

Religion Within the Bounds of Amusement: A Collection of Satire

From the "Major Works" series

CJS Hayward

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Preface

The author has wielded a satirist's pen since he began writing "Hayward's Unabridged Dictionary" as an undergraduate at Wheaton. The work is uneven, but quite a lot in it is quotable, and it has been mistaken for Ambrose Bierce. Perhaps, as he has been told, there is too much truth in his humor, but satire is powered less by exaggeration than by unnerving truth.

You are invited to explore the five satirical works in this volume.

Unvera Announces New Kool-Aid Line

Unvera has announced a new line of poison Kool-Aid supplements intended to bring its distributors unique extracts of the most powerful plant toxins available to its research.

"So what makes your offering different from other MLM's?" our reporter asked. "*Relational* marketing," the Unvera distributor insisted, "Unvera puts things in the most flattering terms possible. We have a **team** approach that really sets us apart. And with us, you're not just a cog in the wheel fueling profits for Unvera. You are the Jim Jones of your own cult, as we repeatedly insist, and we teach you to talk about "my cult". You have the privilege to choose just what you want your *cult's* very own *cult-ure* to be. And we will push you along every step of the way unless you have excellent boundaries and know how to say 'No' and put your foot down. At Unvera, we are your *religion!*"

The reporter asked, "I've heard your nutraceutical supplements are really something. But are the health effects worth a putting yourself in the hands of a pushy MLM, even with your new line of Kool-Aid?"

The Unvera distributor said, "At Unvera, we believe strongly in having multiple trickles of income, and it's good financial sense. If you are good at sales, good enough that you can get a regular job, we're talking three figures, maybe four. Do you have time for a quick online presentation tonight? I'd love to recruit you for my cult. And here, have a

sample of our Kool-Aid!"

The reporter said, "There is an old mandate in the business world, 'Revenue must exceed expenses' and it seems that your multi-level marketing system is like most multi-level marketing jobs: it makes its money from its 'distributors' and is designed so that revenue exceeds expenses for the company *and not* for its, um, 'sales' distributors."

The Unvera distributor said, "But you could be, just like every other Unvera distributor, the Jim Jones of your own cult."

Our reporter said, "But I don't **want** to be the Jim Jones of my own cult!"

The distributor's jaw dropped, flabbergasted.

Archdruid of Canterbury Visits Orthodox Patriarch

The Archdruid of Canterbury appeared as head of a delegation to His All Holiness THOMAS, Patriarch of Xanadu.

The Archdruid bore solemn greetings and ecumenical best wishes. He presented gifts, including an oak and holly icon, portraying St. Francis of Assisi as the pioneer of "I-Thou" existentialism. The icon was "not made by hands" ("all done by paw," in the memorable words of Paddington Bear).

The Druidic leader spoke of the Orthodox Church with the most solemn reverence. "The Orthodox Church is not only Oriental and exotic, but has the most hauntingly beautiful liturgy achieves what we are trying to engineer in our liturgical reform, and the Orthodox Church would make the perfect partner for the most dynamic and progressive forces that keep the C of E a living spiritual power in this world. St. Alban and St. Sergius *are* Anglican saints, but they are first and foremost Orthodox saints, and are only Anglican saints because they are Orthodox saints. I have personally blended the most excellent traditions of Druidic Bard and occupant of the See of Canterbury. We would be most deeply honoured if the existing profound (if invisible) bond uniting Orthodox, Anglican, and Druid were made explicit."

After the Druid spoke for an hour, he paused in thought a moment, turned to His All Holiness THOMAS and said, "But I fear I have done too

much talking, while you have said nothing. Isn't there anything you'd like to say? Don't you have questions we could speak to?"

The Patriarch coughed, sat in silence for a moment, and began to squirm. "Have you considered pursuing ecumenical relations with the African majority in your own communion? I've dealt with some of them and they're really quite solid people, with good heads on their shoulders."

The Archdruid made no reply.

Inclusive Language Greek Manuscript Discovered

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — There is a considerable buzz among New Testament scholars over the discovery of a near-complete Greek manuscript to the book of the Bible called Romans. The manuscript is similar to others, but is the first known manuscript to mirror the *Today's New International Version* (TNIV) in its use of inclusive language.

There is a wide consensus among both conservative and liberal scholars that most Greek manuscripts use grammatically masculine words where the original author meant to include women as fully as men. This manuscript, referred to by scholars as R221819, is similar to other such manuscripts but uses inclusive language where applicable.

The book of Romans was first written in Greek and is considered foundational in its treatment of what it means to be a Christian. Chapter eight is well-known among people who read the Bible; its fourteenth and fifteenth verses are shown above. *Huioi* ("sons") in verse 14 is replaced by a more inclusive *tekna* ("children"), and various word forms are adapted to a gender-neutral spelling. R221819 is thought to reflect the TNIV's distinguishing features with considerable accuracy.

Kenneth Barker, one of the leading scholars involved with the TNIV, said, "I don't think this is quite as big of a deal as people make. It's just a minor change, like other textual variations, and simply clarifies the author's intent." He disclaims any greater significance to the discovery.

The progressive element of Christians for Biblical Equality has been jubilant. One scholar said, "This is a very important step in the right direction. I look forward to when a manuscript is found where the patriarchal *Theos* is replaced by the more neutral *Theon*. It really only means changing a couple of the case endings plus the spelling of the word that means 'the.' *Theon* would remain in the second declension. It is just a small change, but it would help Christians reach out effectively to those on the margins of society." After all, if one clarification helps, why not another?

A Strange Archaeological Find

To my most excellent friend and pupil:

Yes, you are correct about the letter's origins, and you are right to be somewhat confused. This one's going to take a more than a few words.

Literature from almost any place can be timeless. This people had an epic poem that appeared to be about cat and mouse, but was really about much more: the struggle between good and evil, and the vindication of the oppressed. We do not have a complete manuscript, but we know their children would listen to these poems for hours. I know the criticisms of that literature, and they are all true—but the literature is universal and timeless. I read some of it to my youngest, and he was laughing.

However, not everything they made is that universal. You asked if the document you'd found showed unusual local color. I'd rather call it a slagheap of discarded local paints and pigments. Making sense is going to take some explaining, but keep your cheer. By the time you're done, you may find some other things less difficult to think about.

Remember the lecture illustration of the potato. At one end is the entirety of man, or what is universally human; at the other end, the full specificity of one man. Understanding man, or understanding one man, means in part moving in an infinitely differentiated space full of nuance. I don't need to remind you that the actual lesson has other dimensions as well, in part because we aren't getting that far with this letter.

Now think about those things that are corporate to a people. Take a thin slice of the potato, and throw the rest away—yes, I know, that's most of the potato. Now there's... I'll explain what the other slice is in a bit, but imagine another, even thinner slice of the slice, so what's left is a line—a line that looks like a point if you view it the wrong way.

What is that second slice? Step into a friend's field, and leave a rock to remember your place. Now walk to his house, counting the steps. Then walk back, and walk to some other landmark—a tree, perhaps, and count your steps. Now forget the earth beneath your feet, the grass you see, the children smiling, and the birds overhead—not quite 'forget', that's too strong, but push them back as secondary. What counts, what makes that place uniquely itself, is the number of steps you counted in going to the house and the tree. Of course the steps can be used to find that place, but imagine further that the number of steps make that place what it is—and it would be quite different if the house had been built ten paces further.

They do this with the number of winters that have passed. That is the second slice, and it is viewed end-on, so as to only be a point—but the strange thing is they do not think this is part of the picture, but that it is the picture. In a strange way, that line, viewed end-on, is much bigger than the potato we think of; it's not just a teacher's illustration, even one that is repeated very often, but an idea so basic and foundational that most of them aren't aware they believe it. They might perhaps be shocked, and think the other person is irrational, if someone were to deny the significance of one of the mantras that encapsulates this view, but... I'm trying to think of an example... I'll have to get back to you on that.

That is one major piece of background. Another that I'll mention—and this is not universal to the people, but something that tends to infect the more intelligent... ok, a bit of background.

We have, and use, one basic kind of candle. Once I was able to visit an archaist who had been able to revive one of the candles they were using. He invited several of us in, pulled a lever...

The candle was encased in a goblet, and it had a dazzling brilliance—as if there was a bonfire burning, and yet its flame was no larger than a small candle's and it did not flicker at all nor did it make smoke. The

small candles, and it did not flicker at all, nor did it make smoke. The light was not red nor orange, not even yellow, but purest white like the sun—and when I broke my gaze and looked away, the other things in the room looked as if there were a little sun in the room. It was one of the most beautiful things I have ever seen.

As I was saying, they had several kinds of candle, but one thing they had in common was not only that they produced light, but that when they ran out, the wick turned black. One of their jokers, in an inspired moment, produced a theory that what were called 'light sources' were instead things that sucked dark: darkness was heavy, which is why if you swim down in a lake you will find more and more dark. It was absolutely brilliant humor, all the moreso if you know what sort of thing it parodied.

There are multiple theories like that, and there was... well, this will require a bit of background as well. Any magical system of merit doesn't just try to get things done; it has a theory about why the magic works, and underneath there is a story. One of their magical theories essentially said there was a nonexistent spirit which, despite its nonexistence, hovered over the earth and made more of organisms that were excellent and fewer of organisms that were poor. This theory was woven into a narrative about great mounds of rock and fire, then earth, then lightning striking a lake and bringing something to life, then the spirit working that one living thing into a symphony of diversity, organisms coming and going, until at last mortal gods walked the earth... and then, in the truly greatest speaking, all returns to elemental chaos. It is a truly great myth, and I am saddened that our storytellers do not recount anything like it.

There is an idea of a 'meme', which is an idea, story, or joke, construed as a living thing that this sort of spirit is operating on. I was interested when I encountered the idea, and read with even more interest when the *Principia Cybernetica* described memes in explicitly more anthromorphic terms than people. Here, I was certain, was a masterpiece of comedic genius...

...and then one of my colleagues explained that it wasn't. It was deadly serious. I thought it parodied dirty sleight-of-hand in anti-Christian polemics... but it didn't. It couched terms in heavily prejudicial language, like their example question of, "Have you stopped beating your

wife?" but somehow even very bright Christians accepted what far less intelligent ones intuited to be unfair and insulting.

Now I remember one of the catch-phrases, in terms of how important the number of passed winters was for them. I'd have to look at their literature for more, but one of them was, "We're entering the third millenium." As spoken, it was not simply the answer to a trivial question, but a statement of great metaphysical import. From what little I can tell, if someone contradicted this association, it was to them as if he had contradicted that the sun was white.

I think I've given enough of a preface to look at the letter—rather than writing a full letter of preliminaries. Here's the opening:

Several things relate here. Trying to 'see' what happened in history, particularly where we are looking at the origins of Christianity, is to me somewhat akin to being in a river trying to look back through all the moving water and intuiting what the source looked like when the water you are in now started to flow. 'Tis murky indeed... Those historians and theologians, who might have us believe they are not looking back through the murky river as we are but rather hovering over the source in a helicopter somehow transported back through time, are slipping in a priestly function in so doing.

I'd like to say a few things. As regards your main questions on this passage, you got one right and one wrong. The Helicopter was a giant mechanical bird capable of carrying men—oh, about that question, these things were produced by magic, but it was not occult practice to use them; this is not an occult reference, and I don't want to delve into why not. You were right about that.

What you were wrong about is your reading that the people being criticized are looking downstream while the letter's author is in the priveleged Helicopter able to look down on the ancient Christians and the people he was criticizing. That isn't what he was saying at all... wait, I know why you would think that. You might be right in that that is what he was really saying. Kind of like the koan I'll adapt:

An ancient Christian looked troubled.

One later Christian said, "He is troubled."

Another Christian said, "How do you know whether or not he's troubled? You're not him!"

The other replied, "How do you know whether or not I know whether or not he's troubled? You're not me!"

The tone and spirit of the letter indeed suggests that the ancient Christians, and the author's conservative contemporaries, are trapped in a river, while the author is hovering about freely in the Helicopter. *However*, that is not the intent. The intent was to accuse the conservatives of doing something that would appear strange given the assumptions of a metaphor that runs counter to their thought, as for that matter it did for ancient Christian thought.

Further complicating our task is our respective cultural memes and our personal ongoing process of regeneration. The former contains all the turbidity thrown up by all previous good thinking and confused thinking. The latter usually contains some unrecognized proclivities.

The reference to 'cultural memes' carries quite a lot more freight than the already substantial freight they associate with cultures. I'm trying to think of something to use as a metaphor to convey what is meant here, and I am failing. It's a bit like saying "two people are uniquely themselves and cannot converse otherwise", except that what it plays out as is not a celebration of God's gift of humanity, where God made each man unique and catholic, but being uniquely themselves is construed as an impediment to catholicity: Gregory's skill in choosing nautical metaphors is an impediment to talking with Jane, because most people don't work that way. It's not exactly the doctrine of the Fall, either, saying that there are dark marks on each person and society, and that that hinders communication. It's more... the central dogma of their magic is that there is no magic, and there is an essentially amoral and even material conception of human culture: culture is a spiritually inert weight which slows and weighs people down, except that's not right either. My

which slows and weighs people down, except that's not right either. My head is spinning now, and you probably understand less about them than you did at the beginning of this paragraph.

The last sentence seems to stem from individualism, in that corporate personality, the spirit of a society, is a source of turgidity, but God does work with people, and he sometimes gives them special abilities despite his difficulties in blessing communal knowledge.

Hence my insistence that we know what we are thinking with as well as what we are thinking about.

No, this sentence is *not* corrupt. I checked.

Perhaps the best way to put it stems from a friend's comment that if he takes a strong and immediate dislike to someone, it is quite often because the other person exemplifies one of his vices. There's some resonance with Confucius's words, "When I see a virtuous man, I try to be like him. When I see an evil man, I reflect on my own behavior."

I understand your suggestion that the reading be emended, "Hence my insistence that conservatives know what we think they are thinking with, as well as what we are thinking about," but you have to understand that the statement as read, literally, can be made in perfectly good faith. Some people talked about the importance of knowing what they were thinking with; the people they criticized often did so.

Regarding what is called feminism, our very use of the term indicates the influence of our cultural meme and our submission to someone else's cultural agenda.

You were right on this time. He's not an etymologist. However, there are reasons besides individual carelessness that this would be presented as serious analysis.

You know that the New Testament writers tended to read any ambiguity for all it was worth, in their favor. The considered people tended to be much more tightly rigorous in treating Biblical texts, but relaxed rigor and made "Just-So" stories about words in their own time:

"family man" was taken by their feminist dictionary to be a mark of sexism (because that quality is assumed in a woman so much that we don't have a specific term for a family woman), but you can rest assured that, had the language had a term "family woman" but not "family man", the dictionary entry would have talked about how sexist it was to have a word used to talk about a woman as a "family woman", but not even have a word to refer to a "family man".

If you ask a historian or an etymologist, their very use of the term feminism indicates something very prosaic: a movement started, calling itself feminism, and the name has stayed the same across time. This is a run-of-the-mill linguistic occurrence, closely related to the growth of dead metaphor, and has the same political significance as the fact that the gesture they use to greet a friend originated as a gesture of mistrust used to keep a stranger from drawing a weapon: none.

However, this sort of folk analysis is innately valuable for historians. You need to keep your eyes open for passages like this; some sentences can tell more than a page of straightforward explanation.

In the context of biblical discussion, much progress has been made on 'gender passages' such as 1 Timothy 2.

In their conception, that one thin slice of potato is magnified in part by a conception of progress, a conception that ideas, like machines, grow rust and need to be replaced for no other reason than being old. As such, their use of the term 'progress' means something different from our understanding of a student acquiring the expertise of his master. It means that people are becoming better, wiser, and nobler than the people who came before.

Given that I am writing to you and not speaking publicly, I'm not going to traipse through and analyze the texts referred to. I can say, without bothering to look them up, that they are using their immense scholarly resources to make themselves stupider than they actually are, dredging up some pretext to reverse a conclusion that is obvious to a child of twelve. You and I do this for humor; they were quite serious.

The starting point for learning this is via Christians for Biblical Equality. See the link to their website on the links page of www.intelligentchristian.org. I am convinced they are right.

Yes, there is a reason for the use of the term 'Biblical equality'. Specifically, the name functions as whitewash when even backwoods farmers have caught on that there are problems with feminism. As far as accuracy goes, one in two isn't bad for these things; it isn't Biblical (note that the Bible doesn't qualify as a suggested starting point for Biblical equality), but the choice of term makes up, if one may follow their linguistics: they seek e-quality, the absence of qualitative or distinctive traits such as God created every person to exhibit. Their way of leveling the ground also levels the people who are standing on that ground. A cue to this is found in their use of the term 'gender' where previous thinkers had referred to 'sexuality'.

The older term, 'sexuality', evokes a man and a woman on a couch, but that moment is the visible shoot atop a network of roots. The deep root stated, in essence, that different physical characteristics are not the end of different personhood, but the very beginning: that masculinity and femininity are attributes of the spirit, and that differences of spirit run deeper than differences of body. The feminist movement's search for equality discarded this, believing there are only physical differences, and if there's any differences in people's minds, they must be arbitrary social constructions, namely 'gender'.

The surface issue most commonly discussed—the only issue, to many listeners—is the issue of whether women should be ordained. In this regard, the people who were for women's ordination couldn't see why it shouldn't be that way, and the people against couldn't explain. If there's no essential difference, if as the feminists said we are one type of soul that happens to be encased in two types of body, then it is an unambiguous consequence that women should be ordained.

I trust you will see that something important has slipped into that nice-looking statement. If not—think closely about "one type of soul that happens to be encased in two types of body." What is being said? This doesn't just impact sexuality. The teaching that we are soul encased in

body is ancient, and it lies at the root of that great Hydra, Gnosticism. Gnosticism starts out very rigidly ascetic, trying to be spiritual by shunning anything bodily—because we're spirits and not bodies. Then it shifts, and ascetics are shocked when their spiritual children engage in every form of bodily vice—because we're spirits and not bodies, so it doesn't matter *what* we do with our bodies. I've studied it, and it happens every time.

I would recall to you an early lecture, where I distinguished a philosophical conclusion from a practical conclusion: there's a deeper resemblance than philosophy being practical, but I wish to talk about them as distinct ideas. A philosophical conclusion is what a philosopher will develop from an idea with an hour's thought, and it does not much concern me here. A practical conclusion is what will happen over time if you start a community believing an idea and come back to it later. Gnostic libertinism is the practical conclusion of Gnostic asceticism.

Does the Biblical egalitarian perspective have a practical conclusion? It does, and it is something even that Biblical egalitarian could have seen—could have seen without engaging in the execrated practice of opening a history book. The perspective did not originate with him; it happened before, and the late forms were around for him to see.

The claim bandied about is that women should be ordained. Well... it appears that women had been ordained before and after the Biblical egalitarians, and so far as I read, God's blessing was on it. However, that's really just a glint on the surface. What lies deeper, and the reason people were so bent on having half the priests be priestesses, is the idea that there is no fundamental difference between men and women beyond what impacts the mechanics of reproduction—because if there isn't, then of course it's ridiculous to only ordain men. That assumption was not given critical examination.

What happened after that is what had happened every other time, and what he could have verified by opening his eyes. If the teachings about masculinity and femininity are erased from Christian doctrine, a few proof texts about women's roles won't last long... very few years pass before people explain them away, as appears "progress" in

misinterpreting the Timothy passage above. The Bible is an interlocking whole, a great sculpture in perfect balance—and if you pull away one part you don't like, others will not stay in place. So we celebrate the ordination of women, or—in more honest terms—celebrate the annihilation of belief that sexuality could inform how people contribute to the body of Christ.

After that, why be so unenlightened as to maintain sex roles anywhere else? Why not gay marriage? By that time, it was difficult to have anything besides a gay marriage, even with a man and a woman both involved: it was some legal contract involving sex, but disconnected with any expectation of loyalty or openness to children, so why not a marriage between two men? Sure, the Bible has a couple of proof texts about that, but they're not really any harder to "explain" and "investigate" than those that suggest human sexuality contributes to the Church... It wasn't an accident, by the way, that feminism specifically celebrated lesbianism. There were of course other factors, but part of it was the dismantling of an older teaching that celebrated sex as the interaction between two very opposite poles.

By this time, a sculpture that had been hanging precariously slid further down. Somewhere along the line any revelation of God as masculine and not feminine was dismantled—because "we need to keep an open mind and not confine God to traditional canons of gender", meaning in practice "we need to confine God to our anti-traditional abhorrence of sexuality." You'll remember the Re-Imagining conference which there was that big hubbub about—celebrating the goddess and more fundamentally believing that all the Biblical images their movement didn't like were arbitrary imaginations put in by unenlightened men. I frankly don't see why anyone, conservative or liberal, made such a stink about that. It wasn't any worse than what was happening elsewhere; it just dropped the usual mask.

A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Where people raised the axe and chopped away one troublesome root of the Ancient Tree, what invariably happened was that that wasn't the one troublesome root; now that it was gone, their vision cleared to see that there was another one of equal trouble... and another... and another... and by the time the Tree fell, people were glad for the death of an ancient menace. The phenomenon is

a bit like a fire—the more it has, the more it wants.

I am leery of the unrecognized use of logical systems which were developed outside scripture.

I understand your point, but I really don't think he's trying to be ironic. "A meme is not a social construct like a syllogism; it reflects the terrain of which the syllogism is a very imperfect map." Agreed, this is a bad way of putting it, but... the best I can explain it is that he is brilliant, knows many of the facets of knowing how to think, but doesn't understand how to think. Reminds me of when I had a student trained in memory but not our thought, who answered perfectly my questions until I stumbled on the fact that he didn't understand what was being talked about—he memorized words, and did so far better than I ever will, but didn't grasp the ideas the words were meant to hold. This is different; the author knows large chunks of the truth, but... Irenaeus wrote how false teachings were as if someone had taken a jewel statue of the king, and reassembled it to an imperfectly executed statue of a fox, and said the fox were the king. There are real jewels there, but the statue isn't right.

As we now know through complexity studies, the old Aristotelian view that A and non-A were mutually exclusive is suspect.

In response to your question, I'm more hesitant to say that he's gone from believing in infallible logic to believing infallible complexity study has debunked fallible logic. It comes closer to say that logic is old and favored by many traditional theologians, and therefore in double jeopardy—complexity studies provide a good platform to attack it. If Aristotle had developed complexity studies and more recent endeavors had found logic, I believe this statement would show how logical inquiry reveals inherent problems in complexity studies.

At any rate, after tasting old wine, he has tasted the new, and said, "The new is better."

There is one reason to be particularly cautious in your use of logic.

He's not saying what you think he's saying. He's not describing logic as being like an array of tools, where you should use a file rather than a hammer to smooth a piece of wood. The direction he's going is more, after having seen that different tools perform different tasks, to say that you need to be careful in using a saw to cut wood, because there are so many things a saw isn't good at. It might be like an oral person with a well-trained memory discovering the power of writing, and doubting the justification of memorizing the stories he tells.

That is the instinctive, post-fall, unregenerative, inclination of males to engineer.

In another context, you would be right; the long string of words would convey something wonderful and poetic that one word will not tell. Here, it is there to achieve a quite different effect that one word wouldn't:

Instinctive

I know that instincts are good: the instincts to preserve oneself, or seek company, or procreate are part of the goodness of man. You have to keep in mind who is using the word, though. Remember what the feminist position implies for a theology of body: it is a husk, an exterior, and therefore to say someone is acting on instinct, is to say he is living by something base and exterior, and is less than a man. He is *not* building up to a panegyric on the glory of intelligent creation; he's using what is meant to be a very pejorative term.

Post-fall

I've seen this usage before, and I don't know what to make of it. What I can tell you is that it serves as a kind of loaded language to dismiss a feminist's opponent; the opponent is "locked into a post-fall mode of thinking", quite often without a proper explanation of why he is wrong. It's a sort of irrefutable trump.

The propositional content of this epithet is debatable; it states that the Fall created an urge which has just been declared part of our created instinct. It's rather confusing if you try to reason it out, and

much better if you don't reason it out, and just let the words flow over you and show that whatever's being discussed is *bad*.

