

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled. (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

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Thinking Biblically Part 2

by John W. Robbins

Editor's note: Part 2 continues Lecture 2 – "The Attack on Thinking" by Dr. Robbins, and picks up with Søren Kierkegaard's attack on thinking.

Søren Kierkegaard

The next attack on thinking came from Søren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher of the early part of the 19th century. No one knew of him until the early part of the 20th century when the existentialists and the Neo-orthodox discovered him and came under the influence of his thought. Kierkegaard had some good qualities, many of these men do. That is what makes them so dangerous. A bottle labeled "Strychnine," most likely will not be drunk, but add some to orange juice and it might. It is the mixture of truth and error that is so dangerous, because it is so deceptive.

Kierkegaard did not highly regard the press. He said, "There is a far greater need for abstaining societies which would not read newspapers than for ones which do not drink alcohol." He had a very low opinion of the newspapers of his time. He wrote, "The lowest depth to which people can sink before God is defined by the word, 'journalism.' If I were a father and had a daughter who was seduced, I should not despair over her. I would hope for her salvation. But if I had a son who became a journalist and continued to be one for five years, I would give him up."¹

Kierkegaard also wrote, "It was intelligence, and nothing else, that had to be opposed. Presumably that is why I, who had the job, was armed with an immense intelligence" (*Journals*). He is very modest,

too. He is an intellectual who knows what he is about, and he is about to launch an attack on the intellect. Kierkegaard again, like Schleiermacher, although they never met or read each other's writings, comes down with an attack on ideas and doctrine. In his *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, he says, "Christianity protests every form of objectivity. It desires that the subject should be infinitely concerned about himself. It is subjectivity that Christianity is concerned with, and it is only in subjectivity that its truth exists. If it exists at all objectively, Christianity has no existence."² This sounds very similar to Schleiermacher's, "...turn from everything usually called religion and fix your regard on the inward emotions and dispositions." Like Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard comes up with this subjectivity. However, unlike Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard says that we need to understand some doctrines of Christianity. The reason we need to understand them is so that we know they are contradictory. Then we believe *because* they are contradictory. That is the reason we believe them. He wrote, "Can one learn from history anything about Christ? No. Why not? Because one can 'know' nothing at all about 'Christ'; He is the paradox, the object of faith, existing only for faith. But all historical communication is communication of 'knowledge', hence from 'history' one can learn nothing about Christ" (*A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 388). Here is an ahistorical Christ who is a figment of Kierkegaard's imagination.

² *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Fragments*, as reproduced in Bretall, *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, Princeton University Press, 1946, 207.

¹ Both quotations from Søren Kierkegaard, *Journals*, 1847.

At another point, he wrote, “The object of faith is the reality of another, and the relationship is one of infinite interest. The object of faith is not a doctrine, for then the relationship would be intellectual, and it would be of importance not to botch it, but to realize the maximum intellectual relationship. The object of faith is not a teacher with a doctrine; for when a teacher has a doctrine, the doctrine is *eo ipso* more important than the teacher, and the relationship is again intellectual, and it again becomes important not to botch it, but to realize the maximum intellectual relationship. The object of faith is the reality of the teacher; that the teacher really exists. The answer of faith is therefore unconditionally yes or no. For the answer of faith is not concerned as to whether a doctrine is true or not, nor with respect to a teacher, whether his teaching is true or not; it is the answer to a question concerning a fact: ‘Do you or do you not suppose that he has really existed?’ And the answer, it must be noted, is with infinite passion.... Christianity has no doctrine concerning the unity of the divine and the human,... If Christianity were a doctrine, the relationship to it would not be one of faith, for only an intellectual type of relationship can correspond to a doctrine. Christianity is therefore not a doctrine, but the fact that God has existed.... Faith constitutes a sphere all by itself, and every misunderstanding of Christianity may at once be recognized by its transforming it into a doctrine, transferring it to the sphere of the intellectual” (*A Kierkegaard Anthology*, 230-231). Faith has nothing to do with the intellect. Christianity has nothing to do with doctrine.

