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Christ and the Temptations of Modernity

David Hawkin

One of the truly great short stories of Western literature is “The Grand Inquisitor” which is found in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*. In the novel the story of the Grand Inquisitor is told by one of the brothers, Ivan, to another brother, Alyosha. It is set in the sixteenth century in Seville in Spain, at the height of the Inquisition. Ivan, the storyteller, tries to envisage what would have happened had Christ reappeared at this time. Ivan says, ‘He came unobserved and moved about silently but, strangely enough, those who saw him recognized him at once.’¹ Having recognized him, a woman in the crowd, in the process of burying her dead daughter, beseeches Christ to raise her daughter from the dead. Christ does so. It is at this point that the Grand Inquisitor, a wizened 90 year old, appears. He sees Christ raise the girl from the dead. At once he orders Christ to be arrested and imprisoned. Ivan continues—

The Grand Inquisitor’s power is so great and the people are so submissive and tremblingly obedient to him that they immediately open up a passage for the guards. A death like silence descends upon [the gathered crowd] and in that silence the guards lay hands on [Christ] and lead him away. Then everyone in the crowd, to a man, prostrates himself before the Grand Inquisitor. The old man blesses them in silence and passes on.²

At night, the old man visits Christ in prison. He knows who Christ is, but he does not fall down and worship him. On the contrary, he upbraids Christ for coming back, and announces his intention of having him burned at the stake the next day. Throughout the encounter with Christ, only the Grand Inquisitor speaks, and the story centres upon what it is that the Grand Inquisitor has to say to Christ. The Inquisitor is an imperious figure. He is, says Ivan, ‘oppressed by sorrow and loving mankind’. He is an ascetic who has no material ambition. He confronts Christ with an authority born of moral indignation. Christ, says the Grand Inquisitor, does not understand humanity. Christ wanted humans to freely give themselves up to him through an act of faith. But, contends the Grand Inquisitor, the vast majority of humans are much too weak and flawed to be expected to do this. Very, very few have the strength to

fulfil such expectations. ‘Thou didst crave for free love and not the base raptures of the slave,’ says the Grand Inquisitor, ‘but Thou didst think too highly of men therein, for they are slaves, of course, though rebellious by nature.’³ Then the Inquisitor turns to the heart of what he has to say. When the devil tempted Christ in the desert, he knew exactly what humans wanted. They wanted miracle, mystery and authority. Says the Inquisitor—

There are three forces, only three, on this earth that can overcome and capture once and for all the conscience of these feeble, undisciplined creatures, so as to give them happiness. These forces are miracle, mystery and authority. But You rejected the first, the second and the third of these forces and set up your rejection as an example to men.⁴

Because Christ would not listen to the devil, he condemned humans to a miserable fate because he asked of them the impossible. In the first temptation Christ refused to turn stones into bread. For the Inquisitor this was a mistake. ‘But only one who can appease a man’s conscience can take his freedom from him,’ says the Inquisitor. ‘In bread you were offered something that could have brought you indisputable loyalty: You would give man bread and man would bow down to you, because there is nothing more indisputable than bread.’⁵ In the second temptation Christ refuses to throw himself off the pinnacle of the Temple so that he could miraculously survive the fall. Again the Inquisitor rebukes Christ for not realizing how important miracles were for humans. He says—

Did you really expect that man would follow your example and remain with God without recourse to miracles?...And since man cannot live without miracles, he will provide himself with miracles of his own making....You did not want to bring man to you by miracles, because you wanted their freely given love rather than the servile rapture of slaves subdued forever by displays of power. And here again You overestimated man.⁶

In the final temptation Christ refuses the gift of power over all of the kingdoms of the earth. This final rejection of the devil’s offer is the most important for the Inquisitor. He says—

You could have taken Caesar’s sword when you came the first time. Why did you reject that last gift? Had you accepted the third offering of the

mighty spirit, you would have fulfilled man's greatest need on earth...thus enabling him finally to unite into a harmonious ant-hill, where there are no dissenting voices, for the unquenchable thirst for universal unity is the third and last ordeal of man.⁷

