

II.

The Removal of Religion from Human Development and Natural Events

Enlightened History

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Voltaire (1694–1778)

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

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

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

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

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

He thinks of Christianity as causing most of the violence within western society. Unlike the “pagan” religious community, the church was split with seditious disputes over dogmatic tenets throughout its history: bishops condemning each other to exile, prison, death, and eternal torment³⁶; popes using trivial matters of contention to excommunicate their rivals—all for the sake of gaining power.³⁷ Christian emperors joined the zealotry by extending the religion through the force of arms. They ensured uniformity among the subjects by participating in the bigotry of Orthodox disputes, like the infamous iconoclastic controversy during and after the time of Charlemagne, the burning of heretics beginning at Orléans in 1022, and the Thirty Years’ War, which divided Germany with intolerance and chaos during the times of the Reformation. Voltaire likes to emphasize these dark chapters in Christendom and provides a darker interpretation of the events than what is typically presented in most accounts to diminish the church.³⁸ For example, his description of the crusades provides little sympathy for the Crusaders and tends to favor the Muslim side of the situation to promote this agenda. Voltaire speaks of the crusades as beginning with the “pathetic” and “imaginative” ravings of Peter the Hermit, who complained about the “exactions which he suffered in Jerusalem” and gave Urban II an excuse to incite enthusiasm and call Christians to arms against Muslims.³⁹ In taking Jerusalem on July 5, 1099, the Crusaders massacred all non-Christians without mercy and then “burst into tears” upon reaching the sepulcher of Christ, the ill-founded destination of their fanaticism.⁴⁰ Some of them were motivated by “their zeal and love of glory, others by their crimes and distresses; the fury of propagating religion by the sword.”⁴¹ Voltaire contrasts this orthodox zeal with the generosity of Muslims like Saladin, who spared the lives of Crusaders, restored the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to the Orthodox, and loved all human beings as brothers, regardless of their specific religious profession.⁴²

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

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

agenda in directing the reader toward a dark view of the papal office and its history. A few good things are mentioned, but papal crimes and wickedness stand out in the account and include such infamous acts as immorality, incest, and debauchery; murdering the innocent, poisoning rivals, and torturing enemies; and selling relics, benefices, and absolution in order to gain a more opulent lifestyle⁴⁵—the typical Protestant charges that contain some element of truth when kept within proportion.

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

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

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

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

Guillaume Thomas François Raynal (1713–1796)

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

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

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

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

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

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

their own officials,⁸² but denigrates the republics for the most part as run by religious fanatics and filled with intolerant practices, which are accented and exaggerated in the narrative.⁸³ In doing so, he misses their cultural significance and only reveals his own deist prejudice in preferring to exalt non-dogmatic expressions of faith like the Quakers and their social impact. His narrative fails to mention that the Quakers grew up during the Puritan Revolution and simply extended the egalitarian, democratic, and antinomian tendencies that were already an integral part of the former religious movement.⁸⁴ It also fails to remain consistent with its own sympathy toward the upcoming revolution in America⁸⁵—a revolution that was spearheaded by the Puritans or Congregationalist of the northeast. Raynal recognizes that the “cry of liberty” and the “violent exhortations against England” are leading the way toward revolution,⁸⁶ but he fails to acknowledge the role of Northeast Congregationalists in promoting the cause, or the legacy of Puritanism in developing the justification for revolution in the first place.⁸⁷ It is clear that Puritans took the lead in fighting for liberty, while Quakers remained in the minds of most Americans after the war all-too-passive. Raynal’s account is shortsighted in failing to appreciate these and other points because of its secular and religious commitments.

