.

Throughout Hebrew history, Gentiles were welcomed into the Israelite family as long as they were willing to assimilate, and worship and serve the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Consider these Old Testament laws and how they were applied to both slave and free, Jew and Gentile.

- Resting on the Sabbath was allowed for slaves.

Six days thou shalt do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest: and the son of thy handmaid, and the stranger, may be refreshed. — Exodus 23:12

- Slaves who were purchased by a priest could eat of the meats that were offered to God. They were treated as family members.

No one outside a priest's family is to eat the holy offering. A foreigner staying with a priest or a hired hand is not to eat the holy offering. But if the priest purchases [redeems] someone with his money, that person may eat it, and those born in his house may eat his food. —Leviticus 22:10-11

- Slaves could be circumcised and become part of the Hebrew covenant.

He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. —Genesis 17:13

- Slaves could participate in the Passover Feast if they were circumcised.

And the LORD said unto Moses and Aaron, "This is the statute of the Passover: no foreigner may eat of it. But any slave a man has purchased may eat it, after you have circumcised him." —Exodus 12:43-44

An Israelite could sell themselves to others as a form of contractual employment (due to poverty or restitution), but they could never sell each other. The "kinsman redeemer" could deliver a person out of slavery, but a Jew could never sell another Jew. Even more amazing, a Jew could never sell a foreign slave either. Once a slave was purchased, he/she was secure in the Hebrew family.

Even the future offspring of those who were redeemed were promised security under the safety of the Hebrew God. They would remain a Hebrew possession and couldn't be sold. All that the purchased slaves had to do was assimilate to the beliefs of the Hebrews by following the same laws, forsaking the idol-worship of their past, and like Ruth, love the God of the Hebrews (Ruth 1:16). When they did this, they were no longer under the cruel bondage of those who traded in human flesh. They had a place of safety where they and their children could remain if they wanted to, but they could also leave if they wanted to, as Deuteronomy 23:15 guaranteed.

Throughout Hebrew history, Gentiles were welcomed into the Abrahamic family. Isn't this the same picture of salvation given to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ? Jesus said he came to set the captives free. How would he do this? As foreigners and strangers, we have been purchased (redeemed) by the blood of Jesus. Consequently, we have been grafted into the Hebrew family (Romans 11). We come as bondservants (Romans 1:1, Philippians 1:1, James 1:1, 2 Peter 1:1, Jude 1:1), slaves to sin (John 8:34, Romans 6), but Jesus calls us friends (John 15:15). The Bible also says we are now family who can cry out "Abba!" to the heavenly Father (Romans 8:15, Galatians 4:6).

Jesus also said he came to "fulfill the law and the prophets" (Matt. 5:17). I am convinced, especially after studying the great mission movements, that the Jewish redemption of slaves was a type and shadow of what Jesus did to redeem the Gentiles who were in bondage and darkness throughout the world.

It was only when the God of Israel came to the ancient Gentiles that they were set free. In the same way, it was only when missionaries came to the Gentile nations that they overcame the same bondages: idol worship, human sacrifice, cannibalism, tribal warfare, widow-burning, and infanticide (just to name a few). As Isaiah 9:2 says:

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light."

But what about the contrast in Leviticus 25:44-46? It says the Israelites can purchase slaves from the surrounding nations, but they must not treat their fellow Israelites with "rigor." Doesn't this imply that they were allowed to treat their slaves with "*rigor*" (Lev. 25:46)?

In the Hebrew translation of the text, the word "but" doesn't appear. The English translators ADDED the word into the text. If the word "but" did not appear in the text, verse 46 would read like this:

And ye shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession; they shall be your bondmen for ever. Over your brethren the children of Israel, ye shall not rule one over another with rigour.

The continuation of that sentence would then read:

And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the

stranger's family: After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him: Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself. And he shall reckon with him that bought him from the year that he was sold to him unto the year of jubile: and the price of his sale shall be according unto the number of years, according to the time of an hired servant shall it be with him. If there be yet many years behind, according unto them he shall give again the price of his redemption out of the money that he was bought for. And if there remain but few years unto the year of jubile, then he shall count with him, and according unto his years shall he give him again the price of his redemption. And as a yearly hired servant shall he be with him: and the other shall not rule with rigour over him in thy sight. — Leviticus 25:47-53

Do you see how the first sentence in these verses ties in with the final verse? What if verse 46 was a lead-in to the idea that fellow Israelites were to be treated with kindness? Not that foreigners were to be treated harshly, but just a reminder that there was an expectation that Jews were to be kind to one another also. Verse 53 says just that.

The addition of just one little word (but) changes the entire flow and meaning of the text. Could this be an example of how a small addition (a jot or tittle) when added to the text has been the cause of so much human suffering and cruelty? Unfortunately, it has also caused the name of God to be vilified.

In fact, if verse 46 is applied to foreign slaves, then it would counter Exodus 23:9 which commands the Israelites not to oppress a stranger because they were once strangers in the land of Egypt. Leviticus 19:34, KJV makes the same assertion:

But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

Some may think that my argument is a stretch, but when I look at the rest of the scriptures, I see only kindness toward those who have been poor, orphaned, or victimized. It seems out of character to have this harsh scripture sitting right in the middle of all the other laws that were formulated to be blessings to humanity--or types and shadows of Christ.

An example of the law being a type and shadow that points to Jesus is that the Old Testament law demands a blood sacrifice to atone for sin (Lev. 1:1-4). When John the Baptist cried out, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!*" (John 1:29, ESV) he was making a reference to Old Testament law and declaring that Jesus was our sacrificial lamb who would atone for sin. He was also pointing to Jesus as the Passover Lamb, which was commemorated by an ordinance in the law as the Passover feast (Exodus 12:14).

Another example would be that the Old Testament law prohibited the Hebrews from eating unclean meat, such as pigs or shrimp (Lev. 11). We know, after Peter's vision (Acts 10:9-16) that unclean meat was a symbol for the Gentiles, who were considered to be unclean, but now were able to come into the family of God because they were purchased and cleansed by the blood of Christ.

Each of the Old Testament laws pointed to some aspect of the gospel and symbolized something precious. How is the ability to take slaves from the surrounding nations and hold them with "*rigour*" as a generational possession in any way a type and shadow that points us to Christ? I believe the only way Leviticus 25:44-46 can be interpreted correctly is to look at it as though it's a picture of Gentile redemption.

The Jews were allowed to purchase slaves from all of the surrounding nations except for the Canaanites who God commanded them to completely destroy (Deut. 20). The Canaanite tribes were involved in all the sins of Leviticus 18: incest, adultery, fornication, bestiality, and homosexuality. They worshipped gods who demanded human sacrifice, especially of babies. They also had a remnant of the Nephilim—the giants—who persecuted the Israelites and mocked their God. (Goliath was an example of this.) God said these things "defiled" the land.

The Hebrew word for defile is "tame." According to *Strong's Concordance* it means "to be foul—especially in a moral sense (contaminated): --defile (self), pollute (self), be (make, make self, pronounce) unclean, utterly."⁵⁷ The sins of the Canaanites had left their people so polluted by disease, genetic abnormalities, and hardness of heart toward people and God that the Israelites were instructed to wipe them out as a form of physical, moral, and spiritual protection.

The specific tribes that were commanded to be destroyed were the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perrizites, Hivites, and Jebusites. In fact, one of the sins of the surrounding people that Israel was commanded to destroy was manstealing (kidnapping). The name "Perrizites" actually means "to drag away violently, hate." According to Genesis 15:16 God waited 400 years before judging the Canaanites—until the iniquity of the Amorites (in particular) was "*full*."

There were other tribes that God didn't command to be destroyed. These tribes were further away from the wicked tribes found in central Canaan. God told the Israelites to offer these outlying tribes terms of peace. In exchange, the people would have to pay a tribute to the Israelites. On the other hand, if they refused, when God gave the Israelites the victory, then all the men were to be killed, but the women and children were to be saved. Israel was commanded to take in the women and "little ones" (Deut. 20:14) and care for them. (To care for widows and orphans was a command of God [Exod. 22:21-24].)

⁵⁷ "H2930 - tame' - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (KJV)." Blue Letter Bible. Web. 31 May, 2018. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org//lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strong's=H2930&t=KJV>>.

People were continually grafted into the Hebrew family. The Hebrews were never a pure race. They were made up of stragglers and slaves. Abraham was called out of Babylon and told by God to travel to a place far away. He had gathered some people from Haran to go with him (Genesis 12:5). In one incident, Pharaoh gave servants to Abraham to make up for taking Sarah, another man's wife. (Genesis 12:16) This is probably how Hagar, the Egyptian servant, became part of Abraham's clan. Unfortunately, Sarah and Abraham became impatient and tried to fulfill the promise of God by enlisting Hagar to commit adultery and have a child with Abraham. Not only did they not trust God to fulfill his Word, they also sinned and mistreated someone who was put under their care.

Although Sarah and Abraham sinned concerning Hagar, servants were generally loved and treated with respect. Eliazer was born as a servant into Abraham's family, and since Abraham had no descendants, he was set to inherit Abraham's wealth. Eliazer was so beloved and trusted that he was sent out to find a wife for Abraham's son, Isaac.

Abraham's slaves are an example of bondservants who served with loyalty. Gen. 14:14 says 318 of them were even armed and went into battle. If they were held against their will, couldn't they have used their weapons and led a slave rebellion against Abraham?

Jacob was a servant to Laban in exchange for his daughter Rachel's hand in marriage. Rachel and Leah were foreigners (they came from Mesopotamia), yet they became the mothers of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses married a Midianite. Rahab, the Gentile prostitute who helped the Jews at Jericho, married Salmon, an Israelite from the tribe of Judah. Their son was Boaz, the husband of Ruth, a Moabite who would receive the Hebrew God. Both of these Gentile women are in the lineage of Jesus Christ.

God is not exclusive. He is looking for hearts that are open to Him, that will assimilate into His ways, and love his Word, but he isn't open to every Gentile. If there was no repentance and no desire to change, to love and obey His commandments, then God didn't open the way for them to become part of Israel.

This love for God and His commandments also applied to the Israelites! If they turned away from Him to foreign idols, and forsook the commandments, then they were judged by God. This warning was conveyed to the Hebrew people through the ministry of the prophets.

The Curse of Ham

The Southerners also pointed to the so-called "curse of Ham" as a biblical justification to hold slaves. Here is the story as it's found in Genesis 9:18-27, KJV:

And the sons of Noah, that went forth of the ark, were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth: and Ham is the father of Canaan. These are the three sons of Noah: and of them was the whole earth overspread. And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his

two brethren without. And Shem and Japheth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, 'Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.' And he said, 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant.'

Those who believed slavery should be abolished made passionate arguments against the supporters of slavery, who claimed that the “cursed” descendants of Ham had settled in Africa, were dark-skinned, and destined to subjugation.

When James A. Sloane published his pro-slavery treatise, *The Great Question Answered; or Is Slavery a Sin in Itself? Answered According to the Teaching of the Scriptures*, David R. Kerr, editor of *The United Presbyterian Quarterly Review*, gives Sloane credit for making the Bible “the only rule for faith and practice,” but then he slams him for his weak biblical arguments concerning the curse of Ham. At one point he laughs at the absurdity of Sloane’s position and proclaims: “Risum teneatis, amici?!” (Can you help laughing, my friends?!)⁵⁸

Why was the pro-slavery teaching on the biblical “curse of Ham” so laughable to abolitionists?

For one thing, only the descendant of Ham (Canaan) was cursed. Genesis 9:25 says, “Cursed be Canaan.” It doesn’t even say, “cursed be Ham.” According to Josiah Priest, writing in his book, *Bible Defence of Slavery*, the authority to expand the curse to Ham came from the Arabic translation of the Bible, not the Hebrew Bible itself:

For an account of this appalling anathema, see Genesis ix, 24–27, as follows: “And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him: and he said, cursed be Canaan [Ham]; a servant of SERVANTS shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Shem; and Canaan [Ham] shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan [Ham] shall be his servant.”

But lest the reader should become perplexed, respecting the application of this anathema, on account of the text above referred to being, in the English, “cursed Canaan” instead of “cursed Ham,” as it should have been translated; **we state that the Arabic copy of the book of Genesis, which is a language of equal authority with the Hebrew** (emphasis mine), and originally the very same, reads “cursed Ham,” the father of Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ David R. Kerr. “Article II: Sloan on Color and Slavery” *The United Presbyterian Review*, Volume 2. (Pittsburgh, PA: Publication Office, No. 76 Thirds St., 1861), 336.

⁵⁹ Josiah Priest, *Bible Defence of Slavery* (Louisville, KY: J. F. Brennan, 1851). accessed 8/30/2017 at <https://thedixieflatline.wordpress.com/2014/12/10/bible-defence-of-slavery-part-two/#comment-27372>.

The pro-slavery defense took liberty with the scriptures by using the Arabic copy of Genesis as their authority for changing the word Canaan into Ham!

Ham's descendants didn't even settle in sub-Saharan Africa, the place from where southern slaves were taken. According to Genesis 10:6-20, Ham's sons were Cush, Egypt, Put, and Canaan. The sons of Cush settled in Babylon (his son was Nimrod, the builder of the Tower of Babel), Egypt would become the father of the Egyptians and the Philistines, and Canaan would become the father of the tribes that spread from Sidon to Gaza to Sodom and Gomorrah (the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perrizites, Hivites, and Jebusites, etc . . .). Put settled in modern Libya and northern Africa.

According to Sloane, the name "Ham" meant "black," but Kerr argued that this was untrue. The word Ham is never used for the word black. Instead the Hebrew word used for black is "shachar" or "shachor." The Hebrew word for Ham is "cham" and it means "hot."

The Bible was abused by the Southern slaveholder. They weren't literalists! There is no "curse of Ham" found in the scriptures. Those who wanted to hold slaves for their own profit had to become biblical *contortionists*. There were two groups of "Christians" involved in the debate over slavery. One group was "*rightly handling the word of truth*" (2 Tim. 2:15, ESV) while the other used the Bible as "*a means of gain*" (1 Tim. 6:5, ESV).

Science and Slavery

If the Christians of the South believed they were right with God, even though they attained their slaves through the process of kidnapping Africans (manstealing), how did they justify it? Many people also question how Thomas Jefferson could claim that all men are created equal, and then be a slaveholder, especially after penning these beautiful words from the *Declaration of Independence*:

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

Like most of the intelligentsia of his time, Jefferson was a "scientific racist." He believed that people of color were of a different species, making them sub-human. It's a little-known fact of history, but racism was supported by the brightest scientists of the slave era, and most of the Enlightenment philosophers were scientific racists! Jefferson thought that blacks were different than whites. In his *Notes on the State of Virginia* he described blacks in scientific language (reticular membrane, secretion, transpiration, etc. . . .):

The first difference which strikes us is that of colour. Whether the black of the negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and scarf-skin, or in the scarf-skin itself; whether it proceeds from the colour of the blood, the colour of the bile, or from that of some other secretion, the difference is fixed in nature, and is as real as if its seat and cause were better known to us. And is this difference of no importance? . . . Besides those of colour, figure, and hair, there are other distinctions proving a

difference of race. They have less hair on the face and body. They secrete less by the kidneys, and more by the glands of the skin, which gives them a very strong and disagreeable odour. This greater degree of transpiration renders them more tolerant of heat, and less so of cold, than the whites.⁶⁰

While Jefferson's reasoning may seem archaic to us, he believed he was merely using empirical methodology and scientific observation to develop his views.

Jefferson was also a deist. This spiritual view resulted from the blending of Christianity with science. Jefferson believed that God was Isaac Newton's "First Cause" of creation and that He merely wound the universe up like a clock and put it in motion. Therefore, God didn't interject himself into the affairs of men. Jesus, to Jefferson, was a great teacher, but since he rejected the possibility of miracles (because that meant God was intervening in the physical world), he cut out all the scriptures in his Bible that had to do with the miraculous. Unfortunately, Jefferson put more faith in "science" than he did in the scriptures, and now we look back on his scientific views with disdain.

