



THE BEACON BEAM

July 2015

THE SURE FOUNDATION

The Glory of God and the Life of the Mind

By R. Albert Mohler, Jr.

Christianity honors the life of the mind, not because it celebrates the power of human intellect, but because Christ himself instructed Christians to love God with heart, soul, and mind.

To be human is to think, and to think is to operate within a worldview. Every individual operates out of a basic set of convictions about reality, truth, meaning, and how the world works. As thinking creatures, we create, perceive, absorb, and base our thinking upon certain intellectual assumptions that, in essence, allow the world to make sense to us.

There is nothing distinctively Christian about having a worldview. The very process of intellectual activity requires some framework, and no idea is independent of prior assumptions. As human beings, we can hardly begin each moment of intellectual activity without dependence upon assumptions that are, in essence, pre-philosophical. This is true for all human beings, regardless of the actual content and shape of their worldviews.

The great challenge for the Christian is to craft a worldview that is distinctively Christian in its shape, substance, and structure. This is no easy task, especially in an intellectually complex world that is marked by an incredible diversity of worldviews and ideologies.

In this generation, a growing number of Christians understand the responsibility for developing a Christian worldview. Never-

theless, for many of these Christians, the development of a Christian worldview is reduced to certain principles of conviction that are assumed to lead to certain pragmatic conclusions and practical applications. There is no shortage of seminars, books, courses, and curricula directed toward the development of the Christian worldview. There is good reason to be thankful for this recovery of interest in developing a Christian worldview, but there is an even greater need to advance toward a more comprehensive understanding of the Christian worldview that finds its beginning and end in the glory of God.

Christianity recognizes and affirms the importance of the intellect. The life of the mind is understood to be a central issue of Christian discipleship. The Christian is not only to live in obedience to Christ, but is also to serve Christ through the development of a distinctively Christian mind.

All too many Christians ignore the intellectual component of discipleship. This tragic reality betrays a misunderstanding of the gospel, for the gospel of Jesus Christ requires cognitive understanding. In other words, there is a knowledge that is central to the Christian faith. As the apostle Paul makes clear in Romans 10, faith comes by hearing, and that faith is established upon truth claims that are nonnegotiable and necessary for salvation.

(Continued on page 8)

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CONTENTS

The Glory of God and the Life of the Mindpg. 1

Beacon Highlightspg. 2

Doctrinal History (Part 11)pg. 3

Oh Wretched Man That I Ampg. 4

On the Feminine Sidepg. 6



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Schedule of Services:

Sunday
Morning Worship...9:30 AM
Sunday School.....11:10 AM
Evening Worship.....6:00 PM

Wednesday
Prayer Meeting.....7:00 PM
IMPACT Clubs.....7:00 PM
Teen Ministry.....7:00 PM

Beacon Highlights for July

Special Events for July

01	Teen/Parent Focus	12	Lord's Table
03	Church Office Closed	14	Elders/Deacons Meeting
04	Independence Day	19	Members Meeting
11	Teen Homeplace Ministry		



In God We Trust



Those four words are minted on U.S. coins, printed on U.S. dollar bills, and etched in the walls of thousands of courtrooms across our nation. To many Americans, the slogan is nothing more than the vestige of a day gone by. But for us, as Bible-believing Christians, that phrase is a way of life.

(John MacArthur, *Right Thinking in a World Gone Wrong*)

Welcome New Members!

Jeff and Carol Ann Barnt
2456 Pepperstone Drive
Graham, NC 27253

Randy Phillips
4641 W. Millstone Road
Burlington, NC 27215

Sympathy ~ We express our heartfelt sympathy to the family of:

Marian Bopp
Bob Hoover

The Beacon Broadcast

Monday thru Friday

WITA 1490 AM (Knoxville, TN)	9:30 a.m.
WKBA 1550 AM (Roanoke, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WKPA 1390 AM (Lynchburg, VA)	10:00 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	12:15 p.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	2:00 p.m.