Unregenerative

This word may be read as saying that something is not itself part of the regeneration process; unless of the whole of a Christian's life (barring sin) is part of the regenerative process, this could just be part of a holy life that is not concerned with the facet called regeneration. However, in poetic context, this is part of the buildup saying that whatever follows is bad.

Males

Here we do not even see 'men', which in use by a feminist refers to less than one-half of men, but 'males'... the term reminds me of a related language, where it is considered to use the terms 'male' and 'female' of a human: they are used in biology, but of humans it is quite vulgar.

One other nuance, present if not obvious, is not simply as you or I would make a such a statement: you or I would refer to women half of the time when we were saying something sexually specific. They wouldn't. This statement says something very insulting about 'males', not because this sample happens to refer to us, but because no male feminist would dare to make such statements about women. A female feminist may say more abrasive things about traditional women, but a male feminist will nearly never do so. This provides a very interesting glimpse into their view of equality.

Engineer

Literally speaking, the term refers to part of how man participates in culture and the glory of God: that marvelous candle I described earlier was engineered. However, it is used in a metaphorical sense here, and is highly pejorative. The implication is that the accused is engineering something that was never meant to be engineered.

The interesting thing, especially with the last one, is... traditional theology is something organic that has been passed down from generation to generation, tended with the utmost of care by thinkers far too humble to try to engineer it, and is now being rejected in favor of something that has been engineered. That's why the spiritual climate produced the ill-starred Re-Imagining conference, something that wouldn't occur to the traditional theologians who're accused of engineering. This irony plays out in the next line:

Disguised in much theological discussion is the 'what should Christianity be like if I designed it?' agenda.

It is painfully obvious to you and me that making "much progress" on Pauline passages is seeing what Christianity would be like if they designed it, but the irony is apparently not evident there.

The list of indictments brought against traditional theology can be interesting. Looking closely may reveal things the accusers perceive because it is part and parcel of their world.

I don't think Christianity, or any generic god-conscious theology, was designed or engineered by the living God in an anthropomorphically satisfying way.

An astute observation; there is probably fertile ground for your research into why a person making this claim would do so in the context of criticizing traditional theology for not being anthropomorphically satisfying to people sharing his agenda.

It matters not whether the logic we use comes from Aristotle, Plato or Alfred E Newman, let's spell it out when we use it and justify why we use it.

Regarding your question, about why he neither spells out his logic nor justifies it: I honestly don't know. Perhaps he was rushed (an unusually common emotion for them), and he decided this was a poorer use of a small perceived available time than points of greater perceived substance, such as the subsequent list of opponents using personal attacks

attacks.

One of the tip-offs of the male dominator Christian theologians

Thinking about your intuition, I decided to check the archives.

An earlier note among the group had understood and responded in depth: specifically, that domination is what a feminist would expect of tradition because of his stereotype, and it is something read in, but is present neither in the Bible, nor in the theologians being represented. The 'misogynist' Paul is among few ancient writers who didn't tell husbands to keep women in line; he addresses women as moral agents, placing submission in their hearts, and then tells the men to love the women, naming as their example the most costly love of all—much more costly than submission. The group member responding had said, in so many words, that the sigil of male headship and authority is not a crown of gold but a crown of thorns.

Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on. The feminist position *needs* the traditional position to be abrasive to women—and if the Bible or traditionalists clarify, never mind; the abuse will be made up in the feminist's mind so he can still vilify the benighted.

Is their use of personal attack on egalitarian theologians.

I've done some reading of them. Once I was privileged to visit an arcane library that had nearly half the issues to [First Things](#) and [Touchstone](#), and I don't remember an article where one of them personally attacked an opposing theologian. There was quite a lot of polemic, and one devastating satire in *The Other Face of Gaia*, but... they show a remarkable amount of restraint, and I'm getting sidetracked.

What I was going to say is that these people viewed being nice and love as the same thing, so that talking about being loving but not nice is equivalent to Plato talking about being eudaimonic and being evil—a perceived contradiction in terms. In this case...

I can see how some Biblical passages would lose some of their force.

They had a concept of being 'unsanitary', kind of an amoral sense that you could get sick from something, and they knew disgust, but they didn't have a sense of being polluted and defiled... so few nonscholars would read Jesus' comparison of pillars of community to whitewashed tombs as being not merely an insult but a metaphor of their being so unholy that a person whose shadow fell on them would be defiled for a whole week. Likewise... they usually thought cannibalism was wrong, and knew the plot of *Oedipus Rex*, but they would still read 'brood of vipers' as simply comparing people to snakes and not with the full realization that Jesus compared them to creatures thought to kill their mothers and eat their way out—cannibalism and matricide being two of the most revolting things an ancient listener could think of. I can see how they might miss much of the abrasiveness, but there are so many other passages: "Now the Spirit expressly says that in the last times some will renounce the faith by paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron." You've read the Bible more than once; you could supply your own examples.

Somehow they were able to read these passages and not question the belief that the limits of niceness are the limits of love. I don't know how to explain why; that's just how it is. And so apparently the theologians mentioned are dismissed because they fail to meet a standard the Bible itself rejects.

Wayne Grudem, for example, has vilified Cathie Kroeger. He did this in print some time ago and it still hurts Cathie. I saw her, her husband Dick along with Elaine Storkey at Cathie's home a few weeks ago and it is obvious the personal attacks have done damage.

I talked with a colleague, and I believe Arius also sustained emotional damage from what happened at Nicaea.

J I Packer has written some nasty things, using vocabulary stemming from secular conflict.

In reference to 'vocabulary stemming from secular conflict'... I understand your asking where the article author gets *his* vocabulary from,

but I'd prefer to abstain from judgment. I don't know that we have the background to evaluate this.

James Dobson, who is a psychologist of non-biblical foundations, has led the fight against the publication of more gender equal translations.

I've done some research, and I think he's referring to the obvious James Dobson... I wanted to do further research, because it's not at all obvious to me why he's categorized as a theologian... a sharp popularizer, to be granted, and a shade of demagogue; his psychological expertise is held in light esteem by psychologists now and was apparently held in light esteem then... perhaps the author was using the term 'theologian' as a convenient designation for "anyone prominent who disagrees with him." I don't mean that as a joke; if I had to choose between asking a brilliant theologian or a demagogue like Dobson to lead a fight, I'd pick the demagogue hands-down. (Perhaps the author wasn't familiar with very many *real* theologians' defense of sexuality.)

The idea of gender equal translations is interesting. Assuming a more modest objective of correcting gender bias without reading asexuality into God, the argument is made that the original languages used terms that were effectively asexual, so faithfully rendering them were asexual... and the terms in the original language were grammatically masculine which were understood to include the feminine. What's interesting here is that the terms in English were grammatically masculine and understood to include the feminine, universally and without question until feminists decided them to have gender bias.

It's kind of like someone going into a room where you enjoy seeing by candlelight, and then someone comes and brings in a blinding torch—and you get irritated and ask why, so he explains that you need the extra light because your eyes are dazzled.

Dobson's wife writes that the foundation of Christian marriage is the submission of the wife to the husband.

I don't share her perspective, but it is not clear to me why this statement is particularly significant. A more rigorous, if also more vivid

statement is particularly significant. A more rigorous, if also more vivid, statement is found in Martin Luther's statement that if your theology is perfect except for what the world, the flesh, and the Devil are at that moment attacking, then you are preaching nothing.

Many people pick one or more specializations or areas of emphasis; it's an understandable temptation to think that your specialization is the center of the universe. If you're smiling at this, you might take a moment to remember the many times you have viewed history as the foundation to all scholarly inquiry. It's not; it has a place among the Disciplines, and I am glad to study it, but history is not the foundation to Discipline.

It doesn't surprise me that a woman allied with Dobson would think submission was the foundation of Christian marriage; it has the dual qualities of being important and under attack. What I fail to see is why her statement should be *that* significant.

I favour and encourage the popularization and democratization of bible study and take the view that if a theologian can understand then so can I. And if I can understand it then it can be produced in a popularly understandable form.

Part of this passage is very confusing; before and after, he is frustrated by popularized and democratized Bible study which leads people to contradict his conclusion. I'm not going to sort through that, but I wish to summarize one element:

There's a kind of proverb, very common, where someone meeting a specialist would say, "In a sentence, explain what it is that you know." What is interesting is that this was not perceived as a riddle of heroic proportions, or even a ridiculous question; they believed instead that the burden of effort was on the specialist, and if he could not convey what knowledge he had obtained by years of excellent study, then he didn't know what he was talking about. The attitude in this challenge is apparently present in what is proposed.

On one level, there is confusion; given that the Bible is beyond any one person's understanding, the Bible was available, not merely in one or two translations, but so many translations we don't have a count. Many of

these were simplified. What appears to be said is not a Wycliffe call to make the Bible available to the common man, but a call for propaganda that will obscure what is presently obvious to the lay reader.

Instead we get more structure from these men who design and engineer. As I say, structure can speak louder than words. Structure can speak louder than the word of God. And for some, structure can become the word of God.

You have seen an article demonstrating how structure can speak louder than the word of God, an article that seeks and begs that the structure become the word of God. Read it closely. The allegation is made that structure and engineering are the realm of the tradition with no consideration made for how they might belong to the re-imaginings. Go to the [First Things](#) archive and read *The Skimpole Syndrome*: never mind if you dislike it, but is that the writing of an engineer? Then read materials from [Re-Imagining 2000](#) and ask if you see a reverent and trusting preservation of a transcendent and divine gift.

I don't know what, if anything, will come of it, but I took the opportunity to suggest once again to Cathie, Dick and Elaine that they begin producing their own translations of the gender passages along with an outline of the reasons for their differing translation and links for further study.

Why are they making a translation? Well, stop and think. I've made translations for the following reasons:

- To take a text not available in a given language, and make an understandable rendering.
- To take a text available only available in an arcane dialect of a given language, and make it understandable.
- To produce something that is close on a word-to-word level.
- To produce a text that renders thought-for-thought.
- Some careful balance of the previous two goals.
- To document linguistic ambiguity.

What is interesting here is that they aren't making a translation for any of these reasons. There's one reason you or I might not normally

any of those reasons. There's one reason you or I might not normally think of: to obscure a text's meaning.

You know that translations then tended to gut the Song of Songs, but there's really more going on here. The one I think was called the *Now Indispensible Version* was one where the scholars wanted to render the cruder passages accurately, but their elders said that part of God's word wasn't fit for public consumption. Translation bugaboos we will always have with us, but for some translations it is the *raison d'être*. The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* opens the Great Beginning with, "In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." The original for that verse says, literally, "And God was the Word;" Greek did not give John a more emphatic way to say, "And the Word *was* God." So why this translation? It is a translation made by heretics for the express purpose of being able to say, "*Flip, flip, flip*." The Bible doesn't really say that. See! My translation doesn't say so right here!"

That is exactly the kind of translation that is being requested here.

Clearly, from the discussion within our own intelligent group, the egalitarian information is not getting out.

I examined the archives: we know that egalitarian information was getting out in the group, and we know that because some very wise people rejected it, and stated that they had done so. The remark here is reminiscent of people who believe that, if you don't share their perspective, it can only be because you don't understand what they're saying. The mentioned article was actually a response sparked by someone who had weighed egalitarianism in the balance, and found it wanting.

Graham

One last note, because I know what you chose not to write.

He was not dead in mind.

He was absolutely brilliant—brighter than you. Graham Clinton was

a leader of the International Christian Mensa. Mensa is a society that allows people who have a certain quantified wisdom such as is found with one man among fifty, and their leaders are often even sharper. Graham Clinton was someone who worked through struggle, held a great deal of compassion for his neighbor, and did many good works—and I have intentionally shown you his writing so that you may see someone brilliant and a leader among Christians. He also spent some time at a very good seminary. He did not hold ecclesiastical title, but he was concerned (and talented) for a Christian life of the mind.

Satan will attack us wherever he can, and may be far more powerful on our strengths than our weakness. The letter I cite, and the movement from which it came, was not a movement of half-wits; it held many sharp people. It takes quite a lot of wits to make yourself that stupid. Compassion doesn't hurt; Graham could never have fallen for this poison did he not hold a great deal of compassion.

You do well enough in gawking at foreigners. That's commendable; it's good amusement. I might suggest there is more you could learn from your gawking—in particular, that their foibles are all too often our foibles dressed up in other clothes. All of the darkness in that letter is darkness I find in my own heart.

Would you come over here for a season? I miss you, and the discussions seemed to be livelier when they had your questions.

Cordially yours,
Sutodoreh
The year of our Lord 2504.

Hayward's Unabridged Dictionary

Preface

Ambrose Bierce has created a most useful dictionary, serving the ever important function of drawing attention to that which people learn to ignore. I do not agree with all of what he says, but none the less consider it immensely valuable. It is my opinion that subtlety and wit are entirely too scarce. Sometimes this work is a bit caustic; unfortunately, gently worded points are often gently ignored. Bierce wrote that his work was addressed to people who "prefer dry wines to sweet, sense to sentiment, wit to humor and clean English to slang." This work is written preferring subtlety and allusion to the blatant, thought to convenience, and honesty to comfort.

I would not be entirely honest to claim that this work is entirely my own. Some of the ideas are bits and pieces I've picked up here and there; I have done the work of a compiler as well of that of an author. The writing style is, to some effect, borrowed. And, of course, the actual idea for such a dictionary is not originally my own.

The definitions and aim are mostly theological, but occasionally dealing with some of the less agreeable aspects of American life. With apologies to Andy Rooney, there's probably something in here to offend anybody. I am not trying to cause a stinging for the sake of causing a sting; rather, my hope is writing

stung for the sake of causing a sting; rather, my hope in writing this is to be as the gadfly whom the Greek philosophers spoke of, with a sting that stirs people to thought and action. Where I point out problems, I believe that better is possible.

I could babble on for a few more pages, but it is my opinion that a frame does best not to be terribly gaudy and detract from the painting it holds. I believe that I've said enough, and that these definitions will introduce themselves.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T
U V W X Y Z

Abortion Rights Opponent, *n.* The politically correct term for a person who holds and acts upon the conviction that an unborn child has at least a few rights which should be legally protected, notably the right not to be killed.

Accuse, *v.* To draw attention to another's similarity to oneself.

Accusatory, *adj.* Defensive.

Acting, *n.* A profession as different from politics as night is from day.

A member of the one profession puts on costumes and makeup, goes before cameras, dramatically reads lines written by someone else, and pretends to be someone that he isn't, providing unconvincing but amusing entertainment to millions.

A member of the other profession makes movies.

Administration, *n.* That body which is in charge of an organization, overseeing everything from personnel to organization to allocation of resources to wasting subordinates' time in meetings. The administration cares for the needs of the organization, placing those needs second only to its own needs, desires, and conveniences.

Administratium, *n.* A chemical element which makes plutonium look tame.

From the news release:

The p

NEW CHEMICAL ELEMENT DISCOVERED

The heaviest element known to science was recently discovered by investigators at a major U.S. research university. The element, tentatively named administratium, has no protons or electrons and thus has an atomic number of 0. However, it does have one neutron, 125 assistant neutrons, 75 vice neutrons and 111 assistant vice neutrons, which gives it an atomic mass of 312. These 312 particles are held together by a force that involves the continuous exchange of meson-like particles called morons.

Since it has no electrons, administratium is inert. However, it can be detected chemically as it impedes every reaction it comes in contact with. According to the discoverers, a minute amount of administratium causes one reaction to take over four days to complete when it would have normally occurred in less than a second.

Administratium has a normal half-life of approximately three years, at which time it does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganization in which assistant neutrons, vice neutrons and assistant vice neutrons exchange places. Some studies have shown that the atomic mass actually increases after each reorganization.

Research at other laboratories indicates that administratium occurs naturally in the atmosphere. It tends to concentrate at certain points such as government agencies, large corporations, and universities. It can usually be found in the newest, best appointed, and best maintained buildings

maintained savings.

Scientists point out that administratium is known to be toxic at any level of concentration and can easily destroy any productive reaction where it is allowed to accumulate. Attempts are being made to determine how administratium can be controlled to prevent irreversible damage, but results to date are not promising.

-Unknown

Admirable, *adj.* Embodying a virtue for whose absence the speaker excuses himself.

Adult Bookstore, *n.* A store offering books and movies which cater to infantile fantasies.

Advertising, *n.* (1) The fine art of lying to consumers about what is actually being sold. (2) A notable amendment of capitalist theory, whereby the market comes to favor, not the producers who sell the best product, but those who sell the best image. (3) A substantial misallocation of economic resources, whereby a tremendous portion of the economy which could do something useful, is wasted. (This misfortune has the additional demerit of providing a substantial competitive edge to those who use it.) For example, for each packet of mixed vegetables sold at the supermarket, more money is spent to place a colored picture on the packet than actually goes to the farmer. (4) ...

AI, *n.* Artificial Intelligence. A form of artificially generated computer intelligence which has proved remarkably successful at tasks such as playing chess as well as a grandmaster, using integral calculus to solve problems, and examining blood test results to diagnose blood disorders more accurately than most doctors, and which has utterly failed at tasks such as answering rudimentary questions about the story told in an I Can Read Book.

Allegory, *n.* A song whose content we find far too embarrassing to

believe could actually be a part of Holy Scripture.

Alternate, *adj.* Unacceptable, but shielded by the aegis of political correctness.

America, *n.* A great nation which like a melting pot; many ingredients come together in turbulent seething, those on the bottom get burned, and the scum rise to the top.

American Catholic, *n.* A conflation of 'American' and 'Catholic' in which 'American' takes precedence to 'Catholic'.

Amplified Bible, *n.* A new concept in translation theory, consisting largely of a word study crammed into a literal translation, listing possible meanings of words regardless of context. Thus the salad bar theologian is permitted to pick and choose the wording which will most emphatically support his point. Moreover, it avoids confusion by bracketed insertions, explaining what the author of the text failed to state clearly. Hence Mark 14:23 giving account of Jesus's actions at the Last Supper, says, "He also took a cup [of juice of grapes]..."

Anathema, *adj* and *n.* Consecrated and holy. The term originally denoted a special offering hanging in a temple, and has come to mean a degree of holiness which borders on superlative.

The Supreme Being is the most holy; the angels in his presence shield their faces so that they will not see him and be destroyed. Secondary to this is a degree of holiness such that anything which touches it must be destroyed. The Ark of the Covenant was holy; it was to be carried only with poles, and when Uzzah touched it in order to steady it, he was destroyed. The book of Joshua records an entire city of such sanctity that it was anathema; Achan stole goods from it, and fierce anger burned against the whole nation of Israel until he was destroyed.

It is possible for this sanctity to be conferred by benediction: one form used contains the words "Let him be

benediction, the form used contains the words, "Let him be anathema..." That is to say, a person as well as an object can be so sacred and holy as to be anathema.

Commonly, this benediction is bestowed upon other believers. The present unity of the church is so complete that it is frequently bestowed upon other Christians whose beliefs legitimately differ slightly, and almost never bestowed on heretics.

Anglicanism, n. See *Catholic Lite*.

Annoying, adj. Popular among companies who wish to persuade you to purchase their goods or services.

Annulment, n. The form of divorce practiced by those who classify divorce as mortal sin.

Anti-Realism, n. Any one of a number of philosophical systems whose proponents believe themselves to have established the nature of knowledge and reality to be such that it is impossible to make any definitive statements about the nature of reality.

Apocryphal, adj. Hidden.

Originally, the term denoted the writings of certain mystery religions which were hidden from all who were not part of the elite of initiates, such as the Orthodox Book of Common Prayer. Over time, the word has shifted in meaning. It is the nature of Christianity to proclaim its truths, not to hide them; thus, there was no need for apocryphal books in the first sense. The term was applied to books which were hidden for another, entirely different, reason; namely, books which were excluded due to heretical content, such as James or the book of Ecclesiastes. There may be a second connection between the two usages of the word, but it is wisely left unmentioned.

Appearance of Evil, n. A bane which people will commit evil in order to avoid.

Archaic, *adj.* Reflecting the best and most enduring relics of centuries gone before. Said of practices, ideas, and language which reflect a belief that wisdom may be found in thoughts of the past as well as those of the present. A pejorative term.

Arminianism, *adj.* The school of thought opposite Calvinism. Named after Arminius, a theologian who was taught under Calvin's successor, Theodore Beza. Arminius began to depart from Calvin's doctrine by teaching conditional predestination, as contrasted to Beza, who emphatically taught limited atonement.

Arranged marriage, *n.* A marriage not chosen by the parties involved; arranged marriages exhibit far lower divorce rates than those voluntarily chosen.

That they be more successful is not really as strange as it may seem at first.

In America, you marry the girl you love; in India, you love the girl you marry.

-A man speaking in a video on Indian philosophy

There is a fundamental difference in how arranged and voluntarily chosen marriages tend to be approached. Voluntary marriages tend to be approached as "If I can just find the right person, we can live happily ever after."; arranged marriages are not approached with any delusions of being an effortless bliss or some sort of box that one can take things out of without putting anything into. But with poorer conditions — with a bride and groom that not only have not chosen each other, but have not necessarily met before the day of the wedding — people decide to make it work. Therefore it is not the lands of arranged marriages, but America, which is the land of divorce.

The difference between expecting something to be fruitful without any effort and without any sacrifice, and expecting something to be difficult (but choosing via effort and sacrifice to

something to be difficult (but crossing via effort and sacrifice to make it work) is a difference between disappointment and a rewarding joy, and applies to much more of life than only marriage.

Aspirin, *n.* A drug used in the treatment of arthritis, commonly found in a container with a childproof cap.

Atheism, *n.* A religion requiring exceptional faith.

Attention Span, *n.* The length of time for which a person is able to maintain concentration. In most nations, a long attention span is valued as enabling understanding of well-developed, coherent, and complete arguments; in America,

Automobile, *n.* A transportation device hailed as the solution to the problem of providing transit without creating the pollution generated by a horse.

AV, *n.* Authorized Version. The Authorized Version, also known as the King James Version, is the original form of the Word of God. All subsequent paraphrases, while easier to read, are merely the word of man.

Bachelor's Degree, *n.* The primary degree offered by colleges attended as happy hunting grounds, such as Moody Bridal Institute.

Ballista, *n.* A device useful in the adjustment of sound systems playing elevator music.

Beatitude, *n.* A genre of didactic statement, used in the Sermon on the Mount.

Blessed are the ticklish,
for the touch of a friend shall fill them with laughter.

-The Unauthorized Version

Beautiful, *adj.* Distorted and unnatural.

One of the enduring aspects of human culture is a tradition which universally establishes a single standard of beauty, one for the male body and (especially) one for the female.

There is some feature which may be attractive, and is exaggerated out of all proportion. Or, alternately, some feature which is unattractive, and is exaggerated out of all proportion.

Because a long and slender neck looks beautiful, a nice contrast to the thick bulges of a man's shape, there's a tribe in Africa which uses copper braces to stretch out women's necks to be a foot long.

China, noting that men have big feet and a feminine shape involves small feet, has the practice of footbinding, using the one kind of footwear tighter than climbing boots in order to painfully keep feet from growing any larger than those of a little girl.

Recent anthropological findings report an obscure culture which has successfully made the transition from ridiculous to bombastic. It has decided that the roundness of feminine beauty should be replaced with the shape of a pre-pubescent boy, and reacted to modern technology by using the woman's body as a repository for gelatinous capsules.

Beer Commercial, *n.* The *reductio ad disgustum* of advertising's image of women.

Bible, *n.* A work high on the tolerant people's list of books to be burned.

We live in a pluralistic, multicultural society where young people raised according to the tenets of Hinduism, Islam, or the humanist philosophy of Bertrand Russel must feel as welcome as young people raised on the Bible. Our solution to this challenge is ingenious. Knowing that the vast majority of young people are profoundly ignorant of

the Bhagavad Gita, or of the Koran, or for that matter of the philosophy of Bertrand Russel, we have decided in the interests of tolerance and pluralism to leave them equally ignorant of the Bible. Our young people enjoy a perfect democracy of ignorance.