David Hume, the Enlightenment philosopher and empiricist, who relied only on reason and scientific observation for his views (rejecting faith and biblical revelation as a source of knowledge), had this to say about people of color:

I am apt to suspect the Negroes, and in general all other species of men to be naturally inferior to the Whites. There never was any civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures among them, no arts, no sciences...such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men.⁶¹

Immanuel Kant, who, in part, defined Enlightenment thought as simply the freedom to think for oneself, would make this scientific observation, in agreement with Hume:

The Negroes of Africa have received from nature no intelligence that rises above the foolish. Hume invites anyone to quote a single example of a Negro who has exhibited talents. He asserts that among the hundred thousands of blacks who have been seduced away from their own countries, although very many of them have been set free, yet not a single one has ever been found that has performed anything great whether in art or science or in any other laudable subject; but among the whites, people constantly rise up from the lowest rabble and acquire esteem through their superior gifts.⁶²

⁶⁰ Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*. (Richmond, VA: J.W. Randolph, 1853), 149-150.

⁶¹ David Hume, *The Philosophical Works of David Hume*, cont. Henry Maudsley (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1854), 228.

⁶² Immanuel Kant, "Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime," as quoted by David Brion in the book *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2006), 75.

The Enlightenment emphasis on reason and science over biblical revelation would be exemplified in the person of Voltaire, and he had this to say about the black race:

Their round eyes, their flat nose, their lips which are always thick, their differently shaped ears, the wool on their head, the measure even of their intelligence establishes between them and other species of men prodigious differences. If their understanding is not of a different nature from ours, it is at least greatly inferior. They are not capable of any great application of ideas, and seemed formed neither in the advantages nor the abuses of our philosophy.⁶³

Another name for scientific racism is “polygenism.” This was the belief that each race had different parents. Instead of one set of parents (Adam and Eve, according to the Bible), the polygenists claimed there were many sets of parents who birthed the different races.

This wasn’t the obscure work of mad scientists. It was the cutting-edge science of its day. It was promoted by Samuel George Morton, a believer in “phrenology” and well-respected President of the Academy of Natural Sciences. He attempted to develop a racial theory based on the measurement of skull size. He had a collection of skulls from around the world. In his opinion, the skulls found near the Caucasus Mountains in the Near East were the most perfect. These were the skulls of white people, and Europeans would eventually get lumped together with Caucasians, which led to the term “Caucasian” being used in reference to the white race. Morton’s *Crania Americana* would describe the black man in a way similar to other Enlightenment thinkers:

Characterized by black complexion, and black, woolly hair; the eyes are large and prominent, the nose broad and flat, the lips thick, and the mouth wide; the head is long and narrow, the forehead low, the cheekbones prominent, the jaws protruding, and the chin small.⁶⁴

Morton was an “ethnologist.” This was just another name for a person who studied scientific racism during the slave era. His disciples, George Glidden and Josiah Nott, would write *Types of Mankind (or Ethnological Research)*, which was used by southern slaveholders as a scientific justification for slavery.

The Abolitionists Used the Scriptures

Opposing the scientific ethnologists/phrenologists were the abolitionists. They stood on the Words of the Bible as the truth and argued that all races came from Adam and Eve, and therefore they were all equal. They were “monogenists,” rather than “polygenists.” They declared that God’s Word had more authority than science and proclaimed:

⁶³ Voltaire, “Essai sur les mouers,” as quoted by David Brion in the book *Inhuman Bondage*. Ibid.

⁶⁴ Samuel Morton, *Crania Americana*. (Philadelphia: J. Dobson, Chestnut Street, 1839), 25. (<https://archive.org/stream/Craniaamericana00Mort#page/n9/mode/2up/>).

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; –
- Acts 17:26, KJV

The history of the Christian battle against scientific racism isn't very well known, but it should be. The battle was fought in both England and America. The abolitionists argued that since all races descended from Adam, they were all brothers. They believed in the brotherhood of men, because they all had one father.

In England, as traders and explorers went out into the world, Christians began to hear stories of how the people of darker races were being abused and taken into slavery, so in order to defend people of color from the abuse of white colonizers, Christians set up the Aborigines Protection Society. Out of this group, the Ethnological Society of London would form. Their motto was "ab uno sanguine" (from one blood).

Members would also be part of the Clapham Sect, which was founded by John Newton, the former slave trader and writer of the hymn "Amazing Grace." William Wilberforce, who repeatedly presented antislavery bills to the British parliament, was also a member of the Clapham Sect. Their tireless efforts to overcome scientific racism by using the Word of God, finally led to the abolition of all slavery in the British Empire.

In America, abolitionists such as John Rankin, whose home was a major stop on the Underground Railroad, would proclaim, based on his literal reading of the scriptures:

It must be admitted that the Africans and the rest of mankind have all sprung from one common father; and consequently all, originally were alike free. The right to freedom belongs to the Africans.⁶⁵

John Bird Sumner, who argued against polygenism in his book, *A Treatise in the Records of the Creation*, would end up being ridiculed as an evangelical whose trust in scriptures made him blind to scientific facts.

Frederick Douglass, the great black abolitionist who was a former slave, would also battle scientific racism. He mockingly referred to the ethnologists Morton, Glidden, Nott, and Aggasiz as a "phalanx of learned men."⁶⁶ In a speech given at Western Reserve College entitled, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," he asked that the truthfulness of a scientific theory be judged by its fruit. He understood the limits of science in determining truth and argued that . . .

⁶⁵ Rev. John Rankin, *Letters on American Slavery, Ohio, 1823*. (Boston: Garrison & Knapp, 1833), 69-70. (<http://medicolegal.tripod.com/rankin1823.htm>).

⁶⁶ Frederick Douglass, "The Claims of the Negro Ethnologically Considered," an Address Before the Literary Societies of Western Reserve College, At Commencement, July 12, 1854. The Frederick Douglass Papers, 10, The Library of Congress (<http://medicolegal.tripod.com/rankin1823.htm>).

“ . . . viewed apart from the authority of the Bible, neither unity [monogenism] or diversity [polygenism] of origin of the human family, can be demonstrated.”⁶⁷

He also pointed out the hypocrisy of those “Christians” who beat their slaves, mocking the scientific and religious arguments used by the Southerners:

Look at your hard, horny hands—see how nicely **they are adapted** (emphasis mine) to the labor you have to perform! Look at our delicate fingers, so exactly fitted for our station, and see how manifest it is that God designed us to be his thinkers, and you the workers—Oh! The wisdom of God!”—I used to attend a Methodist church, in which my master was a class leader; he would talk most sanctimoniously about the dear Redeemer, who was sent “to preach deliverance to the captives, and set at liberty them that are bruised”—he could pray at morning pray at noon, and pray at night; yet he could lash up my poor cousin by his two thumbs, and inflict stripes and blows upon his bare back, till the blood streamed to the ground! All the time quoting scripture for his authority, and appealing to that passage of the Holy Bible which says, “He that knoweth his master’s will, and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes! [Luke 12:49] Such was the amount of this good Methodist’s piety.”⁶⁸

There were two battlefronts in the war waged against men like Frederick Douglass:

1. Science was given authority over the scriptures. Instead of tethering science to the truth of the Word, when a conflict arose, the Bible was mocked and set aside.
2. Some Christians refused to rightly divide the Word of truth. They needed the Bible to accommodate their views, so in places where there was a clear command, they either resorted to extrabiblical sources, contorted the scriptural arguments, or ignored the particular scripture completely.

The battle to uphold God’s Word as an authority over scientific authority raged during the slave era. In 1833, Richard H. Colfax would write a pamphlet, *Evidence Against the Views of the Abolitionists*, which would cite Jefferson, Voltaire, Gibbon, and others as asserting the polygenist view that the black race was inferior. The *Charleston Medical Journal* published a debate between Dr. Morton, who held a polygenist view, and Rev. John Bachman, who held a monogenist view. The *Southern Presbyterian Review* held a monogenist view, while *De-Bow’s Review* and *Southern Quarterly Review* held a polygenist view.

I think it’s important to note that since the discovery of DNA, we now know that God’s Word is true. People from all nations HAVE come from “one blood.”

⁶⁷ Ibid, 11.

⁶⁸ Frederick Douglass, “The Church and Prejudice” Plymouth County Antislavery Society, Nov. 4, 1841. (<https://www.greatamericandocuments.com/speeches/douglass-church-prejudice/>).

“Reason” Inadequate to Overturn Slavery

Skeptics point to the ability of humanity to “reason” that Southern slavery was wrong, but Merle Curti, in his immense Pulitzer-prize winning historical study, *The Growth of American Thought*, said at least fourteen pro-slavery novels appeared in response to Harriet Beecher Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, and “each made use of one or more of the arguments from the Bible, from expediency, from ethnology, and from example.”⁶⁹ A list of some of these reasons would include:

1. Slaves are better off than the Northern employees of the industrial capitalists.
2. The Haitian uprising could happen here, therefore we need to keep them under control.
3. The Southern climate necessitates using blacks.
4. Blacks are incapable of being educated. (This was part of the polygenism argument.)
5. Slavery existed in great civilizations of the past (especially Greece and Rome).
6. The slaves are not unhappy.
7. Until they are prepared for freedom, we need to care for them.
8. They’re better off here than they were in Africa. At least here they can hear the Gospel.
9. Slavery is a “necessary evil.”
10. The U.S. Constitution doesn’t outlaw slavery.
11. The overseas slave trade has been protected by the U.S. government for decades.
12. The “fugitive slave law” mandates that slaves be returned over state lines.
13. The “3/5 clause” of the Constitution agrees that blacks are sub-human.
14. Letting the slaves go could mean the South would be ravaged by African savages.
15. The slave system domesticates and civilizes the black heathens.
16. The government is the one who enslaved the Africans, not individuals.
17. The laws of slaveholding states prohibit the liberation of the slaves.

John C. Calhoun, who served as vice president of the U.S., and senator from South Carolina, presented a combination of political, scientific, historical, and philosophical thought as embodied in Enlightenment thought to justify slavery. His scientific racist views can easily be discerned in his speech on the Senate floor:

In the meantime, the white or European race, has not degenerated. It has kept pace with its brethren in other sections of the Union where slavery does not exist. It is odious to make comparison; but I appeal to all sides whether the South is not equal in virtue, intelligence, patriotism, courage, disinterestedness, and all the high qualities which adorn our nature.

⁶⁹ Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought*, 3rd ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2003), 435.

But I take higher ground. **I hold that in the present state of civilization, where two races of different origin, and distinguished by color, and other physical differences, as well as intellectual,** (emphasis mine) are brought together, the relation now existing in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good—a positive good.⁷⁰

Calhoun's polygenism contributed greatly to the suffering of humanity. He opposed abolitionism, and his political views contributed greatly to the belief that the South should secede from the Union, a view which ultimately led to the Civil War and hundreds of thousands of deaths.

The Second Great Awakening

Most historians agree that the greatest contribution to the anti-slavery crusade was the Second Great Awakening, led by the evangelical preacher Charles Finney. Starting in upstate New York, the revival would spread across the United States, reaching into small villages, farmlands, forests, frontiers, and cities. Circuit riders would go from place to place preaching in tents and cornfields. As a result, the United States would become an "evangelical empire." Finney taught that Christianity wasn't only about escaping from hell, but it was also about living a life of "benevolence." This led many Christians to get involved with the great reform movements of the time. One of the greatest of these reform movements was the antislavery movement.

Abolitionists had been active in writing and lobbying against slavery for years, but the masses weren't prepared to act against slavery until they were influenced by Finney's teachings. According to the antislavery historian Dwight Lowell Dumond, "evangelism and the antislavery movement were inseparable." He said that Finney's revival provided a group of young men with the "greatest combination of moral and intellectual power ever assembled in support of any cause before or since."⁷¹ To help them in this endeavor, Dumond says:

They had the Bible. They had the great charters of Western liberalism. They had the writings of Woolman, Benezet, Rush, Hopkins, Cooper, Rice, Branagan, Barrow, Duncan, Rankin, and a host of British liberals such as Sharp, Clarkson, and Wilberforce. They needed all this and more to beat down and destroy the doctrine of racial inequality, enshrined in slavery, and upheld by the courts, the churches, and the political parties.⁷²

⁷⁰John C. Calhoun "Slavery a Positive Good" https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Slavery_a_Positive_Good

⁷¹Dwight L. Dumond, *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., Inc. 1961), 158.

⁷²Ibid, 159.

One of Finney's greatest converts was Theodore Dwight Weld, who would become an articulate and passionate abolitionist alongside William Lloyd Garrison, editor of the anti-slavery newspaper, *The Liberator*. After Weld helped to convince students at Lane Seminary to work to abolish slavery, the faculty rebuked him, and he, along with many other students moved to an unknown little school known as Oberlin College, which would become a base for the anti-slavery movement. He trained seventy students in the abolitionist cause and sent them out only to be insulted, tarred and feathered, and have their meetings shut down.

Weld, like Garrison, and unlike Thomas Paine, supported "immediate emancipation." Thomas Paine was an Enlightenment philosopher and a deist who supported "gradual emancipation." In fact, in 1780, he authored the "Pennsylvania Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery." Because he was a deist and didn't believe God interfered in the affairs of the world, he thought that slavery would eventually be worked out in the course of history.

I mention Thomas Paine because many skeptics point out that he founded the first antislavery society in America. Because he was a proponent of "reason" they think this means that skeptics were on the cutting edge of abolishing slavery, but most of his anti-slavery views came from the Bible. (Just as much of his call for revolution in the pamphlet "Common Sense" was based on the Bible.)

Paine referred to God as being the "Lord of ALL" (a reference to Acts 17:26 "*one blood*") and reminded Christians of Jesus' admonition to love their neighbor. He also argued that manstealing was prohibited by the Bible and that Christians must obey the Golden Rule. While his views against slavery had their source in the Bible, his views on when and how the slaves would obtain freedom came from his deist views. On the other hand, the revivalists, who would plead with people to receive Christ because "*Today is the day of salvation!*" (2 Cor. 6:2) would apply the same reasoning to their views on immediate emancipation.

The Effort to Redeem (Purchase) Slaves

Just as the Hebrews purchased slaves, and the early church redeemed slaves, during the era of Southern slavery there was also a movement to purchase (or redeem) slaves. Richard Allen, founder of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, redeemed slaves. Levi Coffin, one of the main conductors on the Underground Railroad said that "in the face of such appeals, it was hard to refuse . . ." ⁷³ James Russell Lowe would admit in a letter written in 1849 that even though he didn't have much money, still "if a man comes and asks us to help him buy a wife or child what are we to do?" ⁷⁴ Harriet Beecher Stowe would take Milly Edmundson on a tour of New England churches, which resulted in enough money to

⁷³ Herbert Aptheker, *Abolitionism: A Revolutionary Movement* (Boston: Twayne, 1989), 62.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

redeem her two children. And Garrison would print notices in *The Liberator*, such as this one, which appeared in January of 1837:

George Potter and Rosella, his wife, would take this opportunity to express their gratitude to God, and under him, to the benevolent individuals, who generously contributed to aiding them to redeem their two children from Slavery. They have the unspeakable happiness of informing the generous donors that, on the 12th . . . they received their children, aged eleven and seven years, raised from the degradation of Slavery to the rank of Freemen.⁷⁵

A Higher Law

Just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, would refuse to bow to King Nebuchadnezzar's idol, and Peter and Paul would continue to preach the Gospel (despite it being outlawed) because they would rather obey the Higher Law of God, Charles Beecher would implore Christians to disobey the Fugitive Slave Law. He appealed to the teachings of the scriptures and the heart of Jesus:

Suppose . . . a fugitive mother and child should come knocking at your door on a winter night pleading for aid. What does the law require of you? What must you do, to obey the law? What is obedience to law? You must shut your door in her face, or you must take her captive, and shut her up until the hounds of officers can come up. This is obedience, and if you do not do this you are a law-breaker. If you give her a crust of bread, you break the law. If you give her a shawl, a cloak; if you let her warm herself by your fire an hour, and depart, you break the law. If you give her a night's rest, and let her go, you break the law. If you show her any kindness, any mercy, if you treat her as Christ treated you, if you do to her as you would wish to be done by, you have broken the law.⁷⁶

Beecher went on to explain that he could not obey the Fugitive Slave Law because it "commands me, when fully obeyed, to deny Christ, to renounce and abjure Christ's law, to trample under foot Christ's spirit, and to remand Christ's flesh and blood into cruel bondage."⁷⁷

Frederick Douglass would also claim to be a law-breaker when he opened his speech at a meeting of the Massachusetts Society in 1842 with these words:

I appear before the immense assembly this evening as a thief and a robber. I stole this head, these limbs, this body from my master, and I ran off with them.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Dumond, *Antislavery*, 310.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Raymond Bial, *The Underground Railroad* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 1999), 38.

