

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The Worldview of the Advancement

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SOME PEOPLE THINK that philosophical ideas are abstract and irrelevant. Some are. Nevertheless, ideas shape history and culture. Some ideas have been so profoundly influential that eras (particularly in Western civilization) can be classified by them.

1

All historians recognize the Middle Ages as an era of fascinating diversity, yet it is easily classified (and thus recognized) by certain unifying ideas. Likewise the Renaissance and the Enlightenment! No one should suppose that these eras had sharp chronological limits, as if they began or ended on certain days, but common ideas gradually surfaced. Often these ideas appear first in the minds of leading writers (scientists, philosophers, and theologians). Through the philosophical elite, these ideas spread in the universities (or, earlier, through the monasteries), and then through the arts to the general culture. These ideas and their collective influence form the intellectual models (the worldviews) by which individual facts and events in past centuries are interpreted.

Whereas the intellectual life of Medieval Europe was dominated by Platonic philosophy¹ and by belief in God as interpreted by the Roman Catholic Church, the intellectual life of the Renaissance was less abstract and more humanistic. It reemphasized classical Aristotelian forms and ideas.² The eighteenth-century Enlightenment was characterized

¹ Plato (c.427–c.347 B.C.), one of the greatest of the ancient Greek philosophers, taught that a spiritual world of universal ideas existed. These ideas were the original forms on which all physical reality was modeled and by which physical reality was shaped. Ultimate reality was exclusively rational and thus could be known by the rational human mind even apart from sensory experiences. Medieval Christianity was not strictly Platonic (since Plato taught that the universal ideas were abstract, impersonal, and autonomous), but it was generally Platonic in style. Medieval theologians held that universal ideas existed, but they located them exclusively in the mind of a personal God. Nevertheless, the emphasis was on a separation between spiritual reality above and physical reality here below. This kind of dualism often led to a depreciation of the physical and an exaltation of the rational (the spiritual). Monastic orders illustrate this tendency by withdrawing from the world in order to be more “spiritual.” The lifestyle of a stereotypical monk was one of mystical asceticism or otherworld-liness. Medieval art often reflects this dualistic worldview. An introduction to Plato may be found in W. K. C Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 4 (Cambridge: University Press, 1975), and John Niemeyer Findlay, *Plato and Platonism* (New York: Times Books, 1978).

² Aristotle (384–322 B.C.), Plato’s most famous student, was at one time a tutor for Alexander the Great. Aristotle was heavily influenced by Plato’s rationalism, but he ultimately rejected dualism in favor of a materialistic monism that found truth and meaning in particular individual things. Such emphases eventually led to modern, empirical, scientific ways of thinking, but Aristotle’s methodology contained many assumptions that depended heavily on common sense or naive observation. These assumptions in

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

by a decisive shift toward a more secularized form of theology, with the emphasis in theological literature turning toward ethics and religious experience. This was in some ways a reaction to the rapid developments in science that seemed to challenge the theological systems that had so closely aligned themselves with the older Aristotelian scientific assumptions. The influence of Kant and Schleiermacher can be seen in the shift away from accepting the objective teaching of Scripture as being the very Word of God toward a more subjective theology of personal experience and personal opinion.

The Modern Worldview

In the nineteenth century the Enlightenment's emphasis on morality and religious feelings continued and grew, but to this was added a sense of natural historical development and inevitable progress. Every area of life seemed to be affected by the growing secularism of the age. Individual freedom became a high priority (unless someone exercised their freedom in a way that violated another's inalienable right to freedom). But this new, secular freedom ultimately refused to submit even to God, and thus it destroyed the only possible basis for guaranteeing rights and values and freedom.³

some cases prevented scientific progress for many years. For example, Aristotle taught that the natural state of a thing was to be at rest (motionless). His reason for holding this belief was that the earth was the motionless center of the universe (sense perception convinced him of that), and without a causal "mover" nothing would move.

Thomas Aquinas took this "accepted truth" as one of his "five ways" to know that God exists. For many years the apparent motion of the heavens was accepted as a solid proof of God's existence. Who else could move all the stars together with such perfect regularity? This common-sense notion about motion was so obvious that it was not until Galileo and Newton that the modern, more dynamic picture of the universe began to emerge. The modern view has a totally different view of motion. It seems as if the natural state of things is to be in constant motion, and the old "first mover" argument has lost its persuasiveness. For the modern mind there is no longer an absolute, no longer a fixed point; the regular motion of the heavens seemingly is an illusion; the need for a personal mover is no longer obvious. This does not mean that all forms of cosmological reasoning are invalid, but the long-accepted version based on Aristotelian views of motion now seems to have been based on a false premise. For an introduction to Aristotle, see John B. Morrall, *Aristotle* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1977), and W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1964).