The Grand Inquisitor, then, sees Christ as having failed humans by overestimating them. He, the Grand Inquisitor, knows humans better than Christ. He reveals to Christ that he, and others like him, have thus 'corrected' Christ's work and have made central to the Christian religion the very things that Christ rejected in the desert. 'We,' says the Grand Inquisitor, are with him [that is, the devil], and not with you....Under us it will be different. Under us they will all be happy and they will not rise in rebellion and kill one another all the world over, as they are doing now with the freedom you gave them.⁸ The conclusion of the story is fittingly powerful and mysterious—

The Grand Inquisitor falls silent and waits some time for the prisoner to answer. The prisoner's silence has weighed on him. He has watched him; He listened to him intently, looking gently into his eyes, and apparently unwilling to speak. The old man longs for him to say something, however painful and terrifying. But instead, he suddenly goes over to the old man and kisses him gently on his old, bloodless lips. And that is his only answer. The old man is startled and shudders. The corners of his lips seem to quiver slightly. He walks to the door, opens it, and says to Him, 'Go now, and do not come back...ever. You must never, never come again!' And he lets the prisoner out into the dark streets of the city. The prisoner leaves.⁹

This bald summary of the story cannot possibly do justice to the immense power of Dostoevsky's narrative. It has created an enormous amount of discussion and debate. There are some, such as Harold Bloom, who are not very moved by it. He describes it as a 'lurid tale', and says that the Grand Inquisitor 'does not frighten us enough'. He is, claims Bloom, 'more gothic than we can accept.'¹⁰ Others, however, have found the story deeply perspicacious. Nietzsche, for example, said that Dostoevsky was the only psychologist from whom he had anything to learn. Sigmund Freud said that the story of the Grand Inquisitor stood at the very pinnacle of the literature of the Western world.¹¹ They both recognized the greatness of Dostoevsky, and in the Grand Inquisitor he has created an immensely powerful narrative which speaks

to the very souls of those of us in the modern world. As Malcolm Muggeridge says—

Has any generation of men had it demonstrated to them more forcibly than ours that Dostoevsky’s analysis of the temptations is correct? Have we not been shown in the most dramatic manner how economic miracles end in servitude to economics? How the glorification of Man leads infallibly to the servitude of men, and his liberation through power to one variety or another of Gulag Archipelago?¹²

So, notwithstanding the comments of Harold Bloom, there is general agreement that the story of the Grand Inquisitor is a sublime piece of literature replete with meaning. What Dostoevsky presents us with in the story of the Grand Inquisitor is a kind of *typology per contrarium*. We see what is at stake in the temptations by seeing through the Grand Inquisitor’s eyes what it is that the devil was offering and what it was that Christ rejected, namely, *miracle, mystery, and authority*.

Let us look at this in more detail. First, the devil suggested that Christ give humans the miracle of unlimited bread. Here Dostoevsky is clearly thinking of the manifestation of this temptation in the thought of the utopian socialists such as Fourier, Considérant, and Proudhon.¹³ The theories of these utopians were widely different, but they had one thing in common: they believed that all existing social evils could be solved by satisfying human material needs. If there was no want, there would be no crime. It is perhaps put most succinctly by a contemporary of Dostoevsky, Vissarion Belinskii, who said, ‘Man’s sins cannot be counted against him and he cannot be laden with obligations and turning the other cheek when his security is set up in such a mean fashion that a man cannot help but do wrong; economic factors alone lead him to do wrong.’¹⁴

These echo the words of the Inquisitor himself when he says, ‘Men of wisdom and learning will proclaim that there is no such thing as crime, that there is therefore no sin either, that there are only hungry people. “Feed us first, then ask for virtue” will be [their] motto.’¹⁵ For Dostoevsky, Christ’ answer, ‘One cannot live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God’, indicates a rejection of this philosophy.¹⁶ In the second temptation the devil tempts Christ to prove himself by throwing himself off the very pinnacle of the

great temple in Jerusalem and miraculously surviving the fall. Here Dostoevsky is clearly thinking of the manifestation of this temptation in Enlightenment rationalism. Many of Dostoevsky's contemporaries were firm believers in Auguste Comte's positivist gospel, *Savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour prévenir*.