And Harriet Tubman, the escaped slave who became a conductor on the Underground Railroad, also appealed to the Higher Law of God when she asserted:

God willed us free. Men willed us slaves. We will do as God wills.⁷⁹

With so many societal strongholds lined up against the abolitionists, how was it that they were able to see the light of truth in the midst of so much darkness? The atheist, Hume, wasn't able to discern evil. The scientist, Morton, wasn't able to discern evil. The Enlightenment philosophers weren't able to discern evil. The rationalist, who relied on "reason," wasn't able to discern evil. The Southern slaveholder, who cherry-picked the scriptures that were conducive to his wants and desires, while ignoring others, wasn't able to discern evil.

But those Bible-believing Christians who rightly divided and stood on the Word of Truth were able to discern good from evil, even when every hardship hounded them because of their position. They refused to compromise, and consequently, they formed a bulwark the slave could run to for safety and help. As a result of their efforts, the institution of slavery would be destroyed, and liberty would finally come to the captives. And these men who were mocked and persecuted for their views would be remembered by future generations as heroes.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

4) Was it loving for God to destroy the Canaanite tribes? Why do you think assimilation to Hebrew laws and culture was important for those hoping to come into Israeli society?

5) Did the “curse of Ham” apply to Africans? Why or why not?

6) What is the difference between monogenism and polygenism? What scripture did the abolitionists use to oppose polygenism?

Colonialism

The Lie:

Christians were responsible for colonialism, destroying cultures, and abusing the darker races around the world.

The Truth:

Evangelical missionaries opposed colonial abuses, believed in the equality of the races, and tried to prove it.

Even though this quote is from an atheist, many college courses have presented an argument against missionary endeavors that goes something like this:

Missionaries have always held a heroic and romantic place within the Christian imagination. Even today churches regularly collect contributions for the mission field. The reality, of course, is very different. From its very beginnings, Christian missionaries have inflicted tremendous harm on the people they have ‘witnessed’ to. – from the website: *Rejection of Pascal’s Wager: A Skeptic’s Guide to Christianity*⁸⁰

This accusation has caused many Christians (myself included) to feel deflated, and to doubt their faith. How are Christians supposed to respond to accusations that make followers of their faith look like backward, cruel racists? And what if it’s true? How can a believer possibly defend these evil actions of their brothers and sisters in Christ? If they were being brutally honest with themselves, wouldn’t it just be better to acknowledge Christian failures and either try to create a more “loving” Christianity, or even give up their faith altogether?

This is exactly where many young people find themselves today. It’s my hope that this chapter will begin to show that the attacks against evangelical missionaries are false, and that Christians can confidently embrace this wonderful part of our heritage. (Perhaps, Christian historians can even add more evidence to support my thesis. For example, Robert

⁸⁰ Paul N. Tobin, “Christian Missionaries,” *The Rejection of Pascal’s Wager: A Skeptic’s Guide to Christianity*. <http://geocities.com/paulntobin/mission.html> (accessed 02/07/2009).

D. Woodberry makes an interesting argument about the contribution of evangelical missionaries to the spread of democracy.)⁸¹

An evangelical is a person who believes the message of Jesus Christ is “good news” for humanity, that Jesus was the Lamb of God whose sacrifice paid the penalty for the sins of the world, and that any person who believes this message, will receive eternal life. After receiving this message of grace, they are imbued with new life and joy which inspires them to share it with others. This desire to share the good news with others is the missionary impulse.

As explained in the last chapter, the Second Great Awakening was based on this evangelical message. The good news was preached from town to town in America, and the new life in the hearts of those who were “born again” unleashed a wave of kindness and compassion that was similar to that of the early church.

Not only did the great revival have an influence on slavery, it also led the church to fight for a woman’s right to vote, educate children (through the Sunday School movement), promote temperance (that is, to oppose drunkenness, mostly because women and children were often abused by drunk husbands), care for abused industrial workers (many of whom were children!), demand a Sabbath day off, care for the mentally ill and handicapped, reform prisons, and fight against animal cruelty (William Wilberforce founded the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, which is still in existence today). As the gospel was preached, the hearts of people were changed, and it caused them to love both God and their neighbor.

Another fruit of the Second Great Awakening was the missionary movement. Christians realized that the rest of the world needed to hear the gospel and began to feel a “call” to travel to the uttermost parts of the earth, and wherever they went societies changed for the better. This may not be what you hear at your local university, but it’s true!

As a result of the 19th century missionary movement hospitals, orphanages, schools, and universities were established around the world. Infanticide, which was widely practiced in China, India, Africa, and the Pacific Islands, was abolished. Murder of the elderly was stopped. Cannibalism ended. Widow-burning (“suttee”) was abandoned. Painful foot-binding was opposed. Human sacrifices (which were practiced in many areas of the world) no longer remained a common cultural custom. The worship of pagan deities declined, and their powerful priesthoods were dismantled. These were the wonderful fruits of the missionary movement, and yet, because much of this history isn’t taught in public schools

⁸¹ Robert D. Woodberry, “The Missionary Roots of Liberal Democracy,” *American Political Science Review*, May 2012, Vol. 106, No. 2, 244-274.

and universities, the attempt to color missionaries as though they were abusive toward other cultures is able to succeed.

Missions weren't always an important part of the Protestant church, but William Carey, the "father of modern missions," reminded Christians (even before Finney's revival) that Jesus gave the Great Commission (to go into all the world and make disciples) not only to the apostles, but to all the church at all times. He urged Christians to have pity on the heathen who were in darkness, while they enjoyed the light of the gospel. He questioned why it was that the followers of the Pope were willing to go out into the world with their message, while evangelical Protestants shied away from the responsibility and made excuses. He also pointed to traders and explorers who were willing to travel to distant lands for the sake of monetary gain while Christians seemed content to remain at ease. This argument from Carey reveals that there were many groups who went out into the world from the 17th to the 20th centuries.⁸²

1. The secular explorers and traders. They were usually documenting their discoveries and developing maps (for example, Captain Cook was a cartographer), or they were creating trade routes and stations (such as those of the Dutch East India Company).
2. The Catholic *conquistadors* and explorers. Some were searching for gold (such as Pizarro and Cortez), while others were establishing Catholic strongholds throughout the world.
3. The evangelical missionaries who were sent out by voluntary associations (rather than the Catholic state-supported missionaries) such as the London Missionary Society. Their goal was to obey the Great Commission that was given by Jesus and go to all nations to make Christian disciples. They opposed social Darwinism and abusive western colonialism, believing that the gospel created a true "brotherhood" of the races and that no person should be abused for another's gain.
4. The liberal Christians who blended evolutionary science with Christianity. They accepted the case for biblical criticism (the belief that the latest science and archaeology should take precedence as a source of truth over that of the biblical record). Many were proponents of Social Darwinism and thought the mission of the church wasn't one of converting souls, but of trying to civilize the darker races as a "white man's burden."

The fruit of each of these groups isn't that difficult to assess once they are sifted out and separated.

⁸² William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens, etc.*, Leicester, 1792. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11449/11449-h/11449-h.htm> (accessed 11/17/2017).

The Secular Explorers and Traders

The earliest groups to venture out into the world were the explorers and traders. Marco Polo whetted European appetites with stories of silk, spices, jewels, gold, and perfume that he had acquired in India. These precious commodities were in great demand, consequently, explorers and traders wanted to find a way to the East without going overland through the Muslim world. Columbus was looking for this trade route when, instead, he came upon America. The British East India Company and the Dutch East India Company were also formed as an attempt to trade with the “East Indies” (south Asia).

Traders and explorers were motivated to make a profit. Because of this, they often made unjust deals with indigenous people. Even though they represented Christian Europe, their main motive was money. Unfortunately, as they traveled to the Americas, or isolated islands such as Tahiti and Hawaii, they exposed native populations to diseases such as small pox and respiratory viruses. While it’s difficult to know how many people died, some estimates run into the millions of people.

The Catholics

Spain was a Catholic nation. They sent out state-sponsored Spanish “conquistadors” who explored and conquered most of South America. (This is why Spanish is the native language of many South American nations.) Using horses and firearms, they defeated the local natives and established the joint rule of the Spanish monarchy and the Catholic religion. Unfortunately, instead of bringing the good news of the gospel, they used conquest as a means of conversion. Mexico’s Aztec Empire was conquered by Hernan Cortes and Peru’s Inca Empire was conquered by Francisco Pizarro.

After this conquest, the people were enslaved, or served as indentured servants. Bartolome de las Casas, a Catholic priest who saw the abuse that was piled on the natives, waged a life-long campaign to stop them from being exploited. In a letter to the King of Spain he complained of the hypocrisy of those who claimed to be followers of Christ:

Your Majesty will also now perceive that here there are no Christians but only devils; no servants of God and the Crown but only traitors to His law and Yours. It is my considered opinion that the greatest obstacle that stands in the way of the pacification of the New World, and with it the conversion of the people to Christ, is the harshness and cruelty of the treatment meted out by Christians to those who surrender. This has been so harsh and so brutal that nothing is more odious nor

more terrifying to the people than the name Christian, a word for which they use in their language the term “yares,” which means demons.⁸³

While some Catholics (such as the Jesuits, in their “reductiones”) tried to civilize the indigenous population by training them in practical skills and teaching them to read and write, they only had limited power in comparison to the colonizing powers that were using natives as workers to mine precious metals and tend sugar fields.

The impact of this abuse was a weakened population who was decimated by diseases carried to them by the Europeans. De las Casas recorded that in the Valley of Mexico the population was estimated to be 1.5 to 3 million people before the conquistadors arrived, but by 1600 (eighty years later), only 70,000 survived. Unfortunately, the Spanish conquistadores carried the cross into their battles and then harshly abused the natives under the banner of Christianity.

William Wilberforce, the parliamentarian whose efforts finally abolished slavery in the British empire) lamented over the damage that had been done to the Christian faith by the Catholic “missionaries”:

Have not these doctrines been ever perverted to purposes the most disgraceful to the religion of Jesus? If you want an instance, look to the standard of the inquisition, and behold the pious Dominicans torturing their miserable victims for the love of Christ. **Or would you rather see the effects of your principles on a larger scale, and by wholesale, if the phrase may be pardoned, cast your eyes across the Atlantic, and let your zeal be edified by the holy activity of Cortez and Pizarro, and their apostles of the western hemisphere?** (emphasis mine) To what else have been owing the extensive ravages of national persecution, and religious wars and crusades, whereby rapacity, and pride, and cruelty, sheltering themselves under the mask of this specious principle, have so often afflicted the world?

The Prince of Peace has been made to assume the port of a ferocious conqueror, and, **forgetting the message of good will to men,** (emphasis mine) has issued forth, like a second Scourge of the Earth, to plague and desolate the human species. That the sacred name of Religion, has been too often prostituted to the most detestable of purposes; that furious bigots and bloody persecutors, and self-interested hypocrites, of all qualities and dimensions, from the rapacious leader of an army, to the canting oracle of a congregation, have falsely called themselves Christians, are melancholy and humiliating truths, which (as none can so deeply lament them) none will more

⁸³ Bartolome de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, trans. and ed. Nigel Griffin (London: Penguin, 1992), 82.

readily admit than those who best understand the nature of Christianity, and are most concerned for her honor.⁸⁴

I put this entire long quote in this book because I think it's important to see that Wilberforce saw a difference between Catholic and evangelical missionaries. He realized that the Catholic conquistadores weren't spreading the "message of good will" and said that it's important for those who honor the Prince of Peace to admit that the existence of false Christians is a "humiliating" truth.

Evangelicals Oppose Colonial Abuses

It's important to note that the traders and explorers who carried diseases and exploited the native peoples *preceded* evangelical missionaries, and unfortunately, the church/state unions that were supporting these trade expositions caused the name of Christ to be associated with such efforts.

In response, the evangelical Aborigines Protection Society spoke out against the abuses of colonization. Thomas Fowell Buxton, a member of the Clapham Sect and successor to William Wilberforce in the British Parliament, was informed by missionaries of many colonial abuses. He urged Parliament to form a select committee to . . .

. . . consider what measures ought to be adopted with regard to the native inhabitants of countries where British settlements are made, and to the neighboring tribes, in order to secure them the due observance of justice and protection of their rights.⁸⁵

This request was made in 1835, and two years later the report would be completed. It would expose the greed and abuse of traders:

The national honor has been tarnished; common honesty has been thrown aside; life itself has again and again been sacrificed for the mere convenience of trade . . . men calling themselves Christians, subjects of a Christian government, professors of the Christian faith, have stooped, for the attainment of selfish ends, to practice upon the confiding ignorance of these simple and untutored children of the desert.⁸⁶

For this information the select committee report gave credit to the missionaries:

For the greater part of the information we now possess, we are indebted to the Christian missionaries sent out from this country. To the labours of these invaluable

⁸⁴ William Wilberforce, *A Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians: In the Higher and Middle Classes in this Country, Contrasted with Real Christianity* (New York: Leavitt, Lord, and Co., 1835), 64.

⁸⁵ *Report on the Parliamentary Select Committee, on Aboriginal Tribes, (British Settlements)* (London: William Ball, Aldine Chambers, Paternoster Row, and Hatchard and Son, Picadilly, 1837), xii.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, vii.

men the cause of humanity is unspeakably indebted. Amid persecution and scorn, obloquy, ridicule, and contempt, they have steadily persevered in their work of faith and labor of love, until to them, in an especial degree, belongs the honor of having first exposed the evil workings of our colonial policy.⁸⁷

William Howitt was an evangelical (a Quaker) who was so astounded by the abuse he observed that he wrote an expose called *Colonisation and Christianity* which lamented the treatment that tribal peoples received under European colonization. The title page contains the words of the prophet Malachi:⁸⁸

Have we not all one father? —Hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously one man against his brother? – Malachi 2:10

He was so astounded by the abuse he observed that he rebuked “so-called” Christians for their hypocrisy:

The barbarities and outrages of the so-called Christian race throughout every region of the world, and upon every people that they have been able to subdue, are as to be paralleled by those of any other race, however fierce, however untaught, and however reckless of mercy and of shame, in any age of the earth. Is it fit that this horrible blending of the names of Christianity and outrage should continue? . . . If foul deeds are to be done, let them be done in their own name; and let robbery of lands, seizure of cattle, violence committed on the liberties or the lives of men be branded as the deeds of devils and not of Christians.⁸⁹

The great missions leader, Helen Montgomery-Barrett, pointed out the sins of those traders who abused native populations:

The indictment against so-called Christian nations becomes heavy indeed. Their lands stolen, their fisheries depleted, their freedom taken away, their men sold into virtual slavery as contract laborers in distant lands, their strength enfeebled by the importation of foul diseases, the islanders of the Pacific might well question the blessing brought them by contact with the whites.⁹⁰

But she realized that the traders and the missionaries weren't the same group of people and recommended that missionaries be sent *in order to make up* for the sins of the traders.

⁸⁷ Ibid, viii.

⁸⁸ William Howitt. *Colonisation and Christianity: A Popular History of the Treatment of the Natives by the Europeans in All Their Colonies, 1838*. (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishers, 2004), title page.

⁸⁹ William Howitt, *Christianity and Colonization: A Popular History of the Treatment of the Natives by the Europeans in All their Colonies, 1838* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishers, 2004), 9-10.

⁹⁰ Dana Lee Robert, *American Women in Missions: A Social History of Their Thought and Practice* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997), 265.

