

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)

Number 309b Copyright 2012 The Trinity Foundation Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692 Nov-Dec 2012
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The Church Irrational Part 2 by John Robbins

Editor's Note: This essay first appeared in The Church Effeminate and Other Essays, edited by John W. Robbins and published in 2001 by The Trinity Foundation. Dr. Robbins also presented some of the content of this essay at a meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in 2000. Part 1 appeared in the previous Review, and Part 3 will appear in the next Review.

This teaching—that knowledge, wisdom, discernment is from God—is repeated in many verses of Scripture. Here are just a few:

But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding. (Job 32:8)

Who has put wisdom in the mind? Or who has given understanding to the heart? (Job 38:36)

Therefore, give to your servant [Solomon] an understanding heart to judge your people, that I may discern between good and evil....

Because you [Solomon] have asked this thing...understanding to discern justice, behold, I have done according to your words; see, I have given you a wise and understanding heart.... (1 Kings 3:9, 11-12)

My son, if you receive my words, and treasure my commands within you, so that you incline your ear to wisdom and apply your heart of understanding; yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for

hidden treasures; then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from his mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:1-6)

These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. (1 Corinthians 2:13-15)

It is clear from Scripture that all knowledge, wisdom, and discernment come from God alone. It is equally clear that it is God who withholds knowledge, wisdom, and discernment from people. God darkens the minds and hardens the hearts of men; he withholds his knowledge and wisdom and sends delusions and lying spirits to men; he diminishes the ability of some men to judge correctly, not merely of those he wishes to destroy eternally, but those whom he wishes to destroy temporally as well:

Then Micaiah said, "Therefore, hear the Word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of Heaven standing by, on his right hand and on his left.

"And the Lord said, 'Who will persuade [King] Ahab to go up, that he may fall at

Ramoth Gilead?’ So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in another manner.

“Then a spirit came forward and stood before the Lord and said, ‘I will persuade him.’

“The Lord said to him, ‘In what way?’

“So he said, ‘I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.’

“And he said, ‘You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.’

“Now, therefore, look! The Lord has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the Lord has declared disaster against you.” (*1 Kings 22:19-23*)

With some individuals, such as Nebuchadnezzar and the demoniacs, God’s withholding of knowledge and wisdom and his restoration of understanding and discernment are sudden: “Then they came to Jesus and saw the one who had been demon-possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind” (*Mark 5:15; Luke 8:35*). In these cases God acted suddenly, darkening and enlightening minds in an instant. But God’s usual method of operation is gradually to darken the minds of those he intends to abase and destroy, and gradually (after the sudden change of regeneration/resurrection) enlightening the minds of those whom he intends to save. He darkens minds both objectively and subjectively. Objectively, he sends famines of the preaching and hearing of the Word of God:

“Behold the days are coming,” says the Lord God, “that I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, seeking the Word of the Lord, and they shall not find it.” (*Amos 8:11-12*)

He gradually darkens minds, not only of isolated individuals, but also of whole societies; he hides his Word in dark sayings and parables,

And the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?”

He answered and said to them, “Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries¹ of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it has not been given. For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be

taken away from him. Therefore, I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: ‘Hearing you will hear and not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive, for the heart of this people has grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their heart and turn, so that I should heal them.’ ” (*Matthew 13:10-15*)

The lack of discernment is the lack of wisdom and knowledge. It is an intellectual deficiency. Professed churches and professed Christians lack discernment today because they do not know or believe the truth. They profess to, but they do not. Those who decry the lack of discernment in today’s churches usually fail to attribute that lack to its first cause: the purpose, plan, and providence of God. Further, they fail to indicate how God carries out his plan, how he darkens minds, how he withholds his light and his face. Objectively this darkening is the dearth of preaching and publication of the Word; subjectively it is the rejection of revealed truth, including, at the present time, the revealed truth about logical thought.

