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Man on the Eve of Destruction

Daniel R. Mitchell

Liberty University, dmitchell@liberty.edu

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who disliked his position, Fundamentalist became inadequate as a term of abuse! Particularly as he began to spend more and more time back in the United States, he became aware of a dangerous drift within the Evangelical community. By his presence and example, as well as by his speaking and writing, he tried to stop the drift, and to some extent he succeeded. While certainly not all Evangelicals appreciate Schaeffer or agree with him, so many do that the word Evangelical is still a legitimate term to apply to Bible-believing Christians. At the same time, his last years and months were darkened by a growing fear that Evangelicalism, as a whole, was on a downward slide and was likely to destroy itself before it could be rescued.

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Is World Destruction Possible?

Some readers may object that world destruction is not possible since Bible prophecy is silent about it. At least 7 years of tribulation and another 1,000 years of millennial bliss are necessary before any general dissolution of the earth is indicated.

However, in Bible prophecy, exact dates are extremely difficult to pinpoint. Who could possibly have known when Isaiah 61:2 was written that it contained

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Regardless, whether or not world destruction is probable, it is an abuse of Scripture to use Bible prophecy to give license to reckless abandon in the proliferation of unspeakably destructive instruments of war. There is a power that rules through fear of death, and it is not the Prince of Peace. We are responsible for preserving and caring for the planet which God created so beautifully for our enjoyment. We are never justified in the wanton abuse of it.

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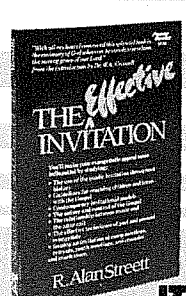
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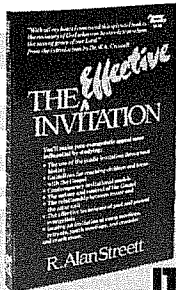
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to his Creator. It outlines specific principles vital to both the salvation and survival of man. These principles establish his dignity, and provide the rationale for his continued existence upon the earth.

To correctly evaluate and understand man and the cosmos, we must see them in their relation to God. Any effort to study the universe, or man's place in it, that does not build upon this premise is doomed to fail.

How Did We Get into Such a Mess?

One of the most persistent of modern ideologies views the cosmos as a closed mechanical system. Isaac Newton was the originator of this concept which dominated Western thought for more than two centuries, and which served as the basis for much that has occurred in the twentieth century. In accordance with Newton's "scientific outlook," nature is viewed as a vast machine, predictable in every respect according to the laws of motion—sort of a large clock designed and wound by the Creator, but left to tick away the hours alone. This view presents man as merely the sum of his

atoms, devoid of freedom, controlled by the natural laws that govern the machine.

If Newton was correct, many traditional ideas about God, man, and the cosmos could no longer be accepted. The idea of a personal God, present everywhere in the universe, was replaced by the "absentee" God of Deism or various forms of idealism or pantheism. The noble status given to man in Scripture also had to be discarded. Instead he was made out to be a microcosmic speck wandering about on a tiny planet in a remote corner of the galaxy. Today, of course, no informed scientist views the universe as Newton did. The tragedy is that other disciplines altered their views of God and man to correspond to Newton's physics, but have continued into this century as though Maxwell and Einstein had never been born.

If we learn anything at all from the rise and fall of Newton's theory, it is that science must never be allowed to replace Revelation. While his theory may be helpful to sort out some of the mysteries of the universe, it is only a model. These all grow old and are cast aside. God alone remains and His Word endures forever

(see Heb. 1:10-12; 1 Peter 1:25). Many people are concerned that science and the Bible do not always agree. There is a good reason. Only one is always correct. There is no such thing as "pure science." Science is approximate—or it is not science at all. Only God's Word "is pure and righteous altogether"—or it is not His Word at all. Therefore, we must recognize that the concept of man as set forth in Scripture is fundamental to all our thinking. No matter how tempting it is to follow the latest ideas in "scientific" thought, we must allow God to speak with authority.

What Is Man?

The Bible teaches that man came into being through the creative word of God. Man is a creature and God is his Creator. Nothing can alter this fact. When we attempt to bridge the ocean that separates nothing from something, only God will do. We say this not because we can necessarily prove it from science, but because it is axiomatic to Scripture. Without Genesis 1 through 3, all that follows in the Bible is unintelligible.