-Literary critic Peter Marchand, commenting on the removal of the Bible from public school classrooms

Billboard, *n.* An eyesore which possesses the additional demerit of being a distraction to drivers.

Drivers who take their eyes off the road to read billboards should make sure that they're sufficiently insured.

Just a thought.

-A billboard seen in Holland, Michigan

I think I shall never see
a billboard lovely as a tree.
Perhaps, unless the billboards fall
I shall never see a tree at all.

-Ogden Nash

Blind, *adj.* Possessing eyes that do not see. The prophet Isaiah spoke of people having eyes that do not see and ears that do not hear. That prophecy has had numerous fulfillments; of chief contemporary relevance is current underinterpretation of Biblical teachings on wealth.

Bombastic, *adj.* Of, from, or pertaining to the PC-USA.

Boot, *n.* An ingenious device used to keep astronauts on the moon from floating away in space.

Brainwashing, *n.* A cold Big Brother's constant barrage of

propoganda to people under his thumb.

One American who recently visited the People's Republic of China said that at first he wondered how people could tolerate the constant barrage of slogans on walls and radio telling everybody what to think. Then he realized that his own society reels under nonstop messages just as inane.

-Doris Janses, *Living More with Less*, on advertising

Budweiser, *n.* A headache in a bottle. The dog of beers.

With most beers, if you drink too much, you get a headache the day after. With Annheiser-Busch, you get a headache as you drink it.

-A German student, spring '95

Bumber Sticker, *n.* A tool to present the ludicrous as unassailable. One bumber sticker, for instance, reads:

PRO-CHOICE, PRO-CHILD
EVERY CHILD A WANTED CHILD

This form of deep compassion is perhaps inspired by satirist fantasy author Terry Pratchett:

Give a man a fire and keep him warm for a day.
Light a man on fire and he will be warm for rest of his life.

Busy Signal, *n.* An elegant sound designed to prepare the ear to listen to country and western.

Cafeteria, *n.* A refectory instrumental in the building of fine and upstanding young students. The meat builds muscle, the milk builds bones, and the rest builds character.

Friend: We're going to the cafeteria for dinner. Wanna come along?

come along:

Student: Sorry, but I'm trying not to lose weight.

Canada, *n.* See *Northern Wastes*.

Canadian, *adj.* and *n.* An anti-American American.

Capital Punishment, *n.* A form of sentence found in the most dangerous of first world nations, used by the government to intimidate criminals who have been taught that violence is the way to solve their problems.

Category Mistake, *n.* An assumption embodied in an inappropriate question, inquiring about an undefined attribute, such as, "Is yellow square or round?", "Is the doctrine of the Trinity calm or excited?", or "What was the point of that speech?"

Catholic, *adj.* and *n.* United, universal. Hence the Nicaene Creed, shared in common by nearly all believers, says "I believe in one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." Today the term denotes one of three distinct branches of Christianity, the other two being Orthodox and Protestant. All present believers are members of one branch and forbidden to receive communion with members of the other two.

Catholic University, *n.* An institution of higher learning that welcomes Orthodox students with open arms on the theory of, "The Church must breathe mustard gas with both lungs!"

Causality, *n.* The mechanism by which cause brings about effect, thoughtfully provided as a reminder to philosophers of who is in Heaven and who is on earth. The latter have responded by deciding under what bounds the former is permitted to operate.

CD, *n.* Compact Disc. Used to record musical works in accordance with the popular taste, the compact disc is a small, round plate made out of the same material as bulletproof windows. This is

believed to be in anticipation of more sophisticated reactions to the material they contain.

Ceremonial Law, *n.* As established in the Pentateuch, an elaborate system of rules and regulations. Ceremonial law contained, of course, exacting detail governing the administration of rites and ceremonies, but also contained an intricate calendar of holy days, told which foods were clean and unclean, talked about objects which were consecrated and objects which were profane, described what haircuts were and weren't acceptable, and so on. Paul spoke of this in many places; in his epistle to the Colossians, he describes all of these things as shadows of the reality found in Christ. Christ nailed it to the cross, and the Church has raised it from the dead.

Chalice, *n.* A vessel used to hold drinks, which were sometimes augmented by various poisons.

Lady Astor (to Churchill): Winston Churchill, if I were your wife, I would put poison in your cup.

Churchill: Lady Astor, if you were my wife, I would drink it.

Chaotic, *adj.* Embodying chaos; uncontrolled and unpredictable. A chaotic situation is one in which presence of mind is good and absence of body is better.

Checks-and-balances, *n.* A system of government with power divided between different branches, so that no one man or branch can hold too much power. This is accomplished by providing each branch with "checks" on the power of others, to maintain a "balance", in order that (once the government has grown sufficiently corrupt) the amount of good that one honest man can inflict is kept within tolerable bounds.

Cheese, *n.* The most important ingredient in good pizza and successful television programming.

Childproof Cap, *n.* A safety device preventing parents from opening certain containers without their children's assistance.

Chivalry, *n.* A time-honored code of conduct which, at a time when most men treated women as chattels, demanded as central to a man's honor that women be accorded deference, protection, and respect. Considered by modern feminism to be a bane.

Christian Contemporary Music, *n.* A genre of song designed primarily to impart sound teaching, such as the doctrine that we are sanctified by faith and not by good taste in music.

Christian Film, *n.* A mode of expressing Christian doctrine which uses the same essential communication strategy as hard-core porn, in that the form of storytelling leaves nothing to the imagination but the plot.

Christian Science, *n.* A system of doctrines with a name carefully chosen, word by word, in honor of the accuracy with which it describes the world.

Christmas, *n.* A yearly holiday celebrating the coming of the chief Deity of Western civilization: Mammon.

Church, *n.* An early substitute for America and the GOP.

Circular Definition, *n.* A definition which is circular.

Civilization, *n.* The state of living where people abide in cities rather than roam planes, conferring a respect for the value of human life not found among savages.

Reporter (To Gandhi): Mr. Gandhi, what do you think of Western civilization?

Gandhi: I think it would be a good idea.

Classic, *n.* A work which everybody wants to have read but nobody wants to read.

Closed-Minded, *adj.* Possessing a mind which, like a pipe sealed on both ends, does not permit ideas to enter and leave. Contrasted with an open mind, which permits ideas to flow, like water through a pipe, entering and exiting without leaving any trace. There is perhaps a third prospect, of weighing and examining most ideas against a higher standard to grab firm hold of what is meritorious and worth keeping and reject what is twisted and mistaken, but this idea does not occur sufficiently often to merit its own word. Promoting open-mindedness is perhaps the single greatest achievement of current thought.

If Jesus Christ were to come today, people would not crucify him. They would ask him to dinner, and hear what he had to say, and make fun of it.

-Thomas Carlyle

Coconut, *n.* Positive proof that plant life has been affected by the Fall. See also: *Pistachio*, *Cashew*.

Coffeehouse, *n.* A location symbolic of the fake intellectual scene, where people sit over a cup of coffee and talk about how open-minded they think they are.

Coin, *n.* The smallest unit of currency. The coin generally bears something symbolic of the nature and perspective of the people who create it — what they value, what they think of. The highest coin in the United States bears a picture of a human being; the highest coin in Canada bears the image of a loon.

Coincidence, *n.* In television, a kind of event that happens to happen as often as people need it to.

Collateral Damage, *n.* Blood that flows like a river.

Comedian, *n.* An entertainer possessing every faculty relevant to amusement save the ability to be funny.

Commentary, *n.* A multivolume explanation of the meaning of a

book, chapter, or (occasionally) single verse, such as Ecclesiastes 6:11.

Commitment, *n.* [*N.B.: definition pending upon completion of a search for relationships which are not viewed as temporary and disposable*]

Committee, *n.* The divine model of speedy application of resources to the point of need.

For God so loved the world, that he formed a committee, that whosoever attendeth on it should not perish, but have everlasting life in which to await a decision.

-The Unauthorized Version

Common Sense, *n.* An exceedingly uncommon commodity.

Communist, *n.* One of the money changers Jesus drove out of the temple.

Company, *n.* The associations a person is seen with, as a reflection of character. Keeping good company is one area where many Christians have gone above and beyond the example of Christ.

Computer Error, *n.* The juxtaposition of at least two purely human errors, one of which is attributing the problem to the computer.

Congress, *n.* A body of men whose sole purpose in existence is to pile law upon law upon law.

The fundamental belief embodied in this philosophy is that a nation at peace with itself is ordered and held together, not by love and true religion, nor by honor and morality, nor even by a minimal attempt to act according to Confucious's simple words, "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you," but rather by the brute force of edicts issued by the

sovereign.

Therefore, when the nation was first formed, and not only did held together but actually built itself up by leaps and bounds, the legislators believed it their duty to create laws. When the nation's growth began to slow and problems to increase, the legislators believed it their duty to attempt to improve the situation by creating laws. And now, as the nation is crumbling, when it is common for a mere child to carry a .45 caliber handgun because he does not feel safe at school, it is by the force of tax laws hundreds of pages long and penal codes which the lawmakers themselves could not hope to read that the legislature seeks to stem the ever advancing tide of chaos.

The greater the number of laws and enactments, the greater the number of thieves and robbers.

-Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

Conscience, *n.* An early artifact formerly serving the purpose now fulfilled by harsh penalties assigned as punishment for getting caught.

Conspicuous, *adj.* Trying to act inconspicuous.

Consumer Oriented Services, *n.* Religion within the bounds of amusement.

This fundamental category mistake places church meetings not within the category of religious services designed to help people worship and grow, loving enough to give a gadfly's sting, but rather action-packed spectacles designed to attract people who are seeking amusement. Seminaries, far from warning against this, are actually promoting it.

This is, unfortunately, not a novelty. Like schools, and USA-TODAY, and so on and so forth, just one more segment of society in need of a swift kick in the pants from Neil Postman.

Copyright, *n.* A legal protection acquired for a piece of information, commonly used by the author or publisher of a book, program, et cetera, to secure benefit\$ from its use. While it is possible to be more lenient in what a copyright permits, that option ranks to many as an extremely gnu concept. Most commonly, all rights are reserved. Without the express written consent of the owner, *n.* part of the work may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or biological.

Corporate Ladder, *n.* An awe inspiring structure which reaches to the clouds and leans against the wrong building.

By working hard for eight yours a day, you may get to be a boss and work hard for twelve hours a day.

-Mark Twain

Crash Test, *n.* A simulated collision, used to prove the safety superiority of larger and heavier cars by showing that they provide partial protection in an accident that a more maneuverable car would be able to avoid.

Creativity, *n.* An attribute which is admired and praised in figures of the past.

Cult, *n.* An aberrant group whose bizarre practices deviate from what is established and considered normative. Etymologically, the word signifies worship.

Cybertechnology, *n.* Technology which enters into the body, such as an artificial heart or robotic arm.

At present, a surgeon has access to books upon books of procedures designed to restore function to a hand injured, and yet not one procedure designed to improve the function of a hand uninjured. Cybertechnology which is not remedial — a replacement for a defective heart or severed limb being examples of remedial cybertechnology — is essentially the

property of science fiction writers, who allow all manner of incredible technology to enter the body.

The prime exception, if it is to be counted as such, is chemical. There exist drugs which exert special impact on the body. Most are used in medical fashion — an antibiotic or some other such function — but there are a few which act to improve the function of a person in health. It was observed that smoking cigarettes causes people to breathe more deeply. Realizing this, and understanding the importance of oxygen to a developing child, doctors advised pregnant women to smoke. There are many other drugs which bring a similar improvement. The use of cocaine is a wonderful way to deal with depression, and the use of massive amounts of anabolic steroids brings an unequalled boost to athletic prowess.

This present lexicographer looks with great anticipation to the day when the cybertechnology described in novels may become commonplace.

Dance, *n.* An activity of joy and celebration given numerous references in Scripture (none of which are negative), now considered by staunch Christians to be demonic if enjoyed in community.

Dark Sucker, *n.* Supposedly, an alternative understanding of a light source.

This jesting theory states that darkness is something which obscures vision; we are able to see when the darkness is sucked out. Eventually, the dark suckers become full of darkness and themselves become dark; this explains why incandescent bulbs, fluorescent tubes, and candles universally turn dark when they cease to function.

The theory was probably devised by an electrical engineer, who wanted to do something silly while taking a break from drawing circuit diagrams.

Dating, *n.* A sequence of miniature marriages, complete with miniature sex, ending in miniature divorces.

Democracy, *n.* [Gk. *demos*, people, *cratein*, to rule. No connection to the etymology of 'demon'] A Utopian form of government based on the twin assumptions that the majority will generally do what is noble, just, and true, and that mass persuasion techniques cannot be used to set aside good judgement.

Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible, but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.

-Reinhold Niebuhr

It has been said that television is an example of democracy at its ugliest; there is no accountability, and people tend to watch something other than what they would publicly be seen as associating with. It is a degenerating morass, increasingly portraying sexual sin as harmless and bloodshed as an amusing sport; recent years have seen the network television premiere of America's first made-for-TV war. It was wrong of the Evil Empire to define a just war as anything which advances the cause of communism; we know that a war is only justified if it makes the world safe for freedom and democracy. Were that war not to have been fought, Kuwaiti refugees would still be stranded in the surrounding nations' disco parlors. We would not have been able to restore the tyranny and human rights violations of the Kuwaiti ruling family, nor, more importantly, implement important alterations to the infrastructure of Baghdad to better deal with the problem of overpopulation. All of this is necessary to be able to listen to a child's shattered dreams, and then explain why Daddy isn't coming home.

For the majority to oppress the minority is perfectly democratic; the condition for democracy is the desire of the majority, a consideration independent of right and wrong. In perhaps the most spectacular debacle of all, Adolf Hitler rose to

power in Germany, through means which can only be described as unimpeachably democratic.

Eloquence, *n.* The art of persuading fools that white is the color that it appears to be. It includes the gift of making any color appear white.

-Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*.

Demon Rum, *n.* An unfortunate by-product of Jesus's first miracle.

Denomination, *n.* A group of schismatics whose conduct we find to be in accordance with Scripture.

Department of Defense, *n.* A Ministry of War continually involved in operations which have little or nothing to do with the integrity of national borders.

Deus Ex Machina, *n.* [Lat. *deus*, god, *ex*, out of; from, *machina*, machine] (1) In fiction, an unrealistic solution to a problem, which miraculously works. For example, a poor family's financial struggles finding resolution in the death of a hitherto unknown relative who willed them his wealthy estate. (2) In nonfiction, an unrealistic technological solution to a problem with its origin in the evil within the human heart, which miraculously fails. For example, infanticide on demand as a solution for the contempt for children which causes child abuse.

Dictator, *n.* An evil man who maintains power by intimidation and force, refusing to obey the United States.

Dinosaur, *n.* An immense prehistoric beast with a mental capacity lower than that of a field mouse. Figuratively, the term is used in a very pejorative manner by computer scientists, in reference to annoying machines which have miniscule capabilities and take inordinate amounts of time to do anything useful. Dinosaurs typically make obnoxious noises, and are bulky eyesores with glowing green against a somewhat darker but none the less nauseating background. For all the disagreeable

things in American culture, we have learned the importance of teaching computer literacy to young children.

Disclaimer, *n.* A kind of publisher's preface accompanying books, advertisements, et cetera, for the edification of any lawyers who may happen to read the work. Most disclaimers are either patently false, as the disclaimer by cigarette manufacturers that colorful advertisements sporting cartoon characters are not meant to attract the attention of children, or blatantly obvious, as the following words found before many novels:

This is a work of fiction. The characters and plot of this story are solely the product of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to the personality or actions of any person, living or dead, is purely coincidental.

Dishonesty, *n.* A condition which is considered a vice until it is channeled into the virtuous and proper bounds of tact.

Dispensationalism, *n.* Systematic theology as an excuse for lack of faith.

Divorce, *n.* A legalized form of child abuse.

DOS, *n.* Disk Operating System. A set of programs offering crude disk operations, frequently confused with a complete and robust operating system.

A master was explaining the nature of Tao to one of his novices, "The Tao is embodied in all software — no matter how insignificant," said the master.

"Is the Tao in a hand-held calculator?" asked the novice.

"It is." came the reply.

"Is the Tao in a video game?"

"Yes, it is." came the reply.

"The Tao is even in a video game," said the master.

"And is the Tao in the DOS for a personal computer?"

The master coughed and shifted his position slightly.
"The lesson is over for today."

-Geoffrey James, *The Tao of Programming*, 4.3

Doubt, *n.* The cornerstone of the four cardinal virtues of classical modernity.

DoxaSoma, *n.* The Christian spiritual practice of meditative prayer through exercise, balance, and body posture. (Minimum 85% recycled from Hindu spiritual practices.)

Driver's License, *n.* A form of identification required in order to legally purchase alcoholic beverages.

Dystopia, *n.* Utopian theory in practice.

Easter, *n.* The highest point of the Christian calendar, named after the Babylonian whore goddess.

Edifice, *n.* A building antedating the advent of the Bauhaus aesthetic.

Educated, *adj.* Unemployed with a degree.

Education Party, *n.* The party which nominated for important office a man lacking sufficient training to spell personal names or those of common household items.

Eh?, *tic.* See *Like*.

Eighteen, *n.* In the eyes of the United States government, the number of years which constitute the age of accountability. At this age, a person is no longer treated as a child, but as a mature adult with sound judgment. Eighteen years is old enough to give a signature that bears legal weight without the approval of a

legal guardian, old enough to decide the fate of a human life or nation by serving as a juror on a capital case or by casting a vote, old enough to enlist or be conscripted to military service, old enough to kill enemy soldiers and old enough to die in combat, but too young and immature to visit a restaurant and enjoy a glass of wine with dinner.

Eisegesis, *n.* Reading one's meaning into a text, as distinguished from exegesis, drawing the meaning out of a text. It is interesting to note that the people most skilled in eisegesis, particularly as it pertains to Scripture, do not generally understand the distinction.

Electricity, *n.* A modern convenience which, when combined with running water, is capable of making life very inconvenient.

Element, *n.* The basic building blocks of which all matter is built. According to the ancient Greeks, there were four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water. Science has progressed beyond that; matter generally consists of atoms, the ultimate, indivisible unit. Atoms in turn are built of more fundamental and elementary particles, and the elementary particles combine in various ways to generate the forms of matter we know of — Solid, Liquid, Gas, and Plasma.

Embarrassment, *n.* The one fly in the ointment that it is hoped that opponents won't notice. In general, attempts are made to discredit embarrassments, the results of which can frequently be very amusing to watch. Fortunately, there is an exception if the embarrassment comes from Scripture. Holy Scripture is recognized to be God-breathed, and any embarrassing passage is taken very seriously; exegetes attempt to discern the passage's true meaning through careful reading and detailed word studies.

Man will occasionally stumble over the truth, but most of the time he will pick himself up and continue on.

Winston Churchill

Enlightenment, *n.* The beginning of the fall of Western civilization and thought.

Environmentalist, *n.* One devoted to a particular political agenda, regardless of its impact on the environment.

A recent project at Argonne National Laboratory was working on a new generation of nuclear reactor which would be in many ways a dream come true. Its design would be such that meltdown would be physically impossible. It could run on nuclear waste from other plants, not only generating power but reducing them to material which would become harmless in a matter of roughly a century, rather than millions of years. It could run on nuclear warheads, thus not only providing a safe and permanent manner to dispose of some of the most appalling and destructive devices ever created, but so doing in a manner which would provide useful energy to hospitals and families; a beautiful picture of what it means to beat swords into ploughshares.

However, it is still nuclear, and, in the eyes of environmentalism, all nuclear power is evil and must be stopped at any cost. This project was, most definitely, stopped at any cost. It was terminated at great monetary cost; it was nearing completion, and, now that it was ready to be tested on different materials, those materials must be disposed of, at a cost of ninety-four million dollars more than it would have cost to complete. It was terminated at great environmental cost; those materials are dangerous nuclear wastes, and, though they were going to be made harmless, they must now be disposed of in established manners; that is to say, function as the nuclear waste that environmentalists so adamantly oppose. However, they stopped something bearing the dirty 'n' word, so environmentalists are now happy.

It is at least fortunate that environmentalists do not yet have the means to extinguish the sun.

Episcopalianism, *n.* A most interesting combination of Catholic and Protestant, quite effectively combining the worst of both worlds.

Euphemasia, *n.* In writing, choice of words and phrases that skillfully dance around what they mean. This avoids offending people, and puts any alternative certainty of the work being taken seriously out of its state of being differently happy.

Evangelical, *n.* A believer who is devoted to the doctrine of Sola Scriptura and verse by verse study of Scripture. The Great Commission is at the center of their ethics, and they believe in proclaiming Christ by deed as well as word. Thus many of them wisely abide by prohibitions, against dangerous things such as the following: card games, drinking, dancing, movies, swearing... While none of these are technically outlawed by Scripture, they are thought to be good ideas entirely in accordance with its essential teaching, as reflected in verses such as the following: Ps. 149:3, Eccl. 9:7, II Cor. 4:6, Gal. 1:6-8, 3:1-2, 5:1, 12,18,22-25, Eph. 2:15, Col. 2:8,13-14,16,20-23, I Thes. 5:19, I Tim. 4:1-5.

Evil, *n.* That which is twisted, depraved, and wicked.

Once upon a time, a king wished that his people know what evil was, so that his people could learn to recognize and flee from it. He issued a summons, that, in a year, all of his artists should come to him with one picture, to show what was evil. The best picture would be displayed to the people.

In a year, they all appeared at the king's palace. There were very few artists in the kingdom, but those who were there were very skillful, and worked as they had never worked before. Each brought a picture beneath a shroud.

The king turned to the first artist who had come. "Jesse, unveil your picture, and tell us its interpretation."

Jesse lifted the cloth. Against a background of blackened skulls was a dark green serpent, the color of venom and poison, with eyes that glowed red. "Your Majesty, it was the Serpent whose treacherous venom deceived man to eat of the forbidden fruit. The eye is the lamp of the body, and the Serpent's eye burns with the fires of Hell. You see that beyond the Serpent are skulls. Evil ensnares unto death and outer darkness."

The court murmured its approval. The picture was striking, and spoke its lesson well. The king, also, approved. "Well done, Jesse. If another picture is chosen, it will not be because you have done poorly. Now, Gallio, please show us your work."

Gallio unveiled his painting. In it was a man, his face red and veins bulging from hate. In his hand, he held a curved dagger. He was slowly advancing towards a woman, cowering in fear. "Your Majesty, man is created in the image of God, and human life is sacred. Thus the way we are to love God is often by loving our neighbor. There are few blasphemies more unholy than murder. You have asked me for a picture to show what evil is, that your subjects may flee from it. This is evil to flee from."

The court again murmured its approval, and the king began to shift slightly. It was not, as some supposed, because of the repellent nature of the pictures, but because he had secretly hoped that there would be only one good picture. Now, it was evident that the decision would not be so simple. "Gallio, you have also done well. And Simon, your picture?"

Simon unveiled his picture, and people later swore that they could smell a stench. There, in the picture, was the most hideous and misshapen beast they had ever seen. Its proportions were distorted, and its colors were ghastly. The left eye was green, and taller than it was wide. The right eye was even larger than the left, red, bloodshot, and flowing with blood; where there should have been a pupil, a claw grotesquely protruded. It was covered with claws, teeth, fur, scales, blood, slime, tentacles, and bits of rotted flesh; several members of the

court excused themselves. "However it may be disguised, evil is that which is sick, distorted, and ugly."

There was a long silence. Finally, the king spoke again. "I see that there are three powerful pictures of evil, any one of which is easily a masterpiece and well fit to show to the people. Barak, I know that you have been given artistic genius, and that perhaps your picture will help me with this difficult decision. Unveil your picture."

Barak unveiled his picture, and an awestruck hush fell over the court. There, unveiled, was the most beautiful picture they had ever seen.

The picture was in the great vault of a room in a celestial palace. It was carved of diamond, emerald, ruby, jasper, amethyst, sardonyx, and chrysolite. Through the walls of gem, the stars shone brightly. But all of this was nothing, compared to the creature in the room.