All experience must be tested and subjected to rational analysis. The temptation is for Christ to justify himself by offering irrefutable proof of who he is. In Deuteronomy 6:16, the Israelites are told not to tempt the Lord, as they did at Meribah, where they demanded proof of God's presence among them. When Christ rejects the second temptation with the words, 'Again it is written, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God"', he is clearly recalling this incident. To succumb to this temptation would be to acknowledge the claim that the only reality we may know is the one mediated to us through rationality and empirical evidence. That would be a rejection of the mystery of faith through the assertion of a contrary mystery: the self-sufficiency of human reason. In the third temptation the devil offers Christ authority over all the earth. We see what Dostoevsky is thinking of in this temptation when he has the Inquisitor speak of it as reflecting 'the unquenchable thirst for universal unity'.¹⁷ The Inquisitor explains that to unite all humans in one unanimous and harmonious ant-hill would mean that there would be no dissenting voices. Humans would be free because there would be no individual decisions to make. But Christ rejected this temptation too, declaring that the worship of God implies individual freedom of choice.

Dostoevsky's interpretation of the temptations is very evocative. The Grand Inquisitor claims that the temptations express in a few words 'in three brief human sentences, the whole future history of the world and of mankind'.¹⁸ This may be poetic hyperbole, but it is certainly true that we can learn an immense amount about ourselves and the world we live in by reflecting on the significance of the temptations for today. Using Dostoevsky's interpretation as a starting point, let us discuss further what the temptations might mean in our modern context. What really is at stake in the first temptation? Christ's answer makes it clear: to provide unlimited bread would be to induce humans to believe that they can live by bread alone. Dostoevsky saw this temptation as symbolic of utopian socialism. But as Nikolai Berdyaev says, the ideas of the Inquisitor appeal as much to the right of the political spectrum as to the left.¹⁹ While one can understand why Dostoevsky would apply this temptation to

utopian socialism, in the modern context we can see that the symbolism of this temptation can be equally applied to modern capitalism, once we realize that the quest for sufficient bread has now become expanded into a quest for unlimited goods. After the events of September 11, 2001, officials in the U.S. government urged Americans to go shopping. This advice was meant to try to stimulate an economy which had been imperilled by the event of 9/11, but it also served to remind people what the Western world was about. At this moment of crisis, people should go shopping. The Western 'way of life' was clearly identified with the values of consumerism. But it goes even further than this. For in this commodified and consumer-driven world, the free market economy, or, more simply, 'the Market', has itself come to take on the attributes of a god. Harvey Cox describes how a friend told him that if he wanted to fully understand the real world, he should read the business pages. He did so. Instead of finding a world foreign to him, (he was, after all a theologian and not a man of the world), he found that the business pages disclosed a universe of discourse very familiar to him. In these pages he found not a secular world of rationality and dispassionate thought, but rather a religious world. He says, '[I] saw that in fact there lies embedded in the business pages an entire theology, which is comparable in scope if not in profundity to that of Thomas Aquinas or Karl Barth.'²⁰ Cox saw that behind the descriptions of market reforms, monetary policy, and the convolutions of the Dow, there were pieces of a 'grand narrative about the inner meaning of human history, why things had gone wrong and how to put them right'.²¹

