

Apperceptions of Life and this World

A thinking church, a church that professes to love God with all its mind as well as with all its heart, cannot be content to lie forever in an intellectual fallow.

G. L. Prestige, *Fathers and Heretics: Six Studies in Dogmatic Faith* (1940), p. 3.

We don't see things as they are, we see them as we are.

Anais Nin

To adjudicate a reference point for understanding *everything* to be *anything* other than the infinite, personal, and Triune God of Scripture and His encapsulating and binding Word is to falsify reality.

James Nickel

The dichotomy in the modern mind that science is mere and only fact and that religion is mere and only belief is pervasive. The media and government controlled schools (Kindergarten to University) have, over the past decades, instructed youth and adults alike that, in day-to-day practice, naturalistic or man-centered thinking undergirds every academic subject, in fact, *all of life*. As a result, the Bible is either viewed in the same context (naturalistically—hence, it is prone to error or just a list of interesting stories with a moral lesson) or it is merely and only myth (or a fantasy belief for those who want some sort of assurance of “life after death”). The thrust of Postmodernism is to say that science too (especially rationalism), not just religion, is merely and only belief. The answer to the impoverishment of both modernism and postmodernism is for Biblical Christians to step out of their ghetto, and proclaim and apply, no matter what the cost, that the written Word of God, revealing the Living Word of God who is the person of Christ, is the one authoritative rule for faith and life. All of life - reason, science, education, law, economics, history, mathematics, art, media, family, church - is to be founded upon the rock of God's Word and that nothing, absolutely nothing, can be viewed as Truth in fact unless it is submitted to the liberating freedom and empowerment found in the authoritative person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

James Nickel

All truth belongs to God; where truth is, God is.

Aurelius Augustine (354-430)

Biblical Christians should not only know what we believe, but why we believe it (simultaneously, we should know what we do *not* believe and why). If we do not know the “what and why,” we shall be led or *victimized* by those who do know the “what and why.”

Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004)

The fear of God is the key to coming into truth.

Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004)

The fear of God is a precondition for knowledge—*of God, of self, of all things*.

Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004)

To relativize Truth by soft-pedaling the authority of Scripture in any sphere of life is a renunciation of Christian responsibility, an abdication of Christian conviction, and a cave-in of Christian courage.

James Nickel

If your answer to “What is Truth?” is wrong, you are going to be aberrant in every sphere of life.

James Nickel

There is no direction you can travel in which God has not spoken.

Dr. Del Tackett, *The Truth Project*

... if we do not love God we shall forever be at the edge of truth. We may amass ten thousand pages of accurate technical data in experimental psychology but never come to know the true man made in the

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image of God. We may completely unravel the mystery of the atom but never know its great Creator. We may become experts in philosophy and know all the technicalities of knowledge but never know the supreme Subject of knowledge, the triune God. And to crown our stupidity we shall view the edge of truth as the center!

Bernard Ramm, *The Christian College in the Twentieth Century*, p. 27

Anything (e.g., philosophy) that is constructed apart from God and thereby absolutized will ultimately “collapse in a void.”

Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004)

The point of departure in any sphere is God and the terminal point of any sphere is God. Never place man at the departure or terminal point and we can say this absolutely and finally because of the revelation of God as the Absolute, the Alpha and Omega.

Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004)

For the modern intellectual man, there developed a dichotomy between rationalism and hope. In contrast, the Biblical Christian man possesses a full-orbed hope of both vertical and horizontal unity based upon Biblical content and the finished work of God in Christ.

Renaissance man had the hope of a horizontal, humanist unity.

Rationalist man had the hope of a rationalistic unity.

Process philosophy man had the hope of a materialistic unity.

Existentialist man rejected both horizontal (man to God) and vertical (man to man) unity, but finds unity *only in himself (no exit – round room with no doors and no windows)*.

Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004).

It is plain, therefore, that from the viewpoint of the Scriptures themselves there is a unity over the whole field of knowledge. God has spoken, in a linguistic propositional form, truth concerning Himself and truth concerning man, history and the universe. Here is an adequate basis of the unity of knowledge ... The unity is there because God has spoken truth into all areas of our knowledge.

