Lion and Lamb Apologetics

The Coming of Strange Fire

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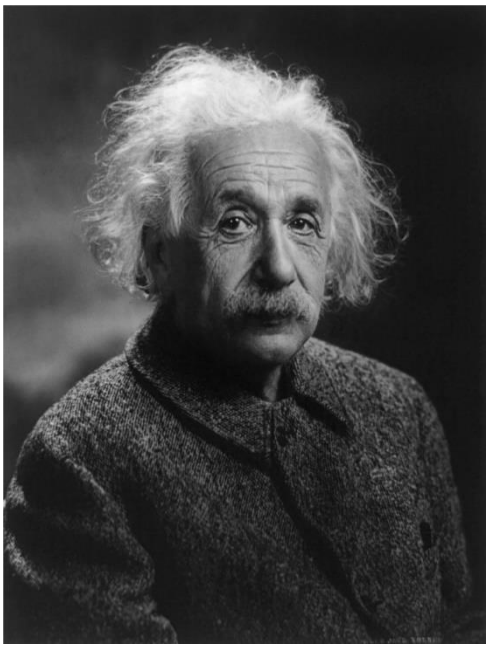

"I have just seen what hell is like."

The date was August 6, 1945. The words were expressed by an observer on a military aircraft that had just turned away from a city whose name would be printed in every subsequent history book. The event was the explosion of the first atomic bomb ever dropped over a populated area of the world. The experience of discovering what hell is like was the last remembered moment for 90,000 people whose lives were extinguished from this world in that living instant. Almost 130,000 people were killed, injured, or missing, and 90 percent of that industrial city was leveled by the bomb blast.

From that moment on, the world would never be the same again. It was at that point in time that the atomic age began as a publicly, universally recognized new era in the troubled history of mankind. The strange fire that was unleashed on Hiroshima in that fateful hour continued to burn, becoming a consideration impossible to ignore in the deliberations of presidents, kings, and parliaments until the end of time. To this very hour, the fact that we live in a nuclear age has daily conditioned the thinking of all who have anything to do with plans for peace, war, energy, manufacturing, or the safety and security of mankind. No word has attached itself more to the hopes and apprehensions of a generation than has the word "nuclear" to this generation.

Following that fateful day in August 1945, the atomic bomb was used but one more time, bringing in that devastating blast the surrender of Japan to the allied powers and the end of World War II. That was on August 9, 1945, and the grisly results were 75,000 people killed, wounded, or missing, with one third of the city of Nagasaki devastated. A stunned world looked upon these two flashes of infernal lightning and then hurried to its conference tables to think about the future. Beginning there, the nations of the world conducted trembling negotiations with one another, pressed by the conviction that "this must never happen again." All subsequent discussions about life on earth have been

conducted in the shadow of that familiar mushroom cloud, out of which comes the muttering thunder that seems to say, "Never again."

Many of the events of history have been created by trends, fads, human deliberations, and the like. More often, however, the vast, world-changing tides have grown out of the mind of one person who saw what others did not see, and thought what others never thought. So it was with the nuclear era. In a sense, modern times, especially in terms of its nuclear component, have been "created" by one man.

That man was Albert Einstein.

The equations that were forged in the incomparable brain of that young man still rule the world of science. As we shall see, they still rule the world of human living as well. They have their impact upon each of us every day that we breathe air, drink water, eat food, or think about the future.

Albert Einstein was born in 1879 to Jewish parents in the city of Ulm, Germany. The definition of his profession is that he was "an American theoretical physicist," although his origins were from the continent of Europe. Surely the world ought daily to thank God that the word "American" was attached to the name of Albert Einstein. Had that word remained "German," how different the world would be today!

Einstein lived as a boy in Munich and also in Milan, and continued his studies at the Cantonal School at Aarau, Switzerland, graduating in 1900 from the Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich. In the early years of his life, his parents were concerned, for they thought him to be at best a slow learner. It seemed as if he did not have the wide, eclectic breadth of interest as did the other youthful students in his school. Therefore, their hopes were not great for this young man who seemed to take more time to think about things than appeared to be normal.

