

## Chapter One

### **Godless Human Philosophy: Truth According to Man**

“The desire of power in excess caused the angels to fall;  
the desire of knowledge in excess caused man to fall.”

Francis Bacon, *Advancement of Learning*, 1605

#### **Man’s Futile Search for Wisdom and Truth**

The origin of the word “philosophy” comes from the combination of the Greek words *philos*, which means love, and *sophia*, which means wisdom. The meaning of the word philosophy, therefore, is a “love of wisdom.” As sentient creatures made in the image and likeness of God, human beings have an inborn urge to know and understand the truth. No other creatures have this desire for wisdom and knowledge. That’s what separates us from the brutes. Merely surviving from day to day like the animals do is not enough for mankind, for we cannot live in peace with ourselves if we don’t ponder where we come from and where we’re going when we die. God recognizes this inborn desire we have, for he was the one who gave it to us in the first place, and has revealed himself to us in order that we may know the truth, and love him and seek him out, and ultimately be reunited to him when we die.

As we have discovered from the modern sciences of archaeology, anthropology, and paleontology, the whole of human history has been a never-ending search for the truth about our creator. Primitive savages once believed that the heavenly bodies and the natural forces and elements of the earth were gods and therefore worshipped such things as the moon, the sun, the planets, earth, wind, fire, rain, crops, animals, insects, and many other things that exist in the natural realm. Savages, of course, did not yet have a fully revealed knowledge of their creator, so they were not to blame for this error.

## 22 THE BEAST IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

As civilizations progressed in knowledge and understanding, stories began to originate out of man's active imagination about non-existent pagan gods and goddesses, whose characters and foibles were more human-like in nature than God's. The Greek gods were often vindictive and slaves of immoral sensuality and pleasures like man. Other than the children of Abraham, most of mankind really didn't comprehend the true nature and character of God. They didn't understand that he was holy and perfect as well as loving and merciful and generous, or that he was one in being and not many. That understanding would not be given to the world until the fullness of time, in the coming of God's son, Jesus Christ.

Gentiles (non-Jews or pagans) living in the centuries before Christ, while having an inward understanding that a higher power other than themselves exists, did not have an accurate understanding of the true nature and being of God, so they created idols of whatever they thought was divine. The ancient Egyptians worshipped Amon-Ra, the sun god; Osiris, the god of fertility; and Isis, the goddess of nature. In the lands now occupied by Syria and Iraq, Assyrians and Babylonians worshipped the higher god Ashur, the divine founder of their nations; the lesser gods Anu, Bel, and Ea; the moon god Sin and sun god Shamash; and Istar, the goddess of the crescent moon and queen of the stars. Over in India, the Hindus worshipped Brahma, the creator god; Siva, the god of destruction and regeneration; and Vishnu the preserver god. The Buddhists worshipped nature as God. On the continent of Europe, ancient Greeks created their own mythology of gods and goddesses who were in many ways pettier, more jealous, and more evil than men. Anyone who has ever read Homer and Greek mythology knows about the jealous and capricious exploits of Zeus, Hermes, Aphrodite, Athena, Apollo, Artemis, and all the rest. It was in the Greeks, however, with all their mythological gods and goddesses, that the spark of divine wisdom appeared. It began to illuminate the minds of a few of their learned and esteemed philosophers such as Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, and through them prepare the Gentile world for the coming of God's Word five centuries later.

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were highly regarded and revered in their time for their wisdom. They didn't buy into the ancient pagan superstitions and mythologies of Homeric legend because they sensed that there existed somewhere out there an absolute being that transcended the human idiosyncrasies and weaknesses of Greece's mythological gods and goddesses. Of course, they had their disagreements about the true nature of the supreme being and the universe he created, but they were remarkably astute in understanding his essence and being.

The teachings and writings of these famous Greek philosophers, therefore, were very compatible with the teachings to come of Jesus Christ. When Jesus appeared four to five centuries later it was only natural for Greeks, Romans, Jews, Arabs, and Orientals familiar with Greek philosophy and language and customs to become followers of Christ.

The learned men of Zion and the surrounding Middle East were well versed in Greek language and customs following the Greek occupation of the Middle East by Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C. The Apostle Paul, who was fluent in Greek, traveled extensively within the territories of Greece to preach the Word of God. In fact, the original extant writings of the New Testament were written in Greek, which was the universal language at that time. Thus, the world owes a great deal to the ancient Greek philosophers for paving the way for Christianity.

This chapter is a detailed history of man's search for philosophical truth, beginning in ancient Greece and ending in modern times. You will first note how astute Socrates and Plato and Aristotle were in knowledge and understanding without having the benefit of direct revelations from God that the Hebrews had, but then you will note that as the centuries progressed, and man began to reject the divine revelations and commandments given to us by Jesus Christ, human philosophers sunk deeper and deeper into philosophical errors, concocting nonsensical axioms and theories out of their own perverted imaginations, which has drawn the world farther and farther away from the divine truths revealed to us by God; so much so that man doesn't know what or who to believe anymore, or if there really is a creator. This has been especially true within the last five hundred years, when confusion and misunderstanding over religion and knowledge in general has caused the downfall of countless souls. And that's exactly what the Second Beast of Revelation (godless human science) wants: the destruction of our souls via the human sciences we worship so much, especially through the scientific discipline of philosophy. Now, here is a history of human philosophy and how we have veered off of the path of truth into apostasy and error. The factual information can be overwhelming at times, but it is important to understand what the ancient philosophers believed in, and how many of their beliefs have been reincorporated in modern society as various lies and heresies, like in the New Age movement.

## **Ancient Greek Philosophy**

Genealogically, the ancient Greeks who gave us so many great philosophers descended from a lost tribe of people called the Minoans

who lived on the Island of Crete between 2500 to 1400 B.C. These people believed in a higher being and afterlife reward or punishment, and probably got their beliefs from the ancient Egyptians with whom they traded in maritime commerce. Before the destruction of the Minoan civilization in the fifteenth century B.C., their culture spread to Greece around 1600 B.C., where they became known as the Mycenaeans, the people depicted in the legendary writings of Homer.

Following the migration of Minoans into Greece, three successive waves of people came next: first the Ionians, then the Achaeans, and finally the Dorians. The Dorians practically wiped out the Minoan-Mycenaean civilization and brought in their own Indo-European religion and customs. Vestiges of the Minoan-Mycenaean culture, however, continued to survive in Greece, especially in the lower classes, and hence the religion and philosophy of the ancient Greeks became an admixture of both Cretan and Indo-European.

The ancient Greeks learned the art of writing from the Phoenicians, but made a major improvement in writing by adding vowels to their alphabet. This, no doubt, helped contribute to the advancement in learning of the Hellenic (Greek) civilization. The first great writings of the Hellenic period were those of Homer the poet. The Homeric poems, the most famous being the adventures of Ulysses in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, were written sometime between the eighth and sixth centuries B.C., and became an important part of Greek education, especially in Athens (Greece was divided into city-states, the most important being Sparta, Athens, and Corinth).

The Olympian gods of Homer were not holy like the God of Judeo-Christianity. They were immoral, capricious and whimsical, differing from mortals only in their possession of supernatural powers. The Greeks also worshipped Pan, the Greek god of fertility who had an oversized phallus and was an avaricious lover of nymphs. Dionysus (Bacchus), the son of the deities Zeus and Persephone, was also popular. He was the god of vegetation, wine, drunkenness, and orgies whom the Greeks adopted from the Thracians. The cult of Bacchanalia was founded to honor him. The Maenads, or Bacchantes, exemplify Bacchus, whose occultic mysteries inspired ecstatic, orgiastic worship. This group of female devotees left their homes to roam the wilderness in drunken idolatry to their god. They wore flimsy, revealing fawn skins and were believed to possess occult, magical powers. The name "Bacchus" came into use in ancient Greece during the fifth century B.C. It refers to the loud cries with which he was worshiped at the Bacchanalia. These events, which supposedly originated in spring nature festivals, became occasions for licentiousness and intoxication.

The celebrants danced, drank, and generally debauched themselves. The Bacchanalia became more and more extreme and were finally prohibited by the Roman Senate in 186 B.C. as dangerous to the state.

In addition to the pagan gods of Homeric legend and the cult of Bacchanalia, the ancient Greeks had their religious cult of Orphism, which was derived from the legendary writings of the Greek poet and musician Orpheus. According to Greek mythology, he was the son of the muse Calliope and Apollo, the god of music. According to Orpheus, Zeus wished to make Bacchus king of the universe, which infuriated the jealous Titans, who then dismembered and devoured the young god Dionysus. Athena, goddess of wisdom, was able to rescue Dionysus' heart, which she brought back to Zeus, who then swallowed it and gave birth to a new Dionysus. Zeus then punished the Titans by destroying them with his lightning bolts, and from their ashes he created mankind. Thus, according to the religious cult of Orphism, humans have a dual nature: the material body comes from the earth-born Titans, and the divine soul comes from the divinity of Dionysus, whose remains had been co-mingled with that of the Titans. As a result man became part divine. Believers in Orphism strove to eliminate the material part of themselves through ascetic rites and purification, which they believed was derived from the Titans, and preserve the divine or Dionysus part. Orphics also believed in a long succession of reincarnation. Once they eliminated the Titanic elements of their nature, they would be reunited with the divine.

In spite of the widespread idolatry and licentiousness of the ancient Greeks (orgies, homosexuality, and adult-child sex were common), great advances in science, astronomy, and mathematics were made. In the sixth century B.C., there was Thales of Miletus and Pythagoras of Samos, the latter a religious leader who taught the importance of studying numbers in order to understand the world, and who was the originator of the famous Pythagorean theorem. In the fifth century B.C., the great geometer Democritus of Abdera discovered the correct formula for the volume of a pyramid, and Hippocrates of Chios discovered that the areas of crescent-shaped figures bounded by arcs of circles are equal to areas of certain triangles. In the fourth century B.C., Eudoxus of Cnidus discovered a method for rigorously proving statements about areas. Euclid, a Greek mathematician who studied at Athens, founded a school of mathematics in Alexandria where he taught plane geometry, proportion in general, the properties of numbers, incommensurable magnitudes, and solid geometry. In the third century B.C., Archimedes of Syracuse, a preeminent Greek mathematician and inventor, wrote important works on plane and solid geometry, arithmetic, and mechanics. His younger

contemporary, Apollonius of Perga, produced an eight-book treatise on conic sections that established the names of the sections: ellipse, parabola, and hyperbola. In the second century B.C., the Greek mathematician and astronomer Hipparchus composed tables of chords in a circle, similar to a sine table, which marked the beginning of trigonometry. Menelaus of Alexandria made great advances in astronomy. In the second century A.D., the Greek astronomer Ptolemy wrote *Almagest*, which became the universally accepted cosmological theory of the organization of the world until the time of Copernicus twelve centuries later.

In the sixth century B.C., Greek philosophers were divided into two competing camps of ideology: those who emphasized the importance of the material world and those who stressed the importance of nonmaterial forms or ideas. The first school of Greek philosophy, the Ionian or Milesian school, also known as the Pre-Socratic school, was largely materialistic. Members of this philosophical school were usually Olympians in faith rather than Dionysians or Orpheans. One of its most important members, Thales of Miletus, Asia Minor (625-546 B.C.), was the founder of Greek philosophy and considered one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. According to Thales, the original essence of all things is water, from which everything proceeds and into which everything returns. Thales was famous for his knowledge of astronomy after he correctly predicted the eclipse of the sun on May 28, 585 B.C. He is also said to have introduced geometry in Greece. Before Thales, explanations of the origin of the universe were purely mythological, so he is credited with giving birth to scientific thought. Thales left no writings, but knowledge of his philosophical and scientific teachings comes from an account in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

Another important member of the Milesian school was Anaximander of Miletus (550 B.C.), who believed that the elements—earth, wind, fire, and water—were all gods. One of the first known believers in evolution, Anaximander believed that the world was not created, but that it evolved by a separation of opposites (like hot and cold and dry and wet) from the primordial material, which is eternal and indestructible. These opposite forms change and merge into one another according to the rule of justice; that is, balance and proportion. Living organisms, Anaximander said, arose from moisture as it was evaporated by sunlight. Man, therefore, evolved from fish like all other creatures. In the end, all things return to the element from which they originated. Anaximander also believed in an infinitely extended being whom he called the "Infinite," who was living and intelligent and encompassed all the worlds. Anaximander also conceived of the universe as a number of concentric cylinders, of which the outermost is the sun, the middle is

the moon, and the innermost is the stars. Within these concentric cylinders is the earth, he said, unsupported and drum-shaped. Anaximander is also credited with introducing the sundial into Greece and inventing cartography.

Yet another important member of the Milesian school of philosophy was Anaximenes of Miletus (570-500 B.C.). Anaximenes believed that the universe consisted of air of different densities, and that air is the primary element to which everything else can be reduced. The soul is air, fire is rarefied air, condensed air becomes water, further condensed air becomes earth, and even further becomes stone.

Pythagoras of Samos, a.k.a. the “Samian Sage” (550-500 B.C.), was another student of the Milesian school. He went on to found a religious sect in southern Italy called the Pythagoreans. The Pythagoreans adhered to mysticism and asceticism, similar in many respects to the Orphics, and practiced silence, obedience, abstinence from beans and certain meats, simplicity in dress and possessions, and the habit of frequent self-examination. Early sources identify Pythagoras as a magician claiming to have had occult, miraculous powers. He is known to have believed in reincarnation and the transmigration of souls (metempsychosis), and an afterlife reward or punishment. Pythagoras was said to have claimed that he had been Euphorbus, a warrior in the Trojan War, and that he had been permitted to bring into his earthly life the memory of all his previous existences. He likewise thought himself semi-divine.

Pythagoreans revered numbers: they believed that the whole of the universe could be explained by mathematics, which was a form of religion to them. Among the mathematical investigations carried on by the Pythagoreans were the studies of odd and even numbers, and of prime and square numbers. Numbers became for them the ultimate principle of all proportion, order, and harmony in the universe. Numbers were tangible things, like sizes and shapes, thus when we speak of numbers being “squared” or “cubed” these designations derive from the Pythagoreans. Pythagoras also showed that concordant musical intervals such as octave, fourth, and fifth could be expressed in arithmetic ratios. He also discovered that in right triangles, the sum of the square of the sides adjoining the right angle are equal to the square on the remaining side, the hypotenuse (the Pythagorean theorem we all studied in school and which was quoted by the scarecrow in the *Wizard of Oz* when he finally got his brain).

Pythagoreans also extended their reverence for numbers to the heavens. They thought that the planets were separated from one another by numeric intervals corresponding to the harmonic lengths of strings,

and believed that the movement of the spheres created a musical sound—the “harmony of the spheres.” Pythagoreans were the first to consider the earth a sphere, revolving with the other planets, including the sun, around a central fire; it was a revolutionary idea for its day. Pythagoras also thought of the universe as made up of atoms, and material objects built up by molecules of atoms of different shapes and arrangements. The cult of the Pythagoreans maintained its organization until the middle of the fourth century B.C., dedicated to the reformation of political, social, and moral life, and the reverence of mathematics. Pythagoras, however, left no writings. All that is known of his doctrines comes from his disciples.

One of the first known skeptics of Greek mythology was Xenophanes of Colophon (560-470 B.C.). Xenophanes was an empiricist, believing there was no possible way to know something outside the realm of direct experience. He ridiculed the anthropomorphic theology of Greece and the immorality of their gods, saying that each race has a god resembling their race, and if horses could draw, their god would be a horse. Xenophanes left Colophon in 545 B.C. to be a wandering poet and minstrel in Greece and Sicily. Xenophanes believed that human beings should reject Greek polytheism, and recognize instead a single nonhuman deity who controls the whole universe. Xenophanes also criticized the belief in reincarnation and deplored the Greek's preoccupation with athleticism and luxurious, carnal living at the expense of philosophical wisdom. In 536 B.C., according to tradition, Xenophanes settled permanently in the Phoenician colony of Elea, in southern Italy, where he founded the Eleatic school of philosophy. The school was expanded after his death by his student, the Greek philosopher Parmenides. Eleatics were opposed to the materialistic philosophy of the Milesian school, and also opposed the theory of universal flux proposed by Heraclitus. Eleatics believed that the universe is an unchanging unity, infinite in time and space, beyond the comprehension of man's senses. Sensory observations yield a distorted, limited view of reality, they said, and only through philosophy can the ultimate truths of the universe be known. The famous Greek philosopher Plato was greatly influenced by the Eleatics.

Another vocal skeptic of the mythological gods and goddesses of Greece was Heraclitus of Ephesus (500 B.C.). Called the “dark” or “weeping philosopher” because of the loneliness of his life and misanthropic views of his philosophy. Heraclitus believed in a state of “universal flux,” where everything in the universe comes out of the one, and the one out of all things. Unity in the world is formed by a combination of opposites. Fire is the primordial source of all matter, and the universe

is in a constant state of change, where a union of opposites produces objects. The soul, for example, is a combination of fire and water, the fire being the noble part and water the ignoble. Heraclitus believed in “parallelism of structure,” where the behavior and structure of the universe and the soul are parallel. Whenever he mentioned a higher power he spoke in terms of a singular god instead of gods. Heraclitus is considered by historians to be one of the founders of Greek metaphysics, although the materialist ideas in his theory of universal flux are closely related to those of the Milesian school of Greek philosophy. Collected editions of all his surviving writings may be found in several modern editions, but only one work, *On Nature*, is definitely attributable to Heraclitus.

One of the greatest members of the Eleatic school of philosophy was the astronomer, biologist, and philosopher Parmenides of Elea (480 B.C.). Unlike the materialists of the Milesian school, Parmenides viewed ultimate reality in terms of thought and reason rather than matter, and was no doubt a big influence on the seventeenth-century French philosopher Rene Descartes, who became famous for the slogan “I think, therefore I am.” To Parmenides, reality is in thinking, and the object of one’s own thought. One’s thoughts can only imagine what really exists. Ultimate reality or “True Being” is not known to the senses but is to be found in reason alone. Full knowledge about the real world and True Being is impossible. The non-existence of True Being, however, is inconceivable, and understanding of its being is equally inconceivable to thought. True Being cannot arise from Non-being, and True Being neither arises nor passes away. The phenomena we observe in nature are only apparent to our senses and subject to human error; they seem to exist, but, in fact, have no real existence because our senses are easily deceived. Sensible things appear to be real but are illusory. The only true being is the “One,” which is infinite and indivisible. Parmenides visited Athens at the age of sixty-five, and on that occasion Socrates, then a young man, heard him lecture. Parmenides’ idealism had a big influence on Plato, Socrates’ pupil, and he is credited as the first to use logic in metaphysics. Parmenides’ only surviving work are fragments of a didactic poem, *On Nature*.

Empedocles (495-435 B.C.), the Sicilian disciple of Pythagoras and Parmenides, was a famous philosopher who claimed to be a god, and is believed by his followers to have been a prophet who could work miracles, control the wind, and raise the dead. However, a fatal leap into the volcano, Mt. Etna—a leap of faith Empedocles made to prove he was a god—quickly put an end to that delusion. Empedocles, nonetheless, is noted for his thoughts on the reality of the natural world and his belief

in evolution. He taught that the two opposing forces of love and hate (affinity and antipathy), act upon the four elements (earth, wind, fire, water), combining, separating, and recombining them over and over into infinitely varied forms. Love unites everything, he said, then hate separates, all in a continuous cycle. No creation of new matter is possible, only changes in the combinations of the four elements. Everything is temporary; only the elements are permanent. Empedocles, who founded an Italian school of medicine, also believed that the natural realm is governed by chance and necessity rather than by design and purpose, which earned him a reputation as one of the first known evolutionists.

Protagoras of Abdera (490-420 B.C.) is thought to be the first Greek philosopher to call himself a "sophist" and the first to receive money for teaching. Sophists were traveling teachers of rhetoric, philosophy, and the art of good living, but their reasoning and arguments were often captious and fallacious. Protagoras won great fame for his teaching of philosophy in Greece and was invited by Pericles, the Athenian statesman, to write the constitution of the Athenian colony of Thurii. Protagoras was also an early agnostic and moral relativist, claiming that we have no proof for the existence of God or gods, and that there was no ultimate authority that we should obey. Each individual is his own authority, said Protagoras. He was famous for saying "Man is the measure of all things." Nothing was absolutely true or false, good or bad, to Protagoras.

One of the best-known philosophers from Athens was Anaxagoras (500-428 B.C.) of Ionia, who moved to Athens and became friends of the Athenian statesman Pericles. Anaxagoras was famous for his teachings on matter and mind, a subject that has fascinated and intrigued philosophers for thousands of years. Matter, Anaxagoras said, existed everywhere without void and with infinitely complex micro particles. All matter is infinitely divisible, and the tiniest bit of matter contains a portion of all the elements. That element which makes up the largest portion of matter characterizes it. Anaxagoras' theory that all matter exists mixed with other matter eventually became known in science as the "field theory." Mind, on the other hand, initiated and ordered the material universe. Mind is the Prime Mover, the infinite, omnipotent, omniscient, cosmic intelligence. Mind was not God, but existed in both animals and man, who only seems more intelligent than animals because he has hands. It was unknown whether or not Anaxagoras believed in divine Providence because he had little to say about ethics and religion.

Contrary to the field theory of Anaxagoras was the "atomistic theory"

of Democritus (460-370 B.C.) and Leucippus (450-370 B.C.). The atomistic theory states that mind and matter are composed of tiny, indivisible, and indestructible particles of pure matter (*atoma*, or “indivisibles”), eternally swirling about in empty space (the *kenon*, or void). There are an infinite number of atoms, which are composed of the same matter but differ in size, shape, weight, sequence, and position. It is this quantitative difference that makes up the different things we see in the universe. As an unbeliever in God, Democritus believed that the world was created not by a higher power but by the ceaseless whirlings and collisions of atoms, which combine to form larger aggregates of matter. There is no divine purpose to the universe, only the movement of atoms governed by the laws of physics. Entirely materialistic, Democritus and Leucippus’ atomistic theory anticipated the modern laws of physics on the conservation of energy and the irreducibility of matter. They were, however, mistaken in their disbelief in a higher power.

One of the wisest men who ever lived was the Greek philosopher named Socrates (470-399 B.C.). Like Jesus Christ five centuries later, Socrates left no writings of his own, only oral teachings handed down to his disciples through word of mouth (it still amazes me how students of science and history are so willing to believe in Socrates yet refuse to believe in Jesus Christ, even though we have many more contemporary witnesses for Jesus than we have for Socrates). All we know about Socrates and his teachings comes from Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and a contemporary critic of his, Aristophanes. Born in Athens, the son of Sophroniscus and Phaenarete, Socrates received an elementary education in literature, music, and gymnastics like the rest of the children his age. As he matured, he studied the Milesian philosophers, the rhetoric of the sophists, the ethics of morality and religion, and Athenian culture. By trade, Socrates was a sculptor like his father, and carved a statue group of the Three Graces, which stood at the entrance to the Acropolis until the second century A.D. When Socrates became of age, he was enlisted as an infantry soldier in the Peloponnesian War with Sparta, and was cited for bravery at the battles of Potidaea in 432-430 B.C., Delium in 424, and Amphipolis in 422.

Although short in stature and unattractive in physical appearance (he wore shaggy clothes and walked barefoot), Socrates was extremely witty, funny, and self-controlled. He refused to be cynical and rude in his oral arguments like the sophists and refused to take any money for his teachings. Indifferent to heat and cold, thirst and hunger, Socrates had mastery over all bodily passions, and seldom drank wine. Preferring oral arguments to writing, Socrates spent the greater part of his adult life in

the public squares and marketplaces in philosophical debate with anyone who would listen. The term “Socratic method” of teaching derives from Socrates’ dialectical method of the teacher letting the student discover the truth by engaging the student in oral argument. Socrates purposely stayed away from discussing politics because of its danger to one’s career, and devoted his life to the teaching of philosophy and the enlightenment of souls about God. He wrote no books and established no schools. What we know of Socrates today comes mainly from his pupils Plato and Xenophon. Plato’s depiction of Socrates’ and his teaching in his dialogues, however, is somewhat tainted with his own philosophical biases, and Xenophon probably didn’t know him well enough to give an accurate account of his life.

In his dialogues, Plato depicted Socrates as a brilliant orator with an extremely sharp acumen on any subject, feigning ignorance of a subject then destroying every argument and belief you had about it. This method of intellectual counterattack became known as “Socratic Irony.” Socrates preferred the subjects of ethics and morality over anything else. He believed that evil is the result of ignorance in education, and that no person is willingly bad. To Socrates, knowledge is virtue, and those who are well educated in philosophy will be ethical and moral as adults. Much of Socrates’ time was spent showing-up pretenders who thought they were wise, and for that he made himself many enemies. But Socrates never bragged about his own intelligence. “God alone is wise,” he often told people.

Although he pledged allegiance to the Athenian state and was a man of deeply-held religious convictions, his enemies regarded Socrates as a traitor because of his criticisms of the corruption in Athenian politics and his disbelief in the pagan polytheism of Greece. Socrates publicly denied the existence of Zeus in Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, which got him in trouble with Athens. In 399 B.C., Socrates was arrested and charged with neglecting the gods of the state and of introducing new divinities, to which Socrates often credited his wisdom. Socrates was also charged with corrupting the morals of the youth, leading them away from the Athenian principles of democracy, although Athens was by no means a true democracy and was rife with corruption. He was also falsely accused of being a sophist because he had been ridiculed by the comic-poet Aristophanes (423 B.C.) in his *Clouds* as the master of a “thinking-shop” where young men were brainwashed to make the worse reason appear the better. Plato’s *Apology* gave an historic account of Socrates’ defense at his trial, and was a tribute to the philosopher’s life. In *Apology*, Plato recounted that Socrates was condemned to death by a small majority of jurors for “speculating about the heavens above, and searching into the

earth beneath, and making the worse appear the better cause.” Upon receiving the death sentence, Socrates made a counterproposal to the court that he pay a small fine to the state because of his value as a philosopher, which made the court so angry that the vast majority of jurors voted for his death sentence. His last remarks to the court were recorded in Plato’s *Apology*: “God orders me to fulfill the philosopher’s mission of searching into myself and other men. . . . Men of Athens, I honor and love you; but I shall obey God rather than you. . . . For know that this is the command of God; and I believe that no greater good has ever happened in the State than my service to the God.”

Socrates’ friends wanted to break him out of prison, but he preferred to obey the law and die a martyr for his beliefs. He had no fear of death and believed that his eternal soul would ascend to a better place. His last day was spent with his friends and admirers, as described in Plato’s *Phaedo*, and in the evening he calmly drank a cup of hemlock. Socrates was seventy years old when he died. Through the writings of Plato’s *Apology*, *Crito*, *Gorgias*, and *Phaedo*, Socrates had a profound effect on the entire course of Western philosophy, and his wisdom, insight, philosophy, and oratorical skills were looked upon with reverence and awe by his students for years to come. The Socrates depicted in Plato’s dialogues became, as the influence of Greek and Roman mythology waned, the archetype of the higher life in the ancient world. When asked who was the wisest of all men, the Oracle of Delphi is purported to have said that there was none wiser than Socrates.

The Greek philosopher who no doubt had the greatest influence on early Christian theology was a star pupil of Socrates named Plato (428-347 B.C.). Plato was born to an aristocratic Athenian family in 428 B.C. His father, Ariston, was believed to have descended from the early kings of Athens. Perictione, his mother, was distantly related to the sixth-century-B.C. lawmaker Solon. When Plato was a child, his father died and his mother married Pyrilampes, who was an associate of the Athenian statesman Pericles. As a youth, Plato wanted to become a politician, but soon grew disillusioned with the corruption of the Athenian democracy. Plato went on to become a pupil of Socrates, and was trained in Socrates’ dialectic method of oral questions and answers to arrive at the truth.

Unlike Socrates, Plato was a prolific writer who cast the legendary Socrates as his mouthpiece for his own philosophical epistemology (the theory on the origin of knowledge) and philosophical ontology (the theory on the origin of being). Some of Plato’s “dialogues” represent authentic thoughts of Socrates, and others used Socrates to convey Plato’s own beliefs. The earliest collection of Plato’s work includes

thirty-five dialogues and thirteen letters, but the authenticity of a few of the dialogues and most of the letters has been disputed. Plato's dialogues are divided into early, middle, and later periods of composition. The earliest dialogues are an attempt by Plato to portray the philosophy and dialectic mastery of Socrates. In them, Socrates encounters someone who professes to be a wise man. Engaging him in discussion, Socrates professes his ignorance and asks for assistance from the supposed wise man. As Socrates begins to raise questions, however, it becomes clear that the one who thinks himself wise doesn't really know what he's talking about. Socrates emerges as the wiser of the two because he at least admits his own ignorance. Knowledge of our ignorance, Socrates would tell them, is the true beginning of wisdom. The dialogues of the middle and later periods of Plato's life are a reflection of his own philosophical ideology, and most historians attribute the ideas put forth in these dialogues to Plato (Socrates continues to be the main character but is now Plato's mouthpiece).

Included in Plato's early dialogues are *Charmides* (an attempt to define temperance), *Lysis* (a discussion of friendship), *Laches* (a pursuit of the meaning of courage), *Protagoras* (a defense of the thesis that virtue is knowledge and can be taught), *Euthyphro* (a consideration of the nature of piety), and Book I of the *Republic* (a discussion of justice). The dialogues of the middle and later periods of Plato's life are a reflection of his own philosophical ideology, and most historians attribute the ideas put forth in these dialogues to Plato (Socrates continues to be the main character but is now Plato's mouthpiece). The writings of the middle period include *Gorgias* (a consideration of several ethical questions), *Meno* (a discussion of the nature of knowledge), the *Apology* (Socrates' defense of himself at his trial against the charges of atheism and corrupting Athenian youth), *Crito* (Socrates' defense of obedience to the laws of the state), *Phaedo* (the death scene of Socrates, in which he discusses the theory of forms, the nature of the soul, and the question of immortality), the *Symposium* (Plato's outstanding dramatic achievement, which contains several speeches on beauty and love), and the *Republic* (Plato's supreme philosophical achievement on the city, state, government, and rulers, which is a detailed discussion of the nature of justice). The works of the later period include the *Theaetetus* (a denial that knowledge is to be identified with sense perception), *Parmenides* (a critical evaluation of the theory of forms), *Sophist* (further consideration of the theory of ideas, or forms), *Philebus* (a discussion of the relationship between pleasure and the good), *Timaeus* (Plato's views on natural science, cosmology, the soul, harmony of the world), and the *Laws* (a more practical analysis of political and social issues).

Plato was a deeply religious man who rejected the gods of Olympus and believed instead in the Creator God of the universe. He was, however, a dualist and believed that God didn't create everything, but only what is good, and that God created the universe out of preexisting matter instead of nothing. Plato also believed that the body and soul are separate and unique, that the soul is immortal and can reincarnate or transmigrate after death, that an afterlife reward awaits the souls of philosophers who have conquered the flesh, and while the souls of the lukewarm go to purgatory, the souls of the wicked go to hell. Souls, according to Plato, are composed of three distinct parts: the rational part, the will, and the appetites. The just person's rational part, supported by his will, is capable of subduing the appetites. Freud's theory of the unconscious superego, ego, and id was no doubt influenced by Plato's theory of the tripartite soul.

Philosophically, Plato was an idealist rather than an empiricist because he believed that true knowledge comes from reason rather than sensory experience. The senses, Plato believed, are too easily deceived. True reality supercedes appearances and is only revealed in thought through our ability to reason. Reason, when used properly, results in awareness of objects that are certain, unchanging, immutable, and permanent. There are two forms of existence in Plato's philosophy: the sensible realm or world, and the intelligible world where real intelligence emanates (the more perfect realm). The objects of our reason, said Plato, are the abiding universals, the eternal "forms" or substances that constitute the real, higher, intelligible world. The senses, on the other hand, experience only changeable phenomena in the physical world, so the objects we perceive through our senses are not proper objects of knowledge. An absolute knowledge of unchanging reality can only be achieved when the soul leaves the body at the moment of death. To Plato, knowledge is virtue and can only be learned through the understanding of forms. The ultimate Form is the Good, and knowledge of the Good is our guide in morality. To know the Good is to do good. Immorality results in ignorance in not knowing the Good. The moral person is the happy person, and since we all desire happiness, we all desire to do what is moral. Oh, if that were really so!

