Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981) is called by some the greatest preacher of the last century. He had an impact on many leaders of this generation. J.I. Packer at the age of 22 heard Lloyd-Jones preach in London. Packer said that he had “never heard such preaching.” It had for him the force of an electric shock, Lloyd-Jones bringing him “more of a sense of God than any other man” he had known. George Verwer, founder of Operation Mobilization, said that Lloyd-Jones’ Sermon on the Mount was the greatest thing he had ever read. John Piper said that when reading the same work, he was deeply moved by the “greatness and weight of spiritual issues.”

Lloyd-Jones was born in Cardiff, Wales, on December 20, 1899. He moved to London with his family at age 14. He went to medical school at St. Bartholomew’s Hospital, where in 1921 he got his M.D. and became chief clinical assistant to Sir Thomas Horder. Horder described Lloyd-Jones as “the most acute thinker I ever knew.” From 1921 to 1923, the Lord worked deeply in Martyn, and he felt an increasing call to leave medicine in order to go into the ministry—to preach.

In 1926 he took a church in Wales at Landfield, Aberavon. In 1927 he married Bethan Phillips, also a doctor (with whom he had two children, Elizabeth and Ann). His preaching started to get noticed in Britain and America. In June 1937 he preached in Philadelphia when G. Campbell Morgan was in attendance. Campbell Morgan was moved to ask him to be his assistant at Westminster Chapel in London.

Lloyd-Jones was being considered at that time for the position of president of the Calvinistic Methodist College in Bala, in North Wales. He was inclined to accept this offer if it came, but the college turned him down. Lloyd-Jones’ main advocate on the board of the college missed his train and was not present to argue his call to be president. So Lloyd-Jones accepted the call to Westminster Chapel and remained there until he retired in 1968. John Piper commented on this situation:

I can’t help but pause and give thanks for the disappointments and reversals and setbacks in our lives that God uses to put us just where he wants us. How different modern Evangelicalism in Britain would have been had Martyn Lloyd-Jones not preached in London for 30 years…Praise God for missed trains and other so-called accidents. (continued on page 12)
In past issues we have looked at preaching and scripture as God-appointed means for restoring the health of the church. In this issue we explore the place of prayer.

In the New Testament, prayer is regarded as an essential part of our relationship with God, healthy church life, and effective ministry.

Jesus, in spite of the full life he lived, made regular prayer a high priority in his life (Luke 5:15-16). If he needed prayer, how much more do we! His example so impressed the apostles that they declined other important ministry opportunities because their priorities were to “devote ourselves to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4). Note that prayer was their first priority, then scripture. They knew that prayer was the indispensable foundation for understanding God’s word and for preaching it in the power of the Holy Spirit and thereby building up the church. In nearly every letter he wrote, Paul either spoke of his prayers for his readers or asked their prayers for him and his ministry. Knowing its power, he was devoted to prayer, and urged believers to do the same (Col. 4:2).

Few pastors today are devoted to prayer as their first priority in ministry. They either do not see the importance of it or they allow the busyness of ministry to crowd it out. As a result, their preaching lacks power and impact and the church suffers. Recent research found that pastors spend an average of only 39 minutes a day in prayer and many are discouraged about their prayer life.

Here is where the congregation can play a quiet, unseen, but major role in the renewal of the church. As individuals and in small groups, people in the church can meet regularly to pray for the pastor’s personal and family life and for his preaching. Amazing things happen when God’s people earnestly pray. Peter, for example, was in jail awaiting execution; the church prayed and God sent an angel to free him (Acts 12:1-19). There are many examples in the Bible and in history of God answering prayers for the revival of his people and the advance of his kingdom. Meditate on 2 Chronicles 7:14 and pray for your pastor and church! (Email us at information@cslewisinstitute.org for a free copy of the classic booklet, Praying for Pastors.)
C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien


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C.S. Lewis was able to make close friendships. And those friendships influenced and shaped his own journey at most of the important turning points of his life—except for one: his love for and marriage to Joy Davidman. His older brother, Warren, was the only friend who knew about that. Lewis made that decision and the steps that led to it by himself. Joy Davidman was a beautiful gift from the Lord that both of them deeply appreciated.

Most of Lewis's friends were baffled by Lewis's marriage to Joy Davidman. But it especially baffled J.R.R. Tolkien, one of his closest friends, and caused a strain in Lewis's and Tolkien's relationship. Nevertheless, the richness and depth of their friendship outlasted that strain.

Tolkien and Lewis shared much in common. Both had lost their mothers to death at an early age, and Tolkien had lost his father as well. Both as young boys made close friends with fellow students at school who shared their love for stories. Both were young soldiers who fought in the First World War on the French front. Both were seriously wounded, both saw death in battle, and both lost close friends in that brutal war of the trenches.

As a lad, John Ronald Reuel Tolkien and his brother suffered the untimely death of their mother, Mabel. They were both adopted by Father Francis Xavier Morgan, a priest who had been an assistant to Cardinal John Henry Newman. Father Morgan loved these young boys, and guided and provided for the education of the brothers until their adult years. The influence in Tolkien's life of Father Morgan cannot be overemphasized. Tolkien said, “I witnessed half comprehend-
One of the important shifts among Christians has been the rise of the “emergent church.” A number of pastors, authors, and bloggers, such as Brian McLaren, Doug Pagitt, and many more, have written extensively about the shifts the church in the west is undergoing as we transition from the influences of the period called “modernity” to “postmodernity.”

For example, McLaren makes a number of observations of how the church has been influenced in largely negative ways by modernity, but now Christians need to learn how to live faithfully in postmodern times, which McLaren calls being a “new kind” of Christian.

When people discuss the emergent church, they typically focus upon emergents’ views of knowledge, ethics, the gospel, salvation, and other doctrinal issues. But, as I keep reading emergents, or academics that are influencing them, I see another pattern that might be at the root of these other topics: the rejection of modern dualisms. This includes a wide range of dichotomies, such as heaven or hell; orthodoxy versus orthopraxis; evangelism or social action. But, according to Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, often the rejection of modern dualisms includes a tendency to reject the traditional Christian dualism between body and soul in favor of a “holistic,” “relational” anthropology. This new view often takes the form that humans do not have souls as their essence (i.e., their essential nature, and what makes us the same person through time) or substance (what has and unifies all our parts and qualities).

This rejection, however, has major implications for traditional understandings of Christianity. Christians have taught that the soul of the believer is what can survive the death of the body, will then be with the Lord, and one day will be reunited with a resurrected body. But if we do not have souls, then there will be significant implications for these and other Christian teachings.

I will survey reasons why some key emergents (and some key academic influencers) are rejecting body-soul dualism, and I will sketch some alternative proposals. Then, I will address to what extent we should accept them. These views lead to some disastrous consequences for any emergents that reject body-soul dualism: (a) we cannot have eternal life; and (b) we will be incapable of having interpersonal relationships.

Rejecting Body-Soul Dualism

According to Doug Pagitt, modern thought often is dualistic. To him, flesh-versus-spirit dualism reflects the influence of a Gnostic way of thinking, which implies conflict. Under that kind of view, Pagitt assumed his body was one thing and his spirit another, that he is “a collection of distinct parts.”

To him, this Gnostic way of thinking separated flesh (which was bad) from spirit, or soul (which was good), rather than treating humans as integrated wholes, and these ideas still influence us today.

Instead, Pagitt opts for a theology of “integrated holism,” which includes creation, even matter, at the smallest level. Matter is “made
of energy packets and not ‘little hard balls of matter,’” which requires “not only different theological conclusions but different presuppositions.” One presupposition to reconsider is “the idea that there is a necessary distinction of matter from spirit, or creation from creator.” Instead, as Pagitt explains, “I have started to get my head around this idea that everything is made of the same stuff, the same energy, interaction, and movement.”

Similarly, in his fictional The Story We Find Ourselves In, Brian McLaren’s protagonist, Neo, explains how the Greeks bifurcated reality into immaterial and material realms. They tended to treat the immaterial (including the soul) as higher, more real, and morally superior, in relation to the material (including the body and creation), which was subject to change. In contrast, for the ancient Jews, there was “one world, one universe, a universe with matter and life and God, not chopped up between real-ideal versus illusory-material, between spiritual and physical, supernatural and natural.”

These ideas impact human beings’ personal identity (their being the same person through time and change), and their hope for life after death. Neo suggests:

(continued on page 19)
One of my favorite axioms is, “Nothing is meaningful without a context.” This is especially true with respect to the scriptures. B.B. Warfield argued that unless we understand our faith systematically, that is, in relation to other biblical truths, we lose at least half of the spiritual value of each particular truth we study. Systematic theology is an important discipline. However, there is another helpful way of gaining this larger view. This is by using what has been called the redemptive historical approach—to understand the larger story or using postmodern language—the metanarrative of scripture.

If you had to summarize faith in Christ in a short form, it’s hard to do better than Herman Bavinck: “God the Father has reconciled his created but fallen world through the death of his Son, and renews it into a Kingdom of God.” Note the words created, fallen, reconciled, renew, and Kingdom of God. Note that each of these terms applies to the whole cosmos and not just to individuals.