Later, Einstein testified that his slow learning ability was in fact the reason for his taking more time to think about things. He thought, however, that this did limit the subjects for which he had the time and interest to consider, and which might well have occupied, but superficially, a more capacious mind. He saw himself as a simple man and felt that his capacities were best spent in thinking more deeply about simple things. That simplicity of thought led him to probe into "the secret of the universe" more deeply than anyone of his time or perhaps of all time.

Pursuing his studies with his penetrating mind, however, he obtained his doctorate in 1905 at the University of Zurich. It was in that year that he presented to the world a

scientific point of view that captured the minds of the physicists of the world and redirected the course of history.

That point of view was called "the special theory of relativity."

From 1905 onward, his reputation was firmly established and grew to the level where he was soon called "one of the greatest physicists of all time." In 1912, he accepted the chair of theoretical physics at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, his alma mater. By 1913, international fame was his, and he was invited by the Prussian Academy of Science to become titular professor of physics and director of theoretical physics at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute. In the process, he became a citizen of Switzerland, but he reassumed his German citizenship in 1914. In 1921, he received the Nobel Prize in physics for his work in theoretical physics, most notably on the photoelectric effect.

In the 1920s, Einstein continued his program of teaching and at the same time was pressed with a thousand other questions by physicists, the press, and ordinary people wherever he traveled on his public appearances. We can be very sure that through the 1920s he kept a careful eye on the growth of science, the political situation in the world, and particularly the developments on the continent of Europe. One of those developments was to effect for Einstein a change of venue and nationality. For this change all of mankind can still be grateful. That development was the rise of Hitler and the establishment of the Nazi government.

The account of those notable days is now well known across the world, political historians having analyzed them in a thousand ways. A disillusioned Germany under the Weimar Republic watched and allowed to rise to power a person and a party with stated, dreadful intentions for the future. One of the early programs of Adolf Hitler and the Nazis was the creation of an enemy in the minds of the German people. That indignation, thought the Nazis, would be an instrument to unite the German people around the Nazi promise for the future. Creating an enemy, whether false or true, is a well-known political device of every incipient dictator.

For the Nazis, that enemy was the Jewish race. There followed the Jewish pogroms, the widest persecution and largest attempt at genocide that man has known in all of history. One of the Jewish persons upon whom that persecution had a profound effect was Albert Einstein. His property was confiscated in 1934 by the Nazi government, and he himself was deprived of his German citizenship. Little did Hitler know that this single act of deprivation was to put into the hands of his future enemies the scientific know-how and the military device which would ultimately extinguish his Nazi promises and halt the war which he was to initiate. The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small.

In 1933, Einstein had accepted a post at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, a fortuitous move for him and for all of civilization. He therefore came to the United States in 1934 and retained his position at the Institute through the war years until 1945. In 1940, he decided to become an American citizen, which decision was ultimately to be of no small consequence in the survival of Western civilization.

We know, of course, that Einstein gave us the special theory of relativity, which gave the world a new understanding of the universe and the titanic power that works in the cosmos as a whole and in each individual, minuscule atom of that universe. From Einstein we learned that there are forces of near-infinite strength within the innocent, benign things we see every day. As an expression of these potential forces, Einstein perfected what is certainly the best-known equation in physics or mathematics.

That equation is $E = mc^2$.

The meaning of that equation is that the energy that is latent within matter is equal to the mass of that matter multiplied by the speed of light squared. Now we know that the speed of light is 186,000 miles per second. Simple mathematics would therefore lead us to understand that the explosive power within the nuclear components of any given mass is so great as to be beyond description. It was discovered that uranium was a remarkable metal, which, under proper circumstances, could be caused to release its atoms with a massive explosive force. Without exercising too strenuous an imagination, one can easily see that an entity, like a proton, which is traveling in a circle at the speed of light, is evidencing titanic energy. If that proton were released and fired in a straight line away from its circular orbit, all things in its path would be devastated. The proper combination to produce that effect was shown to the world in the blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It is still the case that most people in the world do not understand the theory of relativity and how it was that the gigantic forces were unleashed in the nuclear bomb. Despite the inadequate knowledge of the details by the average man, however, each of us will at least note that the physicist's incursion into the world of subatomic particles has released a massivity of energy that has already staggered the imagination. The physicist sees no reason for not believing that there is enough force in a relatively small mass to blow up the entire world.

