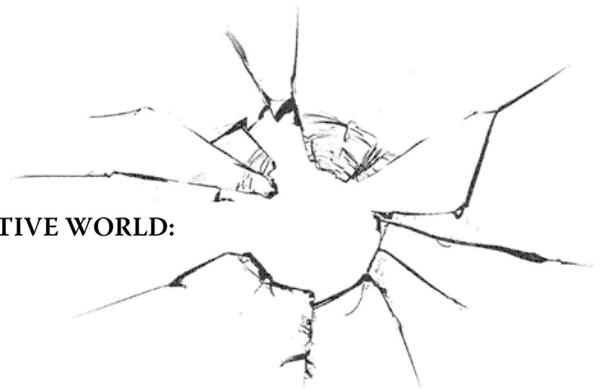


OCCUPY
Till I Come



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3 | FROM POSITIVE WORLD TO NEGATIVE WORLD:

Charting Our Cultural Decline

As we explored in the previous chapter, we become like the God or gods we worship. Put another way, culture follows “cult” or worship and flows upstream from social, economic, and political policies and institutions.

A culture shaped by biblical revelation—grounded in a Judeo-Christian worldview within a moral universe—leads to a culture of life that fosters the growth of a virtuous people. In contrast, a culture born from an atheistic worldview denies the existence of the Infinite-Personal God who created a moral universe. Worshiping in such a silent universe makes soulless humanity the center of existence, leading to a culture of death that invades society’s policies and institutions.

Harvard’s Shield: A Metaphor for the West

Harvard was the first institution of higher education established by America’s founders, and its shield provides insight into their worldview. We will consider this shield as a metaphor to understand where we have come from and where we now stand.

The United States and Europe were formed not in a vacuum but as a direct result of the Protestant Reformation’s ideas. The Protestant Reformation encompassed a civilizational moment that changed history, impacting all of life and major institutions throughout Europe. One marked change was in education. Before the Reformation most of Europe’s population—indeed, most of the world—was illiterate. Thus, the Bible remained inaccessible to most people.

One Reformation leader was the Czech John Amos Comenius (1592–1670), a philosopher, pedagogue, and theologian. Comenius understood that, for society to be reformed and developed, people needed literacy to read the Bible. He championed universal education and became known as the “father of modern education.”

Comenius understood that human beings are not merely animals—they are made in God’s image. He worked from the premise that people are endowed by their Creator with minds and hearts and possess the potential to learn and exercise creativity themselves. He famously declared that “everything must be taught to everyone.” This led to two educational principles.

First, because we are made like God, there should be universal education—everyone, rich and poor, girls and boys, young and old, should be educated. Second, because God exists there is a unified field of knowledge—all subjects should be taught and integrated together through careful study of the “Queen of Sciences”—theology. Comenius and his educational philosophy shaped educational institutions for generations. However, with the rise of Darwinian evolutionism, atheism became the integration point for state-sponsored education.

Creation Communicates

The French Huguenot and educational reformer William Ames (1576–1633) added another piece to this educational philosophy in his book *Technometry* when he wrote, “Thus, let us not become the slaves of anyone, but let us freely and courageously follow the truth. Testing all things, retaining that which is good, let Plato be a friend, let Aristotle be a friend, but even more let truth (*veritas*) be a friend.”

Ames, along with other reformers, understood that the pursuit of truth was the goal and that God reveals Himself through His works in creation and in His Word, the Bible. The Bible itself testifies to multiple forms of revelation.

The psalmist David declares in Psalm 19:1–4 that “creation communicates”—it tells us about God:

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

Similarly, the apostle Paul declared in Romans 1:19–21 (Geneva Bible):

Forasmuch as that, which may be known of God, is manifest in [people]; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, that is, his eternal power and Godhead, are seen by the creation of the world, being considered in his works, to the intent that they should be without excuse; Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their thoughts, and their foolish heart was full of darkness.

Notice that creation communicates. This reality is known in theological circles as General Revelation, and it is for all people in all times, places, and cultures. Creation reveals to all human beings that the Creator exists and that they can know something of His nature.

This revelation comes in two forms: reason and reality. First, it is manifest in people (we are the very image of God and thus have the capacity to both reflect on our existence and to reason). Second, it exists in the external reality of the rest of creation.

God designs our bodies to explore the external world through five discrete sensual systems: touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste. Rita Golden Gelman aptly calls these beautifully designed and purposeful systems the “Body Detectives.” The five senses are part of every human being so that we can discover and engage in the world around us.