To withdraw the missionaries would not stop a single trader, nor a gallon of rum, nor one cruel exploitation; it would simply leave to run riot the forces of evil. The strongest reason why the conscience of Europe and America ought to continue and immensely to strengthen its missionary forces in the island world is to make the largest, most costly and statesmanlike reparation for the ills inflicted on them by unworthy representatives of our race, and by our still unchristianized governments.⁹¹

Mark Twain also took notice of the efforts of missionaries when he wrote in the satirical “King Leopold’s Soliloquy”:

Blister the meddlesome missionaries! They write tons of these things. They seem to be always around, always spying, always eye-witnessing the happenings; and everything they see they commit to paper. They seem to be always prowling from place to place; **the natives consider them their only friends; they go to them with their sorrows; they show them their scars and their wounds, inflicted by my soldier police; they hold up the stumps of their arms and lament because their hand have been chopped off, as punishment for not bringing in enough rubber,** (emphasis mine) and as proof to be laid before my officers that the required punishment was well and truly carried out. One of these missionaries saw eighty-one of these hands drying over a fire for transmission to my officials—and of course he must go and set it down and print it. They travel and travel, they spy and spy! And nothing is too trivial for them to print.⁹²

Evangelicals, who were leading the charge against slavery, also led the charge against the abuses of colonization. They fought against scientific racism (polygenism) in the case of slavery, but in the future they would fight against “social Darwinism” and the justification of the abuse of darker races because they were less evolved than the white races. It’s a little-known fact, but missionaries made it one of their goals to disprove social Darwinism! Their legacy is still seen today in the monuments and honors given to evangelical missionaries who served all around the world.

Social Darwinism

As explained in the previous chapter on slavery, scientific racism was the belief that each of the races had different parents (polygenism). Because this view was based on the latest “science,” the Enlightenment philosophers embraced it as truth—even though it conflicted with the biblical belief that all people had a common ancestor in Adam and Eve (monogenism). In scientific racism, the darker races were considered to be sub-human.

⁹¹ Ibid, 265-266.

⁹² Mark Twain, *King Leopold’s Soliloquy: A Defense of His Congo Rule*, 2nd ed. (Boston, MA: The P.R. Warren Co., 1905), 14-15.

This allowed the white race to subjugate them without being hypocritical for writing “all men are created equal” in the Declaration of Independence. After all, they weren’t fully “men.”

When Darwinism came along, scientists argued that all life evolved from a common ancestor, so all the scientists flocked back to monogenism, but now, instead of the degradation of the darker races being justified because they were sub-human, they could be abused merely because they were less evolved.

One example of the prevalence of this Victorian ideology could be found at the Columbian Exposition, the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. Along the midway, a type of human zoo was set up, which allowed those who attended the fair to walk through the evolutionary history of man.

Beginning with the African race and moving forward through the red and yellow races, villages were set up and people of color were put on display. The exhibit ended with the European villages and culminated with the glorious “White City” of marble buildings which was the final goal that mankind was moving toward. This endeavor is recorded in the *Encyclopedia of Chicago*, which is published by the Chicago Historical Society:

To lend anthropological legitimacy to their enterprise, Chicago’s exposition directors placed the Midway under the nominal direction of Harvard’s Frederic Ward Putnam, who had already been chosen to organize an Anthropology Building at the fair. Putnam envisioned the Midway as a living outdoor museum of “primitive” human beings that would afford visitors the opportunity to measure the progress of humanity toward the ideal of civilization presented in the White City.⁹³

This wasn’t a sideshow. It was a scientific endeavor! The best minds were put to the task, since the goal of the Columbian Exposition was to showcase humanity’s progress.

Today, racism is a great sin, and those who practice or believe in racial inequality are considered to be ignorant, but in the nineteenth century, you weren’t intelligent *unless* you held racist views. For example, the *Atlantic Monthly* claimed that Herbert Spencer (who coined the phrase “survival of the fittest” and was the founder of social Darwinism) represented “the scientific spirit of the age.” His popularity was immeasurable. He was the first philosopher to ever sell over a million copies of his writings.

The impact of social Darwinism, though rarely even heard of today (perhaps due to the embarrassment of the intellectual and scientific community for supporting it), was widespread. Its supporters would read like a “Who’s Who?” of money, power, and intellect.

⁹³ Robert W. Rydell, “World’s Columbian Exposition,” *Encyclopedia of Chicago* (Chicago Historical Society, 2006), <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org/pages/1386.html> (accessed 08/11/2008).

Virtually every major thinker of the late nineteenth century would be influenced by Spencer's social Darwinism.

Andrew Carnegie (industrialist)
Teddy Roosevelt (politician)
William James (psychologist)
Woodrow Wilson (politician)
Josiah Royce (philosopher)
John Dewey (educator)
Winston Churchill (politician)
Borden Browne (theologian)
Sigmund Freud (psychologist)
John D. Rockefeller (industrialist)
Albion Small (sociologist)
Paul Harris (lawyer)
George Howison (philosopher)
Franklin Giddings (sociologist)
Lester Ward (sociologist)
Charles Cooley (sociologist)
James McCosh (theologian)
William Graham Sumner (sociologist)
Calvin Coolidge (politician)

This is just a small list of those who were influenced by Spencer. Many intellectuals leaped on the Darwinian bandwagon because they wanted to apply this latest scientific breakthrough to their field of interest. In the same way that Enlightenment philosophers applied Newtonian physics to philosophy, theology (deism), and political ideology, evolutionary theory was now applied to all areas of study: history, theology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, economics, education, politics, and even architecture, were all influenced by the idea of "progressivism." Woodrow Wilson captured this paradigm shift in his speech "What Is Progress?":

Government is not a machine, but a living thing. It falls, not under the theory of the universe, but under the theory of organic life. It is accountable to Darwin, not to Newton.⁹⁴

In this statement from Wilson, we see how the eighteenth-century Enlightenment view (that the universe was merely a machine that was wound up like a clock and let go), changed to the nineteenth-century evolutionary view (that the universe was progressing upward). This Darwinian view is where the idea that the U.S. Constitution was a "living, breathing document," which needed to be open to change, originated.

⁹⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "What Is Progress?--1913" *Constituting America*. <http://constitutingamerica.org/what-is-progress-by-woodrow-wilson-1856-1924-reprinted-from-the-u-s-constitution-a-reader-published-by-hillsdale-college/> (accessed 05/31/2018).

When applied to race and social engineering, the social Darwinist view was that the Anglo-Saxon race was the ultimate expression of natural selection--but with that high position came the responsibility (the white man's burden) of civilizing and bringing order to the less evolved darker races. Colonialism, they argued, was necessary to lift the lesser evolved races out of their despair and savagery.

Many Christians would also adopt social Darwinism. The Episcopal clergyman and professor, William Graham Sumner, of Yale University, was a proponent of social Darwinism. Josiah Strong, the Congregationalist minister, wrote a very popular book entitled *Our Country*, in which he argued that the Anglo-Saxon was commissioned by God to be his brother's keeper and civilize the weaker races. He promoted W.A.S.P. (White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant) imperialism and promoted colonial expansion in the name of God:

Then will the world enter upon a new stage of its history—the final competition of races for which the Anglo-Saxon is being schooled . . . Then this race of unequaled energy, with all the wealth of numbers and the might of wealth behind it—the representative, let us hope, of the largest liberty, the purest Christianity, the highest civilization—having . . . aggressive traits . . . will spread itself over the earth. If I do not read amiss, this powerful race will move down upon Mexico, down into Central and South America, out upon the islands of the sea, over upon Africa and beyond. And anyone doubt the result of this competition of races will be the “survival of the fittest?”⁹⁵

To those who blended Christianity with Darwinism, civilizing the weaker races merely meant dressing them in European clothing, housing them, and putting them to work in menial tasks since their minds were supposedly less evolved.

Senator A.J. Beveridge also expressed the social Darwinist imperialistic view in a speech to Congress:

It is elemental. It is racial. God has not been preparing the English-speaking and Teutonic peoples for a thousand years for nothing but vain and idle self-contemplation and self-admiration. No! He has made us master organizers of the world to establish system where chaos reigns. He has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Were it not for such a force as this the world would relapse into barbarism and night. And of all of our race he has marked the American people as his chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America,

⁹⁵ Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: The American Home Missionary Society, 1885), 174-175.

and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. We are trustees of the world's progress, guardians of its righteous peace.⁹⁶

Because many tribes and nations had never heard the gospel or learned how to read the Bible, they had no light of Christ, and they remained in their dark, cruel ways. Those who held racial views (polygenists and social Darwinists) thought this meant that the darker races were sub-human or less evolved, but evangelical missionaries set out to prove the truthfulness of the Word of God, which said that all races came from "one blood." They not only shared the gospel, but they also set out to prove that all races were equal in intelligence and their ability to learn.

Evangelical Missionaries

In response to this overwhelming rush of scientific "intellect" the Bible-believing church stood alone. Holding on to the Word of God as the truth, even when every reason appeared to exist to doubt it, the largest group of persons who went out into the world to bless and serve the darker races, rather than take from them, dominate them, and abuse them were evangelical missionaries.

Benjamin Harrison, the former president of the United States, was the Honorary Chairman to a missions conference held at Carnegie Hall in 1901. In his opening address he expressed the missionary mindset:

The highest conception that has ever entered the mind of man is that of God as the father of all men—the one blood—the universal brotherhood. It was not evolved, but revealed [meaning it came from God's Word]. The natural man lives to be ministered unto—he lays his imposts on others. He buys slaves that they may fan him to sleep, bring him the jeweled cup, dance before him, and die in the arena for his sport. Into such a world there came a King, not to be ministered unto, but to minister.⁹⁷

This was a direct counter to the prevailing scientific and racial ideologies of the day. While the scientifically leaning Christians who went the way of Enlightenment rationalism, scientific racism, biblical criticism, and social Darwinism, believed that it was necessary to *impose* civilization on native populations, Bible-believing Christians thought it was best to serve and love the native populations in an attempt to win their hearts and minds for Christ. The evangelical missionary believed that civilization would proceed from knowing Christ, not that knowing Christ would proceed from civilization. Helen Montgomery-Barrett

⁹⁶ Senator A.J. Beveridge, speech given before the U.S. Senate, Jan. 9, 1900, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/ajb72.htm> (accessed 02/09/2009).

⁹⁷ Benjamin Harrison, "Speech Given at the Ecumenical Conference on Foreign Missions Held in Carnegie Hall and Neighboring Churches, April 21-May 1, 1900" (New York: American Tract Society, 1900).

described the hearts of the missionaries and how they were in opposition to social Darwinism:

To take away the missionary would be to take away the one man who is in the islands, not for what he can get of them, but for what he can give to them; the one man who gives the natives books in their own tongue, schools, hospitals, churches; nurses their sick, teaches their children, resents their wrongs, protects them against imposition and fraud, teaches them new arts of practical life—in short, **who is their brother** (emphasis mine).⁹⁸

The missionary movement was a conscious attempt to counter scientific racism/social Darwinism. One example of a missionary who heroically battled against the science of his day was William Knibb. He begged for black equality for the African slaves of Jamaica, crying out:

All I ask is, that my **African brother may stand in the same family of man;** (emphasis mine) that my African sister shall, while she clasps her tender infant to her breast, be allowed to call it her own; that they both shall be allowed to bow their knees in prayer to that **God who has made of one blood all nations as one flesh** (emphasis mine).⁹⁹

Knibb was hated by traders, planters, and merchants who relied on slavery for a living, and would even end up in jail under false accusations, but he didn't care. His heart was broken by the brutality he saw:

I call upon children, by the cries of the infant slave who I saw flogged on the Macclesfield Estate, in Westmoreland . . . I call upon parents, by the blood streaming back of Catherine Williams, who, with a heroism England has seldom known, preferred a dungeon to the surrender of her honour. I call upon Christians by the lacerated back of William Black of King's Valley, whose back, a month after flogging, was not healed. **I call upon you all, by the sympathies of Jesus** (emphasis mine).¹⁰⁰

William Knibb would start schools, train teachers, start a newspaper to give blacks a voice, found a seminary, buy land for emancipated slaves with his own money, and baptize 3000 blacks who were “each spiritually readied for the event—he would not baptize anybody merely to swell the numbers.”¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Roberts, *American Women in Missions*, 266.

⁹⁹⁹⁹ John Howard Hinton, *William Knibb: Missionary in Jamaica* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1847), 148.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

In 1988, on the 150th anniversary of the abolition of slavery in the British Empire (which was accomplished mainly through the efforts of the evangelical William Wilberforce), Knibb was granted Jamaica's highest civil honor: *The Order of Merit*. Only one other non-Jamaican and no white man shared this honor at that time. His award reads:

For Knibb's work as Liberator of the slaves;
For his work in laying the foundation of Nationhood;
For his support of black people and things indigenous;
For his display of great courage against tremendous odds;
For being an inspiration then and now.¹⁰²

Knibb is a hero. He trusted in Jesus and stood on his Word, rather than believing in the latest science. He had compassion on his fellow brothers as a result.

The evangelical missionaries were committed to the belief that all races were equal, and just needed to hear the gospel in order for their societies to advance. Because of this, they didn't force natives into menial labor, but instead made education the priority.

A great example of an evangelical missionary opposing the abuse of a social Darwinist was found in John Mackenzie, of the London Missionary Society. He was appointed to the Tswana territory where he found himself in a clash with the British diamond magnate and social Darwinist, Cecil Rhodes. According to the University of Botswana history department:

On the one hand there was the Reverend John Mackenzie, one of the most articulate spokesmen among Christian missionaries of the later 19th century and prime exponent of ideas of protection of "native" interests. On the other hand, there was Cecil John Rhodes, the diamond magnate whose name has become synonymous with monopoly capitalism and territorial expansion in the later 19th century Africa, who stood for colonization, development, and exploitation of African lands by European settlers.¹⁰³

Mackenzie went back to London in 1882 to campaign for British protection of the Tswana territory. He became the leading voice in the appeal to Parliament to protect Africans from the abuse of Cecil Rhodes, whose dream was to spread the British Empire, led by the Anglo-Saxon race, around the world. He thought there could only be world peace if the white man was in power. In his last will and testament he said of the British:

¹⁰² Alan Jackson, "William Knibb, 1803-1845, Jamaican Missionary and Slaves' Friend," <http://www.victorianweb.org/history/knibb/html> (accessed 02/10/2009).

¹⁰³ Neil Parsons, "Colonial Administration Page 2: Charles Rey and Previous Commissioners of the Bechuanaland Protectorate," University of Botswana History Department, <http://thuto.org/ubh/bw/colad2.htm> (accessed 08/07/2008).

I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race.¹⁰⁴

Rhodes used the wrong plumb line for measuring goodness. The standard isn't race; it's the Word of God.

Another example of an evangelical missionary opposing colonial abuses was John Philip, the director of the London Missionary Society. He was sent to supervise the work of their mission in South Africa and saw the British colonial injustices against the Khoikhoi (Hottentot) people. In 1826 he traveled back to England to lobby the Anti-Slavery Society, arguing in his preface to *Researches in South Africa* that . . .

. . . The Hottentot has a right to a fair price for his labour; to an exemption from cruelty and oppression; to choose the place of his abode, and to enjoy the society of his children; and no one can deprive him of those rights without violating the laws of nature and nations.¹⁰⁵

In response to Philips' efforts, on July 15, 1828, the British House of Commons passed a resolution demanding that the colonial government "secure to all the natives of South Africa, the same freedom and protection as are enjoyed by other free people of that Colony whether English or Dutch."¹⁰⁶ Political freedom didn't lead to economic freedom because the British colonists owned most of the land, but evangelical missionaries shared the gospel with the Hottentots and set up mission stations where natives were taught to read and trained in skills to help them succeed.