Chronicles about the creation of wealth, the seductive temptations of statism, captivity to faceless economic cycles, and ultimately, salvation through the advent of free markets, were all very similar to religious discourse about the Fall, and doctrines of sin and redemption. The Market, says Cox, has come to replace God, inspiring the same kind of allegiance and reverence that used to be reserved for Yahweh or Christ or Allah. In a similar vein William Greider has written of the 'utopian vision of the marketplace' offering its followers 'an enthralling religion, a self-satisfied belief system'. Indeed, people are seen to 'worship' principles of the free market economy as though they constituted a 'spiritual code' capable of solving all human problems 'so long as no one interferes with its authority'. Secular society, with its this-worldly preoccupations of individuality and personal success is a paradoxical culture. As Greider says, 'Many who think of themselves as rational and urbane have put

their faith in this idea of the self-regulating market as piously as others put their trust in God.²² Similarly, Fredric Jameson has referred to the Market as ‘this consoling replacement for Divinity’.²³

Malcolm Muggeridge is absolutely right, economic miracles have turned into servitude to economics. When people think that they can live by bread alone, they turn bread into God. The quest for bread—now expanded into a quest for unlimited goods—has become the purpose of human existence, a purpose which is determined and justified by the Market god.

In the second temptation the devil tempts Christ to throw himself down from the pinnacle of the Temple. Dostoevsky saw this as the temptation of rationalism to believe that it can explain the whole of reality. But there is even more to it than this. Christ answers, ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’ That is, you cannot solve the problem of faith with a miracle, *because then the need for miracles never stops. Moreover, the miracle itself becomes the sole focus of attention and we never get to see beyond it.* Similarly, in the modern world, we have become totally beguiled by our own objects of wonder and amazement, especially those presented to us through science and technology. We have pursued the Baconian injunction to conquer nature ‘for the relief of man’s estate’, and we have succeeded in spectacular fashion. Some fifty years after Bacon, Thomas Hobbes rearticulated the Baconian view and saw humans as locked in a perpetual conflict with a hostile nature. In their original state humans are exposed to a life which is nasty, brutish, and short. Only human knowledge and power over nature help to ameliorate this condition.

Significantly, however, Hobbes saw no end to this struggle to subdue nature. In his view human power over nature must be continually reasserted. It is thus that *scientific progress and power become ends in themselves.* There is no thought beyond that.²⁴ In the third temptation Christ refuses to accept the kingdoms of the earth from the hands of the devil and thus turn the world into what the Grand Inquisitor calls ‘one harmonious ant-hill’. Of all of the temptations, this is the one which is most insidious and difficult to resist. After all, who but a sociopath does not want harmony? History is full of people who have attempted to impose a universal and harmonious vision upon humanity. Although there are exceptions, such people are often not driven by a simple lust for power, but rather by ideology. They think that they know what is best

for humans. There is an excellent example of this perspective in *Walden Two*, a novel by the founder of behavioural psychology, B. F. Skinner. The novel describes a visit to an imaginary utopian commune. Through Pavlovian conditioning and thought control the inhabitants of the commune are taught to be happy and content.

In many ways this utopia is very attractive. There is no competition and no dissension. The focus is not on consumption but on human relationships. It is technology which makes it feasible to build such a society. In Dostoevsky's story the *Inquisitor* says, 'We will convince them that they will only be free when they have surrendered their freedom and submitted to us.'²⁵ This exact sentiment is echoed in Skinner's novel when its chief protagonist, a man named Frazier, says that it is now possible to control and modify human behaviour so that 'we can achieve a sort of control under which the controlled, even though they are following a code more scrupulous than ever was the case before, nevertheless *feel free*. By careful cultural design', he continues, 'we control not the behaviour, but the inclination to behave—the motives, the desires, the wishes [of humans]'.²⁶ Frazier sees himself as a true humanitarian who wishes to save humans from themselves, and not as an intractable authoritarian figure. But, of course, this is precisely the problem. Frazier thinks that he alone knows exactly what humans need. They need harmony, not freedom. He knows best. But his vision is a blighted one. The humans in Frazier's world are *not* fully human. They are not spontaneous or creative, and they do not experience the full spectrum of human emotions and desires. They have paid a terrible price for their happiness. They have forfeited their humanity for the Inquisitor's ant-heap.