Logic and His Enemies

It is on the latter cause that I wish to focus, for this rejection of logic—this misology—explains in large part the lack of discernment, the de-emphasis on systematic theology, the prevalence of what Dr. Adams calls “continuum thinking,” and even the disappearance of church discipline. Another part of the explanation—the dearth of preaching of God’s Word in today’s churches—is discussed elsewhere in this volume. These two causes—the hatred of logic and the suppression of the Word—are the proximate causes of today’s lack of discernment. The ultimate cause is, of course, the will of God.

Today, logic—usually denigrated as “mere human logic”—is suspect, not only in humanist circles, but also, perhaps even more so, in religious circles: It is despised and rejected in liberal, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Arminian, Neo-evangelical, and charismatic churches, and in many professedly Reformed churches as well.²

² For a recent example of this misology, see Douglas Wilson, *The Paideia of God*, 1999, especially chapter 6: “The Great Logic Fraud.” Wilson, a leader in the “Classical-Christian” school movement, is a disciple of Roman Catholic medievalist Dorothy Sayers; Anglican medievalist C. S. Lewis; and a motley crew of rock groups of the 1960s and 1970s, whom he frequently quotes. It is not surprising that his writing demonstrates deep-seated hostility toward logic.

¹ The Greek word means secrets, not paradoxes or contradictions.

All contemporary churches have been influenced by the world on this point. In “The Church Effeminate” I traced some of the effects of anti-intellectualism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, leading to the feminization of the churches in the twentieth century. But the effects of modern misogyny—the hatred of logic—have been far more extensive than the feminization of the churches. It is because church officials and churchgoers disdain “mere human logic” that systematic theology is de-emphasized in both seminaries and churches, and unsystematic theology is preferred. It is because seminary professors and students detest “mere human logic” that “practical” books, and in seminaries and churches “practical” courses, are preferred to doctrinal courses. It is because church officials and churchgoers despise “mere human logic” that they prefer “continuum thinking” to making distinctions and judgments. They are religiously and piously opposed to precision and clarity.³ It is because church officials and churchgoers decry “mere human logic” that church discipline has disappeared, for the exercise of just discipline requires the most rigorous application of our rational powers of definition, distinction, and judgment. Church discipline requires clarity and precision, two godly qualities decried by modern churchmen. Those things which modern churchgoers and church officials find offensive about Christianity—its claim to be an exclusive religion; its claim to have a systematic monopoly on truth and salvation; its insistence on clarity in written and oral expression; its demand for clear definitions of terms; its demand that judgment be done righteously, according to defined and objective standards; its requirement that Christians discriminate between right and wrong, good and evil, godly and ungodly; its requirement that Christians be a distinct people, separate from the world—they find all these things offensive because of their deep-seated and sinful antipathy to logical thought.

This antipathy is itself due to their hostility to God, who is the *Logos*, the Logic who lights the mind of every man:

In the beginning was the *Logos*, and the *Logos* was with God, and the *Logos* was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him [the *Logos*], and without him

nothing was made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men...the true light which gives light to every man who comes into the world. (*John* 1:1-4, 9)

The world and the worldly church hate “mere human logic,” because it is the image of God in man, and they hate God:

There is none righteous, no not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God. They have all gone out of the way; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one. (*Romans* 3:10-12)

Because the carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. (*Romans* 8:7)

God is a rational being, and man, his image, is also rational. God was not joking or waxing metaphorical when he invited sinners, through Isaiah, “Come, let us reason together.” Because man is God’s image, his logic is God’s logic, and God and man can reason together. God’s truth and man’s truth are not two different truths; the concept of twofold truth, in which one thing can be true in theology and its contradictory true in philosophy, or in which two contradictories can both be true in theology, is medieval and modern Antichristian nonsense. God’s logic and man’s logic are not two different logics; the notion of polylogism—many logics—is nonsense. The divine *Logos* lights the mind of every man, John wrote. Since the *Logos* is not created, the light of the *Logos*, logic, is not created. Man’s arithmetic and God’s arithmetic are not two different arithmetics; the notion of many arithmetics is mathematical nonsense. There are many examples of addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication revealed in Scripture, and in every case, God’s revealed answers are man’s answers. Truth, logic, and arithmetic are one truth, one logic, and one arithmetic; they all are uncreated; they all originate with God, who is truth itself, for they are the way God himself thinks. Whatever man has of them, he has from God alone, because he is made in the image of God, and because God reveals himself to men. There is no such thing as “mere human logic,” just as there is no such thing as “mere human arithmetic” or “mere human truth.” Man is logical because he is the image of God—he has the capacity to think, to reason, as God thinks and reasons. John says that the divine *Logos* lights the mind of every man; Peter