Sunday

WPCM 920 AM (Burlington, NC)	9:00 a.m.
WCRU 960 AM (Charlotte, NC)	9:30 a.m.
WBAG 1150 AM (Burlington, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WTRU 830 AM (Winston-Salem, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WDRU 1030 AM (Raleigh, NC)	10:30 a.m.
WSML 1200 AM (Graham, NC)	8:30 p.m.
WLES 560 AM (Richmond, VA)	10:30 a.m.
KUTR 820 AM (Salt Lake City, UT)	11:00 a.m.
Harbour Light of the Windwards 1400 AM/94.5 FM (Caribbean)	9:30 p.m.

July Member Birthdays

02	Tammy Counts
	Darryl McElhannon
03	Johnny Faust
04	Donnan Faucette
	Tommy Marley
05	Texie Owens
06	Elaine Barker
12	Linda Zachary
16	Gerald Counts
	Frances Easley
17	Pam Florence
18	David Wright
19	Little Norris
21	Bob Caldwell
	Bruce Councilman
23	Ryan Cardwell
27	Michael Abernathy
	Glenda Lowe
	Terriann Magdziarz
28	Leann McElhannon
30	Jamie Beck
31	Mike Redd

Happy Birthday!

July Missionary Birthdays

07	Eunjoo Andersen
08	David Andersen
09	Tim Bixby
12	Wanda Taylor
20	David Cassells
	Amy Jensen
25	Chris Hill

Happy Birthday!

Beacon Pastors

Gregory N. Barkman	Senior Pastor
Michael R. Karns	Minister of Christian Education
Robert F. La Tour	Minister of Families
Gerald J. Counts	Minister of Visitation
Gregory L. Phillips	Minister of Music

Last month, I listed a few obstacles which kept me from believing the Doctrines of Grace for a time. Besides not being convinced they were truly Biblical, my reluctance to lose friends, my concern for a mistaken understanding of Baptist history and theology, plus irritation because of pushy Calvinists combined to hold me back for a while. Thankfully, all of these issues were resolved, and I eventually became convinced of the Calvinist understanding of salvation. But there were several other obstacles which merit discussion.

EVANGELISM. I was told, repeatedly, that Calvinists were not personally evangelistic, and were uninterested in world-wide missions. This was a serious problem in my mind. I knew I didn't understand everything about the Bible, but I was convinced that Christ wants His people to evangelize. If Calvinists were not evangelistic, they were clearly not Biblical, or so it seemed to me. This is where my practice of reading several sermons a week by Charles Spurgeon became significant. No one can read Spurgeon without realizing his passion for soul-winning. Evangelistic fervor permeates nearly every sermon he preached. My initial conclusion was that Spurgeon could not be a Calvinist. I was convinced that because Spurgeon was obviously a serious and successful evangelist, it was impossible for him to be a Calvinist. As I continued to read, it slowly dawned upon me that Spurgeon was, indeed, a Calvinist. The evidence continued to mount over time until the conclusion was irrefutable. Spurgeon was both an evangelist, and a Calvinist! In fact, Spurgeon was one of the greatest Christian evangelists in history, and was also one of the strongest defenders of Calvinism. At first, I wasn't sure what to make of this surprising

information.

As I continued to study, I learned that many of the other great evangelists of the past were also fervent Calvinists, men such as George Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, and a host of others. I discovered that William Carey, the Father of modern missions was a five-point Calvinist, as indeed were most of the early pioneers of modern missions. My former misconceptions crumbled to dust, contradicted by evidence. If I was so wrong about Spurgeon and missions, I wondered what else in my thinking needed to be corrected? Barriers were swept aside, and I was able to exam-

*“Calvinists
believe in
whosoever will”!*

ine Scripture from a fresh perspective. Errors about evangelism and missions had colored my ability to study God's Word objectively, but a new understanding of these issues freed my mind to comprehend Scripture more clearly.