On politics, Plato wrote in his *Republic* that the ideal form of government was a commonwealth headed by a philosopher-king who completed the highest level of education and was able to understand all the forms and, therefore, make the wisest decisions. The ideal state is composed of three classes: the merchant class, whose unique virtue should be temperance; the military class, whose virtue should be courage; and the ruling class or philosopher-kings, whose virtue should

be wisdom. The fourth virtue, justice, should characterize society as a whole. In the *Republic*, Plato called the ideal commonwealth a "utopia." In it all four virtues were practiced, wealth was abolished, the Homeric gods of Olympus were outlawed, and a rigid censorship imposed. Plato's Socrates, however, viewed the ideal commonwealth as more communistic: women were equal to men in all things, marriages were to be arranged by the state, communal marriages allowed, children should be taken from their parents and raised by the state, abortion and infanticide should be compulsory for unsanctioned pregnancies, and the practice of eugenics encouraged.

Plato's prolific writings and oral teachings in philosophy gained him an international reputation. In 387 B.C., Plato founded a school of learning in Athens called the Academy, which is generally regarded as the first European university. The Academy provided comprehensive training to students in philosophy, astronomy, biology, mathematics, and political theory. It flourished for eight centuries until the Byzantine Emperor Justinian I, a Christian who wanted to purge the Roman Empire of the last vestiges of Greco-Roman paganism, demolished it in 529 A.D.

In 367 B.C. and again in 361, Plato traveled to Sicily to tutor the new ruler of Syracuse, Dionysius the Younger, in the art of becoming a philosopher-king. Plato failed miserably and spent the remaining years of his life writing teaching at the Academy, where he died at the age of eighty.

Plato's influence on Christian theology and Western philosophy is enormous. The Christian theologians Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and St. Augustine were all enthusiastic advocates of Plato because Plato's ideology and philosophies dovetailed nicely with orthodox Christian belief. As Christianity started to overtake paganism as the dominant religion of the Roman Empire, however, an attempt was made in the third century A.D. by Porphyry of Greece and Plotinus of Rome, both enemies of Christianity, to bring back the ancient pagan practices and beliefs of Plato's Greece. These two began the heretical school of Neoplatonism, whose tenets of an infinite, unknowable, perfect One, from which a world intelligence (*nous*) and a world soul emanated from, were condemned by the Church as unorthodox. Despite being censured by the Church, Neoplatonism made a reappearance during the Renaissance in the fifteenth century, when the Italian scholar and humanist, Marsilio Ficino, at the direction of the wealthy Italian nobleman Cosimo de Medici, translated and annotated the works of Plotinus, Porphyry, and Iamblichus, and thereby founded the Florentine Academy, where students studied Neoplatonism and the

writings of Plato in the original Greek. The resurgence of Neoplatonism during the European Renaissance (1300-1600) was due, in part, to a backlash against the morally rigid thirteenth century scholastic Aristotelianism of St. Thomas Aquinas, in favor of the more idealistic metaphysics of Plato.

Of the three great Greek philosophers Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the most educated in the natural and philosophical sciences was a student of Plato's named Aristotle (382-322 B.C.), who some say is the "Father of Modern Science and Philosophy." So famous was Aristotle that throughout history he is simply referred to as "The Philosopher." Aristotle grew up in Stagira, in Macedonia, the son of a physician to the royal court. At seventeen, he left home and traveled to Athens to study at Plato's Academy, where he remained for twenty years as student and teacher. When Plato died in 347 B.C., Aristotle moved to Assos in Asia Minor, where he was an advisor to the ruler, Hermias. Aristotle later married Pythias, the niece and adopted daughter of Hermias, but after Hermias was captured and executed by the Persians, Aristotle fled to the Macedonian capital of Pella, where he tutored the future emperor Alexander the Great. In 335, when Alexander became king, Aristotle returned to Athens and established his own school of philosophy called the Lyceum. The Lyceum became known as the Peripatetic ("walking" or "strolling") school because much of the discussions between student and teacher took place while strolling the grounds of the Lyceum.

At the Lyceum, Aristotle instituted courses in logic, metaphysics, ethics, psychology, rhetoric, dialectics, art, aesthetics, politics, physics, mathematics, biology, meteorology, and astronomy. On the subject of science, Aristotle's most famous work was *On the Heavens*, a cosmological theory on the make up of the universe with earth at its center, which predominated scientific thought until the time of Copernicus and Galileo. In addition, Aristotle also wrote *On Physics*, which deals with the science of motion and change, and *On Meteorology*, in which he made observations on comets and volcanoes.

Unfortunately, all of Aristotle's original writings on science and philosophy were lost or destroyed in Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire in the fifth century A.D. and weren't rediscovered until the time of the Crusades, when commentaries on the writings of Aristotle by the Islamic scholar Averroes (1126-98) were discovered and translated into Latin. The Crusaders' discovery in Constantinople during the thirteenth century of more of Aristotle's manuscripts in the original Greek prompted further Western interest in Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle's scientific empiricism had a great deal of influence on Catholic theologians of thirteenth century, particularly the Catholic Dominicans

Albertus Magnus and St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74). Aquinas placated Church authorities by showing that Aristotle's philosophy of knowledge through sensory experiences was completely compatible with the prevalent Augustinian philosophy of divine knowledge through Christian revelation and reason. The Catholic Church had banned the study of Aristotle in 1210 and threatened to excommunicate anyone who studied it, but reversed its ban because of Aquinas. The subsequent birth of Thomist scholasticism in the thirteenth century and the Catholic Church's acceptance of Aristotle owes a great deal to Thomas Aquinas' brilliant achievement of reconciling Catholic theology with Aristotelian philosophy and metaphysics.

In essence, Aristotle's metaphysics argued for the existence of a supreme being whom he called the "Prime Mover." The Prime Mover controls cosmological unity and the whole purpose of nature. It is the first cause, pure thought and intellect, perfect in unity and being, immutable in nature, and is the desire of all its creatures that want to share in its beauty and perfection. The concept of the Prime Mover, however, was incompatible with Christianity's concept of a triune God because of Aristotle's belief that other "movers" existed apart from the Prime Mover (Aristotle suggested that there were either fifty-five or forty-seven other movers). Aristotle's more materialistic theory of the soul was significantly different than Plato's theory of a separate material body and spiritual soul. Aristotle defined a soul as a "kind of functioning of a body organized so that it can support vital functions." The soul does not exist separate from the body as Plato believed, but is like Plato's concept of the form, the essence or unchanging substance in an object like the body. A part of the divine lives in the soul, so we should try to emulate it by suppressing the animal within us. Aristotle did say, however, that *nous poetikos* (active mind), which is responsible for human insight in its highest form, is not reducible to any physical process of the body. This implies a kind of immaterial, separate, transcendence of spirit, which was in keeping with Christian doctrine. Aristotle, unlike Plato, did not believe in reincarnation, which was also in keeping with Catholic faith.

Aristotle's tremendous influence on science and philosophy is unparalleled in human history. The philosophical and scientific terms we use today—syllogism, premiss, metaphysics, species, genera, potentiality, categories, dialectic, and analytical—all derive from Aristotle. In the area of logic, which he was a master of, Aristotle developed hard and fast rules for reasoning that would, if applied properly, never lead from true premises to false conclusions. Aristotle's rules of reasoning made use of syllogisms: pairs of propositions that, when taken together, give a

correct conclusion. For example, the propositions that “all creatures are mortal” and “man is a creature” leads to the correct conclusion that “man is mortal.”

In philosophy, Aristotle broke from the Platonic Academy in his preference for using analytical reasoning over dialectic discussions as the principle method for discovering the truth. The dialectic method of Socrates and Plato, Aristotle said, uses opinions to arrive at logical truths, while his analytical method uses empirical rationale derived from direct observation and experiences to discover truth. The analytical method, therefore, is the more reliable of the two according to Aristotle. The scientific method we use today of verifying hypotheses and theories through repeatable experimental observation comes directly from the analytic method of Aristotle. Aristotle, however, did use the dialectic method early on in his career, and wrote some dialogues like Plato, but all have since been lost.

The only surviving writings of Aristotle come from a compilation of his lecture notes on a variety of scientific subjects that were collected and arranged by later editors, in addition to excerpts from a dictionary of philosophical terms and a study of Pythagoras. Among the texts accredited to Aristotle is a treatise on logic called *Organon* (instrument); a treatise on natural science called *Physics*, which gives a vast amount of information on biology, astronomy, and meteorology; a treatise on the Prime Mover and the nature of being called *Metaphysics*; a treatise on ethics he called *Nicomachean Ethics*, in honor of his son Nicomachus, in which he says that what is virtuous is good; and three other treatises called *Rhetoric*, *Poetics*, and *Politics*, the latter which favors democracy over communism but justifies slavery.

Aristotle’s anti-evolutionary theories on biology were largely based on the concept of immutable species. The world, he said, is made up of individuals (“substances”) occurring in fixed natural kinds (“species”). Each member of a species has an inborn pattern of development and grows to maturity according to the direction of its type. The environment, therefore, plays no part in species formation, as it does in Darwinian evolution. Each species reproduces true to type. The exception occurs, Aristotle said, when some “very low” worms and flies come from rotting fruit or manure by “spontaneous generation.” Life cycles, according to Aristotle, are epicyclical: the same pattern repeats itself through a linear succession of generations. The animal kingdom forms a hierarchy from simple (worms and flies at the bottom) to complex (human beings at the top). Evolution of new and more sophisticated species is not possible. According to Aristotle there are four causes of speciation: the material cause, the matter out of which a thing is made;

the efficient cause, the impetus behind motion, generation, or change; the formal cause, which is the species, kind, or type; and the final cause, the mature development and purpose of the thing.

Centuries after Aristotle's death in 322 B.C., Western science and philosophy was synonymous with Aristotelianism. When one talked of logic they were usually talking about Aristotelian logic. But with the subsequent rise in popularity of Christianity in the Roman Empire in the centuries following Christ's death there was also a rise in anti-pagan sentiment. As a result, Aristotle's Lyceum, like Plato's Academy, was closed forever in 529 A.D. by Emperor Justinian I, and Aristotle's influence on academic thought in Europe dramatically declined. Most of Aristotle's important works were either lost or destroyed in the years that followed, but after the rediscovery of Aristotle's writings he was once again considered the premier Western philosopher. His cosmology, which maintained that the universe was geocentric and that everything under the moon decays while everything above is indestructible, was the dominant cosmological theory of the universe until a young Polish upstart named Copernicus developed his own heliocentric theory in the sixteenth century, which Galileo defended in 1633.

As we have seen so far, ancient Greece has given rise to some brilliant philosophers like Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, but it also gave rise to some real misanthropes. One of these misanthropes was Diogenes of Sinope (412?-323 B.C.), a Greek philosopher generally considered to be the founder of cynicism. The word "cynic" comes from the Greek word *kynikos*, which literally means "like a dog." Cynics traveled about like a pack of dogs and lived like homeless tramps, wearing ragged clothing, eating menial food, sleeping on the ground, and disdaining everything in society.

Diogenes was born in Sinope in modern-day Turkey, and moved to Athens where he studied under Antisthenes, who taught that social conventions and worldly pleasures should be avoided, that there should be no government, no private property, no marriage, no religion, no slavery, no luxury, and no pleasures. Captivated by the antinomian teachings of Antisthenes, Diogenes plunged himself into a life of severe austerity and self-mortifications, wandering about shamelessly like a tramp, living in tubs and pitchers. (Plato described Diogenes as "Socrates run mad.") Diogenes ridiculed Greek literature and art, despised politicians and intellectuals, hated the greed and materialism of the rich, and mocked all morals and social norms. Owing no allegiance to any god or state, Diogenes and his cynical followers declared themselves citizens of the world who lived for the here and now, not needing to know why things are. Detachment from worldly comforts

and pleasures was the only virtue to them; the morals and values of the civilized world were of absolutely no use. To further show his contempt for civilization, Diogenes defaced coins and wandered the streets of Athens in broad daylight carrying a lamp saying he was “looking for an honest man.” On a voyage to Aegina one day, Diogenes was seized by pirates and carried to Crete and sold as a slave, but was later set free and made tutor to his master’s children. According to legend, Diogenes died at Corinth on the same day as Alexander the Great in 323 B.C.

Another radical Greek philosopher during the time of Aristotle was Pyrrho the Sceptic (360-272 B.C.), who founded the philosophical school of Pyrrhonism. Pyrrho is credited with being the founder father of skepticism, a doubting philosophy that rejects the generally accepted truths of the prevailing society. The real nature of things can never be known, according to Pyrrho and his fellow skeptics, so any claims of objective knowledge should be put in doubt or totally rejected. Modern atheism and agnosticism have their roots in Pyrrhonism. Pyrrho the Sceptic was born in Elis and studied under the Greek philosopher Anaxarchus, a student of the atomist philosopher Democritus. Pyrrho followed the Greeks into Persia during the conquests of Alexander the Great, where he became acquainted with the contradictory teachings and philosophies of the Persian magi and Indian Brahmins. When he returned, Pyrrho lived the life of a recluse and produced no writings. What we know of Pyrrho comes from the writings of his disciple Timon, who maintained that equally valid arguments could be made to support or disprove beliefs. According to Timon, Pyrrho thought philosophers should have no beliefs, no dogmas or precepts, and make no judgments. Only by living a passive, non-judgmental existence could one obtain peace of mind and tranquility of soul; which, to Pyrrho, was the highest possible virtue. Believing that nothing could be proven true, Pyrrho was like the sophists of the fifth century B.C., who maintained that “nothing is; or if anything is, it cannot be known.” Of course, Pyrrho’s disbelief in the existence of absolute truths is fallacious and self-contradictory because to say that there are no absolute truths is to declare an absolute truth: “nothing is absolute.”

Arcesilaus of Pitane (315-240 B.C.), onetime head of Plato’s Academy, was another skeptic who attacked all doctrines as impossible to prove, and falsely claimed that Socrates and Plato were really skeptics like himself. In addition, the Middle Academy, the school of philosophy and learning that developed in the third century B.C. as an offshoot to Plato’s Academy, and the New Academy, developed by Carneades in the second century B.C., likewise had their schools of skepticism. However, they were somewhat less radical than Pyrrho regarding absolute truths,

saying that while nothing can be proven conclusively, some things can be proven to be more probable than other things. In later antiquity, Aenesidemus of Greece (first century B.C.) taught at the school of Alexandria, where he developed ten arguments for skepticism (called *tropoi*), which maintained that all judgments should be suspended because nothing is certain, and proving an assertion would require an endless process of proofs. Sextus Empiricus, a third century A.D. Greek physician and philosopher who wrote *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Against the Dogmatists*, headed another school of skepticism. Centuries later during the Renaissance, Pyrrhonism reemerged in the writings of the sixteenth century French essayist and skeptic Michel de Montaigne, and the sixteenth century mathematician and philosopher Rene Descartes. Skepticism was made popular again in the eighteenth century by the Scottish philosopher and atheist David Hume, in the nineteenth century by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant, in the twentieth century by the German philosopher and linguist Friedrich Nietzsche and the American philosopher George Santayana. It is now fully incorporated in modern anti-Christian philosophy.

Another degenerate Greek philosopher who led many down the path of destruction was Epicurus of Samos (341-270 B.C.), who founded the philosophical school of Epicureanism. Epicureanism maintains that the greatest happiness and good in life is the pursuit of pleasures, particularly the pleasures of the mind and soul that derive from the pleasures of the flesh. The term "epicurean delights," which means love for gourmet food and luxurious pampering, is derived from philosophical Epicureanism. Epicurus suffered from ill health much of his life, so it is easy to see why he was so preoccupied with the pursuit of happiness through pleasures, which, unfortunately for him, also led him towards atheism. The fear of death and an afterlife punishment by the gods was the greatest evil according to Epicurus, whose conscience constantly worried him for the life he was leading. Religion, Epicurus said, was a damaging superstition that caused people unnecessary fear and worrying. Although he did not deny the possible existence of gods, Epicurus maintained that if they did exist they would have nothing to do with human affairs, except maybe when contemplating the lives of outstanding men.

Besides denying the existence of God, Epicurus also denied the existence of an eternal soul, saying that the universe consists entirely of matter and empty space composed of atoms of varying sizes and shapes, which move about randomly and are not under the control of any gods. Body and mind are likewise made up entirely of matter, which disperses after death, so there is nothing to fear in dying or having lived a life in the pursuit of carnal pleasure, because death is a state of nothingness.

The nihilistic despair of modern-day existentialism, which comes from the loss of hope in a better life, can be traced as far back as Epicurus. To Epicurus, the utilitarian pursuit of pleasure on earth is the highest good—the “beginning and end of the blessed life.” While nothing is forbidden in one’s pursuit of happiness, true happiness comes from friendships and the enjoyment of sensual pleasures, in moderation. Prudence is a virtue, as is justice and honesty, but marriage and family are a distraction from the higher pursuits of life, so we should forego love, politics, passionate activities, and gluttony and drunkenness for the pursuit of the more intellectually rewarding pleasures. Above all, avoid fear, which disturbs peace of mind. Don’t ever worry about a vengeful god who doesn’t exist or being sent to hell by the Almighty; we are the masters of our fate. “When we are, death is not; and when death is, we are not,” Epicurus often said.

Born on the island of Samos to an Athenian family, Epicurus was home schooled by his father, a schoolteacher, and various philosophers. At eighteen, he was enlisted into military service at Athens and later rejoined his father in 322 B.C. In 311, Epicurus founded a school of philosophy in Mitilini on the island of Lesbos, and two years later he headed another school in Lampsacus (Lapseki, Turkey). In 306, he returned to Athens where he settled permanently and founded yet another school. Instructions to his friends and admirers often took place in the sumptuous gardens of his home, so his followers became known as “the philosophers of the gardens.” Because both women and men frequented Epicurus’ garden parties, rumors began circulating about activities of impropriety taking place on the premises. Students from all over Greece and Asia Minor began coming to Epicurus’ school, attracted not only by his charm and wit but also by his liberal, free-thinking philosophy on life and death.

In matters regarding science, Epicurus was an atomist like Democritus and Leucippus. He regarded the universe as infinite, eternal, and uncreated, consisting only of atoms of varying sizes, shapes, weights, and space. The uncreated world results from the collision, aggregations, and dispersal of atoms. Like the philosophers of the Milesian school, Epicurus was a strict materialist, believing that material things cast off films or “idols” that are perceived by the senses. All information that comes to our senses are reliable, it is only in their interpretation that we make mistakes. The soul, likewise, is made up of fine particles that dissolve after death. It is therefore wrong to believe in an afterlife as moralists and believers teach. Natural forces give rise to the different species, and those species that are best able to propagate themselves survive.

Epicurus' influence on Western philosophy was substantial and long lasting, particularly amongst Greek and Roman statesmen. The Greek grammarian Apollodorus (fl.146-140 B.C.) was a prominent Epicurean, and the Roman statesman Pliny the Younger and the Roman poets Horace and Lucretius were all Epicureans. Other influential Roman writers from whom we obtain information about Epicurus were Cicero, Seneca, and Plutarch. The third century historian, Diogenes Laertius (200?-250 A.D.), who wrote a biography of Epicurus, claimed that Epicurus was a prolific writer who left three hundred manuscripts, including thirty-seven treatises on physics and numerous works on love, justice, the gods, and other subjects. Of these writings only three letters and a number of short fragments survive, all in Diogenes' biography.

Epicureanism as an organized school of philosophy went out of existence early in the fourth century A.D. because of the growing moralistic influence of the Roman Catholic Church, but reemerged in spirit in the seventeenth century by the French philosopher Pierre Gassendi and in the nineteenth century by the English utilitarian Jeremy Bentham, both advocates of whatever is pleasurable is what is good. Today, Epicureanism, with its hedonistic and pleasure seeking lifestyle, is as popular as it ever was in ancient Greece and Rome.

### **Ancient Roman Philosophy**

Most of the ancient Greek philosophies were assimilated into neighboring Rome, but it was the philosophy of stoicism that was the most prevalent philosophy of the ancient Roman Empire. The stoic school of philosophy actually began in Greece, where it was founded in Athens around 300 B.C. by the Greek philosopher Zeno of Citium in Cyprus (c.335-263 B.C.). Zeno was a student of Plato's Academy and studied under the cynic philosophers Crates of Thebes and Stilpon of Megara. Zeno and his best students, Cleanthes of Assos in the Troad (area surrounding ancient Troy) and Chrysippus of Soli in Cilicia, represent the first period of stoicism (300-200 B.C.). The second period (200-50 B.C.) represents the incorporation of Greek stoicism into Rome. The period of Chrysippus was followed by Zeno of Tarsus and Diogenes of Babylonia; then Antipater of Tarsus, who taught Panaetius of Rhodes (c.185-109 B.C.). It was Panaetius who introduced stoicism into Rome. Among Panaetius's pupils was Posidonius (c.135-51 B.C.) of Apamea in Syria, who was the teacher of the great Roman orator and statesman Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.), commonly known as "Cicero." The third period of stoicism (50 B.C. to 200 A.D.) was entirely Roman in

influence. The principal adherents of Roman stoicism were the statesman Cato the Younger (95-46 B.C.), Nero's tutor Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Younger, commonly known as "Seneca" (4 B.C.-65 A.D.), the Greek slave turned Roman philosopher known as "Epictetus" (c. 55-135 A.D.), and the infamous Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius (121-180 A.D.), one of the last great stoic philosophers of antiquity, and one of the ten worst Roman persecutors of Christians.<sup>1</sup>

Stoicism, the most influential school of philosophy in Rome prior to the introduction of Christianity, taught that the world was made up of passive matter, which is animated in creatures by an active, fiery-like material called the *Logos*. The soul is a manifestation of the *Logos*, which in turn emanates from the divine, who is the life soul of the world. God is not separate and transcendent from the world as Christians believe: he *is* the world. Each being, therefore, contains part of the divine fire in their souls. Thus, a healthy respect for nature and its natural laws was paramount to stoics.

Natural law played an important part in Roman philosophy, morality, ethics, and jurisprudence. The virtuous will, to Romans, is the will that lives in conformity to the divine order of nature and the universe. Natural law embodies the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance. The stoics disagreed with the Epicureans that the pursuit of pleasure was the cardinal virtue. Ethics was the main field of study in Roman stoicism, but stoics also made advances in logic and the natural sciences. Happiness, peace, and the good life comes not from external things such as health and wealth, but is a manifestation of the internal state of one's soul. Like Plato, stoics believed that true wisdom lies in the ability to deliver yourself from the passions and worldly desires that perturb the ordinary soul, and being able to live in harmony with others. All people, regardless of rank, position, or social status, are reflections of the divine soul, and should love and respect one another as equals. Even before Christianity, stoics believed in a brotherhood and equality of man, although in practice the Roman Empire was one of the cruelest and most bloodthirsty world powers in the history of mankind.

Stoics weren't concerned with otherworldliness; what was important to them was the here and now, not a belief in an afterlife reward or punishment. They rejected Plato's dualistic theory of the immortality of the soul that separates from the material body upon death (most stoics believed the soul perishes with the body). Everything that happens on earth is governed by divine providence, even if it is a tragedy; so one shouldn't despair or worry over misfortunes or one's lot in life. One should only be concerned with doing what is right and virtuous.

The previously mentioned Greek philosophy of atomism put forth by Democritus, Leucippus, and Epicurus was similarly championed by the famous Roman poet and philosopher Titus Lucretius Carus (c. 99-55 B.C.), commonly known as "Lucretius." Lucretius is best remembered for his great didactic poem in six books called *On the Nature of Things*. In it Lucretius presents a materialistic viewpoint on the origin of the world similar to the theories of the Greek atomists. Lucretius believed that the universe is made up of atoms moving about in a void, that the soul is material like the body and not immortal, that there is no afterlife reward or punishment, and that all events on earth are by mere chance and not directed by any god. Lucretius tried to relieve people of the fear of divine punishment, and, like Epicurus, considered this fear the main cause of human unhappiness. If the gods exist, Lucretius said, they have no concern with mortals. Lucretius, however, was unable to convince people of his atheistic materialism, as witnessed by the tremendous rise in Rome a century or so later of a popular new religious sect called Christianity.

Christianity began gaining substantial ground on pagan philosophy and practices by the end of the second century A.D., and was about to completely replace it at the beginning of the fourth century, in spite of ten terrible persecutions of Christians at the hands of the pagan Roman emperors Nero (64-68), Domitian (95-96), Trajan (106-117), Marcus Aurelius (161-180), Septimus Severus (202-211), Maximin the Thracian (235-238), Decius (249-251), Valerian (257-260), Aurelian (274-275), and Diocletian and Galerius (303-311). A last ditch effort to stem the rising tide of Christianity and bring back the glory days of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy was made in the third century by the introduction of Neoplatonism into Rome. Neoplatonism actually began in Alexandria, Egypt, in the third century A.D., and was ushered into Rome about 244 by the Roman philosopher Plotinus. Plotinus (205-270) was born and raised in Egypt and studied philosophy at Alexandria with the philosopher Ammonius Saccus before moving on to Rome and founding a school of Neoplatonism. Other notable Neoplatonists after Plotinus were the Syrian-Greek scholar and philosopher Porphyry (232-304), the Syrian-Greek philosopher Iamblichus (250-330), and the Greek philosopher and mathematician Proclus (410-485), the last important Greek philosopher.

Plotinus preached the ascetic and metaphysical philosophies of Plato and Pythagoras, and through his influence convinced many a Roman to forego their riches, set their slaves free, and take up the study of philosophy and the practice of asceticism and piety. With the permission of the emperor Gallienus, at age sixty Plotinus planned to establish a

communistic-style commonwealth on the model of Plato's *Republic*, but the project failed because of strong opposition. Plotinus continued to lecture and write, however, and by the time of his death he had written fifty-four treatises in Greek called the *Enneads*.

Plotinus' Neoplatonism was based primarily on Plato's philosophy of forms or ideas, but it was modified somewhat to include his own theory of emanation. Plotinus believed that power continually emanates from the Absolute Being or the "One," to the whole of creation, through *nous* or pure intelligence. From *nous* flows the soul of the world; and from it flows the souls of all creatures and material things. Human beings, therefore, live in two worlds: a world of matter and the senses and a spiritual world of pure intelligence. Man should forego the material world, because matter is evil, and pursue the world of pure intelligence through meditation and contemplation of the infinite, unknowable, perfect One. There are three universal principles according to Plotinus: the One or Good is the highest, the Intellect is the next highest, and the Soul is the lowest.

Plotinus believed that the world was "beamed" from the intelligible "there," and that souls descended from the "there" and will someday ascend back. Souls have high and low parts. The highest part is linked to the Intellect "there." In life, the "here," we choose what part of our soul we like best, the high or low part, and that choice determines our afterlife as plants, animals, demons, or gods. A soul that has chosen its lower sensual part rather than its higher spiritual part can still obtain salvation by reversing course and seeking union with the One.

Porphyry, whose original name was Malchus, was a Greek scholar who grew up in Palestine where he studied under Cassius Longinus. Porphyry went to Rome, where he studied Neoplatonism under Plotinus. Unlike Plotinus, who didn't say much about Christianity, Porphyry was vigorously opposed to it. In his defense of paganism, Porphyry wrote *Adversus Christianos*.

The third important Neoplatonist was Iamblichus, a Syrian philosopher and a student under Porphyry in Rome. Iamblichus established a school of Neoplatonism in Syria, where he combined selected elements of Plato, Pythagoras, Plotinus, and Oriental mysticism, turning them into a mystical, pagan religious philosophy. Among his works are *On the Egyptian Mysteries* and *On the Pythagorean Life*.

Proclus was the last important Greek philosopher of antiquity and an important member of the Athenian school of Neoplatonism. Born in Constantinople, Proclus studied in Alexandria, Egypt, with the Greek philosopher Olympiodorus, and later joined the Academy in Athens, eventually becoming its director. Proclus was just as opposed to

Christianity as Iamblichus, and like Iamblichus, practiced a mystical, magical form of Neoplatonism. His surviving works include *Elements of Theology* and *Platonic Theology*.

### **The Christian Philosophy of St. Augustine: Doctor of the Church**

The writings and teachings of the aforementioned Greek and Roman philosophers, at least those who believed in a supreme being and a God-given soul, helped pave the way for the replacement of paganism with Christianity in the Roman Empire. In 313 A.D., Roman Emperor Constantine the Great signed into law his Edict of Milan, which for the first time officially recognized Christianity as a lawful religion within the Roman Empire. With the blessing of Constantine and his successors, many apologists and early church fathers contributed to the rise in popularity of Christianity within the Roman Empire, but the greatest of them all was the famous Christian philosopher known as St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430), Doctor of the Church.

St. Augustine was born on November 13, 354, at Tagaste (now Souk-Ahras, Algeria), a small village in Numidia not far from Hippo (now Annaba, Algeria). His father, Patricius, was a pagan of violent temper, who converted to Christianity before his death, but his mother, St. Monica, was a faithful, good-hearted Christian who prayed endlessly for the conversion of her husband and son. Augustine had been instructed in the teachings of Christianity as a child by his mother, but chose to live the pagan life because it was easier and more pleasurable. Augustine recorded years later in his *Confessions* that his motto was "Give me chastity and continence, but not just now." At seventeen, Augustine left home and traveled to Carthage in the year 370. There he enrolled in a school of rhetoric. Somewhere between the ages of fifteen and thirty, Augustine moved in with a Carthaginian woman whose name is unknown. In 372, she bore him a son, whom he named Adeodatus, which is Latin for "the gift of God." But around the year 385 while living in Milan, Augustine sent his lover away, even though she had remained faithful to him all that time.

In Carthage around the year 371, Augustine read Cicero's *Hortensius*, and turned his interest from rhetoric to philosophy. For the next nine years, from 373 until 382, Augustine was a devotee of Manichaeism, a theological and philosophical heresy that maintained the existence of two gods: a good god who was the cause of all good, and an evil god who

was the creator of all matter which was evil. Manichaeism was less strict in morality than Christianity and was easier for Augustine to follow. After meeting the leading Manichaean teacher, Faustus, in 383, Augustine became disillusioned with Manichaeism, and decided to secretly move to Rome without his mother's knowledge to open a school of rhetoric there. After being cheated out of his wages in Rome, Augustine moved to Milan where he received a post as master of rhetoric. While in Milan, Augustine came under the influence of the charismatic and fiery Bishop Ambrose of Milan, whose sermons on Christianity, which he attended out of curiosity and respect, began to move his spirit towards Jesus Christ. Studying the spiritual teachings of Plato and Plotinus also began to move Augustine closer to Christianity.

St. Monica followed her son to Milan, wishing to see him married, but the mother of Augustine's child moved back to North Africa without marrying Augustine, leaving Adeodatus behind with his dad. Though stirred by Christianity, Augustine, still young and handsome, continued to struggle with sexual promiscuity. Upon hearing of the conversion to Christianity of the Roman Neoplatonist professor, Victorinus, and after a visit by his Christian friend Pontitian from Africa, who read to him books about the lives of St. Paul and St. Anthony, Augustine went to his garden one day and threw himself on the ground, lamenting his past sexual iniquities: "How long, O Lord?" he said, "Wilt thou be angry for ever? Remember not my past iniquities." Immediately he heard a voice like a child, singing from a neighboring house, over and over again, "Take up and read! Take up and read!" Augustine, believing this was a message from God to read the Sacred Scriptures, returned to where his friend Alipius was sitting with the book of St. Paul's epistles, opened it, and read in silence the first words that came to his eyes from Rom.13: 13-14: "Let us live honorably as in daylight; not in revelry and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."

Augustine immediately gave his life to Jesus, as did his friend Alipius. Upon telling his mother that he now accepted the Lord, she wept with joy and gave praise to God for having answering the prayers that she had been saying for so many years for his conversion. This happened in September of 386. Bishop Ambrose baptized Augustine and his son on Easter eve in 387, and his mother and son would die not long afterwards.

After his conversion, Augustine gave up his school and retired to a country house near Milan, accompanied by his mother, brother, son, Alipius, and several other friends, where they all lived a communal life in service to Jesus Christ. It was during this period in Milan that, from

the discussions that took place at the communal home, Augustine wrote three dialogues: *Against the Academicians*, *Of the Happy Life*, and *Of Order*.

Augustine planned to return to Africa, but while in Ostia his mother died in November 387. Augustine returned to Rome for a short while, and then left for Africa in September 388. He lived a communal life in Tagaste for about three more years, fasting, meditating, teaching, and doing good works. In 391, Augustine was ordained a priest and served as an assistant to Valerius, Bishop of Hippo. While in Hippo, Augustine established a monastery where he lived with St. Alipius, St. Evodius, St. Possidius, and others. During this period of time, Augustine rigorously defended Christianity against the heresies of Manichaeism and Donatism. Donatists maintained that baptisms administered by heretics is invalid, that re-baptism was necessary for salvation, and that sanctity was a requirement for church membership.

