

Christian Taste and the Art Entertainment World

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A friend asked me some time ago what I would be teaching in the upcoming semester, and it was an easy question to answer, Ph 305 Aesthetics. He then asked me why I would be teaching it, what significance a course like that would have for Christians; and it was a question not so easy to answer, in a short space that is. What importance after all do reflections on beauty and art have for the practical man bound to his everyday world of places to go and things to be done and people to see and mouths to feed—a world of bills and bottom lines and home mortgages? “Let those who fancy stuffy recitals and museum relics and displays go for them. That’s not my world.” And so we sometimes hear.

It may seem pointless to inquire after theoretical grounding for art values when these values to the ordinary mind pertain only to frills. “As for beauty, I know it when I see it, or hear it. So what’s the big deal?”

It is a huge deal. Many of our most serious and contentious issues today, especially among Christians, have to do with this very thing, a very ancient thing. What does beauty in art have to do with the sacred, the moral, the true, with the way we style ourselves, with our worship, with our entertainment, with a vast range of our deliberations and choices in life? Or is the aesthetic in a domain of its own? Two questions:

May art have a purpose outside itself and still remain itself? Of course, said the German poet Rainer Rilke, speaking of poetry. The meaning of a poem is “You must change your life.”

T. S. Eliot thought so. “If we, as readers, keep our religious and moral convictions in one department, and take our reading merely for entertainment, or on a higher plane, for aesthetic pleasure, I would point out that the author, whatever his conscious intentions in writing, in practice recognizes no such distinctions. The author of a work of imagination is trying to affect us wholly as human beings, whether he knows it or not; and we are affected by it, as human beings, whether we intend to be or not” (“Religion and Literature,” in *Essays Ancient and Modern*, pp. 101-03).

Second question, related: Is art only about itself? That is an understandable conclusion after some reflection on twentieth century modernism’s celebration of nonreason. Said modernist playwright Samuel Beckett, “To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.” (For more on this dilemma see David H. Hesla, *The Shape of Chaos: An Interpretation of the Art of Samuel Beckett*.)

But it is a hard position to maintain. “Art has to be about something. It can’t be about nothing,” remarks Leo Twiggs, a South Carolina Low Country painter. An observation by the eminent scholar-critic and poet O. B. Hardison Jr seems applicable to art of all forms. “Whatever else a poem may be about,” said Hardison, “it is about values.”¹

¹ O. B. Hardison Jr (1928-1990) capped a distinguished career at the University of North Carolina in medieval and Renaissance literature with a coveted appointment as director of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C. In his 30s he had been featured on the cover of *Time* with nine others after an exhaustive search for the ten best professors in America in their fields, Hardison representing literature. In 1983 the British government

Noted religious aestheticist Frank Burch Brown carried the proposition further. Music, most clearly of all the arts, “reflects and engenders values” (*Good Taste, Bad Taste, and Christian Taste: Aesthetics in Religious Life*, p. xvi). No poet, painter, or musician does his art in a moral vacuum. Oddly this widely recognized fact is fervently contested by some evangelicals who otherwise hold to what we in this room believe.

What is the God’s-eye view of present-day art and art entertainment in what is called the post-Christian world? This question meets surprising resistance from Christians who one might think would want to consider it. Their resistance is secular and is twofold. First is the materialist assumption that the fundamentals of art concern physical sensations rather than consciousness and selfhood, and therefore have little or nothing to do with mind states and intentionality. Second is the belief that normativity in art is a cultural construct and therefore that art criteria are generational, relative to time and location, rather than existing universally as implanted promptings and understandings.

These premises, the psychological and the cultural, appear in *the neutrality postulate* and *the cultural mandate*. The one looks now rather dated. Investigations in neuropsychology have certified the existence of universal cognitive responses to musical and other art-related stimulations.² The other, a mantra of broad evangelicalism, has become a settled orthodoxy.

The Neutrality Postulate

Is judgment in art, what we call taste, only subjective, a matter of mere personal preference and opinion, or might it be objective, expressive of embedded intuitions that overarch personal preference and opinion? Christians believe in transcendent values, a conviction that implies a metaphysical basis for judgments on art. But notice the sparks that can fly from evangelical Christians when you raise the question of the *oughtness* of music, or of visual or verbal art, in their entertainment worlds. Principled considerations impacting on the rest of their lives can fall to the side. Art in its artness is value free.