Kierkegaard also had some good things to say about Roman Catholicism, “Catholicism has a conception of the Christian ideal to become nothing in the world. Protestantism is worldliness from beginning to end.”

These men have been tremendously influential in liberalism at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. Liberalism is a spiritual descendant of Schleiermacher with his emphasis on the emotions and the feelings, and his elimination of doctrine. However, it is not just liberalism. It is also some fundamentalism. You have probably heard the slogan, “No Creed but Christ.” That is the same attack on thinking. We make the person of Christ, not a creed, the object of faith.

Neo-Orthodoxy

Another religious attack on thinking came in the form of Neo-orthodoxy, which developed as a reaction to

liberalism in the early part of the 20th century. Liberalism was characterized by a de-emphasis of the supernatural and a denial of miracles. Neo-orthodoxy came along and said we are going to restore the emphasis on the supernatural. The Neo-orthodox theologians such as Karl Barth and Emil Brunner were very much influenced by Kierkegaard. So, religion became a matter of subjectivity and encounter, and not a matter of doctrine, opinion, ideas, understanding, or judgment.

Roman Catholicism

Roman Catholicism has a doctrine of implicit faith, which in essence says that ignorance is the height of godliness. It is the attitude that a devout Roman Catholic believes whatever the “church” teaches. He has implicit faith in the “church.” He does not know what the “church” teaches, but that is okay. A premium is put on ignorance. This too is an attack on thinking.

Neo-Romanticism

Finally, there is a group I will call the Neo-Romantics. These people have picked up on some of the earlier Romantics and have introduced them even into Reformed circles. Some of these transmission belts were people like C.S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, and Douglas Wilson.

Douglas Wilson has a view he calls poetic epistemology. He denies that language is literal, that any language is literal. He asserts that all language is metaphorical. Of course, if that is the case, then the debate over whether the word “day” in *Genesis* 1 is literal or metaphorical is settled—it is metaphorical. However, of course, it is a contradictory position. In order for him to espouse that point of view, he wants us to understand him literally, not metaphorically. However, he espouses a poetic epistemology.

In Wilson’s book, *The Paideia of God*³, he has a chapter on “The Great Logic Fraud,” in which he talks about being the co-author of a logic textbook. In essence he says, “All the good work in that book is my co-author’s work. It is not mine. I don’t believe in the stuff.” The title of the essay is, “The Great Logic Fraud.” It is an attack on precision. It is an attack on analysis. It is an attack on logical processes. Wilson is a clever writer and some of the other things in the book are fine, but that is the core of the book. That is the strychnine in the orange juice.

³ Douglas Wilson, *The Paideia of God and Other Essays on Education*, Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999.

This poetic epistemology comes out of the Neo-Romantic movement. Other figures in the church believe this view as well. The liberal churchman William Marshall Urban also held the view that all language is metaphorical. Urban wrote this about communion in his book *Language and Reality*: “Holy Communion is a simple piece of symbolism to express a number of spiritual truths too great for ordinary language. The symbol expresses something too great for words” (586). This is life is deeper than logic put into religious language. He says, “The symbol expresses something too great for words.” There is nothing too great for words. “In the beginning was the Word...” (*John* 1:1). This reaction against the word is profoundly anti-Christian, and profoundly subversive. Life is not deeper than logic. Logic is deeper than life. We are not Darwinians. We do not believe that logic is a recent appearance on the Earth. Since logic is the way God thinks, logic steers the universe and, in fact, it created the universe—*John* 1:1-3. But to assert that something cannot be expressed in words is stupid and subversive of Christianity. In the beginning was the Word, not the deed, not the symbol, not the activity, not the feeling, but the Word. A word is an expression of thought, and it is thought that controls the universe, nothing else. That is why in the Scriptures there are a thousand occurrences of the word “know.” That is why the first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with your mind.

There are other ways that this attack on thinking has been introduced into Reformed churches. For example, I happened to be in a Presbyterian church in Georgia a few weeks ago, and I was standing outside the nursery, and they had a little game for the kids to play there, and they thought it was necessary to put on the box, “Being Smart Is OK.” Of course it is okay! But they thought it is necessary to say that being smart is okay. I think that reflects something about the culture.