Frazier is very similar to the Grand Inquisitor. They are both, of course, fictional characters. But we should beware of dismissing them as caricatures having nothing to do with real life. For example, Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, better known by his revolutionary codename of Lenin, was very real, and he is also similar to the Grand Inquisitor. Both exhibit the same compelling logic in espousing their respective visions for humankind. Both express deep sympathy for the masses, but contempt for the individual. Both are ascetic, idealistic, and willing to suffer for the cause. Yet their design for a better world means enslaving people. These examples illustrate that it is a mistake to think that authoritarian regimes only come about through wilful, megalomaniac men.

Totalitarian figures are often driven by ideological agendas. In other words, they are driven by ideas. Ideas are in fact more powerful than armies. It is in the realm of ideas that we can see most clearly how the third temptation has taken root in the modern world, for it finds its best expression in the project of globalization. Globalization can mean many different things to many different people. In its most powerful American form it is the belief that liberal democracy and market capitalization will eventually become the unrivalled ideology which governs the world.

This finds its quintessential expression in the so-called ‘neo-conservatives’ in America, of whom one of the most coherent and cogent advocates in Francis Fukuyama. In his best known book, *The End of History*, Fukuyama claimed that we had reached the end point of humankind’s ideological evolution. ‘Democratic capitalism,’ he asseverated, constituted the ‘final form of human government’. There was, he claimed, a ‘Universal History’ of humankind ‘in the direction of liberal democracy’. Fukuyama declared—

The enormous productive and dynamic economic world created by advancing technology and the rational organization of labor has a tremendous homogenizing power. It is capable of linking different societies around the world to one another physically through the creation of global markets, and of creating parallel economic aspirations and practices in a host of diverse societies. The attractive power of this world creates a very strong pre-disposition for all human societies to participate in it, while success in this participation requires the adoption of the principles of economic liberalism. This is the ultimate victory of the VCR.²⁷

To be fair to Fukuyama, he does say that ‘man is not simply an economic animal’. The appeal of liberal democracy, he says, lies not just in its economic success, but also in its understanding that people need ‘recognition’. Fukuyama spends some time discussing what he means by recognition. Basically, it is the idea that people want to be seen as having worth and dignity. Such recognition, when it is combined with global consumerism, makes liberal democracy irresistible. For Fukuyama, liberal democracy has a kind of salvific power, for it will bring about the ‘end of history’, that is, there will be no more dissension caused by ideological struggles. He says, ‘The revolutionaries in Romania and China imagine that they would be happy when one day they get to the

Promised Land of consumerism. One day they too will all have dishwashers and VCRs and private automobiles.’ Fukuyama does rhetorically ask whether this is ‘what the human story has been about these past few millennia’, but he clearly cannot see humans giving up the joys promised by consumerism and global capitalism to be, as he puts it, ‘dragged back into history with all its wars, injustice, and revolution’.²⁸

This then, is the neo-conservative vision. Fukuyama himself, because of the difficulties America has encountered in Iraq, has now modified his neo-conservative stance.²⁹ Other neo-conservatives have sternly rebuked Fukuyama for his apparent defection from the ranks of their orthodoxy.³⁰ But, in its more benign and less militaristic guise, which is what Fukuyama now seeks to present, neo-conservatism can be very seductive. It is a mistake to underestimate the power of consumer capitalism. Liberal Westerners who see the dangers of such capitalism often fail to appreciate the view from the other, more disadvantaged, side. It is instructive here to recall the exchange between Mahathir Mohamad, Prime Minister of Malaysia, and the Swiss environmental activist Bruno Manser. Manser had launched an international campaign in defence of the Borneo rain forests and the people who live there, an indigenous tribe called the Penans. His campaign was very effective and forced Mahathir to take the offensive. He wrote him an open letter.