How much of this shall we attempt to understand? Einstein himself has a suggestion. He wrote:

> Anyone who has ever tried to present a rather abstract scientific subject in a popular manner knows the great difficulties of such an attempt. Either he succeeds in being intelligible by concealing the core of the problem and by offering to the

> reader only superficial aspects or vague illusions, thus deceiving the reader by arousing in him the deceptive illusion of comprehension; or else he gives an expert account of the problem, but in such a fashion that the untrained reader is unable to follow the exposition and becomes discouraged from reading any further.
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> If these two categories were omitted from today's popular scientific literature, surprising little remains. But the little that is left is very valuable indeed. It is of great importance that the general public be given an opportunity to experience—consciously and intelligently—the efforts and results of scientific research. It is not sufficient that each result be taken up, elaborated, and applied by a few specialists in the field. Restricting the body of knowledge to a small group deadens the philosophic spirit of a people and leads to spiritual poverty.[1]

This was Einstein's own introduction to the good work of Lincoln Barnett in presenting *The Universe and Dr. Einstein*.

We will agree as to the wisdom of this statement by Dr. Einstein. In fact, Einstein in this passage has pointed up the difficulty faced by any author who would write on important but complicated themes (almost all important themes carry with them a degree of complication). In any form of science or in the humanities, but especially in theology, is that principle present. One fears, therefore, that in our time the popularists have achieved the clear majority. Consequently, we have much literature that is interesting but superficial. We have much literature that passes for valuable religious material or even Christian doctrine which could well be enhanced in its truth content, despite the complications.

In Einstein, we see once again how a person with a dominant, world-changing set of ideas is soon called upon to put his imprimatur on other things. Einstein, with his obviously confirmed and life-changing views called relativity, was soon to be thought the father of a set of views that were to influence the entire culture. In the minds of many, *relativity* became *relativism*. There is no doubt that relativism is one of the prevailing thought modes of our society.

Paul Johnson, the historian, comments on this:

> "At the beginning of the 1920s the belief began to circulate, for the first time at a popular level, that there were no longer any absolutes: of time and space, of good

[1] Lincoln Barnett, *The Universe and Dr. Einstein* (New York: New American Library, 1938), p. 9.

> and evil, of knowledge, above all of value. Mistakenly but perhaps inevitably, relativity became confused with relativism."[2]

Einstein was chagrined at the way his presentation of physics became twisted in the public mind.

"No one was more distressed than Einstein by this public misapprehension. He was bewildered by the relentless publicity and error which his work seemed to promote."[3]

Expanding on this Johnson said:

> The emergence of Einstein as a world figure in 1919 is a striking illustration of the dual impact of great scientific innovators on mankind. They change our perception of the physical world and increase our mastery of it. But they also change our ideas. The second effect is often more radical than the first. The scientific genius impinges on humanity, for good or ill, far more than any statesman or warlord. Galileo's empiricism created the ferment of natural philosophy in the seventeenth century which adumbrated the scientific and industrial revolutions. Newtonian physics formed the framework of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, and so helped to bring modern nationalism and revolutionary politics to birth. Darwin's notion of the survival of the fittest was a key element both in the Marxist concept of class warfare and of the racial philosophies which shaped Hitlerism. Indeed the political and social consequences of Darwinian ideas have yet to work themselves out, as we shall see. So, too, the public response to relativity was one of the principal formative influences on the course of twentieth-century history. It formed a knife, inadvertently wielded by its author, to help cut society adrift from its traditional moorings in the faith and morals of Judeo-Christian culture.[4]

So it was that the popular interpreter of Einstein in his day found himself quickly saying, "All things are relative," and thinking that he was voicing a new discovery that was as true as relativity. But alas, he was speaking of an entirely different subject, which would be essentially denied by Einstein himself. Nevertheless, the notion that "all things are relative" soon moved out from the laboratory of the physicist into the entire human domain. Thus was created the era in which absolutes faded and eventually disappeared in the minds of many and in which relativism became the prevailing spirit of thought and action.

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[2] Paul Johnson. *Modern Times* (New York: Harper & Row. 1983), p. 4.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid., p. 5.

It will help in our understanding of the easy acceptance of relativism to remember the world as it was in the days of the early impact of Einstein's theory of relativity. The period of the turn of the century until the days of World War II was fascinating indeed.