The main motive for educating the darker races was to give them the ability to read the Bible, but it was also an attempt to counter social Darwinism. It was a grand experiment based on the premise in the *Declaration of Independence* that *all men are created equal*. One of the main evidences of this experiment was the fact that most of the world's greatest universities were started by missionaries. Most Christians realize that the Ivy League colleges of the United States were all (with the exception of Cornell University) founded by believers (Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, University of Pennsylvania, and Dartmouth), and the list of colleges, universities, and seminaries in the United States that were started by Christians is too numerous to list here, but how many realize that most of China's universities were started by Christians? According to the official website on Chinese culture, put out by the People's Republic of China:

In 1901, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South set up Soochow University, which was the first Western-style university—in China. Then Christian universities were

¹⁰⁴ Cecil Rhodes, *The Last Will and Testament of Cecil John Rhodes: With Elucidatory Notes to which are Added Some Chapters Describing the Political and Religious Ideas of the Testator By Cecil Rhodes*, comp. William Thomas Stead (London: "Review of Reviews" Office, 1902).

¹⁰⁵ John Philip, *Researches in South Africa*, 2 vols. (London: 1828; reprint, New York, 1969), I: xxv,xxvi.

¹⁰⁶ Andrew C. Ross, "Philip, John," *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, ed. Gerald H. Anderson (New York: Macmillan Reference USA, 1998), 109.

set up in succession, including St. John's University in Shanghai, Hangzhou Christian College, West China Union University in Chengdu, Huazhong University in Wuchang, Nanjing Ginling University, Huanan College of Arts and Science in Fuzhou, Xiangya University of Medicine in Changsha, Ginling College of Arts and Science for Girls, Shanhai Hujiang University, Canton Christian University in Guangzhou, Yanjing University in Beijing, Shandong Qilu University, Fujian Christian University, and some small colleges. These Western-styled colleges and universities contributed much to the training of modern personnel.¹⁰⁷

In China, it was obvious that missionaries weren't only interested in converting the Chinese and giving them the scriptures. They were also fighting against the social Darwinist belief that the darker races couldn't learn.

One of the most important jobs, necessary to prove that God's Word was true when it said all of humanity came from one blood, was the work of the translators. John Fryer played a pivotal role, not only in translating the Bible into the Chinese language, but "in 28 years he translated more than 170 titles, from textbooks in mathematics, physics, and chemistry, to popular books on history, political institutions, and other aspects of Western Civilization."¹⁰⁸ Fryer would also translate textbooks on hydraulics, electricity, gases, heat, and thermodynamics. Chinese libraries would also be democratized. In the past, they were reserved for the higher classes, but missionaries would push for them to be more accessible to the general population.

William Carey, the great missionary to India, also tried to encourage learning. He was involved in printing an Indian dictionary and an Indian Bible (translated into dozens of Indian dialects), both of which are to be expected as part of the missions ministry, but he also honored the Indian people by printing Indian literature with his precious printing press.

This work of translation went on around the world. In the early church, the Tower of Babel might have been reversed through the speaking of tongues, but now it was being reversed through the efforts of an army of translators. The missionaries would carry on the Pentecostal miracle, under very difficult conditions, to bridge the gap between religion, race, class, and tongue—in the name of Jesus.

Nelson Mandela, in his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, explained how he benefited from the work of missionaries. He attended the University College of Fort Hare, a Methodist missionary school, and said it was . . . :

. . . the only residential center of higher education for blacks in South Africa. Fort Hare was more than that: it was a beacon for African scholars from all over Southern

¹⁰⁷ "Christian Universities in China," http://www1.chinaculture.org/library/2008-02/04/content_26029.htm (accessed 02/03/2009).

¹⁰⁸ Jing Liao, "The Contributions of Nineteenth Century Christian Missionaries to Chinese Library Reform." Project MUSE, University of Texas Press "Libraries and Culture" http://muse.jhu.edu/demo/libraries_and_culture/v041.3liao.html (accessed 02/08/2009).

Central and Eastern Africa. For a young black South African like myself, it was Oxford and Cambridge and Harvard and Yale, all rolled into one.¹⁰⁹

Mandela describes the accusations against the colleges for being “colonialist,” yet explains how this was an unfair accusation:

Fort Hare, like Clarkebury and Healdtown, was a missionary college. We were exhorted to obey God, respect the political authorities, and be grateful for the educational opportunities afforded to us by the church and the government. These schools have often been criticized for being colonialist in their attitudes and practices. Yet even with such attitudes, I believe their benefits outweighed their disadvantages. The missionaries built and ran schools when the government was unwilling or unable to do so. The learning environment of the missionary schools, while often morally rigid, was far more open than the racist principles underlying government schools.¹¹⁰

Mandela said that, “Fort Hare was both home and incubator of some of the greatest African scholars that continent has ever known.”¹¹¹ This was possible because of the work of evangelical missionaries and their commitment to the belief in the brotherhood of the races.

Another evangelical who stands out as a hero in history is David Trumbull, a missionary to Chile who worked to defend mixed marriages. He said the prohibition against being able to wed people of two different races led to “untold measures of shame, sorrow, and pain.”¹¹² The law guaranteeing the state to grant bi-racial marriages was passed in 1884. When Trumbull died in 1889, the Valparaiso newspaper, *El Heraldo*, reported:

It was a complete revolution that which he forged in our country; he himself was a proper revolutionary, and even before his life ended he couldn't walk through our streets without being greeted by everyone with shows of respect, love, and appreciation by all for being a good man, in all sense of the word.¹¹³

In Valparaiso, the church and school he started are still thriving. His tomb reads:

This country has a gifted and faithful minister and friend. He was honoured and loved by foreign residents on this coast. In his public life he was the counselor and statesman, the supporter of the poor and the consoler of the afflicted. In memory of his permanent services, fidelity, charity, and sympathy.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela* (New York: Little, Brown, and Co., 1995), 43.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Annie Bacher, “David Trumbull: A Yankee Reformer in Chile,” *The Argentina Independent*, May 27, 2015. <http://www.argentinaindependent.com/life-style/expat-life-style/david-trumbull-a-yankee-reformer-in-chile/> (Accessed 09/24/2017).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Trumbull was another evangelical missionary who fought against racism. He was ahead of his time. But he didn't gain his view on the brotherhood of humanity from philosophy, science, or reason. He got his views from the Bible, which he loved so much that he was willing to sacrifice his own comfort and safety and reputation in order to go far away to another land and prove that it was true.

Were Missionaries Destroyers of Cultures?

The other argument against missionaries is that they are guilty of destroying the cultures and religions of the native peoples. David Frawley, writing on the website www.religionislies.com made this point:

Missionary activity always holds an implicit psychological violence, however discreetly it is conducted. It is aimed at turning the minds and hearts of people away from their native religion to one that is generally unsympathetic and hostile to it . . . missionary activity and conversion, therefore, is not about freedom of religion.¹¹⁵

Implicit in this argument is that the indigenous religion and culture were good, and that the savage was "noble" (as the Enlightenment philosopher Rousseau argued), but this was far from the reality. As the great church historian William Bainton explains:

Unquestionably, the missionaries have sought to introduce whatever they deemed to be good in their own culture; medicine, sanitation, education, transportation, and technology, especially in agriculture. As for native customs, of course missionaries have opposed suttee, the burning of widows, in India. This the British government suppressed [with pressure from Wilberforce]. They have opposed child murder, prostitution, polygamy, cannibalism, and headhunting, but native literature, native drama, native music, native architecture, they have sought to learn, conserve, and revive.¹¹⁶

Efforts to support this assertion are prolific in missionary testimonies. The missionaries tried to stop those things that were horrible and that victimized people. For example, at a debate between Dinesh D'souza and Christopher Hitchens, a man from Tonga stood up to say that he would have had Hitchens for supper if had visited the island 100 years ago, but missionaries brought the gospel and cannibalism stopped.¹¹⁷

In 1830, the first European missionary, John Williams, of the London Missionary Society, arrived on the Samoan Islands. He was able to make converts and, as a result, the practice of polygamy and widow strangling stopped. These new converts spread the Good News to the other islands, including Anaiteum. In 1848, missionaries were able to settle there and build on the work started on Samoa. The London Missionary Society reported the great

¹¹⁵ David Frawley, "Bush Sponsored Evangelism of India—II," News Today, Feb. 7, 2007, <http://www.newstodaynet.com/2007sud/Feb07/222207.htm> (Accessed 02/04/2009).

¹¹⁶ Roland H. Bainton, *Christendom: A Short History of Christianity and Its Impact on Western Civilization* (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1966), 140.

¹¹⁷ Christopher Hitchens and Dinesh D'Souza, "Is Christianity the Problem?" Debate, The King's College, Oct. 27, 2007, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j3f8b1wdXkU> (Accessed 02/07/2009).

results of their work on Samoa and hoped for the same kinds of results on Anaiteum. This is their report:

In 1856, out of a population of 4,000 Samoans, only 200 or 300 remained heathens. Schools were established all over the island, under the management of native teachers; large chapels were erected at the two principal stations; and boarding houses were attached to the dwellings of the missionaries. The rapid improvement of the character of the people, their goodwill, their quickness in learning to read and write, and willingness to adopt the social habits of their instructors, are so many facts which call for thankfulness in themselves, and give pledges of hope for the future of other islands . . . ¹¹⁸

The Samoans now recognize the work of John Williams, saying on the website of the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office that “he and his followers had a profound impact on the Samoans and their culture.”¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, Williams would travel to another island (Erromango) to share the gospel, but that island would not be as friendly . . . and he would be eaten by cannibals.

The official website of the country of Fiji (www.fijihighcommission.org) said this about the influence of missionaries:

Cannibalism practiced in Fiji at that time quickly disappeared as missionaries gained influence. When Ratu Seru Cakobau [a tribal war lord and cannibal] accepted Christianity in 1854, the rest of the country soon followed and tribal warfare came to an end.¹²⁰

Isaac Taylor Headland, a missionary who spent 20 years in China, explained in his book, *By-products of Missions*, that advances in science and medicine were a result of the ministry of missionaries. He said that in the non-Christian world there were no dentists or tooth fillings, and that clean water, especially, was a by-product of the gospel. The introduction of wells was especially exciting to island peoples who always had to collect rain water in the past.

Not only did missionaries set people free from practices that were harmful to the people, and bless them with healthy practices, they set them free from the bondage of dark and false religions. Bishop Selwyn, of the London Missionary Society, who went to the Melanesians in 1842, described their horrible spiritual condition:

They have a vague dread of the powers of nature, and a defined one of the priests, who have such power over them that if they curse them, the victims will sometimes at once go home and die of terror. In some islands sharks, crocodiles, and serpents—fierce and destroying creatures—receive a species of worship; and a

¹¹⁸ “The Island Mission: Being a History of the Melanesian Mission from Its Commencement” Project Canterbury, http://anglicanhistory.org/oceania/island_mission1869/01.html (Accessed 02/08/2009).

¹¹⁹ “History,” American Samoan Historic Preservation Office, <http://www.ashpo.org/history.htm> (Accessed 02/08/2009).

¹²⁰ “About Fiji: History,” Fiji High Commission to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, <http://www.fijihighcommission.org.uk/about-1.htm> (Accessed 02/08/2009).

vague dread of ghosts seems to be the only idea in many islands bearing any resemblance to the belief in the immortality of the soul.¹²¹

The precious missionaries went out into the world with the Good News of Jesus and set people such as the Melanesians free from their fears and finally brought them peace and rest.

Missionaries Were Lights in the Darkness

I don't want to close this chapter without sharing the stories of some of my favorite missionaries. Their stories should be movies!

On the Pacific Island of Vanuatu (once known as New Hebrides), Scottish missionary John G. Paton and his wife entered into very difficult circumstances. Surrounded by cannibals, the fear was overwhelming. Shortly after reaching the island, Paton's wife gave birth and then died several days later due to fever. Shortly after that, the baby died. He had to bury her and the baby with his own hands. The grief and loneliness caused by her loss was almost too much for him to bear. His missionary partner also died of fear and stress shortly after reaching the island, so he was alone.

The island natives warred amongst themselves, and the victors would eat the losers and their families. Yet for some reason, the cannibals were unable to kill the lone missionary. Many times they would threaten him, throw spears and axes at him, point muskets at him, or chase him through the jungle, to no avail. Paton described how he survived:

Life in such circumstances led me to cling very near to the Lord Jesus. With my trembling hand clasped in the hand once nailed on Calvary, and now swaying the scepter of the universe, calmness and peace abode in my soul. Trials and hairbreadth escapes strengthened my faith and seemed only to nerve me for more to follow.

Without that abiding consciousness of the presence and power of my dear Lord and Saviour, nothing else in all the world could have preserved me from losing my reason and perishing miserably. His words, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," became very real to me and I felt His supporting power. [Those words are inscribed on his tombstone.] I had my nearest and dearest glimpses of the face and smile of my blessed Lord in those dread moments when musket, club, or spear was being leveled at my life.¹²²

Paton also fought against the practice of "blackbirding." Blackbirding ships would travel through the Pacific and coerce, trick, or even kidnap island natives to go Fiji or Queensland, Australia to work on sugar cane plantations that were in need of laborers. He's just another example of an evangelical Christian who fought for the rights of indigenous peoples.

¹²¹ "The Island Mission," Project Canterbury.

¹²² "John G. Paton: Apostle of Christ to the Cannibals," Wholesome Words, <http://www.wholesomewords.org/missions.biopaton.html> (Accessed 02/08/2009).

Finally, I'd like to share the amazing story of another Scottish missionary as it was shared in the wonderful book by the late Dr. James Kennedy, *What if Jesus Had Never Been Born?*:

The work of William Carey is well known, as is that of David Livingstone and Hudson Taylor. But for every one of these famous missionaries of the last two centuries there are thousands of lesser-known lights who carried the Gospel to those who previously lived in darkness . . . I will tell you of only one, Mary Slessor of Calabar (1848-1915), who was from Scotland.

She was converted in her teens, and after doing mission work in the slums of Dundee, she felt the call of God to serve as a missionary to Africa. In 1876 she left for Nigeria.

She learned that beyond Okoyong, deeper in the heart of Africa, around Calabar, was an area in which lived 4 million savages so ferocious, so fierce, that even the government soldiers feared to penetrate the land. These 4 million cannibals were so degraded, their customs so vile, that it stretches the imagination to consider the types of things they did.

Witchcraft and drunkenness were rampant. The savages worshiped fetishes; they murdered twins; they turned the mother of twins out into the jungle to be devoured by beasts, because they believed twins were brought about by a conjunction with a demon. Almost half the population was slaves. When a man died, they would eat fifty slaves; twenty-five more would have their hands tied behind them and their heads would be cut off. Unmarried women were chattel. They could be raped, tortured, or murdered at will. It was an incredible degradation, especially for women. Children were considered to be no better than animals, often simply left to die.

Mary's heart was touched by the plight of twins always left to die or ground to pieces in a pot. She would snatch them up and take them in. At first the people were astonished, because they believed that anybody who touched a twin would die, but Mary didn't die. So she gathered around her over the years many of these young "bairns" as she called them, to nurture them.

In incredible ways, by her faith in God, in her prayer, her winning countenance, the love she demonstrated, she was accepted. People milled around her. They had never seen a white person before. They touched her skin.

She began to teach them about the Son of God who had loved them enough to die for their sins. Astonishingly, God opened up their hearts. They became very willing to hear. One after another, the chiefs of the various villages yielded their lives to Christ. One after another the tremendously horrible customs plaguing these people for years were abolished; the murder of twins, infanticide, the slaughter of wives and slaves, the trial by poisoning and boiling oil, and all other terrible customs.

Perpetual warfare among the different tribes had continued for innumerable centuries, but when she would hear of a tribe of warriors going out to attack another

tribe, Mary would run barefoot through the jungle, where there were poisonous snakes and plants. She would head them off, standing in front of a whole host of armed cannibals with outstretched arms to demand that they stop. They did. Through her ministry, thousands from the Ibo tribe became Christians and abandoned their degrading ways. Without Jesus Christ, there would have never been a Mary Slessor of Calabar.¹²³

This is just one of the amazing stories of courage and sacrifice that evangelical, Bible-believing Christians have as their heritage. These stories reveal the power to overcome evil—a power that only accompanies the gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, if somebody tries claim that missionaries were abusive to indigenous peoples, remember that *evangelical* missionaries were just one of many groups who went out into the world, but of the explorers, traders, Catholic conquistadors, and social Darwinists, only Bible-believing Christians--who opposed the popular science of the day—went out to bless indigenous peoples, rather than to use and abuse them.