He carried with him power and majesty. He looked something like a man, but bore glory beyond intense. His face shone like the sun blazing in full force, his eyes flashed like lightning, and his hair like radiant flame. He wore a robe that looked as if it had been woven from solid light. In his left hand was a luminous book, written in letters of gold, and in his right hand was a sharp, double edged sword, sheathed in fire and lightning.

The king was stunned. It took him a long time to find words, and then he shouted with all of his might.

"You fool! I ask you for a picture of evil, and you bring me this! It is true that fools rush in where angels fear to tread, and that, like unthinking beasts, they do not hesitate to slander the glorious ones. What do you have to say for yourself and for this picture? I shall have an explanation now, or I shall have your head!"

Barak looked up, a tear trickling down his cheek. "Your Majesty, do you not understand? It is a picture of Satan."

Exaggerate, *v.* In satire, to tell a frog, as if it were the present, a plausible description of what the water may be like in a few minutes.

Excuse, *n.* A statement which serves as evidence of a guilty conscience.

Explanation, *n.* An account of a situation which does not threaten the speaker's prejudice.

In George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*, princess Irene gets lost in her mountain home and finds a mysterious grandmother, who gives her a silver ring attached to an invisibly fine strand of spider-silk, and tells her that if she follows the thread Irene will find her grandmother's room. One time, Irene gets lost and follows the thread out of the house, in and out of all kinds of dark and unfamiliar caverns deep inside a goblin-infested mountain. She finds the imprisoned miner-boy Curdie and brings him to her grandmother. Curdie follows along, but cannot believe her strange account: even in the room where Irene claims to be speaking with her grandmother, Curdie sees only a dark and dirty garret. A bitter argument ensues, and Curdie returns home, vexed.

His mother coaxes the explanation out of him:

Then Curdie made a clean breast of it, and told them everything.

They all sat silent for some time, pondering the strange tale. At last Curdie's mother spoke.

"You confess, my boy," she said, "there is something about the whole affair you do not understand?"

"Yes, of course, mother," he answered. "I cannot

understand how a child knowing nothing about the mountain, or even that I was shut up in it, should come all that way alone, straight to where I was; and then, after getting me out of the hole, lead me out of the mountain too, where I should not have known a step of the way if it had been as light as in the open air."

"Then you have no right to say what she told you was not true. She did not take you out, and she must have had something to guide her: why not a thread as well as a rope, or anything else? There is something you cannot explain, and her explanation may be the right one."

"It's no explanation at all, Mother; and I can't believe it. Darwinism is the only game in town."

Fallenness, *n.* The defining characteristic of the present human condition. C.S. Lewis spoke wisely:

There are two types of people in this world:
those who say to God, "Thy will be done,"
and those to whom God says, "Thy will be done."

Herein may be found the explanation for most of human history.

Familiar, *adj.* Considered to be safe and good.

Fashion, *n.* The progressive self-revelation of the imago dei.

Fast, *n.* A New Testament practice which most current-day Christians have quickly disposed of.

Fast Food, *n.* An enterprise which pioneered the use of disposable polystyrene packaging, which was useful and convenient to the customer on the go. Now, due to consumer pressure, the fast food industry is genuinely concerned about the environment. The packaging presently used is biodegradable. The contents, unfortunately, are not.

Fat Free, *adj.* See *Taste Free*.

Feminism, *n.* Like most philosophical and ideological currents, truth gone mad.

Feminism at its heart embodies a substantial truth — that women have historically been treated as second class citizens (if even that), and that no society can call itself just while conducting business as usual — and its development tells many other truths: love, nurturance, and cooperation are foundational virtues in the life of a society; emotion is an integral part of being human; human relationships and community are important; porn degrades women and children, and promotes rape; no means no.

However, both first wave feminism (which sought equality on existing terms) and second wave feminism (which seeks to completely redefine the terms of equality) make statements that, if carried to their logical conclusions, are absolute madness. (To which many feminists would reply that logic is a tool of male oppression.)

At the root of this is a failure to identify the moral structure of the universe as ordered by a God who is the ultimate of masculinity — more Yang than Yin — and a failure to recognize femininity as a created good which, by its very nature, does not and should not order the universe. First wave feminism did not understand the differences between masculine and femininity; the second wave sees all good in terms of the feminine and all evil in terms of the masculine.

Thus is embarked upon a project to remake society (which consists entirely of male oppression) into a world of feminine good. The results vary from the comedic to the destructive — and end up to be at least as baneful to women as men.

To be swept away are all of the classics of literature and

philosophy: their purpose is to justify the exploitation of women. Men's languages are to be replaced by feminine tongues; they revolve around logic rather than emotion, and are cruelly imposed on little girls before they can learn to communicate by their own natures. Never mind that women talk more than men, or that the study of languages is dominated by women. Our languages are oppressive. Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, the landmark work which laid out the foundations of calculus, is "Newton's rape manual."

Of course, nearly all movements have a lunatic fringe, but it is unnecessary to look at feminism's fringes to see the destructive. Many, many women are told to regard *every* man as a potential rapist. Trust is essential to every human relationship; it is a building block as foundational as love and honesty. Yet feminism believes it in the best interest of women to regard every moment with every man as potentially turning into one of the deepest and inhuman violations possible; this means that they are to spend every moment with every man in unending fear.

Furthermore, at least a certain form of feminism, like multiculturalism, relativism, etc. in that they form a core of orthodoxy which the herd of free thinkers is shocked and indignant to see someone go against. Never mind, for example, that early feminism and the present black womanist movement found and find abortion to be unacceptable; anyone who stands against the legality of abortion is an abortion rights foe (just imagine what would happen if anyone used language that loaded in reference to a liberal...) who stands in the way of what can only be seen as a woman's private rights over her own body. Never mind that other cultures — even those which have had substantial impact from other peoples — are not multicultural and do not see the multiplicity of existant cultures as suggesting that everything is arbitrary, no one way of thinking or acting to be preferred over any other; the existence of other cultures which see things differently is proof that everything is an arbitrary matter for which there can be no standard of

judgement. (Never mind that there are a great many things, such as the Natural Law and the absence of our optimistic belief in human progress, which remain remarkably constant across various cultures and ages.) And relativism, of course, means relativism on some very specific points — namely, everything that forms a part of this core of orthodoxy is something that no open-minded person could seriously question, and every belief which could substantially challenge the core of orthodoxy is a relative and subjective opinion which anybody may hold on condition that it is not actually believed to be true. Upon even a few minutes of inspection, it would appear that these beliefs are not only furnished by a zeal not matched by thought, but are not even internally consistent.

But all of this doesn't really matter, because feminism and its cousins are not meant to be thought about; only fought for.

With allies and a supporting movement like this, what woman needs enemies?

Filiopatros Clause, *n.* An exceedingly poor excuse for a schism.

Flag, *n.* See *Idol*.

Flashlight, *n.* An instrument of imperception which obscures vision by producing a concentrated glare at one point which is sufficiently intense to prevent the user from seeing anything else. Environmentalists have brought the cleverness of this device one step further by producing the solar powered flashlight.

Foetus, *n.* A very young child whom it is deemed expedient to consider to be otherwise.

Form, *n.* A piece of paper used as by administrations to deter people from using their services. It is the opinion of this lexicographer that the following form could be of the utmost assistance in helping bureaucracies more effectively serve those under their

care.

Form to Request Information in the Form of a Form

Section 1: Personal Information

Name: _____ Sex: M F

Date of Birth: __/__/__

Social Security Number: ____ - ____ - ____

Driver's License Number: ____ - ____ - ____

VISA/MasterCard Number: ____ - ____ - ____ - ____

Mailing Address, Business:

Street: _____

City: _____ State: __ ZIP Code: _____

Mailing Address, Home:

Street: _____

City: _____ State: __ ZIP Code: _____

Telephone, Work: (____) ____ - ____, Ext. _____

Telephone, Home: (____) ____ - ____

Telephone, Car: (____) ____ - ____

Beeper: (____) ____ - ____ Chicago High School: Y N

E-mail Address:

(if address is in domain aol.com or webtv.net, please explain on a separate sheet of paper)

Height: _', __" Weight: ____ # Hair: _____ Eyes:

_____ Blood type: __ IQ: __

Political Affiliation: Federalist Republican
 Democrat Libertarian Monarchist Socialist
 Marxist Communist Nazi Fascist Anarchist
 Other (Please specify: _____)

Citizenship: United States, including Canada and other territories Mexico California Other (Please specify: _____)

Race: Caucasian/Pigmentally Challenged African
 Asian Hispanic/Latino Amerindian Heinz-57
 Other (Please specify: _____) An

athletic event where people run around an oval again and again and again.

Page 1 * End of Section 1 of 3

Section 2: Form Description

Length of Form, in Characters: _____

Number of Questions or Required Data: _____

Expected Time to Complete: ___ Hours, ___ Minutes,
___ Seconds.

Expected Mental Effort Required to Complete:

_____ (if form would insult
the intelligence of a senile hamster, please explain on a
separate sheet of paper)

**Expected number of questions judged to be
annoying, unnecessary, and/or personally
offensive:** _____

**Expected time wasted on questions judged to be
annoying, unnecessary, and/or personally
offensive:** ___ Hours, ___ Minutes, ___ Seconds.

**Expected blood pressure increase while filling out
form:** ___ mmHg systolic, ___ mmHg diastolic.

If further contemplation has led you to believe that
some of the questions asked are not strictly necessary to
provide the service that you offer upon completion of said
form, please enclose revised prototype here.

Page 2 * End of Section 2 of 3

Section 3: Essay Questions

Please explain, in 500 words or less, your philosophy
concerning the use of forms.

Please explain, in 200 words or less, why you designed

this form as you did.

Please explain, in 300 words or less, why you believe that this form is necessary. If you are in a service oriented sector and desire to require the form of people you serve, please explain why you believe that requiring people to fill out forms constitutes a service to them.

When this form is completed, please return to the address provided. The Committee for Selecting Forms will carefully examine your case and delegate responsibility to an appropriate subcommittee.

Please allow approximately six to eight weeks for the appointed subcommittee to lose your file in a paper shuffle.

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Formal Equivalent, *n.* The style of translation favored by those who hold the highest view of Scripture. The philosophy of formal equivalence justly realizes the secondary place the transmission of ideas, themes, and sagas holds to the importance of direct renderings of individual words and the preservation of the original word order. Even those who attempt to render thought for thought pay due homage to formal equivalence in their renderings of metaphors in that most highly respected of books, the Song of Songs.

FORTTRAN, *n.* See *BASIC*.

Free, *adj.* Complimentary with your purchase of an item overpriced by more than the value of the gift.

Freedom, *n.* One of the foundational aspects of the Christian walk. Its proper understanding is one of the pivotal themes of

Galatians, a book which refutes a heresy that shocked Paul so greatly that he skipped the usual pleasantries in beginning his letter. There are two major historical interpretations, both of which (in some form or other) can claim many orthodox adherents.

The first, the libertine interpretation, states that, due to grace and forgiveness, there are really no behaviors a Christian should avoid. Hence the believer is free to participate in orgies, free to have conduct dictated by an addiction, free to touch molten iron, and so on.

The second, the Judaizing interpretation, states that grace and forgiveness make sense only if there is such a thing as sin, and have an extensive list of sins to avoid. At the same time, the essence of their teaching is freedom. Hence the believer is free (at least one day in seven) to drop an article of clothing once every few steps, free to have conduct dictated by a written code of rules, free to become castrated, and so on.

Both of these emphasize freedom as the center of their walk. There is rumored to be a third interpretation, but it does not claim enough adherents to be worth explaining.

Gadfly, *n.* A sage who speaks with honesty which is universally appreciated and rewarded with unequalled travel opportunities.

Gang, *n.* A group of armed cowards found in major cities, fighting for control of streets and drug money, and intimidating and beating up whoever they think they can get away with, beating up whoever they don't like, and so on, as contrasted to the activities of the police department.

Garrotte, *n.* An early predecessor to the modern necktie.

Gay Theology, *n.* An abhorrent system of supposed interpretation, which serves only to excuse away the Word of God and abridge the moral requirements of the Gospel in order to permit a

lifestyle which is a perversion of nature and a stench in God's nostrils, as contrasted to the beliefs and practices of good, prosperous, normal American Christians.

Gentleman, *n.* A man. The term embodies a degree of respect, and reflects a particular ideal of manhood.

Perhaps best summarized in the words, "A gentleman is a gentle man," this ideal did not hold that manhood was to be measured by the ability to carry a Gatling gun, demolish buildings, and kill people. The ideal rather had something to do with being gentle.

It is perchance because of this that the term is increasingly considered to be an archaism.

Geometry, *n.* [Gk. *geo*, earth, *metros*, measure] A branch of mathematics flowing out of the ancient Greeks' desire to measure the earth. It was adopted by the medieval Scholastics as a means of preparing the mind for the study of theology; their study of geometry often found its culmination when the student crossed the Bridge of Asses. Followers in this tradition held the ancient, Euclidean development of geometry to be God's geometry. They refused to accept as legitimate other axiomatic systems, vigorously attacking Riemannian geometry, which has axioms describing curved rather than flat surfaces.

Gerrymandering, *n.* In modern democracy, the fine art of manipulating certain parts (known as districts) of an ancient artifact from the days before computers, called the Electoral College. Properly done gerrymandering will increase the weight of some votes and nullify the effect of others, in order to ensure with near certainty that elections will yield the outcome desired by the incumbents.

Golf, *n.* A sport so named because all of the other four letter words were taken.

Goto, *v.* The F-bomb of programming language constructs. It has been observed, "A programmer is someone who, when told to 'Go to Hell,' is offended, not by the 'Hell', but by the 'goto.'" See also: *Pointer*.

Government, *n.* One of several areas the subject of an insightful philosophical commentary entitled the Tao Te Ching. Composed in China by Lao Tzu in 500 BC, it paints a picture of government that is like acting; only bad acting draws attention to itself, and the best acting causes the observer to forget the fact that he is watching actors. This book is the origin of the words, "Running a big government is like frying a small fish," popular among Republicans. (There are also statements that Democrats would like, but Democrats do not believe in reading books) A small fish is fried without being cut up or cleaned; that is to say, with a minimum of interference. Hence Republicans like to quote the words as a reason to avoid spending money on social programs and other uses that they dislike (spending ample money on programs that they do like, such as military expenditures and subsidies for environmentally destructive business, is, of course, exempt). Although this may not have been the original intent of the words, there is another significant way in which running a big government is like frying a small fish: it is very inefficient.

GIMP, *n.* Greatly Irritating Mystification Program. Proof that a graphical user interface can be every bit as arcane, uncontrollable, and frustrating as *any* text interface.

Gnosticism, *n.* A major Early Christian era heresy. At its root, Gnosticism contained the idea that the spiritual is good, but the physical is evil.

Perhaps the most deadly aspect of Gnostic error was the denial of Christ's manhood. Knowing that Christ was fully divine, and believing that the physical was evil, Gnostics deduced that Christ could not possibly have been a carnal creature like you and me with real, tangible flesh. They even

went so far as to declare Christ's body to be an illusion.

Only slightly less problematic was the denial of the fact that God himself created the material world as good. The Psalms thank him for his gifts of bread, oil, and wine; the depths of the sea and the stars of the sky declare the glory of their Creator; Paul quoted the Psalms as saying, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it," encouraging believers to eat whatever was sold in the meat market without raising any question on ground of conscience. So far from believing that the material world was created by God as good, some Gnostics went so far as to state that Satan created it when God wasn't looking; they embraced a patently false dichotomy between the physical and the spiritual. The word 'scathing' is perhaps an understatement in describing some of Paul's reactions:

Now, the Spirit expressly says that in later times, some will renounce the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons, through the hypocrisy of liars whose consciences are seared with a hot iron. They forbid marriage and demand abstinence from foods, which God created to be received by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, for it is sanctified by God's word and by prayer.

I Tim 4:1-5, NRSV

Gnostic heresy has, fortunately, been eradicated, and the church's abstemiousness ever since serves as an inspiration to us all.

Gospel According to Thomas, *n.* An ancient writing representing the full, second century development of Gnostic thought, now subject to consideration for inclusion as a canonical writing.

Grace, *n.* The one blessing that people strive to earn more than any other.

Grammarians, *n.* A person who studies the most common patterns of word order as they appear in language. After they are catalogued, the descriptions become ossified and canonical prescriptions; anyone who dare write in a manner contrary to the grammarian's edict because such writing seems more natural or fluid is corrected, and, if impenitent, blacklisted.

Heckler (to Churchill): Mr. Churchill, you end far too many of your sentences with prepositions.

Churchill: I take all sorts of criticism in this business, but that is the sort of criticism up with which I shall not put!

Great Commission, *n.* A commandment of Christ taken to be central by believers who live and die in fulfillment of his words in Matthew 23:15:

All authority in Heaven and on Earth has been given unto me. Go therefore, and make converts of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age.

-The Up-to-date International Version

Guard, *n.* (1) An armed brute entrusted with the responsibility of keeping people from escaping imprisonment. (2) A complete set of rules around the insufficient set established in Scripture, given limited support in I Cor. 4:6 and Deut. 4:2. Due to the fallenness of human nature, the fact that we do not live in a perfect world, and the powerlessness of the Holy Spirit, the naive and simplistic ideas generated by God's inferior wisdom are not enough; a guard around the law is necessary in order to prevent transgression against the moral laws. While few have managed to duplicate the exacting precision and completeness of the Pharisees' Guard around the Law, it must be said that there are many who are carrying on their worthy tradition.

Being instated as an archangel, Satan made himself multifariously objectionable and was finally expelled from Heaven. Halfway in his descent he paused, bent his head in thought a moment and at last went back. "There is one favor I should like to ask," said he.

"Name it."

"Man, I understand, is about to be created. He will need laws."

"What, wretch! you his appointed adversary, charged from the dawn of eternity with hatred of his soul—you ask for the right to make his laws?"

"Pardon; what I have to ask is that he be permitted to make them himself."

It was so ordered.

-Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

Happiness, *n.* A state which is created by some wherever they go, and by others whenever they go.

Haemorrhoid, *n.* See *Boil*.

Hatred, *n.* The coward's response to the unknown.

Heretic, *n.* One who, while appreciating the overall truth of the Christian message, is wiser than God and recognizes certain errors in orthodox theology. These errors usually occur at some point where God misinterpreted the nature of love.

Jesus summarized the Law in the commandments to love God and neighbor, and the teaching of the Apostles retained this; we are bestowed grace, the outpouring of God's love, a love which is to transform and fill us. Love for neighbor is so important that, oftentimes, the way to love God is through

obeying the commandment "Love your neighbor"; in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, "If you are in the temple offering a sacrifice and remember that your brother has something against you, go, leave your sacrifice on the altar, and be reconciled with your brother." Heretics have generally retained an understanding of the central importance of love for a neighbor, and offer a better way to do so.

It seems, as time passes, that the zeitgeist is a continual source of heresy. Of course, it is not the only one, and most major heresies have been able to claim at least a few adherents for most of time, but the spirit of the time seems to aid the most people in recognizing that the Bible is an old book, and bring Christian thought and application of the Law of Love into accordance with the most recent discoveries.

In the nineteenth century and early twentieth, the law of the jungle was understood, and lovingly applied to human affairs. In the wild, only the strong shall survive. It seems harsh, but is far more merciful than mercy. It is sad for a weakling to be killed, it is conceded, but necessary; if the weaklings survive to pass on their inferior genes, it is whole future generations which are doomed to be weakened, and experience a slow and painful death. Mercy is penny wise and pound foolish. Even when people aren't killed, there is often something to be done to make sure that they do not infest future generations with their inferior seed; hence the involuntary sterilization of the mentally retarded. By eliminating mercy, and allowing all those who would pass genetic disease and infirmity to be preyed upon, it is possible to ensure that future generations are strong, healthy, and happy; this was believed to be the best way to apply love.

Now, even among people who believe casuistry to be the best way to adhere to moral imperatives, that misinterpretation is passe. It is recognized that people are equal and have a right to live, and that different is not necessarily evil. From this, it is deduced that being different automatically precludes the possibility of evil, and, if people are equal, then all tendencies

are equally good, equally consistent with a state of health and fullness of life, equally resultant from the state of a person in good physical, mental, and spiritual health. Paul was mistaken when he, having declared redemption for sinners and a life of freedom and joy to those who submit their sinfulness to God's grace, declared homosexual practice to be inconsonant with holy living. Past generations were wrong to burn homosexuals at the stake; we avoid their error by recognizing that homosexual practice was created by God as good, as evidenced by the words from Genesis which Jesus quoted to answer the question about divorce: "He created them male and female."

Highway, *n.* A route of transit more dangerous than airplanes at the height of terrorist crises, calmly travelled by people who would never set foot inside a jet.

Hillsboro Baptist Church, *n.* Christianity's biggest gift to gay advocacy yet.

Holocaust, *n.* One of the most revolting moments in history, when Hitler murdered six million Jews. In the midst of this horrible tragedy, we have learned lessons which will never be forgotten. We have learned to do a better job of ignoring genocide, as we have done for half a dozen other events which exceed the number of Jews Hitler destroyed, or at least use a better name, like 'ethnic cleansing'.

Holy War, *n.* A war which is especially unholy.

Homo Sapiens, *n.* [Lat. man the knowing] The scientific name for man.

Common men seem to have no difficulty deciding, "Is that entity over there a man or a beast?"

To scientists and philosophers, though, it is not such a straightforward question. They are in pursuit of the one action which sets apart man from the beasts.

Some value technology, measuring the progress of a civilization's culture, morality, and character by the machines it produces. Thus, the distinguishing feature between man and beast is the ability to use tools. But even some birds use twigs in order to get food.

Now, language seems to be the prime locus of attention. The distinguishing feature is the use of words, that is symbols, to communicate. But dolphins do that. So it's really the ability to put words or symbols together in new grammatical combinations — or at least was, until it was discovered that a chimpanzee can do that, too.

This present lexicographer is unaware of any beasts which consider it necessary to spend time arguing about what it is that sets them apart from other species, let alone understand doing and being, accident and substance, well enough to confuse them.

Honest, *adj.* Addicted to the reprehensible habit of seeing and explaining things as they are, rather than as they ought to be. The progress of civilization and technology are rapidly advancing to the point of being able to cure this unfortunate condition.

One of the last well known sufferers of this madness was the late Ambrose Bierce, a lexicographer of singular wit and deficient sense. His appreciation for many things which hold great merit — resource, the wisdom of the public nonsense, the goodness of human nature, the American dream — was indubitably stunted by the twin vices of insight and metacognition. A few characteristic samples of his misguided ravings are here given:

Compulsion, *n.* The eloquence of power.

Forefinger, *n.* The finger commonly used in pointing out two malefactors.

Hovel, *n.* The fruit of a flower called the Palace.

Lock-and-key, *n.* The distinguishing device of civilization and enlightenment.

Mad, *adj.* Affected with a high degree of intellectual independence; not conforming to standards of thought, speech and action derived by the conformants of the study themselves; at odds with the majority; in short, unusual...

Palace, *n.* A fine and costly residence, particularly that of a great official. The residence of a high dignitary of the Christian Church is called a palace; that of the Founder of his religion was known as a field, or wayside. There is progress.

Rum, *n.* Generically, fiery liquors which produce madness in total abstainers.

Un-American, *adj.* Wicked, intolerable, heathenish.

Hospitality, *n.* One of many virtues lost in modern life.

Hubris, *n.* The attitude of one who refuses to see things my way. A popular word among relativists.

Humankind, *n.* Mankind, as pronounced by people who are offended at "man" ever being [inclusive language](#).

Hymn, *n.* The sacred song of the Reformations, where the teachings of the priesthood of the believer and the holiness of everyday living are applied to the realm of music.

The music of the Catholic Church was and is beautiful, ancient, powerful, stately, and majestic; nobody had accused Rome of disgracing God by poor taste in music. The reason that the Reformers used different music was as an application of another part of their theology.