As a basic background, Darwinism had taken hold with near universality. The assumption behind most teaching and virtually all related activity was that all of nature was evolving from a narrow, meaner past to a wider, better future. How easy it was, therefore, to assume that the truths, the principles, the standards, the foundations of yesterday were now irrelevant. The past, with its Victorian morality and immature concepts, was fast slipping into the shadows of yesteryear. The force called natural selection was seen to be carrying the world along—ever onward, ever upward. Nothing, then, was sacrosanct, and the belief system of man no longer held that things were changeless, secure, or absolute.

Marxism was also coming on strong not only in the Soviet Union but in other nations in the West. The world looked on with a combination of horror and fascination as the Russian Revolution swept the Marxists into absolute power. Preoccupied by the dread actualities and results of World War I, the unsuspecting nations of earth thought little of the Russian Revolution and its possible consequences. Having established itself in Russia, Marxism then easily entered the intellectual climate of the West with its call for social change and its larger ambition of global revolution.

> Marx, Freud, Einstein all conveyed the same message to the 1920s: the world was not what it seemed. The senses, whose empirical perceptions shaped our ideas of time and distance, right and wrong, law and justice, and the nature of man's behavior in society, were not to be trusted. Moreover, Marxist and Freudian analysis combined to undermine, in their different ways, the highly developed sense of personal responsibility, and of duty towards a settled and objectively true moral code, which was at the centre of nineteenth-century European civilization. The impression people derived from Einstein, of a universe in which all measurements of value were relative, served to confirm this vision—which both dismayed and exhilarated—of moral anarchy.[5]

Yes, the revolutionary spirit was on. Marxist cadres in Germany, France, Britain, and the United States preached their doctrines with even greater conviction and more earnest calls. Pointing to the eight days that shook the world in the Soviet Union, they promised that "this was just the beginning." They joyously extended the call of revolution to everyone everywhere and thought that in a matter of days the same bright revolution that had begun to transform the Soviet Union would come to the other nations of the

[5] Ibid., p. 11.

world. For them, the new age of revolution had begun, and time would shortly transform everything.

The instabilities created by these moving ideas were further exacerbated by the Wellhausian destruction of historic Christianity. The evolutionary and Marxist modes came upon the churches and soon became the substitute gospel preached by the liberal religious establishment, which took the place of the message of saving faith in Jesus Christ. Very soon, the mission of the church was seen as changing the world, altering the social structure, producing social transformation. The concept that the mission of Christianity was to bring the hope of eternal life gave way to the doctrine of social action as a replacement of the "irrelevant activity" of preaching. Christianity, in the minds of its leaders, was now to be seen as the great instrument of social change, even to the place where some thought, *In our time we might bring in the kingdom*.

In the days following World War I, this was especially true. The liberal establishment announced that the awful European war was "the war to end all wars." They announced that mankind had learned its lesson and that dramatic changes were now ahead with the combined forces of natural selection, Marxism, and a new, world-oriented Christianity. The idea of change, of moving from the old to the new, was in the air. In the midst of this milieu of thought came relativism. It soon became fashionable everywhere to suggest as a universal explanation of all things the faddish expression, "All things are relative." Here was an assertion that had nothing to do with the science of physics or chemistry. Rather, it was a play on words, a twist of an expression that thereby lent plausibility to those who felt constrained to use the words of the time.

So it was that at the cocktail parties, on the streets, and especially in the academic circles the relativity of Einstein developed its social application in relativism. They all insisted that just as things were relative to one another in Einstein's universe, so also were all relationships within the culture relative, not to an absolute law but to an inabsolute one another. Relativism became king, and a twisted version of Einstein's views joined the pantheon of ideas that rules from the grave.

The worst of these relativisms, of course, is moral relativism. In that the basis of life itself is moral, moral relativism quickly moved to undermine the very foundations of society. The ideas of "historic values" and especially "Judeo-Christian ethics" were quickly superannuated, and all ideas of right and wrong were suspected, reviewed, and in many cases discarded. It can easily be argued that society began its slide into the abyss with the advent of moral relativism and the absence of a sturdy, rock-ribbed Church to stand as an earthwork against the tide.