At the same time, one must avoid the opposite mistake of saying that because God has communicated truly concerning science, all scientific study is wasted. This is a false deduction. To say that God communicates *truly* does not mean that God communicates *exhaustively*. Even in our human relationships we never have exhaustive communication, though what we do have may be true. Thus, as far as our position in the universe is concerned, though the infinite God has said true things concerning the whole of what He has made, our knowledge is not thereby meant to be static. Created in His image, we are rational and, as such, we are able to, and intended to, explore and discover further truth concerning creation.

God says, in effect, “Learn of the truth that I have made in the external world.” Finite man in the external universe, being finite, has no sufficient reference point if he begins absolutely and autonomously from himself; thus, he needs *certain* knowledge. God gives us this in the Scriptures. With this in mind the scientist can understand, in their ultimate relationships, the truths that he is looking at. Thus scientific study in itself can be to the glory of God, for here man is functioning properly in the universe in which God has placed him. He is telling us what is truly there, and he is adding to the store of knowledge of his fellowmen.

Francis Schaeffer, “The God Who Is There,” in *The Complete Works of Francis A Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview*, 1:100-101

The great Supreme Court justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said that a good catchword could stop people

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from thinking for 50 years. The big catchword this election year is “change”— and it has already stopped many people’s thinking in its tracks.

Thomas Sowell, *Random Thoughts* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 20 May 2008

Some of the biggest cases of mistaken identity are among intellectuals who have trouble remembering that they are not God.

Thomas Sowell, *Random Thoughts* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 1 May 2007

... politics is about evoking emotions, not examining specifics ... political slogans are not meant to be thought through, are they? They are often an emotional substitute for thinking at all.

Thomas Sowell, *Lured to Disaster* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 20 January 2009

NB. Although the following is an analysis of the rhetoric of political ideologies, it serves as a benchmark for the analysis of any type of argument, especially those arguments that rely upon statistics.

Penetrating the Rhetoric:

1. All statements are true, if you are free to redefine their terms.
2. Any statistics can be extrapolated to the point where they show disaster.
3. *A* can always exceed *B* if not all of *B* is counted and/or if *A* is exaggerated.
4. For every expert, there is an equal and opposite expert, but for every fact there is not necessarily an equal and opposite fact.
5. Every policy is a success by sufficiently low standards and a failure by sufficiently high standards.
6. All things are the same, except for the differences, and different except for the similarities.
7. The law of diminishing returns means that even the most beneficial principle will become harmful if carried far enough.
8. Most variables can show either an upward trend or a downward trend, depending on the base year chosen.
9. The same set of statistics can produce opposite conclusions at different levels of aggregation.
10. Improbable events are commonplace in a country with more than a quarter of a billion people.
11. You can always create a fraction by putting one variable upstairs and another variable downstairs, but that does not establish any causal relationship between them, nor does the resulting quotient have any necessary relationship to anything in the real world.
12. Many of the “abuses” of today were the “reforms” of yesterday.

Thomas Sowell, *The Vision of the Anointed: Self-Congratulation as a Basis for Social Policy*, pp. 102-103

Students can graduate from even the most prestigious colleges and universities wholly unaware that there are not simply different opinions about particular issues but a whole comprehensive framework of ideas and analysis through which those issues can be seen in a way that leads to very different conclusions from the ones their professors have taught or insinuated.

Thomas Sowell, *Random Thoughts* (www.jewishworldreview.com), 21 September 2005

... ideology ... is an instrument of power; a defense mechanism against information; a pretext for eluding moral constraints in doing or approving evil with a clean conscience; and finally, a way of banning the criterion of experience, that is, of completely eliminating or indefinitely postponing the pragmatic criteria of success and failure.

Jean-François Revel, *The Flight from Truth: The Reign of Deceit in the Age of Information*, p. 228

The point of departure for Biblical Christian thinking is the recognition of the reality that man is *not* God. God is uncreated; He has no starting point. His existence is from everlasting to everlasting. In

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contrast, man is created and has a starting point. Accordingly, all human conclusions, without exception and necessarily so, flow from or are based on what the man in the street calls basic assumptions, the philosopher calls an arbitrary given, the scientist an indemonstrable axiom ... or presuppositions. Which is to recognize that everyone lives, ultimately, on the basis of faith. So, it becomes a question of where one ultimately grounds one's faith. There are only three possibilities:

1. One may live on the basis of faith in Biblical revelation.
2. One may live on the basis of faith in reason, which, when absolutized, brings us to rationalism.
3. One may live on the basis of faith in faith, which, when absolutized, brings us to mysticism.