Jules Michelet (1798–1874)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

David Hume (1711–1776)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

79. PPH 5.236–37, 255; Voltaire, “Lettres Philosophiques,” in OCV 22.91–95 (“Lettre sur les Quakers,” IV); Montesquieu, *De l’Esprit des lois* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1961), 1.40 (IV, iv); Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 403.
80. PPH 5.244.
81. PPH 5.235–36; Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 417.
82. PPH 5.358.
83. PPH 5.192–99. For example, the following generalization is made out of few instances:
 [Puritan intolerance] was supported by the services of the law, which attempted to put a stop to every difference of opinion, by inflicting capital punishment on all who dissented. Those who were convicted or even suspected of entertaining sentiments of toleration, were exposed to such cruel oppressions, that they were forced to fly from their first asylum, and seek refuge in another. PPH 5.194.
84. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972) 259, 273; Wooton, “Democracy,” 75. Baptists and Quakers represent a radical expansion of certain Puritan ideals. Baptists work with the notion of “visible saints” but apply it in a more consistent manner than the Congregationalists. They simply postpone baptism to a later time when the candidates have professed and demonstrated their faith, eliminating the problem of the infamous Half-Way Covenant. Quakers extend the egalitarian and antinomian tendencies of certain Puritan groups like the Separatists and Levellers. Lilburne, Wistanley, and other dissidents practiced egalitarian gestures like using the second person or refusing to remove the hat to superiors, long before the Quakers. Ian Gentiles, “London Levellers in the English Revolution: The Chidleys and Their Circle,” *Ecclesiastical History* 29/3 (1978): 285; Richard Baxter, *The Saints’ Everlasting Rest* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1962), 8; Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (New York: Penguin, 1975), 198. Many Puritans spoke of the witness of the Spirit to all believers as the most essential means of obtaining assurance before God. The Quakers simply extend the program to include the entire life of the believer and one’s relation to God. This process is most readily seen in the trials and tribulations of Anne Hutchinson. She was a devout disciple of John Cotton but was banished from the Puritan community when she followed his antinomian tendencies beyond acceptable limits. She began to talk much like a Quaker, professing to experience immediate revelations from God, outside the confines of Scripture. Stephen Strehle, *The Catholic Roots of the Protestant Gospel* (Leiden, NJ and Köln: E. J. Brill, 1995), 47–48. John Winthrop thought she was one of the Grindletonians, who appeared in England during the time and emphasized the role of the Spirit more than the Word of God. Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down*, 65–67.
85. PPH 5.89, 371–72, 396–97; Ansart, “Variations on Montesquieu,” 410.
86. PPH 7.456 [XVIII] (London, 1783).
87. For the Calvinist/Puritan role in developing the concept of revolution, see Strehle, *The Egalitarian Spirit of Christianity*, xv–xvi, 83–98, 105.
88. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 150–51, 157. Dale Van Kley finds French historians reacting against the Enlightenment in the nineteenth century before the Third Republic. “Varieties of Enlightened Experience” (unpublished paper).
89. *Ibid.*, 154–55.

90. Jules Michelet, *History of the French Revolution*, Gordon Wright (ed. and intro.), Charles Cocks (trans.) (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1967), xiv–xv.
91. Arthur Mitzman, *Michelet: Rebirth and Romanticism in Nineteenth-Century France* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1990), xv, 278–79. His other great work is *Histoire de France (1833–1867)*. Roland Barthes, *Michelet*, Richard Howard (trans.) (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987), 224.
92. *Ibid.*, 283. For a brief history of the relationship between church and state after the revolution, see Strehle, *The Dark Side of Church/State Separation*, chap. 5.
93. Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* (Paris: Chamerot, Libraire-Éditeur, 1847), i–ii, xvii–xix. Hereafter designated HRF.
94. HRF 2.178–79.
95. HRF “Introduction,” xiii.
96. HRF “Introduction,” xcii, xcvi–xcviii, 3.130.
97. HRF 2.201.
98. HRF ix–x.
99. HRF ix–xviii; 1.106–10, 131. Owen Chadwick describes Michelet’s historiography and depiction of the fall of the Bastille as follows:
- This passion for the people, love of the dramatic, genius for the vivid, could make him very misleading. The famous instance is his account of the fall of the Bastille. He was writing it when he heard the news of his father’s death, and in an earlier chapter I mentioned how that death affected his mind. The Bastille fell when the common people of Paris rose spontaneously and heroically against an impregnable fortress, to end tyranny and win their freedom—the most gripping passage in the works of the most gripping historians—where almost every detail is erroneous, almost every fact misstated; it did not happen like that at all, it was not so dramatic, so romantic, so noble or moreover so spontaneous; ideal, symbol entered into creed, it ought to have happened like that. Examine the narrative and it will not do. Yet totality, legend, stood for a reality of the French Revolution, and became the cherished possession of every republican heart. *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 198–99.
100. HRF 3.150–52.
101. HRF 3.150–63.
102. Mitzman, *Michelet*, 123; HRF 3.176–77. This emphasis upon etatism is indicative of modern French policy. See Strehle, *The Dark Side*, 104–7.
103. E.g., HRF 3.167–69.
104. HRF “Introduction” xxx–xxxii; 3.128–29; Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind*, 199–200.
105. HRF 2.221–22; 3.130–37; Mitzman, *Michelet*, 120.
106. HRF 2.223–25.
107. HRF xxvii, xxxiii–xl; Mitzman, *Michelet*, 127–28. He thinks of Protestantism as much worse than Catholicism in this regard with its emphasis upon *sola fides* or *sola gratia*, but both Christian movements believe much the same nonsense.
108. HRF xxxix–xlvi.
109. HRF 2.194–95.
110. HRF “Introduction” cxii–cxiii; 3.17–18.