³ Many still do not understand that a free God who is righteous and just is the only reality that can grant responsible moral freedom to living creatures. Only such a being can establish justice and values. Without such a being as the Creator of the universe and of human life, all freedom becomes at best random chance and at worst does not exist. Natural law is inviolable if nature is all that exists. Those who cry for their rights and then advocate a modern naturalistic worldview are simply living in the tension of an inevitable contradiction.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Nineteenth-century concepts can be seen as forming the axioms and assumptions of “recent modern” man and, in fact, are the keys for unlocking the modern mind.⁴ With many new discoveries, many previous scientific theories have had to be modified, but nineteenth-century philosophical ideas still make up much of the distinctive worldview of the so-called modern and postmodern eras. Some believe and proclaim the ideas of evolutionary progress and anti-supernaturalism; others reject and/or criticize those ideas; still others suppose that some mixture of old and new ideas is the correct perspective. Nevertheless, the nineteenth-century secularization of science and history sets the agenda and the pattern for modern thought.

The Christian Worldview

The new features of the modern worldview (natural historical development and inevitable progress) are not necessarily two absolutely distinct ideas. They are usually seen more as a blend, and it is precisely this blend that lies behind modern secular thought. In order to see the impact this blend of ideas has made, it will be helpful to contrast the modern secular and naturalistic worldview that had arisen by the late twentieth century with the idea blend (the worldview) which (in the West, at least) has been secularism’s primary rival. This long-standing alternative includes the following ideas: (1) stability in nature, (2) spiritual warfare, and (3) historical change initiated by divine intervention.

This latter set of ideas more or less characterized Christian civilization prior to the nineteenth century, and it has maintained a strong following among Christian philosophers throughout the last two centuries (nineteenth and twentieth). For example, the idea of stability in nature grew out of the biblical teaching about creation. God made everything, saw that it was good, and finished his work of creation (the origination of new kinds of things) on the sixth day (cf. Gen. 1). Animals and plants were thereafter to reproduce “after their kind.” This did not mean that variation and adaptation could not occur within the established limits of the biblical “kind,” but it did mean that nature was understood as being basically stable. There was order and predictable regularity. This notion, in fact, was an essential element in the worldview that actually nurtured the birth of modern science.

⁴ See for example, Colin Brown, *Philosophy and the Christian Faith* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1968). Key thinkers include Kant, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Kierkegaard, Lessing, Comte, Marx, and Darwin. These men do not necessarily originate every idea that we now associate with their names, but the blend of the teachings of these writers is the intellectual matrix upon which the analytical traditions and the existential patterns of the early twentieth century were built. The postmodern collapse of the twentieth-century castle of naturalism was for many unexpected, but the loss of coherence and normative values in the last decades of the twentieth century reveal the bankruptcy of modernism.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Early modern science (1500–1750) came into being only partially because of new inventions such as the telescope. These instruments were important, but of at least equal importance were the philosophical ideas that supported the discovery of objective truth. Aristotle correctly moved away from a strict rationalism, such as might have been supported by Plato, and emphasized the unity of, for example, math, physics, and biology. Aristotle, however, never exceeded the limits of his own perceptions.

Aristotle believed in the perfection and the unchangeableness of the heavens. That is how they appeared to him. The medieval science that grew out of this Aristotelian notion concluded that the pure fire of the stars was either attached to a revolving, celestial sphere or that the stars were windows by which the pure fire showed through from the glorious realm beyond the pure crystal dome of the night sky. The heavenly perfection of the sun, and of the moon and of each known planet, was also affirmed, each one being given its own revolving sphere of pure transparent crystal.⁵

Aristotle taught that an object's natural state was to be at rest. Thus, motion proved the existence of a "mover," and for Aquinas, though not for Aristotle, the unmoved mover of all things was the biblical God. At this point Aristotle's physics and Aquinas' apologetic assumed the earth to be an unmoving fixed point in the universe; in fact, the earth was the center point of all the universal circles. Thus the rational significance of the earth was without parallel.⁶

Aristotle's medieval followers denied (before and without looking) the possibility of a blemished sun (sun spots), and they could offer no natural explanation for a comet (How did it get through the crystal spheres without breaking them?) or for a nova (stars were supposedly in a state of static perfection). The discovery of such phenomena in Galileo's day threatened Aristotle's science and church traditions, though not the Bible. Alchemy and other medieval "science projects" were also based on incorrect ancient Greek notions about the elemental makeup of the world.