In the final analysis, everyone lives on the basis of faith in two possibilities:

1. Faith in what is presupposed to be the revelation, in verbal propositional form, of the God who is presupposed to be there or ...
2. Faith in what is known to be the conclusions of men who were or are here.

Dr. Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004)

Reasoning leads us from premises to conclusions; it cannot start without premises; ... we must believe that we have an inner sense of values which guides us as to what is to be heeded, otherwise we cannot start on our survey even of the physical world At the very beginning there is something which might be described as an act of faith – a belief that what our eyes have to show us is significant.

Arthur Stanley Eddington, *Science and the Unseen World: Swarthmore Lecture 1929* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938), pp. 73-74.

This postmodern generation can be summarized by Dr. Seuss, “Be who you are and say what you feel because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind.” In contrast, the Triune God (as revealed by His authoritative word), who minds, matters.

James Nickel

Truth from Wisdom personified, the Lord Jesus Christ, “Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold, and my yield than choice silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the paths of justice, granting an inheritance to those who love me, and filling their treasuries” (Proverbs 8:18-21).

James Nickel

Grace brings faith to man and only faith can release man from the suppression of the true nature of knowledge.

James Nickel

Romans 1:21-22, “For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools.” Man prefers to be an idiot god rather than a wise man under God.

James Nickel

If men will not see the world as Christ reveals it, then they will not be able to see the world in truth.

James Nickel

The point of departure in any sphere [i.e., legitimate area of human endeavor] is God and the terminal point of any sphere is God. Never place man at the departure or terminal point and we can say this absolutely and finally because of the revelation of God as the Absolute, the Alpha and Omega.

Dr. Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004), Indiana Wesleyan University

Truth, the revelation of the nature of reality (as God reveals it to us in Scripture), can therefore never be compartmentalized; it can never stand in a corner. Truth stands in the midst ... Truth is meant to impact

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our everyday life, our everyday pursuits ... God is pleased with His truth standing in the midst.

James Nickel

After reviewing some notes in philosophy (from the rationalism of Descartes to the radical autonomy of Derrida), it is perspicuous that the human mind cannot find anything that will rescue him from the burden of the Fall. The totality futility of man's wisdom must first be recognized and repudiated if man is to discover the true wisdom that will lead to life everlasting.

James Nickel

You see what your presuppositions, i.e., your basic assumptions, tell you that you are seeing. Hence, it is of utmost importance to evaluate the eyeglasses (i.e., your starting points) by which you see God, the world, and yourself.

James Nickel

"It is not so important to have Christians involved in politics, economics, science, education, etc. It is of utmost importance to understand, embrace, and apply a Biblical Christian view of politics, economics, science, and education. Then, and only then, can Christians embrace and transform these spheres."

Paraphrase from Dr. Glenn R. Martin (1935-2004), Indiana Wesleyan University

Everyone interprets events through a chosen paradigm. Sometimes that paradigm is wrong and it is hard for a person to see that he is viewing events through the wrong filter. Hence, we go to the Bible, engaging in sound exegesis, to check our paradigms (and change our filter, if needed). When it comes to viewing the events of the recent earthquake in Japan, I believe some Christians need a filter change.

James Nickel

Beware of the pervasive and insidious influence of the present liberal Zeitgeist on all our thinking. The modern world and the modern church have little use for a disciplined submission of the mind to the revelation of God, with the result that 'Christian' thought has been penetrated at a thousand points by ideas contrary to its God-given faith.

John W. Wenham, *The Goodness of God*, p. 38

... all have to choose the presupposition with which to start. There are not many options - essentially just two. Either human intelligence ultimately owes its origin to mindless matter; or there is a Creator. It is strange that some people claim that it is their intelligence that leads them to prefer the first to the second.

John Lennox, *God's Undertaker*, p. 210

A realist epistemology asserts that there is a real or actual connection between thought and reality, as long as one's thinking is contoured and structured by the specificities of the rational structure of the portion of reality under investigation. It is in this way that one "thinks God's thoughts in creation after Him."

