

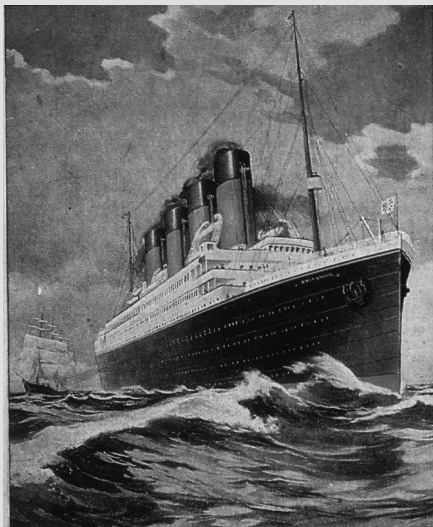
THE YALE STANDARD

Volume XVI, No. 1

When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him. Isaiah 59:19

Spring 1999

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W hat's Wrong With Atheism?

It may surprise many people that God has a lot to say about atheism. Throughout its pages, the Bible affirms again and again one fundamental truth: atheism as a condition results from a deliberate choice of the heart, rather than from purported loyalty to open-minded intellectual inquiry.

The atheist confines his debate to a limited arena, creating a whole world, as it were, in a sandbox. In that sandbox he claims to be a lover of truth, refusing to believe anything that has not been satisfactorily proven. There is no evidence that God exists, he says, and so there is no reason to believe in Him—any more than there is a reason to believe in fairies or leprechauns. On the other hand, there are plenty of reasons not to believe in a God who is all-powerful and totally benevolent. Evil exists, for one thing, and how could such a God permit it to continue and still remain true to His nature? God is silent, for another thing, and a simple test will prove it. The atheist invites God to strike him dead instantly, or to turn a tabletop into a cloud of purple smoke, within say, the next 60 seconds. Seeing no response, he congratulates himself on finding “proof” of his assertion.

As a precondition for believing in God, the atheist demands a comprehensive explanation for a God-created world.

He insists that Christians provide a system that answers all his objections. Again and again he says, “If God is real, *He owes me an explanation.*” God must *answer* for allowing evil and suffering in the world. God must *answer* for allowing death, war, hunger, and disease. He has made a world with misery in it, and He cannot be both good and omnipotent, or He would long since have done something to change it.

Confident within this world of his own making, the atheist scoffs at God and those who trust in Him. He

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Ex-Mafioso Testifies at Taft

“Come hear a former drug lord,” read the fliers scattered around the campus of The Taft School, the traditional New England prep school in quiet Watertown, Connecticut, about 27 miles from the Yale campus. It was Thursday night last November 12th, and even though it was also opening night for the fall school play, 60-70 students filled the Choral Room by the time Rex Duval the featured ex-Mafioso arrived.

Eager anticipation and perhaps a bit of trepidation were in the air, yet few were imagining that this man's story was soon to inspire almost half of them to make a decision as radical as inviting Jesus Christ into their lives.

Evangelistic testimonies are
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◆ Atheism

(Continued from previous page)

dismisses belief in God as superstition, the folly of the cowardly and weak-minded—people who are too afraid or too simple to cast off their fear of the Almighty. But in his heart he has deliberately chosen to deny the possibility of a very real world outside the safe sandbox of his own mind. And, like it or not, that world does intersect with his artificial world. He can deny its existence, but if he persists, it will forcibly intrude upon him at an unforeseen time.

Sooner or later, a gust of wind from that outside world will sweep in and crumble his arguments, like so many sand castles. In its wake will be the soft voice of God, whispering these words:

The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse. (Romans 1)

In these verses God explains a fundamental truth: that He has made the grains of sand, the people of the earth, and the stars that outnumber them all. Though He is invisible, His existence is obvious to all people, because they can see His creation. He indicts mankind for abandoning the knowledge of Him, and for suppressing the truth about Him by their evil behavior.

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. (Romans 1)

The world outside the sandbox is

the real world, which God has made and which He rules. In that world, *man must answer to God*, not the other way around. God will call each person to answer for every evil thought, every evil word, and every evil deed. He will judge the attitudes of each person's innermost being. That judgment will be so intense, like fire, that no man will be able to stand on his own. God will show that He has no tolerance for evil, but that He allowed it for a time out of kindness, in the hope that each person would turn away from it and decide to follow Him—without being forced to do so.¹

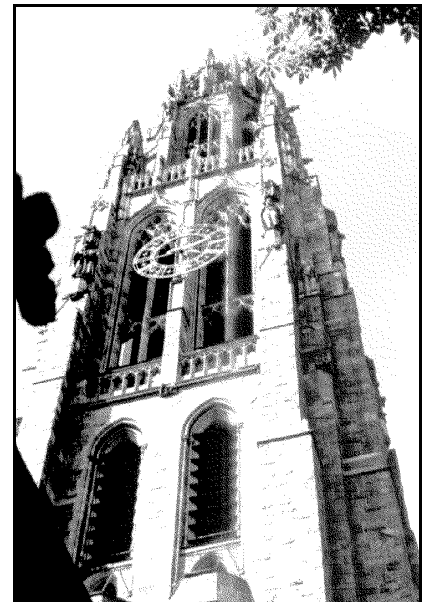
Would we dare suggest then that it is God's fault that evil is in the world? God will show us what we did to promote evil in the short life we had on earth, and He will destroy that evil work—and us too, if we have failed to turn away from it.

Atheism is a spiritual condition, a "darkening of the heart," which results from a moral choice to reject the truth, its Author, and the accountability He demands. The moral choice and the result (denial of God) always go hand in hand, as the Bible says in Psalm 14: "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"² (The Hebrew word for "fool" denotes one who is morally deficient.)

The atheist's arguments may make perfect sense to him, but they are nonetheless spurious and deceptive. God calls him to make a second choice of the heart, a choice to step outside the sandbox and into a life with Him.