But for most people, of course, complete moral relativism is an absurdity and an impossibility. To some degree, man has the law written in his heart and possesses, until he successfully destroys it, a conscience that brings guilt to his soul, which violates that law. The fact is that the mind of the rational human being cannot long retain its sanity in a situation where moral guidelines have disappeared. What, then, was man to do? In that there must be guidance of some kind, society formulated alternative ethical systems so that there would at least be some dim light shining in the darkness. It may well be suggested that there are four possible ethical systems to which a culture can adhere in its attempt to retain some guidance for present and oncoming generations. These four systems would well be worth noting.

The first and highest of the ethical systems available to man is, of course, what would best be called *biblical morality*. This is the conviction that God is and that He has revealed the rules by which man is required to live if civilization is to continue. Because a reminder of this ethical system may be helpful to all, it is worth a moment of review. It can probably be safely asserted that it is a rare person, even in the church, who has reviewed the law of God for civilized man in the last many years. It is found clearly presented in the Bible:

> And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's. (Exodus 20:1–17)

Here we have the mandate that was placed by God upon the nation of Israel. It is the basis of civil law, without which basis no nation can long survive. It is certainly the law without which no nation can know the blessing of God. The law of God, therefore, applies to every nation on earth as the key to the one way it can please God and the one way it can know survival and sanity.

Secular society has, as we have seen, progressively ignored this law. It calls this law too tough, too religious, inapplicable, and the like. But because there must be a set of rules of some kind, the highest form of secular society has opted for another legal program by which it governs itself.

This legal program, the second ethical system, would best be called *consensus morality*. To produce this form of agreement, the leading minds within a society (what politicians were once thought to be) gather and agree together as to the mutual commitment they will make to one another. This mutual commitment then comes together with some form of writing, a constitution, a Bill of Rights, a Magna Carta, or the like. It is agreed that certain things will be legal and others will be illegal. This is followed by many hopeful statements such as, "We are not a government of men, we are a government of law." So consensus morality offers rules for conduct based on a thoughtful consensus of discerning people who meet by the light of day and determine what they shall hold to be acceptable conduct.

A set of laws based on consensus can certainly be helpful. In our time, however, we have discovered that this form of agreed-upon conduct can work only among people who are for the most part reasonable, obedient, moral—yes, lawful. If, however, the majority of the constituents of a nation become unstable, self-seeking, rebellious, unreasonable, or violent, then the consensus begins to break down. We call this form of government "democracy." We are now in the midst of discovering that democracy and its attendant laws are insufficient to control a people who become increasingly perverse.

Finally, when people decide to do what is right in their own eyes, the agreement breaks down. Democracy, therefore, can only be a temporary expedient, lasting only as long as there is within that society a majority of responsible people who have the work of the law written in their hearts. When democracy sinks to the place where it is simply an object of personal advantage by those who would exploit it to their own ends, from thence it is in great trouble. It is at the point where the concept of divine law behind democracy has been eroded and then disappears. We must recognize, therefore, that however deep a national consensus may be, it still is a free-standing arrangement. It cannot survive apart from being built on a foundation stronger than the mere statement, "We have met, and this is what we have decided." Who can doubt that most of the democratic nations in the

world are even now sinking beneath the possibility of being controlled by mere organized consensus?

The third possible form of civic morality is best expressed by the word *pragmatism*. Morality becomes more personal and individualistic as private advantage moves to the fore as the rule of life. Under pragmatism, the citizens of a progressively weak nation give themselves more and more to doing the thing that is practical, advantageous, or personally profitable. They move to the conviction that whatever superficial interest they may have in others, they must, if they are to survive, look out for "number one." Such a society must inevitably become progressively atomized, with each one of its people becoming a small factor of disunity as the culture is progressively fractionalized.

We can say about pragmatism that at least it is not quite the worst of all moralities. This is due to the fact that it is sometimes very practical to cooperate, to be obedient, or to follow a rule that has been established by consensus somewhere. It is therefore possible for a society to limp along even when most of its people live for personal, rather than public, advantage.