Scripture further asserts that man and the cosmos were endowed by their Creator with inherent dignity and worth. God saw that it was good (Gen. 1:31). Man is important because he is important to God. He is unique above all other creatures. Created in God's image (Gen. 1:26-27), he is given dominion over the earth (Gen. 1:28). He alone is created with the capacity to know God and to communicate with Him (Gen. 2:15-3:19). Man's uniqueness is not merely in the collection and arrangement of his atoms, his relative intelligence, or his strength. What seems to be implied in Genesis 2:7, and more explicitly given later in Scripture (cf. Gen. 35:18; Rev. 6:9), is that man is endowed with a spiritual dimension. He has a soul. Paul's teaching on the Resurrection is based upon this fact (1 Cor. 15:39). Hence, it is not correct to say with the naturalist, "You are what you eat." Man is more. For this reason, he has a dual responsibility—to the earth, over which he is to exercise dominion, and to God, whom he serves.

By contrast, the mechanistic model of Newton generated the theories of evolution. Darwin and others reasoned that they could unlock the door to the mysteries of biological life by tracing its development on the earth. Their ideas, of course, led not to Genesis, but to a primeval sea of protoplasmic pudding.

For Darwin the mechanism for the emergence of life is the principle of the survival of the fittest. In keeping with this maxim we have seen the development of ruthless totalitarian states where "nature is red in tooth and claw" and the future is bequeathed to the strong. The Fascism of Nazi Germany and the Marxist Communism of Russia and China are prime examples. In such systems the state is like a

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giant machine operated by a small elite selected by chance and muscle. The individual and all social agencies, including the church, exist for the good of that authority. The dignity of the individuals and of human life in general is measured only by their relative worth to the state.

Recent attempts to modify our own system of government can be shown to follow this same line of reasoning. The individual exists for the good of the great machine (society) and man's worth is measured by his ability to contribute to it.

The logic of euthanasia and infanticide is based on these ideas. Human life and dignity, rights and privilege are all determined by the machine. This is why there appear to be such glaring contradictions in modern society. One mother is jailed by the courts for child neglect because she failed to provide necessary medical care for her dying child. Another (the mother of Baby Doe) is given court sanction to do that very thing. Some forms of life are regrettably forfeit because, like insects in the street, they happen to get caught under the wheels of the great machine. Other life-forms, like the baby seal, with real or supposed utilitarian value, are protected and given a place inside—with a seat belt on of course!

It all sounds crazy to those nurtured to believe there is a God, but it makes perfect sense if you discard such a notion. This is why Secular Humanism is so intent on

throwing God out of public life. He just gets in the way.

Murder and suicide are wrong because they usurp a right that belongs only to God, and presume to make value judgments that He does not recognize. The same is true for abortion, infanticide, or euthanasia. Unequal ability, aptitude, quality of life, or promise does not alter the fact that all men are created equal—equal in value and in the right to become all they can be.

"Liberal" Christianity acquired its name in attempts to come to terms with the so-called "scientific" approach. It was argued that the biblical teaching is broad (i.e., liberal) enough to accommodate the ideas being suggested by the evolutionists and political theorists. This religious Humanism attempted to explain man's conceptions of God and the supernatural on the basis of psychological or sociological factors. Ultimately, the idea of God was reduced to a subjective notion of man in his efforts at continual self-improvement. God is thus measured by man's idea of what He is supposed to be, and the question of man's relative dignity is left unanswered.

Karl Barth and the Neoorthodox theologians charged that the Liberals found man only to lose God. They were right. Barth went on to say that it was not possible to understand man apart from his relation to God. While we cannot agree with what Barth made of this latter insight, there is no question that it represented a vital breakthrough in addressing distorted ideas about God and man based on the mechanistic model of the universe.

Scripture further shows us that God's concern is both for Adam as *Adam* and Adam as *mankind* (Gen 3; Rom. 5). From this follows the principle of the unity of the human race. One of the most shameful attempts made recently by certain fundamental Christians is the effort to support racism on biblical grounds. The appeal of the biblical message is that we are all one race. Recognition of this principle will eliminate much of the tension that exists between countries and ethnic groups today. Here is a sin of the fathers that has been visited upon the children in this generation. Indeed the world stands on the edge of disaster because a previous generation failed to recognize the inherent unity of the race, and that no nation or class is given the right to exploit others.