⁵ It was impossible for Aristotle to imagine how these heavenly bodies could remain in the sky unless they were attached to something. Since they each had their own patterns of movement, they must each be attached to their own support. Such supporting structures must be round and clear, etc. The system was thus rationally extended, but it depended upon earthbound observational premises.

⁶ Students have often supposed that the loss of this central position was the great theological crisis that the Roman Church feared if Copernicus were proven correct. In fact, that fear is a later theory imposed on Rome. A moving earth would be moved by God, and a moving earth would not be so close to hell according to Dante's cosmology; so for the medieval mind, a moving earth would have exalted mankind. The objection to a moving earth was the belief that the theory was false, not primarily a fear of theological loss, though some Vatican theologians believed a moving earth would be contrary to certain Scripture passages. The fear of insignificance was real for Pascal, but it did not affect the outcome of Galileo's trial.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Stability

Christianity⁷ allows for rational order without a necessary commitment to Aristotle's physics, and thus modern science could thrive within such a cultural consensus. If God created the world, as the Christian Bible said that he did, then the world of nature should be reasonably stable, orderly, and predictable. God was not capricious or haphazard in his work of creation or preservation. He was a personal, rational, intelligent being, and he acted with purpose.

5

Since mankind was made in the image of God, the universe created by God should be able to be studied and understood by men, and physical, natural truths could be experimentally discovered. If things were created, then in some sense those things must be a reflection of the mind that created them. If human minds were in some ways like the mind of the Creator, then human minds could, within the limits of that similarity, recognize and understand the created order.

If the mathematics and the observations make more sense if one assumes that planetary motion centers upon—or as Copernicus actually thought, it centers upon some point near—the sun rather than upon the earth, then those more successful, rational calculations should be accepted as being closer to the truth than the older, less successful theories. Thus Galileo argued, and nothing in the actual teaching of the Bible contradicted this approach.⁸

Some misunderstand the descriptive, observational, phenomenological language style of the Bible. They sometimes mistakenly take a phenomenologically descriptive phrase as if

⁷ Christianity in this case is not a reference to a particular denomination or to any world communion as such but rather to the Christian worldview. In this sense, Christianity refers to the belief in an eternal triune God as Creator, Preserver, and Redeemer of the temporal and contingent world, the universe. This God created the world that actually exists and revealed himself within nature and history. Thus, to discover the scientific truth about the world is to discover something about this rational being who created the world by design.

⁸ Bible verses that speak of the earth's stability or the sun's motion through the heavens are not contradictions of modern cosmological views. They are either straightforward descriptions of appearances as described by an observer on the surface of the earth, or they are figurative descriptions of nature. No one actually thought rivers would clap literal hands (Ps. 98:8) or that trees would literally sing for joy (Ps. 96:12). Nor did biblical people think of the sun as literally hiding in a tent before rising each morning (Ps. 19:4–6). Nor does Ps. 96:10 make a cosmological claim about the planet Earth as might be seen from some hypothetical vantage point out in space. Biblical people did not have that privileged perspective. The planet Earth is seldom if ever in view in Scripture. That which does not move is the geographical status of a physical location that can be identified by observers standing somewhere on the surface of the ground. The text is affirming the certainty of divine judgment and the comprehensiveness of God's rule.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

it were describing things from God's viewpoint rather than, as is actually the case, from the viewpoint of the human writer.⁹ The clue that Holy Scripture is written from the viewpoint of individual human observers, who are always located at some geographical point, is found in Genesis 1 where the writer speaks of an "evening and a morning" as being the means of counting days, periods of light contrasted with darkness. Such descriptions are not from a vantage point somewhere out in space. "Evening and morning" is from a human observer's specific geographical point of view, and this is the way the biblical text reads even before there were any actual human observers in existence.¹⁰

6

Such is the language style of the Bible. If the Roman Curia had been less committed to Aristotle's perceptual theory of truth and more aware of this biblical language style, Galileo might not have been the center of such an unfortunate controversy between science and the church.¹¹ His views might have been considered more objectively and judged on their merits.

For Galileo biblical stability remained a characteristic of the world established by God. His theories in no way denied the order and scientific predictability of the world; rather, they depended on them.