Paul Clewell, Ezra Stiles '98

1 "... Do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" (Romans 2)



The Yale Standard Bible Study

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Locations to be announced:
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**Come join us as we
gather to worship the
Lord!**

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When, Not Whether, Lies Will Fail

In the floodtide of comment and dispute over Mr. Clinton's recent impeachment, truth itself seemed run aground on some distant spit of land, as if irrelevant. Speakings and writings were presented for and judged by their intended effect, not their contribution to what may be known of objective truth.

So today, how are we to reconcile a penchant for the convenient fib here and there with our personal desire to remain clear-eyed and well-oriented? Only by an unreasoning presumption: that we are smart enough to tell our lies, and too smart to believe other people's lies.

Right! And every one of us will win the lottery next week, too.

Our human judgment short-circuits amazingly as soon as third-person shifts to first-person. In our Narcissus of generations, the view from the first person prevails; the subjective eclipses objective reality. If a man, say, Mr. Clinton, shields himself with lies in personal matters, polls depict us Americans as performing a subjective two-step:

One—"if that's how the man thinks, it's a free country and he's just doing his own thing,"

Two—"since the trouble seems to be in his personal life, it doesn't affect us, so it doesn't matter."

You can just about hear the short circuit sparking. Actual character, actual morality cannot be compartmentalized. Integrity is wholeness. A man unfit in private responsibilities is unfit for public responsibilities.

Hear the gapping, crackling thought processes! How can we welcome a percentage of lies in what we're told when we don't know which of many other "facts" are also falsehoods? How can it be all right to tell "some lies," to deceive others, if we don't want to be deceived ourselves? Abraham Lincoln once summed up his view on slavery on a like note—"As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master."

In an era of self-justifying liars of all stripes, how

many deceptions has each one of us already accepted? Are we even unraveling old deceptions as quickly as new ones are settling in? This generation takes global positioning satellites' accuracy for granted, but hasn't a clue where truth lives.

A people and nation choosing to live in a subjective hall of mirrors will run into objective truth again, at a time and place not of their choosing. Without a moral course change, the Titanic of nations will party on, then find and crack up upon some very objective icebergs.

All that's needed for our nation to sink in the waters ahead is to let moral corruption go unchallenged, to greet each new wave of toxic falsehood with silence. As we finish a century of two world wars and many smaller ones, genocide, and unspeakable cruelties in scores of countries, let us look for, prize and embrace truth in our lives, public and private.

The moral laws of our existence, of choice and consequence, are as sure and inexorable as the



Without a moral course change, the Titanic of nations will party on, then find and crack up upon some very objective icebergs.

physical laws science has explored. Truth's victory over deceit is always a question of when, not whether. In that light, consider just one more echo of the Golden Rule: "As I would not be deceived, so I will not lie to deceive others."

Is it unreasonable to ask that of our leaders, and ourselves?

Philip Chamberlain, Branford '70

Chauncey Goodrich: Yale's Professor

One Saturday in April 1808, Yale's students and faculty gathered for their regular evening chapel service. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary, but President Timothy Dwight couldn't keep his voice from quavering and breaking as he stood to read Scripture that night. When he joined with others to sing a hymn, he faltered through one stanza and stopped.

A spiritual awakening had swept New Haven in recent months, and over two hundred townspeople had repented and believed. The college, though, remained untouched. Yale's dedication to the Gospel was inscribed in her walls and in her charter, but her students seemed oblivious. An impenetrable deadness seemed to rest on the school.

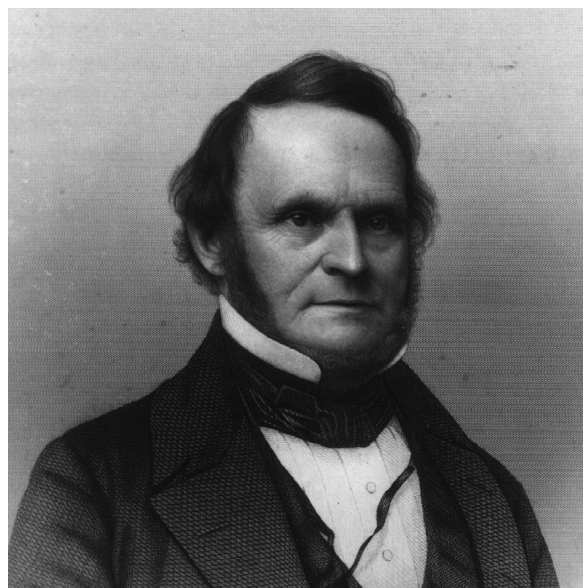
The thought hit him, "These Christians have a right to be happy, but I have not."

Overwhelmed that night with a sense of Yale's spiritual need, Dwight pleaded with God to show mercy and send revival. He preached the next morning on the verse "Young man, I say unto thee, arise!" (Luke 7), warning students not to stay in apathy and rebellion. The deadness in the air lifted, and hardness gave way to conviction of sin. The whole tone of college life changed, and at least thirty students believed before the end of the school year.

One who heard Dwight pray that April was a sophomore, Chauncey Allen Goodrich. There is little doubt it affected him, for he first declared his faith in Christ that spring. He was no stranger to Dwight's preaching, for as the son of one of Yale's law professors, he had attended college chapel for the past six years or more. But something changed for him in 1808.

By his own account of events, Goodrich went one day that spring to visit a Christian friend in another room in the college. Drawing near the door, he heard "shouts of laughter" from within. The thought hit him, "These Christians have a right to be happy, but I have not."¹ Sensing that only peace with God could fill the emptiness of his heart, he went back to his room to pray and repent. The void in him was soon replaced by the joy of knowing Christ.