Fundamentalists have rightly repudiated the universal fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man doctrines of the social

gospel. But, many have forgotten that as the Creator, God is the Father of all men, and as creatures we are all brothers. Note, for example, Luke's genealogy, especially Luke 3:38: "Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, *which was the son of God.*"

But man is also a sinner. He is a sinner by nature (Rom. 5:12-19) and by choice (Rom. 3:9-12). Throughout the ages man's attempts to refute this truth have only served to confirm his blindness and perversity toward God. Only a fool would deny that man is in trouble today. Social engineers attempting to find a solution to society's problems invariably overlook the sin problem. They ultimately treat only the symptoms, never the disease. The comic-strip character Pogo used to say, "We have found the enemy, and he is us." As long as man ignores the sin problem, the disease will continue to rage until, when it is finished, it brings forth death (James 1:15).

Jesus speaks of God's continued concern and care on behalf of His creatures, and indicates that His love is not erased

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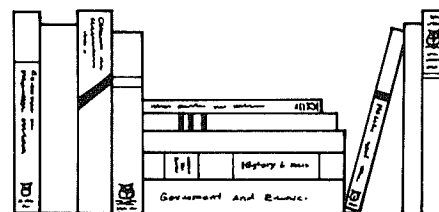
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God's Command Or Man's Demand?

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by sin (Matt. 6:30; Luke 12:24; cf. John 3:16). Consequently, our ethical and moral accountability are still demanded (John 10:10-14; Ps. 139:7-16).

Is There Any Hope?

Never in the history of mankind has the need to communicate the Christian message been greater. When Jesus gave the

command to disciple the nations (Matt. 28:19), He was not merely giving the church something to do. He knew what we are only beginning to internalize, that this was the *only hope* for the world. Unless man is brought under His authority, the terrifying reality is that he may destroy himself and everything he touches. On the eve of 1985 we are much closer to that possibility than ever before.

Whether through ignorance or arrogance, when man excludes God from his personal and public life, he turns his back on the only One who can make any sense of it. James observes: "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" (James 4:1). James recognized the frustration that comes when men seek for happiness and fulfillment apart from God. His answer is, "Ye have not, because ye ask not," or "ask amiss" (James 4:2-3). The good things that bring peace to the restless soul are not gained through power, wealth, or fame. They are God's gifts to His children who are willing to humbly receive them from Him.

Paul says, "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. 4:10). Satan holds the world hostage today "through fear of death" (Heb. 2:15; cf. 1 John 5:19). We have the message to liberate the captives, to set them free, and to set them on their feet with dignity and pride.

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Seeking to save the world, both spiritually and temporally, is neither Liberalism nor idealism. It is acknowledging with the Creator that what He has made is good and worth keeping.

During the Christmas season, as we reflect on the incarnation of Christ, we see the supreme value God has placed on man. He has visited him.

John instructs us that "God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17). Jesus said to his disciples, and to us today, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you" (John 20:21). As we go, our theme ought to be "This is my father's world, O let me ne'er forget . . . God is the Ruler yet." □

Self Test

1. How often do you read your Bible?
2. How much time do you spend in prayer?
3. Do you feel there is a need in your life for spiritual growth?

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60% read the Bible daily—while 15% read the Bible less than once a week or not at all. The purpose of Jerry Falwell's daily radio program is to teach you God's Word and make it come alive in your life as you study it each day.

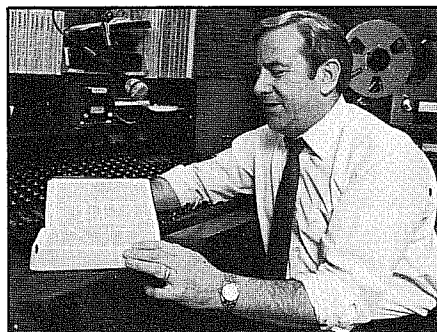
94% pray daily—and over half pray at least 10 minutes a day. The Old Time Gospel Hour radio broadcast includes a "prayer time"—and will help you develop power in your prayer life.

98% feel there is a need in their lives for personal spiritual growth. Jerry Falwell's daily radio program will draw you closer to the Lord—as you learn from uplifting Bible lessons, enjoy refreshing Christian music, and hear how the Lord is working in the lives of thousands of Old Time Gospel Hour radio listeners.