In time, I understood why I had been so susceptible to misconceptions about evangelism. It was because I had embraced methods of evangelism that were not Biblical. Since I had grown up under the altar call system, and since most Calvinists do not employ altar calls, I was under the impression that Calvinists were not evangelistic. My reasoning went like this: Evangelistic Christians give altar calls. Most Calvinists do not give altar calls, therefore, Calvinists are not evangelistic. That seemed perfectly logical to me. But as I continued to study the Bible, I discovered that no one in the Bible gave altar calls either; not Jesus, Paul, Peter, or

anyone else. It was a stunning revelation. I resisted and argued against it as long as I could, but eventually truth won out. Now my reasoning was more Biblical. There are no altar calls in Scripture. Altar calls are unnecessary for Biblical evangelism, therefore, the fact that most Calvinists do not give altar calls is no proof that Calvinists are not evangelistic. I was a slow learner, but by God's patient working, I was making progress.

WHOSOEVER WILL. Closely connected to the issue of evangelism, is the concept of “whosoever will,” and the free offer of the Gospel. Calvinists don't believe in “whosoever will,” or so I was taught. You can see that this parallels the issue of evangelism. If Calvinists do not believe that “Whosoever will may come,” it seems unlikely that they will bother to evangelize. If I believed in Unconditional Election, would I evangelize indiscriminately? Wouldn't I just sit back and let God call His elect without my efforts? That's the way many non-Calvinists view Calvinism. Since non-Calvinists don't understand what Calvinists believe at this point, they often imagine that they are fatalists. But I was wrong in my perceptions, and so are many others, as I have learned.

It would take more space than is available to address this issue thoroughly. Let me simply say as emphatically as I can, “Calvinists believe in whosoever will”! They understand that God must change an unwilling heart into a willing one, but they definitely believe “whosoever will may come.” This issue, in some respects is similar to the subject of prayer. Why do we pray if only prayers according to God's will can be answered? If it's God's will, why pray? Won't God accomplish His will with or without my prayers? Actually, No. God has ordained to accomplish His will in

(Continued on page 5)

Oh Wretched Man That I Am

Bob LaTour

The nice-looking, charismatic son of a well-known pastor stood before me in 1975 to speak in a chapel service as he had done in several Christian high schools on the East coast. He led one of the largest teen ministries in America. In the course of his message, he made reference to the fact that many preachers had to thank God for saving them out of a life of sin. He then thanked God that he had not been involved in that kind of life. The way that he said it was a bit unsettling to me; it seemed as though he had set himself up as a model for others. There appeared to be a lack of understanding on his part that the very best of us is still a sinner saved and kept by grace. A few years later he graduated from Bible College and became the pastor of a large church. Over time, it came to light that he had committed adultery numerous times and was banished from ministry. His problem began when he compared himself to the wrong standard—the past jaded lives of others and not the Word of God. He shipwrecked his life and ministry.

As we mature in Christ, there should be a sense of **grief** over our failures and **gratitude** for God's faithfulness. In Romans seven, Paul is "describing all Christians—even the most spiritual and mature—who, when they honestly evaluate themselves against the righteous standard of God's law, realize how far short they fall."¹ Paul repeats and re-enforces the theme of warfare with our flesh like wave after wave crashing onto the same beach. With each repetition of the battle, a serious-minded believer responds, "That's me! That's me!" There is both a sense of relief and of responsibility. Relief—"A truly godly man like Paul suffered the same torment of soul. I am not 'abnormal' spiritually!" Responsibility—"Like Paul, I must take God's avenue of escape

*"I must take God's avenue of escape time and time again." **Recognize the danger. Repent for failure. Resolve to battle on. Rejoice that "God is faithful to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness."** Repeat steps 1-4 as long as you have breath!"*

time and time again." **Recognize** the danger. **Repent** for failure. **Resolve** to battle on. **Rejoice** that "God is faithful to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us of all unrighteousness." **Repeat** steps 1-4 as long as you have breath! In Romans 7, we want to consider the struggle that torments every Christian and the path to victory that is ours in Christ.