Our Designer so beautifully equips us that our bodies have five sense systems connected to our minds to observe and reason from external creation that God exists. This revelation is so clear that the apostle Paul can assert that every human being who denies God’s existence is without excuse.

The Pursuit of Truth—VERITAS

Harvard College, later Harvard University, was born from the Reformation mindset. The driving presupposition behind Harvard’s establishment is that objective Truth exists. In fact, Jesus is the Truth. His disciples, the early church, and the Reformers were keen on pursuing Truth, and the Reformers and Puritans understood that Truth is found in studying three books of God’s primary communication: His Word and His Works.



- **The book of Revelation**
Special Revelation — *The Bible*
- **The book of creation—Reality**
— through the *senses* — *Aristotle*
- **The book of the mind—Reason**
Reason of Logic—*Plato*

• **Veritas—Truth is found at the intersection of the “books” of Scripture, creation and reason.**

Harvard created its shield to remind itself and the world that Truth is found at the intersection of the books of Revelation, Reality, and Reason—a concept rooted in the Bible and articulated by the educational reformers Ames and Comenius.

In the minds of Harvard’s founders, these three books led to the discovery of VERITAS—Objective Truth. The purpose of discovering Truth was contained in the sashes surrounding the shield. Those founders’ vision was “Veritas Christo et Ecclesiae,” which, translated from Latin, means “Truth for Christ and the Church.” The Harvard Graduate School Christian Fellowship further explains that “the top two books on the shield are face up while the bottom book is face down. This symbolizes the limits of reason, and the need for God’s revelation.” This is the foundation of what has been the most highly regarded educational institution in our nation and one of the most renowned in the world.

With this backdrop of Harvard’s shield, we will now explore the “de-evolution” of culture in America and its relationship to the church. Let’s remember that “ideas have consequences”—come from somewhere and lead somewhere.

So, where have we come from, and where are we going? Let’s use Harvard’s shield metaphorically to reveal this journey.

The Positive (Pre-Modern) World

Before the founding of the United States until nearly the end of the twentieth century, the church experienced a “positive world,” meaning that the church was highly regarded as the pillar and foundation of Western civilization. Judeo-Christianity provided the moral and metaphysical framework for the nation’s founding and development. Thus Christians were seen in a positive light within the nation. They were generally considered wise, hardworking, and virtuous, and the biblical narrative shaped their lives. Let’s trace some civilizational moments that led to this era.

The first, most profound historic act was the creation, recorded in Genesis 1. We cannot gloss over the significance that this world, humans, and the rest of creation originated from the intentionality and creativity of the Creator. Our ontology frames the rest of our worldview.

Then came what might be called the first civilizational moment, when the first human beings rebelled against their God and Creator, bringing sin and death into the world. This rebellion brought a shift from the Judeo-Christian worldview to a pagan, animistic worldview and the rise of polytheism. This animistic spirit, this worldview, is still very much alive today in some world cultures. However, God sowed seeds of restoration to come in a prophecy of the future Savior already in Genesis 3:15: “I will put enmity between you [Satan] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”

The thread of restoration begins with Abram’s (later Abraham’s) life (ca. 1960–1785 BC). Abram was born in Ur of the Chaldees in an animistic culture. When God spoke from outside the universe, He told Abram to leave his birthplace and culture, founded on worshiping small gods. He was to travel to a new place and establish a new culture based on the revelation of the voice of the



One true Creator God. Abram, in faith, obeyed and thus became the founder of what would become the Jewish people.

Abram not only left the place he had known his whole life to move to an unknown location, but he was also endowed by God with a completely different understanding of time. He was shaken off his culture's sense of "life on the wheel" that never goes anywhere. In hearing and following God's voice he journeyed to a new place and entered the future—a new concept of time with past-present-future. [For more on this, read historian Thomas Cahill's *The Gift of the Jews: How a Tribe of Desert Nomads Changed the Way Everyone Thinks and Feels*.]

The next significant step in redemption history was the period of Moses's life (ca. 1525–1450 BC). At this inflection point God used Moses to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt, where they had been enslaved for 430 years. In leading his people to freedom God gave them the Ten Commandments to remind the Hebrew people—and through them the world—that we live in a moral universe.

God rescued these people out of slavery and then went about the more difficult task of removing the slave mentality from their minds. The Pentateuch was God's instruction book for building a free nation from a slave people. [For more on this read Landa Cope's *The Old Testament Template: Rediscovering God's Principles for Discipling Nations*.]