¹²³ James D. Kennedy, *What If Jesus Had Never Been Born?: The Positive Impacts of Christianity in History* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2001), 167-169.

Nazism

The Lie:

Christians supported Nazism and even Hitler was a Christian.

The Truth:

Hitler did not serve the Christian God and Bible-believing Christians of the “Confessing Church” formed the only internal organized opposition to Hitler and Nazism.

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

Unfortunately, at the same time evangelicals were going out into the world to serve as missionaries, bringing the Good News to people of all tribes and nations, at Tübingen University in Germany, one of the most destructive movements to ever come against the Bible would be birthed. A movement, known as the “historical critical movement” would spread like a wildfire across the world and wherever advances in science, history, and archaeology seemed to conflict with the biblical record, many Christians would concede to the “facts” and toss aside the Bible. This was the beginning of modern liberal theology.

Historical Criticism

Before the historical critical movement, Francis Bacon’s scientific method was traditionally applied to the study of the natural world. The empirical pursuit of truth in areas such as biology, chemistry, and geology had long been established, but the German intelligentsia thought they could apply the same standards and methods of research to the study of history or sociology. This was how the term “social sciences” came into being.

Since science led to the discovery of empirical reality, if scientific methods could be applied to the study of history, for example, the truth of history would be more likely to be found. Thus, historian Leopold von Ranke claimed they were more likely to uncover history “as it really was” in a scientific sense. Archaeology grew in importance, records were combed, artifacts were gathered, and museums were created to house their discoveries.

This method of discovering historical truth would even be applied to theology. Frederic Schleiermacher and other scholars would now employ “scientific” methods to try to

determine the truthfulness of the Bible. Instead of believing and trusting in the content of the Bible, the historical critical movement would expose the scriptures to the scrutiny of the new scientific methods.

The historicist concept of discovering history “as it really was” would now be applied to the biblical text, each verse being tested in a way that only that which could be proven historically would be accepted as the truth. No longer was the Bible to be trusted simply because of its sacred nature, instead, empirical science was the plumb line that the Bible was to be measured against, so if portions of the biblical text couldn’t be proven through archaeology, or confirmed by other ancient texts, for example, then the authenticity of that portion of the Bible would come into question.

Alister McGrath, the church historian, explained how this led to the historical critics’ abandonment of the Word as a source of authority:

Liberalism’s program required a significant degree of flexibility in relation to traditional Christian theology. Its leading writers argued that **reconstruction of belief** (emphasis mine) was essential if Christianity were to remain a serious intellectual option in the modern world. For this reason, they demanded a degree of freedom in relation to the doctrinal inheritance of Christianity on one hand, and traditional methods of biblical interpretation on the other. Where traditional ways of interpreting Scripture, **or traditional beliefs, seemed to be compromised by developments in human knowledge, it was imperative that they should be discarded or reinterpreted to bring them into line with what was known in the world** (emphasis mine).¹²⁴

Because of the popularity of Darwinian evolution, in particular, many Christians felt they had to synthesize the faith with modern knowledge. Since traditional biblical doctrines (such as the belief in six days of creation) were now outmoded, Christianity could no longer be looked at as a religion of truth; it had to be reinterpreted to become a religion of human experience whose ethical teachings would be used to propel humanity forward towards progress and prosperity.

Two of the Tübingen theologians who had the most influence were Ludwig Feuerbach and David F. Strauss. Strauss argued in his *Life of Jesus* that the supernatural elements of the Gospel were myths and that Jesus was just a good teacher. Feuerbach taught that God is merely an expression of the mind of man. In other words, *we created God* out of our own desires, wants, dreams, and wishes of what we wanted him to be.

¹²⁴ Alister McGrath, *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003), 232.

Basil Malof and Leo Tolstoy

Basil Malof, an evangelist to Russia at the end of the nineteenth century, met Leo Tolstoy, the author of the great classics, *War and Peace*, and *Anna Karenina*, and explained the sad impact that the new German theology had on the great author, who spent his entire adult life struggling with his faith:

Under the influence of the writings of some German “New Theology” or modernistic writers of the Fifties and Sixties of the nineteenth century, Tolstoy had come to reject the doctrine of atonement by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, inspiration of the Bible and other fundamental evangelical doctrines, and when Pastor Malof referred to the New Testament the novelist said, “My New Testament is much shorter than yours. I reject a great deal of that which you accept.” In fact, he had compiled a New Testament of his own, cutting out all the miracles and the resurrection of Christ. “By what authority?” demanded Pastor Malof. “Ah!” replied Tolstoy, “by the authority of my own reason.”¹²⁵

In the *Gospel in Brief*, Tolstoy explained that the only words in the Bible he could trust were the words of Jesus. All the other words in the Bible had a pall of doubt cast over their authenticity. This view could have come from the historical critic, David F. Strauss, and it haunted Tolstoy his whole life. He was tossed about by the influences of philosophy, experience, reason, historical criticism, and the religious ritualism found in the Russian Orthodox Church.

At times he wished he wasn't educated and could have the simple faith of a peasant. He longed for God, and felt joy when he simply acknowledged that He was real, but then because of what he learned from liberal theologians he would go back into despair:

Not twice or three times, but tens and hundreds of times, I reached those conditions, first of joy and animation, and then of despair and consciousness of the impossibility of living. I remember that it was in early spring: I was alone in the wood listening to its sounds. I listened and thought ever of the same thing, as I had constantly done during those last three years. I was again seeking God.

“Very well, there is no God,” said I to myself; “there is no one who is not my imagination but a reality like my whole life. He does not exist, and no miracles can prove his existence, because the miracle would be my imagination, besides being irrational.”

¹²⁵ Oswald A. Blumit and Oswald J. Smith. *Sentenced to Siberia: The Story of the Ministry, Persecution, Imprisonment and God's Wonderful Deliverance of Pastor Basil A. Malof, Russian Missionary*, 6th ed. (Wheaton, IL: Mayflower Publishers, 1943), 73-74.

“But my perception of God, of him whom I seek,” I asked myself, “where has that perception come from?” And again, at this thought the glad waves of life rose within me. All that was around me came to life and received a meaning. But my joy did not last long. My mind continued its work.

“The conception of God is not God,” said I to myself. “The conception is what takes place within me. The conception of God is something I can evoke or can refrain from evoking in myself. That is not what I seek. I seek that without which there can be no life.” And again, all around me and within me began to die, and again I wished to kill myself.¹²⁶

Karl Marx was also influenced by Strauss and Feuerbach. He rejected Christianity because of Feuerbach’s view that humanity created God out of their own mind. Future Marxists would use these beliefs to discredit and persecute believers in the communist world.

Richard Wurmbrand, founder of Voice of the Martyrs, says this was the precise argument used against him while he was in a communist prison. Describing attempts to brainwash him, he says that a communist official began to “attack religion. Christ, he said, was a fantasy invented by the apostles to delude slaves into hopes of freedom in paradise.”¹²⁷ This could have been Feuerbach speaking.

Pastor Malof prophetically saw a link between sound doctrine and a good society, and that spiritual rebellion ultimately led to political rebellion:

Here was noticeable the destructive results of the poison of the early German modernistic teachings upon the Russian mind which later with such terrible results spread in the theological schools and universities of Great Britain and America. The New Theology . . . like a terrible octopus of hell spread its poisonous tentacles over the thinking of . . . students and professors and preachers. Modernism in religion is the same revolutionary process as bolshevism and anarchy in politics. No more does the infallible and holy God decide, but the fallible human reason. Modernism, just as communism, is an uprising against authority.¹²⁸

The German church was compromised by the claims of the historical critics. The Word of God was no longer trustworthy as a source of truth. Now that the scriptures seemed to have been discredited, there were few authoritative voices that could rise up against the false teachings of the philosophers, scientists, and politicians. The church would now

¹²⁶ Ibid, 233.

¹²⁷ Richard Wurmbrand, *In God’s Underground*, ed. Charles Foley (Greenwich, CT: Fawcett Publications, 1968), 239.

¹²⁸ Oswald A. Blumit, *Sentenced to Siberia*, 75.

succumb to Utopian optimism, arrogant philosophy and/or any ideology that had the stamp of scientific approval.

Much of the church had fallen away--and all of this happened in the same place that Luther started the Protestant Reformation! Since there was no plumb line for truth in many of the German churches, a monstrous blob of ideology began to take shape which would find a resting place in the mind of a self-righteous young man with great skills as an orator—Adolf Hitler.

Hegel

Have you ever tried to figure out what the Nazis actually believed? Most people know that Hitler was an anti-Semite, but how did this view develop? Why was a whole nation willing to go along with Hitler's madness? I don't think the horrors of the 20th century can be understood without understanding the philosophy of Hegel, one of Germany's most influential philosophers.

Wilhelm Georg Hegel influenced both Nazi and communist ideology. Neither of these political views adopted Hegel's philosophy in whole, but each of them was influenced by a portion of his thought. Marx incorporated the views of the "Left Hegelians," while Hitler incorporated the "Right Hegelian" views.

Hegel's philosophy developed at a time when there was a backlash against deism and the Enlightenment philosophers. After the failure of the French Revolution, which was a secular protest against the *ancien regime* of the church/state union, (and ended in mob rule and the guillotine), many philosophers were looking for an alternative answer to the question of how to design a happy society.

Many young thinkers thought they might be able to come up with the answer. For example, Friedrich Schlegel thought that some sort of synthesis of thought was the answer, so he united Goethe and Fichte. Another person tried to unite Kant and Spinoza. Another idea they had was to unite the best of ancient (classical Greek) and modern life.

Hegel decided that he would try to unite the philosophy of Immanuel Kant with the philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder. He chose Immanuel Kant because his "categorical imperative," as described in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*, argued that morality had to be separated from pleasure. It must be motivated purely by duty, and any action taken must be based on reason alone.

He also chose Herder, who had developed a view that cultures were an expression of God, and that God was only able to express himself through communities, rather than individuals. Each nation had a "Volksgeist" (or national spirit) that inspires its people. For example, the Athenians of Greece produced the Parthenon, democracy, and great philosophers. The Egyptian community produced the pyramids, hieroglyphics, and

mummification. Each society had a different personality or way of expressing themselves, which Herder would claim was that community's expression of God in the physical realm, and no other community could replace the other's contribution.

Hegel's Utopia (his ideal state) was a community made up of individuals whose morality has been developed through the use of reason, and whose existence was merely part of an organic whole through which God was expressing himself. (If you would like to understand more about Hegel's philosophy, you can visit my website at <https://thefaithfulchurch.com/2014/03/21/hegels-philosophy-of-history/>) Incidentally, Hegel also adopted Nietzsche's idea of "ubermensch"—a belief that some people were types of supermen who could come on the world scene and make a heroic impact.

The biggest complaint Marx had against Hegel was that it was merely theory. He believed philosophy had to become practice, not just a contemplation of ideas. Perhaps this is why Marx's tombstone is engraved with the phrase: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point, however, is to *change* it."

Marx believed he could truly design Hegel's "ideal state," but because he rejected God, he didn't believe in Herder's Volksgeist . . . but he did adopt the Nietzschean/Hegelian idea of the "superman." Marx thought this man was an engineer who could look at society in the same way that a master builder looked at a blueprint.

Hitler believed in the "ideal state" also, but he *accepted* Herder's idea of "Volksgeist." Hitler didn't reject God, but his idea of God would be foreign to most of us. Perhaps it's easier to understand this paragraph from *Mein Kampf* in light of an understanding of Herder's philosophy:

Everybody who has the right kind of feeling for his country is solemnly bound, each within his own denomination to see to it that he is not constantly talking about the will of God, merely from the lips, but that in fact he fulfills the will of God and **does not allow God's handiwork to be debased** (emphasis mine). For it was by the will of God that men were made of a certain bodily shape, were given their natures and their faculties. **Whoever destroys His work wages war against God's creation and God's will** (emphasis mine).¹²⁹

Hitler believed in Herder's view that each culture was the expression of God on earth, therefore if any culture was corrupted by outside influences, God's "handiwork" was being "debased" and the perpetrators were actually waging war against God. This, Hitler believed, was what the Jews were doing because they were dispersed among all the nations of the

¹²⁹ Adolph Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, Project Gutenberg, Australia, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200601.tt> (accessed 02/08/2009).

earth in 70 CE as a judgment for rejecting Jesus. (Unfortunately, Martin Luther's writings about the Jews encouraged this view.)

Social Darwinism

Social Darwinism (as discussed in the last chapter) would provide one scientific basis for Hitler's racism, but it would be combined with another "scientific" theory of race put forth by the French social theorist Joseph-Arthur Gobineau, whose "Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races" claimed that there was a hierarchy of the races, each with very different qualities and characteristics. This idea fit in well with Herder's "expressivism," since each race and culture could still be an expression of God. But in keeping with the science of social Darwinism, that is, that the darker races were less evolved than the lighter races, Hitler also adopted Gobineau's idea that the most developed and creative race is the white race, and the most highly developed of the white races were the "Aryans." He even called them the "master race."

The Hindu scriptures teach that the highest castes are the descendants of the Aryans, who refused to mix their blood with racial inferiors. Gobineau developed a theory which claimed that there was once a great migration of the Aryans to the Germanic lands. This led Hitler to believe that the Aryans were the founders of German culture (which included a peasant lifestyle, the Reformation, and great scientists and philosophers). He thought the Aryan Volksggeist contributed to the great creativity of German art, music, literature, philosophy, and political thought. (He even adopted the Hindu swastika as his political symbol.)

The Jews, on the other hand, were destroyers of culture since they held on to their own traditions and were interjected into other nations. To Hitler, good and evil were determined by whether or not the highest image of God was preserved through individual cultures. He was very concerned that the German culture be kept pure. Therefore, the worst sin against God was that of racial interbreeding. Perhaps this paragraph in *Mein Kampf* is easier to understand now:

In this part of the world, human culture and civilization are inextricably bound up with the presence of the Aryan element. If it died out or went under, the black veil of a cultureless period would once again descend upon this globe. To anyone who views the world through nationalist [Volkisch] eyes, any breach in the existence of human civilization effected by the race which maintains it, would appear in the light of the most accursed of crimes. **Whoever dares lay his hand on the most noble image of God is sinning against the kindly Creator of that marvel and lending a hand in his own expulsion from paradise** (emphasis mine).¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Adolph Hitler, *My Battle* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, Co., 1998), 154.

Hitler also dabbled in other popular ideas from his day. One of them was a theory adopted by the musical composer Wagner and his English son-in-law H.S. Chamberlain, whose *Foundations of the Nineteenth Century* had a great influence on Hitler and Nazi ideology. Chamberlain argued that the foundation for all the great achievements of the nineteenth century (in economics, science, and technology) were the work of the Aryan (now German) race.

In contrast to the Aryans, Hitler believed (as a result of the influence of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*), that the Jews were involved in a conspiracy to take over the world through the press and the world's economies. The Jews became the scapegoat, not only for the defeat of Germany in World War I, but for the humiliation at Versailles (the Germans were blamed for beginning the war and commanded to make restitution to the other nations) because, according to Hitler's beliefs, both Jewish *capitalists* and Jewish *communists* were in a conspiracy to destroy the German nation.

Hitler adopted the Nietzschean/Hegelian view of the superman also. He believed God was working through the "hero" to bring about progress, and that only the superman could do what was best for the German people. (Dictatorship, he reasoned, was necessary because if there was a democracy, and Jews were given the right to vote, they would be a destructive and undermining force, like a parasite or a leach, in the political process.)

Hitler was influenced by science and philosophy more than he was by any biblical doctrines. His ideology was a cobbled-together hodge-podge of ideas, cut and pasted into a monstrous whole. He held certain cultural viewpoints about God, but Herder's "expressivism" was a human construct, not a Christian one. And his beliefs on race, gathered from popular scientific views, had no foundation in Christian orthodoxy.