Paul declares the Law of God to be good (14, 16) "In the Christian's mind there is a constant feeling of self-dislike and a sense of the excellence of the law."² The problem in living the Christian life does not lie with any deficiency in the Word of God, but in the heart of Christians who struggle against their flesh. As a new man in Christ, Paul longs to keep the moral law of God out of gratitude and love. In verse 22, he states, "For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man."

Paul then acknowledges a problem that every believer shares. "I am carnal, sold under sin." He was "earthbound, mortal, and still incarcerated in unredeemed humanness. Paul does not say he is still 'in the flesh', but the flesh is in him. Sin no longer controls the whole man (as

with an unbeliever), but it does (strongly influence) the believer's members, or his fleshly body. Sin contaminates him and frustrates his inner desire to obey the will of God."¹ Do you treasure the Bible as the inspired, inerrant, all-sufficient Word of God through which you can guard and guide your life?³

Paul decries his inability to keep the law of God that he desires to keep (15) "For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do.") The word, "understand" has the meaning of approval. "For what I am doing, I do not approve of..." Every individual who is entrusting his or her soul to the Lord Jesus Christ will cry a heart-felt "Amen!" An absence of that disapproval of sinful thoughts, words and deeds should cause grave concern. In verse 19, Paul repeats his struggle. "For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice." The Greek word for practice means "to perform repeatedly or habitually." This agonizing battle with our flesh is a constant struggle. Paul then discloses why—"I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good" (v21). "Every Christian can adopt the language of this verse. Pride, coldness, slothfulness, and other feelings which he disapproves and hates are day by day reasserting their power over him. He struggles against their influence..., longs to be filled with meekness, humility, and all other fruits of the love of God, but finds he can neither of himself nor with the help of the law achieve his freedom from what he hates, or fully accomplish what he desires and approves. Every evening sees his penitent confession of his (failures), his sense of (frustrating weakness), and his longing desire for help from above."²

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 3)

partnership with the prayers of His people. God has not only ordained the end, but also the means to the end, namely prayer. There's mystery here, but this is the truth taught in Scripture. Evangelism is similar. God will effectually call His elect to Himself, but He uses the preaching of the Gospel to accomplish His eternal purposes. The doctrine of Election, when rightly understood, is actually a great incentive to evangelism, not a hindrance. Only the Calvinist can evangelize with confidence of divine success. He does not know who the elect are, but he knows that God has His elect people, and that He will irresistibly call them to Christ through the preaching of the Gospel. The non-Calvinist doesn't know if he will ever succeed. The Calvinist knows he will. He does not know when, nor how often, but he knows that over time, his evangelism will meet with success precisely because God is sovereign in salvation. The Calvinist does not evangelize in order to increase the number of the elect. The Calvinist evangelizes out of obedience to God, love for Christ, and a sense of wonder that he is privileged to partner with the living God in the great work of redemption.

STRONG OPPOSITION. Another barrier across the path of my road to Calvinism was the vehemence of many opponents. Their denunciations are often fierce, dogmatic, and deeply emotional. I could not doubt the sincerity of their intentions as they labored to warn people about what they believed to be the evils of Calvinism. Such warnings were sometimes startling in the strength of their bombast. I knew that some of these fierce opponents were sincere and godly Christians. How could they be wrong? Do I want to fall under their imprecations? Is it safe for me to walk

*“The Calvinist God
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my God.”*

down a road filled with such strong denunciations? And yet, troubling as this may be, I had to make God's Word the test of truth, not the sanctions of men, no matter how sincere or dogmatic. If zeal is the test of truth, Jehovah's Witnesses must be right, but they are wrong, seriously and fatally wrong. So too, are anti-Calvinists; sincere, but sadly mistaken.