The premier civilizational moment of all human history came about with the life, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Savior Jesus Christ. These events are recorded in the New Testament Gospels. Jesus's life gave rise to the birth of the church and, according to the atheistic sociologist Rodney Stark, the most significant sociological movement in all of human history. No other event in human history has had more books written about it. And the Bible, in which the historic record of the Jewish people and of Christ's life is recorded for all to read, is the most widely owned and read book ever published. [For more on this read Rodney Stark's *The Rise of Christianity: How the Obscure, Marginal Jesus Movement Became the Dominant Religious Force in the Western World in a Few Centuries*.]

At the time of writing *The Rise of Christianity*, Stark was an atheist. The question he asked in his book was, "If there is no God and there are no miracles, what accounts for the rise of Christianity?" At the book's end he answers that Christianity had a better set of ideas than the Romans and that the Word was indeed made flesh through Christians' lives. In other words, they lived out what they professed to be true. Because of what he discovered, Rodney Stark became a Christian before his death.

This witness was so potent and effective that it led to a civilizational moment in Europe. It was Emperor Constantine the Great (AD 306–337) who broke the legacy of pagan culture by professing to be a Christian and declaring Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire. While people have argued about whether fusing Christianity with the Roman state was good or bad, it most certainly changed the direction of history.

Another civilizational moment took place in Europe with the Protestant Reformation (1517–1685), sparked by the Roman Catholic monk Martin Luther and framed by John Calvin's teaching (1509–1564).

Luther wanted to reform the Catholic Church and began the Protestant protest by nailing his "Ninety-Five Theses" to the Castle Church door in Wittenberg. Calvin's goal was significantly greater. He wanted to reform all of society, not simply the church. He understood that biblical faith in God's whole counsel would bring about the transformation of nations and began teaching God's entire Word. His magnum opus, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, brought freedom to Geneva and light to the world.

The “Reformation” in England came through the back door for political reasons, not theological ones. In 1543 King Henry VIII wanted a divorce, which the Pope wouldn’t allow. So, Henry created the Church of England, whose main difference from Roman Catholicism was the issue of authority. Instead of the Pope having authority over the church, the King would head both the government and the church. In both Roman and English churches, the Pope and king held both political and ecclesiastical offices.

Then came the Protestant Reformation spirit in England, carried by people who wanted to bring biblical orthodoxy to the church. After much persecution by both the church and the monarchy, this group divided. The Separatists understood that the only way they could live in freedom was to separate from the Church of England. The other group, known as the Puritans, pursued reformation within the Church of England.

While very close theologically, these two groups differed in approach. The group of Separatists, under Pastor John Robinson’s leadership, set out on the *Mayflower* for the New World in 1620. Their goal was to escape the oppression of their movement by the government and the Church of England. They landed at Plymouth Rock and have since been known as the Pilgrims. Ten years later their Puritan brothers and sisters left for the New World with a very different vision.

In 1630 the Great Puritan Migration (1630–1642) began under the leadership of John Winthrop on a fleet of ships. The Puritans did not simply want to plant a church in the new world—they wanted to establish an “enterprise,” which was known as the Massachusetts Bay Company. Theirs was a comprehensive concept of “disciplining a nation.” They envisioned the church creating a culture, an entire civilization that would become, in Winthrop’s words, a “**city on a hill**”—a beacon of hope to the nations.

Winthrop, the colonial governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, famously established one of the early and most potent symbols of colonial America. As he prepared to lead the Puritan settlers in their voyage to the New World, he delivered a sermon titled “A Model of Christian Charity” on March 21, 1630. Winthrop took for his text Matthew 5:14, in which Jesus states that “a city set on a hill cannot be hidden.”

Winthrop said regarding this Puritan experiment of freedom that, “as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us.” This phrase has proved an abiding symbol of America being a beacon of hope to the world. [For more on the impact of the Puritan investment in the New World, read Hopper and Hopper’s *The Puritan Gift: Reclaiming the American Dream Amidst Global Financial Chaos*.] Because of education’s importance for the Reformation, in 1636 the Puritans established Harvard College as the first post-secondary educational institution in what would become the United States.

As we have mentioned before, ideas, like seeds, take time to germinate and grow. The seed of the Judeo-Christian worldview sprouted and grew over time to become a mighty tree. It shaped Europe, founded the United States as a nation, and eventually began to influence the world. [For more on this read Tom Holland’s *Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World*.]