We could summarize the biblical story in another way: God created the world and it was very good (Gen. 1-2). The fall of Adam and Eve into sin and its impact on the world is described in Genesis 3-11. Then from Genesis 12 to Revelation 22 you see unfolded God’s plan of redemption for his fallen creation. The story starts in a garden (the Garden of Eden) and ends in a city (the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven). If you don’t understand the place of creation, the extent of the fall, and the extent of redemption, and perhaps we could add here, the destiny toward which the whole story drives—the consummation—then we can easily get off track. Let me develop these themes in the rest of this article. (In subsequent Knowing and Doing articles I will look at each of these in a deeper way.)

From the very beginning of Genesis we see that God’s creation is real and good. Seven times God calls that which he made “good.” When he made mankind—male and female—he describes them as “very good.” “God made them in his image and likeness.” There have been many book-length studies on the nature of the image of God. One helpful (but not complete) way of describing the image is, “response–ability.” Adam and Eve were created to respond to God, to each other, and to the creation in appropriate ways. The fall damaged this capacity to respond in every area. We are now alienated from God, alienated from each other, and alienated from the creation. We no longer respond to God, others, or nature in the way we were created to do.

We were also created to “fill the earth and subdue it,” exercising our capacity to rule over the fish, the birds, and the whole creation. The capacity to rule is also described as exercising dominion, developing the potential of the creation around us. Another term for this call is the “cultural mandate.” What starts with ruling over the birds and fish is extended to “caring for and tending the garden” (Gen. 2:15). Very soon (Gen. 4:20-22) various people develop
The Bible teaches that creation is real. God made distinct things such as animals, birds, fish, and humans. When theologians talk about God creating “ex nihilo” (out of nothing) they are, in part, saying that the creation was not made out of God. This is in contrast to pantheism (all is God), as exemplified in various forms of Hindu, Buddhist, and New Age philosophies. Various New Age authors articulate this “All is One” or “All is God” philosophy in the negative—the principle of “non-distinction.” This means that the distinctions we see in this world between plants, animals, and people are illusory. The distinct world created by God is not real but an illusion.

Creation is also good, according to the Bible. Matter is not evil. Various philosophies throughout the ages have maintained that anything physical or material is suspect. Plato wanted to have his soul delivered from the prison house of his body. He desired our destiny to be a redemption from the body rather than redemption of the body as scripture teaches. Other groups, such as Manicheans, Dualists, and Gnostics, held similar views. The early church battled earlier versions of these philosophies. For instance, the apostle John is said to have resisted the teaching of Cerinthus, who believed that the divine Christ entered the human Jesus after his birth and departed before his crucifixion. Thus God was not involved with pain, suffering, and death. John says, in contrast, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). Church father Irenaeus in Against Heresies tells a story he had gotten from Polycarp who knew the apostle John. Polycarp said that John entered a bathhouse and found out that Cerinthus was also there. John came out quickly, saying to his followers, “Let us fly, lest even the

“No philosophical theory which I have yet come across is a radical improvement on the words of Genesis, that “in the beginning God made Heaven and Earth.”

C.S. Lewis
To Increase Humility

by Jeremy Taylor

17th Century Clergyman and Author

1. Confess your sins to God often, and consider what all that evil amounts to, which you then charge upon yourself. Do not look at them as scattered at large distances in the course of a long life, but unite them into one continued representation. If all our sins and follies were heaped against us, we would certainly appear vicious and miserable. Possibly this exercise really applied to your spirit may prove useful.

2. Remember that we usually criticize others on slight grounds and for little cause, and that one fly is enough to spoil the ointment as far as they are concerned. Since we are so severe to others, let us consider that whatever good they can think or say of us, we can tell them of hundreds of base, and unworthy, and foolish acts, any one of which were enough to destroy someone else's reputation. So let them destroy our over-high opinions of ourselves.

3. When our neighbor is lifted up by public fame and popular acclaim, we cry out that the people is a herd of unlearned and ignorant persons, poor judges and fickle. Let us use the same art to humble ourselves, and never take delight and pleasure in public acclamation.

4. We change our opinion of others by their kindness or unkindness towards us. If my patron is bounteous, I think him wise and noble, and his faults are but small blemishes, while his virtues are mountains. But if he proves ungenerous, he is ill-natured, covetous, glutinous; all he speaks is flat, and dull, and ignorant. This is indeed unjust towards others, but a good instrument if we turn the edge of it upon ourselves. It is reasonable that we should at least not flatter ourselves with too kind opinions.

5. Call to mind every day some one of your foulest sins, or the most shameful of your disgraces, or your most indiscreet act, or anything that most troubled you, and apply it to the present swelling of your spirit, and it may help allay it.

6. Pray often for God's grace, with all humility of gesture and passion of desire, and interpose many acts of humility, by way of confession to God, and reflection upon yourself.

7. Avoid great offices and positions, and those conditions where many ceremonies and occasions though necessary, will destroy the sobriety of your thoughts. It is certain that God is as greatly glorified by your example of humility in a low or temperate condition as by your generosity in a great and dangerous one.

8. Do not become introspective about your own humility or any other grace with which God has enriched your soul. For since God often hides from his servants the sight of those excellencies which shine to others so that he may secure the grace of humility, it is good that you do so yourself. And if you behold a grace in yourself, be sure to give Him thanks for it, that you may not boast in that which is not your own. Consider how you have soiled it by handling it with dirty fingers, with your own imperfections. Spiritual pride is very dangerous, not only because it spoils so many graces by which we draw near the Kingdom of God, but also because it so frequently creeps in upon the spirit of holy persons. It is not a wonder for a beggar to call himself poor, or a drunkard to confess that he is not a sober person. But for a holy person to be humble, for one whom all men consider a saint to fear lest he himself become a devil, to observe his own danger, to discern his own weaknesses, and to uncover his bad

From Jeremy Taylor, Holy Living (Orleans, MA: Paraclete Press, 1995), p. 50. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.
tendencies, is as hard as for a prince to allow himself to subject to discipline like the lowest of his servants.

9. Often meditate upon the effects of pride and humility. First, that pride is like a cancer, and destroys the beauty of the most excellent gifts and graces, while humility crowns them all. Second, that pride is a great hindrance to the perceiving of the things of God, and humility an excellent instrument of spiritual wisdom. (Cf. Matthew 11:25) Third, that pride hinders the acceptance of our prayers, but humility pierces the clouds. Fourth, that humility is but truth and all pride is a lie. Fifth, that humility is the most certain way to real honor, and pride is ever affronted and despised. Sixth, that pride turned Lucifer into a devil, and humility exalted the Son of God above every name, and placed Him eternally at God’s right hand. Seventh, that God “resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble”: grace and pardon, remedy and relief, contentment in all conditions, tranquility of spirit, patience in afflictions, love abroad, peace at home, and utter freedom from contention and the sin of censuring others and the trouble of being censured themselves. For the humble man will not judge his brother for the splinter in his eye, being more troubled by the beam in his own eye. He is willing to be reproved, because himself has cast the first stone at himself, and is not surprised that others are of the same mind.

10. Remember that the blessed Savior of the world has done more to secure this grace than any other. His whole life was a continued example of humility, a vast descent from the glory of the Father to the womb of a poor maiden, to the form of a servant, to a state of poverty. It would be a good but reasonable design if we would be as humble in the midst of our greatest imperfections and basest sins as was Christ in the midst of His fullness of the Spirit and perfect life.

11. Drive away all flatterers and never endure them. He who allows himself to be so abused by another not only loves to have his own opinion of himself heightened and cherished, but is a fool for entertaining mockery.

12. Never change what you are doing when someone approaches you suddenly. Do not try to seem studious or devout before him, but be the same as you were to God and yourself in privacy.

13. To the same purpose, it is of great use that he who would preserve his humility should choose some spiritual person to whom he shall be accountable to reveal his very thoughts and imaginations, every act of his and all his behavior towards others in which there may be danger. By such an openness of spirit he may expose every blast of vain-glory, every idle thought, to be chastened and lessened by the rod of spiritual discipline. He who finds himself tied to confess every proud thought, every vanity of his spirit, will also perceive they must not dwell with him nor find any kindness from him; and, besides this, the nature of pride is so shameful and ugly that the very revealing of it is a huge mortification and means of suppressing it.

14. Anyone who knows the laws of God, the rewards of virtue, the consequences of sin, and in spite of all this, runs foolishly into his sin and his ruin, merely because he is a fool, is like a madman rushing to his death. He that can think great and good things of such a person may admire a swine for wisdom and go for counsel to the prodigal and trifling grasshopper.
You’re always quoting the Bible to me as if it were the last word on issues about life. How can you base your life on a book that’s so full of contradictions and errors? Historians and scientists have long since proven that the Bible is inaccurate and unreliable.”

Many people are of the opinion that the teachings of the Bible are outdated, contradictory, and full of scientific and historical errors. With few exceptions, they have reached these conclusions through second- and third-hand sources rather than their own study of the Bible. Consider the following statements:

- The Bible says that God helps those who help themselves.
- The books of the New Testament were written centuries after the events they describe.
- “Cleanliness is next to godliness” is in the Bible.
- According to the Bible, the earth is flat.
- The earliest New Testament manuscripts go back only to the fourth or fifth centuries A.D.
- The Bible teaches that the earth is the center of the universe.
- The English Bible is a translation of a translation of a translation (etc.) of the original, and fresh errors were introduced in each stage of the process.