The fourth possible form of morality, which is becoming increasingly more evident in our time, is simply called *hedonism*. Here, as in pragmatism, the individual seeks for personal advantage; but now he sinks to the place where that personal advantage takes the form of mere indulgence and personal fulfillment—yes, the lust of the flesh. In a hedonistic society, partying is the major pursuit, and alcohol and drugs and degeneracy become king. Sexual fulfillment is all there is, and all other entities cooperate to bring a false version of this fulfillment. In such a society, the popular films are X-rated and the popular talk shows center on bizarre or perverted sexual activity. Finally, there are no rules whatsoever, and homosexuality becomes merely "an alternative lifestyle" and bestiality just another form of self-realization.

Hedonism may be discussed dispassionately in a philosophy class, but in practice the passions take over. A society of hedonism is experiencing its final form of existence before it passes into a bottom-of-the-pit situation where survival is impossible. It sinks into a situation with a name that only means destruction, death, and damnation. The name of that lower form of brief existence is *anarchy*.

Anarchy, the fifth possible ethical system, is the end of the line. It is the reductio ad absurdum of moral relativism. Have we not in our time seen elements of the world culture drop into anarchy, which but for the grace of God or a quick, violent, bloody revolution means death for everyone? No perceptive person will ignore the growing evidence in our time of emergent anarchy in one or another increasingly dangerous place in our world.

Such a situation begins when some person, pretending at intelligence, says, "All things are relative." If this is true, then murder, rape, and pillage are not morally different from love, altruism, and neighborly help. The fact is that many who mouth these relativistic ideas in our time have no concept of the deep pit to which such loose talk leads. If all things are relative, then soon there is no tomorrow. Society will inevitably slip down the ladder of progressively false moralities into the pit of death and extinction. Could this be the course of our present society? Only a person characterized by incurable (and it needs to be cured) human optimism could deny that possibility.

It is fair to suggest that the world of science was enormously inspired by Einstein's theory of relativity. They saw his views as truth for the world of physics, as indeed they were. Einstein brought to the physical world a deeper truth than Newtonian physics had ever seen. This deeper, more solid truth became an enormous new force in the advancement of science. James Coleman, one of the explainers of relativity, said:

> The story behind the theory of relativity is a fascinating one which stirs the imagination more than any fiction created by man possibly could do. For here is a story of theory after theory, at first appearing successful, but disintegrating upon closer scrutiny; of repeated attempts at surmounting insurmountable barriers, only to be met with continual dismal failure. But at last all barriers were surmounted by a superhuman endeavor which up to now has withstood all tests and attacks. This is the story of relativity.[6]

Out of these remarkable discoveries, Einstein developed an enormous respect for the universe and for the God who stood behind it all. He certainly could not be called a conventional atheist, but rather an honest Jewish theist. He was given to making such remarks as, "God is subtle, but He is not malicious." He also said the well-known, "God does not play dice with the universe." He stood in awe of the intelligent Being who, in his opinion, was behind it all.

Unfortunately, the world of external culture drew the wrong conclusions from its association with Einstein. It took to itself its own ideas of social relativism with all of the consequent results of which we have spoken. Einstein would certainly not be proud to be thought the father of the deterioration due to relativism that we have seen today.

Many will remember that the doctrine of relativism was presented in something of an "official version" of this point of view just a few years ago. It took the form of a book entitled *Situation Ethics*, written by Joseph Fletcher. This work created a bit of a stir at that

[6] James A. Coleman, *Relativity for the Layman* (New York: New American Library, 1954), p. 6.

time, both because of its content and because of the rather extreme illustrations Fletcher used.

One of these illustrations came in the form of a story of a woman being held by the Nazis in a concentration camp. She felt reponsible to return to her husband and children, but knew that there was only one way in which this release from the concentration camp and her return to her family could be obtained. The method was that she must become pregnant. Therefore, out of love for her husband and family, she seduced one of the guards, and in the resulting act of adultery the pregnancy was achieved. Fletcher then insisted that this was an act of higher love. It was, if you please, the committing of what the world would call "sin" in order to achieve the higher righteousness of returning to the bosom of her family. With these and other illustrations, Fletcher attempted to prove that morality was never absolute; rather, it was "situational."

Fletcher's work, therefore, attempted to give situation ethics a degree of theological legitimacy. While this may or may not have been achieved, he did succeed in giving situation ethics a degree of notoriety.