An obstacle to moral discrimination in what I have called the art entertainment world is what has been called the *neutrality postulate*. From mathematics and economics comes the concept that numbers are value neutral. It is difficult to contest this claim until we consider the power of nu-

awarded him the Order of the British Empire for his scholarship and contribution to the humanities. After his death a poll of academics placed him third among twentieth century teachers of Shakespeare. He directed my dissertation from the Folger.

² *The Week*, December 7, 2007, reports evidence from a new study that “beauty is not strictly in the eyes of the beholder.” “Italian neuroscientists showed images of famous classical and renaissance sculptures to 14 volunteers who had no artistic training, some of whom had never been to a museum. Some of the images were altered so that the original proportions of the sculptures were slightly modified. When subjects viewed the pictures of the original sculptures, scans of their brains showed a strong emotional response; they were clearly moved. There was much less response to the sculptures with subtle changes in proportion. ‘We were very surprised that very small modifications of images of the sculptures led to very strong modifications in brain activity,’ researcher Giacomo Rizzolatti tells *LiveScience.com*.”

merical constructs to order and disorder the world. Statistical aggregates shape and reshape society, define true health, determine public policy, and posit what is normal and aberrant in public education.

Symbolic penumbras have surrounded numbers since ancient times. The number 3 does so for Christians, also 40 and 7. In the Middle Ages it was thought blasphemous to walk under a ladder leaning against a building. The ladder, wall, and path formed a triangle, and to pass through the triangle was to dishonor the Trinity. Hence the notion of its being bad luck to walk under a ladder. At issue is the definition of number. Do we mean by the word *number* a bare quantity or do we intend more—the ability of numbers in combination to accomplish tasks, to create theoretical systems, to quicken a mind creatively and even reverently, to birth impressive works of the imagination and engineering art, to catalyze a latent thought and make or remake the world? For the Greeks numbers were the building blocks of the universe, and modern physical science has not ventured far from that conviction.

Numbers for the pagans had cosmological and religious significations, grandly evident in temple architecture, the ubiquitous Golden Ratio for example. Numbers resonated with meaning for the Hebrews, notably 7 and 12. Numbers in the ancient world were not naked soulless ciphers but celestial potencies enrobed in mystery and poised for human use.

Ideas can be defined in such a way as to dispense with what one is not interested in or sees as interfering with what one is interested in. And so it is with the arts. What do we mean when we speak of music, film, painting, poetry? Is music just vibrations in the air as from a plucked string? Was David making music while he readied his lyre to play before Saul? Is an orchestra doing so when tuning up? Is quintessential Rembrandt only color and shading and line? Are Hamlet's soliloquys reducible to strings of phonemes? An actor's rendering of them quantifiable as pitch and volume, as pace and pause?

Hardly so, most would say. The arts amount to more than their raw constituents. One can stipulate whatever concept of an art will serve his purpose, define it thus, and proceed from there. The sufficiency of the resultant concept is another matter.

Few would deny that music for example has psychological effects. The ancients thought so, to which they connected ethical effects. The eight common named modes, or tone schemes, of Greek music were thought by Plato and Aristotle to generate particular mind states. Plato allowed two of the modes, warning of music's power to disorder the mind and draw it from virtue and high achievement. Aristotle allowed more while distinguishing those that were and were not favorable to the forming of character in children. For Plato and Aristotle the musical and the moral were psychologically joined at the hip.

Although features of music, for example, differ from culture to culture, there persists an impression that particular modes of this art associate with particular situations and produce mind states suited to those situations. This popular view, a presupposition of those who compose soundtracks for films, is as noted above reinforced by cognitive neuroscience. Studies have amassed data indicating that musical expectations and responses are inscribed in the human brain. Humans are wired to anticipate resolution and correspondence, in music as well as in narrative art. A scientific

account of David's playing, could we bring it back, would take us beyond his lyre plucking to its untroubling of Saul. The psychology of music is a recognized professional field.