Change

Order and stability—regularity—are characteristics of rationality. A rational God created the world. Thus, order and stability were assumed and sought by theists in scientific research. The world was believed by Newton and others to be what it has always been,

⁹ Martin Luther is said to have opposed Copernican heliocentrism because Joshua commanded the sun rather than the earth to stand still. Luther was wrong on this cosmological point, though he read the words of the Bible correctly. What he did not understand was that the Bible never intended to describe the world from a nonterrestrial perspective, whereas Copernicus and later thinkers were in fact attempting to describe the world from a new nonterrestrial perspective, which they seemingly considered to be more objective. In both cases, however, the underlying assumption was the rationality of God and thus of creation. The simplest and most rational explanation that adequately accounts for the evidence is favored. Luther apparently did not recognize the phenomenological language style of the Bible because he was seemingly unaware of all of the evidential issues for which an account must be given.

¹⁰ Adam is not created until the sixth day. The Spirit of God is hovering over the surface of the waters from the dark beginning, however, and from some point on this surface the story is told, even before Adam becomes an observer.

¹¹ The most fascinating account of Galileo's life and work is by Dava Sobel, *Galileo's Daughter* (New York: Penguin Putnam, 2000). Clearly the issues at Galileo's trial revolved around biblical interpretation, but it is equally clear that Galileo was a Christian believer who never doubted the truthfulness of the Bible.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

the product of the creative action of a rational God.¹² All animals reproduced after their own kind, as did all plants. Biological variation, in the minds of the theologians, simply served to fill out God's great chain of being.¹³ And life as it was now observed could be traced in its ancestry directly back to the creative hand of God. Such beliefs were held virtually by universal consent in pre-nineteenth-century scientific circles in Britain and in Europe.

7

Fossils were not unknown prior to the nineteenth century, but they were not particularly considered to be historically significant. Most fossils were thought to be the remains of older variations of the same kinds of animals that were still in existence. Extinction, not evolution, was the explanation when no similar contemporary animals were found.

Fossils were thought to have been placed on mountaintops perhaps by the biblical flood, but they were not taken as evidence of any radical changes in nature as a system. The flood surely would have brought about vast geological changes on the earth's surface, but this was clearly a historical change initiated by God.

¹² Newton's God was not Aristotle's impersonal, Unmoved Mover, however. Newton contended that motion was as much a natural state as was rest. This is his doctrine of "inertia." For Newton the system of motion and gravity is as much a manifestation of God's providence as a system of stability would be. Aristotle (and thus Aquinas) saw motion as a direct manifestation of God's activity. Newton saw motion to be as natural as the state of rest. Thus Newton's "God" was more dynamic and was not threatened by changes in nature.

Copernicus could be right and the earth could move, and no negative theological implications would result. In fact, a God who ruled all of this universal motion by simple, rational (mathematical) laws seemed to Newton to be a far grander God than Aristotle's unconscious Unmoved Mover. That this modern Newtonian view ultimately came to be seen as mechanistic (and thus impersonal) was due to philosophical, not factual, changes. See Nancy R. Pearcey and Charles B. Thaxton, *The Soul of Science: Christian Faith and Natural Philosophy* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 71–73, 99–95. See also Peter Aughton, *The System of the World: Isaac Newton and the English Scientific Renaissance* (London: Cassell, 2001).

¹³ The idea of a "chain of being" seems to have come from Augustine's notion that God (through creation) intended to make creatures of every conceivable kind from the simplest to the most complex. Thus, the variety of created things was seen as a series of beings, each one capable of being classified as a link between two other beings. Each creature, then, filled a niche or served as a link in a continuous chain of reality. This image is still preserved in our references to the lack of transitional forms in the fossil record as being "missing links." Augustine's original notion of a "chain of being" was not evolutionary, however. Each variety of created kinds simply unfolded and blossomed into a multitude of creatures of that kind. The many variations of size, coloring, shape, and other characteristics filled out the possibilities within each kind and thus helped to complete the "chain." This concept of creation was seen as an adequate explanation for variation and change among living things while at the same time affirming the basic stability of nature. See Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study in the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936, 1964).

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

According to the biblical record, God had initiated several historical changes since creation. Just as there was one language before Babel, and Law before Gospel, so there was the antediluvian world and the postdiluvian world. Perhaps there were other significant, divinely initiated changes that would have an effect on scientific studies—for example, in geology or in historical studies—but the underlying principle upon which even *catastrophist theory* was built was that all real, significant, and substantial change had a supernatural initiation (divine creation or divine judgment). *Nature itself, however, was thought to have remained essentially constant as a system, fixed, stable, and orderly since the beginning.*

8

Natural law was seen as more reliable than any man-made machine. To study the present *was* to study the past because it was assumed that nature had remained stable since the first Sabbath, the seventh day of creation.