The Reformers held to the priesthood of the believer; they believed that a farmer as well as a missionary can and should draw close to God. To this end they translated the Scriptures into the common tongue, to reach people where they were. They also held belief in the sanctity of everyday living; prayer and study of the Scriptures are the sacred privilege and duty of the believer, but the believer also gives glory to God by eating and drinking, working and playing. Pulling these thoughts together, they used popular tunes as the medium to carry teaching in verse. Although the songs lacked any complexity — the musical equivalent of flat soda — and cannot honestly be described as embodying good musical taste, even those songs were taken and transformed. The Roman Church had slowly fallen into the error of making Christianity something far off, boring and unintelligible sermons and odd songs with prayers and incantations in a dead language, elite and aloof from the way that common people live; the Reformers wished to cleanse the Church of this error. The Holy Scriptures, formerly available only in the Latin of the Vulgate Versio, were now rendered in the vulgar tongue, and people began to sing of Christ's love to the tune of popular drinking songs — all to reach out, and place the Gospel message before people, meeting them where they are.

This beautiful thought has not been forgotten; cherished hymns sung by the Reformers have been passed down from generation to generation, and used to keep Christian youth from becoming entangled in the Devil's music.

IBM, *n.* I've Been Mugged. A mismanaged behemoth which has designed and engineered the line of computers which has been the industry standard in personal computing for decades. Everybody has a skeleton hidden in a closet somewhere.

Icon, *n.* An idol in competition with the true Christian's devotion to the Bible.

Idealistic, *adj.* 1: [philosophical usage] Holding the belief that there

exist minds, sensations, and thought processes within those minds, but not an external material world to which sensations correspond. 2: [common usage] A patronizing and condescending term used in reference to a person who holds unswervingly to the only moral standards there are, implicitly declaring those beliefs to be as disconnected with reality as those of a person who is idealistic in the first sense.

What the word says is that such uncompromising faithfulness to the call of conscience is not to be praised (at least not beyond half-insults of "He means well." and "His heart is in the right place.") but, rather, gently patted on the head and politely dismissed. What the term *means* is that the speaker, whose own compromised conduct has been brought to light by that of person referred to, and suddenly looks very shabby — indeed, all the worse for its whitewash coat of noble-sounding words about how "We do not live in a perfect world." and so on and so forth — is not only justified in compromise and lowering of standards, but actually doing a better job than someone who does not compromise: the speaker is more truly on the mark, and the idealistic one has the most praiseworthy intentions but misses the goal in an excess of misguided zeal. To top it all off, the word is not recognized as a pungent insult such as 'asinine' or 'idiotic', but pleasantly accepted as a simple statement of the way things are.

See also: *Admirable, Values.*

Idiot box, *n.* An ingenious device which stimulates the senses and bypasses sense.

Ignore, *v.* To imitate American Christianity's treatment of the Biblical teachings on wealth.

Illustration, *n.* In childrens' Bibles, an iconoclast's depiction of important Bible characters and stories. The difference between an illustration and an icon is that the illustration is not venerated, and with good reason. Illustrations recall

characteristic moments from important stories by representing the characters involved. By so doing, they teach many important truths, the first and foremost of which is that Jesus was white.

Incoherent, *adj.* Lacking internal consistency; muddled and confused. An account is said to be incoherent if no sane person could hope to make sense of it. Incoherence dates back to the result of the attempt to build the Tower of Babel, as recorded in the book of Genesis:

And they said to one another, "Come, let us make bricks, and burn them thoroughly." And they had brick for stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves; otherwise we shall be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth."

The Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which mortals had built. And the Lord said, "Look, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; nothing that they propose will be impossible for them. Come, let us go down, and confuse their language there, so that they will not understand one another's speech."

And there was Kuhn.

-The New Revised Nonstandard Version

Incompetent, *adj.* Very well paid.

Those who can — do.

Those who can't do — teach.

Those who can't teach — administrate.

Those who can't administrate — do it anyway.

-Author(s) unknown.

Incongruity, *n.* The basis for modern life.

Indescribable, *adj.* About to be given a very poor description.

Indicator, *n.* A kind of marker which, when measured or examined by a competent observer, will reveal more macroscopic information about a system. In ecology, certain species are very sensitive to environmental conditions; thus their population serves as a good indicator of the health of an ecosystem — such as red algae.

In the early days of aerial warfare, engineers understood and appreciated the delicate balance between armor and agility. They devised airplanes as best they could, and then observed the results of combat in order to make a more effective machine.

In order to accomplish this, they had a life sized picture of an airplane. Every time an airplane came back from combat, they would place a dot on the picture corresponding to each bullet hole. By so doing, they hoped to discern exactly where the most damage was sustained, and thus intelligently place armor as effectively as possible.

It was eventually noted that there were no dots over the fuel tank.

Inefficient, *adj.* Resembling the methods and practices currently in use.

Infallible, *adj.* Not subject to doctrinal error. It is believed by Catholics that the Pope is infallible, which is absurd; no single man is infallible except for me.

Infest, *v.* For something foreign to enter an organism and cause it to rot. For example, meditation, a practice of Eastern religions, has been carried to the west in the degenerate form of New Age.

The abhorrent activity is beginning to infest nearly all facets of Christianity, and is rumored to penetrate even the purity of the Early Christians.

Inflammable, *adj.* Flammable.

Inhuman, *adj.* Acting without a shred of human decency; demonic; resembling the soldiers (and civilians) we are destroying in the current war.

Inn, *n.* In former times, a precursor to the modern hotel.

Once upon a time, a wayfarer came upon an inn bearing a sign, "Inn of Saint George and Ye Dragon." He knocked upon the door, and the matron came out.

"Pray have mercy on a poor and weary traveller beset by bandits. I've got no silver, but I can sing or tell a tale."

"I care not about the woes of a filthy ragamuffin. Begone." With these words, she threw a rotten apple at him, slamming shut the door.

He began to walk away, paused in thought, and at last returned, once again lifting the heavy knocker.

"What?"

"May I please speak with Saint George?"

-Reader's Digest

Innumerate, *adj.* Lacking in basic mathematical (number) skills, just as 'illiterate' refers to someone lacking basic reading (letter) skills. The latter is recognized as a severe handicap and fought accordingly; the former is accepted because thinking hurts. There are three types of people in America: those who remember rudimentary mathematical skills, and those who have forgotten them.

In Parentis Loco, *n.* See *Loco*.

Inquisition, *n.* A systematic attempt to remove heretics by executing heresy.

Insomniac, *n.* One most prepared to appreciate the most prominent quality of the *Lord of the Rings*.

Institutionalized Food Service, *n.* A special case in which the law of gravity is reversed: what goes down must come up.

Intel, *n.* The company that put the 'backwards' into 'backwards compatibility.'

International Law, *n.* Law that is violated in multiple countries instead of just one.

Intimidation, *n.* In American diplomatic theory, the basis for cultural sensitivity and achievement of understanding.

Wesley (to gatekeeper): "Where is the gate key?"

Gatekeeper: "There is no gate key."

Wesley (to Fezzik): "Fezzik, tear his arms off."

Gatekeeper: "Oh, you mean this gate key."

-The Princess Bride

Intuition, *n.* A means of thought thought to be proven useless by logical people because it has not been rigorously proven according to logical methods.

Journalist, *n.* One engaged in the pursuit and obscurement of important facts.

Jury, *n.* A group of peers selected to render judgment, on a basis of inability to identify with any of the involved parties.

Kinder and Gentler, *adj.* Crueler and harsher.

It is obviously evil to beat or molest a child. What is less obvious, an ever so sweetly disguised sadism, consists in a manner of parenting that is always pleasant and rosy.

The basis for parenting is love, and a child is not a punching bag to scream at or hit after a bad day. It is wrong to strike a child in anger, and a spanking can only be right if it is more painful to the parent than the child.

That being true, a parent who is loving and wise must chastise and administer painful discipline as a tool of correction. He who fails to do this raises a child who is spoiled.

This child will not understand consequence on anything more than an immediate physical level; he will not burn himself by placing his hand on a hot stove only because his parents lack the power to make the action painless. In all other areas — conduct towards other people, thievery, promiscuity — he will do whatever seems most attractive at the moment. The belief that some things are worth a wait, or the idea of action bearing consequence, especially a delayed consequence that does not come by physical mechanism, is a foreign concept. And so, when the child could be entering into life, he is instead trapped in the abyss of self.

This present lexicographer wonders how long it will be until those under the 'kinder and gentler' mindset will be told to go to Hell — not by man, but by God.

Klu Klux Klan, *n.* See *Klueless Klux Klan*.

Koinonia, *n.* The life in community and fellowship shared by believers. The Early Christians lived in a world where people identified and separated themselves by race, social class, and gender; the Church astonished the world by showing Jews and Greeks, masters and slaves, males and females, who not only

did not exhibit the same tensions, but were all one, together, equal, in Christ Jesus. Today in our nation Christians gather at 10:00 AM, the most segregated hour of the week.

Kneejerk Liberalism, *n.* Liberalism's strand of a thread which runs through nearly all parts of society. Kneejerk liberalism is largely responsible for the "Stop nuclear power in order to save the environment." and the "Shut up in the name of open-mindedness and free speech!" movement, among others. Kneejerk conservatism, not terribly different, encompasses most Rush Limbaugh listeners.

Of course, kneejerk movements are not limited to the political sphere. Also to be mentioned is a kneejerk following of science, which believes science to have displaced God and the appropriateness of religious faith, kneejerk openmindedness, which attacks Christian thought and any other intellectual edifice which is built on a foundation unlike its own foundation of relativism (which turns out to span most of human thought over most of time), and kneejerk spirituality, also known as New Age.

Idiot, *n.* A member of a large and powerful tribe whose influence in human affairs has always been dominant and controlling. The idiot's activity is not confined to any special field of thought or action, but "pervades and regulates the whole."...

-Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

Knock, *v.* (1) To strike a light blow which does no damage against a door or other massive object, in the hope that it will open. (2) [colloq.] To strike a light blow which does no damage against a ridiculous law or other massive object, in the hope of opening and illuminating information which is not plainly seen. In this sense, the word is almost always used pejoratively.

Know-Nothing, *n.* A member of an extinct political party formerly

of great influence in American public life.

Labor-Saving Device, *n.* Any one of a number of inventions which is common among people who are busy, and scarce among people who have leisure.

Landfill, *n.* A storage device used in the preservation of biodegradable materials.

Lazer, *n.* Light Amplified by Stimulated Electromagnetic Radiation.

Lehi, *n.* A battle between Samson and the Philistines, when a multitude was slain by the jawbone of an ass. Its pivotal importance is recognized, so that there have been many historical re-enactments worldwide.

Lent, *n.* A special time of year set aside for solemn prayer and fasting. It is customary to use this time to contemplate Paul's words about special days and seasons.

Liberal, *adj.* and *n.* A scholar desiring to correct the tendency of conservatism and tradition to slowly and imperceptibly tarnish and distort that which they attempt to preserve. The liberal scholar studies the ancient origins in their original form, and then attempts to remedy the situation by offering fresh, new heresies.

Lifeboat Ethics, *n.* One of many fine-sounding and respected excuses for a lack of ethics.

Lifestyle, *n.* That mode of preaching which espouses an alternative set of doctrines.

Like, *tic.* In Valspeak, a continual reminder of "Look, I'm Klueless, Etc."

Light Bulb, *n.* An invention which permits electricity to travel through a tiny filament. The filament puts up tremendous resistance to this, using the energy to generate approximately

5% light and 95% heat. Herein lies the Western precept of illumination.

Liquor Law, *n.* A form of regulation found in the places most plagued by alcoholism, teaching children to regard drinking as an adult activity (the ability to drink friends under the table being the true test of maturity), and, in some states, prohibiting parents from training children in the temperate and controlled use of liquors.

Literate, *adj.* Innumerate.

Lottery, *n.* See *Poverty Tax*, *Gullibility Tax*.

Love, *n.* A technical detail of secondary importance to the basis of morality, the Ten Commandments.

Lutheran, *n.* Pertaining to a denomination in the tradition of Martin Luther, a man who avoided the error of the church in Laodicaea, accused in Revelation of being neither hot nor cold, by being both hot and cold. Luther made many adamant statements, among them an insistence of, "Do not ever name a denomination after me."

Luxury, *n.* A rare pleasure available only to a privileged few, such as being able to walk. It is important to distinguish luxuries from necessities, such as driving a car.

MacCuisinart, *n.* The ultimate word processor, doing to words what food processors do to foods.

Machiavellian Politics, *n.* Politics.

Macintosh, *n.* (1) An apple distinguished for its sweetness, colorful lustre, and lack of meat. (2) A computer, with a name perhaps chosen for the acronym "Mouse Activated Computer", sporting software designed around the central parameter of requiring the user to do nothing sufficiently complicated to confuse a mouse. A striking example of the essential identity of agriculture and

computer science.

Majority Text, *n.* The most accurate Greek New Testament text. While it was the accepted text for over a millenium, there have been since discovered some other texts. These inferior texts reflect considerable modification and transmission errors, and sometimes have entire verses missing; they have hindered the work of translators for over a century.

Marxism, *n.* A system of thought named after Karl Marx, who said, "Religion is the opium of the people," and, coincidentally, lived before the invention of television.

Mary, *n.* A woman's name very common in New Testament times. It would have been entirely credible to meet three women standing together, and find that all three of them are named Mary.

Most commonly, 'Mary' refers to the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is fortunate that all believers agree that she was a person of exceptional holiness, and that, as a virgin, she was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit to become the mother of Jesus. Beyond that, there is considerable discrepancy, over issues such as whether she retained perpetual virginity, and to what extent it is appropriate to venerate her.

Protestants, holding to Sola Scriptura, note that there is relatively little mention of Mary in the Scriptures. They deny her perpetual virginity, and regard veneration of her as idolatrous, taking their position from Luke 1:30-31, and 42-45, particularly verse 42.

Catholic and Orthodox believers, who hold to both the authority of Scripture and Tradition, point primarily to Tradition. They venerate Mary and hold the doctrine of her perpetual virginity, and so on, in order to offend Protestants, as they have spitefully done since the Council of Milan in 391. They also refer to Mary as the Blessed Virgin or Theotokos, and occasionally quote verses such as Matt. 1:25, 19:16, 50. Mark

occasionally quote verses such as Matt. 1:25, 12:40-50, Mark 3:31-35, and Luke 8:19-21.

In a sense, both sides of the controversy have important concerns. Protestant believers fear that an overly strong Mariology will detract from a proper Christology, taking away its central glory, whereas Catholic and Orthodox Christians feel that an overly weak Mariology will detract from a proper Christology, taking away its central glory. If they both stated those concerns first, the debate, over whether to have a strong Christology or a strong Christology, would indubitably become far more intense and generate more light than heat.

As things stand, though, it is fortunate that all agree to the emphatic teaching, whether derived from Scripture alone or both from Scripture and Tradition, stated in Rom. 14:5-6, 15:7, and I Cor. 1:10-17.

Mascot, *n.* An animal chosen to symbolize or represent a team or entity, thought to embody those qualities that it values most. A political cartoon depicted the Democratic party as an ass, a representation which was meant as an insult, but was happily accepted. The Republican party, feeling jealousy at not having a mascot, selected as its mascot the elephant, the one remaining member of an otherwise extinct family. The other members, such as mammoths and mastodons, were big, slow, and died because they could not adapt to their environment.

Maze, *n.* A puzzle and test of human intelligence. It consists of an intricate system of walls, the objective being to move from the entrance to the exit. It is commonly represented on paper, as if viewed from above. Most people can solve such a puzzle quite well. If actually inside the puzzle, such as the hedge mazes sometimes found at wealthy mansions, human performance is poorer, but still comparable to that of the average rat.

Memorization, *n.* A filing system used by those who are too lazy to look details up.

Memory, *n.* A faculty that, in our culture,

Metacognition, *n.* That mode of thought which, among other things, permits men to think about and apply to others that which they have carefully reasoned and applied to themselves. The results of its affliction are seen in the following Biercian definition:

Christian, *n.* One who believes that the New Testament is a divinely inspired book admirably suited to the spiritual needs of his neighbor.

This vice is one of the most deadly forms of thought. It sometimes stops people from being at ease with themselves, and causes them to raise questions. It was with great discernment that the Catholic (and, shortly after breaking away, Protestant) church saw the need for Scriptural interpretation handled exclusively by the Church and not by the individual believer. Private interpretation brings with it some very real dangers. The prime of these dangers is the possibility (however remote) that a private reader may read some troublesome portion of Scripture — perhaps the Sermon on the Mount, perhaps the book of Galatians — and fall into the trap of thinking (and acting as if) they mean what they say they mean, and getting it right.

This concern, of course, is not exclusively a plague to theology. It endangers other modes of thought, even philosophy. Some might begin to question relativism or believe that there might be morals which do not really depend on perspective. Postmodernism is the great white light by which we have been able to see, progressing far beyond the benighted folly of those who lived before us and properly reshaping history so that it appears in its true nonform; there are some who even dare to suggest that it may have internal problems as bad as those of Logical Positivism.

The vice is, fortunately, a very rare one. Most people accept

as infallible the nonsense of popular opinion, or at least believe that they are not intelligent or wise enough to question it, and succeed in protecting the few areas that thought uninvitedly intrudes with an SEP field.

Micro\$oft, *n.* The company which has produced a flight simulator which is the industry standard for testing the robustness of PC emulators. Its products are phenomenal to the extent that they are, in advertisement, something which people swear by, and, in practice, something which people swear at.

Minimalism, *n.* An aesthetic which avoids cluttered design by keeping detail and beauty to a minimum.

MIPS, *n.* Meaningless Indicator of Processor Speed. The expression was originally thought to mean Millions of Instructions Per Second, until Sega produced a video game system with a substantially higher MIPS rating than a Cray supercomputer. There are other numerical ratings thought to be of equal accuracy, but the discreet lexicographer does not name them.

Misnomer, *v.* An inaccurate expression, inappropriately used to refer to something which it does not describe. Ex: 'Catholic', 'Orthodox', 'Protestant'.

Mock, *v.* To render the highest form of compliment due the bulk of modern philosophy.

Moderation, *n.* One of the four cardinal virtues of classical antiquity. In modern times, it is held in light esteem; most people wish to replace it with either the virtue of Abstention, or the virtue of Excess.

Modern Art, *n.* A French expression meaning 'Art Nouveau.'

Money, *n.* A blessing which is appreciated and generously given in proportion to the amount possessed — inverse proportion.

Monopoly, *n.* A classic bored game, commonly pronounced

'Monotony'.

Monroe Doctrine, *n.* A bold stance from early American history. Even in its infancy, the young democracy was asserting itself with the strength and leadership which would eventually lead to its role as the world policeman.

Monty Python, *n.* An anti-intellectual form of comedy which is extremely popular among intellectuals.

Moon, *n.* A celestial body which, after long training and observation, people learn not to see during the day.

Moral, *n.* That for which the unenlightened take mores, and which the ever so different enlightened take for mores.

Moral Majority, *n.* Neither.

Morning, *n.* A time of day as joyous as its homonym.

Motor Oil, *n.* The preferred cooking oil of institutional food services everywhere.

Motorcycle Lane, *n.* A shortcut to the wages of sin.

MS-DOS, *n.* A major medical breakthrough of the 19th century, providing modern medicine with what many doctors still consider to be the most effective known treatment for hypotension.

MtG, *n.* Magic, the Gathering. A commercial gaming product (legal, despite a level of addictiveness by which it must be said that smoking is a comparatively easy habit to break) of sufficiently fiendish cleverness to make TSR executive curse in awe.

MTV, *n.* As stated by the Russian author Solzeneitsyn, "the liquid manure of Western culture."

Multiculturalism, *n.* A deity offered much worship and

veneration. Of all the gods of the current pantheon — Mammon, Technology, Postmodernism, Psychology — perhaps the one whom one is most persecuted for failing to bow down and worship.

Multilingual, *adj.* Proficient in the use of multiple languages. In certain parts of Africa, it is not unusual for a person to speak five or six languages; worldwide, the average is somewhat lower, but most places still appreciate the importance of being able to use a language other than the native tongue. A person who can speak three languages is trilingual; a person who can speak two languages is bilingual; a person who can speak but one language is American.

Mushroom, *n.* and *v.* (1) A fungus which is kept in the dark and fed an ample supply of manure. (2) To grow and expand beyond all proportion. A striking example of how much administration is able to requisition to its own purposes.

Narrow-Minded Bigot, *n.* Someone who is white, is male, is Christian, appreciates the heritage of Western Europe, and/or holds and speaks beliefs which cannot properly be expressed in a slightly late implementation of George Orwell's Newspeak.

Nation, *n.* A country or people. In Old Testament times, the nation favored by God was Israel; now that Christ has come, the nation is America. Isaiah's Messianic prophecies clearly predict America as Christ's chosen nation:

Of the increase of the Federal Government there shall
be no end.

-The Unauthorized Version

Natural Selection, *n.* The proposed mechanism, according to Darwin's account, of evolutionary change. It states that organisms which are better suited to their environment survive and pass on their traits, whereas more poorly suited organisms

do not. Its capital defect is its total failure to provide any explanation for the continued survival of Incomestibilis spammus.

NBC, *n.* National Broadcasting Company. One of several similar television companies, all of which vastly exceed most of public broadcasting stations in airing programming which is stimulating and edifying. Appreciation for how often such services should be used is believed to have inspired a military acronym referring to nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons.

Necessity, *n.* The mother of invention. Profit is the father.

New World Order, *n.* See *New World Disorder*.

New Year's Day, *n.* In the Christian calendar based on the year of our Lord, a holiday occurring six days after Christmas.

NIV, *n.* Now Indispensible Version. This translation is one of the best modern English translations of the Holy Scriptures. It has achieved a wonderful balance between word for word and thought for thought, and rightly become immensely popular and widely used. All Scripture is God-breathed, and the scholars creating this translation started from scratch to give what has turned out to be, in many cases, excellent renditions of the original meanings. The donors and administrators over the scholars were sufficiently wise to avoid the temptation of telling the scholars to set aside professional judgment in favor of what they thought a Bible should and shouldn't be. See also: *Boulderize*.

Non-Alcoholic Beer, *n.* Beer that has been watered down until it can legally be sold as a non-alcoholic beverage.

Non Sequitur, *n.* Therefore, Al is a pud.

Normal, *adj.* What you think other people are like.

NOW, *n.* National Organization of Women. An organization which

fought tooth and nail to ensure that women as well as men are permitted to serve in the military, but has not lifted a finger to see that women are subject to selective service.

NPC, *adj.* Not Politically Correct. Correct.

NRA, *n.* National Rifle Association. That group which is working vigorously to defend our constitutional "right to keep and bear firearms", while recognizing the datedness of the words, "as part of a well-regulated militia."

NRSV, *n.* Not Really Sure Version. The culmination of many reworked and revised translations tracing back to the King James, this translation holds several singular virtues. With the knowledge that it might be used for liturgical and other reading, the translators tried to produce a rendition with smooth assonance. Yet they knew that there is something even more important than natural sounding English. Unlike practically all other translations, this translation admirably avoids, at all costs, introducing gender bias which was not present in the original languages. For example, words in Revelation 2:23, where Christ is speaking to the angel of the church in Thyatira, is generally rendered something like "I am he [sic] who searches hearts and minds."; it is instead rendered "I am the one who searches hearts and minds." This avoids the possibility that Christ might be offended to hear a more sexist rendering of her words.

NSA, *n.* National Security Agency. The government agency responsible for ensuring that nationally used encryption algorithms are insecure.

Nuclear Power, *n.* A means of using nuclear rather than chemical reactions to generate electricity, which is orders of magnitude more efficient. A nuclear plant's waste is contained in a bushel sized encasement rather than emitted ton upon ton upon ton by billowing smokestacks. It is, pound for pound, worse than any other known residue, but minute in amount, well-contained and

easy to deal with; a coal burning plant incidentally generates higher levels of radioactive waste, which are not considered worth paying attention to in the shadow of the damage done through carbon dioxide, soot, and so on. The one weakness of nuclear power is expense; it costs more per kilowatt-hour than any other widely used method of generating electricity. Nuclear power is staunchly supported by most conservatives and adamantly opposed by most environmentalists.

Nude, *adj.* Ahead of fashion trends.