³ A defense of imprecisionism is Vern Poythress, *Philosophy, Science, and the Sovereignty of God*, who bizarrely apes precision by numbering his paragraphs to the third decimal place. Dr. Poythress is a student of Cornelius Van Til and a member of the faculty at Westminster Theological Seminary. See *Clark Speaks from the Grave* for Gordon Clark’s discussion of the irrationalism of Dr. Poythress.

and Jude describe beasts as “without logic”: *aloga*.⁴ They are not the image of God.

“Postmodernism,” which is merely a trendy name for the ancient idea of epistemological relativism—the idea of the Greek sophist Protagoras that “man is the measure of all things”—is also the view of those who assert epistemological relativism in their theology. Postmodernism in the churches—even many of the professedly Reformed churches—takes many forms:

Men cannot know God’s truth, but only an analogy of God’s truth.

Man, being finite, cannot understand the infinite.

God cannot be understood.

God is “Wholly Other.”

Logic is created and is not the way God thinks.

There is an “infinite qualitative difference between man and God.”

God’s knowledge and man’s knowledge do not coincide at any single point.

Truth is not propositional but personal.

God and the medium of conceptuality are mutually exclusive.

To *think* God is not to think *God*.

Life is deeper than logic.

Such pious platitudes are relativistic, agnostic, and Anti-Christian to the core. They explicitly deny the central and fundamental idea of propositional revelation—“You shall know the truth.” Christ did not say, “You shall know an analogy of the truth”; nor, “You shall encounter truth”; nor, “You shall know something approximating truth”; nor, “You shall know probable truth.” The pious platitudes of the religious irrationalists implicitly deny the doctrines of the omnipotence of God and of man as the image of God; and they make nonsense of all of Christianity, for they make it all unknowable. It is this rejection of the ontological and epistemological status of logic, this pious theological agnosticism, that lies at the root of the lack of discernment, the lack of judgment, and the worldliness of today’s churches.

The Creative Logos

God is a rational being, the architecture of whose mind is logic. How the *Logos* functions in creating the universe is made clear in *Genesis* 1: He speaks; he distinguishes and judges; he separates; and he names.

“In the beginning was the Word,” and the Word, naturally, speaks: The statement “God said” appears nine

times in *Genesis* 1 alone. In the act of speaking God reveals his rationality: The laws of speech are the laws of logic. The rules of grammar are derivative from the principles of logic. For a word—any word, human or divine—to mean something (and every word of God means something, for God does not talk nonsense), that word must also not-mean something else. When God says, “Let there be light,” *light* does not mean *dark*; or *bees*, or *matter*; *let* does not mean *do not let*, *write*, or *rent*; *be* does not mean *buy*, *destroy*, or *eat*. *Bereshith*, the Hebrew word translated “in the beginning,” does not mean in AD 2000 or even one second after the beginning. This is the logical law of contradiction: Not both A and not-A. If sounds and written symbols do not obey this fundamental rule of logic, they are mere noises in the air or mere scribbling on the paper; they are not words; they are not speech. God can and does speak because, as John tells us, God is Logic.