Converted in the city side of the revival were the crusty old skeptic Noah Webster (see sidebar), and his two oldest daughters, Emily and Julia. Here we can see God's sovereignty, for Julia was to become Chauncey Goodrich's wife.



REV. CHAUNCEY A. GOODRICH D.D.
Professor in Yale College
Engraved for the Yale Literary Magazine, 1858.

Sixteen at the time, she offered herself to God in these terms "I ... consecrate to thee all I am, or have, the faculties of my mind, the members of my body, my worldly possessions, my time & my influence over others, to be used entirely for thy glory"² The strength of Julia and Chauncey's marriage was their strong love of Christ.

From the time of his conversion, Chauncey planned to enter the ministry and he studied for it with the help of Timothy Dwight. Julia strongly supported his choice, praying for him fervently. At a youth conference in Durham, Connecticut, Goodrich saw revival break out while he was speaking. A girl in the audience burst out crying, then the entire crowd of sixty dissolved in tears of repentance.³ He spoke nine times more in the following week to those under conviction of sin.

The young man found himself in high demand as a preacher, and eventually, the Park Street Church of Boston, one of the most prestigious congregations in New England, called him to become their pastor.

But trouble came in the form of chronic illness, and Goodrich grew discouraged. He felt physically and spiritually so inadequate to his task, that he wondered at times if he had mistaken his calling. The spread of Unitarianism disheartened him, and he dreaded being asked to take a pastorate in Mas-

Compassion and

sachusetts, where that heresy was strongest. When he married Julia and took a post in Middletown, Connecticut, his health proved so fragile that he lasted in his job only a year and a half.

Just then, Goodrich was invited to become professor of rhetoric at Yale, filling part of the position of Timothy Dwight, who had died a few months earlier. This meant giving up pastoring, and the change seemed to a heartbroken Goodrich like a great loss.

But his mother had recently counseled him to ask himself some searching questions about his motives for wanting to serve God. Could he submit from the heart “to serve [the] Lord in a humble, less conspicuous manner” than he had hoped? Was he willing to “acquiesce in the decisions of the Saviour” to “crown [his] efforts with greater or less success” as He determined?⁴ These questions pared the whole matter of serving the Lord down to the spiritual base line. Was Chauncey pleasing himself, or did he love Jesus?

In the end, Goodrich decided for Yale, though it meant putting aside his heart’s desire to preach. But what seemed like a heavy disappointment, God intended for blessing and expansion, both for Goodrich and for the college.

Academically, Yale needed an overhaul, and one of the first things the new professor did was entirely revamp his department’s curriculum. Because of the old curriculum’s emphasis on Greek and Latin, students up through 1817 had received only minimal instruction in their own language. The new course of study included English grammar and composition and solid training in public speaking. Goodrich felt men should leave Yale gifted to persuade, whether they became public servants, or spokesmen for God. His lectures on rhetoric become famous, and he has been considered America’s only important rhetorical theorist of the nineteenth century.

Rhetoric turned out to be only one of Goodrich’s interests. As Noah Webster’s son-in-law, he began work on the dictionary, which stretched over a lifetime. In 1828, while Webster was struggling to push his first quarto edition through the press, his publisher was badgering him also to produce a cheaper abridgement to sell on the mass market. Feeling overwhelmed with work and under constant financial pressure from the profligacy of his scapegrace son, William, Webster called on Goodrich not only to oversee the abridgement, but also to purchase its copyright. Goodrich con-

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Noah Webster, In His Own Words

Most people today know New Haven’s Noah Webster (Yale, 1778) as the author of a great dictionary, but few know much about Webster the man. Converted at age fifty through the bold evangelism of Moses Stuart (Yale, 1799), the eminent lexicographer never tried to seal his day-to-day work off from his faith (see definition for *Happy* below.)

Looking back on his life as a skeptic he said:

“... I had for almost fifty years exercised my talents such as they are, to obtain knowledge and to abide by its dictates, but without arriving at the truth, or what now appears to me to be the truth of the Gospel. I am taught now the utter insufficiency of our own powers to effect a change of heart, and am persuaded that a reliance on our own talents and powers, is a fatal error, springing from natural pride and opposition to God...” (E.E. Fowler Ford, “Notes on the Life of Noah Webster,” New York, 1912, vol. 2, pp. 44-46.)

HAPPY, *a.* [from *hap* ; W. *hapus*, properly lucky, fortunate, receiving good from something that falls or comes to one unexpectedly, or by an event that is not within control. See HOUR.]
1. Lucky ; fortunate ; successful.

Chemists have been more *happy* in finding experiments than the causes of them. *Boyle*.
So we say, a *happy* thought ; a *happy* expedient.

2. Being in the enjoyment of agreeable sensations from the possession of good ; enjoying pleasure from the gratification of appetites of desires. The pleasurable sensations derived from the gratification of sensual appetites render a person temporarily *happy* ; but he only can be esteemed really and permanently *happy*, who enjoys peace of mind in the favor of God. To be in any degree *happy*, we must be free from pain both of body and of mind ; to be very *happy*, we must be in the enjoyment of lively sensations of pleasure, either of body or mind.

Happy am I, for the daughters will call me blessed.—Gen. xxx.

He found himself happiest in communicating *happiness* to others. *Wirt*.

(Webster’s *An American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1840.)

Religious Garbage

I had an annoying habit my freshman year: I picked up litter. Not just mine. *Everybody's*. I never felt very altruistic about it, though—only increasingly burdened.

It would happen on my walks up and down Science Hill, the urge to clean. First a gum wrapper. Then an outdated flyer, a plastic bottle—anything that lay beside the sidewalk. I'd hold the items, at first, between thumb and forefinger; then, as they multiplied, would clutch them in a fist. By the time I reached Sterling Chemistry Laboratory, I would have a heap atop the three-ring binder cradled in my arms, usually a dozen scraps of days-old paper toppling over, threatening to sail off in the breeze. I'd dump them into a wastebasket, thinking this was not the way life was meant to be.