Though music is abstract, its units are not inert, not in combination. When we define music merely as configured sounds in motion, as did Edward Hanslick in an influential nineteenth-century treatise, we haven't said much about it. We haven't spoken to its power to engage the mind in a total way, to motivate behaviors, to reinforce or challenge life stances. We haven't addressed how the slow vibrato of a horn solo in a darkened room, or the underpitched slurred tones of a blues rendering, or the slash of a jazz riff, or the bugling of taps at a military funeral can enact or affect a mood. We haven't explained how a beleaguered gas-station owner could rid his lot of gang members by changing the music from his outdoor speakers to classical from rock.

Calvin would have understood. In an oft-quoted statement the great Reformer speaking of more than music's words marveled, "There is hardly anything in the world with more power [than music] to turn or bend, this way and that, the morals of men. . . . It has a secret power to move our hearts in one way or another." So also would musicians of stature in our own time. For conductor Daniel Barenboim, music has its physics, which is fairly easy to describe, but also its metaphysics, which is not. Music's physics and its metaphysics strangely mingle in the performance of any great work, he said. The same may be said of lesser works as well.

Music has been aptly called a universal language. A language, claims Turkish professor Erciyes Sahin, is not merely a set of signs, symbols or codes, but a way to act, respond, and believe. Its power unites a society that shares a common form of communication (*Turkish Online Journal of Distance Education*, 11/2: 90-107). The claim might be made for all the arts.

That being so, why, one may ask, would a theorist or practitioner of an art wish to reduce it to its minimal constituents? The answer should by now be clear. To characterize music as only organized vibrations in the air is to rule out by definition those properties on which moral discrimination depends. But such liberation—from, shall we say, the intrudery of prudery—comes at a cost of what is supposed to matter to a Christian and what Christians can be sure is of importance to God.

It also shrivels the aesthetic experience. Art of the first order addresses the entire person, not just his reason, his imagination, or his feelings, to borrow as Paul does in 1 Corinthians 3 from Plato's conflict model of the personality. Its parts associate with "resonant rightness," as someone put it, and uncoil together during listening or observation. The art experience takes us to the center and circumference of what we are.

Christian taste in the arts has not been unaffected by the neutrality postulate. A Christian university graduate studying music in Austria on a Fulbright scholarship shared with his father a startling observation. Music, he said, is the only domain in which his atheist fellow students accept transcendence and the only one in which his evangelical friends do not. This conundrum extends beyond music. A BJU professor of religion I happen to know very well was in conversation with a young evangelical friend involved in cinema about some objectionable elements in a film. "Don't you know you're just looking at pixels?" the friend said.

In the sixties when I was in doctoral study at UNC-Chapel Hill, formalism was entrenched in literary theory and had been for more than twenty years, though not without challenge. The meaning of a poem, if it could be said to exist, resided in its form. The author's purpose, expressed or inferred, was irrelevant to that meaning as was its idea content. This view was of course aestheticism, which had been influencing art theory for more than a century. A poem was a standalone artifact. Moral considerations were distractions. In fact moral considerations were hostile to the aesthetic experience. They were to be anathematized.

Toward the end of the sixties formalism was losing ground. Its criterion of unity was under attack from deconstruction, a nihilistic approach according to which a good work of literature gradually undermines its own premises until its didactic project collapses artfully in a heap. Waiting at the door was multiculturalism, which would challenge the literary canon and relativize literary criteria. In the eighties multiculturalism would mutate into postcolonialism, which would join with race-gender-class theory in politicizing literary values.

Meanwhile, on the psychological front, reader-response theory was subjectivizing literary experience, so that the reader, not the author, was said to create the work's meaning. (Sartre had seemed extreme when he said they *co-create* the meaning.) Psychoanalytic theory treated a work as the site of unresolved conflicts though in a more nuanced way than the earlier Freudianism. On the sociological front, the old Marxist literary theory was being displaced by culture studies, which blended all of the above and considered a work as expressive of political power relations and social privilege. Its British counterpart was material culture, which treated literary works as physical objects, focusing on their publication and transmission as economic processes.

In the background of these critical modes, psychological and sociological, was the postmodern attitude, dismissing artistic norms and insisting on the continuity of pop culture with high culture. Formalism was set aside though its emphasis on irony and idiosyncrasy had been the gateway to the postmodern.