The Neutral (Modern) World

Then, with Darwinism’s rise, we as a culture in the United States moved from a theistic worldview to an atheistic worldview. This, in turn, brought a cultural shift that ushered in the modern world of secular materialism. This was accomplished by removing the Bible from public life.



The current Harvard shield has removed the banner and replaced it with a Roman Laurel Wreath. Harvard Graduate School Christian Fellowship explains the change in the books: “With the school’s secularization, the current shield now contains only the word ‘Veritas’ with three open books.” The unique book, facing down in the original shield and representing the Bible, is gone. Modern man assumes that we can do without God and the book of Special Revelation. The assertion has it that all that is needed to find truth are the books of Reason and Reality.

The shield’s meaning changed, the worldview has changed, and the world has changed. The United States and the West began to understand themselves as being without God and a moral universe. Thus invited the growth of license and lawlessness.

The nation’s foundations and the Western world began to be shaken in 1857 with the publication of Charles Darwin’s *Origin of the Species*. Darwin’s theory made a plausible explanation of how life could have developed if there were no God. This led to Western culture’s severance from its roots and its long, slow death.

Thus began the abandonment of the Judeo-Christian framework for life and the rise of atheistic faith that rid the universe of a transcendent God and a moral universe. This new seed sprouted and became the integration point for all knowledge espoused in state-sponsored education. God and the “Queen of Science”—theology—were gone.

The books of Reality and Reason remained. It was assumed that human beings could pursue and find Truth from science (Aristotle) and philosophy (Plato) alone. This provided grounds for the continued pursuit of truth, but the fundamental source for the very concept of Truth was gone. The church could still participate in public discussion but too often chose not to do so.

The Negative (Postmodern) World

Then came the postmodern movement, which in its turn jettisons reality and reason. In this mindset, Truth with a capital T is no longer knowable and in many situations does not exist. We are living in a moment of history that has been growing for about a hundred years. It is now coming to fruition in our lifetimes.

The philosophic shift to postmodernism was born in the Frankfurt School of Social Research at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1923. There a group of Marxist scholars realized that economic Marxism would not bring about the massive changes these atheists wanted. They understood that culture is upstream from economics and politics.



If you want to change society, you first need to change the culture. So, their ideology became known as **cultural Marxism**, critical theory, or postmodernism; it is now popularly known as wokeism.

These scholars posited that the concepts of reason and reality were the ideas of Western White men and that they needed to be overthrown to destroy Western civilization. This metaphorically meant the removal of the books of Reason and Reality (philosophy and science) from Harvard’s shield. The result includes identity politics, the breakdown of the family, the rise of postmodern feminism, the fight against motherhood, and the push for gender identity.

Western civilization’s foundations have been destroyed; it’s as if our foundations are deteriorating under our feet as termites devour them. The institutions built on ancient foundations are crumbling before our very eyes. Because the postmodern movement denies

reason, reality, and revelation, it is unlikely to last one hundred years. What will replace it? What are we going to do? That is the subject of this book.

With our Judeo-Christian foundations in utter shambles in the culture at large, those of us who follow the Creator God and His Son Jesus Christ now live in a context that is hostile to everything we hold dear. Orthodox Jews, Christians, and classical “liberals” who believe in truth are despised by these cultural Marxists who are bringing chaos and darkness to the Western world. These cultural Marxists are obliterating the once honored and cherished culture of the West by:

1. Rewriting history and developing a new vocabulary.
2. Destroying the basic social, economic, and political institutions of Western civilization.
3. Eradicating the nuclear family as the building block of a healthy society.

The world as we know it is being intentionally and systematically destroyed by what Scott Allen and I have called *A Toxic New Religion*. [For our book on the subject, go here: <https://www.amazon.com/Toxic-New-Religion-Understanding-Judeo-Christian/dp/B08BV5SQYL>.]

Now Judeo-Christianity—the worldview and ideological vision that founded the United States and Western civilization—is viewed as the enemy that must be destroyed. [For more on this, see my blog: <https://darrowsmillerandfriends.com/2018/08/02/three-books-created-western-civilization/>.]

While on one level we can see how this shift in worldview has brought a shift in culture, and this in turn has affected the societies in which we live, on another level we must acknowledge that there is an evil domain behind this shift in ideas and the consequences they bring.

While understanding that a shift in ideas is essential, if we want to get to the problem’s root we will need to look more deeply into the spiritual reality behind these ideas. The existence of the demonic comprises the next section of this book. This analysis reveals a darkness that is not for the fainthearted. However, once we have looked at evil’s face we will see the radiant hope on the other side.