Second, the *Logos* distinguishes and judges: The statement “God saw” appears seven times in *Genesis* 1 alone. Of course, God’s seeing has nothing to do with physical vision. God has no rods and cones, no retinas, no optic nerves or eyeballs. “Saw” is a figure of speech for “understood.” We use the same metaphor in English when we exclaim, “Oh! I see.” In the act of distinguishing, God reveals not only his rationality, but also the rationality of the creation, which is implied by John’s statement that “All things were made through him [the *Logos*], and without him nothing was made that was made.” The laws of logic are not merely the laws of God’s own thinking and God’s own speech, but of the entire creation as well. All creation is rational because the Word of God who created it is rational. Life is not deeper than logic, as the poets and romantics tell us; Logic is deeper than, and created, life. Those are pagan views that teach, as the German Romantic Goethe did, “in the beginning was the deed”;⁵ or as Democritus did, “in the beginning was matter and motion”; or as contemporary scientists do, “in the beginning was the Big Bang.” It is those pagan views that make logic, not the designer and creator of the universe, but an effect, an evolutionary byproduct of blind, purposeless, and unintelligent events. It is the pagan view that makes the universe—and man in it—irrational. Those movements within the churches for the past two thousand years that have gloried in uttering gibberish, deceptively calling their gibberish “tongues,” that is languages, are merely imitating the gibberish uttered by pagan savages, who in their hatred for God and logic attempted to suppress the truth of God in them, by attempting to deny and destroy

⁴ See 2 *Peter* 2:12 and *Jude* 10.

⁵ This is the “translation” of *John* 1 that Goethe offered in *Faust*.

the human capacity for rational thought and speech, by asserting that gibberish is speech.

While all creation cannot and does not imitate God in thinking and speaking, all creation does obey the laws of logic. A dog is a dog, not a cat or a car. A thing is itself. This is the logical law of identity: A is A. It is also the name of God: "I Am that I Am." Those theologians and philosophers who assert that logic is an effect of creation (their counterparts, the evolutionists, make logic an effect of evolution; both agree that logic is an effect, not a cause), make God illogical. Logic is not an effect; Logic is the cause, John tells us, of the universe. Because the universe was created by the *Logos*, animals and plants reproduce after their own kinds. In distinguishing, the *Logos* reveals that the creation is not an amorphous, undefined, ineffable lump—indeed, *Genesis* 1 is the account of God transforming the formless void into a *cosmos*, an ordered universe.⁶ The *cosmos* is the creation of the *Logos*. Logic is not an effect of the *cosmos*. In judging, the *Logos* reveals that one thing differs from another—that "good" differs from "bad," and that "very good" differs from "good." It is not the original formless void that God pronounced good, but the creation that had distinctions and separations made by the *Logos*. From this we ought to learn, *inter alia*, that there are several forms of unity, and not all of them are good. These acts of rational discrimination, in which one thing is distinguished from another, in which "good" is distinguished from "bad," and "very good" from "good," are acts of the *Logos*. These acts of distinguishing are acts of evaluation and judgment. They are acts of discernment.

The Bible is filled with such pairs of opposites. Here are just a few:

Light/darkness
Day/night
Seas/dry land
Good/evil
True/false
Right/wrong
Obedience/disobedience
Christ/Belial
Righteousness/lawlessness
Life/death
Heaven/Hell

Election/reprobation
Blessing/cursing
Narrow way/broad way
Godly wisdom/ worldly wisdom
God's righteousness/self-righteousness
Grace/merit
Belief/works.

These opposites cannot be synthesized; they cannot be integrated; they are forever "either-or," not "both-and." There is no continuum; there are dichotomies; there are antitheses.

Third, the *Logos* in *Genesis* 1 separates: The statements, "God divided," "let it divide," "to divide," "God gathered," "be gathered," occur six times in *Genesis* 1 alone. God divides the light from the darkness; he divides the waters under the firmament from the waters above the firmament; he gathers the waters under the firmament together, thus dividing the seas from the dry land; he divides the day from the night. By separating one thing from another, God displays his rationality as well as the rationality of the creation. It is only such divisions that give form, structure, and unity to the creation; and each division that God makes, makes a more intricate structure, a more complex unity, possible. Separating the seas from the dry land makes possible the creation of sea creatures, plants, and land animals. Without these separations and divisions, there could be no structure in creation, and no plan, no cooperation of parts, no function. All would be a formless, meaningless mass. In creating, God is making the world conform to the patterns in his mind, as *Hebrews* says.