The exception to this general rule was that modern observers would, of course, by necessity be focused on the effects of divine judgments, such as the Genesis flood, and the present was in that sense unlike the beginning. A similar distinction was made between the pre- and post-fall world. The earth currently suffers under a curse of death and decay that would not have been an original feature of the world. This would affect biology and geology and other areas of science, but regularity and stability were nevertheless crucial for scientific studies, even with these qualifications.

Spiritual Warfare

The common understanding in the premodern era of human life and human history was that though it took place in a physically stable environment, human beings were engaged in constant spiritual warfare. Satan and God were doing battle, and the battleground was the human mind; the price was the human soul.

According to the Bible, mankind had been created perfect, mentally keen, disease free, righteous—or at least innocent—and spiritually minded. Nevertheless, Adam was tempted by Satan, and Adam sinned by choosing to disobey God. Every person faces and fails a similar test, and the battle with temptation and sin is continual. The struggle of life in Western society was not primarily the physical struggle; it was the spiritual one. Judgment, and thus major historical change, came about when humanity failed in the spiritual battle. Blessing, revival, and, thus again, major historical change came about as men and women responded to the grace of God.¹⁴

¹⁴ See Malcolm McDow and Alvin L. Reid, *Firefall: How God Has Shaped History through Revivals* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997).

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The New Worldview

Prior to the Renaissance—actually prior to Kant—almost no one believed in gradual, inevitable progress in human history. Progress came as a gift of God when there was a turning in faith to him. Human history was primarily, however, a history of failure and judgment, broken by spiritual awakenings from time to time.

This worldview was challenged by the humanism of the Renaissance, and it was finally replaced in the nineteenth century by a modern worldview stressing gradual, inevitably progressive development and advancement in human history and in natural history. This shift is perfectly clear as far as seeing that it took place. It is, however, far from clear in the sense of seeking the authentic sources of the change.

Obviously, the intellectual roots of the modern view go back at least into the Enlightenment. Kant's view of history as progressing from the "dark" past to the intellectual "clearing up"¹⁵ of his day was surely a major factor. Hegel proposed perhaps the most sophisticated philosophical expression of the historical development toward freedom, but "inevitable progress" became the subconscious reality of modern thinkers, whether they had ever read Hegel or Kant.

Notice the contrasts these two worldviews produce in the interpretation of nature, history, and mankind. (See table 1.) In the earlier view there is a natural stability in both history and in nature. Progress or decline are products of a person's relationship or lack of relationship to God, and neither is inevitable historically. To the modern mind, however, progress is inevitable. It is a characteristic of nature and a characteristic of mankind.¹⁶

¹⁵ This *Aufklärung* or "enlightenment" became the self-image European scholars adopted in contrast to what they now called the Dark Ages, the years since the fall of Rome. Kant is suggesting by this term that modern knowledge had finally exceeded that of the ancients. The term *Enlightenment* covered a range of modern ideas in science, literature, philosophy, and politics. See Michael Delon, *The Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment* (London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001).

¹⁶ While in table 1 the description of mankind in the modern view is optimistic and self-congratulatory, such views are increasingly being recognized as a delusion by those who most fully understand the true implications of the modern naturalistic worldview. Robert L. Smith Sr., of Howard Payne University, in the H. I. Hester Lectures given at the annual meeting of the Association of Southern Baptist Colleges and Schools held at Charleston Southern University, June 1994, as reported in *The Southern Baptist Educator*, September 1994, 3–5, called attention to this shift in thinking:

A pall has fallen on our society described by theologian Carl F. Henry as "the Blight of Meaninglessness." Harvard paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould in an interview published in *Time* magazine in May of 1990 entitled, "Evolution, Extinction and the Movies" was asked why he had written that humankind was an afterthought, a cosmic accident. His response was that every

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Some modern theists describe reality as if it were a society. God is preeminent but not totally controlling. Progress is inevitable because God is active rather than static. He is a creative participant in the community of interacting beings.¹⁷ Some who advocate this so-called process theology believe that God himself is dynamically growing. The world is thought of as his body through which he interacts with and leads the community of life. God is thought to be the process of life itself, and thus the supposed evidence for evolutionary change is taken as evidence for an inevitable process of divine growth.