Several of these views had not as yet emerged but they were in the air. Traditional literary theory was being lifted from its foundations, to my mind in greatly harmful ways and with a broad skeptical agenda. These views have been said now to be in retreat. I'm not convinced they are, but even if that should prove true, as they retreat they will leave their debris on the beach. Most toxic within the detritus is the denial of words' ability to deliver stable, determinate meaning.

From the postmodern attitude has come philosophical support for a work of art to be as good or as poor as one wishes it to be and to mean whatever one wishes it to mean. Relativity subjectivizes both evaluation and interpretation, if not indeed vacating the need for them altogether. Formalism however has not died the death. The neutrality postulate is still on call when the specter of moralism seems ready to rear its head.

Moral purpose meets us everywhere in today's art and art culture, whether as radical critique or cynical nihilism. It is rarely acknowledged. An exception is the remarks by the iconic postmodern novelist David Foster Wallace in an interview published in the *New Yorker* in March 2009. Wallace had grown impatient with the pessimistic novels and stories that are the standard fare

offered by modern writers including the fiction he had written himself. Wallace says to his interviewer, “Look, man, we’d probably most of us agree that these are dark times and stupid ones, but do we need fiction that does nothing but dramatize how dark and stupid everything is?”

The interviewer and author of the article acknowledges that “the default for Wallace would have been irony—the prevailing tone of his generation,” but points up Wallace’s growing dissatisfaction with the ironic mode. “As Wallace saw it, irony could critique but it couldn’t nourish or redeem.”

For Wallace in this clear-sighted moment, pessimism fails because it does not help the reader, a responsibility of art. Sadly, Wallace himself succumbed to pessimism and took his own life on September 12, 2008. To dismiss the psychological power of art is unrealistic. It leaves art arid. More seriously it denies art its moral consequence. That can be lethal.

The Cultural Mandate

Whereas minimalism serves libertarian ends with the neutrality postulate, maximalism does the same with the cultural mandate. Distilling the arts down to their physical components disposes of abstract considerations such as those of moral and artistic worth. Democratizing the arts, validating the wide range of their multifarious expressions, dispenses with questions of normativity and merit. Distinctions fall. Pop art and fine art become indistinguishable. Objective judgment and definitive interpretation become impossible.

The modern disagreement about the universality of art values links with a historical division of thought concerning the trajectory of cultures. In eighteenth-century England a literary quarrel known as the Battle of the Books pitted Tory defenders of inherited knowledge against Whig celebrants of scientific progress. In the next century their descendants clashed as traditionalists and Enlightenment rationalists with their respective religious and secularist dogmas in play. From contrasting views of the past came contrasting views of the future. Conservatives lamented what appeared to them a decline from historic moral and cultural understandings. Progressives lauded the dawning of a long-envisioned utopia.

In Protestant Christianity both views had partisans. Conservatives held by and large an apocalyptic degenerative view of society driven by the Bible’s account of last things. Human culture for them, absent divine intervention, trended downwards. Progressives held a meliorist, that is, optimistic progressive, view encouraged by the advance of scientific knowledge and technology, what seemed to them a friendlier association of nations, and for some the worldwide spread of the Gospel. For liberal Protestantism the gospel was social and moral improvement. Human culture was capable of trending upwards. Complicating this divide on the conservative side was Reformed millennial optimism, an important fact in the account that follows, and to which we now turn.

Strictness of doctrinal formulation and generosity of worship style came together in the improbable partnering of Calvinism and Pentecostalism in the 1950’s. That such temperamental opposites could engage so easily bespeaks a common foe. Both Calvinism and Pentecostalism in their evolved mid-century forms rejected Fundamentalist separatism and, on the Calvinist

side, a purported Fundamentalist anti-intellectualism. Fundamentalism became a term for unlearned contentious biblicism. With the rise of Islamic terror the expression came to refer to all stiff religious militancy, not just to the American historical movement.

Many Evangelicals did not want to identify as Fundamentalists. Advancing Christ's kingdom in the world required connection, not separation. The pressing need, they believed, was cultural engagement, the redemption not rejection of their social worlds. They relaxed their sense of what is binding for Christians in life style and in the worship of God. With this revised sense of identity and mission came flexibility of standards and relativity of taste. And so in broad Evangelicalism today indeterminacy in social choices is ballasted by determinacy in theological belief.