Finally, the *Logos* in *Genesis* 1 names: The statements "God called" and "God named" appear five times in *Genesis* 1, and God names all the creatures he makes—grass, herbs, seeds, trees, days, years. In giving names, God is not only revealing his rationality and the rationality of the creation—the fact that concepts and propositions can be used to refer accurately to things (an idea that some professing Christian philosophers deny)—God is also revealing his dominion over all things, including man, whom he names. Divine dominion is, first of all, intellectual mastery, for it is by the Word that the universe is created and by the Word that each part named. At other places in Scripture, God names individual men: Abram becomes *Abraham*; Sarai becomes *Sarah*; Jacob becomes *Israel*; Elizabeth's son becomes *John*; Mary's son becomes *Jesus*.

When we come to chapters 2 and 3 of *Genesis*, it is man, the image of God, who performs the functions that God

⁶ The political philosopher Leo Strauss wrote: "Creation is the making of separated things, of things or groups of things that are separated from each other, which are distinguished from each other, which are distinguishable, which are discernible" ("On the Interpretation of *Genesis*," *L'Homme*, 1981, 10).

performed in *Genesis* 1. Adam is commanded to speak and to understand, to distinguish between obedience and disobedience, to judge between good and evil, to name the animals, and to separate his children into families. Adam names his wife *Eve*. Adam and all men, as rational creatures, are commanded to exercise judgment. We are commanded to distinguish good from evil, to discriminate one thing from another, to discern what is true and what is false; to make judgments about all things. We are commanded to act as rational creatures, to use the gift of rationality that God has given us.

Judgment

Because we are creatures with the gift of rationality, made in the image of the rational God, the *Logos*, refusing to judge is impossible. All declarative statements—the cat is black, abortion is murder, chocolate is poison—are judgments. All our knowledge consists of such judgments. This is the sense in which Paul uses the term in *1 Corinthians* 1:10, where he writes:

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

The word *judgment* is used in Scripture many times with this meaning:

I will praise you with uprightness of heart when I learn your righteous judgments....

With my lips I have declared all the judgments of your mouth. (*Psalms* 119:7, 13)

The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. (*Psalms* 19:9)

Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! (*Romans* 11:33)

The verb *to judge* has three meanings, one more fundamental than the others. The more fundamental meaning is *to distinguish*; the first derivative meaning is *to evaluate* according to a standard; and the second derivative meaning is *to condemn* or *to acquit*. The attack on judging must be seen, first and most importantly, as an attack on the faculty that understands, that distinguishes—an attack on the image of God in man. It is an attack on the rational faculty, and implicitly an attack on God, who is Truth himself. The Holy Spirit, writing through Paul, says that all Christians ought to be perfectly joined together “in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

They are to agree on the same propositions, to have the same beliefs, to hold the same faith, to believe the same doctrine. The Christian faith—sometimes called Christian doctrine or Christian theology—is a collection of judgments, a system of propositions such as “Jesus Christ is both God and man”; “Christ died according to the Scriptures and rose again after three days according to the Scriptures.” Those are some of the judgments that all Christians are to believe. It is their agreement in these judgments that creates, or better, is, the unity of the church. Paul repeatedly exhorts us to be “like-minded,” to “not be conformed to this world, but [to] be transformed by the renewing of your mind,” to “be of the same mind toward one another,” to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the Gospel.” There is no command in Scripture to have one organization or one institution, but to have one mind, the mind of Christ. Christians are to be unified in their doctrine, in their judgments.