How many of these statements do you think are true? The answer is that all of them are false. Yet these false impressions persist in the minds of many, and misinformation like this produces a skeptical attitude toward the Bible.

In this article, we will consider a number of objections to the accuracy and reliability of the Bible to help you make a more informed decision as to whether or not it is authoritative.

“How can you be sure that the Bible is the same now as when it was written? The Bible has been copied and translated so many times! Haven’t you ever played the game where people sit in a circle and pass a sentence from one person to the next until it comes back around in a completely distorted version? If that could happen in a room in just a few minutes, think of all the errors and changes that must have filled the Bible in the centuries since it was first written!”

There are three lines of evidence that support the claim that the biblical documents are reliable: the bibliographic test, the internal test, and the external test. The first test examines the biblical manuscripts, the second deals with the claims made by the biblical authors, and the third looks to outside confirmation of the biblical content.

The Bibliographic Test

1. The Quantity of Manuscripts

In the case of the Old Testament, there is a small number of Hebrew manuscripts, because Jewish scribes ceremonially buried imperfect and worn manuscripts. Many ancient manuscripts were lost or destroyed during Israel’s turbulent history. Also, the Old Testament text was standardized by the Masoretic Jews by the sixth century A.D., and all manuscripts that deviated from the Masoretic Text were eliminated. But the existing Hebrew manuscripts are supplemented by the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Septuagint (a third-century B.C. Greek translation of the Old Testament), the Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Targums (ancient paraphrases of...
the Old Testament), as well as the Talmud (teachings and commentaries related to the Hebrew Scriptures).

The quantity of New Testament manuscripts is unparalleled in ancient literature. There are over 5,000 Greek manuscripts, 8,000 Latin manuscripts, and another 1,000 manuscripts in other languages (Syriac, Coptic, etc.). In addition to this extraordinary number, there are tens of thousands of citations of New Testament passages by the early church fathers. In contrast, the typical number of existing manuscript copies for any of the works of the Greek and Latin authors, such as Plato, Aristotle, Caesar, or Tacitus, ranges from one to 20.

2. The Quality of Manuscripts
Because of the great reverence the Jewish scribes held toward the Scriptures, they exercised extreme care in making new copies of the Hebrew Bible. The entire scribal process was specified in meticulous detail to minimize the possibility of even the slightest error. The letters, words, and lines were counted, and the middle letters of the Pentateuch and the Old Testament were determined. If a single mistake was discovered, the entire manuscript was destroyed.

As a result of this extreme care, the quality of the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible surpasses all other ancient manuscripts. The 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls provided a significant check, because these Hebrew scrolls antedate the earliest Masoretic Old Testament manuscripts by about 1,000 years. But in spite of this time span, the number of variant readings between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Masoretic Text is quite small, and most of these are variations in spelling and style.

While the quality of the Old Testament manuscripts is excellent, that of the New Testament is very good—considerably better than the manuscript quality of other ancient documents. Because of the thousands of New Testament manuscripts, there are many variant readings, but these variants are actually used by scholars to reconstruct the original readings by determining which variant best explains the others in any given passage. Some of these variant readings crept into the manuscripts because of visual errors in copying or because of auditory errors when a group of scribes copied manuscripts that were read aloud. Other errors resulted from faulty writing, memory, and judgment, and still others from well-meaning scribes who thought they were correcting the text. Nevertheless, only a small number of these differences affect the sense of the passages, and only a fraction of these have any real consequences. Furthermore, no variant readings are significant enough to call into question any of the doctrines of the New Testament. The New Testament can be regarded as 99.5 percent pure, and the correct readings for the remaining 0.5 percent can often be ascertained with a fair degree of probability by the practice of textual criticism.

3. The Time Span of Manuscripts
Apart from some fragments, the earliest Masoretic manuscript of the Old Testament is dated at A.D. 895, due to the systematic destruction of worn manuscripts by the Masoretic scribes. However, the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls dating from 200 B.C. to A.D. 68 drastically reduced the time span from the writing of the Old Testament books to our earliest copies of them.

The time span of the New Testament manuscripts is exceptional. The manuscripts on papyrus came from the second and third centuries A.D. The John Rylands Fragment (P52) of the Gospel of John is dated at A.D. 117-38, only a few decades after... (continued on page 28)
From 1939-1943, Lloyd-Jones ministered alongside Campbell-Morgan. When the latter retired, he became the head pastor. His ministry grew quickly. By 1947 there were about 1,500 people attending service on Sunday morning and about 2,000 on Sunday evening. Later, he also drew many to his Friday evening Bible studies. This meant three separate sermon preparations each weekend, each pursuing a different exposition of a biblical book. His sermons were usually about 40 minutes long, and he went through the Bible verse by verse. For instance, his sermons on Romans have been published in 14 volumes. His series on Ephesians extends to eight volumes on the book’s six chapters. Similar detailed expositions are now available on II Peter, Philippians, and I John.

**Preaching**

Preaching was at the center of Lloyd-Jones’ ministry. His preaching was very serious and straightforward—no jokes, personal stories, and only occasional allusions to the latest current events—just exposition of God’s Word with power. Lloyd-Jones did not want attention given to the personalities of preachers. He wanted to emphasize and practice God-centered preaching.

One young man went to hear Lloyd-Jones for the first time. Lloyd-Jones started quietly, but for the next 40 minutes the young man was riveted by the message, leaving him unaware of anything else around him. He was impressed by the message, not by the preacher. Later, this man, Tony Allen, became a well-known Scottish preacher.

Though Lloyd-Jones’ preaching was plain and straightforward, it was riveting and often caused people to forget the external world. One person hearing him preach about the storm on the Sea of Galilee and the predicament of the disciples found himself stretching forward in the pew to grab an oar. Another time Lloyd-Jones was demonstrating the sensitivity of the eye and how the eyelid shuts involuntarily. His description was so graphic that when he suddenly thrust his finger towards his eye, people jumped in their seats.

One of the marks of Lloyd-Jones’ preaching was a consciousness of being in the presence of God. He would often pray for an hour before he preached, so one had the sense that Lloyd-Jones had come to convey the presence of God to the listener. Earlier in his ministry, at Sandfields, a spiritualist woman came to hear him speak. She was conscious of being surrounded by a “clean” power that contrasted with her own practice.

**Reading the Bible**

In Lloyd-Jones’ *Preaching and Preachers*, he stressed the importance of reading the Bible systematically. Although his remarks were directed to preachers, his advice applies equally to any committed believer. He said:

> Read your Bible systematically. The danger is to read at random, and that means that one tends to be reading only one’s favorite passages. I would say that all preachers should read through the Bible in its entirety at least once every year.

Lloyd-Jones said that the most important discovery he made as a preacher was that, while reading the Bible, when a verse jumps out at you, “do not go on reading. Stop immediately and listen to it. It is speaking to
you, so listen to it and speak to it. Stop reading at once, and work on this statement that has struck you this way. Go on doing it to the point of making a skeleton of a sermon.” He says that he never read the Bible without a pad to be used for making notes.

Prayer

Prayer is vital to our own growth and ministry. But prayer is not a simple thing. Lloyd-Jones confessed that he found it difficult to pray in the morning:

You cannot pray to order. You can get on your knees to order; but how to pray? I have found nothing more important than to learn how to get oneself into that frame and condition in which one can pray. You have to learn how to start yourself off, and it is just here that this knowledge of yourself is so important. What I have generally found is that to read something which can be characterized in general as devotional is of great value. Lloyd-Jones said that if you start with just the Scriptures, you have the same problem. Read something that will warm your spirit. Get rid of any spiritual coldness. Learn how to kindle a flame in your spirit. This devotional tool is not merely to be something sentimental, but something that leads to the worship of God.

He also emphasized that prayer is not to be confined merely to one time during the day. It should be going on throughout the day. Prayers can be brief sometimes, like an arrow shot to the heavens. Paul calls us in I Thess. 5:17 to pray without ceasing. Lloyd-Jones said,

That does not mean that you should be perpetually on your knees, but that you are always in a prayerful condition. As you are walking along a road, or while you are working in your study, you turn frequently to God in prayer...Above all—and this regard as most important of all—always respond to every impulse to pray. The impulse to pray may come when you are reading, when you are battling with a text. I would make an absolute law of this—always obey such an impulse. Where does it come from? It is a work of the Holy Spirit...So never resist, never postpone it, never push it aside because you are busy. Give yourself to it, yield to it, and you will find not only that you have not been wasting time with respect to the matter with which you are dealing, but that actually it has helped you greatly in that respect.

Doctrine and Practice

Lloyd-Jones was convinced of the necessary relationship between doctrine and practice. He didn't believe in giving people what they wanted. He thought it essential to give people what they need; for instance, to speak regularly on the nature of sin and God’s view of sin. Someone might object that this is too negative, puritanical, ugly, and black. Wouldn't it be better to stick to the beauty of Jesus or the love of God? Lloyd-Jones had the following response:

What are we to say to such objections? First, I would point out that such an attitude denotes an entirely false view of preaching. What is really implicit in that criticism is that preaching should always give men what they desire rather than what they need. There is a feeling that men have a right to demand certain things of messengers of God. That is a popular view of preaching, and I have no doubt that it accounts very largely for the state of the world today.

