

UK BIBLE STUDENTS NEWSLETTER

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WHAT IS MAN?

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet (Psalms 8: 3-6, King James Version).

Man was made to make. By his artefacts he expresses the intelligent means which brought him about. Were we to reverse engineer him as a whole – not merely as a bag of bones or chemical reactions – we would arrive at a creator. But even then we'd come up short. No essay on the existence and nature of man is complete without recourse to revelation. If the Christian faith has any value it must rest on several fundamental assumptions of the Bible narrative:

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Freedom of Thought and the Forces Against It

'It is a common saying that thought is free. A man can never be hindered from thinking whatever he chooses so long as he conceals what he thinks. The working of his mind is limited only by the bounds of his experience and the power of his imagination. But this natural liberty of private thinking is of little value. It is unsatisfactory and even painful to the thinker himself, if he is not permitted to communicate his thoughts to others, and it is obviously of no value to his neighbours. Moreover it is extremely difficult to hide thoughts that have any power over the mind. If a man's thinking leads him to call in question ideas and customs which regulate the behaviour of those about him, to reject beliefs which they hold, to see better ways of life than those they follow, it is almost impossible for him, if he is convinced of the truth of his own reasoning, not to betray by silence, chance words, or general attitude that he is different from them and does not share their opinions. Some have preferred, like Socrates, some would prefer to-day, to face death rather than conceal their thoughts. Thus freedom of thought, in any valuable sense, includes freedom of speech.'

J.B. Bury, *A History of Freedom of Thought* (1957; Oxford University Press, London; H.J. Blackham ed.), 1.

In the Rear-View Mirror

It is difficult to believe that Russia will remain a second-rate power. Inevitably, a Soviet-Russian state will revive, whether as a liberal social democracy, an enlightened despotism, or a brutal dictatorship. And when it does, its demands on Europe will almost certainly be similar to those posed to Churchill and Roosevelt. It will want a strong voice in Eastern Europe and Germany, and guarantees for its security on both its eastern and western fronts. It will want a large military establishment, almost certainly larger than other powers will believe justified. The new Soviet Union in whatever form will not abdicate from Russian history.

William G. Hyland, *The Cold War: Fifty Years After Conflict* (1991).

Dragnet

Items of interest from the World Wide Web

Britain

New Government panel to consult with faith groups

<http://www.christiantoday.co.uk/article/government.appoints.faith.advisers/25040.htm>

Canada

Radio can turn your household appliances on and off

<http://www.insidethecbc.com/the-cbc-can-now-control-your-dishwasher/>

Israel

King David Era Pottery Shard Supports Biblical Narrative

<http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/135432>

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