Perhaps the genius of Hitler was his ability to reach the German people through the Hegelian-like attempt to unify Utopian idealism and science. His assertion that the Germans deserved "lebensraum" (living space) to further the Aryan race because the German culture was the highest expression of God on earth, was easily blended with nineteenth century scientific views on racial superiority. Hitler was merely immersed in the popular philosophical and scientific thoughts of his day.¹³¹

His words fell on ears that were accepting of his views because the German people had heard them in their universities, their churches, and their popular culture, and due to the historical critical movement, there was no longer any foundation of truth, so the German

¹³¹ According to Peter Calvocoressi and Guy Wint, authors of the book *Total War: Causes and Courses of the Second World War* (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 7, Hitler "was employed in the Press and News Section of the army headquarters in Munich" and "was appointed a *Bildungsoffizier* (a cultural instructor or ideological education officer)." That might explain why Hitler knew so much about Hegelian philosophy, even though he was uneducated.

people were spiritually compromised and easily given over to strong delusion. Destruction and suffering followed quickly after that.

The Confessing Church

Members of the Confessing Church, led by Martin Niemoller (founder of the Pastors' Emergency League), Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Karl Barth, joined together to write the *Theological Declaration of Barmen: An Appeal to the Evangelical Congregations and Christians in Germany*. Written in May of 1934, they saw far ahead of time that Germany was heading toward disaster and tried to warn Christians to not be a part of it. They encouraged Bible-believers and said that since the church was taking their "stand upon Scripture, then let no fear or temptation keep you from treading with us the path of faith and obedience to the Word of God."¹³²

The signers of the *Barmen Declaration* opposed the "German Christians of the present Reich government." They declared that "Jesus was the way, the truth, and the life," and they rejected . . .

. . . the false doctrine, as though the church could and would have to acknowledge as a source of its proclamation, **apart from and besides this one Word of God** (emphasis mine), still other events and powers, figures and truths, as God's revelation.¹³³

Theirs was a declaration of faithfulness to the Word of God, rather than to philosophy or men. They also argued that the church was not an organ of the state, that they weren't willing to submit to anyone other than Jesus as their Lord, and that the church wasn't subject to any prevailing ideologies, but instead had a timeless message of "faith, hope, and love."

All three of the writers suffered as a result of their stand. Martin Niemoller was imprisoned in Nazi concentration camps for seven years and narrowly escaped execution. Dietrich Bonhoeffer died in a concentration camp, and Karl Barth was arrested by the Nazis and sent back to his home country of Switzerland.

In the *Barmen Declaration* they reminded their flocks that Jesus would never leave them, nor forsake them. Therefore, they encouraged their followers with the words of Jesus:

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—
Luke 12:32, KJV

¹³² Arthur C. Cochrane, "The Theological Declaration of Barmen," *The Church's Confession Under Hitler* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 237-242.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

They were able to be heroic because they were committed to something higher than themselves and they had a hope for a future beyond this world.

There were many individual heroes who acted valiantly during the Nazi era. Corrie ten Boom and her family hid Jews in their home and, as a result, spent time at Ravensbruck concentration camp (where her sister died and she only escaped due to an administrative mistake). Pastor Von Bodelschwing, head of the charitable community at Bethel-Bielefeld “barred with his body the efforts of the Nazis to remove deformed children from his institution in order to exterminate them.”¹³⁴

Hans and Sophie Scholl, calling themselves the “White Rose,” opposed the Nazi regime in Munich. Brother and sister, both in college, they were both inspired by their faith to oppose Hitler’s tyranny. They distributed leaflets which read:

Everywhere and at all times of greatest trial men have appeared, prophets and saints who cherished their freedom, who preached one true God and who with His help brought the people to a reversal of their downward course. Man is free, to be sure, but without the true God he is defenseless against the principle of evil . . . We must attack evil where it is strongest, and it is strongest in the power of Hitler . . . we will not be silent. We are your bad conscience. The White Rose will not leave you in peace.¹³⁵

Hans and Sophie were arrested, interrogated, and beheaded for opposing the Nazis. But they were faithful to God and his Word . . . as were countless other believers. Even people who had no outward expression of faith, such as Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler, were heroic in their kindness to the Jews, but most of the religious community failed and went along with Nazi ideology. They had no defense. They were drowning in the quicksand of compromise with no solid doctrine on which they were willing to stand.

For skeptics to insist that Hitler was a Christian because he mentions Herder’s conception of God, or because liberal churches were infused with Nazi symbolism, is a shallow understanding of history. Skeptics such as Sam Harris,¹³⁶ or even the liberal Christian, Chris Hedges,¹³⁷ imply that fundamentalist Christians were purveyors of fascism and Nazism, but this is an absolute perversion of the truth.

Nazism was brought about by *leaving* the fundamentals of the faith—and those members of the faithful church who believed that the Bible was the Word of God, even if it cost them

¹³⁴ Robert Ellsberg, *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time* (New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 2005), 205.

¹³⁵ Robert Ellsberg, *All Saints*, 88.

¹³⁶ Sam Harris, *Letter to a Christian Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006).

¹³⁷ Chris Hedges, *American Fascists: The Christian Right and the War on America* (New York: Free Press, 2007).

their life, formed the only internally organized opposition to Adolph Hitler and his evil Nazi regime.

Continuing the Legacy of the Faithful Church

After reflecting upon the history of the faithful church, there are two things that I think are absolutely necessary for its powerful and amazing legacy to continue:

1. We must preach the true gospel.
2. We must keep the gospel pure.

Part 1: The True Gospel

One of the main elements to understanding the true gospel is to realize that humanity is under the wrath of a just God. Richard Dawkins, the famous atheist, doesn't seem to understand the gospel, so he describes God in this way:

The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it, a petty, unjust, unforgiving control freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser, a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.¹³⁸

Because of statements like this, and the inability to formulate a strong response, some Christians have decided to cave in, and concede to the atheist description of the Old Testament God as a "moral monster"¹³⁹ who supports genocide, racism, misogyny, and slavery.

But let's think about this! If the church concedes to this narrative, then we will also lose Jesus, because he said, "*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*" (John 14:9b, KJV).

Something is amiss here! Is God the Father a bloodthirsty, cruel brute, while the Son is a new, more hip, compassionate God?

Perish the thought!

¹³⁸ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2008), 51.

¹³⁹ Andy Stanley, *Aftermath: Part One, Stand Alone*, April 21, 2018. <https://youtu.be/jmoTAtH3zus>.

The Father, Son, and Spirit are ONE. They are the same in heart, mind, and purpose. So why does there seem to be a distinction between the Old Testament and the New Testament?

The main reason there's a difference is because of the blood of Jesus.

Sin angers God. This is because sin hurts people. It causes harm and injustice when we lie, covet, steal, cheat, and murder. The scriptures say that *"the wages of sin is death"* (Rom. 6:20, KJV) and God demanded that blood be shed as a consequence for sin because *"the life of the flesh is in the blood"* (Lev. 17:11, KJV). For a time, under the Old Testament, animal blood was shed as a part of the law.

Why would God demand something that seems so harsh and archaic? Is he a bloody overlord with "gnarled hands" who wants to "drag us back to the catacombs and the reeking altars and the guilty pleasures of subjection and abjection"¹⁴⁰ (as Christopher Hitchens describes with his usual flair)?

No!

The plan of God demanded a blood sacrifice because it was the only way he could pay for the sin himself!

Would a just judge place the penalty on another who was innocent? No. This is why Jesus is now the one who will judge:

For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son. –John 5:22, KJV

In his mercy and love he took upon himself the punishment that the universal justice system had established for our sin. In Christ, mercy and truth have met together and justice and peace have kissed (Ps. 85:10).

Yet why didn't Jesus just immediately come to the world and shed his blood? Why did he set up a temporary system instead? Christopher Hitchens looked upon this fact as evidence of God's injustice and passive disregard for the condition of humanity:

Famine, struggle, bitterness, war, suffering, misery, all of that for 98,000 years. Heaven watches this with complete indifference. And then 2000 years ago, thinks "That's enough of that. It's time to intervene."¹⁴¹

¹⁴⁰ Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (New York: Twelve, 2007), 283.

¹⁴¹ Christopher Hitchens, "Christopher Hitchens on the Indifference of Heaven" *Hitch Archive*, published Feb. 4, 2016. <https://youtu.be/GGMo927DZmg>.

But I look at this fact as evidence that God wants to reason with humanity. He doesn't demand blind faith. He wants to give proof of his existence through the revelation of the Messiah in the Old Testament.

If somebody claimed he was the savior of the world, how could you trust them? Would signs and wonders convince you that he was who he said he was? Would his words convince you? How would we know that this person was acting in our best interest? How would we know if he was a liar?

Jesus was angry with the scribes and Pharisees because they wanted a sign (rather than the Word) to prove that he was the Messiah. Because the Word wasn't enough, and they needed an extra-biblical indication of his identity, Jesus said, "*a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign*" (Matt. 16:4). Not that Jesus didn't perform miracles, but the true identity of the Messiah can only be known through the Word of God, not through an adulterous [ADD-ULTEROUS] extra-biblical sign.

After all, the scriptures say that the Antichrist will come and claim to be the promised Messiah. He will come in peace (Dan. 8:25). He will perform miracles, signs and wonders (2 Thes. 2:9). He will declare that he is God (2 Thes. 2:4). He will appear to be resurrected from the dead (Rev. 13:3). He will even have his own "prophet" that, like Elijah, will call fire down from heaven (Rev. 13:13). If we didn't know the Old Testament revelation of Jesus, we might receive the Antichrist!

Amazingly, the entire Old Testament is like a road map leading us to Jesus as the Messiah. There are hundreds of supernatural prophecies that reveal where the Messiah would be born (Micah 5:2, Matt. 2:1), how he would die (Psalm 22:16, Luke 23:33), when he would appear (Dan. 9:24-26),¹⁴² where he would be buried (Isa. 53:9, Matt. 27:59-60), and on and on. In God's wisdom, the Messiah didn't just drop out of the sky. He came just as he was prophesied. No other religious figure in the world has supernatural proof of their claims. God's patient plan helps his people to know they can put their trust in Jesus as their Savior.

Not only do the prophets point to Jesus, but the *history* of Israel is another way to identify Jesus as the Messiah. Nearly every story in the Bible has "types and shadows" of Jesus. When I hear sermons about how the Exodus story, or the story of Joseph, represents the gospel, my faith grows! For example, in the Exodus story, the Passover Lamb is a symbol of Jesus, especially as its blood is placed on the doorposts of the houses in the same places that Jesus bled from the wounds in his hands and from the crown of thorns. It was this blood that caused the death angel to "pass over" the home. In the same way, if we are under the blood of Jesus, we are safe from eternal death. Jesus also used a story from the

¹⁴² Diana Lesperance. "Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks," *The Faithful Church*. May 14, 2012, <https://thefaithfulchurch.com/2012/05/14/daniels-prophecy-of-the-70-weeks/>.

history of Israel when he said Jonah's time in the tummy of the whale was a sign that was symbolic of how he would be in the grave for three days (Matt. 12:38-41).

How could so many stories in the Bible—that happened before Jesus was born—point so beautifully to Jesus? If the Bible was not inspired, what writer could have placed so many levels of literary symbolism in the text? As Joseph Parker wrote in *Ecce Deus*, “only a Christ could have conceived of a Christ.”¹⁴³ Yet Richard Dawkins describes the Bible in this way:

To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and ‘improved’ by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly unknown to each other, spanning nine centuries.¹⁴⁴

To me, that just gives the Bible MORE credibility. How can it have such a unified message if it wasn't inspired? And because of the Dead Sea scrolls,¹⁴⁵ discovered by a shepherd boy in 1947, we also know that the biblical text hasn't changed--as Dawkins seems to claim.

Not only did the Old Testament reveal the Savior, it also led us to understand why we *needed* a savior. The old covenant demanded obedience to the law. It was based on an if/then relationship with God. If you obeyed the law, then God would bless you. If you sinned, then God would judge you. (Deuteronomy 28)

Because God gave us free wills, we had to have the freedom to obey or disobey. Unfortunately, all of us disobeyed. All of us sinned. We were unable to keep the law in our own strength and abilities.

As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. – Romans 3:10, KJV

That left all of us in a hopeless condition. We all failed. But God didn't leave us in despair. Every year the Hebrews could offer a blood sacrifice on the day of atonement to appease God's anger at sin. If they followed God's way they would be safe for another year. It was a temporary plan, but in due time it would point us to the true Messiah.

Since Adam and Eve sinned, and God covered them with furs from animals (rather than letting them remain in fig leaves), the message of a blood sacrifice as a covering for sin was passed on to their children. We know this because Cain disobeyed God and offered a

¹⁴³ Josh McDowell, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict, Volume I: Historical Evidences for the Christian Faith* (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life, 1992), 74.

¹⁴⁴ Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (New York: Houghton, Mifflin, Harcourt, 2008), 268.

¹⁴⁵ The oldest known existing Hebrew texts were dated to the 10th century, CE and the Dead Sea scrolls were dated a thousand years earlier. Amazingly, the older scrolls were the same as the newer ones, proving that the transcription of the scriptures over time has been extremely accurate!

vegetable sacrifice, while Abel obeyed and offered the blood sacrifice of a lamb from his flock.

Over time, the message of sacrifice was lost again and God destroyed the whole world, whose thoughts, he said, had become only wicked all the time (Gen. 6:5). Only Noah and his family were preserved, and his first act after getting off the Ark was a blood sacrifice (Gen. 8:20).

Again, at the Tower of Babel, the message of blood sacrifice was corrupted. Nimrod, the rebel, led the people to build a high tower to get to heaven. Just like Cain, he used self-effort to get to God. He promoted a form of oneness and unity to build his tower, but this wasn't pleasing to God, and the people were scattered. All over the world we can still see their high places, and in many instances, there's evidence that human sacrifices took place there.

In the story of Abraham, we see how God stopped the Hebrews from offering human sacrifices. Although the gods of the surrounding nations would demand human sacrifice, Yahweh would use Abraham and Isaac to reveal the true plan of salvation. Abraham traveled to a high place and readied his son for sacrifice, but the angel stopped the knife from being plunged into Isaac and God instead provided a ram caught in the thorns (a picture of the future Messiah who would wear a crown of thorns).

The Canaanites sacrificed little babies in the fire, so they had no proper covering for their sin and were under God's wrath even though he strived with them for four hundred years.

Sometimes even Israel forsook the Lord and suffered under the wrath of God. They had become unfaithful to God by worshiping Baal, even building high altars where they would burn their children. When the Lord sent prophets to warn of God's judgment, the people mocked and rejected them. Because of their failure to obey God and make the commanded blood sacrifices, the Babylonians laid siege to Jerusalem, and in 587 BCE the Jews were exiled to Babylon for 70 years.

When John the Baptist declared, "*Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!*" (John 1:29, ESV)," he was revealing that the law wasn't just a set of barbaric rules; it was another way to identify Jesus as the Messiah. All of those laws concerning the sprinkling and pouring out of animal blood would point to Jesus, but his sacrifice was different in that it was "*one sacrifice for sins forever*" (Heb. 10:12, KJV). Now there would no longer be any need for any kind of blood to be shed. In fact, the blood of Jesus is so powerful to the Father that the wrath of God on the whole world has been appeased—for a time.

And he is the propitiation [appeasement] for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. – 1 John 2:2, KJV

This is the Good News! God is no longer pouring out his wrath on sin. During this period of grace to the nations the Old Testament punishments are no longer in effect. The gospel message begins with the wrath of the God of the Old Testament and the bloody sacrifice required to appease it! We must not set aside the Old Testament message of a vengeful, angry God, or we won't have a true understanding of the gospel!

Why did Jesus Set the Old Covenant Aside to Establish a New Covenant?

When Jesus said, "*This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood,*" (Luke 22:20, ESV) he was changing the way God related to humanity. God's character didn't change, but now his anger for sin is being held back by the precious blood of his son.¹⁴⁶ He no longer demands that an adulterer be stoned, or that disobedient children be put to death. (This is not to say there are no civil penalties for crimes, but *God's* anger is no longer poured out upon sinners, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, or in a worldwide flood. Instead, Romans 13 (ESV) says that the "*governing authorities*" are now the servants who carry out "*God's wrath on the wrongdoer*" for breaking societal laws.)