It may have begun as concern for the environment: the if-everybody-does-a-little-the-world-would-be-a-better-place romance. Eventually, to saunter past litter seemed to telegraph an attitude about as apathetic as the one that tossed it on the ground. What an unglorifying statement, I would think, if a Christian walked by garbage and didn't even try to clean it up. Shouldn't one exert that extra effort, go the extra mile—in every part of his life, not just obvious or traditional or more convenient parts? Even so, as time went on, my inability to break the habit bothered me more than the litter itself.

I made rules. First was "no compromise": I would pick up everything. If I saw a potato chip wrapper on the grass, I picked it up. In doing so, if the corner of my eye caught a torn magazine photo a few feet off, I picked that up, too. Then, the new angle would give me a glimpse of an empty Snapple bottle across the street. A glance at the bottle hauled into view a whole tract of trash stretching another half a block, which would no doubt require hours to remove.

Shouldn't I pick up all of that? Or do I care more about getting to class on time, about grades and success, than I do about being a

n o n -

compromising Christian? Won't I give complete devotion? And so I would stand there, taut in dilemma, as organic chemistry began.

The problem? I was seeing too much refuse, of course. Why, if I *saw* less, I would have to pick up less. And so I began walking to class with a reinforced rigidity of neck, a field of vision narrowed to the path before me. And whenever I bent over to pick up items, the nuchal-cranial angle didn't deviate. This new solution reduced the load I brought to the top of Science Hill or, on return trips, to Woolsey Rotunda.

Yet, this still seemed a rather questionable way of going about life. The rule had to be amended.

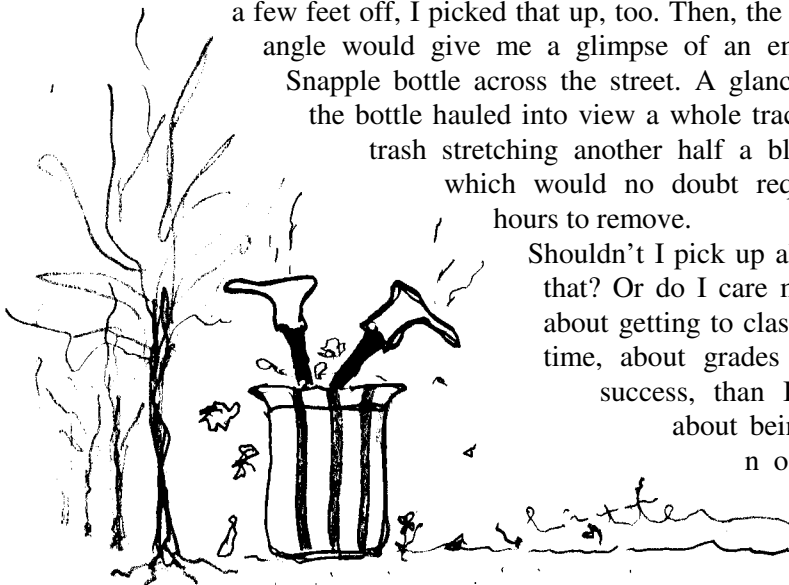
Only pick up litter that's on the sidewalk, I told myself. That way, I can get to class on time and still be reasonably Christian as far as litter is concerned. This worked except when a piece of litter lay on the grass only a few inches from the sidewalk. Too bad, I'd say, I'm not picking it up.

Am I so small of heart, so legalistic, that I can't accommodate a few inches?, a voice inside me would say. I would walk on despite the voice—the spurned paper scrap more distant with each step. If in the course of this internal debate I happened to get far enough from the scrap, the very distance would bar me, I thought, from retracing my steps to retrieve it. The strategy's very disingenuousness disturbed me even more, however. Rather than enabling escape, each step reinforced my duplicity and left me uncomfortably walking further and further from a scrap which, at this point, seemed quite easy to have picked up a block ago. Yet, I would press on, step after miserable step. Why, if I turned around now, I'd be more of a fool than I already was! But, then again, wasn't there the greater issue of walking away from my conscience?

Sooner or later, I would spin around and return to that paper scrap—sometimes halting and turning again, only to halt again, and turn again, and halt, and turn. I would snatch the scrap up and ask, "Now why didn't I just do that in the beginning?" Then I'd resolve to pick up garbage at first sight—a resolution which sometimes regressed to my original approach of picking up everything I saw.

So the habit flourished, particularly miserable after rainy days (which work terribly on the texture

“... A spirituality perhaps defined more by ostentatious makeover than by inner transformation.”



(It Can Take Over Your Life)

of refuse). Why, really, did I do this? I had never been compulsive before college. God had given me several responsibilities in life: as student, son, friend, to name a few. Why did I think that ad-hoc street cleaning was one of them? Why did I believe, at least sometimes, that it trumped my academic responsibilities?

Compulsiveness emerged in other areas of life as well. In bed, I couldn't sleep unless I had prayed for the half-dozen or so members of my family who lived in America. If I didn't pray long for any given member, I felt I at least *had* to mention his or her name. I also felt a compulsion to say the Lord's prayer every night. I told myself that the authenticity of my intentions and my relationship with God mattered, not the observance of a ritual that could mask deteriorating motivations. Yet—and this is the striking thing—*nothing* I did, no intellectual argument I told myself, no chiding could dispel the sense of dread that stole over me if I was not devout in maintaining these traditions. Nothing could remove the sense of incompleteness or persistent and vague disapproval. Sometimes this voice, gesturing toward the wreckage that earnestness toward God seemed to leave behind, suggested that life would probably be better without it all, or without Him.