Jerry Falwell's Daily Radio Broadcast is "A MESSAGE TO AMERICANS WHO WANT TO GROW SPIRITUALLY"

Join Jerry Falwell on The Old Time Gospel Hour's Daily Radio Broadcast

Heard Nationwide Each Weekday Monday through Friday



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PRAYER The Keystone of Revival

by Vernon Brewer

Every revival in the history of the church, from the Day of Pentecost to the present time, has been born and cradled in prayer. Even Pentecost followed 10 days of prevailing prayer. An unchangeable divine law decrees that prayer is a power that will open the windows of heaven, and send forth an outpouring of the Spirit of God. E. M. Bounds, a man mighty in prayer, wrote: "Prayer is the channel through which all good flows from God to man, and all good from men to men . . . Prayer is a duty, an obligation most binding, and most imperative, which should hold us to it. But prayer is more than a privilege, more than a duty . . . It is the appointed condition of getting God's aid. It is the avenue through which God supplies man's wants."

Earnest intercessory prayer has always preceded great movements of God. Indeed, the Revival of 1858 should be known as "The Revival of the United Prayer Meeting." When the American church awoke to the full consciousness of what God was doing, it found that the entire nation was alive with daily prayer meetings.

Two of these meetings are especially noteworthy. Jeremiah Lanphier, longing intensely for revival, begged a few of his fellow Christians to meet with him. On September 23, 1857, he was alone for some time in prayer. Later in the day he was joined by five others. This was the origin of the famous Fulton Street Noon

Prayer Meeting in New York City, which has continued to this day.

In Philadelphia, 4,000 met daily in Jayne's Hall to wait upon God. Drawn from every class, they were massed together in a great stillness, broken only for a while by the sobs of the repentant. Then brief, earnest prayers, often only a few broken sentences, would be offered.

Every spiritual revival throughout the centuries can be traced to earnest intercessory prayer.

The revival of 1858 came as a direct result of the prayers offered at these meetings. No television, no radio, no media, no evangelist, no singer, and no book on "How to Have Revival" brought about the revival that touched a nation. The revival resulted, quite simply, from the fervent prayer of faithful Christians with a burden for nationwide revival.

In Acts 2:1, the Bible records a specific prayer meeting at Pentecost. It says, "They were all with one accord." And so were the believers of the 1800s. Although those prayer warriors were not all in one place at the same time, they too were all of one accord. They were one in prayer and purpose. S. D. Gordon stated, "The greatest thing anyone can do for God and man is pray. It is not the only thing; but it is the chief thing. The great people of the earth today are the people who pray. I do not mean those who talk about prayer; nor those who say they believe in prayer; nor yet those who can explain about prayer; but I mean those people who take time to pray."

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16). We must pray boldly and with confidence, believing that God is going to send revival. We must pray in faith. We must pray with urgency and with a fervency that we have never had before. We must, as Paul so aptly said in Hebrews 4:16, come boldly before the throne of God. We need to sense the urgency of the hour. Charles Finney, the great American evangelist said, "Prayer is an essential link in the chain of causes that leads to revival, as much so as truth is. Some have zealously used truth to convert men and have laid very little stress on prayer. They have preached, and talked, and distributed tracts with great zeal and then wondered why they had so little success. And the reason was that they forgot to use the other branch of the means, effectual prayer. They overlooked the fact that truth, by itself, will never produce the effect without the Spirit of God, and that the Spirit is given in answer to earnest prayer."

Why is it that we still have not seen a nationwide awakening of God's Holy Spirit in our lifetime? Because we as Christians are not united in prayer and spirit. We have not sensed the urgent need to pray. Could it be that revival has not come in this century because America has not seen and heaven has not heard from a "Jeremiah Lanphier"?

We must realize that God is just as able today to revive the church body as He was able to revive the body of His Son almost 2,000 years ago. Praise God that He is ready and willing to answer our prayers.

Samuel Chadwick said, "The one concern of the Devil is to keep Christians from praying. He fears nothing from prayerless studies, prayerless work, and prayerless religion. He laughs at our toil, mocks at our wisdom, but trembles when we pray." □

Adapted by permission of Life Action Ministries, Buchanan, Michigan.



Vernon Brewer is dean of students at Liberty Baptist College and director of LIGHT Ministries, an international evangelistic team committed to revival and world evangelization.

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