A day of wrath is coming though! But this time the *Lamb's* anger for sin will be poured out on the world, and only those who are under his blood will be carried away to a place of safety.

And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the **wrath of the Lamb**: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? –Revelation 6:15-17

Do Christians Need to Obey the Law?

Christians are dead to the old if/then system, but the law is still the plumb line against which we are to measure our actions. Jesus never abolished the Old Testament law.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the

¹⁴⁶ "I am the Lord your God. I change not."—Malachi 3:6

least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. – Matthew 5:17-19, NIV

Paul also made it clear that the law is good.

Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. —Romans 7:12, KJV

Trying to live out the law without the power of the Holy Spirit led Paul to call the law a “*ministry of death*” (2 Cor. 3:7), not because the laws were bad or evil, but because the inability to obey them led to death, but God sent “*the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead*” (Rom. 8:11, KJV) to dwell in us and give us freedom from the bondage of sin. We are now “*more than conquerors through him who loved us!*” (Rom. 8:37, KJV)

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

And such were some of you. *But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. –1 Cor. 6:9-11*

The purpose of the new covenant wasn’t to remove the law as the standard of behavior; it was to empower those who believed in Jesus to live out the law by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

In fact, Jesus even *strengthened* the laws imposed by the Old Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said adultery was wrong, but then he took it even further and said even if a man *looks* at a woman with lust in his heart they’ve committed adultery (Matt. 5:27-28).

True faith was now indicated by a new heart that loved God (our “*first love*” [Rev. 2:4]) and loved our neighbor as we loved ourselves. Jesus said, “*On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets*” (Matt. 22:40, KJV). Paul described it this way:

*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, **Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet;** and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. –Romans 13:8-10, KJV**

Notice that “keeping the sabbath” wasn’t found in that list of the Ten Commandments. That’s because it is no longer in effect because Jesus FULFILLED the outward portions of

the law. Gloriously though, those old laws became *another* part of the evidence that points to Jesus as the Messiah. These are just a few of the ceremonial laws Jesus fulfilled:

- The Sabbath was fulfilled. It represented Jesus, who is our rest.¹⁴⁷ The law said:

Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. –Exodus 20:8, KJV

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. –Hebrews 4:10, KJV

- Circumcision is no longer necessary. Even in the Old Testament it represented having a soft heart toward God:

And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live. — Deuteronomy 30:6, KJV

For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God. – Romans 2:28-29, KJV

- The temple is no longer needed for worship because the church is now the temple of God. Jesus predicted that the temple would be destroyed, and he would raise it up in three days. His body was raised up and now we are the body of Christ, the temple of the living God.

Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” The Jews then said, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?” But he was speaking of the temple of his body. –John 2:19-21, ESV

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. – Ephesians 2: 19-22, ESV

¹⁴⁷ Romans 14:5-6 makes it clear that keeping the sabbath is an outward ordinance of the law. *“One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind.”* Colossians 2:16 also sets the sabbath aside as an outward law, equivalent to the ceremonial food laws. *“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.”*

- The tithe is no longer necessary because it represented the resurrection. Jesus is called the firstfruit of the harvest from the dead. Because he was raised from the dead, those who put their trust in him will also be raised from the dead.

The best of the firstfruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. –Exodus 34:26a, KJV

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. –1 Corinthians 15:22-23, KJV

- The sacrifice of animals is no longer necessary because it represented the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus. Isaiah described the Messiah as a sacrificial lamb:

He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. —Isaiah 53:7, KJV

So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. –Hebrews 9:28, KJV

- The priesthood is no longer necessary because now the veil has been torn. There is no need for any “mediator” between man and God (1 Timothy 2:5) In the Old Testament the priest would enter into the presence of God in the Holy of Holies once a year, but now we can enter into God's presence at anytime because of the blood of Jesus.

And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar, and Ithamar, Aaron's sons. –Exodus 28:1, KJV

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. –1 Peter 2:5, KJV

The ways that Jesus fulfilled the law could fill many books! He was also the “bread of life” (John 6:35), representing the shewbread in the tabernacle (Exo. 25:30), and the light of the world (John 8:12), representing the candlestick in the tabernacle (Exo. 25:31). The Old Testament law was like an outer shell that one day would be opened to reveal Jesus—the “pearl of great price” (Matt. 13:46).

God devised this wonderful plan so that we could wholeheartedly put our trust in Jesus. He loved the world so much that he gave his only Son to become the Lamb who took away our sins. This is the God of the Old Testament, the Father of Jesus!

Do you now understand why the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament? It has nothing to do with a character flaw. God is justified in his anger. He has seen incest, murder, abuse of women, abuse of children, racial injustice, lynchings, bullying, neglect, religious tyranny, torture, etc....¹⁴⁸ and just as it angers us and causes us to cry out for justice, God's anger is still there, but it's being held back by the blood of Jesus. (Even Jesus became filled with righteous anger when he saw the abuse of the poor by the moneychangers in the temple! [Matt. 5:39])

But since Jesus shed his blood, the church is under the same restraint as God. Like Christ we are to "*present our bodies as a living sacrifice*" (Rom. 12:1). We are not allowed to avenge ourselves. ("*Vengeance is mine, sayeth the Lord, I will repay*" [Rom. 12:19].) We are commanded to "*turn the other cheek*" (Matt. 5:44, Rom. 12:20), to love our enemies (Matt. 5:44), and "*bless them which persecute you*" (Rom. 12:14). In the Old Testament the law demanded an "*eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth*" (Exod. 21:24, Matt. 5:38) but under Christ we are told not to repay evil for evil, but to "*overcome evil with good*" (Rom. 12:20). Following the example of our Lord, for centuries Christians have gone like lambs before the slaughter for the sake of the gospel. The grace of God is to be manifested through us at this time—until the time of grace is over, and then we will ride on white horses behind Jesus as he returns to earth to conquer the Antichrist and complete his vengeance upon those who are not protected under his blood.

*And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, **and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.** His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; **and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.** –Rev. 19:11-14, KJV*

Under the old covenant God always sent prophets (like Jonah) to plead with people to repent and turn from their sins before his anger was revealed. When those prophets were mocked, jailed, tortured, and murdered, the time of grace ended, and the judgment came.

¹⁴⁸ The story of Mary Vincent and Lawrence Singleton is an example of why justice against evil is a form of love. Singleton picked up a 15-year old girl who was hitchhiking, and beat her, raped her, cut off her arms, and threw her down a 30-foot culvert, leaving her for dead. She survived by climbing up the culvert, naked, carrying her arms. He was sentenced to the maximum of 14 years and got out on "good behavior" after serving only 8 years in prison. After being set free, he stabbed another woman to death.

Under the new covenant, the messengers of warning are evangelists who indicate to people that their sin has placed them under the judgment of God, and they must now repent (turn) and place themselves under the blood of Jesus or face his wrath.

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: be reconciled to God. –2 Cor. 5:20, NIV

The Good News is that there's still time to be saved, and by faith, your sins can be covered, and you can be reconciled to God. Just like Cain, our self-effort will fall short; only the blood is pleasing to God, but when you identify with Christ in his death (as a sacrificial lamb), you can be raised to new life in the Spirit.

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. –Romans 6:4, KJV

This message of baptism is part of the Great Commission given to the church by Jesus right before he ascended to heaven.

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. – Matthew 28:19-20, KJV

Jesus even preached the gospel on the road to Emmaus. After listening to Cleopas and his friend talk about the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection, and seeing that they were downcast because Jesus wasn't the hoped-for redeemer of Israel who would set them free from Roman occupation, Jesus responded with his own explanation:

*He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses [the law] and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in the scriptures [the Old Testament] concerning himself. – Luke 24:25-27***

It was only after he had a meal with them that their eyes were opened and they shared these wonderful words describing their time with Jesus:

They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?" –Luke 24:32, NIV

This is the true gospel message. If we remove the blood of Jesus—or God's anger at sin—we are preaching a "different gospel" (Gal. 1:7-9) which provides no blood covering by grace, no true way to be reconciled to God, and no way for the Holy Spirit to empower us to obey the laws of love and become new creations in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17)

Part 2: Keeping the Gospel Pure

As I look at the beautiful history of the faithful church, I have great concerns about today's church. It seems that Satan's ability to seduce believers into doubting the truth of God's Word is still as powerful as it was in the garden. The battle over the authority of the Bible continues to rage. We continue to ask, "Hath God said?"

The new atheists have bought this battle to the forefront, leaving many people who carry the name of Christ feeling helpless to respond to the accusations lobbed against God. The worst criticisms of our age are also preserved for those evangelical, Bible-believing Christians who have remained faithful to the Word of God and refused to toss aside or pick and choose the scriptures to which they will adhere.

Those who maintain that "*all scripture is given by inspiration of God*" (2 Tim. 3:16) are now being slandered and called racists, haters, bigots, and Nazis. They're accused of being genocidal colonialists and misogynists, but as I hope to have shown in the pages of this book, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the *opposite* is true.

It's been those who have compromised the truth of the Bible by not keeping the faith pure, or giving science precedence over the Bible, or who have presented a false gospel, who have been the greatest abusers. Perhaps the church of the ages should have heeded the words of her Lord when he warned against leaven.

Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. –Matthew 16:6

The disciples didn't understand at first, but then they realized that Jesus was telling them to take heed and beware of the *doctrine* of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who were teaching man-made commands and traditions of men alongside or instead of the scriptures alone. They hadn't kept their doctrine pure and it was like adding a form of leaven to it.¹⁴⁹

Satan has somehow cleverly twisted history to make it appear that the Pharisees and Sadducees were great Bible believers who had received the condemnation of Jesus because they placed the law above love. But in every case Jesus condemned them for putting the outward laws (hand-washing, tithing, keeping the sabbath) over and above the laws of love and compassion which were also required in the law and the prophets. An example of this

¹⁴⁹ The Feast of Unleavened Bread was another Old Testament feast that Jesus fulfilled. Leaven represented sin and unleavened bread represents sinlessness. This is why the Lord's Supper (communion) often consists of wafers or crackers. This is a type of bread made with no yeast. The bread represents the body of Jesus, sinless (unleavened) and broken for us.

is giving so much money to the church that a person neglects to care for their mother and father (Mark 7:8).

Keeping the scriptures pure is still a major challenge for the church. The Bible is bombarded from all sides. We've blended biblical truth with psychology, science (such as evolutionary or quantum science), business principles, mammon (mainly through the prosperity gospel), philosophy, man-made traditions, new revelations concerning doctrine (such as the "God is Still Speaking" campaign of the United Church of Christ), dreams, visions, and prophecies that conflict with sound doctrine, fiction (such as *The Shack*), political ideologies, Old Testament ceremonial laws, *Jesus Calling*, and mystical or contemplative experiences. Paul warned the Corinthians to not go "*beyond what is written*" (1 Cor. 4:6).

"Radically inclusive" churches are now calling for a blend of all faiths to come together in worship and service. Mormonism and Islam are two religions that blend the revelation of an angel with the Word. Even the most committed evangelicals are calling for ONENESS with those who have compromised the truth.

If the church continues to be so unfaithful, humanity will suffer, and we will bring shame to the name of God. We will cause him to be vilified again. Like many in previous generations, even though we carry the name of Jesus, we won't hear the words, "*Well done, good and faithful* [not adulterous] *servant*" (Matt. 25:23, KJV).

In the parable of the talents, the two requirements necessary to please God are goodness and faithfulness. If we become evil or unfaithful—if you can believe it—even the blood is ineffective. The prophet Isaiah shared God's heart:

*What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; **I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.** When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? **Bring no more vain offerings;** incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations—I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes, cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause. –Isaiah 1:11-16, KJV*

This is a warning for the church! If we continue in a lifestyle of disobedience to the commands of God, even the blood will no longer have the power to cover our sin. It's the equivalent of using the death and shed blood of Jesus to indulge in evil. The blood is

powerful for those who are humble, repentant, and grateful, but it won't be wasted on those who continue in rebellious sin and cruelty.

After all, will slaveholders and Nazis hear the words "*Well done*" from the Lord? They were Methodists, Baptists, and Lutherans who all knew about the blood of Jesus, but because they were unfaithful, they had become evil. Will they now enter into the joy of their Lord? Was he their Lord? Was he their king? Will unrepentant Nazis and slaveholders be able to enter the kingdom?

I believe history reveals that the church needs to remain holy—set apart by truth—and if we toss any scriptures aside or cherry-pick the ones we think are just or true, we will be no better than those who kidnapped slaves or hunted them down. They decided that those Old Testament laws forbidding kidnapping or harboring fugitive slaves didn't apply to them.

We will be no better than the polygenists who thought their science was more trustworthy than Acts 17:26 which declared that all nations came from "one blood."

We will be no better than the social Darwinists who believed in evolution, rather than the creation story found in Genesis, and consequently justified the abuse of the "lesser evolved" races.

We will be no better than the Nazis who set aside God's laws against murder in exchange for Herder's view of God.

The suffering that happened as a result of the rejection of the Word happened because they all "*exchanged the truth about God for a lie*" (Rom.1:25) and refused to keep the Word as the only source of truth. They were all spiritual adulterers and they're the only "Christians" who need to be embarrassed about their legacy on judgment day.

On the other hand, the faithful church, who loved the scriptures and preached the true gospel left behind a beautiful legacy of kindness, love, human achievement, and heroism, proving that the Bible is a strong foundation for truth and justice, and that it will forever stand the test of time.

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever. –
Isaiah 40:8

5) Is it still necessary for Christians to follow the moral law?

6) What two commandments cover all the commandments?

7) How does God deal with evil in our present world?

8) Do you think it was right for God to be jealous of foreign idols? Why or why not?

9) Do you think it's wrong for God to be angry over sin?

10) Do you think the Old Testament God is a moral monster? Why or why not?

Extra Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

(Perhaps this could be set apart for an extra week.)

- 1) Those Baptists, Methodists, Catholics, or Lutherans who added science or philosophy to the Word of God, may have held orthodox views on the virgin birth, the resurrection, the Trinity, and other biblical beliefs. Does adherence to a “core” of beliefs ensure salvation? What do you think constitutes “saving” belief? Do you think the slaveholders, inquisitors, colonialists, and Nazis will be saved if they merely hold to a “core orthodoxy” (as Rex Koivisto calls it)?¹⁵⁰ [*Some key scriptures: Romans 10:9, Matthew 7:21-23, Hebrews 10:26-29, John 8:31-32, John 10:29, 2 Thess. 2:9-12]

¹⁵⁰ Rex Koivisto. “The Search for a Core Orthodoxy for Catholicity” from *One Lord, One Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993).

2) What do you think it means for a Christian to be faithful to God? In ancient Israel unfaithfulness meant worshiping idols. Hosea took an adulterous wife as a symbol of the way Israel was relating to God. Just as Hosea's wife never divorced him, Israel never stopped worshiping God. In the same way Hosea's wife just met with other lovers on the side, the Israelites merely added the worship of idols alongside of their worship of Yahweh. In what ways do you think the church has practiced a similar unfaithfulness through the course of her history? If the church is betrothed to be the Bride of Christ, do you think the betrothal period is a time to determine the bride's heart—whether it will be faithful and true? Do you think faithfulness might be a determining factor in salvation? Can you name any ways the church is being unfaithful today? [*Some key scriptures: Jer. 2:1-5, James 4:4-5, 1 Cor. 4:1-2, 2 Cor. 10:5, 1 Tim. 1:9-10, Rev. 19:7-11]

3) What do you think the role of the church should be—a prophetic witness (proclaiming the Word) or a co-creator with God (renewing and renovating the world)? Which of these two roles did the faithful church of the ages seem to fulfill? Should the renovation and renewal of the planet be a goal of Christianity--or is it merely a by-product of proclaiming the Word? [*Some scriptures to consider: John 18:36, 2 Cor. 4:4, 2 Pet. 3:7-13, Heb. 11, Rev. 11:15]