Aesthetics

Another way the attack on thinking is carried on is through art—painting, sculpture, or something of that sort. Art displaced doctrine in the churches a long time ago, in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches over a thousand years ago. Aesthetics became a major concern back then. Today emphasis on art is showing up in the form of concern with liturgy. We have a different form of it showing up in the form of entertainment in the churches. Both of which are equally opposed to doctrine and to

understanding. Whether we try to work up our feelings of awe, or whether we try to whip up our feelings of joy and be entertained, both art and entertainment are opposed to thinking in church.

In advertising a few years ago there was a beer commercial on television that was profoundly anti-intellectual, *Why ask why?* The ad would begin with a question, Why something or other? It would be some perfectly legitimate question. Then the response was, *Why ask why?* Asking Why? is the most profound question that one could ask. The purpose of the ad campaign was to imply that it is stupid to look for reasons. Why ask why? There are no reasons. Nothing makes sense. So why ask why? Movies, music, and art are all ways of distracting ourselves and avoiding thought.

Watchman Nee

Watchman Nee is influential in some circles and regarded as a profound devotional writer. Nee writes, “How very vain it is for man to act on the basis of doctrine. He does not have the true article, the reality. The doctrine is not the true article, the reality. Sometimes we are close to being false simply because we know too much and act according to doctrine instead of following the leading of God’s Spirit.”

Along this line, I happened to be recording some radio spots for our church back in Tennessee with the pastor, and he and the station director were there talking about things and the pastor told how he had been preparing for Sunday’s sermon, and the response from the station director was, “Why don’t you just let the Spirit lead you?” For this director and many other people, study and preparation are contrary to the real thing, which is the leading of the Spirit.

Returning to Watchman Nee, “Whenever we act on the basis of doctrine we are not touching the reality. We must recognize two very different ways of help before us. First, there is a way that seemeth right, in which help is received from the outside, through the mind, by doctrine and its exposition. Second, we must see that God’s way is the way of spirit touching spirit. Instead of having our mentality develop by acquiring a storehouse of knowledge, it is by this contact that our spiritual life is built up. Let no one be deceived, until we have found this way, we have not found true Christianity.”

This all sounds very pious, does it not? Christianity has nothing to do with doctrine. It is spirit touching spirit.

D.H. Lawrence

Another attack on thinking came from D.H. Lawrence, a 20th century pornographer, but highly regarded as a writer who wrote, "My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong with our minds, but what our blood feels, and believes, and says is always right."⁴ He had a philosophy behind the phrase, "gut instinct." Trust your gut instinct. It is always right. "We can go wrong with our minds, but what our blood feels, and believes, and says is always right." This philosophical foundation for pornography is an attack on thinking.

J. Gresham Machen

To conclude this study of the attack on thinking, a quote from J. Gresham Machen is apropos. Machen is not one of those who have carried out an attack on thinking; rather, he is one of those who have defended thinking. He said, "Faith, it may be said, cannot be known except by experience, and when it is known by experience, logical analysis of it and logical separation of it from other experience will only serve to destroy its power and its charm.... Such objections are only one manifestation of a tendency that is very widespread at the present day, the tendency to disparage the intellectual aspect of the religious life. Religion, it is held, is an ineffable experience; the intellectual expression of it can be symbolical merely; the most various opinions in the religious sphere are compatible with a fundamental unity of life; theology may vary and yet religion may remain the same. Obviously this temper of mind is hostile to precise definitions" (*What is Faith?* 13). An ineffable experience is one that is too great or extreme to be expressed or described in words.

Why Think Biblically?

The Bible emphasizes thinking. Notice the frequency of occurrences of several words pertaining to thinking as they occur in the Bible. These numbers include their cognate forms. The word "know" occurs 1,454 times, "judge" 674 times, "wisdom" 460 times, "understand" 291 times, "teach" 244 times, "think" 209 times, "consider" 97 times, "reason" 88 times, "instruct" 65 times, "reckon" 33 times, "account" 31 times, and "meditate" 20 times. For the sake of contrast, notice that the word "feel" occurs 14 times,

"experience" 4 times, and "sense" 4 times.