Paul's reference to the Philippian Christians as lights in the world pictures the world as alien to the followers of Christ but also as a space of opportunity for their witness. The darkness is spiritual unbelief and moral degradation. It is to be countered by spiritual light. It is also a space of spiritual danger and confusion. Another apostle, John, in his first Epistle, will write of a conflict between darkness and light, warning of the world's seductive attraction to believers. Two contrary loves, of the world and of God, writes John, stand in irreconcilable opposition. They mark the sincerity of a Christian profession.

It follows that the Christian conscientious about his engagement with the world has a commission and a caution. He is not to withdraw from the world but is to station himself within the world as a witness to the truth, taking care not to let the world affect him. James, half-brother of Christ, puts the Christian's stance toward the world in an active mode. "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father is this: To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (1:27).

Christianity has not always succeeded in performing both obligations so that one is not neglected in the interest of the other. In the late nineteenth century the Dutch theologian and statesman Abraham Kuyper (1837-1920) broke from the Dutch Reformed Church because of its growing modernism and helped found a new body, the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands. Dissatisfied with the inclination of his Reformed brethren to pursue their theological interests in isolation from their enviroing world, Kuyper sought to heighten their attention to public life and extend their sense of responsibility toward it. He enlarged the scope of the creation mandate of Genesis 1:27-28 from the natural world to the world of man. Human institutions are to be restored as much as possible to the governance of God. He also adopted a holistic view of the Great Commission, extending its redemptive mission beyond the saving of souls to the transformation of society.

Kuyper did not advocate militant confrontation with the "authority spheres" of the world. Their autonomies should be respected. A pluralist society is the will of God for the present age, he believed, adverting to the Reformed doctrine of *common grace*. Family has its own realm of governance. So does a nation. So also the church. The business of Christianity is to engage, penetrate, and insofar as possible appropriate these public spheres to transform them, recognizing their granted authorities within the overarching rule of God. Kuyper's amillennial eschatology facilitated his meliorist view of the present age. The millennium, if such there be, is God's

gradually realized governance of the world in which His people have been summoned by Him to participate.

Neo-Calvinism, as Kuyper's theology is called, attracted a North American following among Reformed academics in the 1950's, including the founders of Fuller Theological Seminary and influential figures in existing schools such as Calvin College. The movement has been credited by an enthusiast with "the evangelical intellectual revival' of the past three decades" (James Turner, cited by Eric Miller, *Christianity Today*, March 26, 2013, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2013/april/father-abraham.html>). Whether that be so, *the cultural mandate* influences Evangelicalism at most levels today. An important one is the arts.

The concept warrants thoughtful consideration. Though Kuyper was staunchly opposed to the theological drift of modern Protestantism and was no lover of the present world order, it should be clear how his conception of Christianity's mission could be understood to encourage a less strictly polarized, more genial account of the church's relation to the world than conservative Christians had been used to. Separatism rather than Darwinism and liberalism would hereafter be the bugbear of mainstream evangelical thought. Fundamentalist fetishes and internal rifts, quaintly featured, would be brought into the service of this repulsion. The readiest critics of Fundamentalism would be progressive evangelicals unwilling to be tarred with the same brush.

The concept of *the cultural mandate* spearheaded this endeavor. In order to widen the Christian witness it thinned that witness. It discouraged belief in universal aesthetic intuitions in favor of cultural relativism and subjectivity. Its devotees flirted with the pop world from a high minded but mistaken intention to repurpose it. Scripture instead instructs us to engage the world on our terms and for our purposes without adapting to it—to use the world and not *ab-use* it (I Cor. 7:31) in the effort to spread the gospel of Christ. Evangelistic dating, cultural as well as personal, has never been wise.

It has long been a truism that a mature person can dis sever his values from his preferences. Whereas the immature approve of what they like and disapprove of what they dislike, the mature are able to approve what they dislike and disapprove what they like, or are inclined to like. Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002), leading twentieth-century philosopher of hermeneutics, rejected subjectivism in interpretation and aesthetic judgment. In *Truth and Method*, his most important work, published in 1960, Gadamer declared, "The concept of taste undoubtedly implies *a mode of knowing*. The mark of good taste is being able to stand back from ourselves and our private preferences" (p. 36). This insight has made the teaching of standards possible in Christian families and in Christian schools and congregations. Christian taste requires a detached self-critical stance rooted in a biblical worldview.