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Mechanistic Universe

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In certain ways, this appeal to special revelation is divided from his work in physics as he follows the basic tendency of Puritans in separating the two fields and their methods,⁴⁷ but he is never faithful to a strict or absolute distinction between the two. In following the division, he speaks of the Bible as a non-scientific book, written to accommodate the experiences of common people and addressed to utilize what appears true to them in a "relative" way about space, time, and motion.⁴⁸ His scientific works display the same division by defending the autonomous nature of experimental philosophy against metaphysical prejudices⁴⁹ and mentioning God and Scripture only once in the first edition of *Principia*, thinking it "better to let his readers draw [religious consequences] for themselves."⁵⁰ But this division is violated on other occasions and hardly expresses his overall sentiment on the subject. He certainly avoids speaking about God in the first edition of *Principia*, but his General Scholium of the second and third editions adds explicit theological comments to make clear his overall understanding of the subject at hand.⁵¹ He goes on to speak of God as the basic presupposition of rational science in providing order and simplicity to the object of study⁵² and rejects any strict division between religion and science. He rejects any notion of science that would exorcize the presence of God from the universe or justify a secular view of life as if consonant with scientific inquiry.

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

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

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

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

All definitions are made a priori.

One elementary proposition cannot be deduced from another.

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

There is no causal nexus to justify such an inference.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Innocent Suffering

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

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

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

The Puritans

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

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

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

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

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

The Puritans also had a tendency to search out the “secret plan” of God in their works. They emphasized the OT more than other Christian groups¹⁸ and tended to embrace the view of the Mosaic economy, which sees the blessings of life as a sign of divine favor and the curses as much the opposite (Dt 28).¹⁹ Thomas Beard, a Puritan divine, provided an extreme example of this viewpoint in his influential work, *The Theatre of Gods Judgments* (1597). As an early schoolmaster and later friend of Oliver Cromwell, his ideas and work naturally exerted an important influence upon his pupil, as well as the subsequent Revolution, which published a revised and expanded edition in 1648—the year before Charles I’s execution.²⁰ The book contains special exhortations to rulers about serving the will of God and warnings about divine wrath punishing “wicked offenders against the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lisbon

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

A pivotal moment was the great earthquake that rocked Lisbon, Portugal on November 1, 1755. It happened on All Saints' Day when all the churches of the city were crowded for the morning's mass, ensuring maximum carnage and producing a death toll of over 50,000.⁴⁷ Some like John Wesley reacted with the theological and rhetorical style of a Puritan by underscoring the sovereignty of God in all things, the divine right to take vengeance upon those responsible for the Inquisition in Portugal, and the need to take refuge in the Almighty, not the ability of humans to control the forces of nature.⁴⁸ But others started to question this old-school approach to a more complex and disturbing reality. A couple of months after the event, Voltaire wrote a poem questioning the supercilious optimism of the church and modern philosophical thinkers like Leibniz and Lord Shaftesbury, who simply dismissed real and senseless tragedies like Lisbon by believing that all things are just and work for the good in the counsels of God. Is it possible to tell those who witnessed the death of so many loved ones that "all is well" in the grand scheme of things and dismiss the cruelty of life around them as a mere chimera?⁴⁹ Three years later, Voltaire returned to the subject of Lisbon and composed *Candide* or *Optimism*—a novel that resonated with the public and warranted 43 editions in the next few decades.⁵⁰ In the novel, Candide is the protagonist, who undergoes some tragedies in his life, forcing him to question the teaching of his mentor that this is the "best of all possible worlds," that "everything is made for the best purpose."⁵¹ Candide finds it difficult to reconcile this optimism with the brutal death of so many good people, including Pangloss, his mentor and the "greatest of philosophers,"⁵² but he (and Voltaire) refuses to sink into complete pessimism in spite of the evidence around him. Candide chooses to go on and "cultivate the garden" at the end of the novel, deciding to continue working with the prospect of finding meaning. Voltaire displays through Candide the indomitable hope that still beats within the human spirit. He finds it difficult to end his work on a pessimistic note or yield to the darkness of complete atheism, even if his thoughts are leading him elsewhere.⁵³ He still wants to believe in God or something that is essential to the

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

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

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

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

Holocaust

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The three victims mounted together onto the chairs.

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

“Long live liberty!” cried the two adults.

But the child was silent.

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

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

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

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

“Cover your heads!”

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

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

Behind me, I heard the same man asking:

“Where is God now?”

And I heard a voice within me answer him:

“Where is He? Here He is—He is hanging here on this gallows....”⁹¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