Someone once said that a religion, in order to be accepted, has to be satisfactory to the one who believes it. Before Christ, those who accepted pagan religions accepted them because they were satisfactory. Pagan religions satisfy the desires of the flesh. They satisfy the desires for emotions. They satisfy the desires for action. They satisfy the desires for the feeling of reverence or awe. However, Christianity alone satisfies the mind. Christianity alone has the answers, and the answers are intellectual. So, if you want a religion of excitement, if you want a religion of emotion, if you want a religion that appeals to the flesh, then Christianity is not for you.

To Love God

In the New Testament Christ is asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" His answer is, "Love God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. And the second is like it, Love your neighbor as yourself." How do we love God? The greatest commandment is to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. This means to love God totally. These do not refer to four different parts of man. They are piled up for emphasis. Some theologians have developed theories of man having three, four, five, even six parts. One part is his heart, one part is his soul, one part is his spirit, one part is his mind, one part is his body, and so on. The Bible knows nothing of such man-made doctrines. In this case, these several terms are used for emphasis. The phrase means we are to love God totally. How does one do that? Is the commandment to have an emotion? Is the commandment to have a feeling? What is it?

God has given us a book of a thousand pages. How do we show our love for the author who has given us a book with a thousand pages containing ten thousand propositions? Read it! Read it! Do we really believe that this is the Word of God? Or is that something we have just grown accustomed to hearing? If we really believe that this is the Word of God, we ought to read it. Not just devotional reading for ten minutes before falling asleep, reading a chapter or a few verses, but rather getting out paper and pen and going through the Scriptures, reading them slowly as if you loved God, as if you had a book written by the Creator of the universe, the very One who made you.

A major reason we do not read the Scriptures is that we really do not believe it is the Word of God. The first way we love God is by reading his Word.

⁴ *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by James Boulton, Cambridge University Press, 1979, "January 17, 1913."

Above, we read in *Psalms* 1 about the godly man who meditates in the Law day and night. Obviously, we do not have time to sit down with pen, paper, and Bible in front of us twenty-four hours a day. But, we can commit the Word to memory, we can recall it, and we can think about it. We can think, How does the doctrine of creation affect the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture? How are those two connected? We can ponder these questions. If God did not create the universe, can we have any confidence in the inspiration of Scripture? I do not simply mean that then we cannot believe in *Genesis* 1. I mean that if God is not the Creator, he does not have the power to control the minds of men so that they write the truth. The doctrine of inspiration necessarily depends upon the doctrine of creation. The one explains the other, and they fit together. What we should do is read the Scripture with the idea of figuring out how the various doctrines of Scripture fit together.

Emotion and Religious Affections

Look at the passages in Scripture where the apostle Paul breaks out in praise for God. People would say at this point he was overcome by emotion. Look at *1 Timothy* 6:13-16, "I urge you in the sight of God who gives life to all things, and before Christ Jesus who witnessed the good confession before Pontius Pilate, that you keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ's appearing, which He will manifest in His own time, He who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see, to whom be honor and everlasting power. Amen" (compare *Romans* 9:3-5; *Romans* 11:30-36; *Romans* 15:7-13; and *Ephesians* 1:3-14). He is not overcome by emotion. He is writing words, and they express his emotion. His emotion is a reaction to the doctrine of the majesty of God, and unless he had that understanding first, the emotion would be worthless. In fact, it would be very misleading.

Jonathan Edwards wrote the book, *Religious Affections*. Many people think by the title of that book he was defending the centrality of emotions. They might be surprised at what Jonathan Edwards had to say about the matter. However, he makes a very good point. He says the affections indicate nothing. Although they did not have movies or television in the 18th century, they did have stage plays and books. Edwards said people are frequently moved to tears by stage plays and books of fiction, and they are moved

to tears even though they do not believe the story being told. He says I fear the same thing happens in our churches. They hear the story of Christ and his sufferings, and many people are moved by that. But just like attending a stage play or reading a book, they do not believe it. He says they are destitute of spiritual life, yet they have these emotions.