Moral judgments, which are condemned by many today, must be understood as a species of the genus “judgment.” Some theologians, pathetically following the lead of the world, have attempted to separate “moral judgments” from “cognitive judgments,” as if morality were not a matter of knowledge, but a matter of feeling, desire, or emotion. When we make a judgment, for instance, that “murder is sinful,” we are stating a truth. It is as intellectual an act as solving a quadratic equation. When we make a judgment, “Joseph Stalin was a murderer,” we are stating a truth. Moral judgments are a form of judgment, and as such they are either true or false. If moral judgments are made correctly, that is, according to the principles of God’s Word, including a rigorous application of the laws of logic, then they are true judgments. Because we are rational creatures, we do not have the ability to avoid making judgments. Because we are rational creatures, we do not have the ability to avoid making moral judgments. The question is not whether we will make judgments or not, but whether the judgments we make will be righteous judgments or not. Rationality is the ability to judge. To be rational is to make judgments, including moral judgments. Therefore, to refuse to make moral judgments is impossible, for even those who misquote Christ’s words, “Judge not,” judge that those who make moral judgments are wrong. All moral judgments are judgments; that is, they are matters of true and false, right and wrong.

Because we are rational beings made in the image of God, we cannot avoid making moral judgments. Moral agnosticism, which says we cannot know what is right and wrong, what is true and false, in matters of ethics and morality, is as self-contradictory and Antichristian

as theological agnosticism. The Greek root of *agnostic* is *agnosis*, which literally means, “without knowledge.” Its Latin equivalent is *ignoramus*. Agnosticism is not a position; it is a confession of ignorance; and ignorant people, particularly those who are proud of their ignorance, are not to be learned from; they need to be taught. Unfortunately agnostics—some of whom are arrogant, ignorant people—control both the churches and academy. As we have seen, ignorance of the truth, in their view, is commendable, for it shows we are humble, finite creatures. When moral agnostics teach that one must never judge others or their actions, they are attacking knowledge and truth; when they teach that distinguishing good from evil is evil, they are making a moral judgment. It is impossible to avoid making intellectual and moral judgments; the only question is whether such judgments will be made correctly or not.

Judging ideas, men, and their actions is an extremely serious matter. Here is Christ’s statement about judging that is so often misquoted by religious moral agnostics:

Judge not, that you be not judged, for with what judgment you judge, you will be judged, and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, “Let me remove the speck out of your eye”; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will clearly see to remove the speck out of your brother’s eye.

Do not give what is holy to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces. (*Matthew 7:1-6*)

It will be well worth our while to analyze Christ’s statement, for Christ does not endorse moral agnosticism; he does not command us not to judge *simpliciter*; and his statement clearly shows both how we are to make moral judgments and the purpose for making them.

The first thing to note is that Christ concludes this statement by commanding us not to give what is holy to the dogs—expecting us to judge what is holy and what is not, and who are dogs and who are not. He repeats the idea: Do not cast your pearls before swine; and he expects us to judge which things are pearls and which are not, and who are swine and who are not. All this requires judgment, and moral judgment is an intellectual act. One cannot obey Christ’s injunctions here without

making moral judgments. The moral agnostic would have us believe that there are no dogs and there are no swine—“I’m OK; you’re OK”; “There’s no such thing as a bad boy”—and there are no pearls, nor anything that is holy. The moral agnostic cannot obey Christ.

Now Christ not only expects Christians to make moral judgments; he tells us how to make them: “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment” (*John 7:24*). The sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden was to judge according to appearance; their sin was not the fact that they judged; nor was it the fact that they used their own human faculty of judgment in deciding whether to obey or disobey God. As rational beings, we all must constantly use our own judgments; that is included in the idea of rationality.⁷ The sin of Adam and Eve was not in judging, but in using the wrong standard to make their judgment. Rather than judging by the standard of God’s propositional revelation, they choose to judge by the evidence of their senses, “according to appearance”:

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate. (*Genesis 3:6*)

The sin of Adam and Eve was not their use of private judgment, as some totalitarian theologians have suggested, but their abandonment of propositional revelation as the only standard by which to make all judgments. Adam and Eve did not believe the Word of God, and their unbelief separated them and all their children born by natural generation from God.⁸ Judging by appearance was also the sin of the Jews in *John 7*, when Christ commanded them to “judge righteous judgment,” not according to appearance. Making moral judgments is a serious affair. We must use the Word of God as our only standard in making such judgments, and we must labor to understand that Word, praying that God will give us wisdom in applying the principles of his Word to specific men, ideas, and events.