NEW UNDERSTANDING OF GOD.

I think the biggest obstacle to my becoming a Calvinist was the realization that this would change my concept of God. That's scary. I knew I was a Christian. I was a worshipper of God, the one true and living God, the God of the Bible, at least insofar as I understood Him. But if Calvinist doctrine is correct, my understanding of God must change. The Calvinist God was bigger than my God. He was more sovereign than my God. He ruled upon a throne that was higher and more exalted than the one that I conceived. Ultimately, this was the most disturbing issue of all, the possibility that I might be worshipping the wrong God. You may think I am overstating the case, so please allow me to explain. In truth, no one fully understands God, and Calvinists will certainly learn many things about God when they get to Heaven that they did not understand on Earth. Are Calvinists, therefore worshipping the “wrong” God? No. They are worshipping the true God as best they understand Him, recognizing that there is yet much more to understand. The same is true of non-

Calvinists. They worship the God of the Bible as they understand Him, but here's the difference. Failing to understand and accept all that He has revealed about Himself, means that Christians may be, in a real sense, worshipping the wrong God, or at least a very truncated concept of God. By harboring notions that are not true, they do not worship God aright because they fail to understand and believe all that His Word reveals. God hasn't revealed everything about Himself, but what He has revealed, we are obligated to believe. The Calvinist understanding of God is very different from that of the Arminian. It's difficult to admit that you may have entertained erroneous ideas about God, especially if you have been a Christian for a long time. Ultimately, however, everyone needs to come to terms with what God has revealed about Himself. How can we worship Him in truth if we are unwilling to accept all the truth that He has given? This realization was my biggest obstacle, and was also the most important one to remove. If I would worship God aright, I must bow to His self-revelation. I dare not cling to attractive and comfortable idols of my own manufacture. I must kneel before the sovereign God of the universe, and worship Him for Who He is. That was once my biggest obstacle, but has since become my greatest joy. Since becoming a Calvinist, God has become bigger and man smaller in my understanding. I know that God will become bigger still when I get to Heaven, for I have yet to grasp the greatness of His being. But I have grown because He has grown, and for that I give Him praise. “Hail sovereign love that first began the scheme to rescue fallen man. Hail, matchless, free, eternal grace, that gave my soul a hiding place.”

Elisabeth Elliot Enters Gates of Splendor.* This is the headline from an article in World Magazine about the death of one of the most admired and loved women in the Christian community. The name Elisabeth Elliot is not only known to all of you, but to most is familiar... someone we don't know personally but have known of so long we feel we might. My earliest memory of this renowned woman goes back to 1956. I was eight years old, when her husband Jim and four other missionary men were murdered by the Auca Indians. It was a solemn time in our missionary-family household when, several weeks after hearing the news, we received from family in the States a copy of *Life Magazine* with the story and stunning pictures of the tragedy. Almost 60 years later I can still see some of those pictures, even remember where I was standing when I saw them. Jim Elliot's death was not the end of the narrative ~ Elisabeth's story was just beginning, and is nothing short of amazing. This young mother, tiny daughter in tow, returned to the tribe who killed her husband, and taught them forgiveness for murder and for all sin, the forgiveness found in Jesus Christ.

Elisabeth became a well-known, well-loved writer and widely heard speaker in conferences and on radio. I think of her oft-quoted work as a combination of wisdom and common sense, stated with clarity and brevity. One of her best known quotations is just a few words, wisdom mined from the true story of a young woman (possibly a relative of hers) who was suddenly widowed, and reeling from the discovery that her husband's property had been stolen by their lawyer. She and her children had returned from the funeral to the home they would soon have to leave and her daughter describes the scene as one of

utter despair as they sat silent in a darkening house. And then she heard the swish of the broom on the kitchen floor. Her mother was sweeping. Sweeping? Her life was in shambles! She had children to care for and no place to go! What was she to do? She started by doing something that needed to be done regardless of other circumstances. The floor needed sweeping so she swept. Her daughter remembered what a comforting sound that swish of the broom was to her, a familiar sound of life as usual. Mrs. Elliot learned from this to "Do the next thing." Just four words, but full of common sense and helpful advice, fitting for everyday situations, helpful in desperate times. I don't doubt they've given many women the push they needed to get on with things.