This heightened sensitivity made me vulnerable to any pressure that appeared to originate from higher moral ground. I assumed that whatever seemed more holy or more spiritual actually was. If a Bible study went over the time limit, for example, I presumed that staying to the end was always the holy choice—not allowing that obedience might mean returning to my room to do something as “unspiritual” as study. The first time I talked with my Jewish roommate about spiritual things, I assumed I needed to make clear how different our beliefs were—never thinking that God might have wanted me first to emphasize our common respect for the Old Testament, which describes the Man of sorrows. I assumed expressive prayers and raised hands during worship meant alignment with the Spirit, more so than silent prayers and recumbent hands. To be sure, fear

of man or selfish inhibition may still us. Yet, I didn't realize freshman year that spiritual activity does not always seem spiritual. In fact, fleshly activity can appear spiritual; and spiritual activity can appear fleshly.

When David and his men were hungry, Jesus says in the Gospel of Matthew, the future king entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which was lawful only for priests. Doing an unlawful act to satisfy hunger certainly seems more fleshly than spiritual, yet Jesus used this example to show the Pharisees that obeying the law's spirit is more important than observing its letter.

In King Zedekiah's time, when the Babylonians besieged Jerusalem, it might have seemed more spiritual for Jeremiah to tell God's people to fight the enemy, as godly prophets had urged in past conflicts. Yet, God commanded through Jeremiah the most cowardly-seeming course: to surrender to the invaders.

Might it not seem more fleshly to keep the company of harlots and other sinners, as Jesus did, than to hang around the more ostensibly righteous, the Pharisees?

The devil used Scripture itself to tempt Jesus. Satan, after all, sometimes masquerades as an angel of light.

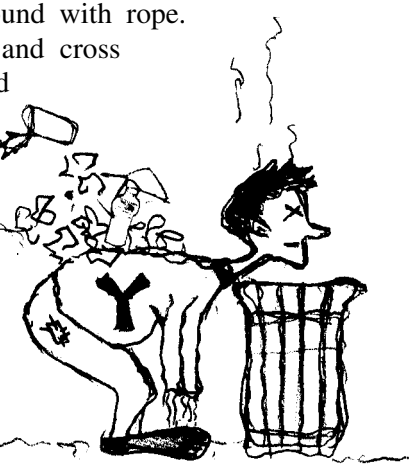
In these Bible examples, one couldn't separate the genuine from the imitation by appearances.

My compulsive behavior freshman year may faintly echo some quirky spirituality from post-Biblical times. The Stylites of the fourth century, for example, thought to impress God by spending their lives on poles. In the deserts of Turkey and Egypt they would erect stone columns about forty feet high and sit atop them for decades, fed by baskets they would lower to the ground with rope. They would genuflect and stand and cross themselves again and again and again, giving advice to the crowds that came to them in pilgrimage.

There are other examples—like the Holy

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“The Christian life is not a tightrope; it is a tableland.”
-Oswald Chambers



Ex-Mafioso cont'd

hardly common events at Taft. As one student put it, "The attitude towards Christianity here is generally mocking and sarcastic. People associate it with scenes from *Fletch Lives*, *The Blues Brothers*, *The Scarlet Letter*.... It is not seen as an intelligent way of life."

What kind of message could so powerfully reach this audience?

The room stilled as Rex first prayed and then began to speak. He was the son of the man who played Juan Valdez, the Colombian coffee grower in commercials. Growing up in the New York celebrity world of drugs, fame and parties, he was just twelve when his father first taught him to snort cocaine.

By his early twenties, he and his dad had teamed up to smuggle large quantities of drugs across the Mexican border. When not busy smuggling, he robbed banks, stole cars, forged money, ran bookmaking and debt-collecting operations, and sold drugs individually to rock stars and businessmen. He was quick, tough and good at what he did. Within a few years, he found himself living the 'good life' with a Rolls Royce and an L.A. mansion.

All of the outward symbols of success.... "But I was a slave," he said. "A slave to sex, a slave to fast money, a slave to the pride of getting my own way." And just as quickly as it all came, it left.

"I went from living in that mansion and driving that car," he continued, "to sleeping on the ground by the side of some guy's pool just wishing I were dead and thinking that I would be soon."

But Rex Duval did not die. Instead, a bizarre sequence of "coincidences" rolled through and left him a completely different man.

He had moved back in with his dad and was dealing drugs out of their home. "I had just gotten ripped off in a drug deal," he said, "and I was in a gun fight with this other guy. He hit me in the head with his gun and there was blood pouring out. I started chasing him down the street, shooting at him. Then, right at that moment, I heard a voice inside of me say, 'If you don't get out now, you're dead.' I stopped, dropped the gun at my side and with the guy still shooting at me as he ran away, I walked back into the

house."

He packed up everything he owned and, just like that, walked out, leaving his father behind. With no clear idea of where he should go, he moved in with two prostitutes he knew. A few days later he returned to find them gone and the place cleaned out.

"I had no job, no way to pay the rent and nowhere to go," he continued. "I went to the bank and was taking out my last \$20 when a girl came up to me. 'Do you know

Jesus?' she asked. The only Jesus I knew was a guy named Jesús who I sold drugs to. She invited me to a Bible study that weekend and with nothing to lose, I went. Two weeks later I asked Jesus into my life."

"When I came to Christ," he said, "I was an empty shell of a man." A drug overdose a little while before had left him half-dead with a complete mental and nervous breakdown. "I couldn't even put two sentences together without losing my train of thought. Even among drug dealers, the lowest of the low had said to me just a little while

before, 'Rex, you won't live another two months.'"

Yet to his Taft listeners that Thursday night, the Rex Duval before them had plainly changed, changed radically since then. There was not a trace of the broken, half-destroyed drug dealer that had been. Rather a wholesomely peaceful man was speaking to them with a refreshing joy that seemed to fill the room.