In 395, Augustine was consecrated a bishop and succeeded Valerius as Bishop of Hippo not long afterwards. Priests and deacons of Hippo were obliged to follow the communal rules of Augustine by renouncing ownership of property. From 395 to 405, Augustine was involved in a bitter and protracted battle with the Donatists and the outrages they committed. Emperor Honorius published severe laws against the Donatists, up to the death penalty, which Augustine was against. In the course of this conflict, which was long and bitter, Augustine developed his doctrines of original sin and divine grace, divine sovereignty, and predestination. The Council of Carthage in 411 marked the beginning of the end for Manichaeism and Donatism, but another heresy called Pelagianism sprung up their place. Pelagius believed that man, by his own natural powers and free will, could be sinless and become like a son of God, that Adam's sin was purely personal and didn't pass the stain of original sin on to all humanity, that we are born free of sin like Adam and Eve, that man can do anything God can do, that we don't need a redeemer because the Mosaic Law is sufficient to save us, that there were men who were sinless before Christ, that we don't need God's grace for salvation, and that St. Peter had no authority over the other apostles. The Council of Ephesus finally condemned Pelagianism in 431.

In the year 410, Alaric the Visigoth sacked Rome, and the barbarians attributed the calamities of the Roman Empire to Christianity. To counter these blasphemous slanders against God, Augustine began his greatest work, *Of the City of God* (413-426), in which he formulated a theological and philosophical history of the world, with Christianity as the natural and foreordained successor to Greek and Roman paganism. As a prolific writer on theology, history, and philosophy, Augustine was every bit as talented as St. Paul the Apostle. One of his best-known works

is his autobiographical *Confessions* (c. 400), in which he confessed his earlier life of immorality and his subsequent conversion to Christianity. In 428, Augustine wrote the *Retractions*, in which he corrected some of the mistakes in his earlier writings. His other writings include the *Epistles*, of which 270 are in the Benedictine edition, variously dated between 386 and 429; his treatises *On Free Will* (388-95), *On Christian Doctrine* (397), *On Baptism: Against the Donatists* (400), *On the Trinity* (400-16), and *On Nature and Grace* (415); as well as homilies upon several books of the Bible. The Roman Catholic Church and the major Protestant denominations both hail St. Augustine as one of the most influential doctors of orthodox Christianity. His influence on the spread of Christianity is immeasurable.

## **Medieval Philosophers of Europe and the Middle East**

The perpetual myth that the Middle Ages were the “Dark Ages” because culture and learning precipitously declined after the triumph of Christianity has been exploded time and again by scholars and historians. In the *scriptoria* (writing rooms) of European monasteries, the famous works of Latin and Greek writers, philosophers, scientists, and physicians—such as Virgil, Ovid, Cicero, Seneca, Galen, and Celsus—were preserved and taught by well-educated monks. Modern advances in medicine, mathematics, and astronomy are indebted to medieval scholars and monks in such historic sites as the Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino, which was founded in the sixth century and contained an extensive library on medicine and science. Other noted centers of education included the famous medical schools of Salerno, Montpellier, Paris, Oxford, Padua, and Bologna. There was no such thing as the Dark Ages.

The fifth century A.D. witnessed the sack of Rome in 410 by the Germanic tribes of Alaric I, and the reign of the last Roman emperor in the West in 476, Romulus Augustulus. The barbarian invasion of the Western Roman Empire changed forever the economic, political, and military makeup of Europe, with the coalescing of the primitive tribes of the Franks, Gauls, Goths, and Visigoths into competing kingdoms on the lands that were once occupied by the armies of the Roman Empire. With the coming of the barbarian invasion, the well-regulated commerce of the Roman Empire was replaced by a more primitive feudal system of peasant and landlord without a centralized political

authority. The only centralized authority that maintained its influence and actually grew in importance during the Middle Ages was the Catholic Church, which established numerous monasteries throughout Europe, especially in Ireland where missionaries evangelized the pagan barbarians and converted them to Christianity. Thanks to the evangelization efforts and hard work of the Catholic Church, the barbarians of Europe became civilized and converted to Christianity.

The Eastern Roman Empire managed to survive the barbarian invasion because the Roman emperor Constantine the Great had moved his capitol to Constantinople—now Istanbul, Turkey—in 324. Like the Academy and Lyceum, all other pagan philosophical schools in Rome were closed. Both non-Christian and Christian philosophers, however, still made an impact on Western education during that period. One non-Christian philosopher from Rome named Anucius Manilus Severinus (c. 480-524), commonly known as “Boethius,” wrote *The Consolation of Philosophy* in 523, which contained many elements of Christian ethics and was highly respected in Europe during the Middle Ages. Boethius was translated many times over, especially in England by King Alfred the Great and the poet Geoffrey Chaucer. His works contained numerous writings on logic, music, arithmetic, and theology, in addition to commentaries on Cicero, Porphyry, and Aristotle. What little Western philosophers knew of Aristotle during the early medieval period came largely from the translations of Boethius.

In addition to Boethius, John Philoponus, also known as “John the Grammarian,” was a sixth century Greek philosopher from Alexandria who helped Christianity replace Neoplatonism. Philoponus authored two treatises on grammar, helped reconcile Aristotle with Christianity, and wrote *Diaitete*, an attempt to reconcile monophytism (the belief that God is one person rather than three) with orthodox Christianity. Another important scholar was Simplicius of Cilicia (c.530 A.D.), the last major Neoplatonist who authored commentaries on Aristotle and the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus.

In spite of the rapidly growing influence of the Church, pagan ideas and unorthodox beliefs managed to surface now and again, bringing the Church into conflict with heretical philosophers for their attacks on orthodox Church doctrines. One particular Scots-Irish philosopher named John Scotus Erigena (815?-877?), the supervisor of the court school of King Charles I, was condemned by the Church at the Council of Sens (1225) for his pantheistic work entitled *Concerning the Division of Nature*, which was written between 865-870. In his *Division of Nature*, Erigena rejected the Christian doctrine that God created the world out of nothing, and believed that space and time were only manifestations

of the mind of God, and that reason supercedes Church authority. Erigena's treatise *Concerning Divine Predestination*, which denied the eternal damnation of souls and God's total control over our salvation, was condemned by the councils of Valence (855), Langres (859), and Vercelli (1050). Erigena was also believed to have rejected the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Although a heretic, Erigena was highly regarded for his knowledge and translations from Greek into Latin of a number of ancient philosophical works, particularly the Neoplatonic works of Dionysius the Areopagite.

Another famous philosopher and teacher whose unorthodox views got him into trouble with the Church was Peter Abelard (1079-1142?). Abelard was a French philosopher and early scholastic theologian who gained fame for his love affair with a young woman half his age. At age forty, Abelard fell in love with his student Heloise, age twenty, the niece of the canon of Notre-Dame in Paris. Heloise bore Abelard a son whom they named Astrolabe, and they were secretly married soon afterwards. Persuading Heloise to enter a convent and become a nun because he had not yet received his major orders, Abelard infuriated the canon of Notre-Dame, who felt that Abelard had abandoned Heloise at the abbey, so he had Abelard castrated. Abelard retired to a religious retreat at the Abbey of Saint-Denis-en-France, in Paris, where he began to write. Abelard's first published work, a treatise on the Trinity (1121), was condemned and ordered burned by a Roman Catholic council that met at Soissons in the same year. Forced to leave St. Denis-en-France, Abelard founded a chapel and oratory, called the Paraclete, at Nogent-sur-Seine. In 1125, Abelard was elected abbot of the monastery at Saint-Gildas-de-Rhuis. Abelard arranged for Heloise to become the abbess of the convent there, so that she could be near him. Their exchange of love letters became classics of romance. Abelard's philosophy was that of a skeptic and rationalist. In 1140, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, an eminent French ecclesiastic who thought Abelard's teachings were dangerous, persuaded bishops to support his charge of heresy against Abelard. Abelard appealed to Pope Innocent II (r. 1130-43), but to no avail. Although judged a heretic, Abelard's contributions to Western philosophy included important treatises on ethics, theology, and dialectics.

Islamic philosophers also contributed a great deal to Western philosophy and learning during the Middle Ages. Yaqub ibn Isahaq as-Sabah al-Kindi from Baghdad (801-873), known as "al-Kindi," was one of the first Arab students of Greek philosophy and one of the first Arabs to translate Aristotle into Arabic. Highly influenced by Aristotle and Neoplatonism, al-Kindi authored over 270 works on subjects such as philosophy, medicine, mathematics, optics, and astrology. Some of his

writings were translated into Latin during the Middle Ages and greatly impacted Western scholars. Al-Kindi, however, disagreed with Aristotle that the universe was eternal, believing instead that the universe had a beginning. He also believed that revelations from God took precedence over human reason. Al-Kindi wrote *On First Philosophy*, the first Arabic work on the philosophy of metaphysics.

Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Tarkhan ibn Uzalagh al-Farabi (c. 873-950), commonly known as “al-Farabi” or “Alfarabius” in Latin, was an Islamic philosopher from Uzbekistan who studied in Khorasan (now in Iran) and then in Baghdad, and eventually lived at the court of Sayf ad-Dawlah (916-967), the ruler of Aleppo (now in Syria). Educated by Christian Syrians, al-Farabi was one of the earliest Islamic philosophers to teach the Arab world the doctrines of Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, thereby greatly influencing later Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna and Averroes, who in turn reintroduced the teachings of Aristotle to Europe during the time of the Crusades. Al-Farabi was the first Islamic philosopher to believe that philosophy was superior to revelation, and that despite the differences of the world’s religions, philosophical truths are universal. Al-Farabi dreamed of a universal religion, which used the truths of philosophy as its foundation. Authoring over one hundred works, many of al-Farabi’s works were lost, but many others have been preserved in Latin translations.

Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina (980-1037), commonly known as “Avicenna,” was an important Iranian Islamic philosopher and physician. He was born near Bukhara (now in Uzbekistan) and became court physician to the Samanid ruler of Bukhara, where he held that post until 999, when the Turks defeated Persia. The last years of his life were spent as the scientific advisor and physician to the ruler of Isfahan. Avicenna authored over two hundred books on science, medicine, philosophy, and religion. His encyclopedic book *The Canon of Medicine* was highly regarded in the Middle East and Europe as the premiere textbook on science and medicine. Avicenna’s most popular philosophical work was *Book of Healing*, a collection of treatises on Aristotelian logic, metaphysics, psychology, the natural sciences, and other subjects. Combining elements of Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism, Avicenna denied the immortality of the soul, the creation of the world in time, and a God involved with the lives of human beings, which brought heavy criticism by the orthodox Muslim al-Ghazali. Much of Aristotle’s philosophical works were lost in Europe until the time of the Crusades, when Avicenna’s writings on Aristotle were found. Aristotle’s philosophical logic presented a major challenge to the Catholic Church, which saw his materialistic viewpoints in contradiction

to the accepted Augustinian theology. At one point the Church even banned the study of Aristotle, but Thomas Aquinas later reconciled Aristotle with Christian theology.

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad at-Tusi al-Ghazali (1058-1111), also referred to as “al-Ghazali” or “Algazel” in Latin, was an Islamic philosopher and theologian from Persia. He was appointed in 1091 by Nizam al-Mulk (1018-1092), vizier to the Seljuk sultan, to teach at Nizamiya University in Baghdad. In 1095, after a personal crisis of faith, al-Ghazali left his job and family to become a wandering ascetic. Ten years later he found the answers he was searching for and accepted another teaching position in Nishapur. His work *The Deliverance from Error*, like St. Augustine’s *Confessions*, told the story of his personal crisis of faith. Al-Ghazali’s most important work, *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, was considered to be the second greatest book in the Muslim world, second only to the Koran. Al-Ghazali refuted Avicenna’s Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism, which denied the creation of the world, the immortality of the soul, and a personal God who was involved with the lives of men. His *Destruction of the Philosophers* was an attack on rationalistic philosophy, as were his subsequent works *Intentions of the Philosophers* and *Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rushd (1126-98), also called “Averroes,” was a Spanish-Arab Islamic philosopher, theologian, jurist, scientist, and physician, born in Cordoba, Spain. Averroes’ monumental commentaries on the works of Aristotle and Plato were translated into Latin and Hebrew and, like Avicenna before him, greatly influenced medieval European and Jewish philosophy. Like Aristotle, Averroes denied the creation of the world, believed in a Prime Mover, and held that the individual soul emanates from a universal soul. Averroes was a rationalist like the Greek philosopher Parmenides of Elea, believing that reason is superior to religion, which led to his exile in 1195 by Abu Yusuf Yaqub al-Mansur. Averroes also believed that metaphysical truths could be explained by both philosophy and religion, but that theologians were inferior to philosophers in interpreting divine truths. His greatest work was *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, a rebuttal of the attacks on Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism by the Islamic theologian al-Ghazali.

Also influential to Western philosophy were the writings of Jewish scholars and philosophers. One important Jewish philosopher was Solomon ben Yehuda (1021?-58? B.C.), also known as “Ibn Gabirol” or “Avicebron” in Latin. Gabirol was a Spanish Jewish philosopher and poet, born in Malaga and educated in Saragossa. Gabirol wrote *Fountain of Life*, a Neoplatonic dialogue on the universality of matter, which was

translated into Latin and called *Fons Vitae*. *Fons Vitae* was thought to have been written by a Christian philosopher, and was praised by the Scottish philosopher John Duns Scotus. Thomas Aquinas, however, was critical of its Neoplatonism.

The most important Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages was Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (1135-1204), also called "Moses Maimonides" or, from the initials of his name, "Rambam." Maimonides was a Jewish philosopher and physician from Cordoba, Spain. After the capture of Cordoba in 1148 by the Muslim Almohads, who forced Jews and Christians in Spain to convert to Islam, Maimonides and his family emigrated to Cairo, Egypt. There he became the chief rabbi of Cairo and physician to Saladin, the sultan of Egypt and Syria who captured Jerusalem from the Crusaders. Maimonides' greatest works on Jewish law and faith were the *Mishneh Torah*, which was written in Hebrew and combined into fourteen books from 1170-1180, and his *Thirteen Articles of Faith*. Maimonides' works were so well regarded by Jewish scholars that they called him the "Second Moses." Philosophically, Maimonides greatly influenced Western philosophers by trying to synthesize rabbinic Judaism with Arabic Aristotelianism in his work *Guide for the Perplexed*, which also contained elements of Neoplatonism. Maimonides believed that pagan faiths were primitive, superstitious, and perverse. Christianity and Islam, Maimonides said, were derived from Judaism and have spread the belief in monotheism and the coming messianic age. Maimonides, however, did not believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah. Maimonides had a profound influence on the thirteenth century scholars Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus in their development of scholastic philosophy, which became the most important school of philosophy until the beginning of the Renaissance in the late 1300s.

### **The Thomist Philosophy of Scholasticism: Christianized Aristotelianism**

Scholasticism was a major philosophical and theological movement that dominated Western thought in medieval schools and universities from the eleventh to the fifteenth century. It was named after the scholars of the major monastic and cathedral schools of learning (the first true universities in Europe) who attempted to synthesize Christian theology and Augustinian philosophy with the materialistic and rationalistic philosophy of Aristotle, whose major works had just recently been rediscovered in the Latin translations of the Arab philosophers

Avicenna and Averroes. Scholastics believed that a harmony could exist between human reason and divine revelation, that the God of Aristotle and other important Greek philosophers such as Plato and Socrates was the same as the God of Christianity, and that any disagreements between reason and revelation were because of an improper use of reason or an incorrect interpretation of revelation. Because it is the direct communication of God to man, revelation is superior to human reason. Thus, in any conflicts over truth between the philosopher and the theologian, the theological truths would always prevail over philosophical truths.

Scholastic theologians such as Thomas Aquinas valued philosophy as a way to better understand revelation. They considered Aristotle the chief authority in philosophy and science, calling him simply “The Philosopher.” St. Augustine, on the other hand, was the scholastic’s chief authority in Christian theology, subordinate only to the Bible, the teaching magisterium of the Church, and the *Sententiarum Libri Quatuor* (*Four Books of Sentences*). The latter, written by the twelfth century Italian theologian and prelate Peter Lombard, was a collection of the opinions of the early church fathers on problems in theology. The first scholastics such as Abelard were nothing more than compilers of the words of the great philosophers, while the later scholastics such as Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas were skilled commentators and debaters on the works of the great ancient philosophers and theologians. Scholastics such as Magnus and Aquinas used the disputational method of appearing before faculty and peers to debate the complexities of Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy. After the middle of the fourteenth century, the verve of public disputation as an educational tool waned, and scholasticism became more of a rigid and boring formalism. Scholastic debaters became concerned less with real content and more with trivial points of logic and unimportant minutia. Trivial disputations gave scholasticism a bad reputation amongst Renaissance intellectuals and scholars. This, along with scholasticism’s rigid defense of Aristotle’s empiricism, eventually caused it to be discredited in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Some of Aristotle’s scientific theories, such as his mistaken belief that the universe evolved around the earth, were proved to be erroneous.

The “Founding Father of Scholasticism” was St. Anselm (1033-1109), archbishop of Canterbury, who is credited with being the most important theologian since St. Augustine. Anselm was born to a wealthy family in Aosta, northern Italy, and applied at age fifteen to the local monastery, but was turned down. In 1060, at age twenty-seven, he joined the Benedictine monastery at Bec, Normandy, where the English

prelate Lanfranc was prior. Some time later, after Lanfranc was called to England to become archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm was elected abbot of Bec. In this role, Anselm gained a reputation amongst his fellow monks as a person of deep piety and wisdom. The monks of Bec insisted that Anselm write out the meditations he taught them, so he composed *Monologion* (1077), in which he provided metaphysical proofs for the existence and nature of God. He also wrote *Proslogium* (1078), a contemplation of God's attributes as well as a treatise on truth, freewill, the origin of evil, and the art of reason. Anselm provided such strong arguments for the existence of God that they are still being argued over today. Anselm maintained that even those who deny the existence of God would have to have some understanding of what they are denying. Those who say there is no God know exactly in their mind who he is: the Most High living being who is above all things and which nothing greater can be thought of. According to St. Anselm, any nonbeliever who denied the existence of God would contradict himself because he is implying that something greater exists above which nothing greater can be thought of in the mind; so by necessity, God has to exist.

In 1093, with the death of Lanfranc, Anselm reluctantly became the archbishop of Canterbury. His election to the post soon brought him into direct confrontation with King William II. They debated who was in control of the abbeys and monasteries in Normandy: the king or the archbishop (the Investiture Controversy). Anselm was forced to go to Rome to plead his case before the pope, who assured him of his support. While in exile, Anselm completed one of the greatest works on the incarnation of Jesus Christ, the *Cur Deus Homo* (*Why God Became Man*). Upon the death of King William II and the succession to the English throne of Henry I in 1100, Anselm returned to Canterbury amid rejoicing of the people. Anselm, however, continued to struggle with the new king over control of the Church and the payment of investitures, resulting in another period of exile for Anselm. Anselm finally returned to Canterbury in 1106, where he died on April 21, 1109. He was canonized in 1163 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1720. His feast day is April 21.

Another important scholastic philosopher was St. Albert the Great (1206-80), also known as "Albertus Magnus." St. Albert is recognized for his voluminous works in the natural sciences and for his introduction of Greek and Arabic science and philosophy into Europe. A Swabian by descent, Albert was born into the noble family of Bollstädt at the castle of Lauingen, Bavaria, on the Danube in 1206. Albert joined the Dominican Order of Preachers of Padua in 1222, without the approval of his family. Upon hearing that the count of Bollstädt was planning to

forcibly remove him from the order, Albert moved to another friary in Cologne, Germany, where he was then ordained. Albert taught for several years in various locations throughout Germany before going on to the University of Paris, where he became a master of theology in 1245, and subsequently held one of the Dominican chairs of theology. Albert was an influential teacher, church administrator, and pastor. He traveled through Western Europe and served as a provincial and, briefly, as bishop of Regensburg (1260-62) before returning to teaching and scientific research.

A preeminent authority on physics, geography, astronomy, mineralogy, botany, physiology, chemistry, and biology, St. Albert's writings fill thirty-eight quarto volumes in print. In studying the writings of the ancient Greek philosophers, Albert saw the value of Aristotle's analytical method of scientific knowledge as useful to Church theology. The full body of scientific and philosophical writings of Aristotle had been unknown to Western philosophers until they were reintroduced into Europe via Latin translations of Arabic scholars at the time of the Crusades, and had to be dealt with by the Church, which was only familiar with the logic of Aristotle and saw Aristotle's scientific theories on matter and his emphasis on natural reason over revelation a threat to the accepted doctrines of Christianity. St. Albert, however, was able to rewrite Aristotle in such a way as to make him more acceptable to his Christian critics, but it would be Albert's most famous pupil, St. Thomas Aquinas, who would completely reconcile Aristotelianism with Christianity. Albert died at Cologne on November 15, 1280. He was beatified in 1622 and declared a saint by Pope Pius XI in 1931, at which time he was acclaimed an official Doctor of the Church. In 1941, Pope Pius XII made him the patron of all who study the natural sciences. His feast day is November 15.

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) was the most important figure in scholastic philosophy and the most important Roman Catholic theologian who ever lived. Because of his tremendous scholarly contributions to scholasticism, he is referred to by the Church as the "Angelic Doctor" and the "Prince of the Scholastics." Thomas Aquinas was born of a noble family in Rocca Secca, near Aquino, Italy. His father Landulf was a knight, and his mother Theodora was of Norman descent. Thomas, being big in stature, looked more northern in appearance than Italian. Thomas was educated at the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino and at the University of Naples. In 1243, the year of his father's death, he joined the Dominicans while still an undergraduate. His mother was totally against her son joining a mendicant order, so she had him captured and imprisoned in the family castle at Monte San Giovanni for

two years. While in confinement, Thomas read the *Sentences* of Peter Lombard, memorized much of the Bible, and is said to have written a treatise on the fallacies of Aristotle. In 1245, his mother finally realized that her attempts to keep her son away from the Dominicans were in vain, so she released him; whereupon Thomas immediately journeyed to Paris to rejoin his fellow Dominicans and continue his studies. At the University of Paris, Thomas studied under the Dominican Albert the Great, and then relocated to Cologne with Albert in 1248. Because Aquinas was rather quiet at disputations at first and heavysset, his fellow students nicknamed him "The Dumb Ox." St. Albert, however, knew this kid's potential, and said in reply to the other novices that "this ox will one day fill the world with his bellowing."

Aquinas was ordained a priest in 1250, and he began to teach as a bachelor at the University of Paris in 1252. His first writings were compilations of his lecture notes, and his first major theological work was a treatise on the writings of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* called *Scripta Super Libros Sententiarum* (*Writings on the Books of the Sentences*). In 1256, Aquinas received the doctor's chair in theology and was appointed professor of philosophy at the University of Paris. It was about this time that St. Thomas Aquinas began to write his brilliant work, *Summa Contra Gentiles*.

*Summa Contra Gentiles* was originally written to persuade Muslim intellectuals of the truth of Christianity and as a rebuttal to the followers of the Islamic philosopher Averroes, who believed that philosophy was independent of and superior to revelation. Averroes was a proponent of Aristotle and wrote a great deal on Aristotelian philosophy, the works of which were translated into Latin during the thirteenth century. From the writings of Averroes, it was evident that Aristotle was an empiricist and believed in the superiority of human understanding through sensory experiences rather than spiritual revelations. The clearness, energy, and authority of Aristotle's materialism and empiricism, as presented by Averroes, posed major problems for the Catholic Church: it couldn't just brush Aristotle aside or ignore him altogether because too many Europeans believed in the superiority of the senses in gaining wisdom, particularly the Frenchman Siger de Brabant and his fellow Averroists. The heresy of Averroism, therefore, which maintained that philosophy was independent of revelation, was a threat to the unity and supremacy of Church doctrine. It had to be dealt with if Christianity was to survive. Albert the Great and other scholastics had attempted to deal with Averroism, but with little success. Aquinas, however, succeeded brilliantly. Reconciling St. Augustine's emphasis upon the human spirit as the major source of wisdom and truth with Averroism's claim of the

primacy of the senses over spirit for obtaining knowledge, Aquinas insisted that the truths of Christian faith, as presented by Augustine, and those of sensory experience, as presented by Aristotle, are fully compatible and complementary. Some truths, such as the mystery of God's incarnation and his resurrection from the dead, can only be known through divine revelation, while other truths, such as the scientific understanding of the material world, can only be understood through sensory experiences; still others truths, such as God's existence, can be known by both equally. All knowledge of the truth, Aquinas said, originates in sensory experiences, but sensory data can only make sense by the actions of the intellect, which elevates thought toward the contemplation of spiritual things. To reach understanding of the highest truths, those with which religion is concerned, the aid of divine revelation is absolutely necessary. Aquinas' brilliant synthesis of Aristotelianism and Christianity in *Summa Contra Gentiles* and his later work *De Unitate Intellectus Contra Averroistas* turned the tide against the Averroists, who were subsequently condemned by the Church as heretics.

From 1259 to 1268, St. Thomas returned to Italy where he was made preacher general, and acted as adviser and lecturer to the papal court. In 1266, he began composing the most famous of his works, the *Summa Theologiae* (*Summary Treatise of Theology*), which was divided into three parts (on God, the moral life of man, and Christ), of which the last was left unfinished. In *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas said that there are two ways to know God: through reason and through revelation. By our observance of motion in the universe we can reason that God exists. That "God Exists" is self-evident in itself; from causes we can infer effects, and vice versa. God is the cause of all being, goodness, and perfection. God orders things in nature for the sake of an end, a purpose that may not be evident to us. God knows all things and has knowledge of things before they existed. God knows every act we will ever perform even before we do it. And even though God knows our destiny, we make our own destiny through our freewill.

In 1269, Thomas Aquinas returned to Paris, then left Paris in 1272 and proceeded to Naples, where he organized a new Dominican school. On December 6, 1273, the feast of St. Nicholas, while celebrating Mass, St. Thomas received a revelation from God, which affected him so much that he wrote and dictated no more. "The end of my labors is come," he said. "All that I have written appears to be as so much straw after the things that have been revealed to me." In March 1274, while traveling to the Council of Lyon, to which he had been commissioned by Pope Gregory X (1210-76), Aquinas fell ill. He died on March 7,

1274, at the Cistercian monastery of Fossa Nuova near Terracina. Thomas Aquinas was canonized by Pope John XXII in 1323 and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius V in 1567. In 1880, Pope Leo XIII declared him the patron of all universities, colleges, and schools. The greatest Catholic theologian of the medieval period, St. Thomas Aquinas wrote more than eight million words in eighty works on metaphysics, ethics, morality, epistemology, the mind, and religion. It was he, more than any other theologian of his time, who was able to reconcile the truths of Greek, Roman, Islamic, and Jewish philosophy with Christianity.

### **The Philosophy of Nominalism: What's in a Name?**

The golden age of scholasticism gave rise to such famous scholastics as Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, the English monk and philosopher Roger Bacon, the Italian prelate and theologian St. Bonaventure, the Scottish theologian and philosopher John Duns Scotus,<sup>2</sup> and the Belgian secular priest Henry of Ghent. Another philosophical school called nominalism, however, challenged scholasticism in number of followers. The most famous names in nominalism were Roscelin de Compiègne (1050-1125), the French theologian and scholastic philosopher regarded as the founder of nominalism, the scholastics Bernard of Chartres (1090-1130) and William of Champeaux (1070-1121), the outspoken and controversial English theologian and scholastic philosopher William of Ockham (1285-1349), and the French philosopher and theologian Nicholas of Autrecourt (c. 1300-1350?).

Nominalism, which gets its name from the Latin word *nomialis* meaning “pertaining to names,” is a philosophical doctrine that says that abstractions, known as universals (Plato’s eternal “forms” or substances that he said constitute the real world and are the objects of our reason), are without essential reality, and that the mind can grasp no single idea or image corresponding to any universal because only individual objects have real existence. For instance, the universal “circle” has no real existence in itself; we can only ascribe the name circle to things that are round. Nominalism is contrary to the extreme realism philosophy of Plato, who said that universals have a real and independent existence prior to and apart from particular objects.

Nominalism first evolved from Aristotle who disagreed with Plato’s extreme realism philosophy, believing that reality consists in individual objects, not universal archetypes. The founding father of true nominalism,

however, was the French theologian and philosopher Jean Roscelin de Compiègne, also called “Roscellinus.” Roscelin taught that only individual objects are real, whereas universals or abstract concepts are merely words. Misapplying nominalism to theology, however, got Roscelin in trouble, when he said that the Christian concept of the Trinity, one God in three persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), was not real either. There must exist, Roscelin said, three separate gods who are not one in being and who are not consubstantial. Needless to say, the Church was very angry with Roscelin and condemned his polytheism theology as heresy at the Synod of Soissons (1092). After his condemnation, Roscelin was forced to recant or face punishment. Roscelin fled to England, where the popular archbishop of Canterbury, St. Anselm, challenged him on his heresies. As a result of Anselm’s rebuttal, Roscelin left England and went to Rome, where he recanted in the end and was reconciled with the Church.

The most notable supporter of Roscelin’s theological nominalism was William of Ockham (1285-1349), nicknamed by his followers as the “Unconquerable Doctor” and “Worthy Initiator.” Ockham was a maverick English philosopher and Franciscan scholastic who vigorously opposed Thomist and Scotist scholasticism. Born in Surrey, England, Ockham joined the Franciscan Order and studied and taught at the University of Oxford from 1309 to 1319. Ockham got himself in trouble early on with Pope John XXII for his unorthodox teachings, and was held under house arrest for four years (1324-28) at the papal palace in Avignon, France. After being excommunicated in 1328 by Pope John XXII over a dispute involving evangelical Franciscan poverty, Ockham fled to Italy, and then to Munich, where he spent the rest of his life until he died of the plague.<sup>3</sup> With Michael of Cesena, the Franciscan general, Ockham joined sides with Louis IV, the Holy Roman Emperor from Bavaria, in contesting the temporal powers of the pope. Ockham’s *Dialogus* (1343) argued for sovereign independence from Rome of temporal (home) rule. In his philosophical defense of nominalism, Ockham maintained that such abstract entities as universals, essences, or forms are merely second intentions of words; that is, references of words to other words rather than to actual things. Ockham argued that the real is always individual, not universal, and that universals have no real existence in themselves, but are only abstract terms. Ockham, the man who more than anyone else helped put an end to Thomist scholasticism, however, is mostly remembered today for his fundamental principle of modern science and philosophy called “Ockham’s razor,” which says that one should not assume the existence of more things than are logically necessary (i.e., the most likely explanation to a problem is usually the best).

### **Humanism: Man Displaces Christ in Importance**

The first inklings of the decline of Christianity in Western society began during the European Renaissance (late 1300s-1600), which introduced a new man-centered philosophical ideology called humanism. The humanism of the Renaissance must not be confused with the secular humanism of today; for at that time there were not yet any publicly professed atheists. Humanists of the Renaissance wanted to focus in on the major achievements of man rather than Christ, by reviving the aesthetic, opulent, artistic era of the pagan Greeks and Romans. The recent rediscovery of the ancient works of Aristotle and other important Greek philosophers from the translations of the Arab philosophers Avicenna and Averroes in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries sparked a resurgent interest within Europe for classical art, philosophy, and culture. Statues and ancient architecture of Greece and Rome were idolized and worshipped for their beauty and magnificence. Great schools of art and architecture opened up in Italy, producing such incredibly talented artists as Giotto (1267-1337), Botticelli (1445-1510), and Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519). Italy was the birthplace of the Renaissance (which means “rebirth”) in Europe because that was where the ancients lived and there was plenty of architectural ruins, statues, and works of art left for Renaissance artists to study and emulate.

A renewed vitality and spirit of human accomplishment emerged in Europe during the Renaissance. Great works of literature were written by Dante Alighieri (1265-1321), Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-75), and Francesco Petrarch (1304-74), which glorified humanism and the ancient classics. Magnificent achievements in architecture, especially the construction of huge, ornate basilicas and palaces, were also made. Churches, basilicas, palaces, and the residences of the nobility and Church hierarchy were adorned with exquisite paintings of the human body and sculptures from Italian masters. Explorers from Italy, Spain, Portugal, and England circumnavigated the world in search of new lands and wealth to finance the Renaissance. Urban cites and centralized political institutions began replacing the rural fiefdoms of the Middle Ages to accommodate the growing populations and increased wealth of the merchant class. Secular scholars began replacing monks and priests as doctors of higher education and learning at the major universities. Scientists made important new discoveries, especially in the disciplines of medicine, archeology, mathematics, and astronomy. Historians began to record time in terms of antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance instead of the creation, incarnation, and Second Coming of Jesus Christ. Man started to replace Christ in importance.

The study of the works of the ancient philosophers coming in from the scholars of the Christian Byzantine Empire after its fall to the Muslim Ottoman Empire in 1453 produced a slavish imitation of the classics by humanists. Plato and Aristotle, who were once looked upon with suspicion by the Church during the Middle Ages, were adored and revered. The ethics of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers became the common standard of morality for humanists, and a feverish search to locate the manuscripts of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers was undertaken by humanist researchers and their supporters.