Mrs. Elliot had a view of God that determined her view of herself and the world in which she lived. "God never withholds from His child that which His love and wisdom call good. While it is perfectly true that some of my worst fears did, in fact, materialize, I see them now as 'an abyss and mass of mercies,' appointed and assigned by a loving and merciful Father who sees the end from the beginning. He asks us to trust him." How is it possible to see tragedy as an immeasurable kindness? It's possible only if we know the source! She not only knew that all things originate with God, that God is good in every way, on every day, but she knew as well that good is defined by God, not man. Do you find yourself easily sidelined by the smallest discouragement? Are you incapacitated by a medium-size disappointment, by fear of a potential problem, an unkind word from someone, or even by seeing the success of another? These are not tragedies, yet we react with a near-paralysis because we don't consider the source or the mercy intended. We will continue

to struggle thus as long as we operate 'on our own' for we are incapable of interpreting things correctly if we start with ourselves and human wisdom. God's ways are not our ways and his mercies often look severe to us from this view, a view that for now is but a slit in the clouds. Will we believe that the One who writes the end of our story knows best? Phrases from the hymn *God Moves in a Mysterious Way* come to mind...

*Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
the clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy and shall break
in blessing on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense
but trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence He
hides a smiling face!*

Not 'super-human' or having reached perfection, Elisabeth Elliot was a woman who stood out because she accepted with grace what God had determined for her. We hear it best from those who knew her best, her family. Her third husband described her response to "the onset of her cognitive decline (as) the same attitude she displayed toward the deaths of her previous husbands: peace." And her daughter described her mother as a "speaker of the truth, a teacher of obedience, a woman of strength and dignity. She always loved and encouraged me. She was a woman of prayer."

Peace, truth, obedience, strength, dignity, love, encouragement, prayer. Beautiful! Praise be to God!

All quotations come from an article in *World Magazine* by Daniel Devine.

Link: http://www.worldmag.com/2015/06/elisabeth_elliot_enters_gates_of_splendor#.VYAvG3G9JFA. email

**Through Gates of Splendor* is the title of her book on the story of her husband's ministry and death.

(Continued from page 4)

Paul discloses the weakness of his flesh (v18). “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.” Flesh is a term for our “unredeemed humanness.” Part of what we do is the natural response to corrupted human desires that still reside in us in spite of our being new creatures in Christ. Have you ever heard a person use the excuse, “I am only human” when trying to defend his actions? Even though Christians are new creations in Christ, we battle with the residue of what we were. It is like the cravings for nicotine that plague a person who has quit the habit of smoking for the good of his body. He has made the break from the habit, but the cravings are ongoing and must be battled daily. Paul desires to do right, but the performance of that desire remains a challenge because of his flesh.

Paul describes the conflict of two spiritual laws *warring* within him (17, 20-24) The law of indwelling sin: “I find then a law that evil is present with me.” We all know this universal truth by experience. He sees in his flesh the on-going influence of sin which so easily ensnares him.... “This is precisely the (influence of) sin of which every believer is conscious. He feels that there is a law in his body bringing him into subjection to the law of sin, that his distrust of God, his hardness of heart, his love of the world and of self, his pride—in short, his indwelling sin—is a real power from which he longs to be free, against which he struggles, but from which he cannot (free) himself.”² Paul calls himself “the one who wills to do good” and the “one who delights in the law of God according to the inward man.” He then references what he calls the law

“When we fail in the battle with our flesh, we humbly, gratefully flee to the throne of mercy and plead for the God of grace to forgive us of our sins and to enable us to think, do and say those things that please Him.”