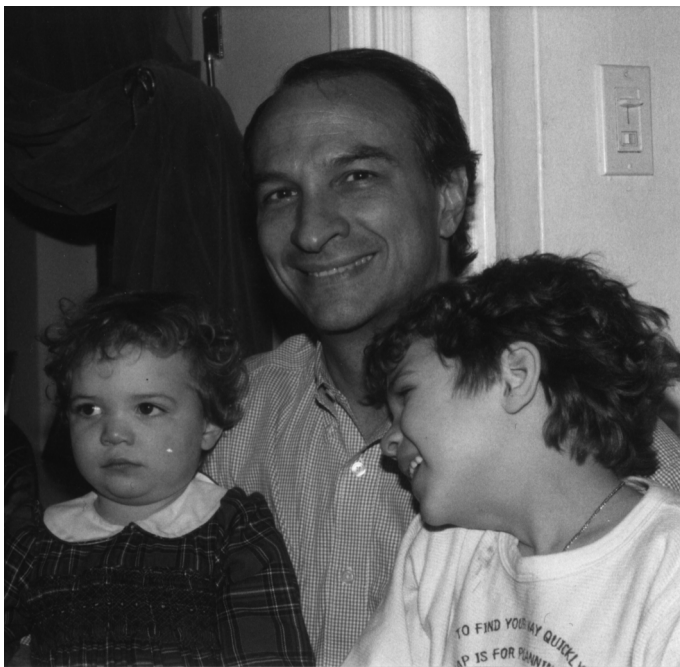
Not only so, but he exuded an almost palpable love

The only Jesus I knew was a guy named Jesus who I sold drugs to.

for each of them as well. As Pearl Chin, (Ezra Stiles '96), a teacher at Taft noted, "He knew their pain. He knew what broken families were like." It was so clear that he cared.

"I'm committed to you," he said. "I'll come back whenever you want me to."

(Continued on page 9)



As Rex finished, he emphasized this point, "All of us, in God's sight, have sinned and are living far below what He wants for us." It's His desire to fill each of us with love, joy, peace.... "But," he said, "if we are halfway honest with ourselves, we will admit that we are not filled with these at all. Rather we have pain, confusion and a constant craving to gratify ourselves in each moment because we don't know if in the next we will be satisfied." For Rex it was money, sex, drugs and mansions that he craved. For another it could be something different.

We have sinned, he stressed, which cuts us off from an all-holy God. We have nothing in ourselves that can satisfy Him. "The beauty of God's love and justice, though," he continued, "is that He never asks us to pay a price that we cannot pay. Instead, in Jesus, He paid it for us."

"God is here tonight, in this room ready to save you," he concluded. "All you have to do is acknowledge in your heart that you are a sinner separated from God. Then humble yourself before Him, and ask Jesus to come into your life. He will come and forgive you for all you've ever done. He will bring peace where there was pain, joy in place of unhappiness, wholeness instead of brokenness."

"Let's bow our heads," he said. "If anyone wants to receive Jesus, raise your hand."

About thirty did.

"If you raised your hand," he said, "then look up now at me. Are you raising your hand because you want to receive Jesus into your life as your Savior and want to start a new life with God today?" As Rex scanned the room, each one looked at him with tender, sweet eyes and affirmed, yes, I want Jesus today.

Ben Lyons, Choate '91, Columbia U. Graduate '99

Garbage cont'd

Fools of Russia a few centuries later, who showed their spiritual fervor by wandering around barefoot in the snow and tundra; the Anchorites of medieval England each of whom would seclude himself in a room by having someone lay a brick wall in the doorway.

In all these forms it may be hard to pinpoint the main motive. Yet, they all share the notion of obedience on their own terms rather than Scripture's—a spirituality perhaps defined more by ostentatious makeover than by inner transformation. The root of my behavior wasn't revealed to me until one day later that freshman year when I was resting before the Lord and adoring him.

It struck me without insistence or apology or hurry—with a depth and authority that stilled me, a gentleness that suggested unspeakable kindness, and its insight was thoroughly true. It was a realization of how far I had departed from and how much I had grieved the One who loved me most, in a specific area of my life.

I had been unwilling to submit my choice of career to Him. My compulsiveness and religiosity were attempts at compensation—a hypertangible, rather than authentic, obedience. This realization was different from the vague accusations of selfish ambition that came over me on Science Hill. This was about the choice of career, and even more specific: was I willing to leave pre-med and enter full-time Christian ministry?

It urged me to the Cross, not to depression or some facile, ostensibly good impulse. The truth was No, I was not willing then to enter full-time Christian ministry. My heart preferred

the convenient obedience of picking up garbage and reciting certain prayers. Yet now, under the gaze of a benevolent and just Lord, all the disguises dropped away. I understood that worldly trophies and securities would eventually be burned like rubbish anyway.

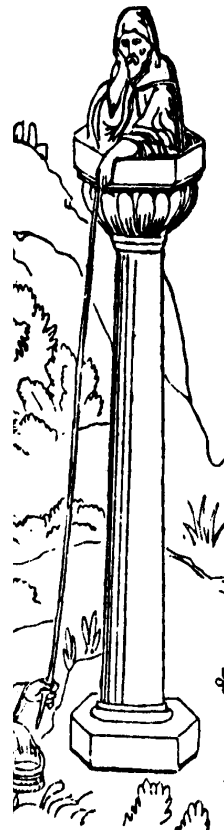
I transacted with Him. Ready to enter *gladly* whatever life He wanted, I gave back to Him my entire self, including my career, and the network of constraints about me snapped apart. Some time later, I committed to medicine, not so much from guilt or compulsion, as from a willingness to do whatever He wanted, a sense of gratitude and freedom and celebration. The Christian life is not a tight-rope, Oswald Chambers writes; it is a tableland.

The enemy had supplied the voice of a false conscience, one that could never be appeased, one that should never be obeyed. He had tried to distract me from walking in the Spirit through the vast expanse of God's purposes and plans. The voice of the enemy and my flesh had me accumulate garbage instead.