James Nickel

One of Barack Obama's great gifts is the ability to say things that are absolutely absurd and make them sound not only plausible but inspiring.

Thomas Sowell

... The Christian worldview centers on the kingdom of God. Jesus the King rules over all that exists. Disciples with a kingdom mind-set press for the entire world to acknowledge the kingship of Jesus. This is not some pie-in-the-sky, by-and-by notion; it is a here-and-now way of thinking. Fewer and fewer North Americans look at life from the perspective that Jesus is the ruler of the entire universe.

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Without this perspective one cannot be truly described as a disciple of Christ.

Albert D. Curry, Foreward to *Making Kingdom Disciples*, p. x.

To exaggerate an assertion made by your opponent to a level of absurdity and then accuse your opponent of being absurd is an oft used political ploy. This only reveals that the one making the exaggeration has a relative degree of immaturity reflected by an over inflated or, at times, blind (or irrational) commitment to his own ideology.

James Nickel

There is a hidden anger at God in the antagonistic stance of the atheist. Today, we see many atheists (e.g., Richard Dawkins) who point a loaded gun at God and shoot. Of course, if God really doesn't exist, there is no need for this energetic anger. In the God revealed in Scripture, the atheist is confronted with a Person far above his mental capabilities (a truth that is an insult to every rationalist). There may also be a reason for this antagonism due to upbringing issues (where a pseudo-form of Christianity may have been forced down one's throat). The underlying reason for this anger is a heart that not only harbors, but loves darkness. In truth, God is the most attractive Being in the universe, but He is attractive only if one is willing to stand in His blazing and burning light, a radiance that reflects the love of His revelation and cleansing.

James Nickel

A world view is not just how one views the world (e.g., ideas alone). One looks at life through certain spectacles. For the Biblical Christian, those spectacles are the Word of God - the whole Word of God. Above all, the Word of God is a gracious command word. At times, its commands disturb us by requiring of us what we may not want to do. And the "to do" is the crux. The Biblical Christian world view, since it is Biblical, requires action; an action that is initiated by obedience to God's commands.

James Nickel

We cannot have a renewed mind if there is any naturalistic clutter between God and ourselves.

Dr. Glenn R. Martin, *Prevailing WorldViews*

Christianity is not a series of truths in the plural, but rather truth spelled with a capital "T." Truth about total reality, not just about religious things. Biblical Christianity is Truth concerning total reality - and the intellectual holding of that total Truth and then living in the light of that Truth.

Francis Schaeffer (1912-1984), Address at the University of Notre Dame, April 1981

We stand for a fully Christian culture, Biblical fidelity, catholic orthodoxy, limited civil government, an established Faith, culturally savvy believers, the power and gifts of the Holy Spirit, individual liberty under God's law, a culturally relevant church, fervent charity among the saints, and Christian engagement in all aspects of life and thought (among other things). Our basic creed is "Jesus is Lord - in all things." More than this, we're influencing Christians in all walks to take the lead in taking back our culture for Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

P. Andrew Sandlin, President, Center for Cultural Leadership

Every point of view is a view from a point.

John Dawson

As finite creatures, we cannot escape the reality that *every* human conclusion is necessarily based on *some* starting point.

Glenn R. Martin

What fundamental assumptions are behind the conclusions?

Glenn R. Martin

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Facts never just speak for themselves. They must be interpreted through a hypothesis, a model, a theory, a paradigm, or a worldview. And not all hypotheses, models, theories, paradigms, and worldviews are equal.

Michael Shermer & Alex Grobman, *Denying History*, p. 5

Knowledge in truth always acknowledges God as the Final Interpreter.

Glenn R. Martin

Every system of thought begins with some ultimate principle. If it does not begin with God, it will begin with some dimension of creation - the material, the spiritual, the biological, the empirical, or whatever This starting point has to be accepted by faith.

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 41

If Christians do not *consciously* develop a biblical approach to the subject [under consideration - JN], then we will *unconsciously* absorb some other philosophical approach.

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 44

Those in relationship with the Creator should be the most creative of all. By creatively developing a biblical approach to their subject area, believers may even transform an entire discipline.