Lloyd-Jones’ objective was to get people to understand the teaching of Scripture because “it is a failure to understand doctrine that causes a failure in practice.” Sometimes he so stressed the importance of revival and the experience of the Holy Spirit that he was thought to be a Pentecostal. Others heard his preaching on doctrine (continued on page 14)
Profile in Faith: Martyn Lloyd-Jones
(continued from page 13)

and thought he was just an intellectual. But he maintained that doctrine and experience were intertwined:

We seem to be opposing everything and thus we receive criticisms from all sides…. For myself, as long as I am charged with being “nothing but a Pentecostalist” and on the other hand with being an intellectual, a man who is always preaching doctrine, as long as the two criticisms come, I am very happy; but if one should ever cease, then is the time to be careful and to begin to examine the very foundations. The position of the Scripture as I am showing you is one which is facing two extremes. The Spirit is essential, experience is vital, truth and definition and doctrine and dogma are equally vital and essential, and our whole position is one which proclaims this; that experience which is not based solidly on truth and doctrine is dangerous.

Lloyd-Jones was involved in a number of theological controversies during his time. One was with what is called the Keswick doctrine, that sanctification is simple: Become a “broken vessel,” “yield,” “let go and let God.” Some would say that the Christian life is “Christ in you without any help from you.” He felt that this doctrine contributed to a loss of interest in theology. Lloyd-Jones certainly wanted to see holiness and righteousness encouraged:

But Keswick had isolated one doctrine, holiness, and altered it by the false simplicity contained in the slogan, “Give up, let go and let God.” If you want to be holy and righteous, we are told the intellect is dangerous and it is thought generally unlikely that a good theologian is likely to be a holy person…The apostles, who wrote “stir up your minds,”

“fight the good fight of faith,” and many such things, would be surprised.

This teaching led to the neglect of all the biblical teachings and commands, making them unnecessary. All doctrine was reduced to one thing, expressed as “let go,” “yield,” or “let God.” It was one-step sanctification. Later, J.I. Packer wrote in a journal that Keswick, thought to be a citadel of orthodoxy, “offers a salvation which, far from being ‘so great,’ is in reality, attenuated and impoverished; that its teaching rested on a theological axiom which is false to Scripture and dishonoring to God.” The article caused great controversy because of its strong language. It is interesting to note that this teaching is still around in authors such as Watchman Nee, Oswald Chambers, and others.

Overall, Lloyd-Jones was convinced that almost all our problems come down to an ignorance of God. He also maintained that one of our greatest problems is that we listen to ourselves rather than talk to ourselves. Rather than spiraling down into a depression by focusing on our problems, we are to remind ourselves of who God is: we should bombard our problems with the truths of God’s Word.

Altar Calls and Testimony

Lloyd-Jones held a couple of other views that go contrary to much evangelical practice. He questioned the appropriateness of altar calls and frequent use of testimonies. Altar calls were, he said, an innovation traced to Charles Finney in the 1820s. The altar call introduced a psychological element directed at the will. Lloyd-Jones maintained that “there is a grave danger of people coming forward before they are ready to come forward. We do believe in the work of the Spirit, that He convicts and converts, and He will do His work. There is a danger in bringing people to a ‘birth,’ as it were, before they are ready.” In other
words, they might be like the “foolish virgins” (Matt.25), or those who say “Lord, Lord” and yet don’t know Christ (Matt.7). He felt it was wrong to directly pressure the will. The true biblical order is to have truth presented to the mind, which moves the heart, and which, in turn, moves the will. Certainly, many people have come to Christ through altar calls, but some have come forward who are not truly believers and might think that they are saved.

Lloyd-Jones also cautioned about the frequent use of testimonies. Even though it is valid to hear others’ stories, there are a number of dangers in the way things are normally done. Often, testimonies follow a similar pattern where people are led to expect a standard experience which may be contrary to their own. Focus is often given to the dramatic features of the story, and eyes are directed to the person telling the story and not to God. Lloyd-Jones was also aware that the cults (such as Christian Science) often have dramatic testimonies about their own experiences. He said that “our case” was not to be based on experience but on objective facts grounded in history. He was always wary about sharing his own story of how he gave up medicine for the ministry because he didn’t want to focus on what he had done and because he didn’t feel that he had sacrificed anything: “I gave up nothing...I received everything.” Again, there may be a place for testimonies, but we often indulge in them without discernment about their dangers.

Pastoral Guidance

Lloyd-Jones was a wise counselor and made himself available after services to as many people as wanted to talk to him. He would sit or stand in his church parlor and greet each person as they were sent in to see him. There was often a long line of people waiting. He talked to them all. There are many stories about the helpfulness of his advice. Here is a glimpse of his thoughts on guidance from a letter written to his daughter Elizabeth when she was a student at Oxford University:

Looking back, I thank Him quite as much for the things He has prevented me doing as for the positive leadings. See Acts 16:6-7 in this connection. More and more do I see that our supreme duty is to submit ourselves unreservedly unto Him. He will make His way plain and clear, and to attempt to anticipate or be over-concerned about it all, or even to think too much about it, is a lack of faith. How glad we should be that we are in God’s hands and that He determines our ways. What foolish mistakes and blunders we would often make. How kind and good He is to restrain us and to order our circumstances

“\[continued on page 16\]

“I believe that there are many accommodating preachers, and too many practitioners in the church who are not believers. Jesus did not say ‘Go into all the world and tell the world that it is quite right.’ The Gospel is something completely different. In fact, it is directly opposed to the world.”

C.S. Lewis
Profile in Faith: Martyn Lloyd-Jones
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as He knows best. Nothing is better or gives greater joy and happiness than to be able to say: “He knows the way He taketh and I will walk with Him.” If we only understood God’s love to us and His concern for us.

In the space of this article we can only touch on various aspects of Lloyd-Jones’ life. It would be great to discuss his role in founding London Bible College, his extensive work among college students, his constant preaching all around the United Kingdom, his role in recovering the insights of the Puritans, the Puritan Conference, his founding of a classic library in London, his perspective on the ecumenical movement, his disagreements with Billy Graham, John Stott, and J.I. Packer, his occasional interaction with C.S. Lewis, his marriage and family life, and his later years after retirement. Perhaps it is best to focus on his preaching.

Emil Brunner, a neo-orthodox theologian, maintained that Lloyd-Jones was the greatest preacher in Christendom of his day. One pastor said that the essence of Lloyd-Jones’ message was that the only hope for our world or in the world to come is to abandon our illusions and come as a helpless child to God. Another magazine article summed up his ministry:

No one can pronounce the word Scripture with such force as this great expositor. You cannot hear him preach for three minutes without realizing that he believes God is speaking in His Word, that the Word is infallible, and that what we do with the Word of God will determine our eternal destiny.

If you want to explore further, I recommend Lloyd-Jones’ Sermon on the Mount, Spiritual Depression, or his commentaries on Philippians, Ephesians, and Romans. I have also benefited greatly from the extensive biography (authorized) written by Iain Murray (2 volumes) entitled, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones: The First Forty Years (1899-1939) and The Fight of Faith (1939-1981).

RECOMMENDED READING

Two Books from John Stott

The Cross of Christ
John Stott says, “I could never believe in God, if it were not for the cross...in a real world of pain, how could one worship a God who was immune to it?” Stott’s book is the best, most readable study of the cross ever written and deals with the subject from many angles. J.I. Packer says, “This more than any book he has written, is his masterpiece.”

Contemporary Christian
In this book, Stott clearly summarizes the major doctrines of faith as they relate to our contemporary situation. He discusses human dignity, depravity, the nature of freedom, the Word of God, the cross, the Holy Spirit, the resurrection, and the lordship of Christ. He also addresses practicalities such as listening to God, the mind, the emotions, guidance, the Bible, the church, evangelism, mission, and the future. If you want to have your mind refreshed and a clear breeze blow any rustiness out of your thoughts, this is the book.
this project my “stuff,” and he credits a friend who offered him the gift of “sheer encouragement.” Eventually, Tolkien agreed to the publication of his stories: first The Hobbit, and then his masterpiece, The Lord of the Rings trilogy. The encouraging friend was another Oxford scholar, C.S. Lewis.

J.R.R. Tolkien’s fundamental and daily walk of faith in Jesus Christ was discovered first from his beloved Father Morgan and participation in the worship of the Catholic Mass, with its focus on the death of Christ and his victory over death, sin, and the power of evil on our behalf. Tolkien grew to have a certitude and confidence in the powerful grace of God that in the end overcomes the terrors of evil. Evil may itself be strong, but Tolkien built his confidence upon St. Paul’s radical affirmation in Romans 5 that “where sin increased, the grace of God increased more.” Evil has cumulative force and inner power of its own, but the goodness of ultimate reality rendered in Jesus Christ has even greater power. The adventures in Tolkien’s stories live within this certitude of their author.

For Lewis, the journey toward faith in Christ started in the territory of a youthful atheism, following a roadway more like an alpine trail that moves to the right and then to the left, sometimes veering farther away from the destination, and yet finally arriving in an open place of trust in the one who is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It started with the honesty and clearness of W.T. Kirkpatrick who, though himself an atheist, taught Lewis to think for himself and to search for answers wherever they are.