Unlike the first Adam, the second and last Adam, according to Isaiah, will not judge according to appearance:

There shall come forth a rod from the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

⁷ The Roman Catholic Church-State rants and rails against private judgment; what it really fears is rationality.

⁸ This, by the way, is why belief alone unites us to Christ.

The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. His delight is in the fear of the Lord, and he shall not judge by the sight of his eyes, nor decide by the hearing of his ears, but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the Earth. (*Isaiah 11:1-4*)

Notice that in all these passages it is not judging *per se* that is condemned, but judging according to the wrong standard. That is also how we should understand Paul's words in *Romans 14*:

Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls.... But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.... So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another any more, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

In this passage Paul is speaking of "doubtful things"—things about which brothers may differ. When there is no clear statement of Scripture, or no clear inference from Scripture, by which to judge, we must indeed not judge; we must recuse ourselves, for in those cases we would be making our own opinions our standard of judgment. It is that sort of judging that Paul condemns in this passage; he does not condemn judging according to the Word of God. Paul commands Christians—such as the Christians at Corinth—to judge church members for their scandals. It is not judging, but incorrect judging that Paul condemns. The misinterpretation of Paul's words has caused the virtual disappearance of church discipline.

James' warning against unlawful judging in the fourth chapter of his letter is the same:

Do not speak evil of one another, brethren. He who speaks evil of a brother and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law you are not a doer of the law but a judge. There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who are you to judge another?

James has in mind the judge who establishes his own opinion as his standard of judgment. By adopting a

standard of judgment other than the Word of God, this sort of person judges the law itself. But James reminds us that there is only one Lawgiver, and no mere man (or group of men) has the competence to establish his own opinions as law.

Many commands are given to us to forsake our own imaginations and our own ideas, and instead to think God's thoughts, revealed to us in Scripture alone, and to bring all our thoughts into captivity to Christ. But nowhere in Scripture is there a command to forsake logic, to abandon the mind, or to spurn the gift of rationality.⁹ In fact, in order to bring all our thoughts into captivity to Christ, we must become not less and less rational, but more and more rational, for Christ is the *Logos, the logic and wisdom of God*. Scripture in hundreds of passages praises knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, and urges—commands—all men to seek them ardently. The book of *Proverbs* and *Psalms* 119 show that clearly. The central concern of Scripture is epistemological: How can we know God? But those who think that God (or the universe) is illogical or irrational think that men ought to be so as well. Such ideas are not only Antichristian, they are self-stultifying: No one can applaud the virtue of irrationality without using the very laws of logic he despises. To speak—even to think—the misologist must use the law of contradiction. He cannot win the war against logic and rationality; he cannot even declare it. As soon as he formulates a thought, he has lost the war, and the *Logos* has won. That is why the fellow who says silently in his heart, let alone out loud, that there is no God, is a fool: He must use the Logic that lights every man even to think that there is no Light.

Part 3 will conclude in the next Trinity Review.

Essay Contest Results

The First Prize of \$3000 plus 15 books goes to Laura Rader of Suffolk, Virginia, for her essay "*Without a Prayer: Ayn Rand and the Close of Her System.*"

The Second Prize of \$2000 plus 10 books goes to Abigail Lashbrook of Newville, Pennsylvania, for her essay "*Atlas Fell.*"

There was no Third Prize Winner this year.

⁹ The command in *Proverbs* 3:5 to "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" is not a command to become irrational, but to accept truth as a gift from God, rather than relying on one's own observations and opinions.

Congratulations to our winners, and thanks to all those who entered the Contest. All entrants had to read the book *Without a Prayer: Ayn Rand and the Close of Her System* by Dr. John W. Robbins and write an essay about the book.

Family Conference

Thanks and praise to God for The Trinity Foundation's Conference on The Bible Alone and It's Opponents. Thank you also to our speakers and attendees. All who came were edified and equipped to defend the Bible from all its attackers. If you did not get to attend, or got information late, please check our website or mailings in the future for the next conference as the Lord wills.