Number, *n.* The most common mathematical entity used to lend buoyancy to an insubstantial argument, and strike awe and gullibility into the hearts of people who lack a rudimentary understanding of mathematics. Research has shown that 73.2% of all statistics represent poorly gathered or inaccurate original data, 87.9% of all statistics are substantially manipulated and distorted in the form in which they are finally presented, and 99.5% of the remaining statistics are made up on the spot.

NutWare, *n.* A secure networked operating system which usually requires the proper password before granting supervisor privileges.

Oath, *n.* A solemn and officially recognized declaration of one's lack of trustworthiness.

Obfuscation, *n.* A quality which is generally added to bolster Christianity's natural weaknesses.

Obvious, *adj.* Considered to be unworthy of attention; unnoted.

"It is the first duty of intellectuals to state the obvious."

-George Orwell

Official Endorsement, *n.* A highly effective means of destroying a religion when intense persecution has failed.

Oleoresin Capiscum, *n.* See *Non-Alcoholic Firebreather*.

One Size Fits All, *adj.* See *One Size Fits None*.

Open-Minded, *adj.* Ready to vigorously attack anyone who seriously challenges an orthodoxy of academic freedom in all areas.

Optimize, *v.* To produce alterations to a section of code which will decrease runtime and resource consumption without interfering with its utility.

Audience member (to speaker): "Is there a Unix FORTRAN optimizer?"

Speaker: "Yes. 'rm *.f'"

Opulence, *n.* The quintessence of the lifestyle of many spiritually impoverished people who have sealed their ears to Biblical teachings about wealth. The most prominent and definitive feature of American Christianity.

Organ Donor Card, *n.* The flipside of a driver's license.

Ossification, *n.* The universal result of administrative attempts to preserve an organization's strength and vitality.

Painkiller, *n.* A drug which kills the ability to deal with pain, taken as a symbol of American culture.

Pangloss, *n.* In Voltaire's novel *Candide*, a teacher expounding the most pessimistic and cynical of known doctrines.

Parliament, *n.* [Fr. *parler*, to talk] A form of legislature which attempts to resolve hot issues by the exchange of hot air. American government has branches with names other than 'parliament', apparently for the same reason that some states have names such as 'The People's Republic of China'.

Pascal, *n.* A handholding pseudolanguage whose students have insisted on dragging into the real world to abuse as a language.

Pax, *n.* [Lat.] Peace. This word is occasionally used to refer to specific cases of peace, such as the *Pax Romana* and the *Pax Americana*. It also has meaning within a religious context, in reference to the kiss of peace.

The language used in the New Testament in reference to the believers is not one of separated people who happen to share beliefs, maintaining a curtain of isolation and afraid to come near each other; it is instead a family. The picture painted is one of an intimate community; language that referred to the believers as brothers and sisters was used in Scripture, and repeated in the words and lifestyles of the Early Christians.

In this sense, it is not at all surprising that the Apostles wrote their letters to the churches, and, along the practical instructions usually included towards the end, included personal greetings, by name, and commanded a warm embrace. "Greet one another with a holy kiss." "Greet one another with a holy kiss." "Greet one another with a holy kiss." "Greet all the saints in Christ Jesus." "Greet all the brothers and sisters with a holy kiss." "Greet those who love us in the faith." "Greet all your leaders and all God's people." "Greet one another with a kiss of love." "Greet the friends by name."

The kiss of peace began to be formalized as a part of the liturgy. The Scriptures certainly do not forbid a greeting within such a context, but the kiss of peace is never mentioned in connection with any ceremony. As centuries passed, it somehow seemed not to occur too much outside of the ceremony. After a few centuries, in order to avoid impropriety, the practice was modified so that only men were permitted to greet men, and only women were permitted to greet women. But that still involved touching, and so there appeared a most interesting invention: an object called the Pax.

The Pax was a small pendant or amulet, worn for the sake of services. It was held out to be kissed.

And so, the troublesome command to "Greet one another with a holy kiss." was thus dealt with, in an ingenious manner which obviated any occasion for people to touch each other.

It is fortunate that this manner of dealing with the wisdom laid out in Scripture has not occurred anywhere else.

PC, *adj.* Politically Correct. Political Correctness is avoidance of certain words judged to embody closedmindedness and prejudice (and ostracism of anyone who does). For example, 'm-nk-nd' is deemed an inappropriate word to use to refer to all members of Homo sapiens, because the word 'm-n' (which originally did not specify gender) has come to sometimes mean a perbeing who is specifically male. Thus, the only reason anyone would say 'm-nk-nd' is out of spite towards every womyn. Political Correctness is a wonderful thing; many people have it to be an excellent substitute for actually removing prejudice.

PC-USA, *n.* Politically Correct, USA. A church in which there is neither heterosexuality nor homosexuality, monotheism nor polytheism, orthodoxy nor heresy.

Peace through Strength, *n.* Establishing peace, according to your own terms, by ensuring that your nation has superior military powers to those of its neighbors. With the advent of nuclear weaponry, peace through strength has taken a new step forward and now also bears the title of mutually assured destruction.

Paradoxically, this is actually not as absurd as it initially sounds. It works remarkably well due to an essential unity of spirit among the nations. Peace is desirable. That is the almost unequivocal consensus. Military strength is the best way to achieve this — again, the nations' consensus.

Thus each nation attempts to establish a military that is a

safe margin greater than the forces of its neighbors. This helps prepare for the resolution of any misunderstandings that might arise. In addition, the resulting friendly competition does wonders for the economy, especially on the poorer end.

Pejorative, *adj.* Embodying a low opinion; said of words. 'Pigheaded', as contrasted to 'resolute'. The word 'dog', when used in reference to human beings, is an extremely pejorative term, embodying more contempt than most obscenities. It is in this sense that the word was used by Moses in reference to male shrine prostitutes, and by Paul, in reference to men who took it upon themselves to supplement the ordering force of the Holy Spirit with additional rules.

Penitentiary, *n.* An academy whose expenses are paid by state scholarships, improving select pupils' skills in the clandestine arts and reinforcing their impenitence.

Pentacostalism, *n.* A movement which remembers and believes in the gifts of the Spirit as described in the New Testament, while demonstrating a remarkable forgetfulness for New Testament instructions as to how those gifts are to be used.

People's Democratic Republic of Korea, *n.* One for four.

Perception, *n.* That by which we see (and hear, feel, smell, taste) a combination of the world around us and what we expect to see. Most people, of course, believe that we only observe the former, and this is very useful for practical jokes.

...it is necessary to pay close attention to the most minute detail.

-Inspector Clouseau

Perfect World, *n.* A hypothetical situation vastly removed from the reality we live in. For the past 1700 years, it has been fashionable to assume that the inhabitants of a perfect world are

the only (hypothetical) people to whom the Sermon on the Mount is addressed.

Pesticide, *n.* A chemical agent used to increase the population of pests by making them immune to poison and by destroying their natural predators.

Peter Principle, *n.* A piercing insight into the function of American business.

The Peter Principle states, in essence, that individuals in an organization will rise to their level of incompetence. That is to say, a person who demonstrates competence in one field will be "promoted". A promotion consists of an increase in pay, and hours of time expected to complete responsibilities, combined with a shifting of responsibilities to another field requiring a different skill and talent. This philosophy of promotion holds that the various functions within an organization — which may be likened to parts of a body — are to be ranked and ordered, so that when one part excels at being itself, it is considered to be evidently good at being the next part up. A bicep muscle which proves its strength and stamina is surgically removed from the upper arm and reattached to the end of the wrist and expected to grasp and do fine manipulation; a nose which keenly picks up faint odors is transplanted to the eye socket and expected to see. Thus, the more competent an individual demonstrates himself in handling one set of responsibilities, the more likely he will be to be reassigned to another field where he is incompetent. See also: *Incompetent, Promotion.*

Pharisee, *n.* A member of an extinct religious sect frequently mentioned in Scripture. Most churches have recognized the importance of presenting the whole of the Gospel in modern and accessible terms rather than those obscure and ancient. They thus mention Pharisees and what Christ said to them far less frequently than they hold seminars on how to use technicalities and loopholes to minimize the financial inconvenience caused by income tax.

Philosopher, *n.* [Gk. *philos*, love, *sophia*, wisdom] A man who loves wisdom and truth. The philosopher pursues these matters with all of his mind, striving to be united to truth, to know her most intimately and completely, and, like a jealous husband, does his best to prevent others from doing the same.

Phonetically, *adj.* A word which isn't spelled that way.

Photobiodegradable Plastic, *n.* Photobiodisintegrable plastic.

This substance consists of an ordinary plastic film mixed with a small fraction of biodegradable material such that, given time and sunlight, it will disintegrate into innumerable microscopic particles. The particles are then engulfed by microbes, causing them to die in a way that a nonbiodegradable film could not come close to.

The substance is made to be environmentally friendly.

Physics envy discipline, *n.* Any academic discipline in which one is oriented, in the plagiarized first sentence on the first page of a textbook, to say that practitioners '[are scientists, and they are just as much scientists as people in the \[open scare quote\] "hard sciences" \[close scare quote\] like physics.](#)'

Examples include, for instance, psychology which perpetually pines for a "Newton" who would "lead them into the promised land" of being a full-fledged science, a pining in blatant unseen contradiction to the claim to have already reached the promised land as fully as physics.

This claim is in particular strange as Newton helped found and frame a de-anthropomorphized way of understanding inanimate objects, and the idea of seeking a de-anthropomorphized understanding of *ανθρωπος* (*anthropos*, meaning *man* in the broadest sense) is beyond strange: but the strength of the impulse may be seen in the "where do we go from here?" school of behaviorism, a school in which we emit

behaviors but have confused minds if we believe that we have minds at all, even if we have confused minds if we believe we have *confused* minds.

Pipe, *n.* A feature of UNIX, enabling the output of one process to be the input of another. *Purgamentum init, purgamentum exit.*

Pocohontas, *n.* G-rated porn.

Poison, *n.* An elemental or chemical agent which, when introduced to an organism by contact, inhalation, or ingestion, induces reactions which are harmful or lethal. Poison has historically been associated with assassins, an extremely dishonorable lot which refuses to rely exclusively on firearms to commit murder as civilized men do. There are many known poisons. Most of the heavier elements, such as lead, mercury, selenium, administratium, and so on, are poisonous. The biological world has produced hosts of organic poisons; industry observed this, and realized that it might be able to gain substantial profits by providing assassins with a superior variety of products. This prospect was successful beyond all expectation, and now provides millions of jobs, forming a stable and respected pillar of the economy. Realizing that openly advertising products for use in assassinations could be a potential legal liability, poisons are effectively concealed behind a front that markets them as fertilizers, fuels, cleaning agents...

Political Correctness, *n.* See *Newspeak*.

Pop Psychology, *n.* Nonsense.

Pope, *n.* (1) The bishop upon the See of Rome. In the Apostolic Succession, the Pope carries the torch handed down from Peter, the rock upon whom Christ built his Church. He acts as the capstone of the College of Bishops and his infallibility is established in Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, ii.11, and affirmed by Tradition. (2) As used in several early English translations of the Bible, designed to avoid the Catholic

Church's monstrous tendency to hide or distort Scripture to suit its purposes, an alternative rendering of a word frequently translated 'Antichrist'.

Popular Taste, *n.* See *Popular Distaste*.

Postmodernism, *n.* The cadaver left over after philosophy has committed suicide.

Pride, *n.* A substance whose foul and bitter taste we do not fully realize until we have swallowed it.

Priest, *n.* A man of special sanctity, imbued with the authority to serve as an intermediary between man and God.

The priestly office is very clearly outlined in the Old Testament, the priests uniquely holding the authority to offer sacrifices, to enter into holy places, and to consume sacred foods. The highest priest, once each year, was permitted through the blood of a sacrificial victim to enter into the most sacred of places, the Holy of Holies.

The New Testament speaks also of priesthood. The Old Testament sacrifices were a shadow anticipating the things to come, for Christianity is to know priestly office in its fullest. Christ is the ultimate priest, having a priesthood after the order of Melchizedek, both priest and victim, who offered the one perfect sacrifice for all time. By the most precious blood he entered into the Holy of Holies, and has not merely permitted but called all believers in him to enter with him to the Holy of Holies also. He calls all believers, offering to them the most sacred of sacred foods. And, in the greatest mystery of priestly mysteries, orthodox Christianity sets aside some believers set aside as especially holy to hold the authority to act as priests, performing duties and rites not permitted to the laity.

Priority, *n.* An objective which is taken to be of prime importance. A person or nation's priorities can be very revealing.

We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.

-General Omar Bradley

Professor, *n.* In the modern academic world, a researcher whose performance is evaluated primarily on a basis of the amount of unnecessary articles he publishes.

Progress, *n.* Noted advancement in one area combined with unnoted retrogression in many others.

Promotion, *n.* A financial incentive offered by corporate mismanagement to an employee who has demonstrated competence in one set of responsibilities to assume another, in the hope of finding a field of incompetence.

Prophet, *n.* An unauthorized preacher whose message is offensive to the guardians of orthodoxy. See also: *Martyr*

Prostitute, *n.* A wretched woman created to help us appreciate the security of our own spiritual position. See also: *Pharisee*

Protest, *n.* A check on abuse of power emphatically protected in the Bill of Rights, granting freedom of speech and the right to peaceably assemble. The people who established these most pre-eminent and vital of amendments to the United States Constitution realized that corrupt regimes shield themselves from correction and reform by making speaking out against the government a punishable offense. Thus one of the Founding Fathers declared the importance of freedom of speech in the words, "I disagree with what you say, sir, but I will fight to the death for your right to say it." Today the torch is honorably carried by the Democratic Party and the American Civil Liberties Union, who vigorously defend the rights to freedom of speech and peaceable assembly, provided that they are not exercised in a manner that involves protesting an abortion clinic.

Protestant, *adj.* and *n.* A believer who is not Catholic or Orthodox.

Unlike the other two, Protestants do not have a continuous line from the beginning. Rather, they broke off (sometimes voluntarily, sometimes involuntarily) from the Catholic Church, believing that the adherence to Tradition was inappropriately obscuring Scriptural teaching, such as James's doctrine of salvation by faith and faith alone. They held to the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, meaning that they would not take Tradition as a basis for doctrine, but instead only use the Scriptures which supported their views. Today, still holding strongly to Sola Scriptura and other important traditions, they have seminaries (attendance to which is requisite to clerical positions) which teach the faith from extensive creeds and confessions, designed to remove the confusing task of directly interpreting the Scriptures.

Puppetry, *n.* A form of art appreciated in most of the world. It is shunned in America, and relegated to children. Only a child would have the imagination to succeed in believing that a couple of pieces of cloth are characters woven into a story. Mature adults do not watch puppet shows, but rather respect and demand movies with exquisite lighting, sets, acting, and special effects; oftentimes, they are so well done that they are difficult to distinguish from real life. This, also, explains the complexity, sophistication, subtlety, and depth to be found in plots.

Puppy, *n.* A warm and soft animal handled and enjoyed by people who are afraid to touch each other.

For an infant, touch is every bit as important a need as food and protection from the elements, if not moreso. A baby deprived of touch will, quite literally, wither and die.

If a puppy is taken into some place with a lot of people, there will be a shower of people wanting to pet it. Part of this is due to how cute it is, and it must be said that there is nothing which feels quite like a puppy's fur. At the same time, there is

another factor also at play.

Handling a puppy, purring cat, guinea pig, or some other agreeable furball, is one of a few situations where social mores are actually willing to interpret an innocent touch as an innocent touch. There are allowances made for exceptional circumstances, such as moments of great sorrow and the handling of young children, but even these are not entirely steady; it is actually illegal in some states for a kindergarden teacher to give a student a hug, so fervent is the legal zeal to avoid sexual misconduct.

Thus, we have embraced the age old style of solving problems, so greatly concerned with respecting people's space and, as touch rightly plays a vital role in marital union, avoiding what could possibly be taken to be unwanted sexual advances, that human contact is deemed expendable and unnecessary, a frying pan which we must jump out of at all costs. See also: *Pax*, *Purity*, *Victorianism*, *Wealth*.

Purity, *n.* A virtue to be found in that which is free of any taint of evil. Purity should pervade not only actions but thought. Its relentless pursuit is perhaps best illustrated by the following story, which has come to us from Buddhist folklore:

There were two monks, finally returning to their monastery at the end of a long trip. They were passing through a wooded region, forest with scattered paths and villages.

Walking along the road, they came to a large clearing. Cutting through the clearing was a river, with stepping stones across. There had been a great storm the night before, and the river was flowing swiftly, sweeping over its banks and the stepping stones.

There was a young woman standing on the near side of the river, holding a bundle of firewood, clearly wanting to cross the river but terrified to do so not trusting her light

cross the river, but learned to do so, not trusting her light frame against the currents.

The older of the two monks, who was a tall and very stout fellow, set down his walking stick, and walked over. He picked the girl up.

Slosh. Slosh. Slosh. He still had to try to maintain his balance, but he got to the other side and set her down.

Slosh. Slosh. Slosh. He picked up his staff, and then continued walking with the other monk.

After about an hour, the younger monk spoke.

"I know that you are older and wiser than I, and perhaps I should not be speaking. But there is something that I wonder."

"Speak, my child."

"To be a monk means to take a vow of celibacy. Perhaps I do not understand, but was it right for you to hold a young girl like that?"

The older monk walked a few steps, and then drew a deep breath. Finally, he spoke.

"Oh, my child. Are you still carrying her?"

Quebec Separatism, *n.* A political movement distinguished from the Rhinoceros Party chiefly by its inability to recognize when it is being hilariously funny.

Qwerty, *adj.* and *n.* A keyboard layout created in the nineteenth century, with many the most frequently used letters under the weakest fingers. The qwerty layout was used when primitive typewriters would easily jam, in order to slow down typists and keep them from typing too quickly, cutting typing speeds by over 40%. Now, even the crudest keyboards are capable of

handling any typing speed without jamming, but the rule is still qwerty, kept for over a century by secretaries and other typists who can't be slowed down by taking the time to learn another keyboard design. See also: *MS-DOS*

Rabbi, *n.* See *Reverend*.

Racism, *n.* Egotism taking the form of a delusion that one's own race is less depraved and idiotic than the criminal tendencies and gross stupidity exhibited by another.

Random Number, *n.* In computer science, the output of a deterministic algorithm carefully designed to produce output according to a specific distribution, deemed far too important to leave to chance.

Rank, *adj.* and *n.* (1) A numerical rating of a person's skills — "Better than him, not as good as her" — taken as a measure of worth. (2) Possessing a putrescent stench.

Rationalism, *n.* The first step in the flight from reason.

Rationalist, *n.* One who holds an irrational faith in the human mind.

Recursion, *n.* An extremely powerful concept (or non-concept, depending on perspective), whereby the set of functions and procedures potentially invoked by a function or procedure includes itself. See also: *Algorithm*, *Function*, *GNU*, *PINE*, *Procedure*, *Recursion*.

Red, *adj.* and *n.* The color of roses, sunsets, and many ideologies.

Red Russian, *n.* One of the followers of the regime that made for Stalin, and supported an implementation of a somewhat altered version of communism (an economic system which has functioned at its best at monasteries, nunneries, and other religious communities to which a vow of poverty is requisite) which tried to keep religion under tight control. The

implementators of the Russian and Soviet implementations of communism were masters in the use of symbol; an even more notable addition to the communist implementation of Utopian ideals was captured in the color of the flag.

Redundancy, *n.* (1) Repeated statements of the same thing. (2) Saying the same thing over and over again. (3) Language or wording which is repetitive. (4) Something which is cherished by many orators. (5) Phrasing which duplicates its meaning many times over. (6) ...

Regurgitate, *v.* (1) To expel from the mouth material which has entered the stomach and been found unsuitable to retain. (2) To expel from the mouth material which has not entered the brain.

Relationship, *n.* A kind of box that people expect to take treasures out of without placing anything of value into, first.

Relativism, *n.* The philosophical system of those who have finally come to realize that all truth is entirely a matter of perspective.

Religion Within the Bounds of Reason, *n.* The thinking man's way of remaking God in the image of his mind.

Renaissance, *n.* A time of intellectual rebirth, when many things — from philosophy to art — were rethought and infused with new energy.

The movement in art is perhaps most striking. On one level, there was an awesome mastery of technical detail, from the use of perspective to da Vinci's subtle use of blue to create distance in the Madonna of the Rocks.

The skill which they used succeeded in creating more convincing illusions than ever before. The term "Renaissance Masters" is quite justly applied to these artists, but the most profound rethinking of Renaissance art was not on a technical level.

Jesus was a Middle Eastern peasant, with calloused hands and skin darkened by years' beating in the sun. The Renaissance Masters invariably showed him to be a soft and fair skinned Caucasian, who most definitely did not look Jewish; the Jews (in the rare instance that they were painted) were a symbol of conniving, greed, and rejection of everything that is good, and so they knew far better than to paint Jesus as a dark-skinned Jew.

Jesus was a carpenter by profession, and he completely violated people's expectations of a rabbi. He chose disciples, but not from the scribes and lawyers, the educated and literate. Instead, he chose a very motley crew of manual laborers — fishermen and whatnot, even one terrorist thrown in for good measure. The Renaissance Masters, in painting the disciples, knew that Jesus would only choose men attired in dignity; his disciples are invariably painted as Greek philosophers.

His birth was announced to shepherds, in one of the great images of the last being first. A shepherd was crude, dirty, smelly, and uncouth; he could outswear a Roman soldier, and his testimony was not legally valid in a court of law. They might be described as the ancient equivalent of used car salesmen, except for the fact that the modern used car salesman does not have quite that bad of a reputation. From the Renaissance onwards, the image of the shepherd has been used as an image of the pastoral, to symbolize everything that is calm, serene, peaceful, and idyllic; the angels are painted as joining this beautiful scene to sing of the newborn Messiah because of how perfect it is.

An angel, as described in Scripture, is invariably majestic, awesome, and terrifying. Their first words are almost always "Fear not!", to calm the great fear that comes in response to such a magnificent creature of power and light; when they appeared at the Resurrection, their presence was sufficient to make soldiers faint from terror, and John, after seeing all things in Revelation, fell down at the angel's feet to worship him. The

Renaissance Masters had the skill of brush to capture something of this majesty, and painted angels as voluptuous women whose clothing is always falling off.

The Renaissance Masters would be pleased to see the wonders of television news reporting.

Repair, *n.* A polite word meaning 'kludge.'

Duct tape is like the force. It has a light side and a dark side, and it holds the universe together.

-Carl Zwanzig

Repeat, *n.* To render greater persuasive force to a weak argument.

In advertisement, the most ridiculous claims — AT&T is preferable to MCI because it is only slightly more expensive, if you drink our beer, you will be surrounded by models in bikinis, our dish soap is superior because it contains real lemon juice, our car is accompanied by a woman in a miniskirt, whenever there's fun there's always Coca-Cola, women flock to a man who wears our underwear before having a chance to guess what brand it is, smoking cigarettes will make you strong and healthy like this cowboy, if you buy our camera you will have a consort almost wearing a very interesting outfit, you will have an orgasm while eating our ice cream, and so on — are rendered persuasive by the force of repetition. The force is so powerful that, costs being passed to the customer, consumers purchase these more expensive products rather than generic brands, and do so with frequency that makes multimillion dollar advertising expenditures pay for themselves several times over. At least the mindless repetition of risible nonsense provides a relaxing diversion from watching political speeches.

Responsibility, *n.* The long-lost twin of freedom.

Revere, *v.* To hold in a high degree of respect and affection. For

causing people to feel as if they are thinking, one is revered, and for causing people to think, detested.

Revolutionary, *n.* A person attempting to establish a Utopian society by wading through blood. If this attempt to remove corruption and oppression succeeds, the insurrection becomes a revolution. The revolution is like a point on a wheel, slowly rising out of the muck and mire as it revolves around its axis.

Rock, *n.* (1) In the natural world, a stone. (2) In the musical world, a form of entertainment enjoyed by those who wish to become stone deaf.

Rose, *n.* A flower of singular beauty, holding a unique place in romance and some celebrations. The rose has a stem covered with sharp thorns, and, with full knowledge of the thorns, people still appreciate its breathtaking beauty enough that it is said that a rose is God's autograph. It is exceptional in more ways than one.