One does not have to believe the truth of something to be moved by it. This happens all the time. Go to a "chick flick." They will be moved by the pathetic story of these lost souls, and they know that none of it is true, but yet they are moved by it. They have an emotional response. Edwards' concern is that the same thing happens in church. What is important is the understanding and the belief of the truth of the doctrines of the Word of God. That is what is important.

We have the greatest commandment—to love God with our whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. There are scores of other commandments in Scripture, which say similar things. Seek wisdom. Consider.... Know.... Understand.... Meditate....

First Samuel 12:6-7, "Then Samuel said to the people, 'It is the LORD who raised up Moses and Aaron, and who brought your fathers up from the land of Egypt. Now therefore, stand still, that I may reason with you before the LORD concerning all the righteous acts of the LORD which He did to you and your fathers.'" One of the requirements of understanding is standing still. We have to do it with a calm mind. We have to pay attention. All this frenetic activity that we engage in and emotional upheaval is inimical to understanding. It is inimical to thinking Biblically. Stand still.

Psalms 4:4, "Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah. Be still and know that I am God." There is nothing necessarily sinful about emotions, but if they interfere with our thinking there is. When we call a man an emotional man, we are not paying him a compliment. We mean he is unstable, that he is given to mood swings, that he has a temper. Christ became angry, so there is nothing wrong necessarily with being angry *per se*. Christ wept at the death of Lazarus, so there is nothing wrong necessarily with weeping. But if it interferes with our thinking, it is.

The reason that certain things such as drunkenness are prohibited in Scripture is that they interfere with our ability to think. One cannot obey the Scriptural commands to consider, to know, to meditate, or to understand, when he is drunk. The same principle that

applies to drunkenness, applies to every other thing that might interfere with our thinking ability. Drug use is one of those things. We lie to children if we tell them that drugs are not pleasurable. That is the attraction of drugs, and if we tell them that, they know we are lying. That is the whole attraction, but that attraction interferes with the ability to think. Whether one is tripping on some hallucinogenic drug, or is silly and giggling with marijuana; thinking is impaired, and that is what makes it sinful. If emotions interfere with the ability to think, they are likewise sinful.

To Understand the Bible

Another reason to think Biblically is to understand the Bible. Act like you believe it is God's Word. As James says, ask God for wisdom and he will give it to you liberally, if you ask without being double-minded.

To Understand Ourselves and the World

Another reason to think is to understand ourselves and the world. The Bible does not just talk about God, although that is its major concern of course. It also talks about the creation. It talks about us. We do not learn about ourselves through introspection. We learn about ourselves through Scripture. The motto of Socrates was, Know yourself. This is impossible apart from Scripture. Socrates had no idea who he was. He had no idea that he was a creature of God. He had no idea of God. He had no idea that he was created in the image of God. He had no idea that he was a sinner. He had no idea that he needed a Savior. He failed miserably at knowing himself. If we want to know ourselves, we have to know Scripture. If we want to know who we are, we have to know Scripture. This is for our own benefit. Since the 16th century when the Reformation occurred and the Gospel began to be preached and believed on a large scale, the benefits that have accrued to mankind have been enormous.

The Gospel is not only for our eternal benefit, but for our temporal benefit as well. We need to think Biblically to proclaim the Gospel. We need to think Biblically to defend the Gospel. There are many more reasons for thinking Biblically, but the first and the greatest is the Great Commandment.