In France, while at war, Lewis met a brave and good comrade in arms who was killed in battle before his eyes. Lewis tells about this man in his book Surprised by Joy. The goodness in this man surprised Lewis and unnerved his cynicism. He wrote, “In my own battalion also I was assailed. Here I met one Johnson (on whom be peace) who would have become a life-long friend if he had not been killed...in him I found dialectical sharpness such as I had hitherto known only in Kirkpatrick, but coupled with youth and whim and poetry. He was moving toward theism...But it was not this that mattered. The important thing was that he was a man of conscience.” This man, who was the commander of Lewis’s company, had been a marker of goodness and integrity and in his own way a witness to the reality of God.

Also in France, Lewis was treated for trench mouth and while in a hospital tent, he read a volume of G.K. Chesterton essays. Lewis wrote of Chesterton, “I liked him for his goodness. I can attribute this taste to myself freely (even at that age) because it was a liking for goodness which had nothing to do with any attempt to be good myself...In reading Chesterton, as in reading [George] MacDonald, I did not know what I was letting myself in for. A young man who wishes to remain a sound atheist cannot be too careful of his reading. There are traps everywhere....”

Both Tolkien and Lewis loved stories of the marvelous, and that affection for stories drew them together in 1926 at a reading group Tolkien had founded called the “Coalbiters.” They gradually came together with a few other friends to meet on a regular basis, to drink beer together and talk about books. These friends included Hugo Dyson, who was also an Oxford scholar; Dr. Havard, a medical doctor; C.S. Lewis’s brother, Warren; Charles Williams, who worked for Oxford University Press; and others who came occasionally. They called themselves the Inklings. These men were Christians. It was a particular, long talk between Dyson, Tolkien, and Lewis that became the decisive moment of discovery for C.S. Lewis. Tolkien helped him to understand the most radical truth about Jesus Christ as the world’s unique, totally-by-surprise, breakthrough of the divine who resolves the world’s catastrophe of human sin, death, and the power of evil. The pieces of a grand puzzle came together, and Lewis decided to believe in the deity of Jesus Christ. He explained it to his friend Arthur Greeves: “It was the long talk with Tolkien and Dyson that had much to do with it.”

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C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien  
(continued from page 17)

C.S. Lewis dedicated his book, *The Screwtape Letters*, to his friend J.R.R. Tolkien, and Tolkien dedicated his *Lord of the Rings* to the Inklings. It was also Tolkien who was the key influence in persuading C.S. Lewis to accept the professorship offered by Cambridge in 1954.

Lewis honored his experience of friendship with Tolkien and his other friends in the Inkling group in the book, *The Four Loves* (1960). In that important study of love, he wrote that whereas lovers stand face to face, friends stand side by side. The friendship among the Inklings was about the truths they held in common. In friendships like this, Lewis says there is the “what you too! I thought I was the only one” factor, the recognition of a shared vision (p. 96, *The Four Loves*). These words of Lewis help us to appreciate the healthy friendships that marked Lewis’s life. Tolkien’s friendships were not as extensive as were Lewis’s, but they both were marked with the “what you too! I thought I was the only one” factor.

These two story tellers gave to each of us a grand gift of the joy of adventure in their stories of the marvelous. They made us want to read, and for many of us to want to write stories of our own.

For the unsuspecting agnostic or atheist, both of these writers will catch us off guard. There is a sheer goodness and kindness at the core of the resolving surprise that happens to two young hobbits, Frodo and Sam, at Mt. Doom in Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings*. It is a tender goodness that overcomes the dreadful power of the ring. That very goodness in the *Return of the King* is an unforgettable moment that prepares us for the great breakthrough of the powerful grace of God. Gandalf, in the castle of King Theoden, challenges every fear we have that makes us want to stay safely hidden from the clear cold air of life. Tolkien helps us understand the cruelty of evil and its own inner weakness and rage that finally becomes destructive to evil itself.

Lewis helps us discover the breakthrough of God’s love and truth in the “enormous exception” that G.K. Chesterton predicted. We meet the golden lion Aslan, Son of the Emperor from beyond the sea. Lewis once wrote to a friend about the seven Narnia stories, “I wondered what the redeemer would be like given a place like Narnia.” Now we have seen it for ourselves, and our lives are not the same. Both men are like friends we wish we knew, both oddly contemporary to us as their stories, letters, essays, and persuasive books allow us to know how they think, and we are the better for it.

C.S. Lewis died in his beloved home, the Kilns, on November 23, 1963. J.R.R. Tolkien was at the graveside of his friend with a few of their Oxford friends and one family member, Lewis’s stepson Douglas. Lewis was buried in the churchyard of the Headington Trinity Parish; on his grave are the words that were imprinted on the calendar of his house in Belfast on the day his mother died: “Men must endure their going hence.”

Earlier that year, Lewis had written to Tolkien, “All my philosophy of history hangs upon a sentence of your own, ‘Deeds were done which were not wholly in vain.’” Lewis is quoting from *The Fellowship of the Ring*.


Both men are in their books, and their books are in our hearts.
"Dyson and Tolkien were the immediate human causes of my conversion. Is any pleasure on earth as great as a circle of Christian friends by a good fire?"

C.S. Lewis

Are Emergents Rejecting the Soul’s Existence?

(continued from page 5)

the belief in a substantial mind or soul is the result of confusion arising from how we talk. We have been misled by the fact that ‘mind’ and ‘soul’ are nouns into thinking that there must be an object to which these terms correspond.” Third, she claims that body-soul dualists have been unable to explain persuasively how an immaterial soul can interact with a physical body (i.e., the “interaction objection”).20 “Cartesian” body-soul dualism actually fosters this objection because it posits our bodies and souls are radically different and not deeply related.

Instead, Murphy endorses a type of physicalism, in which humans do not have souls. Instead, we are made up of physical stuff. For her, the soul is a “functional capacity of a complex physical organism.”21 Emergent leader Tony Jones is sympathetic with Murphy’s views. He has suggested that her nonreductive physicalism22 is the best explanation of the unity of persons in the Old Testament.23 He also mentioned that “a lot of them [emergents] would jibe with that [nonreductive physicalism], but I don’t think that too many of them have thought much about it.”24 Also, the philosophical theologian LeRon Shults has been influenced by her, and he too embraces a kind of nonreductive physicalism.25

New Testament interpreter Joel Green contends that, due to the evidence of neuroscience, biblical studies, and philosophy, humans are basically physical.26 Despite our English translations, he argues that terms in the original biblical languages do not clearly support the soul as our essence or the existence of a disembodied, intermediate state.27 Even though bodies change constantly, and the person (and not just the body) dies at death, Green still thinks we can survive death and be the same person.28 His basis is a narrative and relational unity of the person which constitutes each of us. These “are able to exist apart from neural correlates and embodiment only insofar as they are preserved in God’s own being, in anticipation of new creation.”29 So, our unity and identity lies in our sustained relationships and our stories.

The late evangelical theologian Stanley Grenz also influences emergents. With John Franke, Grenz argued that the soul as our essence fails to do justice to our rational and moral capacities.30 To Grenz, modern dualistic thought led us to emphasize saving “souls,” as though bodies have no eternal importance.31 This view suggests that sin resides in the body, so redemption involves overcoming our bodies.32 Last, the words “soul” and “spirit” do not refer to substantial entities that form part of our ontological nature.33

Overall, these arguments reject the soul as our essence, and embrace a holistic, relational view of humans, which for many leads them to physicalism.34 Now, let’s assess these proposals.

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Assessing Emergent Alternatives to Body-Soul Dualism

Positively, Green, Pagitt, and others are right; biblical authors presuppose a deep unity of human persons as normative, and our bodies are not the prison of the soul, to be escaped by death. Even in the eternal state, we will enjoy a resurrected body. Further, emphasizing getting souls into heaven when we die can be misconstrued to imply that the body really doesn’t matter, even now. Yet, we are to work now to conform our lives to Christ’s. And, the believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. So, the body matters to God and should to us.

Further, Murphy is right to criticize “Cartesian” body-soul dualism; if our bodies and souls are so radically different, it is hard to conceive how they could interact. Descartes also stressed rationality; yet, while rationality is important, there is more to us than just beings thinking things. We also need relationships with others, especially God.

Now we’ll critically examine this family of views. Let’s focus upon personal identity, i.e., what makes each of us the same person, regardless of the changes we undergo.

...emphasizing getting souls into heaven when we die can be misconstrued to imply that the body really doesn’t matter, even now. Yet...the believer’s body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. So, the body matters to God and should to us.

This is not one’s social identity (the cultural group with which one most closely identifies), or a sense of identity (how we tend to view what gives us significance).

In philosophy, the law of identity states that for one thing to be identical to something else, both things have to have all their properties in common. There would be one thing, not two. So, what would be the basis for our personal identity if we were just physical?

Our bodies continually change over time. At twenty-six, I had various physical traits. Moreover, I had married Debbie and lived in California. At fifty-one, I have changed bodily and autobiographically. I have less hair. I teach at Biola and am a father.

Yet, somehow, I am the same person. How? The traditional answer (from Thomistic body-soul dualism) has been to appeal to the soul as our essence, which does not change essentially, yet can change accidentally.35 But without the soul, what might the answer be? There would not be an essential aspect to us that “grounds” all the various changes we can undergo and still be the same person. Our physical parts, narratives, and relationships are always changing. Yet, if someone has had several relationships and is now in an irreversible coma, we don’t suggest that a “former” person has ended, and a “new” one now exists. Instead, we include the period of being comatose in that same person’s story.