Two incidents in the life of the Savior provide a view of the world from an elevated vantage point along with His response. In the first incident the Prince of this World takes the Savior to "an exceeding high mountain apart" and spreads before Him "all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them" (Mat. 4:8). He offers Him the rule of his world if He "will fall down and worship him." It is a bogus offer: Jesus is the Creator and owner of all that is offered, including the offerer himself. Furthermore, what is offered, Satan's world, is tawdry, corrupt, and

doomed. It is also a trap: to accept it would be an unthinkable act of false fealty, an acknowledgment by the Son of God of Satan's lordship.

Jesus bluntly refuses the offer, quoting Deuteronomy 6:13: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." There could have been no other response from the King of Kings. After the Last Supper Jesus declared, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

In the second incident Jesus takes three of His disciples to another "high mountain apart." There He "was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light" (Mat. 17:1). The world was not rendered visible from this height. The attention of Peter, James, and John was directed upward to their Savior and to two Old Testament figures, Moses and Elijah, the founder and the reformer of Israel. Soon a cloud removed the brilliant group from their sight.

As they descended the slope, the three disciples asked Jesus about the prophecy that Elijah would appear before His coming and restore all things. Jesus replied that Elijah would indeed come and restore all things, but that he had come already, had he been believed, in the person of John the Baptist. John had not restored all things, for he had been rejected and killed. So it would be with Him. Jesus thus both confirmed and corrected their eschatology. The prophecy of His kingdom would indeed be literally fulfilled but was still to be realized. Messiah's rule would be rejected.

At the foot of the mountain the three disciples were met by a world of which they had been given only a glimpse in the words of the Savior on the way down. A crowd was watching the futile efforts of the other nine disciples to heal a demon-possessed child. Jesus cast out the demon and rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith. This evil spirit, He said, is of an especially stubborn kind, whose expulsion requires prayer.

There could hardly have been a more striking contrast with what had been revealed to Peter, James, and John on the mountain's summit than this scene of seething hostility and aching misery at the mountain's foot. Unless, that is, the mistreatment of Messiah and His forerunner referenced on the mountain's slope. Here on the mountain Jesus' revelation of His glory is coupled with the reason He left behind that glory. The radiant scene on the summit is followed by a view of a world torn under Satan's rule. No redemptive potential for that sin-torn world is indicated there. Redemption must descend from above. It must come to the inhabitants of that world, not to their enviring conditions.

The two mountains considered together give us a view of the present world order that should control our expectations of what may be accomplished with it. Cultural transformation is not part of it. The repurposing of Satan's designs and energies is not what the redemptive task is all about. Christians are given no mandate to recover a fallen world for God. "The whole world lieth in wickedness," folded in Satan's sensual embrace (I John 5:19). Christ's disciples today engage that world as did their Savior, disdaining its offers to release its slaves.

The issues raised in the foregoing accounts bring to my mind the priorities of the musician-poet in Psalm 137. The Psalmist treasured his playing and singing but gave witness, by a curse formula, that he ought to lose those abilities were he to forget his God, were he not to “prefer Jerusalem above [his] chief joy.” His “chief joy” was composing and performing his music, but that joy by no means embraced it all. There was something more important to him, more “chief,” than his chief joy. His values were signified for him by “Jerusalem,” to which he was paying tribute, fittingly in the form of a lovely song.

Addendum

The chart below maps the changing landscape of evangelicalism in the past half century.

Neo-Calvinism embraced cultural engagement; Neo-Pentecostalism obliged, implementing it with celebrity and celebrationism. The two currents, intellectualist and populist, merged while Fundamentalism for the most part remained separate.

The adjectives *Cooped* and *Cool* are intentionally pejorative, such as might be ascribed each by the other side. The broken line between Fundamentalism and Classic Calvinism is due to the relative importance placed by their adherents on differences in eschatology (pre- versus post- or a-millennial) and soteriology (voluntaristic versus deterministic).

“Dost thou still retain thine integrity?” in Job 2:9 comes to mind as Fundamentalists reflect on where they are now and what they should be doing where they are. Charitable breadth in spiritual matters is not always a virtue or rigid narrowness always a vice. Both accuracy and velocity increase when you elongate, without widening, the barrel of a gun.