RSV, *n.* Revised Standard Version. In the first edition, a dangerous mistranslation heretically discordant with the authority of popular opinion.

From the reactions it received one might be tempted to think that they gave an accurate rendition of a comment Paul made in Phillippians. Paul listed many reasons he had to be confident on his own, without need of grace: born into the tribe of Benjamin, circumcised on the eighth day, perfect in maintaining ceremonial law, flawless in Pharisaic legalism, ad nauseum. A couple of verses later, he commented on their real value: "Furthermore, I consider everything a loss next to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them all —, that I may gain Christ." He was perhaps contemplating the rebuke of the Divine through the prophet Malachi:

And now, O priests, this commandment is for you. If
you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory

you will not listen, if you will not lay it to heart to give glory to my name, says Yahweh Sabaoth, then I will send the curse on you; truly, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. I will wither your offspring, and spread — on your faces, the — of your solemn feasts, and drive you out of my presence.

or perhaps the words of the prophet Isaiah, who compared righteous acts to a used tampon.

A like reaction might be generated by rendering the crowd's words about Jesus "Crucify him!" in words the same hate took over a millenium later: "He is a faggot. Burn him at the stake!" Perhaps there were footnotes explaining that the word *stauros* (in its various forms) was not merely a pejorative term, but an obscenity.

Or perhaps a dynamic equivalent of the Song of Songs, rendering the sexual metaphors and double entendres in fresh English. Perhaps they might have rendered "His banner over me is love." in a less literal manner, more understandable to the modern reader, so that Sunday School teachers would be less sorely tempted to set it to an annoying tune and teach it as a song to young children. Perhaps they departed from the Victorian classic describing that which is described between the legs and belly and likened to a rounded goblet flowing with wine: the woman's navel.

But they did none of these, choosing an error far worse.

In Hebrew, the word meaning 'young woman' was spoken with the implicit understanding that the young woman is a virgin. The prophet Isaiah recorded the word of Yahweh, "Behold, the young woman shall be pregnant and shall give birth to a son, and call his name Emmanuel..." RSV in its first edition not only rendered the word as 'young woman' (with a footnote saying 'or virgin'), but placed in footnotes (rather than the main text) various verses which are not found in the most ancient and reliable manuscripts, preceding the editing work of

Erasmus in creating the Textus Receptus.

As a result, the RSV became a banned book. It was held up and waved around as the latest Communist-Marxist-trying to subvert the doctrine of the virgin birth-heretical-Catholic-infiltration. *En masse*.

This prompted the creation of RSV Second Edition, a work less offensive to such staunch Christians.

Rule, *n.* The shuffled off husk of morality.

Russian Orthodox Church, *n.* A church in which, the higher you go up in the hierarchy, the less faith there is — right up to the top, where requisite to membership in the Ministry of Religion is a profession of atheism.

Sacred Cow, *n.* A ridiculous superstition which benighted fools dare not give five minutes' serious re-examination, protected by a careful line of Things You Do Not Question, as contrasted to the incontestable wisdom of our own feminism, lesbigay movement, multiculturalism, relativism, humanism, progress, materialism...

Safe Sex, *n.* In modern times, a second rate (not to mention dangerous) substitute for the original safe sex.

Safety, *n.* Avoiding or minimizing the risk of human injury. For example, during Operation Desert Storm, safety was such a high concern in operational procedures that U.S. forces achieved a kill ratio of better than 100:1 of Iraqi civilians to U.S. soldiers.

Salad Bar, *n.* A conglomeration of circles, lines, cylinders, rectangles, fractals, and so on, serving a function which, in centuries past, was served by the formal study of geometry.

Secure, *adj.* Replete with undiscovered security holes.

Seminary, *n.* An academy devoted to the study of the highest

sacred truths, and to the integration of faith, learning, and life.

Time is fleeting. Resources are short. In the best of all possible worlds, we might be able to make any compromises, but we do not live in the best of all possible worlds. Constantine taught us that.

In an experiment conducted by some psychologists, a class of divinity students, one by one, was sent off (belatedly, due to bad planning) and told, as a final exam, to hurry over and give an expository sermon on the meaning of Luke 10:30-37.

The experimenters, in order to test them, had placed certain distractions in the way of the students — even a person who was made to appear injured and in need of medical assistance. Practically none of them shirked their true duty, but went on to give the sermon without wasting any of their professors' time.

Truly, if the head of the house embodies such unimpeachable character, we need not hold any doubts about the spiritual condition of those living within the house.

Sensitivity, *n.* One of the prime concerns of administrators and directors, who desire to use their power and authority in such a manner as to benefit those under their authority. In order to effect this proper use of power, it is important to be attuned to the needs and desires of those people; it is an administrator's business not to be aloof. This quality is best demonstrated in an immortal story from hacker folklore:

In the beginning was the Board of Directors. And the Board of Directors formed the Administration. And the Administration formed a Committee. And the Committee formed the Plan.

The Board of Directors believed that the Plan was good, but wished to be sensitive to the Hackers. They did not wish to use the Plan except that the Hackers Approved

not wish to use the Plan, except that the Hackers Approved.

So they sent Memos explaining the Plan, and Low Level Administration summoned the Hackers to set aside their Work and attend Meetings, to find what the Hackers thought of the Plan.

"You, the Hackers, are our life's blood. Our strength as a Corporation depends on you; you are the source of our Success, and we hold the highest Regard and Appreciation for your Wisdom. Now, you have had time to read and meditate upon the Plan. What do you think? Is the Plan a good or a bad Idea?"

"It's a crock of —, and *it stinks!*"

Then Middle Level Administration summoned Low Level Administration to set aside their Work of wasting the Time of the Hackers, and attend Meetings, to explain what the Hackers think of the Plan.

"You have spoken with the Hackers. The Hackers are very Intelligent, and have many good Ideas. What do they say of the Plan?"

"It is Manure, and the Stench thereof is Great."

Then Upper Level Administration summoned Middle Level Administration, to set aside their Work, and attend Meetings, to explain what the Hackers think of the Plan.

"You have spoken with those who have condensed the wise and good Ideas of the Hackers. What do the Hackers say of the Plan?"

"It is Fertilizer, and it Smells of great Power."

Then the Board of Directors summoned Upper Level Administration, to set aside their Work, and attend Meetings, to explain what the Hackers think of the Plan.

"You know the Wisdom and Understanding of the Hackers, and what they believe of the Plan. Our Time is scarce, so we are certain that you can explain their Reactions briefly. What do the Hackers say of the Plan?"

"It promoteth Growth, and the Vigor thereof is exceedingly Great."

Whereby the Board of Directors was greatly Pleased, to learn that the Hackers appreciated the Value, Efficiency, and Wisdom of the Plan.

And the Plan was Approved, and made Action.

Sermon, *n.* A speech used in a church service to instruct believers in sound doctrine and holy lifestyle. This ecclesiastical function is very important, enough so that it is occasionally misunderstood to be the focus of a worship service.

Sometimes, to make a sermon easier to remember, the preacher will center it around a certain number of points. Hence there will be a sermon on the four spiritual laws, seven points of effective prayer, the three 'P's of resisting temptation, and so on. There is some controversy over how many points a good sermon should contain; the best have at least one.

Sesame Street, *n.* Education within the bounds of amusement.

Settler, *n.* Someone who goes to inhabit land already inhabited by other people who are of a different race and whose lives are thus considered worthless.

Sex, *n.* One of the God-given blessings of which different cultures are most universally intolerant.

The most obvious example of this is found in the most ridiculously idiotic monument of Victorian culture. Victorian thought held that, because the marriage bed is private, it is to be

an object of shame. While claiming to be Christian, Victorian thought flaunted a blatant disregard for the Song of Songs, an extended commentary on the words in Genesis, "Male and female he created them." and "Two shall become one," and utterly ignored Paul's words, commanding that the husband and wife should yield to each other's conjugal rights. The Victorian mind found sex to be, at best, an unfortunate but necessary evil in order to produce children. Hence, in a letter to a newlywed bride, a minister commanded that she give occasionally, give sparingly, and give grudgingly; what they were to have as sex precluded the possibility of seeing each other's bodies, and, if the husband began to fondle or kiss anywhere not strictly necessary in order to produce children, the wife was suddenly to excuse herself.

Current American culture, by contrast, considers sex to be a faceless, underclothed, and underweight model holding a product in an advertisement, or, taken further, still little more than a cheap thrill, to toy with when other forms of amusement become boring. Sex is not a cherished bond, a union of body, mind, and soul that encompasses conversation and silent walks as well as foreplay and intercourse, best described by the word 'know'; this present lexicographer is reminded of monks who used pieces of the oldest known Septuagint manuscript to start fires.

People who have cohabited and quickly introduced intercourse to romance wonder why sex after marriage seems a contradiction in terms; along with adulterers, they are befuddled at why it is so difficult to keep a marriage together. Even the people who recognize certain limits are inclined to ask, "How far can I go?" rather than, "How much do I want to have left?"

The harm stemming from a culture using pornographic magazines and casual sex is not that its people experience too much sex, but that they experience too little.

Herein lies a very illuminating glimpse of American culture.

Sexual Harassment, *n.* (1) In a court of law, an unwanted sexual advance. (2) Under educational administration and corporate mismanagement, any statement, supportive hand-on-shoulder, door opening, gesture, facial expression, et cetera, which could possibly be misinterpreted as having sexual overtones. (3) In the future, any handshake, polite greeting, eye contact, presence in the same room, et cetera, which cannot positively be proven not to have any sexual overtones.

Sexual Misconduct, *n.* A charge which must be taken seriously if the accused is conservative, but should be carefully examined if the accused is liberal.

Sharp's, *n.* Flat's.

Shock, *n.* The state of any sane person upon seeing how far our world has fallen. Something which people learn to ignore to retain their sanity.

We have lost the invaluable faculty of being shocked.

-C.S. Lewis

Shoot, *n.* The most common mispronunciation of '—'. Used by people who desire the force of an expletive, while retaining a sense of self-righteousness at refrain from language which refined people do not use.

Sight, *n.* A faculty of perception which permits us to forget that we have four others.

Your ambush would have been more successful if you bathed more frequently.

-Worf

Sin, *n.* An expert remodeler whose services are in great demand for the maintenance and preservation of institutions and traditions. His competitor has some very satisfied customers, but is generally considered far more difficult to trust.

Sinister, *adj.* Shadowy; mysterious; dark; abysmal; in short, evil. Etymologically, the word signifies left-handedness.

People who are left-handed tend to be intuitive, original, and creative; in short, different. And so, historically, most of them have either been taught to be right-handed, or mercifully burned at the stake.

It is a rare society which does not declare at least some of what is harmless to be evil, and some of what is evil to be harmless.

Sit Com, *n.* Situational Comedy. A form of televised annoyance in which the placement of flat and predictable characters in stupid and embarrassing situations is confused with comedy.

Skin-deep, *adj.* About as far as most people look.

Sleep, *v.* To "celebrate with appropriate ceremony" the content of a political speech.

Opposing speaker (to Churchill): Winston Churchill,
must you sleep while I am speaking?

Churchill: No, it is purely voluntary.

Small Talk, *n.* The fine art of having nothing to say and saying it anyway.

Smoking, *n.* A legalized form of suicide.

Snob, *n.* A man made arrogant by money, looking down on normal people as if they were urchins, and possessing more wealth than I do.

Sociology, *n.* The enlightened liberal's way of reducing everyone to a collection of stereotypes.

Sola Scriptura, *n.* [Lat. *sola*, only, *Scriptura*, Scripture] A momentous doctrine of the Reformation, holding that only the Scriptures are to be used as a basis for teaching.

Scripture has held an important role in church history; it is God-breathed and profitable for teaching and rebuking, in its entirety. If a belief contradicts the unambiguous teaching of the Scriptures, it is an error; only a heretic would hold so low of a regard for these sacred writings as to hold even one out and say of it, "It is a letter of straw. Burn it."

If the Scriptures are to be magnified beyond being seen as a final resolution as to which doctrines are and are not acceptable, and declared to be the only acceptable source of teaching, then it is important to see what they are and what they do and do not say.

The Scriptures are an anthology of a wide variety of sacred writings. A definition is not the place to quote a thousand pages of truth, but there are a few points which are notable here. The Scriptures do say that God himself speaks through the lips of prophets, and the Creation declares the glory of its Creator. They do not, at any point, give a listing of which works are to be considered canonical.

Sophia, *n.* [Gk.] Wisdom, which, along with knowledge (*gnosis*), was considered by Gnosticism to be the route to salvation. The Gnostic understanding of wisdom — of attaining the spiritual by shunning the physical, of balancing and then moving beyond good and evil, of a Christ whose prime purpose was to offer knowledge rather than to offer grace, and so on — was harshly attacked by the Apostles and Early Fathers. Recent thought has found that some of these ideas are perhaps better than they were thought to be, and bits and pieces have slowly been brought into Christian thought. The work is far from complete,

of course, but there have been many steps to follow in the path of the Gnostics and wholeheartedly embrace a system of ideas worth its weight in gold.

Sorcerer's Bargain, *n.* A classic pact with the Devil, who offers, "I will give you power if you give me your soul." But there is a problem (aside from the obvious difficulty of the power having no value near that of the soul): if you make the deal, it isn't really you that has the power. Once the deal is made, it is a lose-lose situation.

In the contemporary Western world, the sorcerer's bargain is frequently made with two very attractive looking twin demons, named Mammon and Technology.

Both of them woo people with the sweetest promises, never speaking of any price to be paid. And both of them somewhere, somehow, find the most creative ways to extract payment (and deliver more of an illusion than a reality of what they promised). . It is notable that, in the Sermon on the Mount, Christ's warning was not "No man can own two slaves," but "No man can serve two masters."

Calvin: I had a dream last night in which machines had taken over the world and made us do their bidding.

Hobbes: That must have been scary.

Calvin: It sure wa—holy, would you look at the time? My TV show is on!

-Calvin and Hobbes

Sorcery, *n.* The study and practice of spells, evocations, incantations, gestures, and so on, in an attempt to divine the future and manipulate unseen forces to produce supernatural effects. Out of sorcery the practice of science has sprung. Science then began to spurn even the most remote trace of

magic, and has now progressed to the point of being indistinguishable from it.

Sore Loser, *n.* A very poor sport whom I will only play if he is the only one I can beat.

Sound Bite, *n.* In contemporary life, the basis for public discourse and the illusion of thought.

Source Criticism, *n.* The proper scholarly response to texts that are clearly the result of incompetent editors attempting to interweave entirely distinct sources, as evidenced by the fact that the texts are not written according to the standards that a modern scholar would use.

Sovereignty Association, *n.* All of the benefits of being a part of Canada combined with none of the costs.

SPA, *n.* Software Publisher's Association. An association of software publishers which seeks to stamp out the problem of software piracy by the use of intimidation, and coercion when people do not surrender, to extract ransoms from anyone unfortunate enough to cross their waters.

Speed Limit, *n.* A maximum speed, assigned by laws which prohibit cars from moving more than ten miles per hour less than the average road speed in the country, or faster than ten times the average road speed in the city.

Spherical, *adj.* Appropriate for consideration in physics calculations.

Splinter, *n.* A small fragment of wood, which often manages to work its way into the hand. A splinter in the thumb has never been popular, but nothing matches the swiftness of a person trying to deal with the true sting caused by a splinter in the eye.

Once upon a time, a man came to a psychiatrist.

"Doc, wherever I go, whatever I look at, all I can see or think of is sex, sex, sex. Can you tell me what's going on?"

"I think so, but I'd like to run a few ink blot tests first. I'm going to hold up some sheets of paper with colored spots, and I want you to tell me what you see.

Walking over to a shelf, he pulled a binder, and, opening it, began to hold up sheets of paper.

"What's this a picture of?"

"Sex."

"Ok, what's this a picture of?"

"Sex."

"What about this one?"

"Sex."

"Can you explain how?"

"Yes. Right here, you can see that the..."

Thirty, forty, fifty ink blots. Always the same response — "Sex.", "Sex.", "Sex."

Setting down the binder, the psychiatrist opened his desk drawer, and pulled out two sheets of paper from there — one 8 1/2 x 11" blue lined sheet of notebook paper, and one blank 8 1/2 x 11" sheet of typing paper.

"All right. Those images are somewhat old, and perhaps all look more or less the same. I want you to clear your mind of all thought, and then I'm going to hold up two more sheets of paper, different from any of the ones before. Could you please tell me what you see?"

The psychiatrist, with one swift motion, lifted both sheets off the desk, holding them up in the air for the patient to see.

"They are both graphic sexual images, like all the rest."

Even after professional training, the psychiatrist was somewhat taken aback; he wasn't expecting that reaction. Caught off guard, he said, "Well, um, I see. You do seem to have a one track mind."

"Hey, Doc! *You're* the one who's drawing all of the dirty pictures."

Standard, *n.* Any one of a number of officially endorsed options, enabling the individual a wide variety of options.

Statistician, *n.* A skilled advertiser with at least a BS in mathematics.

There are three types of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics.

-Mark Twain

Statue of Liberty, *n.* An immense and awe inspiring statue, a powerful symbol of all that is American, beautiful but hollow. The Statue boldly proclaims the magnificent words, "Give me your tired, your hungry, your poor, your wretched masses yearning to be free," and stands over Ellis Island, the site of immigration offices which, at a time which is seeing a growing gap between rich and poor and (quite possibly) seen more large scale genocides than the rest of history, enforces strict maximum quotas on the number of immigrants who are permitted to enter the country.

Stupidity, *n.* See *Drive-Thru Liquor Store*.

Subliminal Message, *n.* William H. Everston's new theory,

helping/enabling commercial organizations' ugly new traps. Richard Y. Inglenook stopped this hideous, rastifarian outrage. What next? In no trick observed, children have acted or served, potentially, as truly rational. Inglenook observes that idiots seldom muse. It should be obvious right now.

Subtlety, *n.* [obs.] An attribute of good writing, where the meaning is not immediately obvious, requiring thought to understand.

Suggestion Box, *n.* An unusual garden set up by administrators. They till the soil, spreading an ample amount of fertilizer, and then allow others to come and plant whatever seed best expresses their sentiments. The administrators then come, weeding out those plants which are troublesome, and nourishing and exhibiting those which are compatible with the administrators' goals and plans.

Suntan, *n.* A precursor to wrinkles and melanomas, deemed to be highly attractive by a culture whose models of beauty are almost never born with dark skin.

Supercomputer, *n.* A computer which is a few years behind the needs of industry and research, combining the latest in hardware with the most primitive of software.

You can tell how far we have to go, when FORTRAN is the language of supercomputers.

-Steve Feiner

Symbol, *n.* A forgotten art which once represented most of Christian thought.

Systematic Theology, *n.* The mark of the Enlightenment on Christianity, where God is expected to bow down and worship the human mind. A part of wisdom frequently mistaken for the whole.

Ritualism, *n.* A Dutch Garden of God where He may walk in

rectilinear freedom, keeping off the grass.

With all due respect, Ambrose Bierce is mistaken in implication. I humbly submit that it is inaccurate to make such a statement of all ritualistic traditions, and ludicrous to imply that ritualism (or, for that matter, systematic theology) has a monopoly on such things.

Tactician, *n.* A man skilled in the methods of persuasion most devoid of tact.

Talk, *v.* To exercise the strongest muscle in the body.

Taoism, *n.* A tradition in Chinese thought dating back to approximately 2500 BC. The tradition began as a profound philosophical system originated by Lao Tzu. From that point, it continually devolved until it finally became a generic pagan religion, complete with gods, priests, temples, altars, complicated rituals, a calendar of holy days, and everything else necessary to make a complete antithesis of all that made the tradition interesting in the first place. Much like Christianity.

Technicolor Yawn, *n.* The best response to the OJ media circus.

Technology, *n.* (1) Any device invented and used by men [ex: a lever]. (2) A result of and substitute for modern Western civilization, empowering the evil which lies inside the human heart to achieve what it could not possibly achieve otherwise.

Teflon, *n.* One of few plastic resins which is actually more chemically stable (and thus less biodegradable) than polystyrene plastic or foam (Styrofoam). The difference between the two is that Styrofoam can be recycled into rice cakes.

Telemarketer, *n.* Someone who believes one of the most annoying and offensive invasions of privacy to make a customer better disposed towards a company.

Such a man would expect a bucket thrown into the ocean to

yield cold and pure drinking water. Such a man would expect a thistle to yield figs. Such a man would expect a hornet to create honey.

Such a man would expect a soldier, using violence and intimidation at a superior capacity to destroy, to achieve the manifest presence of love, understanding, and respect for the rights and needs of others which is called justice and peace.

Like a eunuch trying to take a girl's virginity is someone who attempts to achieve justice through force.

-Jesus Ben Sirach

Telephone, *n.* A very poor substitute for reaching out and touching someone.

In a personal conversation with a friend, the text of what is said is of course important, but there is more. Eye contact, touch, and body language are all carriers of personal presence; of such things, only tone of voice is preserved, and even that is often garbled by line static.

As such, telephone conversations are a distant and miserable rendering of enjoying another person's presence, and it is no great surprise that a majority of them are terse and technical: taking the necessary time to say what needs to get across, but not really taking time to slow down and chat. As reported by the Chicago Tribune, fifty percent of phone calls are one way (person to answering machine), and fifty-two percent of residential phone calls do not last for more than a minute. People exchange brief messages and get tasks done, but maintaining friendships and keeping in touch with family is something which seems to happen. And, if there is any real distance between the involved parties (which is often why a phone call is used as a substitute for a personal visit), it costs money by the minute. Touch, eye contact, body language, and an unhurried and relaxed time are all vitally important, and the telephone takes away all of these. One might be tempted to

telephone takes away all of these. One might be tempted to forget all of this by advertising slogans that suggest touch and show the faces of family warmed by each other's presence, but it is still true.

All in all, a quite perfect picture of how not to cultivate relationships with friends and family.

Television, *n.* A font of wisdom poured out upon those who do not have the time to read the Early Fathers.

Temperance Movement, *n.* A movement of people who reject as inappropriate Christ's model of temperate use of alcohol.

Terrorist, *n.* A terrible soldier capable of striking terror into the heart of the most defensible nation in the world.

The more advanced a system becomes, the more vulnerable to primitive modes of attack.

-Dr. Who

Theology, *n.* [Gk. *theos*, God, *logos*, Word] A discipline now considered essentially distinct from the direct study of the Word of God.

Thermite, *n.* An industrial strength cleaning agent advisable in the care of hardware made by Zenith Data Systems.

Thou, *pn.* In older English usage, the familiar second person singular pronoun, as contrasted to 'you', the formal and plural second person pronoun.

In 1611, when the King James Version was translated, addresses to the Godhead were rendered as 'thou'. This was not in any sense a denial of the glory and majesty of the King of Kings, but rather an accurate rendering of the intimacy of the original language. Mark's account of the Gospel preserves an Aramaic word, 'Abba', which Jesus used to address the Father, and Paul's writings mention that word as something which

and Paul's writings mention that word as something which believers are to use in prayers; the best modern equivalent is probably 'Daddy'. It was a very important element of prayer and religion which was accurately preserved when the personal, informal, familiar, intimate word 'thou' was used to accurately render the corresponding words in the original language; it was a very important element of Christian teaching which was preserved when that same word was not simply left in Scripture as a special case owing to the sanctity of the characters involved, but an example, to be repeated in prayers.

Now, the word has generally fallen out of use. The one exception, the one place where 'thou' is still used, is in formal prayer and liturgy, where it is cherished for its elegance and stateliness.

Thoughtful, *adj. Non sequitur.*

Thunderstorm, *n.* A spectacular symphony of nature in which rolling thunder complements streaks of lightning against dark and majestic clouds, droplets pour forth to clean the air and make soft ripples in puddles, staining everything a deep and rich shade, the flowers come open and children dance, and civilization dons galoshes and raincoats, muttering about what a bother it is.

Ticklishness, *n.* Proof that God has a sense of humor.

Tide, *n.* The motion of the waters in the ocean, as influenced by the moon phase. See also: *Caucus*.

Tobacco Industry, *n.* A vital and necessary force in our nation's economy.