Schools of humanistic studies began to appear throughout Italy during the fifteenth century, encouraged and financed by the wealth of the Medicis of Florence, the Estes of Ferrara, the Sforzas of Milan, the dukes of Urbino, the Gonzagas of Mantua, the doges of Venice, and even papal Rome. The most notable supporter of Renaissance humanism was Cosimo de Medici (1389-1464), also known as Cosimo the Elder. Cosimo was an Italian banker and statesman who gathered at his court the leading artists, architects, and intellectuals of his day. Among those who enjoyed his patronage was the famous humanist philosopher and theologian Marsilio Ficino (1433-99), who reintroduced Neoplatonism to Europe.

During the earlier time of the scholastics, Aristotle was the most notable and respected philosopher of antiquity. Plato didn't have a strong following until the Renaissance when Marsilio Ficino, secretary to Cosimo de Medici, was commissioned by Cosimo to translate Plato's complete philosophical works into Latin (1462-69). Ficino, an Italian physician and philosopher who later became a priest, established a new Platonic Academy in Florence in 1462, which taught Plato, Plotinus, and the works of other Neoplatonists, as well as classical art and architecture. Ficino's Florentine Academy, therefore, was the greatest contributor to the Neoplatonic revival during the Renaissance.<sup>4</sup>

Students of the Florentine Academy, although they studied Neoplatonism, were nonetheless Christians. As they studied the works of the early Church fathers and ancient philosophers, they also studied the newly discovered writings of a legendary, fictional character named Hermes Trismegistus (whose name means "three times greater than Hermes," the fabled messenger of Zeus). Hermes Trismegistus was believed by Cosimo de Medici and other members of the Florentine Academy to have been an ancient Egyptian sage and contemporary of Moses who wrote a body of writings called the *Corpus Hermeticum*, or the "Hermetic Corpus." The Hermetic Corpus, which was actually written around the third century A.D. and rediscovered about 1460, contains Gnostic writings on magic, astrology, alchemy, the occult, and supposed

correspondences from Hermes to his students (*Pimander, Asclepius*).<sup>5</sup> In fact, Cosimo de Medici, knowing that he only had a short time to live, ordered Ficino to stop translating Plato and concentrate solely on translating the Hermetic Corpus. The fictional Hermetic Corpus had a profound effect on Renaissance writers like Pico della Mirandola and Giordano Bruno, who revered these phony writings more than they did the Bible. Hermeticism, the mistaken belief in the fabled writings of Hermes Trismegistus, was one of the major causes for the decline in popularity of Christianity during the later part of the Renaissance, a fact that few people are aware of.

Another influential humanist and philosopher of the Renaissance was a student of Marsilio Ficino's named Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-94). Pico della Mirandola was a gifted student of the Florentine Academy who studied the Kabbala, Arabic, Hebrew, philosophy, science, mathematics, and theology. At the age of twenty-three in 1486, he nailed a list of nine hundred theses to the cathedral door in Florence, publicly challenging anyone to an open debate, but was prevented to do so by the Church. For his unorthodox cabalistic beliefs, he was accused of heresy by Pope Innocent VIII in 1487, but cleared in 1492 by Pope Alexander VI and was reconverted to orthodoxy by the controversial Dominican monk Savonarola. In 1486, Pico della Mirandola got himself in trouble with the Church when he published *De hominis dignitate oratio* (*Oration on the Dignity of Man*), which said that man can do anything by himself: a typical creed of modern secular humanists.

Another Italian humanist who is worthy to note is Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457). Valla was secretary to the king and protégé of Pope Nicholas V and Pope Calixtus VI. He was fluent in Latin and Greek, and translated Homer, Herodotus, and Thucydides. He was often called upon to authenticate ancient texts and manuscripts, including the New Testament. Valla discovered that the famed Donation of Constantine, which gave all temporal authority of the Western Roman Empire over to the papacy, was actually a forged document. It was supposedly written in the fourth century A.D. by Constantine, but Valla discovered that it had been written around the eighth century A.D. because it was written in later Latin grammar rather than earlier. This important new discovery gave substantial ammunition to secular rulers who believed in state's rights over Church rights, and helped fuel the Protestant Reformation in the late Renaissance era and the subsequent decline in influence of the Roman papacy.

One of today's heroes of freethinking and secular humanism during the Renaissance is Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). Bruno was an Italian

philosopher and poet from Naples who joined the Dominican Order in 1565, where he studied Aristotle and Thomist scholasticism. Egotistical, rebellious, and argumentative by nature, Bruno fled the Dominicans in 1576 to avoid prosecution for his unorthodox beliefs. Influenced by the phony writings in the Hermetic Corpus, Bruno believed in magic and said that Christ was a magician and the philosophical heir to Hermes Trismegistus. Wandering around Europe teaching, preaching, and writing anonymously about such topics as the Hermetic Corpus, pantheism, Neoplatonism, atomism, a plurality of worlds, an infinite universe, and the Copernican cosmology which said that the sun is the center of the universe instead of the earth as the Church maintained, Bruno raised the ire of the Catholic hierarchy. In fact, if Bruno had never championed Copernicus, the Catholic Church probably would have never censured Galileo in 1633 for his support of the Copernican theory. It was Bruno, not Galileo, who gave the Copernican theory a bad reputation within the Church. In 1584, Giordano Bruno gave a lecture at Canterbury and was very insulting and demeaning to the scholastics, but he had many friends in high places in London and Paris who disliked the Catholic Church and papacy as much as he did, and offered him protection against his enemies. Bruno's career, however, was about to come to an end. Invited to Venice to be the private tutor to the nobleman Giovanni Moncenigo, Bruno was turned in to the Inquisition in 1592 (a possible setup) and imprisoned while undergoing questioning on charges of blasphemy, immoral conduct, and heresy. First recanting, then affirming, his heretical ideas, Bruno was condemned and burned at the stake in Campo dei Fiori on February 17, 1600, for being an "impenitent heretic." Giordano Bruno has since become an icon and martyr for freethinkers, rebels, secular humanists, and atheists ever since. Late in the nineteenth century, a statue was erected on the site of his execution in his honor, which has become a memorial magnet for humanists worldwide.

Renaissance humanism in Italy was concerned primarily with the revitalization of European art and architecture, and the translations and study of ancient philosophers such as Plato and the Neoplatonists. Humanism in central and northern Europe, however, extended much broader into the fields of education and theology, and had a profound impact on the birth of the Protestant Reformation in Germany at the start of the sixteenth century. The invention of the Gutenberg printing press with movable metal type in 1455 helped spread humanism through the dissemination of the Greek classics (a critical study of the Bible in the original Greek and Hebrew language was paramount to the Reformation cause of *sola scriptura*, or the Bible only). In Germany,

Johann Reuchlin (1455-1522) was a leading humanist and scholar of Greek and Hebrew who wrote *De Rudimentis Hebraicis* in 1506, the first text on Hebrew grammar written by a Christian. Although personally opposed to the Reformation, Reuchlin's nephew, Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), was a leading German Reformer. Elected to the chair of Greek at the University of Wittenberg in 1518, Melanchthon befriended Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism, and became a well-respected theologian and major voice for the Protestant cause.

One of the key figures in the enlargement of humanism in France and England was the Dutch cleric and humanist Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Erasmus was born in Rotterdam, the illegitimate son of a priest, Roger Gerard, and a physician's daughter. Erasmus went to strict monastic schools in Deventer and s'Hertogenbosch and, after his father's death, became an Augustinian canon at Steyn. Erasmus was ordained a priest in 1492, and while employed by the bishop of Cambrai, studied scholastic philosophy and Greek at the University of Paris. Unhappy with living the rigorous religious life of an Augustinian, Erasmus petitioned the pope for a papal dispensation to work as a secular scholar without wearing religious apparel, which he was granted. Beginning in 1499, Erasmus traveled from city to city throughout Europe, working as a tutor and lecturer and constantly writing correspondences to the higher ups in Europe, while at the same time searching out ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts. Erasmus had a profound affect on English education. During four trips to England, Erasmus befriended such humanists as John Colet, founder of Saint Paul's School in London; Thomas Linacre, founder of the Royal College of Physicians; St. Thomas More, Catholic author and lord chancellor of England who was executed by King Henry VIII in 1535 for his allegiance to the pope; Bishop John Fisher (1459-1535) who was also executed by the king for his papal allegiance; and William Grocyn (1446-1519), lecturer in Greek at Oxford University (Erasmus also taught Greek at Cambridge). Erasmus' most important writings include his *Adagia*, a collection of Latin proverbs, *The Manuell of the Cristen Knyght*, and *The Praise of Folie*, both of which criticize the Church and advocate practical Christian piety without the need for strict religious observances. Erasmus believed that religion was far too important to be left to the theologians, and that men of letters like himself could purify Sacred Scripture by researching the ancient sources. Erasmus' Greek New Testament (1516), which was based on newly discovered manuscripts, contained critical notes and a new Latin translation, and was a more accurate version of the New Testament than the Latin Vulgate written by St. Jerome in the fourth century. Erasmus' New Testament greatly

influenced Protestant reformers of the time who sought to use the Bible as their sole source of authority (*sola scriptura*). While still maintaining that he was a Catholic, Erasmus befriended many Protestants and criticized the Catholic Church in his *Colloquies* (1518) for what he saw as her errors and superstitions. This led many within the Church hierarchy to suspect that he was secretly a Lutheran, which he vehemently denied. Erasmus refused to take sides publicly and purposely stayed out of theological debates. Accused of concealing his true beliefs for fear of condemnation by the Church, Erasmus responded to his critics by writing a complete declaration of his theological position, *De Libero Arbitrio* (*On the Freedom of the Will*, 1524), which contained a witty and erudite attack on Martin Luther's belief in the satanically enslaved will. A vicious counterattack by Luther elicited a final polemic by Erasmus, *Hyperaspistes* (1526). Despite Erasmus' claim that he was a Catholic, the Catholic Church has always regarded Erasmus as a Protestant reformer. His books were listed in the Index of Forbidden Books by the Council of Trent (1545-63) during the Catholic Counter Reformation.<sup>6</sup>

We have seen how the rise of humanism during the Renaissance began to draw man's interests away from Jesus Christ. Now let's see how another insidious human philosophy known as rationalism, the most destructive philosophy in human history, put mankind on a collision course with God himself.

## **Rationalism: Human Reason Supercedes Divine Revelation**

Rationalism is a human philosophy that glorifies man's reasoning ability to understand truths and obtain knowledge over and above sensory experiences and divine revelation. Rationalism is derived from the Latin word *ratio*, which means "reason." In ethics, morality, and religion, rationalists believe that divine revelation is unnecessary because human reason alone can define what is good and bad, right and wrong. Man doesn't need commandments or direct intervention from any god. In fact, any claims of divine revelation or any moral mandates that can't be rationally proven by science should be looked upon with suspicion, or dismissed altogether out of hand as spurious, superstitious, and evil.

The seventeenth century birth of the irreligious spirit of rationalism caused a skeptical crisis in faith throughout Europe, particularly in France and England where it gave birth to anti-Christian deism, the Age of Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, and the French Revolution of the

eighteenth century. Since its inception, rationalism has been linked to many, if not all, antireligious movements in the West, and is primarily responsible for the modern expulsion of Christianity from our schools, governments, and public institutions. History has recorded the devastating consequences of rationalism: the French Revolution (1789-1794), the rise of communism and the European Revolution of 1848, the birth of Darwinism in 1859, the French Commune uprising of 1871, the rise of Bolshevism in 1917, and the rise of Nazism in 1919. Hundreds of millions have died because of rationalism, and yet it is as strong as ever.

The never-ending argument over how we obtain knowledge and understanding of the world, whether by reason or sensory experiences, and whether or not there is such a thing as absolute truths revealed by God, is as ancient as philosophy itself. Diogenes the Cynic (412?-323 B.C.), Pyrrho the Skeptic (360-272 B.C.), and the Greek physician and philosophical skeptic Sextus Empiricus of the third century A.D. were three of the first known philosophers who could be considered rationalists. The founding father of the modern philosophical school we now call rationalism is the seventeenth-century French mathematician, scientist, and philosopher Rene Descartes (1596-1650). Descartes was born in La Haye, Touraine, to a noble family of learned scholars. At the age of eight, he was enrolled in the Jesuit school of La Fleche in Anjou, where he remained for eight years. In addition to the usual studies of classical Greek and Latin scholars, Descartes received instruction in mathematics and philosophy. The education he received from the Jesuits exerted a strong influence on Descartes throughout his entire life. His later philosophical discourses were attacks on the prevalent scholasticism of his day. Upon graduation from Jesuit school, Descartes studied law at the University of Poitiers, graduating in 1616, but he would never practice law. Following a brief stint in the military, Descartes traveled around Europe lecturing and teaching. In 1619, while in Germany, Descartes had a vision and three dreams that told him that every truth up until now should be doubted and what was needed was an entirely "new philosophy" which he himself would find out.

Back in France, inspired by his prophetic vision and dreams, Descartes plunged himself into the study of philosophy. In 1628, Descartes moved to the Netherlands, where he lived for the remainder of his life. It was here that he composed his major philosophical works: *Le Monde* (1633), *Discourse on Method* (1637), *Meditations on First Philosophy* (1641; rev. 1642), and *The Principles of Philosophy* (1644).

Descartes' first work, *Le Monde (The World)*, was a treatise on physics and cosmology that thoroughly attacked the Christian philosophies he learned in Jesuit school. In favor of a more mechanistic, materialistic

explanation of the world, Descartes, in *Le Monde*, contended that only two things exist in the world—mind and matter. On the complex subject of matter, Descartes maintained that matter is inert, has extension with length, breadth, and width (there are no empty spaces or voids as Aristotle believed), that there exists a plenum rather than a vacuum in space, that celestial matter and earthly matter are of the same substance, that matter has motion and is continually moving, that this motion must necessarily come from the Prime Mover, that there is a conservation of motion in the universe (contrary to Aristotle who believed that things tend to rest), that objects in motion move rectilinearly unless acting upon by forces, and, finally, that there exists three kinds of matter in the world, which differ only in size and shape. He called these first, second, and third matter. Third matter is visible and large; second matter consists of small, invisible “spheres” that fill in the spaces between the third matter; first matter is tiny, irregular, and invisible, and fills in the spaces between the spheres.

There are no empty spaces in the universe, according to Descartes. Matter, like the planets, moves in circular, enclosed paths called vortices. This was Descartes’ vortex theory of planetary motion. Vortices revolve counterclockwise in the same plane (this was the first time anyone addressed the problem of why the planets move in the same plane). At the center of each vortex is a star. Eventually all stars die out. Sunspots are impure matter of decay, which will eventually overwhelm the star. Dead stars are cast out of their paths and appear as comets. Comets will eventually be caught in a vortex and form a planet. Descartes was one of the first to say that the earth was once a ball of fire that encrusted.

Descartes’ mechanistic theory of the universality of matter and his support of Copernicus’ heliocentric theory of the universe were, in 1633, considered to be heretical by the Church. The Church believed like Aristotle that celestial matter is permanent and indestructible, that earthly matter corrupts and decays, and that the earth, according to the literal interpretation of the Bible and a majority of scientists of that time, is the center of the universe. In light of Galileo’s recent prosecution by the Roman Inquisition in 1633 for his espousal of Copernicus’ heliocentric cosmology, Descartes wisely elected to cautiously withdraw *Le Monde* from publication, at least for the time being.

On the controversial subject of mind, Descartes attempted to show that mind is superior to the senses in reliability regarding the confirmation of truths. Senses can often be deceived, he said, like when a stick appears to be broken when immersed halfway in water. In his “Discourse on the Method of Rightly Conducting Reason and Reaching

the Truth of the Sciences" (1637), the fourth part of his *Essais Philosophiques*, which also contains essays on geometry, optics, and meteors, Descartes attempted to build a new philosophy of truth by doubting everything at first, than trying to find things that can't be doubted, such as exists in mathematics and geometry, in which field he was a genius.<sup>7</sup> On the most fundamental question in philosophy, regarding whether or not we really exist and have being, Descartes stated that he can be certain he exists by using the reasoning power of his own mind. Said Descartes: "*Cogito, ergo sum.*" ("I think, therefore I am.") This has since become the single most famous philosophical quote in all of history.<sup>8</sup>

The problem with Descartes' rationalistic philosophy of doubting everything at first, then trying to prove what is true, is that there exist many truths that cannot be proven by either reason or the senses, and must be accepted by faith as given to us by God through divine revelation. This includes the Christian doctrines of the Trinity, the virgin birth, the incarnation, and the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, which, by the way, Descartes didn't believe in. Descartes, in fact, got himself in trouble with the University of Paris and the Catholic Church for his denial of the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*. The real presence is a traditional Catholic doctrine, which says that at the moment of consecration the bread and wine are turned into the actual body and blood and soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. As you will see in the final chapter of this book, there are many miracles of the bread and wine given to us by God to strengthen our faith in the real presence.

The contemporary critics of Descartes argued that his rationalistic oversimplification of everything in the physical universe to just matter and mechanical causes, and his advocacy of the philosophical skepticism of Catholic faith, took the mystery out of the universe and the faith away from the people. As a result of Descartes' rationalism, atheism, pantheism, agnosticism, and hostile antichristianity, all of which were just beginning to gain acceptance in the universities of Europe at the end of the seventeenth century, took off like a rocket, ending forever the Christ-centered era of Thomist scholasticism.

Rationalism had many champions beside Descartes, but he it is considered the founder. Baruch Spinoza (1632-77) was another important philosophical rationalist whose godless philosophical writings didn't become popular until a century after his death, when the irreligious spirit of rationalism was at its peak. Spinoza, whose first name Baruch or Benedictus means "Blessed," which he definitely wasn't, was the first major philosopher to publicly advocate abandoning the traditional beliefs of Judeo-Christianity.

Spinoza was born to Spanish-Portuguese Marranos (forced converts to Christianity living secretly as Jews) and resided in Amsterdam, Holland. He was given a traditional Jewish education, but Spinoza repudiated the Jewish religion of his ancestors following his introduction to the rationalistic philosophy of Rene Descartes, and the mechanistic and naturalistic philosophies of the Englishman Thomas Hobbes. After quitting the local synagogue, Spinoza was cursed and excommunicated by the local rabbis in 1656, and banished from Amsterdam. He then lived on the outskirts of the city and eked out a meager living grinding lenses.

During the next five years as a lens grinder, Spinoza wrote three major philosophical works espousing Cartesian rationalism: *Treatise on God and Man and His Happiness*, *Theologicopolitical Treatise* (published anonymously out of fear of reprisals), and *On the Improvement of Understanding*. In 1674, Spinoza wrote his fourth and most famous philosophical work on pantheism, entitled *Ethics Demonstrated with Geometrical Order*. According to this treatise, the universe is identical with God, who is the uncaused “substance” of all things. Substance, according to Spinoza, was not a material reality but a metaphysical entity that we think of as God. Substance has infinite attributes, but only two are perceptible to human minds: “extension” (the world of material things) and conscious “thought.” Thought and extension, in turn, are dependent on and exist in an ultimate reality, which we think is God. All material objects are the modes of God in the attribute “extension”; all ideas are the modes of God in the attribute “thought.” Modes are *natura naturata*, “nature begotten,” or nature in the multiplicity of its expressions. Substance or God is *natura naturans*, “nature begetting,” or nature in its formative unity, acting as the causal factor of its own modes. Modes are short-lived, and their existence assumes transitory form. God, however, is eternal, transcending all modal modifications. He is both an infinite physical thing and an infinite thinking thing. Material objects and conscious ideas are finite and unstable, but God is indestructible and infinite.

Spinoza rejected the orthodox Judeo-Christian idea of a personal, spiritual God who providentially watches over and judges man, whom he made out of nothing to share in his love and happiness in heaven for all eternity, or hell if he is wicked. No, nature and God were one and the same to Spinoza. God did not create nature but *is* nature. The natural laws of the universe are God, the material objects of the universe are God, we are God, and everything is God. Orthodox Judeo-Christianity, which teaches that God is separate from and transcendent over the universe he created, was intolerant and hateful to Spinoza, but it does provide a moral foundation for the ignorant masses who were incapable of forming a “philosopher’s” intellectual love of God, which Spinoza

claimed is the true salvation. Organized religion, said Spinoza, is life-denying in its promise of eternal happiness for righteous living on earth, which he didn't believe in either. Man's primary aim should be enjoying life in the here and now without fear or worry about condemnation. We should be one with God (nature), which is true salvation. Responding to his critics, who were many, Spinoza urged tolerance from them and freedom of thought in matters of faith and religion. Spinoza believed that the mythical stories and miracles in the Bible were meant to teach ethics and morality and weren't meant to be taken literally, a popular antichristian belief that has now become known as "modernism" or "post-modernism."

Spinoza's pantheism and disbelief in orthodox Judeo-Christianity was looked upon with horror and outrage by the religious leaders of his day, but have since been adopted and espoused by the majority of history's scientific elites, godless philosophers, and liberal intellectuals. Among the most famous philosophers and intellectuals who were proud followers of Spinoza were Goethe, Lessing, Heine, William Wordsworth, Percy Shelley, Nietzsche, Bertrand Russell, George Eliot, Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, and George Santayana, to name a few.

Another important rationalist was Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz (1646-1716), a famous German scientist, philosopher, mathematician, and statesman of the seventeenth century. Leibniz is best remembered as a brilliant mathematician who, along with Isaac Newton, invented integral and differential calculus. He also wrote several important works on philosophy and theology. Both Leibniz and Spinoza were proponents of an ancient philosophical theory called "monism," which says that everything in the universe is of one substance. There is no Platonic dualism of material body and immortal spiritual soul in monism; mind and matter are the same stuff.

Leibniz' philosophy of monism said that the world is composed of innumerable conscious centers of energy, known as "monads," which lack spatial parts and whose properties are functions of their perceptions and appetites. Each monad represents an individual mini-world, mirroring the universe in varying degrees of flawlessness, and developing independently of all other monads. The universe that the totality of these monads constitute is the harmonious result of God's divine plan. To answer his critics on why God, if he is omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, and perfect in every way, created this perfect monadal world filled with so much evil, Leibniz replied in his *Theodicy* (1710) that if a better world could have been made God would have created it. Therefore, God must have had "sufficient reason" to create a world such as ours. Voltaire, the infamous cynic and antichristian deist of the

French Enlightenment, brutally satirized Leibniz's "best of all possible worlds" in his infamous novel *Candide* (1759), a wicked satire of Judeo-Christianity in particular and all religions in general.

Yet another champion of seventeenth and eighteenth century rationalism was a German mathematician and philosopher with an ironic name, Christian Wolff (1679-1754). Inspired by the rationalistic doctrines of Descartes and Leibniz, Wolff became professor of mathematics and natural philosophy at the University of Halle in 1706. In 1721, Wolff delivered a controversial lecture denying the necessity of a Christian education for learning ethics and right moral behavior, citing the moral tenets of the Chinese sage Confucius (551?-479 B.C.) as proof that human reason alone could attain moral truths. Wolff's antichristian lecture got him into serious trouble with faculty heads at Halle, and he was subsequently banned from Prussia for teaching "atheism and fatalism" (all events are fixed in advance by some mysterious power, and human beings are powerless to change them). Despite Wolff's banishment from lecturing, the dominant philosophy of the German universities for the next century was Leibniz-Wolffian rationalism. Wolff came up with no new ideas of his own, but he was important as an organizing and systematizing philosopher of antichristian rationalism. His volumes of writings include the infamous work *Rational Thoughts on God, the World, and the Souls of Men* (1719).

On the heels of rationalism, a plethora of antichristian philosophies emerged in Europe and North America that attempted to explain the truth about reality without reference to Christianity, which drew mankind further and further into error and sin. The remainder of this chapter will attempt to define and explain each one of these philosophical errors, and how they've contributed to the downfall of this world we so lament. If you don't believe in God or Christianity, what you do believe will be contained within one or more of these atheistic philosophies, so pay attention.

## **Empiricism: I Must See, Smell, Touch, Taste, or Hear It to Believe It**

Empiricism is a philosophical doctrine that says that all knowledge comes from sensory experience rather than any spontaneous ideas or *a priori* thought. In essence, empiricism is a systematic process of observation and experimentation, which entails observing the material world neutrally and dispassionately, without prejudice or bias, and without

uncorroborated testimonies, especially in regards to reports of supernatural miracles. Empiricism is different than rationalism, but is equally skeptical towards religion and revelation. Empiricists say that all we can know about the truth is that which the natural world wishes to reveal to us through our five senses. If you can't see it, smell it, touch it, taste it or hear it, you can't say it exists. Any theological statements of fact regarding metaphysics and the supernatural realm are senseless to empiricists because they profess agnosticism.

Philosophical empiricists believe that our minds are like a blank tablet, a *tabula rasa*, on which information is imprinted via sensory inputs from the moment we are born. The problem, however, with saying that all knowledge and information comes from sensory input that is recorded on our minds like a blank CD is that it denies the mind's uncanny ability to foreknow things unknown, mysterious, or not yet experienced, such as the existence of a higher power outside ourselves, the existence of another world outside our space-time continuum, and the undeniable reality of ESP precognitions, premonitions, intuition, mental telepathy, and other extra-sensory gifts such as prophetic dreams and visions. Even pets who have no eternal soul have an uncanny ability to understand things they've never experienced before, such as finding their way home from far-away distances, when an earthquake or natural disaster is about to strike, or sensing when a family member is in trouble or a stranger has evil intentions. Empiricism, therefore, denies the spiritual nature of God's creatures.

In its heyday during the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, Great Britain was home to most of the world-famous empiricists, including Francis Bacon, John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and David Hume. Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the first Baron Verulam and Viscount Saint Albans, was a preeminent English lawyer, philosopher, and statesman, and is considered to be the founder of modern scientific thought, although he was not a scientist himself. Bacon was born on January 22, 1561, at York House in the Strand, London, and educated at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. Elected to the House of Commons in 1584, he served until 1614. In 1613, Bacon was appointed attorney general. In 1616, he became a privy councilor, and in 1618, he was appointed lord chancellor and raised to the peerage as Baron Verulam in 1621. But that same year he was charged with bribery and confessed that he was "heartily and penitently sorry." He submitted himself to the mercy of his peers who ordered him fined, imprisoned, and banished from Parliament. In September 1621, the king pardoned him but prohibited his return to Parliament or the court. Bacon spent the rest of his life writing at his family residence at Gorhambury and

died in London on April 9, 1626, while trying to determine whether cold could preserve meat.

Bacon's most important philosophical works were *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) and *Novum Organum* (1620). In *Advancement of Learning*, Bacon said that we should stop looking back to the ancient classics and authority figures for knowledge and turn to the moderns. At the time, the ancients were the accepted authorities of the scientific community, but by the end of the seventeenth-century modern scientists, like Newton and Boyle, had replaced them as the new authorities. In *Novum Organum*, Bacon said that what we need is a "new method" of discovering things to progress in knowledge; a new, empirical method of scientific inquiry not beholden to any authority. Bacon believed that Aristotle's deductive method of scientific inquiry, reasoning from preconceived prejudices and attitudes (which he called idols) to account for observable experimental results, is a hindrance to making new scientific discoveries. What we need, Bacon said, is to first begin by objectively collecting facts through scientific observation and experimentation, without any preconceived conclusions or theories. Then we can draw our own conclusions and theories from what we've learned. According to Bacon, we should never have to form a hypothesis about anything. In fact, he argued against them.

Bacon's method of scientific observation and experimentation preceding the formulation of any theory or conclusion is known as the scientific method,<sup>9</sup> and is credited with stimulating the scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Scientists in that period wholeheartedly embraced Bacon's scientific method, and governments and universities rushed to organize new societies for the advancement of scientific learning. For instance, in 1620, the year Bacon wrote his *Novum Organum*, there were no state-sponsored scientific societies. By 1660, the Royal Society of London was founded, and France's Royal Society in 1666. As a result of these new societies, tremendous scientific discoveries were made in England, France, and the rest of Europe, simply by doing what Bacon recommended—observing what happens in carefully controlled experiments.

The English philosopher, physician, politician, and statesman John Locke (1632-1704) is actually considered to be the founder of the philosophical school of empiricism, because he was the first to systematize the empiricist principles laid down by Francis Bacon. Locke was born in the village of Wrington, Somerset, on August 29, 1632, and was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church at the University of Oxford, where he lectured on Greek, rhetoric, and moral philosophy from 1661 to 1664. Liberal in politics and Protestant in faith, Locke

held a couple of minor government appointments and served on the Board of Trade until he resigned in 1700 because of ill health. Locke's most important philosophical work was *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), which took him twenty years to complete. In his *Essay*, Locke was the first to say that the mind is like "white paper" at birth, on which experience imprints knowledge. Locke did not believe in intuition, innate conceptions, instinctual understanding, or any type of inborn knowledge. All knowledge and all ideas, he said, come from experience. Locke did, however, try to include some of Descartes' rationalism in his philosophy. Senses alone, he said, do not impart knowledge; it is reason that works out the connections between ideas obtained from sensory experience that give us knowledge. Without reason, Locke said, all we have is belief, not knowledge. Locke, therefore, was empirical about obtaining information yet rational and liberal about interpreting it. Regarding Christianity, Locke's philosophy in his *Essay* elicited many criticisms for his skepticism towards religion. His polemics against innate ideas were taken as dangerous for religion and morality, and the role he gave to reason in religion was taken as to imply an impersonal deism. His weird theory that non-living matter might "think" was also seen as scandalous and heretical.

Another infamous empiricist, rationalist, and materialist from England was Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679). As the secretary to Francis Bacon, Hobbes was a controversial philosopher and political theorist whose mechanistic and naturalistic theories got him in trouble with both church and state. Born in Malmesbury, Hobbes was educated at Magdalen Hall, University of Oxford. In 1608, he became the tutor of English explorer William Cavendish, the third person to circumnavigate the world. In the following years, Hobbes traveled to continental Europe, where he visited and conversed with Galileo, Descartes, Gassendi, Mersenne, and others. Back in England, Hobbes became involved in politics and the civil war between Parliament and the king. In support of the monarchy, in 1637 Hobbes wrote *The Elements of Law, Natural and Politic*, which was circulated and read by members of Parliament. Hobbes feared that Parliament would arrest him for his *Elements*, so he fled to France in 1641 and lived in voluntary exile for the next decade. From 1646 to 1648, he was a mathematics tutor to the prince of Wales, later King Charles II, who was living in exile in Paris. In 1651, Hobbes completed his most important political work called the *Leviathan; or, The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiastical and Civil*. Hobbes' *Leviathan* was seen by the French authorities and British royalists living in exile in France as being too supportive of Oliver Cromwell's commonwealth and too critical of the papacy, so

Hobbes returned to England for fear of arrest in France. Hobbes had enemies on both sides of the English Civil War. Royalists saw Hobbes' denial of the divine right of kings as anti-king, and Parliament saw his support of the king over Parliament as anti-commonwealth. When Cromwell finally died in 1658, and his former student, Charles II, returned to England and became king, Hobbes regained favor with the English royalists. In 1666, however, the House of Commons passed a bill that included Hobbes' *Leviathan* on a list of books to be investigated on charges of teaching atheism. Similarly, the Catholic Church included *Leviathan* on their Index of Forbidden Books.

Hobbes' *Leviathan* and his philosophical trilogy of *De Cive* (1642), *De Corpore* (1655), and *De Homine* (1658), which covered topics on logic, language, and optics, as well as moral and political theory, clearly showed that Hobbes held a materialistic viewpoint about the world. For instance, Hobbes believed that all human psychology, such as sense, behavior, and tastes, are due to matter in motion inside the body. In matters pertaining to ethics, Hobbes was utilitarian and based his morality on psychological egoism, in that he believed that all things desired are good, and that every man seeks what is good for him. Although he said he believed in God and tried to justify his philosophical and political viewpoints by quoting Scripture, Hobbes felt that God was completely nonessential as the source of morality and ethics. Atheists and deists, he said, are subject to natural law and civil law just like theists, but not necessarily the commandments of God. To Hobbes, reason by itself provides a sufficient guide to right moral conduct, just as the rationalist Rene Descartes had said.