Above we referred to Jonathan Edwards. He was an 18th century American prodigy and these are a few of the things he wrote: "Men by mere principles of nature are capable of being affected with things that have a special relation to religion as well as other things. A person by mere nature, for instance, may be liable to be affected with the story of Jesus Christ and

the sufferings He underwent as well as by any other tragical story. He may be the more affected with it from the interest he conceives mankind to have in it. Yea, he may be affected with it without believing it as well as a man may be affected with what he reads in a romance or sees acted in a stage play. A person therefore may have affecting views of the things of religion and yet be destitute of spiritual light."⁵

Edwards also wrote, "It cannot be said that we come to the knowledge of any part of Christian truth by the light of nature. It is only the Word of God contained in the Old and New Testament, which teaches us Christian divinity. The sacraments of the Gospel can only have a proper effect no other way than by conveying some knowledge. Without knowledge in divinity, none would differ from the most ignorant and barbarous heathens. Divine subjects are the things to know which we had the faculty of reason given to us. No speech can be a means of grace but by conveying knowledge. The Bible can be of no manner of profit to us any other wise than as it conveys some knowledge to the mind."⁶

Further he wrote, "There is no other way by which any means of grace whatsoever can be of any benefit but by knowledge."⁷

Notice the great contrast between the position of Jonathan Edwards and the positions of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Søren Kierkegaard. The difference is that Jonathan Edwards echoes the Bible, and Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard do not.

Consider

Following are some verses of Scriptures that use the verb, *consider*.

Job 37:14, "Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still, and *consider* the wondrous works of God." Here is a command to think about what God Has done, to *consider* the wondrous works of God.

Psalms 8:3, "When I *consider* thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained." The psalmist goes on to reflect about man. He is considering this. He is thinking about it. He is pondering it.

Psalms 13:3, "*Consider* and hear me, O LORD my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of

⁵ "A Divine and Supernatural Light," Sermon included in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 2, The Banner of Truth Trust, [1834], 1974. 13.

⁶ "Christian Knowledge" included in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 2, 158.

⁷ Same as 6 above.

death.” The Psalmist is asking God to think about him.

Psalm 50:22, “Now *consider* this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.”

Psalm 119:159, “*Consider* how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O LORD, according to thy lovingkindness.” The psalmist makes no distinction between loving God and loving his precepts. In fact, loving God is loving his precepts. If someone says, I love God, I just don’t like the Bible, they are not telling the truth.

Ecclesiastes 7:13, “*Consider* the work of God: for who can make that straight, which he hath made crooked?”

Isaiah 41:20, “That they may see, and know, and *consider*, and understand together, that the hand of the LORD hath done this, and the Holy One of Israel hath created it.”

Jeremiah 2:10, “For pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and *consider* diligently, and see if there be such a thing.”

The list goes on and on. In a concordance look up the words *know*, *knew*, *wisdom*, *wise*, *understand*, *understood*, *teach*, *taught*, *think*, *thought*, *consider*, *reason*, *instruct*, *reckon*, *account*, and *meditate*. These words from Scripture are profoundly intellectual. Look at the hundreds of times that they are used, not only in an imperative fashion, but in a descriptive fashion as well.

When Jonathan Edwards says things like, “No means of grace does any good except through knowledge,” he is echoing what Scripture says. However, today it is very common to hear this view castigated as Gnosticism, from the Greek word, γνῶσις, meaning knowledge. If this be Gnosticism, let us make the most of it. The people who talk about Gnosticism do not have the foggiest idea what a Gnostic was. They simply know that they dislike knowledge. But when we read Scripture, we find statements such as, “...by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many” (*Isaiah 53:11*). There are hundreds of such verses. Edwards says salvation comes through knowledge. Faith is knowledge. Disbelief of the truth of Scripture is not knowledge.

Questions and Answers

Question: Can an emotion be completely independent of an understanding?

Answer: No, an emotion is always a reaction to some understanding. Even when you watch a movie

and are moved by it, you do not believe that what is happening is true, but it is your understanding of what is happening that gives rise to the emotion. So, in that sense, an emotion cannot exist apart from an understanding.

Question: Are babies capable of thinking?

Answer: Babies are not capable of thinking as we have defined it. Babies are lighted by Christ, but they cannot articulate. They are conscious and aware, but their ability to calculate and analyze is dubious. They can probably do so earlier than most people credit them. There are one-year-olds who seem to understand very well what is happening when you speak to them. They are incapable of expressing themselves, but they understand very well from all appearances.

Question: Isn’t it true that Christianity is not a religion, but a relationship?