of my mind.” The law of “the mind” does not refer to our mental faculties as though our brain wars against our body; the meaning is that our inner man, empowered by the Holy Spirit, wars against our flesh. The law of sin brings us into captivity as if we are chained and held hostage by our flesh, but our inner man struggles to do that which pleases God. Paul cries out in grief over his failures, “O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”

Paul delights in the victory we have in Christ over present battles and the final warfare with our flesh (v25) “I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. This verse “sums up with clear-sighted honesty... the tension, with all its real anguish and also all its real hopefulness, in which the Christian never ceases to be involved so long as he is living in this present life.” With the mind, with my new nature, the inner man, from the “bottom of my heart” I serve the law of God enabled by His Holy Spirit. With the flesh, with the residue or remnant of what I left be-

hind in my old self, I serve the law of sin. This battle on the part of our new nature with the lingering effects of sin is real and repetitive. “For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.” Our victory is by God’s G-R-A-C-E—God’s Resources And Christ’s Enabling.⁴ Our responsibility is to “walk in the Spirit and not fulfill the lust of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). “All believers have the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit as the personal power for living to please God. The (word) translated ‘walk’ indicates continuous action, or a habitual life-style. Walking also implies progress; as a believer submits to the Spirit’s control—that is, responds in obedience to the simple commands of Scripture—he grows in his spiritual life.”¹ We “exercise ourselves unto godliness” by purposefully and consistently obeying the Scriptures through the power of the Spirit.⁵ When we fail in the battle with our flesh, we humbly, gratefully flee to the throne of mercy and plead for the God of grace to forgive us of our sins and to enable us to think, do and say those things that please Him. Praise God for His faithfulness and long-suffering as we daily battle our flesh to glorify Him!

¹ J. MacArthur

² Charles Hodge

³ Leon Morris

⁴ Galatians 5: 17

⁵ II Peter 1; Philippians 4:13

The Glory of God and the Life of the Mind

Albert Mohler, Jr.

(Continued from page 1)

Christian faithfulness requires the development of the believer's intellectual capacities in order that we may understand the Christian faith, develop habits of Christian thought, form intuitions that are based upon biblical truth, and live in faithfulness to all that Christ teaches. This is no easy task, to be sure. Just as Christian discipleship requires growth and development, intellectual faithfulness requires a lifetime of devoted study, consecrated thinking, and analytical reflection.

As Anselm of Canterbury, a leading Christian theologian of the 11th century, classically affirmed, the Christian task is well defined as "faith seeking understanding." In other words, the Christian faith honors intellectual responsibility and the life of the mind. The faith that justifies sinners is a faith that requires a certain knowledge and then leads to a responsibility to advance in knowledge and understanding in or-

der to move "from milk to meat" in terms of intellectual substance.

All this is necessary in order that the disciple would grow in grace and in understanding, but it is also necessary in order that Christians will grow in intellectual discernment. This intellectual discernment is a necessary component of the Christian's responsibility to know the truth, to love what is true, to discern the difference between truth and error, and to defend the faith "once for all delivered to the saints."

The Christian affirmation of the life of the mind has produced schools, colleges, universities, seminaries, and a host of other centers of intellectual activity. The rise of the university can be traced directly to the intellectual vigor of medieval Christianity. Christianity honors the life of the mind and has made literacy a central issue of the church's concern. Christianity is a religion of the book - the Bible - and it is a faith that takes the tasks of reading and writing with pro-

found seriousness.

In the end, Christianity honors the life of the mind, not because it celebrates the power of human intellect, but because Christ himself instructed Christians to love God with heart, soul, and mind.

The fact that God would command that we love him with our minds indicates in a most profound and unmistakable sense that our Creator has made us to know him in order that we would love him and to seek his glory above all else. Understood in this light, our intellectual capacity and the discipleship of the mind are to culminate in the development of a Christian worldview that begins and ends in the glory of the self-revealing God of the Bible.

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