## **Skepticism: Doubt Everything, Especially Christianity**

Skepticism (from the Greek word *skeptesthai*, which means "to examine") is an ancient philosophical doctrine that denies the possibility of knowing any reality apart from human perception, and usually means doubting what is generally regarded to be the truth, especially divine truths. The birth of skepticism as a major philosophical movement in the West is attributed to the Greek sophists in the fifth century B.C., who, for the most part, doubted everything. The most familiar sophist, Protagoras of Abdera, who was famous for saying "Man is the measure of all things," taught that human beings can know only their perceptions of things, not the things in themselves. The Greek sophist Gorgias

is similarly known for his saying "Nothing is; or if anything is, it cannot be known." Gorgias said that all statements concerning reality are false, and that even if true, their truth can never be demonstrated. Pyrrho of Elis, who founded the philosophical school of Pyrrhonism in the fourth century B.C., maintained that human beings can know nothing of the real nature of things and, consequently, the wise person should suspend all judgment. Timon of Phlius, Pyrrho's pupil, said that equally good reasons can be given both for and against any philosophical proposition. Carneades, a more moderate skeptic, maintained that no beliefs could be proved conclusively, but that some can be shown to be more probable than others. Sceptics of later antiquity included the Greek philosopher Aenesidemus, who classified ten arguments in support of the skeptical position, and the Greek physician Sextus Empiricus, who emphasized observation and common sense as opposed to hypothesis. During the Renaissance, skepticism was advocated by the French writer Michel de Montaigne (1533-92), and a few centuries later during the Enlightenment it was staunchly defended by the English philosopher David Hume.

Inevitably, the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century led to a revival of philosophical skepticism, which, in turn, initiated a tidal wave of antichristian sentiment. Influenced by the empirical and rationalistic philosophies of the seventeenth century, orthodox religion came under increasingly vicious attacks in the eighteenth century by skeptics, atheists, agnostics, and deists who saw the scientific revolution as proof positive that organized religions, especially Judeo-Christianity, were mere myths invented by the authorities to retain power and keep the ignorant masses in subjugation. Bolstered by their pride and arrogance in man's achievements in mathematics and the sciences, especially the vindication of Galileo, skeptical philosophers glorified the period they were living in as the "Age of Reason" and the "Age of Enlightenment." Not afraid anymore to publicly condemn the Church, many skeptics who still wanted to believe in some higher power opted to believe in a new, nature-based religion called deism. Deists believed that God or some other higher power created the universe but left it alone to run by itself, much like a watch. Deists didn't believe in the Bible or its accounts of supernatural miracles and divine intervention and revelations, but believed instead that each person, aided by reason alone, had within themselves an inherent understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

The skeptical, antichristian philosophy of deism first emerged in England around the beginning to middle of the seventeenth century (around the time of the English Revolution and the beheading of King

Charles I at Whitehall Palace in 1649), where it quickly gained a following. Lord Edward Herbert of Cherbury (1582-1648), English philosopher and ambassador to France from 1619 to 1624, is considered by many to be the “Father of Deism.” Lord Herbert wrote in his most important metaphysical work, *Of Truth* (1624), that there exists a universality of belief in some higher power, which is indicative of man’s capability to understand right from wrong through the power of his reason alone. Lord Herbert and other English deists such as John Toland (1670-1722), who coined the word “pantheism,” and Charles Blount (1654-93), criticized the supernatural claims in the Bible and advocated a new, rationalistic religion based on the existence of nature instead of Jesus Christ as evidence of a higher power.

Deism was taken up in England in the eighteenth century by Anthony Collins (1676-1729), Thomas Chubb (1679-1746), and Matthew Tindal (1655-1733), and in France was championed by the likes of Denis Diderot (1713-1784) and Francois Marie Arouet (1694-1778), a.k.a. “Voltaire.” In America, deism had its champions in Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), Ethan Allen (1738-1789), and Thomas Paine (1737-1809). Paine wrote the controversial book *The Age of Reason*,<sup>10</sup> a philosophical digest of antichristian beliefs in which Paine boasted of a glorious and peaceful future after deism overturned, as his friend and fellow philosopher Joseph Priestley put it, “the old errors of superstition,” meaning, of course, Christianity.<sup>11</sup>

The Age of Reason, however, which was so glorified by Thomas Paine as an enlightened period of intellectual awakening and rationalistic antichristianity, should be remembered as the “Age of Pain” because it witnessed more violence, more wars, and more destruction than any other century. There were four French and English Wars waged in North America (1689-1763); there was the War of Spanish Succession in Europe (1701-14); the Swedish-Russian War of 1709; the Austrian-Turkish War in the Balkans in 1717; the War of the Polish Succession (1733-35); the Russian-Austrian War in the Balkans in 1739; the War of Austrian Succession (1740-48); the Scottish Jacobite Rebellion of 1746; the four Carnatic Wars fought between England and France in India (1740-63); the Seven Years War (1756-73) fought over the control of Germany by Prussia, Great Britain, and Hannover on one side and Austria, Saxony, France, Russia, Sweden, and Spain on the other; the American Revolutionary War (1755-81); the Russian defeat of Polish uprisings in 1768 and 1793-94; the French Revolution (1789-94); the French Revolutionary Wars in Europe and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815). Millions of lives were lost in wars and revolutions during the eighteenth century, especially in France, which, ironically,

was lauded centuries earlier by the early church fathers for being the “Eldest Daughter of the Catholic Church.”

France, one of the first European nations to convert to Christianity, was in the eighteenth century home to more deists and antichristians than any other European nation. Pompous French intellectuals and philosophers known as *philosophes* gathered together at extravagant evening parties in the homes (salons) of prominent persons, and mercilessly attacked Christianity and the French monarchy with their hateful propaganda and liberal ideas. Antichristian and anti-monarchical rhetoric coming from the salons lit the fire of the French Revolution of 1789-94, and the horrible and bloody persecution of the Catholic Church, the overthrow of the French monarchy, and the guillotining of King Louis XVI and his wife Marie Antoinette.

Among the leading French *philosophes* of eighteenth century were Charles Montesquieu, Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Denis Diderot. Baron Charles Montesquieu (1689-1755) was a French writer and jurist who was born in the Chateau of La Brede, and educated at the Oratorian school at Juilly and later at Bordeaux. He became counselor of the Bordeaux Parliament in 1714 and was its president from 1716 to 1728. Montesquieu was a landed aristocrat from a noble family, part of the resurgent nobility after the reign of King Louis XIV (1638-1715), and became famous for his satirical work *Persian Letters* (1721), which was based on the fictional letters of two Persian patricians traveling about Europe. In this cynical work, Montesquieu poked fun at French politics, social conditions, ecclesiastical affairs, literature, education, and other French institutions, which won Montesquieu instant fame in France among all those who hated the French monarchy and the Catholic Church. Montesquieu's second most important work was *The Spirit of Laws* (1748), a political treatise that said that the French monarchy had overstepped its bounds, and must be brought back in line. Power, he wrote, must be shared by the monarchy and other institutions, such as the Estates General (the French Parliament which hadn't convened since 1614), the local estates, organized nobility, charter towns, and the Church. Governmental powers, he said, should be separate and balanced to guarantee individual rights and freedom. Both *Persian Letters* and *The Spirit of the Laws* were widely read in France, and helped precipitate a climate of rebellion, which climaxed in the French Revolution.<sup>12</sup>

The one person who most typified the cynical spirit of skepticism and antichristian bigotry during the Enlightenment in France was Francois Marie Arouet (1694-1778), who called himself Voltaire. Born to a middle-class family in Paris, November 21, 1694, Voltaire was educated

by the Jesuits at the College Louis-le-Grand and went on to become an avant-garde philosopher and compulsive letter writer. One of the leading figures of the Enlightenment, Voltaire was a prolific writer whose collected works on various topics numbered more than seventy volumes. Voltaire had a biting tongue and a quick, sarcastic wit, which he seemed to relish but which got him in trouble with the authorities on many occasions. His lampooning of the French regent Philippe II, duc d'Orleans, accusing him of heinous crimes he didn't commit, caused him to be imprisoned in the Bastille from 1717 to 1718. A quarrel with a member of an illustrious French family, the Chevalier de Rohan, resulted in Voltaire's second incarceration in the Bastille in 1726, from which he was released within two weeks on promise to leave France and go to England, where he quickly mastered the English language and infected England with his pernicious, irreverent philosophies. In 1728, Voltaire returned to France, where he immersed himself in writing during the day and at night frequented the salons of Paris and Versailles where he entertained the ladies with his charm and wit and the *philosophes* with his political and theological liberalism. Voltaire got himself in trouble again with the French authorities with his publication of *Letters Concerning the English Nation* (1734), which covertly attacked the Church and political institutions of France, and once again he was forced to leave Paris. This time Voltaire took refuge at the Chateau de Cirey in the independent duchy of Lorraine. There he formed a close relationship with the aristocratic and learned Gabrielle Emilie Le Tonnelier de Breteuil, marquise du Chatelet (1706-49), who exerted a strong intellectual influence upon him. Voltaire's exile in Cirey was not without interludes of travel, though. He often traveled to Paris and to Versailles, where, through the influence of the Marquise de Pompadour, the famous mistress of Louis XV, he became a court favorite. At the court of Versailles, Voltaire was appointed historiographer of France, and then a gentleman of the king's bedchamber. Finally, in 1746, he was elected to the French Academy. Following the death of Madame du Chatelet in 1749, Voltaire finally accepted a long-standing invitation from Frederick II of Prussia to become a permanent resident of the Prussian court. He journeyed to Berlin in 1750, but stayed there only two years because his smart-aleck mouth clashed with the king's laconic German temperament, which led to frequent disputes between the two. For a while, Voltaire wandered about Europe, but he ended up in Ferney, near Geneva, Switzerland, where he spent the remaining twenty years of his life.

In his most memorable novel, *Candide* (1759), Voltaire satirized the Church as cruel, vindictive, and evil, and made fun of their belief that

the pain and suffering in the world is propitiatory and all part of God's redemptive plan. Voltaire's main characters in *Candide* are unrealistically struck with terrible tragedies time after time, but continually repeat Leibniz's optimistic and sanguine phrase that this is "the best of all possible worlds." Notable throughout Voltaire's letters and writings was his obsessive hatred of Christianity, saying in his letters that it was necessary to "crush the infamous thing," meaning, of course, the Catholic Church. But Voltaire didn't just hate Catholics; he was equally hateful of Protestants, believing that all sects of Christianity stifle freedom of thought and social progress. Politically, Voltaire insisted that the state should be supreme over the Catholic Church and demanded universal religious toleration (Voltaire was a deist), abolition of censorship and the death penalty, lenient punishment of criminals, and a strong government acting only under general rules of law to safeguard social progress and individual liberty. Voltaire believed in strong government and wasn't against monarchies *per se*; he was only against what he called "unenlightened monarchies."

Another very influential social and political skeptic of eighteenth century France, whose writings likewise inspired the overthrow of the French monarchy by the commoners, was Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78). Rousseau was actually born in Geneva, Switzerland, but lived in France most of his life. Coming from a working-class Protestant family, Rousseau never really felt at ease in France. He was paranoid that his French friends were really out to get him. Rousseau had no money, no social status, and fit the classic profile of the deluded outsider, pathetically maladjusted yet convinced of his virtue and righteousness in the face of heavy criticism. Rousseau's mother died a few days after his birth and he was subsequently raised by an aunt and uncle. Apprenticed at the age of thirteen to an engraver, Rousseau ran away at sixteen and became secretary and companion to an older woman, Madame Louise de Warens, who had a profound influence on his life and writings. In 1742, Rousseau went to Paris, where he earned a living as a music teacher, music copyist, and political secretary. He became close friends with the French philosopher Denis Diderot, who commissioned him to write articles on music for the multi-volumes French *Encyclopedie, ou dictionnaire raisonne des sciences, des arts et des metiers* (*Encyclopedia, or Systematic Dictionary of Sciences*, published between 1751-1772), a biased and often inaccurate encyclopedia of science, philosophy, politics, and religion written by the leading *philosophes* and scholars of France, such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Baron von Grimm.

Rousseau's scathing criticism of French society, the aristocracy, and the Catholic Church instilled a deep sense of distrust and hatred

amongst the French lower classes for the upper classes and the Church. In his *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Mankind* (1755), Rousseau expounded the view that science, art, and social institutions have corrupted mankind, and said that the savage, natural state of primitive man was superior to the civilized state of modern man. Real virtues are a product of nature, not society, Rousseau said, which is too artificial and pompous. Voltaire, who disliked Rousseau, said that reading Rousseau's *Discourse* made him feel like "going on all fours." Rousseau, in turn, attacked Voltaire's "God of Reason." Reason, he said, is a false god when followed alone, and needs to be balanced by "feelings." Rousseau's emphasis on feelings, intuition, and consciousness over reason greatly influenced French society and helped popularize the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century and the later development of the mind sciences, like Freud's psychoanalysis. Thanks to Rousseau, the common man and the ordinary life were now the ideal. Sophisticated French ladies began breast feeding their own children again, Marie Antoinette started gardening and milking cows, men began crying in public, and the worship of nature replaced Christianity. Regarding Christianity, Rousseau believed that organized religions were corrupt and hypocritical. Virtue, he said, came not from organized religions and social institutions but from an appreciation of nature. Nature is to be loved. Nature is to be adored. Nature is God.

Rousseau's most famous work, *Emile* (1762), a dialogue on experimental education between a priest of Savoy and a student, expounded a new liberal theory of education, emphasizing the importance of self-expression rather than academic discipline to produce a well-balanced, freethinking child. Sensitivity, Rousseau said, comes before intelligence, feelings before ideas. "To exist is to feel," he said. Rousseau's permissive theory of education was later adopted by many liberal educators in France, Germany, and Switzerland, in spite of the well-known fact that Rousseau had five illegitimate children from a young, illiterate barmaid named Therese Levasseur, and put them all in orphanages. So much for Rousseau's feeling and caring about children.

Rousseau's other famous work, *Social Contract* (1762), championed the will of the people over the divine right of the king, and, therefore, both *Emile* and *Social Contract* were condemned by the Parliament of Paris in 1762. As a result, Rousseau fled to Switzerland in 1762, then to London in 1766 with his friend David Hume, the famous English skeptic. They soon became enemies, though, and Rousseau returned to France under an assumed name in 1768. Rousseau spent the remainder of his life in France, going insane for the last ten to fifteen years before his death. Rousseau's last major work was *Confessions*, completed in

1770, an autobiography of the many mistakes he made in his life. There is no doubt that Rousseau's widely-read attacks on the Church, the aristocracy, the monarchy, and the like were all driving forces behind the anarchy of the French Revolution.

The principal editor of the controversial and rationalistic French *Encyclopedie* was a Frenchman by the name of Denis Diderot. Diderot (1713-84) was a French philosopher, teacher, novelist, essayist, playwright, and art and literary critic from Paris who was considered one of the leading skeptics and antichristian materialists of pre-Revolutionary France. Born in Langres on October 5, 1713, and educated by Jesuits, Diderot's first major work, published anonymously, was *Pensees philosophiques* (1746), which was a philosophical apologia of his rationalistic deist beliefs. Diderot's second and third works, *Les Bijoux indiscrets* (*The Indiscreet Jewels*, 1748) and *Lettre sur les aveugles* (*Letter on the Blind Men*, 1749), particularly the latter, landed him in prison for its atheistic materialism. After a brief incarceration, Diderot was released to work with Jean le Rond d'Alembert, French mathematician and philosopher, on the *Encyclopedie*, a powerful propaganda tool of the French *philosophes* who tried to use science and philosophy to argue against Christian doctrines, monarchical conservatism, and peasant-landlord society. In turn, Diderot and his associates became the objects of clerical and royal attacks. In 1759, the Conseil du Roi formally suppressed the first ten volumes (published from 1751 onward) and forbade further publication. Nevertheless, Diderot continued work on the remaining volumes and had them secretly printed. The *Encyclopedie* was completed in 1765, with plates and supplements added until 1780. As history records, Denis Diderot,<sup>13</sup> like Jean le Rond d'Alembert<sup>14</sup> (1717-83), Paul Henri d'Holbach (1723-89), Julien Offroy de La Mettrie<sup>15</sup> (1709-51), and other atheistic materialists, was one of the leading provocateurs of the French Revolution.

Over in England, David Hume (1711-76), the one-time friend of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, was eighteenth-century England's most controversial philosopher and religious skeptic, nicknamed by his critics as "The Great Infidel." Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, on May 7, 1711, Hume was educated at home in a strict Presbyterian household. A child prodigy, Hume at age twelve matriculated to the University of Edinburgh where he excelled in his studies. Somewhere along the line, however, Hume renounced his belief in Christianity. When asked by a friend just before he died when he first became an unbeliever, Hume said that he was religious when he was young, and went away to Edinburgh as a believer, but lost his faith in college.

In 1729, Hume gave up the study of law to become a philosophical

skeptic, saying that a tremendous awakening transported him beyond measure, as he engrossed himself in study rather than the pursuit of the customary pleasures of young men his age. Long hours of study and deprivation, however, affected him mentally. Often plagued by depression, anxiety, and the pain of poverty, Hume suffered from what he called “the disease of the learned.” On one night, during a fever, he ranted and raved about the devil, hell, and damnation, and tried to commit suicide by drowning himself in a well.<sup>16</sup>

After four years of intense study, during which he had a nervous breakdown, Hume left Scotland in 1734 and settled in France in La Fleche, a small town in Anjou where Rene Descartes and Marin Mersenne had attended Jesuit school. From 1734 to 1737, Hume totally immersed himself in the study of philosophy, and during this period he wrote his most important philosophical work, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739-40), which characterized the core of his skeptical ideas. Because of its difficult-to-read style and poor editing, Hume’s *Treatise* never gained popularity. Hume himself admitted that it was “dead-born” from the beginning. Careful not to repeat his mistake, Hume’s later works were written in the easier-to-read essay or dialogue forms that were the vogue of his day.

After the publication of *Treatise*, Hume returned to his family estate in Berwickshire, Scotland and wrote a work on ethics and politics entitled *Essays: Moral and Political* (1741-42), which attained him some degree of success. Hume then applied for an appointment to the chair of ethics and philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, but was turned down because of his atheistic views. Hume went on to become tutor to the insane marquis of Annandale and then judge advocate to a British military expedition to France. In 1748, Hume published his *Philosophical Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, which after 1758 was called *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, an edited version of the *Treatise* with a section on miracles that was left out of the original. Hume’s *Essays* proved to be a better seller than the *Treatise*. Like Timon of Philius, Pyrrho the Skeptic’s pupil, Hume believed reason has limits because there exists equally valid arguments for and against any belief. In *Essays*, Hume said that he was “ready to reject all belief and reasoning, and can look upon no opinion even as more probable or likely than another.” Most knowledge of matters of fact depends upon cause and effect, Hume said, and since no logical connection exists between any given cause and its effect, one cannot hope to know any future matter of fact with certainty. Even the most trustworthy laws of science might not remain true forever, which was a revolutionary and unheard of thought in Hume’s time.

All ideas about truth and knowledge, Hume said, are derived from sensory “impressions” (sensations, passions, and emotions), not reason. The ideas we form in our minds that we think come from reason are, in fact, “the faint images of these [impressions] in thought.” Therefore, because all ideas are derived from sensory impressions, no opinion or belief is more valid than any other. Reason, therefore, does not give us our beliefs. Beliefs come from habits, customs, principles, or imaginations that originate in sensory impressions.

Reason can never show us the connexion [sic] of one object with another, tho' aided by experience, and the observation of their conjunction in all past instances. When the mind, therefore, passes from the idea or impression of one object to the idea or belief of another, it is not determined by reason, but by certain principles, which associate together the ideas of these objects and unite them in the imagination.

Thus, according to Hume, knowledge of matters of fact about anything is impossible. Hume, however, acknowledged that people had to think in terms of cause and effect and accept the validity of their beliefs, else they would “go mad.” What Hume really meant was that it is all right to believe in God, just know that he's all in your mind.

Hume wrote in his *Enquiry*, Part II, in the section “of miracles,” that he doubts the existence of God can be proven, and definitely denies the existence of miracles, that “there is not to be found, in all history, any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned good sense, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves.”

Showing his true prejudice and bias against people of faith, Hume sarcastically remarked in the same section of *Enquiry* that believers in God and miracles were nothing but ignorant heathens. “It forms a strong presumption against all supernatural and miraculous relations, that they are observed chiefly to abound among ignorant and barbarous nations,” he wrote.

David Hume returned to Edinburgh in 1751 and published *Political Discourses* in 1752. That same year, having again failed to obtain a university professorship, Hume received an appointment as librarian of the Advocates Library in Edinburgh. During his twelve-year stay in Edinburgh, Hume worked chiefly on his six-volume history of England, which appeared in parts from 1754 to 1762. In the years 1762 to 1765, Hume served as secretary to the British ambassador in Paris. There he gained fame as a literary genius with French intellectuals and *philosophes*, forming a strong friendship with Jean Jacques Rousseau.

Hume brought Rousseau back with him to England in 1766. Rousseau, however, was paranoid that Hume was trying to defame him, so their friendship ended and Rousseau returned to France, where he eventually went insane. After serving as undersecretary of state in London (1767-68), Hume retired to Edinburgh and there spent the rest of his life. Hume contracted a disease of the bowels that, like his mother, would end in his death. On his deathbed, while attended by his physician, Dr. Black, Hume admitted to an interviewer, David Boswell, that he lost his faith in college after reading Locke and Clarke, and henceforth believed that all religion was bad and immoral for mankind: “He [Hume] said he never had never entertained any belief in Religion since he began to read [John] Locke and [Samuel] Clarke. . . .<sup>17</sup> He then said flatly that the Morality of every Religion was bad . . . that when he heard a man was religious, he concluded he was a rascal.”<sup>18</sup>

David Hume died an unbeliever on August 25, 1776, and on August 29 his coffin was carried out on St. David Street and buried amidst a violent rainstorm. Having once said that “The Church is my aversion,”<sup>19</sup> Hume’s attacks on Christianity continued well after his death, with the posthumous publication of his autobiography in 1777, and his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* in 1779. Hume, some say, cowardly waited until he died to publish his *Dialogues* because of its blatant skepticism of religion. Atheists ever since have been in love with Hume and have considered him a hero of antichristianity.

## Idealism: Mind Is What Matters

“What is mind? never matter. What is matter? never mind.”

—Unknown

Idealism is a human philosophy that maintains that the primary nature of reality lies in man’s consciousness and reason. Only that which is perceptible to the human mind through internal ideas and external sensations are real. The mind, therefore, plays the key role in understanding and experiencing the realities of the world. It is both rational and empirical in theory, holding that the understanding of sensory experiences is necessarily dependent on *a priori* reason. The extreme form of idealism is a philosophy called solipsism, which says that nothing exists outside of the mind. To solipsists, the entire world is a figment of one’s imagination, like a dream. The absurdity of solipsism is easy to prove by asking solipsists to step out on the freeway and see

whether or not traffic is real, which they will never do because they know, despite what they pretend, the reality of external objects. The vast majority of idealists are not solipsists, and they give full credence to the existence of external things. They do say, however, that the mind is paramount in importance in producing and sustaining modes of beings or realities that otherwise would not be possible; such as faith, ethics, morality, justice, art, music, color, sounds, smells, language, and mathematics. Idealists believe that the mind is crucial in observing how external objects truly exist in nature, and is indispensable to scientific observations and experimentations.

The philosophy of idealism can be traced all the way back to Plato, who postulated the existence of forms or ideas, genuine substances that constitute the real, higher, intelligible world. Ideas, Plato said, are more reliable than sensations because senses can be deceived. External objects imperfectly reflect the more clearly intelligible and more real ideal forms that exist within our minds. Plato's forms, therefore, are, to him, more real and more perfect than external things.

In the eighteenth century, idealism was breathed new life by the English philosopher and Anglican clergyman George Berkeley (1685-1753), the founder of the modern school of idealism, as an argument against the growing movement towards skepticism and atheism. Born in county Kilkenny, Ireland, March 12, 1685, Berkeley studied at Trinity College, Dublin, where he became a fellow in 1707. In 1709, he published his *New Theory of Vision* and the following year *A Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge*. When his *Treatise* failed to win widespread support for his defense of idealism, he published a more popular version in 1713 written in the old dialogue style, *The Three Dialogues Between Hylas and Philonous*, which gained him more notice.

Berkeley was ordained a deacon in the Anglican Church of Ireland in 1724 and became increasingly prominent within his church. In 1728, he went to Bermuda to found a missionary college. Although he abandoned his plan in 1732, Berkeley had a great effect on higher education while in America, assisting in the development of Yale and Columbia and a number of other schools. It is important to note the highly secular Ivy League schools of today were founded as Christian universities. In 1734, Berkeley became bishop of Cloyne. He died on January 14, 1753.

Berkeley was a devout Anglican who objected to the skeptical, scientific worldview of his day, and the empirical philosopher John Locke was the primary target of his criticisms. Berkeley believed that Locke's empirical beliefs, which maintained that all ideas are formed in our mind as a result of sensory experiences of matter, necessarily leads to materialism, skepticism, and atheism. In an effort to downplay empiricism, Berkeley

tried refuting the reality of matter, which is nonsensical philosophically. Berkeley theorized that material things have no reality in themselves except as perceptions in our minds (a radical philosophy known as immaterialism).<sup>20</sup> “To be is to be perceived,” Berkeley would often say. To Berkeley, only things that are perceived exist in reality. To answer the question on whether or not things exist if we don’t perceive them, Berkeley said that they do because they’re always perceived by God, who is all knowing and perceives everything. Our minds, of course, don’t conjure external objects into existence, but the ideas of them are caused in the human mind by God.

Berkeley’s espousal of immaterialism never gained much of a following. In fact, most of Berkeley’s contemporaries in England thought his theory on ideas rather foolish. Berkeley would, however, greatly influence the development of German idealism, a major philosophical movement in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany, in the persons of Immanuel Kant, Johann Fichte, George Hegel, and Friedrich Schelling, four very important philosophers who significantly altered the course of human history.

The rise of Germany as the dominant world military power in 1871 after the defeat of Napoleon III’s army at the Battle of Sedan, followed its rise as the dominant intellectual center of Europe. Nineteenth-century Germany was home to some of the most famous, or, rather infamous, philosophers in history. Among them were the idealists (Kant, Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling), the pessimist Arthur Schopenhauer, the materialist and antichristian zealot Ludwig Feuerbach, the communists Marx and Engels, the nihilist and self-proclaimed antichrist Friedrich Nietzsche, and the existentialist Martin Heidegger.

The most celebrated German idealist, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), is often called the greatest philosopher of modern times because the majority of nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophers owe at least part of their philosophical theories to him. Kant’s idealistic and antichristian philosophies influenced the development of two opposing philosophical movements in Germany: on the right was German romanticism, Aryan nationalism, and jack-booted totalitarianism, which can be traced back to Kant’s disciples Johann Fichte and Friedrich Schelling; on the left was Marxist communism, which can be traced back to Kant’s disciple George Hegel, whose dialectic theory was taken from Kant and later adopted by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their formulation of historical materialism (communism). Both of these radical philosophical movements (Nazism and communism) originated from Germany and owe their existence to one man, Immanuel Kant.

It is important to note that Immanuel Kant had an extremely

symbolic name, which fits his role in human history as the primary philosophical impetus behind godless Nazism and communism. Immanuel, as everyone knows, is the Hebrew word for “messiah,” which means “God is with us.” Kant, on the other hand, is the German variant of the English word “cant.”<sup>21</sup> According to Webster’s English dictionary, cant, as a noun, is the private language of the underworld, and as a verb means to speak hypocritically and use pious words insincerely. Combining the two names, Immanuel and Kant, transliterates to “the messiah who tells demonic lies.”

I truly believe that Satan was mocking Jesus Christ, the Word of God Made Flesh, through Immanuel Kant and antichristian philosophers like him. Let’s examine the evidence. Kant renounced his Lutheran faith not long after entering college and began teaching a totally false conception of God and Christianity. For instance, Kant believed that the Bible was only meant to teach morality and not to be taken literally, and he rejected the dogmatic prayers and devotional exercises of his pietist Lutheran upbringing, calling them “hypocritical” and “delusional.” Religion, Kant said, was “ingratiating” and “fawning” to the Highest Being. However, Kant was careful to make a clear distinction between believing in the moral teachings of Christ, which he claimed he did, and believing that Jesus was God, which he didn’t: “Now it is very clearly seen that the apostles regarded the side-doctrine of the Gospel as its fundamental teaching, and . . . instead of extolling the practical religious doctrine of the holy teacher [Jesus] as essential, they preached reverence for the teacher himself, and a kind of ingratiating by flattering and by eulogizing him.”<sup>22</sup>

To Kant, Jesus was an exemplary “archetype lying in our reason . . . of a course of life well-pleasing to God,”<sup>23</sup> but he was not God. This declaration soon brought Kant into trouble with the German authorities. Kant’s writings and lectures on religion were seen by the Germany authorities as too antichristian, so Kant was forbidden by Frederick William II, king of Prussia, to teach or write on religious subjects. Near the end of his life, the king sent a letter to Kant on October 1, 1794, when Kant was seventy years old, that reproached him for having “misused” his philosophy over a long period of time “for the distortions and debasing . . . of Holy Scripture and Christianity.” Kant disagreed with the king that he debased Christianity, but agreed to stop teaching about religion for five years until the death of the king, and then felt released from his liability and continued publishing his unorthodox views about God, which caused a lot of Germans to renounce their belief in Christianity.

Kant said he believed in God, but one has to be very cautious when

people like him say that they believe in God because the word “god” is very fuzzy and generic, and can be used to designate any number of things other than the God of the Bible. To some people, god can mean nature, ethics and morality, a universal world spirit, demons, or even man himself.<sup>24</sup> While “god” can mean anything, there is no mistaking Jesus Christ, who claimed to be God. (See chapter 4 for the evidence of Jesus’ divinity.)

Many intellectuals and philosophers say that they believe in God but refuse to believe in Jesus Christ. They hate Jesus because he sets limits on their freedom to do as they please. Kant was one of these people. He loved his freedom and felt that Christianity was far too constraining. So he, like many philosophers before and after him, renounced orthodox Christianity and remade God in their own preference. These people are the false messiahs and false prophets of the latter days whom Jesus Christ warned us of,<sup>25</sup> those who multiply words upon words, play games with language, invent obtuse and hard to comprehend theories and philosophies in order to impress and convert others to rebellion like them. But they, in fact, are liars. So too was Kant.

Immanuel Kant was born in Königsberg (now Kaliningrad, Russia) on April 22, 1724, and received his education at the Collegium Fredericianum and the University of Königsberg. At Fredericianum, Kant studied Latin and the ancient classics, and at Königsberg he studied the hard sciences, physics and mathematics. After his father died, Immanuel was compelled to halt his university career and earn his living as a private tutor. In 1755, Kant resumed his studies and obtained his doctorate. From that time on, he taught at the university, lecturing first on science and mathematics, and then philosophy. Kant received a chair at the University of Königsberg in 1770, when he was made professor of logic and metaphysics, and for the next twenty-seven years he was a philosophy instructor who attracted a wide following.

Early on in his career, Kant was a student and follower of the German rationalist Christian Wolff, but later on became a follower of Locke, Rousseau, Berkeley, and Hume. Kant was the first philosopher to attempt to combine the antichristian philosophies of the rationalists, empiricists, idealists, and skeptics into one philosophy. He came up with a brand new epistemology he called “transcendental idealism,” which he proudly thought to be as important as Copernicus’ revolutionary theory that the sun was at the center of the universe. According to Kant, the world is comprised of two different principles: tangible “phenomena,” such as rocks, which are touchable and sensible and therefore knowable and transcendent “principles,” such as God, the soul, freedom, and immortality, which are thinkable but not knowable.

Transcendent principles, Kant said, are “things in themselves” or *noumena*. They cause sensations in our minds that we truly experience as ideas, but we can only know them as they appear to be, not as they truly are, because they do not exist in space and time. It is the mind that furnishes the forms and categories (space, time, causality, substance, and relation) to these sensations and experiences of things in themselves. Transcendental idealism, by Kant’s own definition, is agnostic and skeptical because it denies the possibility of knowing ultimate realities like God; it is empirical in that it asserts that all knowledge arises from experience; it is rationalistic in that it maintains the *a priori* (intuitive) character of this empirical knowledge; and it is idealistic in that it believes that the mind gives meaning to sensations and experiences. Thus, Kant’s transcendental idealism was an amalgam of all the popular secular philosophies of the last four hundred years.

Kant believed that there was a problem with using reason alone (rationalism) when defining ultimate realities such as God. Reason, Kant said, inevitably falls into contradiction when it contemplates these kinds of extrasensory *noumena* (Kant’s problem of “antimonies” or opposing viewpoints). For example, Kant pointed out that there are equally plausible arguments for something (the “thesis”) and against something (the “antithesis”), such as an infinite universe or an eternal being (a concept first proposed by Timon of Phlius, a student of Pyrrho the Sceptic). Kant underscored the negative implications of these supposed contradictions in his theory of the transcendental “dialectic,” which, he thought, provided a systematic account of metaphysical “illusions.” In an obvious jab at Christianity, Kant said that metaphysics must solve the problem of antimonies if it is to survive. To demonstrate the problem of antimonies and the supposed illusions of orthodox religion, Kant set out to destroy every traditional argument for the existence of the biblical God in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). Then, in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), Kant gave reasons for believing in his type of god as a moral ideal rather than a personal being revealed to us through Jesus Christ. This tearing down of the Biblical God, of course, won Kant many friends on the liberal side, but many enemies on the conservative. One of these liberals was a man by the name of Karl Marx, the co-founder of communism.