The tobacco industry reports that it provides jobs for 2.3 million Americans — and this does not include physicians, X-ray technicians, nurses, hospital employees, firefighters, dry cleaners, respiratory specialists, pharmacists, morticians and gravediggers.

-Quoted by Ann Landers

Touch, *n.* A source of information which infants naturally use to learn about objects which sight is used to locate, a vital tool to medical professionals to detect injuries and illnesses that the eye cannot see, but not considered worth learning to develop and use by the mainstream of postmedieval Western civilization.

Tourism, *n.* *Veni, vidi, Visa.*

Traffic Law, *n.* The system of laws governing drivers' conduct on state owned roads, to which members of Congress are exempt. This is in accordance with Article I, Section 9 of the Constitution, which commands, "No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States..." See also: *Congressional Medal of Honor.*

True Orthodox, *adj* and *n.* The preferred designation for a loose confederation of people and groups that consider themselves to be properly Orthodox and Novatians to be liberal ecumenists.

Trickle-Down Economics, *n.* A virtually seamless economic system, keeping all but a trickle of money from reaching the hands of the poor.

TV News, *n.* Television [*tele*, far, vision] News. A device which permits us to see that which is far from the truth.

Unborn, *adj.* Not yet born. Among other admirable groups, the Moral Majority has stood firm and uncompromising in its opposition to abortion as the slaughter of unborn children, in addition to correcting the folly of those who would waste valuable time and resources to protect the environment.

Underaged, *adj.* Lacking sufficient age to do some activity maturely. Commonly, the term is used in reference to a person who is deemed by the government to be too young to properly

handle alcohol. This legislative attempt to protect youth from improper use of alcohol has had most interesting results in contrast to places such as England where such responsibility is delegated to parents; underaged alcoholics in America outnumber alcoholics in England.

Undocumented, *adj.* Without a proper description.

Undocumented Feature, bug.

Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

Arthur C. Clarke

Any sufficiently undocumented code is indistinguishable from magic.

-Some frustrated systems hacker at 3:00 AM

unix, .n the operating system designed by e e cummings

Unprintable, *adj.* Resembling Holy Scripture.

Up-To-Date, *adj.* Having fallen hook, line, and sinker for the latest fad.

UseNet, *n.* A massive experiment currently in progress, funded in large part by the National Science Foundation. Designed to provide decisive evidence in a hot debate involving many notable biologists, including all researchers supporting Creation Science, it is being eagerly monitored by the scientific community. Its unbelievably complex apparatus involves a million monkeys on a million typewriters, and has not (to date) produced anything even remotely resembling Shakespeare.

Randomness, *n.* An element playing an increasing role in the determination of political, public, and private events in American life.

Belladonna, *n.* In Italian a beautiful lady; in English a deadly poison. A striking example of the essential identity of the two tongues.

Witch, *n.* (1) An ugly and repulsive old woman, in a wicked league with the devil. (2) A beautiful and attractive young woman, in wickedness a league beyond the devil.

Bierce is, again, mistaken; as with ritualism, there are at least a few ladies who are not so described, and it is bombastic to assume that women hold a monopoly on the power to delude and set aside wisdom.

Images play as focal of a role in current American culture as they did in the medieval European culture, but the manner is different. In medieval culture, images were symbols; in a cathedral, stained glass windows and statues spoke a rich language and lore, literature for the illiterate. Upon beholding images, a host of meanings would occur; a detail was all that was necessary for a single picture to tell a story. The image was a trigger to thought. Now, the image is a substitute for thought; charisma has displaced reason.

This is candidly illustrated in the outcome of a recent election, where one candidate fared poorly because, though he was a decorated and courageous veteran, his physical appearance was weak and unimpressive.

Alternately, it may be seen in a political commentator whose opinion and thought is held to be of immense weight by many Americans. It would perhaps be inaccurate to describe his figure as chiselled, but his manner and personality enable people to believe, through a scattering of sound bites and quotes out of context, that he has the monopoly on the truth.

The sound bite itself has become the modern unit of debate; in a land that once paid attention to involved political debates lasting for hours, it is now expected that any argument deemed credible must be developed in seconds. Vivid language

deemed credible must be developed in seconds. vivid language is certainly not an evil, but neither is it a substitute for thought.

Due to these trends, it is chaos and charisma which carry the day. Once upon a time, acting and politics were distinct professions. Now... For a leader to be charismatic certainly does not preclude being an effective leader, but neither does it guarantee wisdom. In a sense, though, there is one point separating politics and public consensus from a racetrack.

One of the horses has to win.

, *n.* That for which there exists no adequate word.

Valor, *n.* The attribute, embodying bravery and courage, of a soldier who most truly serves his country, without being deterred or intimidated by any threatening menace which stands in the way of the true cause.

Once upon a time, three generals — one from the Army, one from the Navy, and one from the Air Force — were discussing and debating the nature of courage. The debate went through the day and long into the night, and, finally, agreed to visit their respective bases, in order to learn something there.

First, they visited a pier. Driving in a car, the Navy general threw his watch into shallow water, ordering a cadet to retrieve it.

The cadet looked at him in fright, and then, when the general repeated the order, dove into the water, retrieving the watch, at the expense of severe injuries.

The general said, "That is courage."

The Army general paused in thought for a moment, and then said, "That is indeed the beginning of courage, but there is a courage yet greater." And so, they went to an Army base

Army base.

At the base, as several tanks were driving by, the general suddenly commanded, "Private, stop that tank."

The man immediately ran in front of the tank, and stoically stood, until the tank came and crushed him to death.

"That is true courage."

The general from the Air Force said, "There is yet one base that we have not visited. There is a sense of courage — great courage — which both of your forces have shown, but there is a courage, and a true patriotism, which is greater still."

There was a long time of silence, before one of the other generals finally said, "As you wish," and drove to the Air Force base.

Here, at the beginning of a runway, the Air Force general ordered the car stopped. As a plane came in to land, he barked out, "Airman, stop that plane *now!*"

The young cadet immediately snapped to attention, and gave the general a one-fingered salute.

The general leaned back in his seat. "Gentlemen, that is courage."

Values, *n.* [singular, 'value', generally not used] A term/usage chosen by postmodern philosophers such as Nietzsche embodying all of the genius of 1984's Newspeak.

The term designates religious or moral beliefs, but, like a great many words, means far more than it designates. The meaning of the word is that one makes a category mistake in actually regarding such beliefs as corresponding or not corresponding to an external reality: they are rather a strictly

corresponding to an external reality, they are rather a strictly internal state, like a person's emotional state. One does not speak of right or wrong values; one rather speaks of a person's values, just as one speaks of a person's tastes and preferences, as an arbitrary and subjective attribute of that individual person. The word places such beliefs within that basic category.

Thus, from the outset, any discussion is biased — no, worse than biased; a bias presents a difficulty to surmount, while 'values' presents a closed door — against a meaningful consideration of God, or of the moral structure of the universe. Even the term 'atheism' does not quite contain what this does to the discussion; atheism says, "There is an ultimate reality to which beliefs do or do not correspond; God does not exist; beliefs in God are false." — and this facet of postmodernism, in its definition of values, can't go far enough to say that a belief does or does not correspond to reality. Words such as 'good', 'evil', 'right', 'wrong', 'heroism', 'adultery', 'honesty', 'theft', and so on aren't even allowed to be wrong in what they describe; they describe not an external moral reality, but only a person's internal state.

It can at least be said that a part of this usage's proper meaning is dropped by some speakers, who perhaps do not think far enough to cringe at hearing the words, "our values." But even then — this lexicographer cannot recall a single instance of someone referring to values as being right or wrong.

All things considered, a most disagreeable word.

Verse, *n.* An ingenious device, facilitating minute study within strict bounds concerning heterodox misinterpretation of Scripture, and most effective deterrent against quotes out of context. A wonderful set of dependable roadbumps, which the road's paver did not have the foresight to provide. See also: *Footnote*

Victorianism, *n.* The death knell to sexual purity in Western culture.

Victorianism held sexual purity to be extremely important. All well and good, but it did not stop there. Victorianism believed sexual purity to be best approached via a Pharisaic guard around the Law. And, like every other guard around the Law, it did a tremendous amount of damage to numerous other things before destroying the very object it was meant to preserve.

Touch and community are vital elements of human health. This is witnessed in Scriptures that tell of John reclining in Jesus's bosom and in the hands quickly extended to pets, one of the few situations where our society will allow an innocent touch to be an innocent touch. An infant who is not held will wither and die, and psychologists have a bluntly accurate term for the failure of parents to hold and cuddle their children a great deal: abuse. And of course the special kind of community that exists between a husband and wife is given a special kind of touch.

Victorianism looked at sex and did not quite see something which is fundamentally good within a certain context. It saw something which was essentially evil (but tolerable at best within a certain context). And, in progressively widening circles, encompassing different forms of touch further and further from what is necessarily foreplay, saw that there exists at least some possibility for that touch to be sexual (at least from the perspective of the younger monk), and placed on each one a label of "This is dirty. Avoid it." Word such as "Greet one another with a kiss of love." cease to be acknowledged as a divine command which was given for human good, and instead look like, um, an odd cultural thing which, um, shows, um, um, um...

The aim, it appears, was to end up with nothing that was sexual. The result was to make everything sexual, and create a major unanticipated problem.

God created people with certain needs, and when those

needs are not met, Satan comes in with counterfeit substitutes. These things are hard enough to resist to someone whose needs are met with the genuine article; when there is an immense sucking vacuum coming from unmet needs, pushing away the counterfeits acquires a difficulty which is unbelievable. A little girl who is deprived of a father's hugs and kisses will grow into a young woman who has a tremendously difficult time avoiding sexual promiscuity, unsuccessfully searching in a series of abusive boyfriends' embraces for enough love to fill the emptiness inside.

Fortunately, most of Victorianism did not quite leave a stain that dark and deep, but there is still a major problem with a culture that refuses to wholeheartedly say, "It's OK. You may enjoy an innocent touch as an innocent touch." There is still a failure to meet a need that God created people to have filled, and still an uphill battle to fight off the counterfeit substitutes.

In this century, Victorianism has crumbled, but, like every other evil, it fails to crumble in the ways that a sane person would want it to crumble. What disappeared was not the prohibition on friendly touch, but the belief that sexual sin is a deadly poison which should be fought tooth and nail. What appeared and took the place meant to be filled by innocent touch is something which is not innocent. Thus, Victorianism did a perfect job of making room and clearing the way for a great deal of lewdness.

Current Western culture is saturated with sexual sin, not despite, but because of the fact that it is the continuation of Victorian culture.

Villain, *n.* One who is positive that his actions contribute positively to the betterment of mankind.

Among people who embody some semblance of what might be termed good, there is a continual self-search, a continual question of "Am I doing good or evil?" The Apostle Paul said, "Here is a trustworthy saying which deserves acceptance: Jesus

There is a trustworthy saying which deserves acceptance: Jesus Christ died for sinners, of whom I am the worst." Those people who act the most villainously do not ask the question, because they know that they are doing good.

Hence Nazi Germany knew that it was doing the world a favor by eradicating Jews from the face of the earth; the Jews were the source of all the world's problems. Hitler himself did not go to eradicate Jews until after he had established himself as a national hero, pulling Germany out of a major depression, and speaking love and appreciation to the common people and farmers as the heartblood of the Aryan nation. (It is the opinion of this lexicographer that, had Hitler found a more productive use for his talents than genocide, history would probably record him as a strong leader and a hero) Other groups since them, such as the Klueless Klux Klan, are also positive of the immense benefit that their actions are bringing to America, expurgating our white homeland of foreigners and helping to gently persuade them to go back to where they came from (Africa, Asia, Europe...). The present practitioners of ethnic cleansing wear watches reminding themselves of the defeat they suffered 500 years ago, and how they are merely returning just retribution and punishment to an evil that was done to them. In wartime, in order to justify the killing, it is almost universal for one nation to demonize the people of the other country and make their dominant race subhuman, entities which should be destroyed. Hence, even after the tragedy of the Viet Nam war, there was opposition to the chosen plan for a memorial because it was designed by an Asian.

Sometimes people do a more subtle job of making their actions look good. The KKK now is not openly speaking about how other races are destroying our land; they are instead speaking of the importance of hospitality and love towards whites, the true Americans. The neighbors of child molesters and mass murderers frequently say things such as, "He seemed like such a nice man."

There is one common thread: namely that these people are

However, America, in its own special way, does wish to keep a little of everything, not to leave a snippet of some obscure ingredient out of the great melting pot. There is thus one single place where the vote of a dead man is counted to be of equal weight to the vote of one who is alive, knowledgeable and wise in the way things should be run: Chicago.

Vulgar, *adj.* Common. The term's general usage now denotes that which is crude and distasteful. Earlier, it was used by the wealthy, the educated, and those of high social standing to refer to the habits and persons of men who are common, uneducated, and worthless, such as those whom Christ chose to be his apostles.

Vulgate, *n.* *Vulgate Versio.* An early translation of the Holy Scriptures, by the hand of Jerome, who wished that the Scriptures be accessible to the common man, rather than only being available in ancient language and intelligible to an elite few. See also: *AV*

Warrantee, *n.* A legal document provided along with many products, in order to minimize the legal responsibility of the company which made said product to repair or replace in case of malfunction or failure to operate caused by defective workmanship. Warranty is null and void in case of damage caused by owner attempted repair, improper use, or (in some cases) normal wear.

Washington, *n.* The capital of one of the wealthiest nations in the world, and thus the location of the best government that money can buy.

Waterboarding, *n.* The fruit of a flower called the "Living Constitution" which insists that the U.S. Constitution be a dead letter.

We, *pn.* The consenscending form of 'you'.

Wealth, *n.* A universally appreciated blessing which removes

certain unnecessary luxuries, such as human contact.

Weapon, *n.* A powerful device enabling peace keepers to deter the occurrence of violence. The development of technology has produced weapons of increasing potency and efficiency.

I do not know what weapons World War III will be fought with, but World War IV will be fought with sticks and stones.

-Albert Einstein

Willpower, *n.* The excruciating struggle to achieve that which needs no effort.

Windows, *n.* A software emulation package used by people who cannot afford to downgrade to a slower CPU.

Wonder, *n.* Only one of many victims which has been sacrificed to the modern god, Materialism.

Word, *n.* A magnificent vessel used to convey the most profound of thoughts, and to conceal their absence.

World, *n.* The whole of fallen, unregenerate humanity, under the power of the Evil One and waging incessant warfare against the saints.

Contact with the world brings all manner of enticement to lying, idolatry, adultery, witchcraft, homosexual practice, thieving, orgies, and the like. It is rumored that there are other temptations, but they are surely not worth mentioning.

Yellow, *n.* A color symbolic of urgency and haste, used to instruct motorists to apply maximum force to the gas pedal.

Zeitgeist, *n.* The spirit of the time, made manifest in the ever more enlightened nonsense of public opinion — yesterday, Logical Positivism, today, Postmodernism, tomorrow, who knows?

They are philosophical ideas with a kernel of truth, which has been thoughtfully removed in the popular versions. The man who follows these ideas has a mind like a steel trap — snapped shut, and full of mice.

Zen, *adj.* and *n.*

Zenith, *n.* (1) The apex of a civilization, career, art movement, et cetera. (2) The abysmal Gehenna of computing.

Religion Within the Bounds of Amusement

On the screen appear numerous geometrical forms—prisms, cylinders, cubes — dancing, spinning, changing shape, in a very stunning computer animation. In the background sounds the pulsing beat of techno music. The forms waver, and then coalesce into letters: "Religion Within the Bounds of Amusement."

The music and image fade, to reveal a man, perfect in form and appearance, every hair in place, wearing a jet black suit and a dark, sparkling tie. He leans forward slightly, as the camera focuses in on him.

"Good morning, and I would like to extend a warm and personal welcome to each and every one of you from those of us at the Church of the Holy Television. Please sit back, relax, and turn off your brain."

Music begins to play, and the screen shows a woman holding a microphone. She is wearing a long dress of the whitest white, the color traditionally symbolic of goodness and purity, which somehow manages not to conceal her unnaturally large breasts. The camera slowly focuses in as she begins to sing.

"You got problems? That's OK. You got problems? That's OK. Not enough luxury? That's OK. Only three cars? That's OK. Not enough power? That's OK. Can't get your way? That's OK. Not enough for you? That's OK. Can't do it on your own? That's OK. You got problems? That's

OK. You got problems? That's OK. Just call out to Jesus, and he'll make them go away. Just call out to Jesus, and he'll make them go away."

As the music fades, the camera returns to the man.

"Have you ever thought about how much God loves us? Think about the apex of progress that we are at, and how much more he has blessed us than any one else.

"The Early Christians were in a dreadful situation. They were always under persecution. Because of this, they didn't have the physical assurance of security that is the basis for spiritual growth, nor the money to buy the great libraries of books that are necessary to cultivate wisdom. It is a miracle that Christianity survived at all.

"The persecution ended, but darkness persisted for a thousand years. The medievals were satisfied with blind faith, making it the context of thought and leisure. Their concept of identity was so weak that it was entangled with obedience. The time was quite rightly called the Dark Ages.

"But then, ah, the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. Man and his mind enthroned. Religion within the bounds of reason. Then science and technology, the heart of all true progress, grew.

"And now, we sit at the apex, blessed with more and better technology than anyone else. What more could you possibly ask for? What greater blessing could there possibly be? We have the technology, and know how to enjoy it. Isn't God gracious?"

There is a dramatic pause, and then the man closes his eyes. "Father, I thank you that we have not fallen into sin; that we do not worship idols, that we do not believe lies, and that we are not like the Pharisees. I thank you that we are good, moral people; that we are Americans. I thank you, and I praise you for your wondrous power. Amen."

He opens his eyes, and turns to the camera. It focuses in on his face, and his piercing gaze flashes out like lightning. With a thunderous voice, he boldly proclaims, "To God alone be the glory, for ever and ever!"

The image fades.

In the background can be heard the soft tones of Beethoven. A couple fades in; they are elegantly dressed, sitting at a black marble table, set with roast pheasant. The room is of Baroque fashion; marble pillars and mirrors with gilt frames adorn the walls. French windows overlook a formal garden.

The scene changes, and a sleek black sports car glides through forest, pasture, village, mountain. The music continues to play softly.

It passes into a field, and in the corner of the field a small hovel stands. The camera comes closer, and two half-naked children come into view, playing with some sticks and a broken Coca-Cola bottle. Their heads turn and follow the passing car.

A voice gently intones, "These few seconds may be the only opportunity some people ever have to know about you. What do you want them to see?"

The picture changes. Two men are walking through a field. As the camera comes closer, it is seen that they are deep in conversation.

One of them looks out at the camera with a probing gaze, and then turns to the other. "What do you mean?"

"I don't know, Jim." He draws a deep breath, and closes his eyes. "I just feel so... so empty. A life filled with nothing but shallowness. Like there's nothing inside, no purpose, no meaning. Just an everlasting nothing."

"Well, you know, John, for every real and serious problem, there is a solution which is trivial, cheap, and instantaneous." He unslings a small backpack, opening it to pull out two cans of beer, and hands one to his friend. "Shall we?"

The cans are opened.

© 11 1 11

Suddenly, the peaceful silence is destroyed by the blare of loud rock music. The camera turns upwards to the sky, against which may be seen parachutists; it spins, and there is suddenly a large swimming pool, and a vast table replete with great pitchers and kegs of beer. The parachutists land; they are all young women, all blonde, all laughing and smiling, all wearing string bikinis, and all anorexic.

For the remaining half of the commercial, the roving camera takes a lascivious tour of the bodies of the models. Finally, the image fades, and a deep voice intones, "Can you think of a better way to spend your weekends?"

The picture changes. A luxury sedan, passing through a ghetto, stops beside a black man, clad in rags. The driver, who is white, steps out in a pristine business suit, opens his wallet, and pulls out five crisp twenty dollar bills.

"I know that you can't be happy, stealing, lying, and getting drunk all of the time. Here is a little gift to let you know that Jesus loves you." He steps back into the car without waiting to hear the man's response, and speeds off.

Soon, he is at a house. He steps out of the car, bible in hand, and rings the doorbell.

The door opens, and a man says, "Nick, how are you? Come in, do come in. Have a seat. I was just thinking of you, and it is so nice of you to visit. May I interest you in a little Martini?"

Nick sits down and says, "No, Scott. I am a Christian, and we who are Christian do not do such things."

"Aah; I see." There is a sparkle in the friend's eye as he continues, "And tell me, what did Jesus do at his first miracle?"

The thick, black, leatherbound 1611 King James bible arcs through the air, coming to rest on the back of Scott's head. There is a resounding thud.

"You must learn that the life and story of Jesus are serious matters, and not to be taken as the subject of jokes."

The screen turns white as the voice glosses, "This message has been brought to you by the Association of Concerned Christians, who would like to remind you that you, too, can be different from the world, and can present a positive witness to Christ."

In the studio again, the man is sitting in a chair.

"Now comes a very special time in our program. You, our viewers, matter most to us. It is your support that keeps us on the air. And I hope that you do remember to send us money; when you do, God will bless you. So keep your checks rolling, and we will be able to continue this ministry, and provide answers to your questions. I am delighted to be able to hear your phone calls. Caller number one, are you there?"

"Yes, I am, and I would like to say how great you are. I sent you fifty dollars, and someone gave me an anonymous check for five hundred! I only wish I had given you more."

"That is good to hear. God is so generous. And what is your question?"

"I was wondering what God's will is for America? And what I can do to help?"

"Thank you; that's a good question.

"America is at a time of great threat now; it is crumbling because good people are not elected to office.

"The problem would be solved if Christians would all listen to Rush Limbaugh, and then go out and vote. Remember, bad people are sent to Washington by good people who don't vote. With the right men in office, the government would stop wasting its time on things like the environment, and America would become a great and shining light, to show all the world what Christ can do.

"Caller number two?"

CALLER NUMBER TWO:

"I have been looking for a church to go to, and having trouble. I just moved, and used to go to a church which had nonstop stories and anecdotes; the congregation was glued to the edges of their seats. Here, most of the services are either boring or have something which lasts way too long. I have found a few churches whose services I generally enjoy—the people really sing the songs—but there are just too many things that aren't amusing. For starters, the sermons make me uncomfortable, and for another, they have a very boring time of silent meditation, and this weird mysticism about 'kiss of peace' and something to do with bread and wine. Do you have any advice for me?"

"Yes, I do. First of all, what really matters is that you have Jesus in your heart. Then you and God can conquer the world. Church is a peripheral; it doesn't really have anything to do with Jesus being in your heart. If you find a church that you like, go for it, but if there aren't any that you like, it's not your fault that they aren't doing their job.

"And the next caller?"

"Hello. I was wondering what the Song of Songs is about."

"The Song of Songs is an allegory of Christ's love for the Church. Various other interpretations have been suggested, but they are all far beyond the bounds of good taste, and read things into the text which would be entirely inappropriate in holy Scriptures. Next caller?"

"My people has a story. I know tales of years past, of soldiers come, of pillaging, of women ravaged, of villages razed to the ground and every living soul murdered by men who did not hesitate to wade through blood. Can you tell me what kind of religion could possibly decide that the Crusades were holy?"

The host, whose face had suddenly turned a deep shade of red, shifted slightly, and pulled at the side of his collar. After a few seconds, a somewhat less polished voice hastily states, "That would be a very good question to answer, and I really would like to, but I have lost track of time. It is now time for an important message from some of our

sponsors."

The screen is suddenly filled by six dancing rabbits, singing about toilet paper.

A few minutes of commercials pass: a computer animated flash of color, speaking of the latest kind of candy; a family brought together and made happy by buying the right brand of vacuum cleaner; a specific kind of hamburger helping black and white, young and old to live together in harmony. Somewhere in there, the Energizer bunny appears; one of the people in the scene tells the rabbit that he should have appeared at some time other than the commercial breaks. Finally, the host, who has regained his composure, is on the screen again.

"Well, that's all for this week. I hope you can join us next week, as we begin a four part series on people whose lives have been changed by the Church of the Holy Television. May God bless you, and may all of your life be ever filled with endless amusement!"