Answer: If you read the Bible, you will see that the command is always to believe the Word. How am I to be saved? “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (*Acts 16:31*). Does the apostle Paul tell the Philippian jailer to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ? No. Judas had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. It did him no good. He travelled with him for three years. Mary had an even closer relationship with Jesus Christ. What saved Mary and did not save Judas was belief of the truth. Mary believed the truth. She understood the information given to her, and she accepted it as true. Judas may have understood the information given to him, but he did not accept it as true, and that makes all the difference. It is not something called a personal relationship. This is especially the case if you separate the person from the doctrines and the truth revealed in Scripture. Then the person becomes simply a figment of your imagination.

Question: If pagan religions satisfy the emotions, and Christianity alone satisfies the mind, what about the emotionalism of Charismatic and Pentecostal churches?

Answer: Gibberish is not restricted to Charismatic and Pentecostal churches. Gibberish is common to pagan religions. *Glossolalia* is not just a 20th century phenomenon. If you read a history of comparative religions, you will see that various pagan religions have devotees who have spoken in gibberish. *Glossolalia*, whether pagan or Charismatic, is

gibberish. It is not tongues. It is not language. Language has meaning. Gibberish has no meaning. It is an appeal to an emotion, and they mistake the emotion for Christianity. Perhaps Charismatics and Pentecostals are less emotional about other things they do, but for the last century it seems that their central focus has been the phenomenon of *glossolalia* and it has nothing to do with Christianity. So there is an influence of paganism within those movements.

Question: What do you mean when you say that Christianity alone satisfies the mind?

Answer: It means that Christianity alone has answers. Christianity alone can give us the information we need to understand God, the world, and ourselves. No other religion can do that. No other religion even comes close to answering the kind of questions that every college freshman has—Where did we come from? Why are we here? Tell them to go read their Bible. They will learn where they came from and why they are here. Christianity gives information. It does not seek to evoke an emotion or a feeling. It is a revelation given in propositions by God to mankind, and it is given for the purpose of being understood and believed. It is not given for any other purpose than to be understood and believed. This revelation answers questions people have asked for millennia, and in doing this, Christianity satisfies the mind.

Pagan religions do not do this. They have other appeals. They appeal to the desires of the flesh, the desires for emotions, the desires for action, the desires for the feeling of reverence or awe. But they are not intellectual appeals. If you want to see what pagan religion looked like, read a history of Corinth in Greece. We have this romanticized view of Greece and Rome. They were horrible societies. Read the ancient historian Moses I. Finley if you want to find out what Greece and Rome were like. They were absolutely horrible societies, and today we are told that they are the basis for our Western culture and Western government. M.I. Finley will disabuse you of such an idea.

Question: Does not *Romans 1* say that we can discern the existence of God from the creation?

Answer: *Romans 1* appears to say that, but it does not say that. Christ denies that anyone knows God except through him, so any construction of the philosophers that purports to prove the existence of God is a figment of their imagination. The arguments

that have been constructed to prove the existence of God should not be seen as aids to evangelism or the Christian religion, but as impediments. Those arguments were constructed notably by Aristotle, and as Paul tells us in *Romans 1*, for the purpose of suppressing the innate knowledge of being a creature of God, that even Aristotle had. Through his philosophy he devised a doctrine of God that left him irresponsible. Sinful man does not want someone to whom he is accountable. So Aristotle's god exists not knowing anything of life on Earth. He is not the Creator, he is not omnipotent, and he is ignorant of anything happening on Earth. Obviously he is ignorant of Aristotle, so Aristotle and everyone else is free to do as they please. That is the sinful motivation behind such constructions.

Paul says in *1 Corinthians 1:21*, "the world by wisdom did not know God..." Paul in the first four chapters of *1 Corinthians* is intent on denying natural theology. In fact, he is intent on denying any source of knowledge except Scripture. He says, through wisdom they did not know God. Jesus says in *Matthew 11:27*, "No one knows the Father except the Son and he to whom the Son reveals him." That eliminates Plato and Aristotle. To claim knowledge apart from Christ is to express belief in a figment of one's imagination. Jesus teaches that He is the only way. He says, "No one comes to the Father but by me" (*John 14:6*).