Kant’s theory of antimonies and their resolution by way of the dialectic method of thesis and antithesis was adopted in a revised form by the German idealist George Hegel, who in turn greatly influenced Karl Marx’s theory of dialectical materialism (communism). Marx’s theory maintained that the material (economic) basis of a reality are constantly changing in a dialectical process, and that matter (and its unequal

distribution) takes precedence in determining the course of human history (Marx's class struggle for material goods). In this way Kant's transcendental idealism greatly contributed to the evolution of Marxist communism by way of his theory of antinomies and their resolution by means of the transcendental dialectic.

On the subject of ethics and morality, Immanuel Kant insisted in his work *Metaphysics of Ethics* (1797) that the free will of human beings was in itself sufficient for determining morality. Kant was totally against a morality of ethics given by any theologian or natural scientist. He wanted, instead, an "autonomous" morality of reason that has its own *a priori* knowledge of right and wrong. To Kant there was only one "categorical imperative" of morality. "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law," he wrote.<sup>26</sup>

Two other important idealists, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling, were students of Kantian idealism. Fichte (1762-1814), the first of the post-Kantian idealists, was born on May 19, 1762, at Rammenau in Saxony, and was educated at Pforta, Jena, and Leipzig. Fichte anonymously published an essay entitled *Attempt at a Critique of All Revelation* (1792), which at first was thought to be written by Immanuel Kant, and which later gained him the philosophy chair at Jena in 1793. In 1799, however, Fichte, like Kant, was charged with espousing atheism and forced to resign his post. In 1805, Fichte was appointed to the philosophy chair at Erlangen, and in 1810 he became the first rector of the new University of Berlin before he died in Berlin on January 27, 1814.

Fichte was greatly influenced by Kant's transcendental idealism, but he substituted Kant's "things in themselves" (*noumena*) with his "unconscious self-limitation of the I." The "I" is not a thing or a substance, Fichte said, it is activity that posits itself (the thesis). To be aware of itself, though, the I must posit non-I (the antithesis). A contradiction arises when I both posits itself and negates itself. To resolve this contradiction, Non-I, in part, negates the I, and I, in part, negates the non-I (the synthesis). Fichte's version of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis reappeared in Hegel's works, although Hegel didn't like to use Fichte's terminology of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

A summary of Fichte's doctrines appeared in his work *Vocation of Man* (1800), which transforms Kant's critical idealism into absolute idealism by making the human will the ultimate reality. Fichte maintained that the world is created by an absolute ego, of which the human will is a partial manifestation and which tends toward God as an unrealized moral ideal. God is the moral order of the world and we exist "only in

God and through God." But Fichte's belief that God was the moral order of the world and not a personal being as maintained by Judeo-Christianity caused him to be accused of atheism and lose his chair at Jena.

There were two important consequences of Fichte's philosophies. Fichte's absolute idealism, with its emphasis on man's ego and will as the sole basis of reality, was adopted by German ultra-nationalists in their espousal of German racial purity and superiority and the triumph of the will. On the other hand, Fichte's system of resolving philosophical contradictions by using thesis, antithesis, and synthesis was adopted by George Hegel, who, in turn, influenced the birth of Marxist communism or dialectic materialism.

Friedrich Schelling (1775-1854) was one of the leading proponents of romanticism, a literary, artistic, and philosophical movement that started around 1750 and became very popular in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century. Romanticism, which was idealized in the writings of Rousseau and the German poet, novelist, and dramatist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), sought to break away from the philosophical and scholarly regimentation of the classics and neo-classics and move on to a more open society of emotions, imaginations, freedom of expression, the idolization of nature, and the elevation of the common man to the ideal. Schelling, a leading European idealist, romanticist, and pantheist, believed that the evolution of nature (God) culminated in the human organism, which is an emanation of the self-realization of the Absolute. Schelling's unorthodox ideas, of course, were influenced by Spinoza, Kant, and Fichte, and would later influence the Nazi's romantic idealization of the tall, blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan man.

One of the leading Western philosophers and thinkers of the nineteenth century was the German idealist George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). Hegel was born in Stuttgart on August 27, 1770, the son of a revenue officer with the civil service. Hegel was brought up in a strict Lutheran household and attended the Stuttgart gymnasium preparatory school where he obtained the usual education in Greek, Latin, and the classics. Encouraged by his father to become a clergyman, Hegel entered the seminary at the University of Tuebingen in 1788. There he developed a close friendship with Friedrich Schelling. Having completed his courses in philosophy and theology at seminary, Hegel decided not to become a pastor. Instead, he became a private tutor in Berne, Switzerland, in 1793. In 1797, Hegel assumed a similar position in Frankfurt, and in 1801 he went to the University of Jena, paid for by an inheritance from his father, where he became a lecturer on philosophy. At Jena, Hegel completed his most important philosophical

work, *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1807). Hegel remained at Jena until October 1806, when the city was taken by Napoleon and he was forced to flee. Having spent his father's inheritance, Hegel became editor of the *Bamberger Zeitung* in Bavaria. After that, he moved to Nuremberg, where he served for eight years as headmaster of a gymnasium. While at Nuremberg, Hegel published an important work over a period of several years, *The Science of Logic* (1812, 1813, 1816). In 1816, Hegel became a professor of philosophy at the University of Heidelberg. Soon after, he published in summary form a systematic statement of his entire philosophy, entitled *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline* (1817). In 1818, Hegel transferred to the University of Berlin, where he stayed for the remainder of his career. He died there on November 14, 1831, during a cholera epidemic.

Hegel is one of the hardest philosophers to read and understand, and his ideas and theories can be deciphered in many different ways. Nevertheless, Hegel had a tremendous following in the first half of the nineteenth century. Hegelians were divided into two camps: Left (Young) Hegelians and Right (Old) Hegelians. Right Hegelians were conservatives who thought that Hegel's theories lent support to their belief in orthodox Christianity and the status quo in government. Left Hegelians, on the other hand, were radicals, antichristians, and anarchists who thought Hegel supported their revolutionary and anticlerical beliefs.<sup>27</sup> Among the most infamous of the Left Hegelian radicals were Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Bruno Bauer,<sup>28</sup> Ludwig Feuerbach, and Max Stirner.<sup>29</sup>

Influenced by the antichristian idealism and dialectics of Kant and Fichte, Hegel in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1833-36)<sup>30</sup> stated that there was a philosophical conflict in the course of human history, which began with a thesis, which was then contradicted by an antithesis, which in turn would finally be resolved by a synthesis.<sup>31</sup> History's thesis started during the time of Socrates when the science of ethics and morality begin to emerge in pagan Greece, and culminated in the triumph of Christianity during the Middle Ages.<sup>32</sup> The historical conflict or antithesis began during the time of the Protestant Reformation when individual consciousness began to challenge the authority of Church dogmas and doctrines. The synthesis or resolution of philosophical and ideological conflicts will come, Hegel said, only when a rationalistic, harmonious community emerges out of the conflict that fosters both freedom of thought and respect for individual rights.<sup>33</sup> Both Marx and Engels borrowed from Hegel's idea of the historical dialectic, but they said that the course of human history has been shaped not by ideology but by the struggle for material goods (dialectical or historical materialism). Therefore, class struggle, Marx said, has determined the events

of world history, and the struggle would only end in the overthrow of bourgeoisie capitalists and the governments that support them by the violent uprising of the proletariats. The proletariat revolutionaries would then establish a community where material goods are divided equally, "each according to his abilities and each according to his needs" (the basic theory of Marxist communism). Then, and only then, would world conflicts and class struggles end forever.

Karl Marx espoused Hegel's theory of the historical dialectic, but he criticized what he called Hegel's "mysticism" regarding the existence of what Hegel termed the "Absolute Spirit." In his two works *The Phenomenology of Mind* and *The Science of Logic*, Hegel said that the Absolute Spirit "is" the world. The world is whole, said Hegel, and the whole is Absolute Spirit. Dialectically speaking, Absolute Spirit is Pure Being, the thesis; but pure being without any qualities is Non-Being, the antithesis. The union of Being and Non-being is Becoming, the synthesis—the Absolute evolving from an abstract, undifferentiated being into a more concrete reality by the dialectical process. The Absolute, therefore, is in the process of Becoming; developing over the course of history towards an end.

Hegel's idea of Absolute Spirit is somewhat confusing. Is it the transcendent God of the Bible who created the universe and remains separate from it, or is it some sort of cosmologic, universal world force? Hegel said the Absolute is Thought thinking about itself. This Thought or Reason is the true substance of the universe, eternal and all-powerful in essence. It is infinite spirit or Mind, what German philosophers call the *Geist*. All philosophical and intellectual achievements up until now, Hegel said, are the result of Mind coming to know itself as ultimate reality. Mind alone is all that is real. Every human mind is part of this universal Mind, which guides the course of man's intellectual accomplishments, moral ethics, and formation of national

Hegel's philosophy of Absolute Spirit or Mind is very similar to Spinoza's pantheism, the heretical belief that all of nature and the universe is God. We know that Hegel studied in great detail Asian history and Eastern mysticism, as well as Spinoza, and was no doubt greatly influenced by both of them. And although he held up Christianity as the ideal religion in terms of teaching ethics and morals to children, Hegel was by no means a Christian. Hegel's unorthodox theories about the Absolute Spirit being equal to the world helped popularize pantheism and Eastern mysticism in Europe, much to the detriment of Christianity, and likewise influenced the rise of godless atheistic communism, two contradictorily yet equally antichristian philosophies attributable to both Kant and Hegel.

## **Materialism: Matter Is All There Is and All That Matters**

The aforementioned philosophy of idealism maintains that ultimate reality exists only in man's consciousness and reason. The material world exists, but is only perceived through the formation of objects in the mind via sensory inputs. Contrary to idealism is the human philosophy known as materialism, which says that matter is the only thing that truly exists. There are no eternal souls or spirits in human beings, and nothing exists outside of the material universe; no gods, no angels, no heaven, nothing. Feelings, morals, thoughts, and reason are purely physical processes that take place in the brain from biochemical actions and reactions in neurons. Materialism is atheistic and unbelieving, yet it is one of the most widely accepted philosophies in our educational system today, especially amongst liberal scientists and philosophers.

Materialism as a human philosophy has several categories. Ancient philosophers such as Democritus, Leucippus, Epicurus, and Lucretius subscribed to a type of materialism known as "hylozoism," which maintains that matter and life are one and the same. Cosmological materialism, the kind most modern philosophers and scientists adhere to, is a term often used to characterize the usual materialistic interpretation of the universe: the universe consists of nothing but matter. The most radical form of materialism, the concern of the remainder of this section, is antireligious materialism. Antireligious materialism is motivated by an extreme hatred and hostility toward the theological dogmas and doctrines of organized religion, especially Christianity.

As we have already seen, the growing antireligious sentiment of the Age of Enlightenment was in large part responsible for the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. Antireligious materialists such as the eighteenth century French *philosophes* Denis Diderot, Paul Henri d'Holbach, Jean le Rond d'Alembert, and Julien Offroy de La Mettrie hated Christianity and advocated the overthrow of the Catholic Church. But the coming of the nineteenth century saw an even greater hostility towards Christianity by a new generation of antireligious materialists in Germany, in the persons of Ludwig Feuerbach, Karl Marx, and Friedrich Engels. These three atheists were not content to just criticize and control religion, they wanted to forcibly dethrone God and put man in his place: the original crime of Lucifer.

Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach (1804-72), whose last name in German means "fire brook," was a hero to Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud. He is considered by many to be the first

major philosopher to try to disprove God's existence and the credibility of Christianity through a comparative study of science and anthropology. Feuerbach maintained that religion and belief in God are really projections of the highest ideals of man, from the dawn of civilization to modern times. The pagan polytheism of ancient cultures, Feuerbach said, was a glorification of the wonder and beauty of nature, and modern Christianity is really the glorification of man himself. Thus, God is really the glorification of man's highest principles in himself—the mirror image of man. Man makes God in his own image, rather than God making man in God's image.

Feuerbach was one of the most important philosophers in history, in that his writings were widely read and espoused by communists, Nazis, atheistic psychologists, secular humanists and many other groups and organizations hostile to Christianity. An understanding of Feuerbach's life and writings are vital to the understanding of the scourges and catastrophes that befell the twentieth century.

Ludwig Feuerbach was born in Landshut, Germany, and studied Protestant theology at Heidelberg as a youth. Feuerbach later moved to Berlin, where he studied philosophy for two years under Hegel, and then obtained a teaching post at Erlangen, where he was a leading Left Hegelian. In 1830, Feuerbach published his first atheistic work, *Thoughts on Death and Immortality*, which argued against immortality and the existence of God. This book caused him to fall out of favor with the faculty and lose his post at Erlangen, and ended his career as a teacher. Henceforth, Feuerbach withdrew into private life to write. In 1839, Feuerbach published *Towards a Critique of Hegel's Philosophy*, and two years later he published his famous diatribe against religion entitled *The Essence of Christianity*, which detailed his atheistic belief that Christianity was false but psychologically reassuring to the naive and weak-minded.

Religion and the belief in God, Feuerbach said, is only useful in that it satisfies a psychological need, our preoccupation with ourselves. The worship of God, therefore, is actually worship of our idealized self. Only when we finally realize this will our mental health and overall lot in life improve. "The turning point of history will be the moment when man becomes aware that the only God of man is man himself," said Feuerbach.

In his controversial *Essence of Christianity*, Feuerbach said that his main goal in life was to replace the love of God with love of man, and faith in God with faith in man (a popular atheistic philosophy known as secular humanism). To accomplish this goal, Feuerbach felt it necessary to exorcize the "ghosts" of theology and idealism past by a comparative study of science and anthropology. Then and only then would man be totally free to realize his full potential as a god. Said Feuerbach, "The goal of my

work is to make men no longer theologians but anthropologists, to lead them from the love of God to the love of men, from hopes for the beyond to the study of things here below; to make them no longer the base religious or political servants of a monarchy and an aristocracy of heaven and earth, but free and independent citizens of the universe.”<sup>34</sup>

Feuerbach felt that the material needs of people should be the primary concern of society, and providing more food to the hungry would be a good starting point. “Man is what he eats,” Feuerbach would quip.

Feuerbach’s materialistic and atheistic beliefs had a tremendous influence on two of his most notorious disciples, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the evil co-founders of communism. The history of communism is extremely important to know and understand because of the tremendous destruction it has caused the world. In the nineteenth century, tens of thousands were massacred in the communist-inspired European Revolution of 1848 and the Paris Commune uprising of 1871, when Marxist communists tried to overthrow Europe’s monarchical governments. In the twentieth century well over 100 million people died in Europe, the Soviet Union, Asia, Africa, and elsewhere, in the wars, purges, and famines of Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-Tung, Pol Pot, Ho Chi Minh, and others. In fact, communism has caused more death and destruction than any other ideology in history, and it hopes to make a comeback once Christianity is overthrown. For those of you who berate Christianity for causing more death and destruction than any other ideology, the truth is that the Crusades and Inquisitions caused the deaths of hundreds of thousands, while communism and Nazism caused the deaths of hundreds of millions. There is no comparison.

Marx and Engels were firmly convinced that communism was supported by history and science.<sup>35</sup> Independently, these two researched science, sociology, politics, economics, world history, philosophy, anthropology, and other subjects in formulating their theory of historical materialism; which they arrived at separate of each other at the same time in different locations—Engels in Germany and Marx in Paris. Together they joined forces and changed the course of world history forever.

Karl Marx (1818-83), whose first name means “man,” was born in Trier, Germany, on May 5, 1818, the second of seven children of Jewish parents. Although his parents were Jewish, Karl was baptized a Lutheran at the age of six. Karl’s father was a lawyer and a middle-class bourgeoisie. After attending a Protestant high school in Trier, Karl’s family sent him to three universities, Bonn, Berlin, and Jena, where he majored in philosophy and history. In college, Marx was a boisterous rowdy and a heavy drinker. He once fought a duel and once was jailed

for drinking. Despite his hooligan ways, Karl Marx obtained his doctorate in philosophy in 1841.<sup>36</sup> In 1842, shortly after contributing his first article to the Cologne newspaper *Rheinische Zeitung*, Marx became its editor. Although a political radical, Marx was not yet a communist. Marx's political editorials got him in trouble with the authorities, and in 1843 he was compelled to resign his editorial post. Marx left Germany for Paris, where he continued his studies in world history, philosophy, economics, and political science. It was in Paris that Marx formulated his communist ideology. In 1844, Friedrich Engels left Germany for Paris to meet Marx. The two had previously become friends in Berlin in 1842. In Paris, Marx and Engels found that they had independently arrived at identical theories on socialism (communism), so they agreed to collaborate in the formulation of the theoretical principles of communism and in the organization of an international working-class movement dedicated to communist principles. In the movement, Marx would research political thought, political economy, and economic history, while Engels would concentrate on that plus the natural sciences, which he knew more about.

Engels (1820-95), whose first name means "peaceful ruler" and whose last name means "angels," was born in Barmen, Germany (now Wuppertal). The son of a cotton-cloth manufacturer, Engels came from a wealthy Protestant family. At an early age, Engels wanted to have a career in literature but his father insisted that he work in the family business. As a young man, Engels was influenced by the writings of the radical German poet Heinrich Heine, the early socialists Charles Fourier,<sup>37</sup> the duc de Saint-Simone,<sup>38</sup> Moses Hess, the British economic reformer Robert Owen,<sup>39</sup> the German philosophers Hegel and Feuerbach, and the modernist theologian David Strauss, whose skeptical reinterpretation of the Gospels called *The Life of Jesus* (1835) was said to have turned Engels into an atheist. In 1839, Engels began writing on literary and philosophical topics for a number of publications, and in 1842, the same year he met Marx, he became a communist. Between 1842 and 1844, Engels studied a workers' rights movement in Britain called Chartism. Engels' research of Chartism and the poor working conditions in Britain and his vast literary research and experiences led him to formulate his doctrinal theory of communism. He first introduced his theories in a work entitled *Condition of the Working Class in England* (1844), a work that established Engels' reputation in Germany as a political revolutionary and anarchist.

In 1845, Marx was kicked out of Paris because his revolutionary activities were viewed as a threat to the French government. Marx then moved to Brussels, Belgium, and began the work of organizing and

directing a network of revolutionary groups, called Communist Correspondence Committees, in a number of European cities. In connection with the consolidation of these committees in 1847 to form the Communist League, both Marx and Engels were commissioned by its charter to formulate and publish a statement of communist principles. Thus, in 1848 Marx published the *Communist Manifesto* in London, which was written from a rough draft prepared by Engels. This notorious gospel tract of anarchy and rebellion has since sold hundreds of millions of copies worldwide, second only to the Bible, and has inspired untold number of revolutionaries.

The *Communist Manifesto* is a declaration of godless principles and objectives of the Communist League, a secret European organization of emigrant German artisans and workers, intellectuals, and political revolutionaries, which Marx and Engels headed. The *Communist Manifesto* begins with a warning to the world: "A specter is haunting Europe—the specter of communism." It then proceeds to outline the theory of historical materialism, which begins in dialectic fashion with a thesis, which in turn is contradicted by an antithesis, which is finally resolved by a synthesis: worldwide communist domination and the overthrow of all religion.

History, according to Marx and Engels, is a chronicle of class struggle over the material goods of the world, a struggle between the exploiters and the exploited, between the haves and the have-nots. Said Marx in the *Communist Manifesto*, "the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles."

In every historical period the prevailing economic system by which material goods are produced determines the form of societal organization and the political, religious, ethical, intellectual, and artistic history of that period. History, Marx said, is characterized by a succession of five socio-economic periods. The first were the primitive communists, Eskimos and Indians. The second were the large Asiatic empires, the third were the slave-owning societies of ancient Greece and Rome, the fourth were the feudal societies of the Middle Ages. The last, the period Marx lived in, is the bourgeoisie socio-economic formation of modern capitalism. According to Marx, an aristocracy dominated the feudal society of the Middle Ages, where the most important thing was one's birth. In feudal society, there was a paternal, deferential relationship between landowner and serf, the aristocrat being the father and the peasant being the child. Feudal societies were characterized by a conspicuous consumption of material goods by the aristocrats, with much of the rest of society going without.

After the Middle Ages, as industry, commerce, mercantilism, and

trade increased in simultaneity with population growth, a new socio-economic class emerged—the bourgeoisie, or middle, class. In the bourgeoisie socio-economic formation of modern times, the emphasis on bloodlines is replaced by an emphasis on merit, deference replaced by competition, greed and conspicuous consumption replaced by thrift. As the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century progressed, Marx said, the ruling bourgeoisie capitalists compete more and more for the forces of production (labor, tools, raw materials), which negatively affects the relations of production (how people engage and relate to each other). The working-class proletariats migrating into industrialized centers in search of work become more and more exploited by the competing bourgeoisie capitalists who seek larger and larger profits, which, Marx predicted, would lead to a revolution by the disenfranchised proletariats, who would unite and overthrow capitalism and form a classless society of workers where everything is distributed equally, “each according to one’s abilities and needs.” Agricultural and industrial communes would be set up where competition for the forces of production is replaced by cooperation. Once communism forcefully takes over, Marx said, conflict and struggles will cease forever because there will be no one left to exploit economically, and the communist state, which was formed during the revolution by a socialist, scientific elite, will simply “wither away.”

To bring about this so-called workers’ paradise on earth, Marx emphasized the necessity of forcibly abolishing all private property in land and application of all rents of land to public purposes, establishing a heavy progressive or graduated income tax, abolishing all rights of inheritance, confiscating the private property of all emigrants and rebels, centralizing credit in the hands of the communist state by means of a national bank with state capital and an exclusive monopoly, centralizing the means of communication and transportation in the hands of the state, extending factories and instruments of production owned by the state, ensuring equal liability of all to labor, establishing industrial and agricultural armies, combining agriculture with manufacturing industries, gradually abolishing the distinction between town and country by a more equitable distribution of the population over the countryside, establishing free education for all children in public schools, abolishing the family unit, and most important of all, abolishing all religion. Children, furthermore, were to be raised by the state, not by their parents.

Marx and Engels hated all religions, especially Christianity, which they accused of conspiring with the bourgeoisie governments to economically suppress the ignorant masses. Fellow communists, therefore, were called upon to overthrow all world religions. This fight, Marx

declared, would be a “fight against the world,” against the perverted world whose “spiritual aroma is religion.”<sup>40</sup> Only when all religion is abolished, Marx said in his *Toward the Critique of the Hegelian Philosophy of the Right*, would man be truly happy. “The first requisite for the happiness of the people is the abolition of religion,” he said.

Marx characterized religion as an addiction of the oppressed, similar to heroin addiction. “Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the feelings of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the opium of the people,” he said.

Much of Marx’s hatred of religion came from reading Feuerbach. In *The Holy Family*, co-written with Engels in 1845, Marx praised Feuerbach for having “dispelled the old quibbles” about religion and having rightly placed man on God’s throne. “The religion of the workers has no God,” Marx said, “because it seeks to restore the divinity of man.”<sup>41</sup>

Immediately after the *Communist Manifesto* appeared in early 1848, with its rallying call for the “workers of the world [to] unite,” revolutions broke out in France and Germany. The Belgian government, fearful that revolution would spread to their country, kicked Marx out, and he went back to Paris and then to the Rhineland. While in Cologne, Germany, Marx established and edited a communist periodical, the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, and organized revolutionary activities. In 1849, Marx was arrested again and tried in Cologne on a charge of inciting armed insurrection. He was acquitted of all charges but was expelled from Germany, and the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* was put out of business. For a second time in 1849, Marx was expelled from France, whereupon he moved to London and spent the remainder of his life in Soho on Dean Street.

In England, Marx devoted himself to study and writing and to efforts to build an international communist movement. Engels became an employee again in the textile mill in Manchester, England, and throughout the years became the chief financial supporter of Marx and his immediate family. The First International Working Men’s Association, later called the First International, was founded by Marx in 1864. Headquartered in London, the First International was an organization of radicals, communists, socialists, anarchists, and syndicalists. When this organization met at Geneva in 1866, it was the first international forum for the promulgation of worldwide communism. Marx made the inaugural address, wrote its statutes, and subsequently directed the work of its governing body. Retired from the textile industry, Engels moved to London in 1870, becoming a member of the General Council of the First International, and began to relieve Marx of the work of directing the council’s affairs. But the First International

declined after the Commune defeat in Paris in 1871, whereupon it moved to the U.S. and finally disbanded in 1876.

During this period, Marx wrote the first volume of his *Das Kapital* (1867), in which he developed the theory of the exploitation of the “surplus value” of the working class by the capitalist class. Marx also contributed articles on contemporary political and social events to newspapers in Europe and the U. S. He was also a correspondent of the *New York Tribune* whose editor was Horace Greeley, from 1852 to 1861. In 1857 and 1858 he wrote a number of articles for the *New American Cyclopaedia*, edited jointly by the American writer and editor Charles Anderson Dana (1819-97) and George Ripley (1802-80).

Karl Marx died on March 14, 1883, and was buried in London's Highgate Cemetery. In his funeral oration for Marx on March 17, 1883, Engels proudly boasted that Marxist communism, which was based on “scientific” principles, was just as important as Darwin's theory of evolution in revolutionizing the world. “Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of evolution in human history,” he said.

Friedrich Engels would go on to publish volume two and three of Marx's *Das Kapital* in 1885 and 1894, as well as works of his own on communist theory. Although he did not take part in the formation of the Second International in 1889 on the centennial anniversary of the French Revolution, Engels remained active in supporting revolutionary activities until the day he died. For the rest of the story on the rise of communism in Russia and its ultimate downfall, refer to my first book, *The Woman and the Dragon*.

### **Utilitarianism: Good Is What's Useful, Pleasure Is Paramount**

Utilitarianism is a philosophical doctrine that defines what is good as being that which is “useful.” It can be traced as far back as the Greek hedonist Epicurus. Utilitarianists believe that morality and ethics are based not on human conscience, reason, and divine revelation, but on their human “utility”: whatever brings the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people is the most good. Pleasure and pain, therefore, are the primary determining factors of what is right and wrong. Utilitarianism, by its very own definition, is self-centered and hedonistic, placing the utmost importance on the gratification of one's selfish desires and the seeking out of pleasures. Followers favor liberal governments that

don't impose any religious system of ethics or morals, and believe that individual freedom of conscience is the highest human virtue. They oppose any religious dogma or doctrine that mandates self-denial or mortifications of the flesh as being the will of God. The pain of self-denial and self-sacrifice, utilitarians believe, is bad. Pleasure alone is good.

The obvious problem with utilitarianism is equating pleasure with goodness, because what pleases me may not necessarily please you. For example, if a majority of a society would be happy if members of a minority were blown up by an atomic bomb or pushed into the sea or burned in ovens, it wouldn't be a good thing to do so, even if it made the majority happy. But according to the tenets of utilitarianism, Hitler's holocaust of the Jews would be morally justified because it pleased a greater number of German people, the Nazis. Another obvious problem with utilitarianism is that pleasurable acts can often times have unpleasurable consequences. Having sex outside of marriage may feel good at the moment but you can contract AIDS and die, or have an unwanted pregnancy, both of which are not good. The philosophical tenets of utilitarianism, therefore, are ludicrous, but they did have tremendous influence on ethics and morality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and still do today. The popular slogan of the 1960s, "If it feels good do it," is just one example of utilitarian morality.

Morality, according to the utilitarians, should be based on the democratic concept of majority rule. While it is true that majority rule is the best form of governance, majority rule does not apply to ethics and morality. God is sovereign and he alone decides right from wrong. He has given us the knowledge of right from wrong through our consciences, through Moses and the Ten Commandments, and through his son, Jesus Christ. Up until the Age of Reason, people believed in keeping the Ten Commandments, but with the coming of the Age of Enlightenment, philosophers and theologians began to doubt Judeo-Christianity and, therefore, doubted the existence of moral absolutes. No longer having a supreme being determining right from wrong, people of the Age of Enlightenment were free to choose for themselves what they believed to be right and wrong. Utilitarianism is a predictable outgrowth of the Enlightenment and its moral relativism.

The founder of philosophical utilitarianism was a man named Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). Bentham was a British philosopher, economist, and lawyer born in London on February 15, 1748. An enormously gifted child, Bentham was reading literature by the age of three, playing violin at five, and studying Latin and French at six. At the age of twelve, Bentham entered the University of Oxford, where he studied law and

was admitted to the bar, but did not become a jurist. Bentham was disgusted with the current state of English law, and instead of practicing law he set about to reform it. As a youth, Bentham dreamed of founding a sect of followers called utilitarians, who were followers of his radical new ideas. He also wanted to have his body preserved as an "auto-icon," so that every time his followers met he would be near them. Upon his death on June 6, 1832, Bentham got his wish: his body was stuffed and put in a glass box in the University College in London, where it was openly displayed at every meeting of the Benthamites.

In 1789, the year the French Revolution started, Bentham published his *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, which expounded his philosophical ideals of utilitarianism, and which made him world famous. Bentham began chapter one in his *Introduction* with a seditious complaint against Nature:

Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. . . . the principle of *utility* recognizes this subjection, and assumes it for the foundation of that system, the object of which is to rear the fabric of felicity [happiness] by the hands of reason and of law.<sup>42</sup>

The right laws in governance or morality will produce happiness, Bentham went on to say, and will be in accordance with man's reason. Therefore, moral and legislative laws are dependent upon their utility. By using the word *utility*, Bentham meant "that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good, or happiness . . . or . . . to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil, or unhappiness." So the good, for Bentham, is the maximization of pleasure and the minimization of pain. Bentham proposed "four sanctions or sources of pain and pleasure," namely, the physical, the moral, the religious, and the political. The physical sanction, according to Bentham, is the basis of all the others, so the pleasure of the flesh is paramount. Bentham sought further to devise a scale of pleasures and pains, rating them in terms of their intensity, purity, duration, propinquity or remoteness, certainty, fruitfulness, and the extent to which pleasure and pain are shared among the greatest number of people.

As an outlet and voice for his utilitarian ideas, Bentham helped establish the British periodical *Westminster Review* in 1823. He was also the leader of the Philosophical Radicals, whose most important members included James Mill and John Stuart Mill, two other utilitarians who contributed greatly to the popularity of utilitarianism. James Mill (1773-1836) was a Scottish philosopher, historian, economist, and the leading disciple of Jeremy Bentham. Mill met Bentham in 1808, whence he

adopted his utilitarian principles. Afterwards, he submitted utilitarian articles to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1816-23) and to the *Westminster Review*, and applied utilitarian ideas to the education of his son, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). John was another leading proponent of utilitarianism and is considered one of the most important British philosophers of the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup> At an early age, John was subjected to a rigorous liberal education by his father with the intent of making him the torchbearer of utilitarianism. The Utilitarian Society (1823-26), which met at Bentham's house for readings and discussion on all sorts of topics, was organized by John. He was also a chief contributor to the *Westminster Review*.

John Stuart Mill's most important works on moral philosophy and utilitarianism were his *On Liberty* (1859), *Utilitarianism* (1861), and *System of Logic* (1843). John's *System* was a philosophical treatise which attempted to synthesize the irreligious empiricism of the Enlightenment with the romantic-idealist movement of his time. Regarding religion, Mill was an ardent supporter of the atheistic philosophy called naturalism, which says that nothing exists outside of nature. Naturalism denies the validity of teleology (the study of the design or purpose in nature), such as the existence of God, the supernatural realm, or anything metaphysical. Moral values in naturalism, therefore, are relative. Whatever is best for the majority is moral; whatever is useful is good. The atheistic tenets of naturalism have their roots in British empiricism, the philosophical doctrine that all knowledge is derived from sensory experience and scientific investigations, Bentham's utilitarianism, and in French positivism, another atheistic doctrine that denies any validity whatsoever to metaphysical speculation.

### **Positivism: Religious Beliefs Are Not Provable and Therefore Meaningless**

Positivism is a philosophical doctrine originating from France that maintains that "positive" knowledge is only derived from natural phenomena and their properties and relations as verified by the empirical sciences. It claims to be neither atheistic nor theistic in belief, insisting that rational questions and answers should be restricted to observable facts alone. Since theology and metaphysics deal with the unobservable, it is meaningless, therefore, to affirm or deny the existence of God.