If we reject the soul as one’s essence, we seem left with the view that we are a grouping of physical parts, relationships, and other narrated episodes. But there is nothing intrinsic to this grouping that keeps it the same. The set of all the properties that make up the person at one time will not be identical to the set at another. Thus, there is no actual sameness of person through time and change.

This conclusion has serious implications. I would not be the same person now that “I” was at twenty-six when I married Debbie Hubbard. But though I have grown in many ways, I still am married to her. Also, I wouldn’t be the same man who trusted Jesus in 1978 to forgive all my sins. So, the man who was adopted into God’s family then is not the one who lives now. I would not have that relationship with God now, nor will I after I die, because the person who dies will be different, too. Thus, the promise of eternal life seems empty.

Contrary to Green’s and McLaren’s claims, it is not primarily about what God can somehow do (i.e., preserve my narrative,
or remember my “slivers”) to sustain me in existence. Instead, there is nothing about me that can maintain my identity through changes. Even relationships themselves, which emergents rightly stress, whether to other humans or God, become impossible, for they require that we are literally the same person through change that can enter, maintain, and grow in relationships.

Likewise, our stories cannot ground our personal identities. They too are made up of various parts (chapters, episodes) which would be added to other parts of our lives. But they have nothing in themselves that remains the same through change; instead, they presuppose the sameness of a life about which a story can be told. So, Green is mistaken to appeal to our stories and relationships as that which can maintain our personal identity.36

Still, what about the “interaction objection”? Our ability to change in many ways suggests a deep unity between body and soul. Thomas Aquinas’ (Thomistic) body-soul dualism affirms this, for the soul is the form of the body. The soul, not DNA, even directs the development of the body and its parts.37 Moreover, the soul is the basis for our being active agents; so, a person can actively choose to move the body.38

Moreover, the “interaction objection” seems problematic for the Christian physicalist. For God to have a relationship with humans, they have to be able to understand each other’s meanings in ongoing communication. That presupposes that we are a deep unity, and that we maintain personal identity through time and change. Ironically, without a good basis for personal identity, a physicalist view cannot support our ability to have relationships, with God or humans.39

What about Green’s arguments from his interpretations of scripture? My purpose in this article is to look mainly at the philosophical aspects of this issue, thus space and purpose prevent a full treatment of the meaning of biblical language and concepts. But let me raise a couple issues at present. First, I think Green should address implications of John 3:3-14.40 There we see Jesus teaching that entering into a relationship with God requires our being born again by the Spirit. Additionally, what is born of the Spirit is spirit (v. 6), and the Spirit is not physical; how then can there be truly spiritual qualities in humans that are just physical? Yet, Green might counter that these verses should not be interpreted this way; rather, they just address our being in relationship with God.41 However, as we saw above, this move will not help, for it does not seem we can have a relationship with God on his physicalist view.

Also, I think he should consider Mark 12:18-27, in which the Sadducees test Jesus about the resurrection. In verse 26, He underscores the fact of the resurrection, which Jews then would have understood as a general one at the end of time (cf. John 11:24, where Martha expresses this view). Yet, He also quotes Exodus 3:6, where God spoke to Moses in the burning bush and said that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In verse 27, Jesus adds this: “He is not the God of the dead [or, of corpses], but of the living...” However, at the time when God spoke with Moses, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had died, and even still by the time of Jesus’ statement, they would not yet have been resurrected. Now, if we follow Green’s views that when the body dies, the person likewise dies, (continued on page 22)
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it does not seem possible for God to be their
God, because they weren’t alive, but dead.
But, the body-soul dualist has an answer to
this, for living persons, who are essentially
their souls, can live apart from the body, even
after death, even though God’s ultimate plan
is to reunite them with resurrected bodies.

What is sin in a physicalist view? It can-
not be a condition of the soul. For some,
sin seems to be disruption of relationships.

...if we cannot account for sin as a moral issue, there would
not be a real need to be rescued from sin. In effect, this
physicalist view denies sin’s reality, but that is a deception...

That is a manifestation of sin, but it hardly
does justice to how the Bible depicts sin.42
As a physical phenomenon, it also is hard
to see how sin would even be a moral mat-
ter, for physical stuff can be characterized
thoroughly by description (what is the case).
But morality is characterized by prescrip-
tion, what ought or ought not to be the case
in our actions or characters. But if we can-
not account for sin as a moral issue, there
would be no real need to be rescued from
sin. In effect, this physicalist view denies
sin’s reality, but that is a deception, which
ultimately comes from the father of lies.43

A Caution

Not all emergents embrace the exact same
views; therefore, we should examine each
person’s views carefully. But there does
seem to be a tendency, at least among some
emergent leaders as well as many of their
influencers, to reject the soul as our essence.
But, as we have seen, this is a boundary
emergents should not cross.

Notes

1. Tony Jones, former national coordinator of Emer-
gent U.S., seems to conflate the notions of the emerging
church and emergent in The New Christians (San Francisco:
include any Christian involved in the discussion about
how to live faithfully as Christians in postmodern times,
whereas “emergent” had been used to refer mainly to
those who are part of Emergent Village.

2. By “modernity” I mean approximately the period
from Descartes (1596-1650) to today, which is a transi-
tional time, from late modernity to postmodernity.

3. See his A New Kind of Christian (San Francisco:

4. Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger, Emerging Churches
(Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 236. On the
soul as our essence and substance, see J.P. Moreland
and William Lane Craig, Philosophical Foundations for a
Christian Worldview (Downer’s Grove, IL: InterVarsity

5. In “Emergents,’ Evangelicals, and the Importance
of Truth: Some Philosophical and Spiritual Lessons,”
in Evangelicals Engaging Emergent, ed. William Henard
and Adam Greenway (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009),
I address another issue, that we cannot know reality
(whether creation, including other people, or even God)
if all our access to reality requires interpretation.

6. E.g., see Doug Pagitt, A Christianity Worth Believing
7. Ibid., 81.
8. Ibid., 78.
9. Ibid., ch. 8.
10. Doug Pagitt, “The Emerging Church and Embod-
ed Theology,” in Robert Webber, gen ed., Listening to the
Beliefs of Emerging Churches (Zondervan, 2007), 142.
11. Ibid.
13. Brian McLaren, The Story We Find Ourselves In
(San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 51.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 152-3.
16. Ibid., 194.
17. Brian McLaren, A Generous Orthodoxy (Grand
Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 280-1.
18. Nancy Murphy, “Human Nature: Historical, Scien-
tific, and Religious Issues,” in Warren S. Brown, Nancy
Murphy, and H. Newton Malony, ed., Whatever Happened
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 7-9.
See also “Avoiding Cartesian Materialism,” in her

22. Murphy distinguishes between reductive physicalism (which usually is atheistic), in which causation is always from the lowest levels to the highest, and nonreductive physicalism, which she prefers. Murphy’s view is causally nonreductive because causation also can be from whole to part. Yet, she favors ontological reductionism; that is, we are composed of just physical stuff.

23. E-mail from Tony Jones, February 28, 2006.

24. Tony Jones e-mail correspondence, Oct. 20, 2008 (inserts mine).

25. E.g., see his *Reforming Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 2, 179, 213.

26. See his *Body, Soul, and Human Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008). Green though does not seem to be directly associated with emergents, but he uses Murphy’s views; thus, his ideas are illustrative of this overall view.

27. On Hebrew and Greek terms, see Green, 35-71; on the intermediate state, see 140-80.

28. E.g., Green, 179.

29. Green, 180.


33. Ibid., 239.

34. Let me qualify that while Grenz’s thought might suggest physicalism, he did not explicitly endorse it.

35. For Aristotle, each human has a human soul as his or her essence. The soul is the set of our ultimate capacities. Thomas Aquinas extended Aristotle’s philosophy. The soul is our essence and is created by God in His image. Also, unlike Cartesian dualism, there is a deep unity between soul and body; the soul is the essence of a person, and it directs the development of the body. For a contemporary Christian explanation of Thomistic substance dualism, see J.P. Moreland and Scott B. Rae, *Body & Soul* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 199-206.

The soul also can undergo certain types of changes. We each have capacities for rationality, interpersonal relationships, and more. As we mature and develop, we can develop these capacities. But they may be developed to different degrees in each person. Those kinds of changes may be called accidental, in that they are not necessary for that human being to be that person. For example, I have had the capacity to understand philosophy ever since I was conceived, but that capacity was not developed until I engaged in formal study. In that sense, a capacity’s development is contingent upon other factors. In contrast, if I lost something essential to me, then I would cease to exist altogether. This does not mean that I cannot change in profound ways. But I cannot change essentially on this view, lest I lose my identity (what makes me who I am through time and change).

36. See Green, 180. Furthermore, stories themselves seem to be just more physical stuff for him, so they too will be changing. For a more in-depth treatment of the problem of the “narrative unity” of the self, see chapter six in my book, *Virtue Ethics and Moral Knowledge* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003).


38. Here, I am referring to an “agent” as a person “who is in some sense the originator of one’s own actions and, in this sense, is in control of one’s action” (Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 268).

39. Murphy might appeal to God’s working at the quantum level to interact with us. Yet, whatever else may be true at the quantum level, these things still are physical, so the same problems resurface.


41. Thanks to my colleague, Joe Gorra, for this suggestion.

42. For example, Jeremiah underscores our heart’s default bent, that it is desperately deceitful (Jer. 17: 9).

43. 1 John 1: 8 says “if we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” Verse 10 strengthens this: “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”
Creation, Fall, Redemption

(continued from page 7)

bathhouse fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of truth, is within.”
Perhaps it is this kind of teaching that Paul addresses in I Tim. 4:1-5:

But the Spirit explicitly says that in later times some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, by means of the hypocrisy of liars seared in their own conscience as with a branding iron, men who forbid marriage and advocate abstaining from foods which God has created to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.

Notice Paul’s strong language of warning: abandon the faith, deceiving spirits, things taught by demons, hypocritical liars, consciences seared as with a hot iron. But what is this horrible heresy that leads to such deplorable results? Essentially it is taking that which is good and acceptable and calling it bad and unacceptable. It is calling right, wrong.

The advocates of the false teaching Paul was speaking of most likely forbade marriage because of a belief that our bodies and our sexuality are evil. They also advocated abstaining from certain foods and were perhaps related to those who warned, “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!” (Col. 2:21). They focused on what believers could not do. The problem was that they said no where God said yes. They made up rules where God had given no rules; they made up laws where God had left people free. Above all, they denied implicitly (and perhaps explicitly) that God’s creation was good (vs. 4). Note that the apostle regards the creation as real and deeply and radically good. (See also I Cor. 10:23-31.)

The Fall

An essential claim of the Bible is that this is a good world gone wrong. The fall into sin started in the garden with Adam and Eve but has had wide-ranging effects at every level. In Genesis 3 you can see that the first effect on Adam and Eve of the choice to sin was an awareness that they were naked (Gen. 3:7), and they covered themselves with clothes (fig leaves) and tried to hide from God. It was no longer true that they were “naked and unashamed” (Gen. 2:25). When God asked whether they had eaten from the forbidden tree, they shifted the blame. Adam blamed Eve, and Eve blamed the serpent. Adam even implied that it was God’s fault. He sinned because of “the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me.” So Adam and Eve are not only ashamed of themselves but also alienated from each other and God. Al Wolters says, “Deeply ingrained in the children of Adam is the tendency to blame some aspect of creation (and by implication the Creator) rather than their own rebellion for the misery of their condition.”

The consequences of the fall are spelled out by God to the serpent (Gen. 3:14-15), the woman (Gen. 3:16), and to the man (Gen. 3:17-19). Notice especially that God says, “Cursed is the ground” (vs. 17) and goes on to say how sin will make work difficult. Sin will affect not only Adam and Eve’s personal and corporate lives, but also the whole cosmos. Every area is affected by sin.

God’s good creation now can and will be twisted and used for evil purposes. Charles Williams used to say that now everything can be divided into “This is Thou” (the divinely intended use for the creation) and “This not Thou” (the misuse of God’s creation). Sex, for example, is God’s good creation but can easily be misdirected and abused. Our sexual desires are a good part of our human being and structure but can easily be (continued on page 26)
Questions & Answers on C.S. Lewis

Q. Did Aslan die only for Edmund in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*?

A. Although Aslan does seem to die only for Edmund in the book, later books make it clear that he died for the whole of Narnia. If Edmund had been lost, the prophecy about the four thrones could not have been fulfilled and the witch would have ruled forever.

Q. Was Father Christmas an alien intrusion into *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, or does he have a positive role in the story that is appropriate?

A. It is true that Roger Green and J.R.R. Tolkien didn’t like the introduction of Father Christmas into Narnia. Christ is the Savior of the earth, and Christmas is a celebration of his birth. But how can that apply to Narnia where Christ has not been revealed? Even though he seems not to fit, in another way he does. The story works. Father Christmas’ arrival shows that the spell making it “always winter, never Christmas” has begun to be broken. He also brings important gifts that serve the role of revealing the characters of the children: Peter—shield and armor; Susan—bow, quiver, and ivory horn; and Lucy—bottle of cordial and a small dagger.

“It certainly is my opinion that a book worth reading only in childhood is not worth reading even then.”

C.S. Lewis
Creation, Fall, Redemption

(continued from page 24)

turned in a way that dishonors God’s purpose. We can say, “My will be done,” or we can turn around 180 degrees (repentance) and say, “Thy will be done.” Just because something can be easily abused doesn’t mean that we should prohibit its divinely intended use. An argument against abuse is not an argument against use. Everything in God’s creation has a proper use and a prohibited abuse. We could apply this to drinking alcohol, dancing, eating, possessions, work, sports, or anything in God’s creation. Sin affects us individually, corporately, and cosmically. We are now “dead in sin” (Eph. 2:1). It has come to the point that “There is none who does good, there is not even one” (Rom. 3:12). But we also need to say that sin does not annihilate the goodness of God’s creation:

Certainly we should not minimize God’s work in our personal lives. Christ died for us, rose for us, reigns in power for us, and prays for us…There is so much to consider here. But we must take care not to miss the full extent of Christ’s work of redemption.

could have good without evil being present. But you couldn’t have evil without good because nothing is intrinsically, inherently, or ontologically evil. Thus, redemption can (and does) eliminate from the creation the effects of the fall in all areas. Creation can be restored and cleansed from the consequences of sin.

Redemption

Creation is real and very good. The Fall impacts all areas of God’s creation. It shouldn’t be surprising that redemption is applied to all areas of life as well. However, this insight has been missed by most evangelicals. The focus on personal or individual redemption, which, of course, is foundational, has overshadowed corporate or cosmic redemption.

Certainly we should not minimize God’s work in our personal lives. Christ died for us, rose for us, reigns in power for us, and prays for us (Rom. 8:34). God foreknows, predestines, calls, justifies, and glorifies each one of us (Rom. 8:30). The Spirit causes us to be born again, moves us to be more holy, and empowers us for ministry. There is so much to consider here. But we must take care not to miss the full extent of Christ’s work of redemption.

What is the full extent of redemption? In Acts 3:21 it says that the prophets spoke about a time when there would be a “restoration of all things.” Col. 1:20 says that the Father’s pleasure and purpose through the cross was “to reconcile all things to Himself.” In Romans 8:19-21 it says:

For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also, we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves

The central point to make is that Biblically speaking, sin neither abolishes or becomes identified with creation. Creation and sin remain distinct, however closely they may be intertwined in our experience. Prostitution does not eliminate the goodness of human sexuality; political tyranny cannot wipe out the divinely ordained character of the state; the anarchy and subjectivism of modern art cannot obliterate the creational legitimacy of art itself. In short, evil does not have the power of bringing to naught God’s steadfast faithfulness to the works of his hands. (Al Wolters, Creation Regained, p. 57.)

In fact, theologians have often regarded sin as a parasite on God’s good creation. You

Certainly we should not minimize God’s work in our personal lives. Christ died for us, rose for us, reigns in power for us, and prays for us…There is so much to consider here. But we must take care not to miss the full extent of Christ’s work of redemption.
groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

Note that the accent of verses 19 to 22 is on the impact of the fall on the creation and the fact that it will participate with us in redemption. It will be “set free” (vs. 21) from its “corruption” just as we will.

Another interesting fact is that there are two Greek words for new. One is “neos” (meaning totally new) and the other “kainos” (meaning renewed). Almost every time the Bible uses the word new for new birth, new self, new creation, new heavens and new earth, guess which word is used? You’re right; it’s “kainos” – renewed. God will not throw away the creation but renew it. Wolters says, “God does not make junk, and he does not junk what he has made.”

Implications

We should rejoice in God’s creation and enjoy it. C.S. Lewis has Screwtape the demon say about God:

He’s a hedonist at heart . . . He makes no secret of it; at His right hand are ‘pleasures forevermore’ . . . He’s vulgar Wormwood. He has a bourgeois mind. He has filled His world full of pleasures. There are things for humans to do all day long . . . sleeping, washing, eating, drinking, making love, playing, praying, working. Everything has to be twisted before it’s any use to us.

Many Christians have prohibited use of God’s creation because of the possibility of abuse. That has made Christians seem to be life-denying, perpetuating a kind of joyless self-denial. The kingdom of God is not opposed to life but to sin. Christ-centeredness is not opposed to the creation, but to the Fall. We should be life-affirming and creation-enjoying.

We do need to be aware of the twist that is part of every area of life. Work is good but we can work obsessively and with wrong motives. Politics can bring forth good laws and bad laws. We need discernment to see the divinely intended purpose for the structure of things while fighting against the twisted direction that dishonors God saying “my will” or “our will” rather than “Thy will be done.”

We need to be those who participate in God’s purpose to redeem all things. Abraham Kuyper said that there is not one inch of creation where God does not say, “Mine.” When we work to extend God’s kingdom (his rule and reign) or to bring Christ’s Lordship to bear in our work, we are being obedient to him and working to bring God’s kingdom to “earth as it is in heaven.” We also participate as God gives us success in God’s redemptive plan for the cosmos. Al Wolters sums up this emphasis on creation, fall, redemption:

(1) Creation is much broader and more comprehensive than we tend to think. (2) The fall affects that creation in its full extent. (3) Redemption in Jesus Christ reaches just as far as the fall.”

Three books that are most helpful on this subject are: Al Wolters, Creation Regained; Michael Wittmer, Heaven is a Place on Earth; and Cornelius Plantinga, Engaging God’s World.
the Gospel was written. The Bodmer Papyri are dated from A.D. 175-225, and the Chester Beatty Papyri date from about A.D. 250. The time span for most of the New Testament is less than 200 years (and some are within 100 years) from the date of authorship to the date of our earliest manuscripts. This sharply contrasts with the average gap of over 1,000 years between the composition and the earliest copy of the writings of other ancient authors.

To summarize the bibliographic test, the Old and New Testaments enjoy far greater manuscript attestation in terms of quantity, quality, and time span than any other ancient documents. It is especially interesting to make specific comparisons between the New Testament and other writings.

The Internal Test

The second test of the reliability of the biblical documents asks, “What claims does the Bible make about itself?” This may appear to be circular reasoning. It sounds like we are using the testimony of the Bible to prove that the Bible is true. But we are really examining the truth claims of the various authors of the Bible and allowing them to speak for themselves. (Remember that the Bible is not one book but many books woven together.) This provides significant evidence that must not be ignored.

A number of biblical authors claim that their accounts are primary, not secondary. That is, the bulk of the Bible was written by people who were eyewitnesses of the events they recorded. John wrote in his Gospel, “And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you also may believe” (John 19:35; see 21:24). In his first epistle, John wrote, “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled concerning the Word of life . . . what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also” (1 John 1:1, 3). Peter makes the same point abundantly clear: “For we did not follow cleverly devised tales when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty” (2 Peter 1:16; also see Acts 2:22; 1 Peter 5:1).

The independent eyewitness accounts in the New Testament of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ were written by people who were intimately acquainted with Jesus Christ. Their gospels and epistles reveal their integrity and complete commitment to the truth, and they maintained their testimony even through persecution and martyrdom. All the evidence inside and outside the New Testament runs contrary to the claim made by form criticism that the early church distorted the life and teachings of Christ. Most of the New Testament was written between A.D. 47 and 70, and all of it was complete before the end of the first century. There simply was not enough time for myths about Christ to be created and propagated. And the multitudes of eyewitnesses who were alive when the New Testament books began to be circulated would have challenged blatant historical fabrications about the life of Christ. The Bible places great stress on accurate historical details, and this is especially obvious in the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, Luke’s two-part masterpiece (see his prologue in Luke 1:1-4).

The External Test

Because the Scriptures continually refer to historical events, they are verifiable; their accuracy can be checked by external evidence.
accuracy can be checked by external evidence. The chronological details in the prologue to Jeremiah (1:1-3) and in Luke 3:1-2 illustrate this. Ezekiel 1:2 allows us to date Ezekiel’s first vision of God to the day (July 31, 592 B.C.).

The historicity of Jesus Christ is well-established by early Roman, Greek, and Jewish sources, and these extrabiblical writings affirm the major details of the New Testament portrait of the Lord. The first-century Jewish historian Flavius Josephus made specific references to John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, and James in his Antiquities of the Jews. In this work, Josephus gives us many background details about the Herods, the Sadducees and Pharisees, the high priests like Annas and Caiaphas, and the Roman emperors mentioned in the gospels and Acts.

We find another early secular reference to Jesus in a letter written a little after A.D. 73 by an imprisoned Syrian named Mara Bar-Serapion. This letter to his son compares the deaths of Socrates, Pythagoras, and Christ. Other first- and second-century writers who mention Christ include the Roman historians Cornelius Tacitus (Annals) and Suetonius (Life of Claudius, Lives of the Caesars), the Roman governor Pliny the Younger (Epistles), and the Greek satirist Lucian (On the Death of Peregrine). Jesus is also mentioned a number of times in the Jewish Talmud.

The Old and New Testaments make abundant references to nations, kings, battles, cities, mountains, rivers, buildings, treaties, customs, economics, politics, dates, etc. Because the historical narratives of the Bible are so specific, many of its details are open to archaeological investigation. While we cannot say that archaeology proves the authority of the Bible, it is fair to say that archaeological evidence has provided external confirmation of hundreds of biblical statements. Higher criticism in the 19th century reversed almost all of these claims. Noted archaeologists such as William F. Albright, Nelson Glueck, and G. Ernest Wright developed a great respect for the historical accuracy of the Scriptures as a result of their work.

Out of the multitude of archaeological discoveries related to the Bible, consider a few examples to illustrate the remarkable external substantiation of biblical claims. Excavations at Nuzi (1925-41), Mari (discovered in 1933), and Alalakh (1937-39; 1946-49) provide helpful background information that fits well with the Genesis stories of the patriarchal period. The Nuzi tablets and Mari letters illustrate the patriarchal customs in great detail, and the Ras Shamra tablets discovered in ancient Ugarit in Syria shed much light on Hebrew prose and poetry and Canaanite culture. The Ebla tablets discovered recently in northern Syria also affirm the antiquity and accuracy of the Book of Genesis.

Some scholars once claimed that the Mosaic Law could not have been written by Moses, because writing was largely unknown at that time and because the law code of the Pentateuch was too sophisticated for that period. But the codified Laws of Hammurabi (ca. 1700 B.C.), the Lipit-Ishtar code (ca. 1860 B.C.), the Laws of Eshnunna (ca. 1950 B.C.), and the even earlier Ur-Nammu code have refuted these claims.

Much more could be said about the reliability of the Bible. Hopefully, this article gives you a sense of some of the responses which can be made the questions of skeptics. For more, consult some of the many excellent books on this topic.
You see two persons: one is regular in public and private prayer, the other is not. Now the reason for the difference is not that one has strength and power to observe prayer, and the other has not; but the reason is this, that one intends to please God in the duties of devotion, and the other has no intention about it. Now the case is the same, in the right or wrong use of our time and money. You see one person throwing away his time in sleep and idleness, in visiting and diversions, and his money in the most vain and unreasonable expenses. You see another careful of every day, using his time with godly wisdom and spending all his money in works of charity. Now the difference is not that one has strength and power to do thus and the other has not; but that one intends to please God in the right use of all his time and all his money, and the other has no intention about it.

Here, therefore, let us judge ourselves sincerely; let us not vainly content ourselves with the common disorders of our lives, the vanity of our expenses, the folly of our diversions, the pride of our habits, the idleness of our lives, and the wasting of our time, fancying that these are such imperfections as we fall into through the unavoidable weakness and frailty of our natures. But let us be assured that these disorders of our common life are owing to this, that we have not so much Christianity as to intend to please God in all the actions of our life as the best and happiest thing in the world. So that we must not look upon ourselves in a state of common and pardonable imperfection, but in such a state as lacks the first and fundamental principle of Christianity, viz. an intention to please God in all our actions....

So that the fault does not lie here, that we desire to be good and perfect, but through the weakness of our nature fall short of it; but it is because we have not godliness enough to intend to be as good as we can, or to please God in all the actions of our life. This we see is plainly the case of him that spends his time in sports when he should be at church; it is not his want of power, but his want of intention or desire to be there...

This doctrine does not suppose that we have no need of Divine grace, or that is in our own power to make ourselves perfect. It only supposes that through the lack of sincere intention of pleasing God in all our actions, we fall into such irregularities of life as by the ordinary means of grace we should have power to avoid; and that we have not that perfection, which our present state of grace makes us capable of, because we do not so much as intend to have it. It only teaches us that the reason why we see no real mortification or self-denial, no eminent charity, no profound humility, no heavenly affection, no true contempt of the world, no Christian meekness, no sincere zeal, no eminent godliness in the common lives of Christians, is this: because they do not so much as intend to be exact and exemplary in these virtues.

"Good and evil both increase at compound interest. That is why the little decisions you and I make every day are of such infinite importance.”

C.S. Lewis
THOUGHTS TO PONDER

William Law on
The Necessity of Forming a Firm Intention to Please God

_In chapter two of this 1728 classic, William Law explores why so many professing believers live lives indistinguishable from those of non-believers. He sees the primary cause not as ordinary human weakness or lack of God’s empowerment, but rather as a lack of intention to please God. Law embarks on his subject by looking at the widespread practice in his day of cursing, which was common among professing believers. Today, we might think of this or other issues, but the basic question remains the same: why do the lives of professing believers differ so little from the lives of non-believers? Law’s answer is as relevant now as it was in 1728 and reminds true disciples of Jesus Christ of the necessity of forming a firm intention to please God and to live accordingly. Please read the following excerpts slowly and reflectively._

Now the reason of common swearing is this: it is because men have not so much as the intention to please God in all their actions....

It seems but a small and necessary part of godliness to have such a sincere intention as this, and that he has no reason to look upon himself as a disciple of Christ who is not thus far advanced in godliness....

It was this general intention that made the primitive Christians such eminent examples of godliness and made the goodly fellowship of the saints and all the glorious army of martyrs and confessors. And if you will here stop and ask yourselves why you are not as godly as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you that it is neither through ignorance or inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it....

And when you have this intention to please God in all your actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world, you will find in you as great an aversion to everything that is vain and impertinent in common life, whether of business or pleasure, as you now have to anything that is profane....

Now, how can he who lacks this general sincere intention be reckoned a Christian? And yet if it was among Christians, it would change the whole face of the world: true godliness and exemplary holiness would be as common and visible as buying and selling, or any trade in life....

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from the C.S. Lewis Institute

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Director, Marion E. Wade Center, Wheaton, Illinois
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