The counterfeit conscience aims at far more than mere distraction, however. It produces worldly sorrow which, according to Scripture, leads to death. Judas Iscariot's sorrow led not to the foot of the Cross but to a noose of his own making.

On the other hand, "godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret." (2 Corinthians 7) After Peter denied Jesus, Scripture says, he went and wept bitterly. This sorrow, bearing the Lord's signature, had the opposite result. Peter went on to write of the mercy that gives new birth, faith that is refined by fire. There is a note of hope when the Lord speaks *His* word.

Harry Yoon, Berkeley '93, Medicine '01



Chauncey Goodrich

(Continued from page 5)

sented, and shouldered Webster's work after he died. His 1847 complete edition was marketed at an affordable six dollars a copy, and according to Webster scholar Harry Warfel, "the presence of a Webster Dictionary in almost every literate household dates from this year."

Goodrich greatly enhanced the scholarly value of the dictionary by enlisting the help of his colleagues at Yale, and the thesaurus he added to the 1859 edition was the best of its kind. His lexicographic work, though nominally only editorial, was in fact original. Editors for Webster's monument continued to be drawn from Yale well into the twentieth century.

Though he took up the dictionary work to please Webster, Goodrich's generosity made him the target of a jealous attack by his brother-in-law William C. Fowler, professor of rhetoric at Amherst. Fowler began his assault in 1845, and wasted much of his life on an energetic campaign to cast doubt on Goodrich's motives, discredit his scholarship, and claim for himself the editorship of the dictionary and its financial rewards.

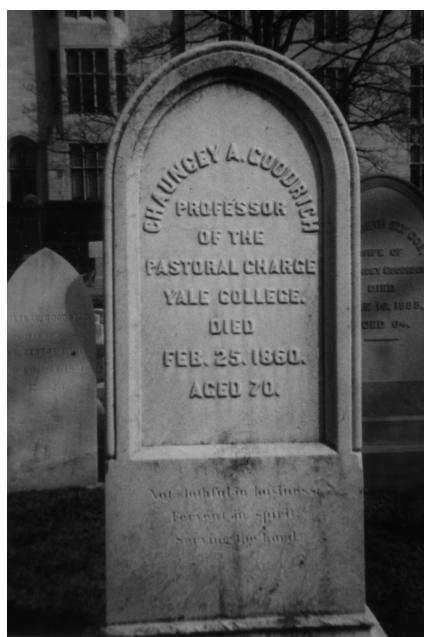
The Amherst professor saved his worst for after Goodrich's death, when he had a pamphlet printed up listing his complaints against the dead. Goodrich's family wisely refrained from even reading the pamphlet until 1869, and apparently never responded to its contents.

Goodrich's personal response to Fowler was confined mostly to private meditations, and these show he knew that God was using the bitter barrage for good. In a diary entry made on his birthday in 1845, Goodrich says:

"I cannot doubt that I needed exactly this trial to humble and purify my soul. It is impossible to penetrate

the depth of self-complacency ... here was the tenderest place in which to touch me. I hope before God I can say ... (1) That I have never prayed more fervently for any one than for the author of this attack. My heart warm toward him in prayer ... [2] I feel much more dead to worldly things, especially to public estimation. This is what I needed."⁵

In the end only Goodrich benefited from the episode, for it persuaded the rest of the family that



*Epitaph inscription reads:
"Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord."*

Fowler was insane. Fowler's jealousy effectively poisoned his daughter, and she wrote contentious letters to the Webster heirs down to at least 1876, demanding a portion of the dictionary profits. Goodrich had given all his share of the money to advance the Gospel.

Contemporaries uniformly describe Goodrich as a fountain of energy, which is amazing given his susceptibility to migraines and other physical debilities. He literally lived out the verse "And whatsoever ye do,

do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men" (Colossians 3, KJV) The cord that bound his work together was his spiritual fervor, and nowhere is that better demonstrated than in his interaction with students.

Yale's college pastor at the time, Eleazar Fitch, could preach well, but was too distant and impersonal to have much impact on students. By contrast, Goodrich was warmhearted and approachable, a person who could help in every kind of need. He had no office or badge, but became shepherd and watchman to generations of Yalies. Theodore Dwight Woolsey remarked that people came from outside Yale to seek Goodrich's help: "... Probably no man in New Haven was more resorted to as a counselor than he was in the last twenty or twenty-five years of his life." He was hopeful and gentle, "not breaking the bruised reed or quenching the smoking flax."⁶

Early in his career as a teacher, at student request, Goodrich began weekend Bible studies, and continued them through the end of his life. Here, he chatted with students in a natural, practical way, giving them help in their Christian lives, and a Biblical view of current issues. Once a month, the topic was missions. University secretary Franklin Dexter (Yale, 1861), himself no believer, said that even skeptical students made a point of going to these studies, and called them "unquestionably the most efficient religious influence in the College."⁷

That Yale remained spiritually vital through the early nineteenth century had much to do with Goodrich's influence, but his labors were quiet and informal. He prayed with Julia every morning for the college, and the faculty gathered for weekend prayer at his house. Students sought him out for private conversation: in March-April 1846, he led eighteen of them to the Lord.⁸ Clearly, Goodrich did what

Oswald Chambers called “persevering work in the unseen.” Yale experienced revival at least seventeen times during the period 1817-1860, though a full record of these years has yet to surface.

Probably one of the reasons there were so many awakenings at Yale in this time period is that the faculty came to understand Gospel truth in a fresh way. The simplicity of Christ’s invitations to the lost had been obscured by generations of theologians who taught that sinners are incapable of choosing Jesus, and must wait for Him to come to them. Chauncey Goodrich and others rightly saw that this belittled the wooing power of the Holy Spirit, and made nonsense of the plain language of the Scripture.