Positivism cites an evolutionary timeline in the achievement of

“positive” or factual knowledge, characterized by three historical stages of scientific, political, and sociological development. According to positivists, the first historical stage was the “theological” or fictitious stage, which occurred during the Middle Ages and was characterized by an immature belief in a supreme being and his personal interactions in the lives and affairs of men. The second historical stage was the “metaphysical” or abstract stage, which occurred during the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. During the metaphysical stage, suppositional theories and abstract ideas were employed to explain the existence of naturally occurring phenomena. The final evolutionary stage of human development is the “positive” or scientific stage. This stage foregoes any metaphysical attempt to explain cause and effect or ultimate reality. Rather, attention is focused on how naturally-occurring phenomena are related to one another, with the aim of arriving at acceptable, verifiable conclusions about reality based on scientifically observable facts. The positive stage is more concerned with the how than the why and, therefore, is the most productive and utilitarian.

The founder of philosophical positivism was a Frenchman by the name of August Comte (1798-1857), whose name means the “Grand Count.” Comte was born in Montpellier on January 19, 1798. At an early age, Comte renounced his Catholic upbringing and began sympathizing with radical socialists, which got him expelled from the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris in 1816 for participating in a student rebellion. For several years thereafter Comte was secretary to Claude Henri de Rouvroy, the duc de Saint Simone, a noted socialist ideologue who influenced the development of Marxist communism. The remainder of Comte’s life was devoted to the writing and teaching of his positive philosophy and “sociology,” a term he invented. Relying on monetary support from his utilitarian friend John Stuart Mill and his pupil Maximilian Littre, Comte endured poverty and misery much of his life, which was marked by periods of severe mental illness. He died in Paris on September 5, 1857.

In his most famous work, *Course of Positive Philosophy* (1830-42), Comte wrote that human thought evolves through different stages, which he termed the religious stage, the metaphysical stage, and the scientific stage. The final scientific stage is the factual, “positive” stage, which, as has already been discussed, is the most incontrovertible stage in the course of human thinking. Having an aversion for Christianity from his youth, Comte’s goal in his *Course of Positive Philosophy* was to extract all supernatural elements from science. He categorized the history of science as developing and maturing in different stages, forming a hierarchy of subjects, which evolved much like Darwinian evolution. The

first scientific discipline to evolve was mathematics, which was preceded by astronomy, then physics, then chemistry, then biology, and finally Comte's science of sociology, with the purpose of the intellectual, moral, and political reorganization of society. Each of the three stages of intellectual development, Comte said, is correlated with certain political developments. The theological stage is reflected in the divine right of kings. The metaphysical stage is reflected in the liberal politics of the Enlightenment. The positive stage entails a scientific or sociological approach to political organization. Critical of the democratic institutions of his day, Comte envisioned a future society governed by a scientific elite who would use Bacon's scientific method to solve human problems and improve social conditions. Although he rejected God and Christianity, Comte recognized the value of religion in contributing to the moral fabric of society. Mimicking Christianity, in his *System of Positive Polity* (1851-54), Comte proposed a secular humanistic religion of his own, complete with secular observances and saints, like Frederick the Great and Adam Smith. Comte's inane religion, of course, never caught on with the general public, but his empirical views on the evolution of science and his theories on positive knowledge increased the number of positivist scientists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

### **Naturalism: Nature Is All There Is, God Does Not Exist**

Perhaps the most widely accepted philosophy of today is the godless human philosophy of naturalism. Naturalists believe that nothing exists outside of nature: no gods, no spirits, nothing. Nature is the whole of reality. Since there is no world outside of the material universe, metaphysics or religion should be de-emphasized, or more preferably done away with altogether. Any reports of supernatural miracles or paranormal phenomenon can be explained by science because all universal phenomena are reducible to the interplay of atomic particles in empty space, as revealed to us by physics and chemistry. There is no intelligent design or purpose to the universe; everything that exists is the result of random chance over eons of time. Since there is no god, ethics and morality must come from within society. Man must determine for himself what is right and wrong. Morals and values should be based on needs, customs, tradition, consensus, inclination, or any other form of utilitarianism that says what is useful is good. Right and wrong evolves

just as man evolved. What is wrong yesterday may not be wrong today, and what is true for you may not necessarily be true for me. It all depends on the situation. Like the material world, everything is relative and evolving; nothing stays the same.

The atheistic philosophy of naturalism is not new; it has been around since the ancient Greeks and Romans. It declined in popularity with the advent of Christianity, but rose again in power and prestige during the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, reaching its apogee in the nineteenth century in the persons of Charles Darwin and Karl Marx. Marx's dialectical materialism has already been discussed. Darwin, as you remember from your biology classes, popularized the naturalistic theory of evolution, which says that man evolved from monkeys instead of being purposely created by God to inherit everlasting life. Darwin's atheistic theory of evolution, which is taught in practically all of our public schools as infallible truth, claims that all life evolved by chance from some sort of primordial soup on the primitive earth eons ago. Every living thing on earth arose from this soup by random chance: plants, fish, animals, birds, insects, everything. And since all life arose by chance from muddy soup, there is no purpose to life except to eat and replicate. Those who reproduce the most are the "fittest," for they survive to perpetuate themselves. Those who fail to reproduce become extinct. The blind forces of nature, therefore, select who lives or dies by weeding out the weak and infirm by means of what Darwin called "natural selection." Mercy, compassion, morals, and ethics have no place in Darwin's dog-eat-dog world, only survival and frenzied copulation. Eliminating the "unfit," therefore, makes perfect evolutionary sense, as it did with the Nazis.

Both the Nazis and the Marxist communists hailed the cruelty and heartlessness of Darwinian evolution, where only the strong and powerful survive, as a revolutionary scientific truth. Friedrich Engels and the Communist League praised Karl Marx for his Darwinian-like theory of the "evolution" of economic history and his advocacy of a violent revolution by the proletariats. Adolf Hitler used Darwinian evolution as justification for his attempt to engineer a master race of Aryan supermen to populate and rule the world by force. The millions of Jews and Slavs whom Hitler killed in the holocaust were considered by the Nazis as subhuman and unfit to live. Hitler saw nothing wrong with slaughtering millions of innocent people who were not Aryan Germans. He was simply putting into practice Darwin's theory of natural selection and survival of the fittest.

Every sensible American knows that the Nazi's forced sterilization and murder of millions of Jews was an abominable crime against humanity, but what most Americans don't know is that there was a

government-backed forced sterilization program right here in the United States at the beginning of the twentieth century that lasted clear up to the 1970s, which resulted in the involuntary sterilization of forty thousand to sixty thousand Americans in thirty-five states, mostly in Virginia and California. At the forefront of America's "eugenics" (good birth) movement, which was social Darwinism at its worst, were Harry Laughlin and Charles Davenport. Davenport founded the Eugenics Record Office at Cold Spring Harbor, New York. It was in operation from 1910 to 1939. This spurious, Darwinian-based organization sought through legal means in the American courts to forcibly prevent the physically and mentally "unfit" from having children.<sup>44</sup> (Laughlin and Davenport's description of "unfit," of course, usually meant European immigrants of Mediterranean descent, blacks, Jews, orphans, paupers, criminals, prostitutes, the "feeble minded," alcoholics, hobos, hemophiliacs, diabetics, epileptics, the blind, the deaf, and the physically deformed.) On May 2, 1927, in an eight to one decision, the United States Supreme Court affirmed in *Buck vs. Bell* Virginia's involuntary sterilization of Carrie Buck, who was seventeen, while she was forcibly committed to Lynchburg's State Colony for Epileptics and Feeble-Minded. Buck's only faults, it was later found out, were being the daughter of a prostitute, to have been brutally raped, and to have had a baby out of wedlock. Chief Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., writing for the majority, wrote the following opinion in support of Virginia's forced sterilization of Buck, which echoed the heartless Darwinian sentiment of survival of the fittest: "It is better for the world if instead of waiting to execute degenerate offspring for crimes, or to let them starve for their imbecility, society can prevent those who are manifestly unfit for continuing their kind. . . . Three generations of imbeciles are enough."<sup>45</sup>

Harry Laughlin of Kirksville, Missouri, who wrote the infamous Model Eugenical Sterilization Law, on which most of the thirty-five states based their forced sterilization laws upon, was the so-called scientific "expert" on eugenics when he appeared before Congress in 1924 to urge them to pass the Immigration Restriction Act to prevent, as Laughlin said, the "inferior stock" of "lesser immigrants" from diminishing America's collective "germ plasm." Thanks to Laughlin, an ardent Darwinist and rabid anti-Semite, the law was passed and wasn't repealed until the 1960s. For his contributions to "the science of race cleansing," Harry Laughlin was granted an honorary degree from Nazi Germany in 1936. In an ironic twist of fate, Laughlin developed late-onset epilepsy, one of the diseases requiring sterilization under his own "model law," and died in 1943 without children.

In the early twentieth century, many highly respected people were in

favor of Laughlin's eugenics program of forced sterilization. Among them were Presidents Calvin Coolidge and Theodore Roosevelt, Alexander Graham Bell, and Margaret Sanger, the birth control champion and founder of Planned Parenthood, the infamous organization founded in 1942 that has caused the destruction of billions of human lives. But it wasn't until the horrors of the Nazi death camps and the hideous experiments of SS doctors were made public in 1945 that the evil science of eugenics finally fell from grace in America. The heartless theories of Darwin, however, have stubbornly persisted and are still being perpetuated in academia. It is only a matter of time when another megalomaniac emerges and tries to commit mass murder in the name of Darwinian evolution.

The Social Darwinism that contributed to the Nazi holocaust and the communist pogroms of the Soviet Union should actually be called "Social Spencerism," for it was an iniquitous man named Herbert Spencer who popularized the atheistic theories of Darwinian evolution in America, Germany, Russia, and elsewhere. Darwin was actually not very well known in his own country of England when he died in 1882. Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) was an English social philosopher who applied the principles of Darwinian evolution to practically everything under the sun, including philosophy, sociology, law, and justice, you name it. It was Herbert Spencer and not Charles Darwin who coined the term "survival of the fittest." Darwin, in fact, never used his theory of evolution to explain anything outside the realm of biology. In the late 1890s and early 1900s, Spencer was being read much more than Darwin, and people got their views of evolution and social Darwinism primarily through him, especially in America. Some very important intellectuals in America thought that Herbert Spencer was the greatest intellectual since Aristotle. A famous American professor at Yale in the 1880s named William Graham Sumner was against the government providing any relief to the poor, taking a literal interpretation of Spencer's "survival of the fittest."

The terrible consequences of Darwinian evolution are so widespread and so important to understand that Darwinism deserves a chapter of its own, so refer to chapter 2 of this book for a detailed discussion on that deadly human philosophy.

### **Nihilism: Negate Everything, for God Is Dead**

Nihilism (from the Latin word *nihil*, which means "nothing") is a godless human philosophy that rejects all positive values and beliefs.

God is dead, there are no moral absolutes, and there is no purpose or meaning to life except negation and rebellion. Christians first used the word nihilism as a philosophical term during the Middle Ages to describe heretics. In the 1850s and 1860s, it was used in Russia to designate godless radicals and revolutionaries who considered Russian society backward and oppressive. Ivan Turgenev popularized nihilism as a philosophical doctrine in his novel *Fathers and Sons* (1862), where he names, defines, and analyzes nihilism through his main character, Bazarov, an idealistic young revolutionary. Towards the latter half of the nineteenth century, the godless philosophy of nihilism was epitomized in the irreverent writings and teachings of the famous German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who loved to equate himself with the Antichrist. Nietzsche hated Christianity more than anything else, and was the first major philosopher to triumphantly proclaim the death of God. "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him," he said.<sup>46</sup> He also said that "The greatest recent event—[is] that 'God is dead,' that the belief in the Christian God has ceased to be believable. . . ."<sup>47</sup>

Nietzsche's unabashed hatred of Christianity was formed while he was in college by reading the atheistic writings of Spinoza, Rousseau, Hume, Feuerbach, Darwin, and a host of other unbelievers. Never one to parse his words, Nietzsche called Christianity a decadent, effeminate, life-negating anachronism; deeming it a "world of pure fiction" and the "greatest misfortune" inflicted upon mankind to date. "I condemn Christianity. I raise against the Christian church the most terrible of all accusations that any accuser ever uttered. It is to me the highest of all conceivable corruptions," he said.<sup>48</sup> Jesus Christ, he said, was an "idiot" and a "sneak," and the Church was "hostile to life." The Church's notion of morality was "anti-nature," he said, and their concept of "sin" was "an invention against science." Christianity, Nietzsche wrote in his *The Antichrist* (1888), was the religion of the "weak" and the "pitiful," which he condemned with the most terrible of accusations. "What is more harmful than any vice? Active pity for all the failures and the weak: Christianity," he wrote.<sup>49</sup> He also said that "Christianity is called the religion of pity . . . Pity is the *practice* of nihilism."<sup>50</sup>

Like Feuerbach before him, Nietzsche wanted to raise man to the level of God. Inspired by Darwin, Nietzsche advocated the breeding of a master race of Aryan supermen, which he called the *Übermensch*. Aryan supermen, Nietzsche believed, would become earth's master race and would overthrow Christianity, which, he said, has waged deadly war against the *Übermensch*. Said Nietzsche: "Christianity . . . has waged deadly war against this higher type of man."<sup>51</sup>

Using Darwinian philosophy and principles, selective breeding

would bring about Nietzsche's dream of creating a master race of supermen, whom, he said, were more worthy of life. "The problem I thus pose is not what shall succeed mankind in the sequence of living things (man is an *end*), but what type of man shall be bred, shall be *willed*, for higher value, worthier of a life, more certain of a future."<sup>52</sup>

Christianity, which preached love for one's neighbor, was one of the main obstacles to Aryan man, so it had to be eliminated. "Christianity . . . represents the counter-movement to any morality of breeding, of race, of privilege: it is the *anti-Aryan* religion par excellence," said Nietzsche.<sup>53</sup>

Only with the coming of a leader rich in will, the one who is "beyond good and evil," would Aryan man triumph over Christianity. "He shall be the greatest who can be the loneliest, the most hidden, the most deviating, the human being beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, he that is overrich in will."<sup>54</sup>

Nietzsche's nihilistic writings were a favorite of fascists, radicals, anarchists, and bohemians of every stripe—particularly the Nazis. Adolf Hitler saw in himself that human being overrich in will who would realize Nietzsche's dream of creating a genetically-superior master race of Aryan supermen. But we all know how Hitler's mad dream ended: eleven million dead in Nazi concentration camps and tens of millions more killed in fighting during WWII, the most horrible war in history. To the Nazis, however, Nietzsche was a prophet. Hitler enjoyed handing out copies of Nietzsche to his officer corps.

Although a madman, Friedrich Nietzsche was an incredible prophet of evil and doom. In his *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), Nietzsche prophesied the coming of horrible wars in the twentieth century as the result of his nihilistic philosophies. "There will be wars such as there have never been on earth."<sup>55</sup>

In *Ecce Homo* (1888) and "Why I am a Destiny," Nietzsche correctly prophesied that only after his death would he be appreciated. He believed that "My time has not yet come. . . . some are born posthumously."<sup>56</sup> He also wrote, "One day my name will be associated with something catastrophic—a crisis such as there has never been on earth, the most profound collision of conscience . . . I am not a man, I am dynamite."<sup>57</sup>

As if he knew it would happen, Nietzsche's life was cut short at an early age. Friedrich Nietzsche went insane in 1889, one hundred years after the beginning of the French Revolution and the same year Hitler was born, and died on August 25, 1900, at the beginning of the century he predicted would be so catastrophic. (Nietzsche, by the way, died on the same date as David Hume.) Because of his madness, Nietzsche was infirm for the last eleven years of his life, and had to be taken care of by his mother and sister. But his sister saw to it that his works were

published and circulated, and only after his death did they gain a huge following, exactly as Nietzsche predicted.

As if God were trying to warn him, Nietzsche suffered from terrible health and chronic pain his entire adult life. He was frightfully myopic and nearly blind, and had to wear thick glasses to see. His eyes were buggy like Hitler's and he constantly suffered from severe migraines and convulsions. Nietzsche finally had to quit his position as a philosopher because of poor health, and traveled around Europe trying to find the right climate to ease his constant pain, eventually settling in Italy, the home of the Church he hated so much. It was in the later years of his life that Nietzsche wrote his most infamous antichristian works, which included *Human, All Too Human* (1878), *The Gay Science* (1882), *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-85), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *Toward a Genealogy of Morals* (1887), *Twilight of the Idols* (1888), *The Antichrist* (1888), *The Will to Power* (published posthumously in 1901), and *Ecce Homo (Behold the Man)*, posthumously published in 1908.

The depressing and evil life of Friedrich Nietzsche is an interesting one to note. Born Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche in a small German village on October 15, 1844, the son of a Lutheran minister, Nietzsche was raised in a devout Christian home; his father, his uncles, and both his grandfathers were pastors. As a youth, Nietzsche planned on becoming a Lutheran minister until he lost his faith in college. While attending Bonn and Leipzig universities, Nietzsche was introduced for the first time to the atheistic writings of Darwin, Schopenhauer, Feuerbach, and others. After renouncing the faith of his fathers, Nietzsche decided to become a professor of linguistics. As a professor of philology at Basel University, Nietzsche excelled in the language of sarcasm. His biting satire, satanic diatribe, and antichristian blasphemy quickly gained him a popular following amongst the ungodly German youth, by heartlessly encouraging the elimination of the weak, the poor, the disinherited, and the physically impaired from the face of the earth, especially in Germany.

But in a bit of ironic justice, Nietzsche's own physical infirmities eventually forced him to quit his chair at Basel in 1870, and for the remainder of his life he was a drug-addicted, sickly pariah. Nietzsche collapsed and nearly died on Christmas day in 1875, and on another occasion he nearly choked to death on a fish bone. He saw both events as full of symbolism and meaning. A loner and a sickly recluse, Nietzsche wandered about Europe searching for the right cure to relieve his chronic pain and illnesses, but he never found rest from his many tortures. As Nietzsche's physical and mental health grew worse, his hatred for Christianity likewise worsened and became more and more evident in his writings.

Like his namesake on whose birthday he was born, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, King of Prussia, and his favorite poet, Hölderlin, Friedrich Nietzsche went insane. It happened in early January 1889, in Turin, Italy, home of the burial shroud of Jesus, when Nietzsche tried stopping a man from beating his horse. If only Nietzsche had cared as much for human beings. Just months before his insanity, Nietzsche was calling the Catholic Church a “madhouse” which needs “sick” people to exist, and the sickest of all are the saints and holy ones. “Christianity needs sickness . . . to make sick is the true, secret purpose of the whole system of redemptive procedures construed by the church. And the church itself, is it not the catholic madhouse as the ultimate ideal?” he asked.<sup>58</sup> He also said that “‘the highest’ states that Christianity has hung over mankind as the value of all values have pronounced holy by the church in *maiolem dei honorem* . . . Nobody is free to become a Christian; one is not ‘converted’ to Christianity—one has to be sick enough for it.”<sup>59</sup>

Nietzsche should have heeded God’s warning that you must watch what you say because you will be judged according to your words: “On judgment day you will be held accountable for every unguarded word spoken. By your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.”<sup>60</sup>

### **Pessimism: Life Is Hopeless, Death and Extinction Are Preferable**

Pessimism is a faithless philosophical belief that life is miserable and hopeless. It is extremely negative and gloomy in attitude; its followers believe that the dream of finding happiness in this life is all an illusion. The material world, pessimists say, is steeped in misery and pain, and an endless struggle of trying to find peace and contentment that never comes. It is the antithesis of faith and optimism, which accepts the struggles of life as they come without foregoing the hope for peace and joy in this life and the life of the world to come.

Pessimism has its roots in Eastern religions and an early antichristian heresy known as gnosticism, the philosophy that the spiritual world is good but the material world in which we live in is evil. A good god, Gnostics say, created the spiritual world, while a bad god created the material world, and both are equally powerful. Gnostics believe that matter in general is evil, that certain foods are evil, that marriage is evil, that the body is evil, and that Christianity is evil. The pleasure of sex, however, is good. Ancient Gnostics often partook in profane sexual

practices in the hopes of achieving a higher level of spiritual awareness. Gnostics of the first century A.D. were inspired by an apostate heretic named Carpocratian, who believed that his “gnosis,” or secret knowledge, was the true way to find happiness and could only be experienced by a very select few. The practice of gnosticism, Carpocratian said, provided a truer insight into the spiritual world than Christianity, which he vehemently denounced. In his denunciation of Christianity, Carpocratian denied that Jesus was God, denied that he was truly a man, denied his atonement for sins, and denied the Ten Commandments and the God of the Old Testament. The Apostle Paul addressed the severe ascetic practices and false beliefs of gnosticism in his first letter to Timothy, warning him to be wary of the liars who spread its false doctrines:

The Spirit distinctly says that in later times some will turn away from the faith and will heed deceitful spirits and things taught by demons through plausible liars. Men with seared consciences who forbid marriage and require abstinence from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by believers who know the truth. Everything God created is good; nothing is to be rejected when it is received with thanksgiving, for it is made holy by God’s word and prayer.<sup>61</sup>

In the second century A.D., pessimism about the evils of the material world surfaced again in the heresy of Manichaeism. Manichaean heretics were followers of Mani the Persian, who wandered aimlessly for forty years throughout the Orient proclaiming himself to be the “Last Messenger of the True God,” and the “Paraclete” that Jesus had promised to send. Manichaeans believed that Satan was an eternally evil god and was the equally powerful rival of the good god. Satan, they said, came forth from the darkness and wasn’t a fallen angel as Christians believe. The devil is the creator of the material universe, which is evil. Mani rejected the authority of the Old Testament, claimed that Jesus and the God of the Old Testament were two separate gods, that Christ was pure spirit and didn’t become flesh, that human souls have been cast down to earth into material bodies because they had sinned in heaven, and that souls must undergo reincarnation before they are liberated from the flesh. Manichaeism rejected the doctrinal authority of the Church, and adhered to a rigorous moral code similar to gnosticism. The supreme objection of mankind, Manichaeans believed, was liberation from evil matter.

The pessimistic spirit of Manichaeism reemerged in the eleventh century in the heresy of Albigensianism. Centered in the southern

French town of Albi, Albigensians, or Cathars as they were also known, denied the Trinity and the human birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ, believed in a New Testament good god and an Old Testament evil god, believed that Satan, the evil god of the Old Testament, created matter which was evil, rejected the sacraments, disdained marriage, adopted sexual promiscuity and vegetarianism, condemned infant baptism and the forgiveness of the fallen away, denied the Holy Spirit's inspiration in the New Testament, repudiated the right of the state to punish criminals, and discarded the role of the clergy. Pope Innocent III (r.1198-1216) sanctioned new preaching missions to convert Albigensians to Christianity until one of his representatives in the region, Peter of Castelnau, was assassinated by them in 1208. Thereupon, Innocent III authorized the weapons of the Crusades as a means of fighting the Cathars, and by the end of the fourteenth century the Catholic Church had successfully eradicated Albigensianism from Europe.

Like the aforementioned Western heresies, the Eastern religions of Hinduism and Buddhism are extremely negative in attitude about the material world. Hinduism, which began in India about 3500 years ago, is the belief in a multitude of gods and goddesses, both good and bad, and a rigid social caste system where the upper castes like the Brahman (priestly caste) or Sakya (warrior caste) do not associate with or help the inferior lower castes; a violation of the golden rule Jesus gave us to love our neighbors as ourselves. The poorest of the poor in Hinduism are called the Harijan caste, or the "untouchables," and are shown very little charity and compassion by their neighbors because of the Hindus' belief that they are working out their bad karma actions from a previous life. Cows, which are sacred in Hinduism, roam the streets of India and are well taken care of, but not the untouchables, who often lie in the streets in abject poverty and misery. Another reason the Hindus don't care much about the destitute in India is because they believe that the material world is all an illusion (maya), wrought by Brahman, the universal world soul, in a spirit of play (lila). This extremely negative and merciless belief about ultimate reality is one of the main reasons why there is so much suffering and misery in that region of the world, and that is why belief in reincarnation is a sin.<sup>62</sup>

The four sacred texts of the Hindus, which teach a pessimistic, negative outlook on life, include the Vedas, the Brahmanas, the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Upanishads. According to the Upanishads, the material universe is in an eternal cycle of creation and destruction, of death and reincarnation, of good and evil. If you have bad karma you may be reborn as a bug, or an animal, or a demon, or worse, as an untouchable. If you have good karma you may be reborn as one of the infinite

numbers of minor gods in Hinduism, or an upper caste member with wealth, beauty, longevity, and power. It all depends on fulfilling one's *dharma* (duty) in a particular caste. That is why those in a lower caste don't complain about the unfair caste system in which they are born—because they are afraid of being reborn in the same or worse circumstances. The perpetual cycle of birth and rebirth, of having and not having, only ends when one renounces worldly desires. This happens when the individual soul or *atman* forswears the material world and becomes united with Brahman, the ultimate reality in Hinduism. Human beings, thereafter, become one in being with this world spirit. Therein lies one of the paradoxes of Hinduism: loving a God with whom one is identical, which is self-worship. We are God.

One of the fastest growing religions in the West is Buddhism. Buddhism is a branch of Hinduism that was founded in India around the sixth century B.C. by Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha or "Enlightened One." According to legend, Siddhartha, who was raised in pampered and luxurious seclusion by his powerful warlord father, the head of the Sakya warrior caste, left home one day against his father's wishes in search of spiritual enlightenment. Around 533 B.C., according to tradition, Siddhartha, now twenty-nine and out in the real world for the first time, come upon an old man, a sick man, and a corpse. Never having seen sickness, poverty, old people, or death, Siddhartha suddenly realized that the common fate of all of us is misery and suffering. After that traumatic experience, Siddhartha encountered a monk who was full of calmness and serenity, whereupon he determined to adopt his way of life and forsake family, riches, and power in search for the truth (the Great Renunciation). Wandering about northern India as a mendicant monk, Siddhartha took lessons in Hinduism from Brahman priests, but felt that the Hindu caste system was too unfair and only benefited those in power. Siddhartha then decided to become an ascetic, undergoing the most severe forms of self-denial and yoga meditation. Still, Siddhartha didn't find the enlightenment he was looking for. While meditating underneath a fig tree, or bo tree, one day in Buddh Gaya, Siddhartha was suddenly struck with the idea that the true way to salvation from the pain and misery of the world was the "middle way," somewhere in between privileged Brahmanism and rigorous asceticism. Upon this revelation Siddhartha became the Buddha or the "Enlightened One." Immediately afterward, evil demons began to assault the Buddha with temptations of fear, lust, pride, and doubt; but the Buddha, remaining strong, withstood them all. After overcoming his trials, the Buddha set about gathering his disciples, organizing them into a monastic community known as the *sangha*, which practiced Siddhartha's Buddhism, the "true" way of salvation.

As an ideology rather than a theology, Buddhism incorporates the main doctrines of Hinduism, such as karma and reincarnation, but rejects the Hindu priesthood and caste system, the Vedic scriptures, and the Hindu sacrificial cult. Buddhism has four noble truths. The first truth is that life is full of pain and misery. From the moment of birth to the end of life we encounter nothing but pain and suffering. Even death doesn't deliver us from distress because we are reincarnated. The second truth of Buddhism is that all suffering is the result of our attachment to worldly desires and ignorance regarding the understanding of ultimate reality. The third truth is that suffering can only be overcome by detachment from worldly desires and from enlightenment. The fourth truth is that the only path to this understanding is the noble eightfold path, which consists of right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right-mindedness, and right meditation. These eight paths are usually divided into three categories that form the cornerstone of Buddhist philosophy: morality, wisdom, and concentration.

Buddhism is a human philosophy on how to live rather than a theology on God's existence because it does not recognize a personal deity or an immortal soul as the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam do. Buddhist doctrine teaches that there is no such thing as an immortal soul. Instead, Buddhists believe that man is composed of five distinct "bundles" or *skandhas*: the material body, feelings, perceptions, karmic tendencies, and consciousness. These five bundles are continuously changing; no one has the same bundles for more than a few moments at a time. It is wrong to consider any of these bundles as permanent or eternal; that would lead to egoism, craving for worldly desires, and continued suffering. All existence, therefore, is characterized by three realities: the *anatman* (no soul), *anitya* (impermanence), and *dukkha* (suffering).

Rather than an eternal life after death, Buddhism teaches the doctrine of *pratyasamutpada*, or dependent origination. Dependent origination says that ignorance in a previous life causes the mind and the senses to operate after death, which leads to craving and the clinging to existence, which leads to reincarnation. As in Hinduism, one's good or bad karma leads to rewards or punishments in the next cycle of rebirth. Pleasures or sufferings in this life are the result of one's karma in a previous life, so there are no such things as social injustices: you get what you deserve as a result of some kind of moral natural law. Bad karma can lead to reincarnation as a lowly animal, a poor leper, a demon, a god, a ghost, or whatever.

On the nature and reality of gods, Buddhists believe that they exist

but don't assign them any special attributes other than long life and pleasures. Gods are not eternal and have to die and be reborn just as humans do. They did not create the universe and do not respond to prayer or sacrifices. In fact, it is preferable to be reborn as a human being because only humans can reach nirvana, the end of the birth and rebirth cycle (*samsara*). The state of nirvana, Buddhists believe, is the final state of existence and transcends all suffering, bad karma, and *samsara*. Nirvana is achievable only through the extinction of worldly desires and individual consciousness, and can be achieved while one is still alive. Reaching enlightenment or nirvana in life burns off any residual bad karma and prepares one for final nirvana after death (*parinirvana*). Nirvana, in theory, is achievable for everyone, although it is a realistic goal in Buddhism only for members of the Buddhist monastic community. Faithful Buddhists, therefore, strive to be reborn as a Buddhist monk.

The introduction of Hinduism and Buddhism into Western European philosophy is attributable to the famous German philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860). Born in Danzig on February 22, 1788, Schopenhauer was educated at the universities of Göttingen, Berlin, and Jena, where he studied philosophy and Eastern religion. Renouncing Christianity and belief in God in favor of Eastern mysticism, Schopenhauer became the first Western philosopher to incorporate Hindu and Buddhist doctrines and beliefs into a philosophical epistemology. After reading Schopenhauer's glorification of Eastern religions, Nietzsche wrote in his *Antichrist* that "Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity. . . . Buddhism is the only genuinely positivistic religion in history. . . . In my terms, it stands beyond good and evil."<sup>63</sup> He also believed that "Buddhism does not promise but fulfills; Christianity promises everything but fulfills nothing."<sup>64</sup>

Schopenhauer led a solitary existence and was well known for his hatred of women and his pessimistic personality, which deeply upset his mother. At his residence in Frankfurt am Main, Schopenhauer became intensely involved in the study of Buddhist and Hindu philosophies. From them, Schopenhauer formulated his atheistic theory of the universal Will in his two most important books, *The World as Will and Representation* (1818) and *On the Will and Nature* (1836). According to Schopenhauer, universal Will, like the ultimate reality in Hinduism and Buddhism, is the unconscious and inanimate existence in all living organisms. The universe, in fact, is one vast cosmic will to exist, which experiences itself through nature. According to Schopenhauer, will is more basic than thought in both man and nature. It is the inner being of all organisms. Unfortunately, the world in which Will exists is one of

constant pain and misery, from which Will constantly seeks to escape, which it can only do so by paradoxically forfeiting its ultimate goal—existence. Pleasure, to Schopenhauer, is only the temporary absence of suffering. Only when people become aware of the misery of their lives as part of the cosmic will to live, will they lose all wishes for existence and self-gratification, as the Buddhist monk does. To Schopenhauer, only the saints are capable of extinguishing their will to live, thereby reaching liberation from matter and its inherent suffering, something akin to nirvana in Buddhism. But the Will, while extinguished from the lives of saints, continues to live on in others and in nature, because it is impossible for all of us to be saints.

Schopenhauer's doctrine of the universal Will maintains that life is but an illusion, which is clearly borrowed from the Hindu concept of *maya*, and that the world is but a reflection of our own will, which is adopted from the Hindu/Buddha concepts of karma and dharma. Nietzsche and Hitler adopted Schopenhauer's Eastern belief that the world is merely a reflection of our own will to justify their demonic craving for power and to create an Aryan race of supermen who would rule the world from Germany. A strong-willed man who rises to power, said Nietzsche, is someone to be praised, not feared. "What is good?" Nietzsche asked. "Everything that heightens the feeling of power in man, the *will* to power, power itself."<sup>65</sup> Said Nietzsche: "Life itself is to my mind the instinct for growth, for durability, for accumulation of forces, for *power*: where the *will* to power is lacking there is decline."<sup>66</sup>

Reading Schopenhauer's writings on the universal Will and Nietzsche's glorification of the strong-willed leader who rises to power, Adolf Hitler was convinced that he was "the one" prophesied by Nietzsche to lead Germany out of the darkness and despair of WWI.<sup>67</sup> This is a perfect example of the Second Beast of Revelation (human science) making an idol to the First Beast (human power).

