

Darwin's corrosive influence on literature and society as a whole

Apostate—The Men Who Destroyed the Christian West

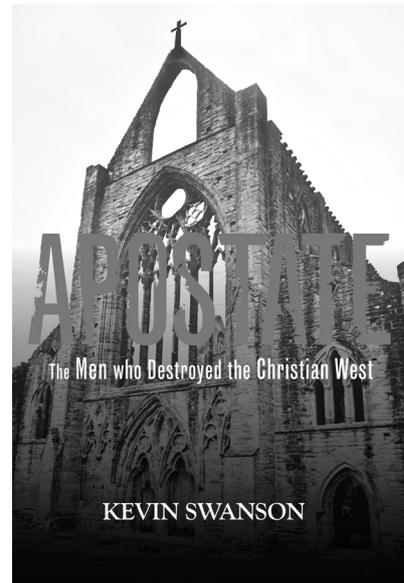
Kevin Swanson

Generations with Vision, Parker, CO, 2013

Jerry Bergman

The fact that Christianity has lost an enormous amount of cultural influence in Australia, Western Europe, and America is without dispute. In fact, Christians have lost ground in every cultural area of leadership and influence in Europe, America, and Australia since around 1700. What is also without dispute is that we can trace this decline through a number of key scientists, philosophers, writers, and other public figures. *Apostate* documents how and why the decline and fall of Western Christian civilization occurred. It is specifically the story of several influential men whom Swanson calls apostates. Swanson's concern is for the young, noting as evidence that "the Southern Baptist denomination reports ... a full 88% of children raised in Christian families leave the church as soon as they leave home" (p. 254).

The luminaries covered included Rousseau, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, John Dewey, Mark Twain and, of course, Charles Darwin, the topic of chapter ten. All of these men of renown had a significant impact on our Western culture. Most of them were born into a Christian family, but rejected this worldview and, instead, put their faith in a worldview called secularism (p. 1). Their influence was first felt in the universities and, eventually, in the public schools and the mass culture. Western society



has moved far away from teaching "In Adam's fall, we sinned all" in the 18th century *New England Primer* to *Heather has Two Mommies* (1989) and, finally, to the modern hostility against Christianity that Swanson documents.

During the time when Darwin's wife, Emma, stayed faithful to her creation beliefs, "Charles diligently laboured to eliminate every vestige of the Christian faith from his thinking. This was no easy feat, but he applied interminable, determined effort to the task" and succeeded marvelously (p. 126). Clear evidence exists of this worldview change in the Western world. In his autobiography, Darwin wrote that the Christian faith was "manifestly false", the Bible is "no more to be trusted than ... the beliefs of a barbarian", and "the Christian God is not a loving father but rather a 'revengeful tyrant'" (p. 126). Although Darwin did at times

"... make reference to a 'Creator' in his public writings, he admitted in

private letters that this was merely a marketing ploy intended to curry public favor. Darwin wrote, ‘I have long regretted that I truckled to public opinion, and used the Pentateuchal term of creation, by which I really meant “appeared” by some wholly unknown process’” (p. 126).

Swanson writes that the humanist–scientific and Scripture conflict is critical to the future of the faith, and Christians should be very concerned because

“... these losses are accelerating in every country of Protestant or Roman Catholic heritage. Of the 110 Christian universities in America where the faith is still strongest, only about half teach creationism and oppose evolutionary Darwinism. Taking into account all public and private university instruction in this country, a mere 1% maintain a God-centered epistemology and metaphysic in the matter of origins. The Darwinian theories dominate at least 99% of higher education in America, and ... closer to 99.999% in Europe” (p. 141–142).

Furthermore, of the thousands of American museums and science centres, less than five

“... maintain a young earth, creationist perspective. Darwin’s materialism has made progress since the Scopes trial of 1925. At this stage, his influence maintains almost complete sway over the scientific and educational institutions in the Western world” (p. 141–142).

In the end, “November 24, 1859 may be the most important date in modern history. The world would never be the same after the publication of Charles Darwin’s magnum opus, *On the Origin of Species*” (p. 126–127). The following statistics contrast the two worlds—before Darwin (BD) and after Darwin (AD):

BD—In 1900, 0.2% of the world were atheists (in 1850, there would have been fewer).