The result of all of this is that questions such as, "What is right?" and, "What is wrong?" were discussed extensively, both in the world and also within the churches, many times these discussions coming to no conclusion. For, of course, to come to a conclusion would admit the existence of some kind of absolute. This would be thought to be rather gauche, for the intellectual fads of the time ran against it.

What was forgotten in many of those discussions is the fact that nature is a far more fixed and unchangeable thing than many were willing to admit. The influence of Darwin had caused the world to believe in a natural universe that is dynamic and emerging, one that leaves behind the old principles and forever seeks new ones. No end of mischief was wrought in the thinking of people by the Darwinist view that there is no fixed continuum that moves from the past through the present into the future. Few things could be further from the truth.

One classic illustration of this necessary point is in the form of a tide that is breaking upon us today and is called by such authors as David Noebel *the homosexual revolution*. The homosexuals would have themselves and us believe that "nature" is a permissive entity, bringing joy and fulfillment to any person practicing whatever form of sexual indulgence may appeal to him, her, or them. The homosexual simply says that his practice is "an alternative sexual preference" and feels that this short expression should answer every question and satisfy every critic.

The homosexual forgets, however, that "nature" does not allow an alternative sexual expression without exacting a precise and horrible price. One cannot, simply by making a short speech, alter the laws that God has built into nature. That is why the people of an earlier and wiser generation called such activity "perversion." Perversion it is, whatever anybody says or how many sociologists add their permission to such practices. The violation of the natural order of things is still perversion, whatever new ideas would express the hope that we should think differently.

Nature is not relative. It is unaffected by remorse, tears, love, or forgiveness, and it very seldom gives us space to repent. That's why we have human laws! The law of man may be just a bit flexible, but this is to warn us of the exactions of inflexible nature. When we approach a curve in the highway, the sign says, "Speed limit—45 miles per hour." Quite obviously, we can take the curve at 50 or perhaps 55 miles per hour. But, there is an exact instant when a car of a certain weight, traveling at a given speed, will roll out of control into the crashing finality of a ditch, culvert, or even a precipice. The good intentions of the driver, or even his philosophic views about relativism, make no difference. He is dead absolutely and buried in an absolute grave.

The homosexual revolution, by the way, is like that. Homosexuality is not only a sin against God, who may give us space to repent, but it is a sin against nature as well. With nature, there is no repentance. How many must die of AIDS before the world learns this? How many new carnages must break upon our world before mankind discovers the inflexible principle that says: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Galatians 6:7–8)?

The world needs to be warned of this. The "relativistic float" in the minds of individuals by the millions and nations by the score is one of the most clear and present dangers to our society. There is coming a time when God will judge under His well-stated and exact laws every person who lives. That judgment is also promised upon a world that is in a state of near-universal moral rebellion against God. Upon that world a very non-relativistic judgment approaches.

But there is coming a day in the history of the nations that might well be called "Einstein's revenge." In it, in a sense, Einstein may have the opportunity to even the score against those who have taken the absolutism of relativity and turned it into the degeneracy of relativism. It is worth noting that there is a sense in which Einstein could be thought of as establishing his rule at the end of history and will even have a say in the way the world will end. Concerning that end, the Bible says, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements

shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are in it shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

These and similar verses in the Word of God tell us of the fiery holocaust that will be the end of history for humanity, for every individual man and woman. More than often, the calamities that come upon man are a direct consequence of his rebellion from divine law. Frequently, man is himself destroyed by the Promethean fire he takes into his own bosom or uses to set ablaze the tinder-like culture in the midst of which he lives. This being the case, we should not disallow the possibility that Einstein has given to man the fire with which a foolish and rebellious generation will immolate itself. Yes, it may be that while *relativism* rules this day, *relativity* may rule tomorrow, bringing history quickly to a halt. Our world, refusing the great equation of John 3:16, may have to face the unstoppable devastation of $E = mc^2$.

We shall, however, not "officially" make Einstein one of the seven. Rather, let us remember that this truly great scientist became an unintended philosophical influence—unintended by him, that is. He influenced the world in a total sense, but he had no deliberate intent to adversely alter the presumed course of history. We shall call his influence a "background" (which it certainly was) to the twentieth century, adding a special dividend to our understanding of these times.[7]

[7] Breese, D. (1990). *Seven men who rule the world from the grave* (pp. 105–122). Moody Publishers.