### **Pragmatism: All Truth Is Relative, There Are No Moral Absolutes**

In this troubled, post-modern age we live in, society has become so overwhelmed by conflicting philosophical and religious ideas regarding ultimate reality and right and wrong that the vast majority of people today no longer believe that there is such a thing as absolute truth. Our secularized public schools and higher institutions of learning, which are primarily to blame for this tremendous increase in moral relativism,

teach that truths, ethics, and morality are all relative to the situation, and that there are no absolute right or wrong answers. What is true for you may not necessarily be true for me, say the moral relativists, so don't judge. Even though moral relativists don't believe in Christianity, they love to tell you, "Didn't Jesus say 'Judge not lest ye be judged?'" Concerned Christian parents know the frustration of trying to teach their children absolute moral truths when their kids have been exposed to this kind of twisted moral logic in public schools or in the media. Role models in high positions of authority haven't helped much either. Pontius Pilate's absurd question "What is truth?" of two millennia ago has been surpassed in ridiculousness by former President Clinton's famous remark during his testimony about the Monica Lewinsky affair: "It depends on what the meaning of the word is *is*." How can our kids be expected to be moral and honest if the former president of the United States argues the meaning of *is*? *Is* is truth. Period.

Moral relativism and its denial of absolute truths is rooted in a mid-nineteenth-century philosophical doctrine that developed in America called pragmatism. Pragmatism, which is closely related to utilitarianism, is the belief that the truth of a proposition lies in its practical utility or usefulness. Truth, therefore, is relative to time, place, and purpose. What is useful or practical at the time is what is true. Truth is based not on moral absolutes, but on how we feel about something at the time. The beliefs of pragmatists are like the lyrics of the once popular song, "It can't be wrong if it feels so right." Reality, however, proves otherwise. Pleasures and good feelings are poor indicators that certain actions are morally right. Actions that bring pleasure at the moment often have terrible consequences in the end. Take, for instance, having sex outside of marriage, which is no longer seen as a taboo by the vast majority of teenagers and adults. Having sex outside of marriage can result in terrible consequences, such as unwanted pregnancies, abortions, single parenthood, poverty, child abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS. In South Africa, for instance, there is an epidemic of AIDS-related deaths because of that country's sexual promiscuity, with upwards of 10 percent or more of the adult population testing positive for HIV. A whole generation in Africa may die just because sex feels good. Condoms, despite what our leaders say, are not the answer. Condoms fail to prevent pregnancies 14 percent of the time, so how can we trust them to prevent the spread of the AIDS virus, which is thousands of times smaller than a sperm cell? The only sure way to stop the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases like AIDS is to practice abstinence until marriage, like God commanded. This is an absolute truth that is true for everybody, whether we like it or not. Abstinence works 100 percent of the time.

The three most notable advocates of American pragmatism were Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey. C. S. Peirce (1839-1914), son of Benjamin Peirce, was the "Father of American Pragmatism." He was an American physicist, chemist, mathematician, and philosopher of logic and Boolean algebra (the mathematical logic behind computer languages). Educated at Harvard University, Peirce was appointed to the U.S. Coast Survey in 1861, and between 1864 and 1884 he lectured intermittently on logic, mathematics, and philosophy at Johns Hopkins and Harvard universities. In 1877, he became the first American representative to the International Geodetic Congress. Influenced by the philosophies of Francis Bacon, Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, and Charles Darwin, Peirce was a die-hard idealist who believed in the superiority of the scientific method of empirical investigations to arrive at what he believed to be the "truth." Peirce's version of the truth, however, got him into trouble at Johns Hopkins. Known for his immoral, libertine lifestyle, rapid mood swings, paranoia, and delusions of grandeur, Peirce's unorthodox beliefs eventually got him removed from his teaching post at Johns Hopkins.

After his dismissal from Johns Hopkins, Peirce delved into philosophical writing.<sup>68</sup> Peirce's new philosophy of pragmatism was first outlined in a paper contributed to *Popular Science Monthly* (1878). According to this new philosophy, no object or concept possesses inherent validity or importance. Its significance or truthfulness lies only in the practical effects resulting from its use or application. Usefulness, therefore, is truth. Peirce rejected all orthodox religions and their authoritarian teachings, and in their place he put science as the only authority. Calling himself a "laboratory philosopher," Peirce abandoned all metaphysics, rationalism, and individual reason in favor of objective scientific inquiry, the purpose of which he said was to settle all doubt and establish a new belief system based upon Bacon's scientific method. To Peirce, truth is what a handpicked scientific elite agrees upon after their completion of thorough scientific investigations, not some religious authority or Church magisterium. In fact, Peirce hoped that his scientific pragmatism would someday eliminate people's belief in metaphysics and religion altogether.<sup>69</sup>

Another prominent figure in philosophical pragmatism was William James (1842-1910), son of a theologian and brother of the great novelist Henry James. William James attended private schools in the U.S. and Europe, the Lawrence Scientific School at Harvard University, and Harvard Medical School, from which he received a medical degree in 1869. After a brief retirement from an illness, James taught anatomy, physiology, and hygiene at Harvard from 1872, and was professor of

philosophy and psychology from 1881 on. In 1907, James left Harvard and lectured at Columbia University and the University of Oxford. James' first book, the immensely popular *Principles of Psychology* (1890), established his reputation as one of the most influential thinkers of his time. James' *Principles* removed psychology from its traditional place as a branch of philosophy and established it among the laboratory sciences. In fact, twentieth-century psychoanalysis and medical psychiatry owe their existence to William James. After his publication of *Principles*, James applied the empirical scientific methods he used in psychology to philosophical and religious issues concerning the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and free will. James' views on these subjects were presented in lectures and essays published in such books as *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (1897), *Human Immortality* (1898), and *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). Theologically, James, like Peirce, was opposed to any absolute moral truths contained within metaphysics or religion. Instead James defined truth as the capacity of a belief to guide one to "successful action." All beliefs should be evaluated in terms of their usefulness in solving problems. Success, therefore, determines the value of our beliefs. Unlike Peirce, James justified the continued existence of religion and metaphysics within society for their pragmatic value in teaching morals and ethics, but he didn't believe in the transcendent, Almighty God of the Bible. God, to James, was the psychic energy of nature, which he called the "mother sea of consciousness."<sup>70</sup> Here again we see the tremendous influence that ancient Eastern religions had on modern Western philosophy and education.

In James' later works, which included *Pragmatism: A New Name for Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), *The Meaning of Truth* (1909), *Some Problems in Philosophy* (1911), and *Essays in Radical Empiricism* (1912), James redefined his pragmatic philosophical beliefs about truth. According to his new definition, truth is that which "works." One determines what works by testing propositions in experience. In so doing, one finds that certain propositions become true and others false. A particular hypothesis can be considered true if the predicted events take place. Truth is something that happens to an idea in the process of its verification. Religious beliefs, therefore, are meaningless because they entail no testable predictions. Since no moral absolutes given to us by the religious authorities can be tested, truth is relative to what works through individual, subjective experience. In this regard, James' truth markedly differs from Peirce's truth. Peirce often angrily denounced James' subjective, individualistic version of philosophical pragmatism as a perversion of his true, objective, scientific pragmatism. This fallout

between Peirce and James begs the question: "Since two of the leading pragmatists couldn't agree on what truth is, why should we believe any of them?" We shouldn't.

By far, the most influential pragmatist of the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries was the controversial American educator and secular humanist John Dewey. Dewey is often called the "Father of American Education" and the single greatest influence on our public educational system by those who revere him the most—liberal progressives who hate Christianity and want it outlawed in school. As an unbeliever in Christianity, or any traditional religion for that matter (Dewey was a signer of the 1933 Humanist Manifesto<sup>71</sup> that renounced God and elevated man in his place), John Dewey fought throughout his entire career to take discipline and authority away from our teachers and to keep religion out of our public (government) schools. In this he succeeded: state-mandated prayer in public school was outlawed by the Supreme Court in 1962, mandatory Bible readings banned from public schools in 1963, the Ten Commandments taken down from classroom walls in 1980, and, most recently, the Pledge of Allegiance was banned in June of 2002 by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco because it mentions "under God." Nowadays, students and teachers in many school districts, for fear of lawsuits, are reluctant to mention the name of Jesus in class or sing Christian songs during Christmas, which school boards refer to as the Winter Pageant or Winter Break (they want to keep the holiday but get rid of the holy day).

God has been taken out of our public schools and replaced with a hostile, pagan, antichristian, secular, humanistic ideology not unlike communism, thanks in large part to John Dewey, who was also known to be a communist sympathizer.<sup>72</sup> The fruit of Dewey's godless education has been catastrophic. One only has to look at the recent spate of crime and violence in schools to see it. Metal detectors, explosive-sniffing dogs, and uniformed police officers are employed in most of our public schools to prevent another occurrence of Columbine High School or Red Lake, Minnesota. But it is only a matter of time until another mass murder will be committed by some deranged teenager. Where God is not welcome, Satan always is.

John Dewey (1859-1952) was born in Burlington, Vermont, and attended the University of Vermont, where he was introduced to the evolutionary and naturalistic theories of Charles Darwin and T. H. Huxley, and the pragmatic theories of C. S. Peirce and William James, which deeply influenced his philosophy on life and his evolutionary theories of education. Dewey graduated from Vermont with a B.A. in 1879, and was accepted as a graduate student in philosophy and

psychology at Johns Hopkins University, where he came under the influence of G. Stanley Hall, one of the most prominent experimental psychologists of his time, and George Sylvester Morris, a German-trained Hegelian philosopher (Dewey's doctrinal dissertation was on the philosophies of the German idealist Immanuel Kant). Upon obtaining his doctorate in philosophy in 1884, Dewey accepted a teaching post at the University of Michigan, which would last for ten years, with the exception of a teaching post at the University of Minnesota in 1888. While at the University of Michigan, Dewey wrote his first two books, *Psychology* (1887) and *Leibniz's New Essays Concerning the Human Understanding* (1888). Both these works reflected Dewey's early training in Hegelian idealism, Jamesian psychology, and evolutionary naturalism, which he tried to synthesize, however difficult it is to do, into one secular philosophy. In 1889, Dewey became head of the philosophy department at Michigan. Influenced by one of his mentors, James Hayden Tufts, Dewey in 1894 joined the recently founded University of Chicago, where he founded and directed the experimental Laboratory School, which implemented his liberal and progressive ideas in elementary education.

Around 1892, Dewey renounced his former belief in Christianity and his earlier adherence to Hegelian idealism and metaphysics. Now totally freed from any influence of religious or metaphysical beliefs, Dewey became an avowed atheist like his role model Charles Darwin, whom he patterned his educational theories upon. Dewey believed that education, like mankind, was evolving towards a higher goal or destiny, which had no room for archaic metaphysical ideas like the existence of God. In fact, Dewey's criticisms of religion were very similar to Marx and Engels'. Dewey said religion "has been petrified into a slavery of thought and sentiment, as intolerant superiority on the part of the few and an intolerant burden on the many."<sup>73</sup>

Dewey was totally against the traditional subject-matter type of education where authoritarian teachers teach a classroom of students the three Rs and the Bible by drills, memorization, and standardized testing. Instead, Dewey advocated a new way of educating children through their "direct involvement" and "experience."<sup>74</sup> In this radical new method of education, kids would teach themselves by "doing" rather than by passively sitting and learning. The seated classroom with the teacher at the front of the class teaching students was out of date, he believed, and had to be done away with. Studies and the classroom, therefore, had to be "psychologized" by using the "scientific method" of "child-centered involvement."

Dewey's ultimate goal of revolutionizing pedagogical learning was to

make children functioning members of a democratic society who shared the same ideals and interests of the community as a whole, a progressive theory of education that was also popular in communistic countries. Dewey believed that children should become functional members of the society while in school, rather than be taught to be functional members of society after graduation. Particularly abhorrent to Dewey was vocational education schools where students were taught a trade that they would work at the rest of their lives. Dewey's progressive laboratory school at the University of Chicago, which emphasized teaching social reform and early community involvement, was in large part based upon Darwin's theory of evolution that nothing is constant but that everything is subject to change. Change to Dewey was good, especially getting rid of religion in school. Democratic ideals rather than dogmatic morals should be taught to children early in life. Dogmas, doctrines, religious authoritarianism, and any claims of having knowledge about absolute truths are bad. The moral absolutes given to us by the Bible don't exist anymore. Truth is ultimately based on the pragmatic consequences of one's actions, not any revelations by God on what is good or bad. All ideas about moral truths are open to criticism. Nothing is absolutely true; morals are evolving. Truth is what works, what succeeds, what leads to a solution.

Dewey was adamantly opposed to the teaching of Christian doctrines in school. In fact, he said the teaching of biblical values and moral absolutes in school were detrimental to the progressive goals of liberal educators like him, and that "A narrow and moralistic view of morals is responsible for the failure to recognize that all the aims and values which are desirable in education are themselves moral."<sup>75</sup>

Human thought, believed Dewey, is practical problem solving achieved by testing rival hypotheses against experience, through the empirical methods of scientific inquiry. Something is true if it leads to a pragmatic solution of a problem. All knowledge, therefore, is the product of human activity directed to the fulfillment of human purposes, not something that is revealed to us by God.

Besides his atheistic pragmatism, Dewey was a materialist who believed that nothing exists apart from matter. Dewey criticized the old mind-body theory of philosophical dualism, claiming that human thought is the result of the material processes that take place within the brain, not a result of some incorporeal mind or soul that is temporarily seated within the brain and ascends to heaven or hell after death.

Disagreement in the administration of his progressive laboratory school at the University of Chicago finally led to Dewey's resignation in 1904. Dewey then joined Columbia University where he spent the

remainder of his career lecturing and writing. A prolific writer, Dewey wrote close to a hundred books and papers, which included such popular works as *The School and Society* (1899), *The Child and the Curriculum* (1901), *Studies in Logical Theory* (1903), *Ethics* (1905), *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought* (1910), *How We Think* (1910), *Essays in Experimental Logic* (1916), *Democracy and Education* (1916), *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1920), *Human Nature and Conduct* (1922), *Experience and Nature* (1925), *The Public and its Problems* (1927), *The Quest for Certainty* (1929), *A Common Faith* (1934), *Art as Experience* (1934), *Liberalism and Social Action* (1935), *Logic: The Theory of Inquiry* (1938), *The Theory of Valuation* (1938), *Experience and Education* (1938), *Freedom and Culture* (1939), and *The Knower and the Known* (1949).

However popular pragmatism was in America, it was criticized by European philosophers as a purely American philosophy that had its roots in the American entrepreneurial spirit of success. The practice-oriented philosophy of pragmatism, Europeans said, is a poor criterion of truth. Something may work but can plainly be false or illegal. And they were right. Take, for instance, corporate greed and the devastating consequences of the recent accounting scandals at Enron, Global Crossings, and WorldCom. The greed that benefited the top CEO's of these companies financially devastated their employees and shareholders. Their actions were morally wrong, despite that the investment icon Ivan Boesky said in a lecture to business students that "greed is good."

Pragmatism's consequences on American education have been devastating. Poor test scores, illiteracy, teenage drug abuse, unwanted teen pregnancies, school violence, and a general lack of respect for authority are all results of the American educational system adopting the progressive, pragmatic ideals of John Dewey. Today, outcome-based education no longer requires kids to study and make good grades. Scholastic aptitude testing and grading is seen as too discriminatory towards minorities, who have the lowest scores. Value clarification programs now teach that morals are relative and ethics are situational. Self-esteem programs make the excuse that the reason Johnny can't read is because of his low opinion of himself, not because of the failure by teachers to make Johnny read. There is a deliberate dunning-down of our educational system so that kids can pass and the schools can graduate them. Core subjects like English, reading, writing, history, mathematics, foreign languages, and science, which are all necessary to successfully compete in the modern business world, are being neglected in favor of unnecessary subjects like environmentalism, human sexuality, gay and lesbian diversity training, gender and minority studies, multiculturalism and the like.

The American educational system is entirely to blame because they have allowed this to happen to our kids. They revise our history books to deny the impact or importance of hard work and conservative moral values that were characteristic of preceding generations. The importance of Christianity and the impact it has had on history is hardly ever mentioned in school textbooks nowadays. There is an intentional effort to keep religion and the truth away from our children. The myth of separation of church and state, which is not in the Constitution, is constantly being used as an excuse by judges and school administrators for taking God out of our textbooks and Pledge of Allegiance. There is a widespread hostility towards Christianity by the liberals in charge of our educational system. The teaching of Islam and Eastern religions is far more acceptable in our public schools today than the teaching of Christianity. In fact, some California school districts have recently made the study and practice of Islam a mandatory subject, despite the protests of outraged parents and the violation of the law, which forbids mandatory religious worship in public schools. The University of North Carolina, which won the NCAA men's basketball tournament in 2005, even made the Koran a mandatory reading assignment for incoming freshmen in 2002. Where is the outrage from the ACLU about this? If the Bible were mandatory reading they would be screaming all the way to the Supreme Court.

### **Logicism: Human Science Is Logical, Divine Science Illogical**

Mankind has fallen in love with his own intelligence and knowledge and worships at the altar of human science instead of divine science. Truth today comes not from the Word of God but from what science tells us is true. We were all taught in school that Darwinian evolution, which says that the universe was created by random chance from non-living cosmic substances that randomly evolved human beings from seawater for no apparent reason is the ultimate truth. This widely held belief, however, is totally illogical. Random chance has no being, no mind, no intelligence, no foresight, no power, no purpose, no spirit, and no love. It is only the mathematical likelihood of the occurrence of a given event, like rolling a seven in craps. A living being still has to roll the dice to cause the event to happen; a "Prime Mover" if you will. As painfully obvious as this truth is, most liberal educators, philosophers, and scientists still believe in evolution rather than divine creation, even though the mathematical

statistics are on the side of creation and intelligent design. The statistical likelihood that random chance created the universe is about as likely as a tornado creating a 747 out of a junkyard, or a monkey accidentally typing out a complex computer algorithm. It just won't happen no matter how much time elapses. Even though they know this, because there are many criticisms being leveled today at Darwinian evolution by highly intelligent people, hard-core evolutionists in our educational system still try to convince us that given enough time, chance can create anything. Do not be deceived. Chance did not create the world.

The real reason that atheists and Darwinists put their faith in random chance instead of God is that they don't want to obey God's commandments. They want total freedom to do as they please, especially when it comes to having lots of sex. One famous twentieth-century philosopher and sexual libertine who renounced God in favor of random chance and evolution was Bertrand Russell, the brilliant mathematician from England who made up the absurd philosophy of logicism. Logicism is an atheistic philosophy that human science alone, especially the science of mathematics, represents the purest logical truth. Unlike religion, mathematical symbols, such as classes, sets, and members, represent undeniable truths, which can all be proven by logic. However, it was later shown in 1931 by the mathematician Gödel, much to Russell's discouragement, that not all mathematical truths can be logically proven. The claims of divine science and the Bible, Russell said, cannot be proven by science, so they must be rejected as untrue and illogical.

Russell's atheistic philosophy of mathematical logicism gave rise to a similar philosophy called logical positivism (a.k.a. logical empiricism), the belief that philosophical truths exist only when their linguistic symbols are verifiable by human science. Logical positivists reject the traditional positivist ideas of Auguste Comte, who held that personal experience is the basis of true knowledge, and instead emphasize the importance of scientific verification by a select panel of scientific elites.

Logical positivism, an extremely popular movement within philosophy during the 1930s and 1940s, greatly influenced the rise of today's modernism within Christianity, which more and more comes to see the stories within the Bible as mere symbols for teaching ethics and morality rather than literal truths.

One of the leading logical positivists of the twentieth century was Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951) from Austria, a philosophy and mathematics student of Russell's at Cambridge. Wittgenstein's first major work, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), was a philosophical treatise on the use of language and semantics as tools for conveying thought. Wittgenstein believed that only concepts and propositions that represent

facts, such as the languages used by scientists, are to be considered logical, meaningful, and true. Like his mentor Russell, Wittgenstein believed that metaphysical and ethical statements by theologians and clergy are not verifiable by modern science, and should therefore be discarded by intellectuals as meaningless.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), godson of John Stuart Mill and the founder of philosophical logicism, was a British philosopher, third earl, brilliant mathematician, secular humanist, and Nobel laureate. He became a world-famous lecturer on philosophy and mathematics at Cambridge University, in addition to being a social and political activist for peace and nuclear disarmament and an outspoken critic of religion. Born in Trelleck, Wales, May 18, 1872, Russell was educated at Trinity College, University of Cambridge. After graduating in 1894, he traveled the lecture circuit in France, Germany, and the U.S. and was made a fellow of Trinity College. Russell's first major work on mathematics was *The Principles of Mathematics* (1902), in which he attempted to remove mathematics from the realm of abstract philosophical notions and to give it a precise scientific framework. Russell's second major work was *Principia Mathematica* (3 vol., 1910-13), in which he collaborated with Alfred North Whitehead to try to show that mathematics can be stated in terms of the concepts of general logic, which he believed represent the only undeniable, provable truths. *Principia Mathematica* became a monument of rationalistic science and spawned other atheistic philosophies in science, such as logical positivism.

In addition to being an outspoken atheist and critic of Christianity, Russell was a pacifist and critic of both sides during WWI. For his outspoken criticism of the British and their allies, Russell was imprisoned and deprived of his teaching post at Cambridge. While in prison, Russell wrote *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919), which combined the two areas of knowledge he regarded as indivisible: mathematics and philosophy. An ardent admirer of the antireligious and communist tenets of Marx and Lenin, Russell visited the Soviet Union after WWI, but became disillusioned with Lenin's tyrannical rule. In his book *Practice and Theory of Bolshevism* (1920), Russell criticized the brutal tactics used by Lenin to achieve communism's redistribution of wealth. Although critical of Lenin's practices, Russell continued to be a die-hard and unapologetic socialist throughout his entire life.

Russell taught mathematics and philosophy at Peking University in China from 1921 to 1922, and from 1928 to 1932 he taught at the highly progressive Beacon Hill School for young children in Britain, which he and his wife Dora founded (Russell had four wives altogether). From 1938 to 1944, he taught at various educational institutions in the U.S.

He was barred, however, from teaching at the College of the City of New York (now City College of the City University of New York) by the state supreme court because of his attacks on Christianity in such works as *What I Believe* (1925), and his advocacy of free sex, divorce, adultery, homosexuality, and adult-child nudity in *Manners and Morals* (1929). An outspoken critic of conventional sexual morality, Russell believed that all human beings should be allowed to express their natural sexual desires, children as well as adults. Some impulses, of course, must be restrained in the best interests of society, but it is the individual's relatively unimpeded natural growth and self-realization of his sexuality that makes for the good life and a harmonious society. The detached sage and ascetic saint who practice celibacy, he said, are poor role models for our children because they are sexually incomplete human beings. Likewise, the Christian doctrine of hell for committing sexual immorality and other mortal sins is an invention of "moralists" (a common charge you hear nowadays by liberals leveled at conservative Christians), who delight in inflicting punishment on those who don't believe as they do.

The concept of hell is one of the main reasons why Russell hated Christianity. He had a guilty conscience and was inwardly afraid of going there. In his famous *Why I am Not a Christian: And Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, Russell publicly denounced Jesus Christ for teaching about the existence of hell, declaring that "There is one very serious defect to my mind in Christ's moral character, and that is he believed in hell, I do not myself feel that any person who is really profoundly humane can believe in everlasting punishment."<sup>76</sup>

Russell believed that Christianity was against all moral progress in society and, therefore, an evil institution. "I say quite deliberately that the Christian religion, as organized in its churches, has been and still is the principal enemy of moral progress in the world," he said.<sup>77</sup>

Russell compared the Christian Church to Lenin's oppressive communism, and blamed Christianity for fomenting WWI. Not just content to bash Christianity, Russell said that all religions are harmful and dangerous because they are all based on lies, fear, superstition, cruelty, and greed. "I think all the great religions of the world—Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, Islam and Communism—both untrue and harmful," he said.<sup>78</sup>

Russell believed that Darwin had debunked the false teachings of religion once and for all, so no one should be afraid of going to hell anymore. Therefore, scientists should not take the Bible and the teachings of Christianity seriously. "It is evident that a man with a scientific outlook on life cannot let himself be intimidated by texts of Scripture or by the teaching of the church," he said.<sup>79</sup>

Bertrand Russell returned to England in 1944 and was reinstated as

a fellow of Trinity College. By then he had rethought his pacifism and publicly supported the Allies against Nazi Germany and Japan during WWII. In 1949, Russell was awarded the Order of Merit by King George VI, and a year later he received the Nobel Prize in literature and was cited as “the champion of humanity and freedom of thought.” He returned to his pacifist ways later in life. At the ripe old age of eighty-nine, Russell was an ardent opponent of the Vietnam War, and was imprisoned again for participating in an antinuclear demonstration.

A radical secular humanist and antichristian until the day he died, Bertrand Russell died at ninety-seven on February 2, 1970, the Feast of the Presentation of Christ (Candlemas), a holy day for Christians that is also celebrated by Satanists, occultists, and New Agers for purely pagan and evil reasons. Russell’s teaching career and published works had a tremendous influence on the secularization of Western society and the disbelief in Christianity. Among Russell’s major works were *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912), from which he refuted the tenets of Kantian idealism, *The Analysis of Mind* (1921), *The ABC of Relativity* (1925), *The Analysis of Matter* (1927), *Education and the Social Order* (1932), *In Praise of Idleness* (1935), *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits* (1948), *My Philosophical Development* (1959), *Political Ideals* (1963), *War Crimes in Vietnam* (1967), and his *Autobiography* (1967-69).

### **Existentialism: Life Is Meaningless**

The last major philosophical school of the twentieth century was the atheistic school of existentialism, which was popular in Europe around the 1930s and 1940s, during the time of the Nazi holocaust. Existentialism is a totally nihilistic and pessimistic philosophy, that maintains that since there is no God or heaven, life has no meaning, and it is pointless to live. Human beings wander throughout life aimlessly without purpose, as in an endless void. Man is not made in the image and likeness of God and is no different than the clouds, which exist one moment in time and are then gone forever. Only when we realize the absurdity and meaninglessness of our lives can we overcome the angst of living, and die a peaceful death, which finally ends our suffering and existence forever. It is foolish to hope for life after death, and even more foolish to keep the Ten Commandments to merit an eternal reward. Death ends everything and we are not judged by some supreme deity for the good or bad we’ve done in life.

The first roots of atheistic existentialism go all the way back to the

famous Christian writer and social critic from Denmark, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). Kierkegaard criticized Hegel's idea of the all-encompassing Absolute Spirit or universal consciousness, and instead stressed the irreducibility of the personal, subjective aspect of human life—the unique “existence” of the individual. Kierkegaard's first use of the word “existence” struck a chord with the secular German philosopher and Nazi sympathizer Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), the actual founder of existentialism.

As the founder of existentialism, the most important philosophical question to Heidegger was what it means to “be” or what is the meaning of our *existenz*, as it is spelled in German. In his most famous existential work, *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger said that man's essence (which he called *Dasein*) lies in “its always having its being to be, and having it as its own.” *Dasein*'s existence and finitude is an issue for each of us, Heidegger said, and how we face up to this determines our individual *existenz*. All of us are thrown into a world we have no choice in. We live, we suffer, and we die. Because our existence in a certain place and time is out of our control, our passions and emotions in life are likewise not willed. The most debilitating of these unwilled emotions is our universal fear or angst about the uncertainty of life and death. A correct understanding of the inevitable and eternal end of one's personal existence, according to Heidegger, will alleviate our universal angst over death. Only when *Dasein* realizes that death is the end of everything can it obtain true freedom, a freedom that understands the meaninglessness of life and the finitude of one's own personal existence. There is no God, no heaven, and no hell. Death ends everything. Heidegger didn't believe in God, but did hold out the possibility that he could appear in the future.

Heidegger's successor, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), the highly-acclaimed French existentialist with Marty-Feldman eyes, coined the term “existentialism.” He was famous for saying “hell is other people.”<sup>80</sup> Sartre agreed with Heidegger about the meaninglessness of man's existence and the finality of his death, but disagreed with Heidegger's belief that our passions and emotions in life are unwilled. Going back to Kierkegaard, Sartre believed we choose our emotions and feelings like anything else. Choice is “the fundamental act of freedom,” Sartre said, a phenomenon of our “imagination” contained within our “self-consciousness.” To Sartre, the freedom to choose whatever we wish, to do as we damn well please (while still respecting the freedom of others), is the most important thing in life. There is, however, one catch to being free: our freedom and the choices we make in life, Sartre said, are “absurd” because our self-estrangement and powerlessness over our

destinies is an inevitable part of the wretched human condition. Existence in this world is absolutely pointless and meaningless because human beings are “nothing.”

Nihilism, fatalism, and self-negation are at the heart of Sartre's bewildering concept of the nothingness of human beings who, he believed, come from nothing and go to nothing. Nothingness therefore is the true essence of our being. Sartre's strange tenet that our individual nothingness comes from some sort of other Nothingness makes absolutely no sense philosophically or ontologically or epistemologically. If something can't come from nothing all by itself, then our individual nothingness can't come from some other Nothingness either. Nothingness can't become being, since by definition it doesn't exist. Sartre, therefore, was illogical in saying that “The being which Nothingness comes to the world must be its own Nothingness”<sup>81</sup> and that “Things are entirely what they appear to be, and behind them . . . there is nothing.”<sup>82</sup>

What Sartre is really implying in these illogical statements is that human beings, who foolishly think they are made in the image and likeness of God, who is Everything, are really nothing because God does not exist. Sartre did not believe in the existence of God and held out no possibility of him revealing himself in the future. Since there is no God, human beings should create their own world by rebelling against the prevailing civil and moral authorities of the day. The freedom to rebel is good, and the freedom to negate and do away with is even better. Sartre reveled in the ideas of nothingness and negation, which was exemplified in his two most famous works, *Being and Nothingness* (1943) and *Nausea* (1938), and his two most popular dramas, *Flies* (1943) and *No Exit* (1944).<sup>83</sup>

Most of Sartre's depressing works were written during the time of the holocaust of Nazi Germany, when he was a secret member of the French resistance, and reflect the despair and hopelessness of many Europeans under Nazi occupation, a time when hope and trust in God had all but vanished. The prevailing question of Sartre's time, especially in the Nazi death camps, was how could a good and loving God, if he existed, allow so much evil in the world? The answer to this question is the same as it's always been: because man wants evil to exist in the world. God is not to blame for the existence of evil. He made man free to choose between evil and good, and many times man chooses evil. People like Sartre are hypocritical when they glorify in their own freedom but rail against God when evil men choose to exercise their God-given freedom and wreak havoc on the world. Don't blame God for the catastrophes that befall mankind. How can we truly be free if God didn't allow us to choose to

love and obey him or not? Love can never be forced, or it is not love. Love must always be given freely from the heart.

An impassioned Marxist revolutionary and antichristian atheist, Jean-Paul Sartre, Europe's most celebrated existential philosopher, dramatist, novelist, and political journalist during the middle of the twentieth century, was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1964 but rejected it, explaining that to accept such an award would be to compromise his integrity as a writer. This, of course, infuriated the Nobel Prize committee, which had it coming for honoring so many ingrates and atheists in the past, but endeared Sartre amongst his radical followers.

The rapid rise of absurdist theater in Europe during the 1950s was in large part attributable to the popularity of Sartre's existentialism. The two most notable absurdist dramatists were the Romanian-French playwright Eugene Ionesco, whose play *Rhinoceros* (1959) saw "man as lost in the world," where "all his actions become senseless, absurd, useless," and the Irish-born writer Samuel Beckett, whose famous play *Waiting for Godot* satirizes the absurd lives of two hapless drifters who patiently and faithfully wait for a man named Godot to show up and help them out, but he never does. Godot, of course, represents God, and the absurd lives of the faithful drifters represent naive believers who blindly put their faith and trust in God only to be disappointed in the end.

Jean-Paul Sartre died in 1980, long after having gone blind. As he lived his life in spiritual darkness, so he died in physical darkness. Like the blind leading the blind, Sartre influenced the direction of many Western philosophers, writers, and playwrights of his time, which was usually away from a belief in the one true God. Those greatly influenced by Sartre include the Algerian French philosopher Albert Camus (1913-1960), whose absurdist ideas were reflected in his existential works *The Stranger* (1942), *The Plague* (1947), *The Fall* (1956), and *The Rebel* (1951); Martin Esslin and his *Theater of the Absurd* (1968); the absurdist playwrights Arthur Adamov, Fernando Arrabal, Jean Genet, Jean Tardieu, Samuel Beckett, and Eugene Ionesco; and absurdist writers such as Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, Gunter Grass, Peter Weiss, Edward Albee, Israel Horovitz, Sam Shepherd, and Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia.