

STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" Mark 1:18.

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Acclimatization to Secularism

Dr. H. T. Spence

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of Sir Edmond Hillary's climb to the top of Mount Everest. Reaching 29,028 feet, Mount Everest is part of the range of the Himalayan Mountains that stretches approximately 1500 miles across Asia. In attempts to reach the top of the world's tallest mountain, 150 have died primarily due to avalanches.

In order for any individual to reach to such heights, a process called *acclimatization* must occur in the body. Due to the decreasing amount of oxygen in the atmosphere as one ascends, the body adjusts by doubling the amount of oxygen-carrying red blood cells. Time is needed for this period of adjustment. A steady ascent from sea level to Mount Everest's summit would

result in sudden unconsciousness and eventual death. Most climbers of Everest undergo the process of acclimatization around 22,000 feet; at this height they stop to rest for several weeks allowing the body to become acclimatized to the thin atmosphere. In order to climb the remaining 7,000 feet, many take additional oxygen with them.

Philosophically, our generation is at a most dangerous time period of human history. An antichrist is coming (though "even now are there many antichrists") who will take over the whole world for a time appointed by God. In order for this to happen, philosophical, political, social, and religious changes must take place universally. To make it to the top of the universal acceptance of

Humanism, where a man will be declared as God (II Thessalonians 2:4), the countries of the world will have to pass through an *acclimatization to secularism*. We are now waiting for this acclimatization to be completed. Any country that believed in God in generations past must now be acclimated to global apostasy; only then will “the man of sin” be universally accepted.

Secular Versus Secularism

There is a difference between the terms *secular* and *secularism*. The word *secular*, coming from both Latin and French, means “the world or age.” This term is used to refer to things in life that are without religious significance. That which is not defined as religious is placed in the secular category. Because Christ and His Word are to reign in every part of his life, to the Christian there is no difference between the secular and the sacred. No matter how mundane, the Christian should enter every compartment of life with the consciousness of his Lord.

In *secularism* everything in life has been deliberately secularized. Secularism forcefully restrains any association of God and His principles with that which the world has deemed non-religious. Secularism is a total denial of the spiritual, of God, or of the soul and its identification with God. To declare a distinction between sacred or secular is one thing; however, it is another thing when entities of the secular compartment are specifically set against God (anti-God), denying His existence, and prohibiting Him in any compartment of the secular.

For two thousand years, Western Civilization has been acclimatized to the general acceptance and belief in the existence and presence of God throughout society. However, Western Civilization is presently acclimatizing itself toward a powerful secularism. Sadly, this process has even become a part of the fabric of the institutional church.

The Process of Modern Acclimatization

When Liberalism and Modernism came to prominence during the mid-1800s, they created a destructive force against the literalness of the Bible; this attack in return destroyed the authority of the Bible in man’s thinking. As a result, the place of God’s presence and authority in man’s living was eventually destroyed. This change was an early stage of secularism. Once such a reality was evident among the leaders of the Church, the momentum of secularization overwhelmingly increased.

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Amidst this failure in the Church, Charles Robert Darwin brought another dimension to the process through his presentation of evolution. Although evolution had been proposed in the writings of Lamarke, Darwin added a philosophical context to the view that permeated not only science but also all of the social sciences of man.

By the mid-1900s, after the forces of Neo-Orthodoxy through existentialism kept pounding away at the literalness of the Bible, Radical Theology gave its contribution to the secularization of the secular by announcing the “death of God” in everything, including religion. Even John Robinson in his work *Honest to God* called for a secularizing of religion. Eventually Neo-Evangelicalism brought the conservative church closer to the world’s thinking by eliminating biblical separation. Following hard on its heels, the Charismatic movement made the “feelings” of man equal or even synonymous with the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

We cannot blame the world for secularism; secularism has been the mutating of error within the Church that has thrown God out. The Laodicean Church Age, because of its emphasis upon prosperity and physical health, has created a Christless church, making the secular more powerful than the spiritual. As a result, even most Christians today have no vision for God.

Western Civilization no longer has any remote concept of who God is, what He is, and how He acts.

Outside the walls of the church, God is absent and obviously omitted. Today people are crying out, “if God exists, why does He allow all of the violence in our schools?” Well, we must remember the courts have barred God from our public schools; therefore, it is unjust and illogical to blame Him for what is happening. The daily newspapers have their society section, their sports section, their entertainment section, and even their religious section that publishes events of the local churches once a week. But nothing is said about God. The media through television and cinema are conspicuously silent in their treatment of God. Such silence about God reigns in all of the sit-coms while sodomy, the final frontier of immorality, is being forcefully promoted by the media.

The contemporary now views the supernatural through the eyes of Harry Potter; it is evident that God is not found in his supernatural world. The primer of a natural God-consciousness in a child is now being molded and interpreted as an avenue or medium for the occult in children.

The present generation is allowing nothing to have the presence of God; nothing is allowed to speak of God unless it is in a damning way. Everything in our contemporary that speaks in the schools, in the medical world, in the entertainment world, in the science world, in the art and music world, and even in the religious world, has labored at keeping God out of the conversation. This process of acclimatization to secular-

ism is the necessary foundation for the coming of Christ and Antichrist.

The process of secularization began in Western Civilization during the Enlightenment Period, or the Age of Reason. David Hume and Immanuel Kant endeavored to distinguish in human epistemology two categories of knowledge: the *phenomena* world and the *neumena* world. Between these two worlds was an impregnable gulf. Anything dealing with God, the soul, angels, or the supernatural realm was exiled to the *neumena* realm. That which man could empirically experience or realize made up the *phenomena* realm. This led to the concept of a “closed world system,” with no allowance of any concept of God to enter into the rational or phenomena world in which we live. Such a belief has become the solidifying presupposition in our secular generation.

Amidst the massive conversation about God throughout history, it truly is a miracle wrought by the Devil that we have now come to a generation that has forgotten God. What is stated in Judges 2:10 is not only becoming true from the perspective of many churches but also indicates the obvious rejection of natural revelation that Western Civilization has believed for centuries:

And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel.

God is giving our country over to a mind of insanity as described in Romans 1:24-28. America, founded upon the concept of a personal God, has become fully secularized in its living, lifestyles, and daily philosophy.

The interpretation of “separation of Church and State,” which did not come until the 1940s, has been one of the greatest means whereby our country has been secularized. This constant philosophical thrust has had a profound effect upon everyone, including professing Christians.

Our public society has become atheistic in its avoidance of God in every compartment of life. Evolution has permeated every context of human existence with its conspicuous absence of God in the conversation of man’s origin. Rejecting Him then affects the conversation of man’s morals and existence, and even the rejection of an afterlife. The New Age Movement now speaks of an unclear afterlife as being absorbed into the realm of light, conspicuously avoiding any judgment by God.

A Laodicean Church Age

Our contemporary church is aptly represented by the Laodicean church of Revelation 3:14-22. Lukewarmness is the norm of Christians today in their profession of and stands for God. This is becoming evident among the most conservative of professing Christians. One of the evidences that the institutional church has become secularized is its emphasis upon the visceral or the

physical: "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing" (Revelation 3:17a). This Christless church age is void of insight into the spiritual world of God: "And knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked" (3:17b). Generalities now rule about God: no specifics are being given from the pulpit anymore, no specifics are being prayed anymore, and no specifics are being thought about God anymore. Secularized thinking voids our thinking of the spiritual: "and knowest not...."

God Must Be Acknowledged in All Things

Secularizing the secular world is going to bring the wrath of God down upon this generation. We read in Acts 12:21-23,

And upon a set day Herod, arrayed in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them. And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man. And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.

We are in such days when men refuse to acknowledge God in any subject of life. To the contrary, we must speak more and more of Him as the age quells His name in its conversations.

We cannot talk about origin without Christ as the centrality of the conversation:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether he

thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist (Colossians 1:16-17).

We cannot talk about history without Christ being the centrality of the conversation. God, for His Son, has already written history:

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [the ages] (Hebrews 1:2).

We cannot talk about languages without acknowledging God in their original diversity (Genesis 11:1-9). We cannot speak of the nations divided and their geographical inheritance without acknowledging God:

When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel (Deuteronomy 32:8).

And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation (Acts 17:26).

Daniel acknowledged God in the rise and fall of kingdoms and their rulers: "And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings" (Daniel 2:21). Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, tried to secularize his thinking and conversation. But such an insane thought brought a curse from God. The great monarch became a beast of the field for seven years, after which God's great mercy was extended to him.

And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Daniel 4:34-35).

Even our own individual life cannot be spoken of without the acknowledgment of God (Psalm 139; Hebrews 9:27). The saints will sing such truth in heaven:

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created (Revelation 4:11).

Conclusion

Everything in the universe exists for Christ and to the glory of God; this is the fundamental truth of the purpose and existence of life. In declaring a distinction of existence, the terms *secular* and *sacred* may be proper terminology; however, if such distinction denies God in the secular things of life, then it is most improper.

In 1811, the English poet Shelley was expelled from Oxford for writing a pamphlet defending atheism. He stated, “Mankind had only to will that there would be no evil and there would be none.” In the time leading up to the French Revolution, Marquis DeSade stated,

The goal of humanism is the death of God! Man will not be free until

God is abolished, until there is total freedom to believe and live anything and everything contrary to the Bible.

Even though there was an honorable humanist movement in the days of the Renaissance leading into the Protestant Reformation, it was not a humanist movement that denied God—it included Him. Today we are in “secularist” humanism, which denounces with vehement and embittered heart the concept of the true God.

As a result of the secularist powers that dominate human existence today, it is more imperative that the Christian come to really *know* God, not just know about Him. There must be an all-consuming passion in the heart for the supremacy of God in the entirety of life. There can be no difference between the secular and the sacred for the Christian; Christ must truly be in all the compartments of life! A revival of this truth is demanded for our souls; how and why are we living? With the absence of God in the natural man’s conversation of life, and such a life being presented by the world without any alluding to the presence and existence of God, it will be more imperative for us as Christians to read our Bible daily, fill our mind with thoughts of Him and fill our conversations (no matter what the topic may be), with the all-encompassing presence and meaning of God.

As man ascends his mountain of self-deification, as nations await the coming of their leader the Antichrist, society is now reaching a level

where the final acclimatization to secularism is occurring. In order to bring the nations into one centralized government and all religions to universalism, the acclimatization of society to secularism is the next step. Political correctness reigns in oppressive power in the political world; religious correctness is the oppressive power reigning in the institutional churches. With such imminent powers at work, the true saints of God are feeling the mental, emotional, and spiritual pressure to yield to the various movements trying to squeeze them into their mold of this secularism. Personal separation is just as necessary as ecclesiastical separation. We must not allow the age to convince us that certain compartments of life do not fall under the dealings of the Lord and His Word. Such thinking is evident by many in the compart-

ments of cosmetics, clothing, jewelry, places of entertainment, music, and videos; and the list could go on and on. Christ *must* control it all in our moment-by-moment living!

The Lord told His disciples in Luke 18:1 “that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.” The word *faint* in the Greek (*enkakein*) means “not to give in to evil, not to become a coward.” Prayer must be a constant activity of the soul aiding its constant, daily battle against secularization. May God grant us discernment to see even in its subtle form such acclimatization trying to creep into our lives, our homes, and our churches. While the world is being acclimated for the coming Antichrist, may we as believing Christians be found “watching and waiting” for our coming Lord. ■

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Crucial Truths

for Crucial Days

Volume I

H. T. Spence, Th.D.

Crucial Truths for Crucial Days is a compilation of articles taken from *Straightway*, the published voice of the Christian Purities Fellowship, an outreach arm of Foundations Bible College.

The word *crucial* in its primary meaning suggests something critical, severe, or trying. Its secondary meaning, cross-shaped, actually stems from the Latin term for *cross*. The author believes we are living in the most crucial days of human history; these days are critical, trying, and severe. The Bible has prophesied that the days before the coming of the Lord will be filled with global apostasy.

These crucial days of global apostasy are marked by a falling away within the institutional church. Therefore, the triumphing truths of the Cross become a greater necessity for the biblical Christian life in such times. In this compilation of articles, the author affirms that the Lord through His eternal Word has given to us Cross truths for *crucial* days. (227 pages)

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The Historic Bible College

By Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder

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Contemporary Christian thought has become almost an ecumenical melting pot in which the infallibility of Biblical Authority is no longer felt essential to Christian faith in many quarters of the land.

Semantics and Existentialism are quite often replacing former Biblical affinities.

Words such as “love,” “unity,” “fellowship,” “togetherness,” and “broadmindedness” are gaining the ascendancy over the words of “truth,” “conscience,” “character,” “righteousness,” and “holiness.” We also are hearing emphatic demands for the “glossolalia” and “miracles” to an unbalanced neglect of practical holiness and faith in the simple and more ordinary providences of God.

The history of the Bible Colleges of America dealt with that rugged, adventuresome spirit that pioneered the truth in all kinds of environments and circumstances. Many schools of the prophets which sprang up about a century ago across our land were born out of great sacrifice and devotion. The Bible was the main Text, and prayer was the normal attitude of the students. Missionary societies were born, and great and good goals were reached through the doctrinal and practical ministries of the Word of God. The legacy of the Bible College is rich and weighty. We could not possess a greater heritage.

Now, we must forward the great teachings of the word in our own time, giving ourselves to much prayer and study in and around the great principles of truth. When we teach and preach the principles of the Bible, we must likewise demand of ourselves that we practice and live these principles. We must keep faith with the past and despise the hypocrisy of the present. There is no substitute for consistency of character. The man, the message, the mission, the means, and the methods must all be sanctified; there is no room for a double standard. To the Bible believer, *separation* and *consecration* are still the motives for evangelism, for without spirituality there is no true witness in soul-winning.

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER “TAPES OF THE MONTH”

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