In his Yale lectures on revival, Goodrich noted that the fanatic excesses and agitation at times evident in the First Great Awakening arose from this paralyzing doctrine of the impotence of the will. “... Men when really

awakened were much like persons shut up in a burning house; [the preacher] told them to escape” but took away “any hope in effort.” Goodrich made it his business to open the Gospel door to sinners. He taught not only that the lost could come to Christ, but that God was anxious to

*Yale experienced
revival at least 17
times during the
period 1817 - 1860.*

restore believers to their first love and give them his Holy Spirit. “... To the Church itself, we can say on the ground of promise [Luke 11], you can have a revival in your own hearts. Every real member of Christ’s body can come back from the world and have the special presence of the

Spirit.” When God’s people make a right request, “God is predisposed to grant the exact thing his children pray for ... we have therefore is inexpressible encouragement to labor and pray for revival”⁹

Goodrich’s labor of love and prayer came to an end in 1860. There is no conspicuous memorial to him at Yale, and this is understandable, for his work was pervasive but quiet, and the man himself unassuming. But his gravestone in Grove Street Cemetery says it well:

“Not slothful in business,
Fervent in Spirit,
Serving the Lord.” (Romans 12,
KJV)

Marena Fisher, Graduate ’92

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1. Theodore Dwight Woolsey, “A discourse commemorative of the life and services of the Rev. Chauncey Allen Goodrich,” New Haven, 1860.
 2. Goodrich Family Papers, MS 242, SML Mss. & Archives, April 9, 1809.

New Historicism

(Continued from page 12)

been Christians (like the abolitionist William Wilberforce) who believed that every person is of eternal value in the eyes of God. Most historicists, though they appear to champion in the oppressed, are in fact anti-humanists who believe that individual will and freedom are illusions only. The downtrodden are of interest to them not primarily as human beings, but as challengers of social norms. The real goal of the historicist scholar is not human equality (which he considers a romantic, naïve notion at best), but the destruction of authoritative moral standards to which all of us must answer.

As scholarship, New Historicism is ultimately self-defeating. It maintains that we are all so shaped by experience that not one of us can understand anything except within the men-

tal boundaries of his culture. But in order to criticize “Western” culture the historicist has to claim personal exemption from this limitation. To be morally indignant, he must lay claim to real perceptual and moral knowledge of real events, the same knowledge he categorically insists upon is unavailable to anyone else.

A few historicists understand the self-contradictory nature of this claim to special knowledge and insight, and have shown a weariness with the crusading fervor of their colleagues. They seem half aware that by denying the existence of real, universal truth, we, as the Bible says, “become fools,” and render our think-

ing futile. (Romans 1) We take the road back from all that futility when we recognize that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,” and “a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.” (Psalm 111)

Marena



The New Historicism: Revisionism as Dogma

Note: The following exchange is based on an actual correspondence.



Hello Marena,

I have a question for you, or frustration with academia. I am taking a research seminar this semester in which I will be writing my MA thesis. My interest is in minority groups. I'm finding that this is very political topic and that the questions that seem to interest scholars are things like the construction of ethnic identity and political questions of who is oppressing whom. One article by a very well known scholar is on how the Chinese perceive their minorities as "female" in relation to their "male" self. Another identified the relationship between the Chinese and the minorities as "internal colonialism," and gave examples of how minorities are labeled and categorized in demeaning and stereotypical ways.

Factually, this is all true and perhaps it is good to have my eyes opened to reality. But even though I can't put my finger on it yet, there is something that bothers me about the way that colonialism and imperialism are over-used to criminalize any majority or powerful group. I want to be concerned about justice and to care about minorities, but even though these scholars appear to be on a "righteous" crusade, I sense that they are missing the boat somewhere and that this isn't the way the Lord sees things.

Anyway, I'm feeling quite alone in this for it is hard to criticize effectively when I am such a novice in the whole field and can't even articulate what I do want to study.

Does this make sense? Any thoughts?

Ben

by God. It assumes that the Marxist view of history is essentially correct, that history is a tale of power, with some people having power and oppressing others (it has no room for God or virtuous action). It assumes that male-female relationships function on a power principle, too, so that "gender oppression" describes the history of man-woman interactions (which belittles love).

Because the above ideas are the assumptions of historicist scholarship, work done with that approach tends to fit the specifics of a culture into a preconceived plan. The spirit of genuine inquiry is dead, because the assumptions can't be challenged. The work of the scholar is to reinforce them: if he doesn't, he becomes immoral. For these assumptions make up a religion of sorts, not merely a philosophy. Historicism proposes to take up the sixties' crusades for the rights of the oppressed, which gives the scholarship its motive, but also cuts it off from any true disinterestedness (new historicists continually deny the reality of any disinterest: everything, including scholarship, is political, and is based on power relations and self-interest). It is not too much to say that historicism entirely misses the boat, by judging sinful self-interest and struggles for power to be the only realities in this world.

But we know God is in charge here, and that he works mightily to recover his creation for

Dear Ben:

The academic view of minorities is just what you detail above, and it has more relationship to literary theory than you might think. "New Historicism" has taken over the academy: it affects the study of literature, history, political science, and other disciplines, and its influence is great. This kind of historicism has produced a new set of social norms, and a righteous crusade referred to popularly as "political correctness," with which you no doubt are all too familiar.

The problem with New Historicism (it may go by other names) is its assumptions, some of which you mention below. It assumes that man is a creature made by his environment: he is "socially constructed," not constructed

its original purpose, which has nothing to do with sin. Consider the history of the Puritans, or the very public Victorian age struggles against moral and spiritual darkness. When people seek the Lord, His love begins to work in this dark world, and people do selfless things in His power, and the whole axis of life on this planet is changed.

Historically, the principal champions of the oppressed have

(Continued on previous page)