AD—In 2012, 21.3% of the world were atheists, 36% of 18–34-year-old British citizens claimed to be atheists/agnostics, and 63% claimed they were ‘not religious’.

BD—In 1850, 0% of the scientists of the day were self-described atheists.

AD—In 2005, 52% of the scientists in a Chicago National Opinion Research Center survey said they had no religious affiliation compared to 14% of the general population who claim no religious affiliation.

AD—In 2006, 93% of the National Science Academy members were self-described atheists.

A 2007 Pew Research study of Americans documented the enormous increase in the percentage of atheists by birth year (p. 138–139):

Date of birth	Percent claiming to be atheist or agnostic
Before 1946	5%
1946–1976	14%
1977 and after	19%

Swanson wrote that the leading evolutionist Ernst Mayr (1904–2005) was right when he wrote that a 21st-century modern person

“... looks at the world quite differently than a citizen of the Victorian era did. This shift had multiple sources But what is not at all appreciated is the great extent to which this shift in thinking indeed resulted from Darwin’s ideas. Remember that in 1850 virtually all leading scientists and philosophers were Christian men. The world they inhabited had been created by God, and as the natural theologians claimed, He had instituted wise laws that brought about the perfect adaptation of all organisms to one another and to their environment The basic principles proposed by Darwin would stand in total

conflict with these prevailing ideas Eliminating God from science made room for strictly scientific explanations of all natural phenomena; it gave rise to positivism; it produced a powerful intellectual and spiritual revolution, the effects of which have lasted to this day” (p. 141).

Swanson concludes by asking what influence Darwin, whom he writes was an

“... agnostic, racist, mentally-ill sadist, had on any person or persons of intellectual or moral stature in the world?¹ (*Of course, his influence was titanic. According to multiple recent polls, Charles Darwin is still considered the most influential person in the world*) [italics in original]” (p. 137).

In fact, Swanson maintains that the

“... lives and institutions of billions of people around the world from Japan and China to Russia, England, and America, were radically changed by Charles Darwin. This man’s work has touched every person in every nation on earth through the educational, cultural, religious, and political institutions that affect their lives. Regrettably, Darwin’s dreary influence still looms heavily over the whole world” (p. 137–138).

Darwin’s ideas have also impacted how we think about almost everything. As a result:

“Godlessness prevails everywhere—in school classrooms, media, entertainment, and politics. ... Charles Darwin’s naturalistic materialism has so changed the Western metaphysic that the average person hardly senses God’s providential interaction with the world, let alone His existence” (p. 137–138).

As evidence, Swanson cited: “... hundreds of thousands of readers who rated Darwin’s *Origin of Species* as the most influential book in history, out-ranking the

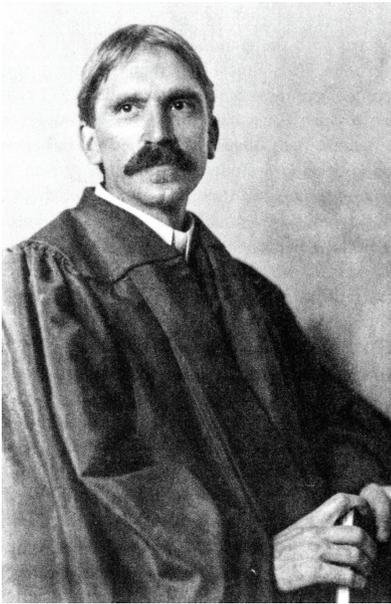


Figure 1. John Dewey

Bible, the Koran, and Marx's Communist Manifesto. In the worldwide war of worldviews, Darwin's naturalism and Marx's materialism are serious competitors against the theist worldviews of Islam and Christianity [emphasis in original]" (p. 137–138).

In view of this fact, Swanson asks

"Why then is Charles Darwin the patron saint of the modern men and women of our day? ... Why did the masses run after men like Charles Darwin with such ardent affection and dedication over the last century?" (p. 137).

Swanson concluded that the "... impact that Charles Darwin has had on the lives of hundreds of millions of Christian families is overwhelming. This man was a key leader in the apostasy. It is an undeniable fact that the Christian faith was far stronger 150 years ago in England and America. In the 1850s, Americans from previous generations were generally orthodox Christians. Now, their 21st century grandchildren are pagans, atheists, homosexuals, witches and atheist-scientists. The sheer numbers that

will be in hell because of Charles Darwin's commitment to 'murder God' is too much—and too torturous—to fathom" (p. 142).

Swanson observes that Darwin "writes as a cold, heartless, and detached scientist picking at a live human pinned to his mounting board" and he [Darwin] showed

"... less concern for the people groups to be eliminated than he does for the animals he destroyed with his little hammer. If the reader does not shudder a little as he reads these things, then Darwin has proven the point. We have entered a brave new world that fails to respect the human life created in the image of God" (p. 142).

In "personal letters to friends, Darwin even wondered if his book *Origin of Species* might be the cause of 'the main part of the ills which my flesh is heir to'" (Darwin,² quoted in Swanson, p. 247). Darwin also argued that we humans are merely animals, and not the pinnacle of God's creation as the Bible teaches. Rather, in his 1871 *Descent of Man* book, Darwin rejects any discrete distinction between the animal kingdom and humans: "The mental faculties of man and the lower animals do not differ in kind, although immensely in degree" (p. 131). Swanson also briefly notes the important influence of Darwin on Hitler, writing that one

"... element of Charles Darwin's legacy is the Adolph Hitler connection. If modern humanists still recognize one villain in history, Hitler usually makes the list. Therefore, evolutionists must repudiate any connection between Darwin and the German Nazi, and carefully avoid references to Darwin's support of eugenics" (p. 132).

Swanson adds that, although they attempt to do this, they cannot avoid Darwin's own words that document his eugenic, superior race views. Furthermore, Darwin is "slippery, purposefully inconsistent, and ominously vague"

(p. 133). Darwin also predicted the extermination of the "savage races" and, although he

"... does not argue for social imperative for eugenics and genocide, ... neither does he argue against it. This is how Charles Darwin paved the way for megalomaniacs of the 20th century who thought nothing of exterminating the Jews in Germany, or the Slavics in the Soviet Union" (p. 134).

In the end "Deceptive obfuscation only accentuates the evil character of men who toy with the idea of racial extermination" and

"Darwin *almost* approves of the 'survival of the fittest' mechanism operating among the savages who do not 'check the process of elimination'. He half-heartedly recommends a limitation on marriage for the weaker and inferior members of society. But he reveals his true agenda ... as he holds on to something called the 'noblest part of our nature [emphasis in original]" (p. 133).

The result of holding onto the "noblest part of our nature", Swanson notes, will be, at some point in the future, that

"... the 'overwhelming present evil' will trump the contingent benefit, and the surgeon will just

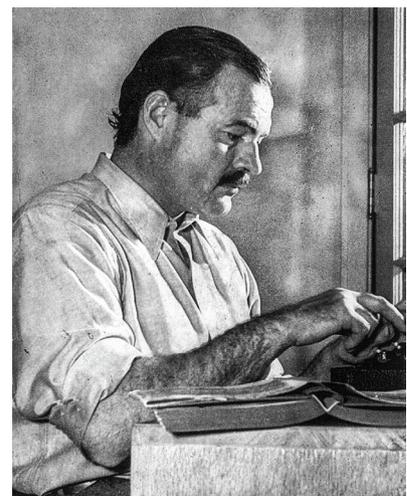


Figure 2. Ernest Hemingway

have to ‘harden himself’ whilst performing the operation. This is how Darwin opens the door to powerful social planners who will centralize power and act on these fateful propositions. Later, Friedrich Nietzsche picks up on this and corrects Darwin’s purposeful inconsistencies, providing the link to Adolph Hitler” (p. 133).

Swanson concluded by noting that against Darwin’s “sad legacy of racism, eugenics, and genocide” stands “God’s revelatory truth. The Bible acknowledges variance in culture, nationality, language, and skin pigment (Jer. 13:23), but there is no ‘racial’ differentiation with a people who trace their lineage to Noah and Adam” (p. 135).

The reason is “Every man, woman, and child, regardless of ethnic and cultural background, is made in the image of God” (p. 136). This was reflected in the fact that, in “the 1870s and 1880s, missionaries like John Paton fought hard against Darwinian whites who were committed to eliminating the ‘savages’ in Australia by mass murder.”²³ Darwin tried to murder God by postulating another means to account for the existence of the creation. Because Darwin “could not

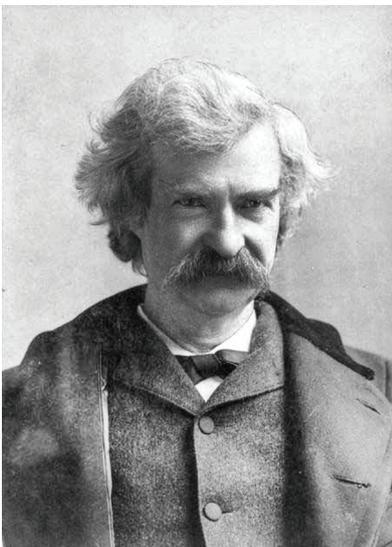


Figure 3. Mark Twain

disprove the existence of God, but if he could identify a natural mechanism for the development of the complexity of life forms, then there would be less need for God as a causal force” (p. 127). To do this Darwin hypothesized that mankind, and all life-forms, evolved by “... natural selection in which the most physically-fit mutations (those that were better adapted to the environment) survived while the weaker died out. Darwin’s hypothesis perfectly accommodated the growing deism and agnosticism of the day, because it took God out of the picture. If this was a viable explanation for the development of the complexity of biological life, then it rendered a Creator God obsolete in the process” (p. 127).

Darwin also influenced many other ‘apostates’. For example, “Karl Marx, who has had more impact on actual events, as well as on the minds of men and women, than any other intellectual in modern times.”²⁴

John Dewey

Swanson concluded that Darwin had a profound effect on “John Dewey [figure 1], the man who mainstreamed godless humanism and pragmatism in Western education at the turn of the 20th century.” Swanson calls Dewey “a key apostate from the Christian faith and quite possibly the most significant American philosopher” (p. 156). Dewey was born in the year that Darwin’s *Origin* was first published (1859), and died in 1952. He was reared in a solid Christian home (strict Congregationalists), and his parents worked hard to enable their son to obtain an education at the leading American universities. Then, to their horror and dismay, they watched their “children forsake the faith” (p. 157). Dewey’s veering from Christianity “came about from the slow and steady influence of the university as he



Figure 4. John Steinbeck

immersed himself in the higher levels of academic training” (p. 156).

This case reflects the fact that, for various reasons, the secular universities have “formed the juggernaut for undermining the Christian worldview in the West” (p. 156). Swanson then documents Dewey’s descent into atheism. After Dewey earned his Ph.D. at Johns Hopkins, his first professorship was at the University of Michigan. There, he joined the largest organization on campus, the Student Christian Association. He was active, giving lectures, such as one titled “The Obligation to a Knowledge of God”, and conducting Bible classes (p. 157).

In his first book, titled *Psychology*, Dewey argued that logic proved God. This claim provoked a ‘fiery response’ from his former professors, including G. Stanley Hall and William James at Harvard. Hall himself was also reared by devout Christian parents, who agreed to send him to college only if he would study for the ministry. At college, Hall also “was especially attracted to Charles Darwin’s ideas, and soon turned into a full-blown eugenicist” (p. 158). Hall also soon agreed with Darwin, arguing that allowing inferior humans to breed is counter-productive to evolution, and

“interfered with the movement of natural selection toward the development of a super-race” (p. 158). Swanson then documented that this event was the start of the pressure on Dewey to reject Christianity. A critical factor was that Dewey came to consider Darwin as the greatest philosopher ever, and even wrote an article defending this view, titled “The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy” (p. 159).

Dewey’s journey into atheism was soon complete, even signing the 1933 Humanist Manifesto that proclaimed the “universe is self-existing and not created Man is part of nature and has emerged as a result of a continuous [evolutionary process] . . . modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic” existence (p. 161). A major goal of Dewey’s ‘educational psychology’ is for schools to indoctrinate students into the Darwinist philosophy of life.

As a result, “by 1950 almost every textbook in America had been purged of references to God, Jesus Christ, the Christian church, and the moral laws of God. This complete national apostasy came about by the influence of John Dewey” (p. 160). Dewey today still wields wide influence throughout the Western world. Swanson also documents several major literary apostates, three of whom are noted below.

Ernest Hemingway

One of the most famous 20th-century American authors, Ernest Hemingway (1899–1961 [figure 2]), was born on 21 July 1899 into an evangelical Christian (Congregationalist) family (p. 251). He also soon left his faith and through his writings actively denigrated Christianity. Hemingway was awarded the 1954 Nobel Prize for literature (p. 257) for his *The Old Man and the Sea*, a story about a man who “fights to the bloody end” (p. 257–258). In this story “we learn that everything

dies, including the stars and the moon” in a Darwinian, purposeless, universe (p. 259). Hemingway committed suicide in Cuba in 1961.

Mark Twain

Another author detailed is Mark Twain (1835–1910 [figure 3]). Toward the end of his life, Twain “may have been the most famous writer in the world” (p. 233). Reared in the Presbyterian faith, Twain rejected the faith he was reared in, and in his many books that were cloaked with his atheism, he “clearly communicated his unmitigated hatred for Christians, the Bible, and God” (p. 233). In his classic *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* he mocks Christians as “stupid” and shows his contempt for them by “frequently cursing, blasphemy, dishonor of parents, cross dressing, stealing and lying” (p. 244). Twain especially hated Christian missionaries (p. 235).

John Steinbeck

One of many other examples of an author who was highly influenced by Darwin was John Steinbeck (1902–1968 [figure 4]). Steinbeck’s “Grandfather was a deeply devout Christian (a Lutheran), and his grandfather’s brother was martyred for the faith while serving as a missionary in Palestine”. His parents were faithful members of a Salinas, California, church. His mother “encouraged him to be involved in the church, but from the beginning he resisted her appeals. As a college student, he was a drunk and a sexual libertine” (p. 260). By age 18, “Steinbeck’s hatred for the Christian faith was manifest to all who knew him. On one particularly momentous occasion, he rudely interrupted a Christmas church service, announcing to those with him that the message was a ‘lot of [manure]’. Then he screamed at the congregation, calling them a bunch

of hypocrites and stomped out of the church” (p. 260).

His *Of Mice and Men* (1937) was a story of a “God-hating wretch” and a “mentally retarded man” who was large and extremely strong, a man who liked to “run his hands over the surfaces of dead mice and women’s clothes and hair” (p. 264). It was this story and similar books, such as *The Grapes of Wrath*, that the Nobel committee cited for his realistic as well as imaginative writings, and keen social perception for which he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1962.

Summary

Swanson’s book is critical to understand how central Darwin has been in the efforts to destroy Christianity in the Western world, especially Europe. Swanson also documents the critical importance of literature in destroying Western Christianity. Most of the leading authors who Swanson profiled were “philosophers and literary men” who were “born into a family with a strong Christian heritage” and many were highly influenced by Darwinism to reject Christianity and, often, theism as well (p. 260).

References

1. See Bergman, J., *The Dark Side of Darwin*, New Leaf Press, Green Forest, AR, 2011; Colp, R., *To Be an Invalid: The Illness of Charles Darwin*, The University of Chicago, Chicago, IL, 1977; Colp, R., *Darwin’s Illness*, The University Press of Florida, Gainesville, FL, 2008.
2. Darwin, C., *Correspondence of Charles Darwin*, vol. 7, Cambridge University Press, New York, p. 247, 1991.
3. Paton, J., *Missionary Patriarch: The True Story of John G. Paton*, Vision Forum, San Antonio, TX, p. 262, originally published in 1891, republished in 2001.
4. Johnson, P., *Intellectuals*, Harper and Row, New York, p. 52, 1988.