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 58

The Reformers sought a return to a unified field of knowledge, where divine revelation is the light illuminating all areas of study.

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 81

Every subject area [in the school - JN] should be taught from a solidly biblical perspective so that students grasp the interconnections among the disciplines, discovering for themselves that all truth is God's truth.

Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 129

Understanding worldview is a bit like trying to see the lens of one's own eye. We do not ordinarily see our own worldview, but we see everything else by looking through it.

Phillip E. Johnson, in Nancy Pearcey, *Total Truth*, p. 11

The point of having an open mind, like an open mouth, is to close it on something solid.

G. K. Chesterton

Christianity certainly has always been multi-dimensional. It wasn't purely intellectual nor purely spiritual, but a many-stranded combination of spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional threads woven together to form a tough, anchoring assurance.

Os Guinness

Each of us tends to think we see things as they are, that we are objective. But this is not the case. We see the world, not as it is but as we are - or, as we are conditioned to see it.

Stephen R. Covey

My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got the idea of just and unjust? Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist - in other words, the whole of reality was senseless - I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality - namely my idea of justice - was full of sense.

C. S. Lewis

No finite point has meaning without an infinite reference point.

Jean Paul Satre

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I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else.

C. S. Lewis

A Hindu response to Christianity, "If what the speaker has said tonight isn't true, it doesn't matter, but if it is true then nothing else matters."

E. Stanley Jones

If I did not believe in God, I should still want my doctor, my lawyer and my banker to do so.

G. K. Chesterton

There is no longer a Christian mind ... the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion - its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which relates all human problems social, political, cultural to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian Faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.

Harry Blamires

Our society finds truth too strong a medicine to digest undiluted in its purest form, truth is not a polite tap on the shoulder; it is a howling reproach. What Moses brought down from Mount Sinai were not ten suggestions but Ten Commandments.

Ted Koppel, Commencement Address at Duke University

The Law of conservation of ignorance: A false conclusion once arrived at and widely accepted is not easily dislodged and the less it is understood the more tenaciously it is held.

Georg Cantor

If God does not exist, everything is permissible.

Dostoevsky

The suffering of children is the greatest proof against the existence of God.

Dostoevsky

The problem is not only to win souls but to save minds. If you win the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you have not won the world.

Charles Malik, *The Two Tasks*, p. 32

I long to understand in some degree thy truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand.

Anselm of Cantebury

Reflection upon revealed truth naturally follows the advent of faith, but faith comes first to the hearing ear, not to the cogitating mind.

A. W. Tozer, *The Knowledge of the Holy*

I have not bowed to current academic nostrums about nomenclature or accepted the flyblown philacteries of Political Correctness.

Paul Johnson, Introduction to *A History of the American People*

Upon these foundations, the law of nature and the law of revelation (Holy Scripture), depend all human laws; that is to say no human laws should be suffered to contradict these.

William Blackstone

The behavioristic version of Psalm 23

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The Lord is my external-internal integrative mechanism.
I shall not be deprived of gratifications
For my viscerogenic hungers or my need dispositions.
He motivates to orient myself
Toward a non-social object with effective significance.
He positions me in a non-decisional situation,
He maximizes my adjustment.

A. Simpson, *Time*, August 9, 1963, p. 56, col. 3

Man sits in front of a bad television program and does not know that he is bored ... he joins the rat race of commerce, where personal worth is measured in terms of market values, and is not aware of his anxiety Theologians and philosophers have been saying for a century that God is dead, but what we confront now is the possibility that man is dead, transformed into a thing, a producer, a consumer, an idolater of things.

Eric Fromm, *New York Times*, April 17, 1966, p. E2, col. 3

We are such insignificant creatures on a minor planet of a very average star in the outer suburbs of one of a hundred thousand million galaxies. So it is difficult to believe in a God that would care about us or even notice our existence.

Steven Hawking, "Master of the Universe," BBC broadcast (1989)

All my means are sane, my motive and my object mad.

Captain Ahab, *Moby Dick*

Humanists do not run leprosariums.

Malcolm Muggeridge, Cited in Thomas Cahill, *Desire of the Everlasting Hills*, p. 305