Table 1

	Modern View	Earlier View
Nature	naturally evolved	divinely created
	characterized by progressive development	stability of species
	transmutation of species	each kind of life distinct
	all kinds of life physically related	
	produces man's character	reflects God's character
History	physical struggle	spiritual struggle

species is. The interviewer continued, "So the view of evolution as a ladder with humankind at the top rung is incorrect." Answer: "It is nothing more than a representation of our hopes. We have certain hopes and cultural traditions in the West, and we impose them on the actual working of the world." He was then asked what he thought the reason was for our existence. He answered, "There is as much reason for us to be here as there is for anything else.... It's just that what happened is one of a billion possible alternatives...." Another question followed, "Does extinction mean failure?" Gould replied, "Extinction is ultimately the fate of all creatures."

Whatever we think of that interview, it gives us a clear insight into the secular worldview.

¹⁷ For example, this is the view advocated by Ian G. Barbour, *Religion and Science* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1997).

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

	change natural and inevitable	change by divine intervention
	survival of the fittest	survival of the faithful
Mankind	pinnacle of biological evolution	unique creation of God
	exclusively related to animals	made in God's image
	characterized by spiritual progress	characterized by spiritual failure

Perhaps it is a characteristic of God to develop and to increase in knowledge. Perhaps God even adds to his own being by actualizing potential realities. Thus, modern thinking not only alters the earlier views of nature, history, and mankind, but it has radically changed its concept of ultimate reality. God himself has now become identified with evolutionary progress and development.¹⁸ For modern thinkers even God is not unchanging and fixed in his nature or in his character.

Modern theologians, therefore, face problems that never occurred to their ancestors. Not only do they struggle to classify and interpret the factual data of biblical history, but they must now ask how an ancient historical event, such as the death of Christ, could have any modern significance at all. This is a major problem for them, of course, because what gave significance to such an event in traditional theology is no longer relevant to those who live inside the modern worldview. In a stable world experiencing spiritual warfare, a supreme spiritual victory is eternally significant. In a world of physical struggle and perpetual advancement, however, a victory over evil in the past might be interpreted as a major step forward in the overall pattern of spiritual advancement, but it would never settle anything in an eternal sense.

¹⁸ Gordon D. Kauffman, professor of divinity at Harvard Divinity School, in his *Theology for a Nuclear Age* [(Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 42], suggests that the traditional concept of God is "seriously misleading and dangerous." He insists that we must reconceive God "in terms of the complex of physical, biological and historic-cultural conditions which have made human existence possible, which continue to sustain it, and which may draw it out to a fallen humanity and humaneness." God, he says (p. 43) is a symbolic word representing "an ultimate tendency ... working itself out in an evolutionary process." Humans, however, have been polluting the environment. We now have endangered human life on earth, and thus what we do "can have disastrous consequences for the divine life itself" (p. 46).

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Thus, the quest to discover and explain the significance of Christ has become a major theme of modern theology. Some see Jesus as the outstanding example of a man properly related to God. Others give him acclaim as the true revolutionary theologian. Some find his uniqueness in his moral example or in his religious consciousness. To see him as an incarnate deity is considered by the modern mind to be a mythological belief.¹⁹ Not all modern theologians are ready to declare incarnational Christology a myth,²⁰ of course, but many do, and those who do are clearly and consistently following the logic of the modern worldview to its unfortunate, though natural, conclusion.

Authentic Christianity need not fear modern thought any more than it fears heresy in general. The apostles clearly warned that in the latter days many would deny the truth and heap unto themselves teachers who would scoff at our most holy faith (cf. Jude 17–19; 2 Pet. 3:3; 2 Tim. 3:1; 4:3–4; 1 John 4:1). The truth, however, will ultimately prevail.

The older worldview is not true because it's old, and it too may be in need of refinement in light of better understandings of the Bible, but authentic Christianity is the best antidote for a culture that is dying from the venom of the Advancement. The modern world is full of good, but there are also within it some poisons—the loss of truth, the determinism of evolutionary naturalism, the inevitability of moral decay, and the absence of meaning. For all of these things and more, Christ is the answer.²¹

¹⁹ See John Hick, ed., *The Myth of God Incarnate* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977); and Michael Goulder, ed., *Incarnation and Myth: The Debate Continued* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979).

²⁰ Bernard L. Ramm devotes a major section of his *An Evangelical Christology: Ecumenic & Historic* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985) to a demonstration of this point (see pp. 18ff and 190ff).

²¹ Bush, L. R. (2003). *The advancement: keeping the faith in an evolutionary age* (pp. 7–17). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.