As a Swiss living in the lap of luxury with the world’s highest standard of living it is the height of arrogance for you to advocate that the Penans live on maggots and monkeys in their miserable huts, subjected to all kinds of diseases....Do you really expect the Penans to subsist on monkeys until the year 2500 or 3000 or forever? Have they no right to a better life? What right have you to condemn them to a primitive life forever?³¹

Fukuyama should not be dismissed too quickly when he says everyone the world over wants a VCR, (although now it would probably be a DVD player!). But the issue goes much deeper than the commodity itself. As world markets globalize and everyone from London to New Delhi drinks Coke, buys Levi jeans and drives Toyota cars, people are exposed to the same information, the same cultural icons, the same advertisements. This process goes beyond taste and consumer choice and enters the more fundamental realm of worldview and mind-set. Globalization thus becomes a potent solvent of tradition. There is

evidence of this everywhere. Countries as different as Iran and India struggle with the dissolution of their own cultural values as Coke commercials, Arnold Schwarzenegger movies, and the gyrating pelvis of Britney Spears are beamed into the homes of their young via satellite TV.

On closer inspection, however, it is clear that history is not unfolding in quite the way that the neo-conservatives have envisaged it. The world does not seem to be moving towards a global ant-heap of universal peace. Quite to the contrary. The world seems a more fractious place than ever. Universal secularization and propagation of peace through trade are belied by resurgent fundamentalist religions, the revival of ancient ethnic rivalries, and the use of new technologies for the purposes of war rather than wealth creation. *Homo Economicus* and the idea of a universal civilization do not seem able to overcome these forces. Those who still hold to the conviction that worldwide modernity will banish such forces have to address the question of why economic liberalization has led to the revival of such phenomena as religious fundamentalism.

The twenty-first century has presented us with an entirely unforeseen and paradoxical situation. There is, on the one hand, unprecedented economic integration and cultural homogenization; on the other hand, we are also witnessing cultural and religious factionalism. Are these two trends simply contradictory? Or, are they, on some deeper level, linked? Is it possible that cultural and religious wars and rivalries are actually *a result of* globalization and its homogenizing power? This is a vital question, for we need to understand how it is that contrary to what we might have expected, especially after the collapse of communism, the world has not become a safer place in which to live. One of the best-known explanations of why the modern world seems more fractious than ever is given by Samuel Huntington.³²

Huntington proposed that we were entering a new phase of history in which wars will no longer be caused by ideology, but by conflicting cultural identities. Future clashes will be ‘wars of civilizations’. By ‘civilizations’ Huntington means the ‘cultural groupings’ which extend beyond regions and states. Most significantly, Huntington sees religion as having a fundamental and formative role in these ‘cultural groupings’. Says Huntington, ‘In the modern world religion is a central, perhaps the central, force that motivates and mobilizes

people....What ultimately counts for people is not political ideology or economic interest. Faith and family, blood and belief, are what people identify with and what they will fight and die for.’³³

There are problems with Huntington’s thesis, not the least of which is his sweeping and over-generalized categorization of what constitutes a ‘civilization’. Yet, unlike Fukuyama, there is a recognition in Huntington that there are impediments to globalization such as other religions and cultures which are stubbornly attempting to keep their identity. This resistance to the Western project of globalization which we are now witnessing indicates that there is a flaw in the idea that globalization will bring about a universal civilization. *People need the particularity of faith and culture to truly discover themselves.* They aspire to more than a global civilization offers them. They are not, contrary to what the Inquisitor believes, willing to be relieved of their freedom in order to be part of some harmonious ant-heap.

No one who has lived through the last century can deny the existence of genocide, gulags and ghettos. Humans can indeed be weak and despicable and corrupt, as the Grand Inquisitor claimed. But neither should we deny that humans are also capable of self-sacrifice, spontaneity, and spiritual evolution. The Grand Inquisitor’s narrow and blighted vision of humanity fails to see what Christ, in turning down the temptations, did see—that humans are striving, willing creatures who hope and who love and who, through glimpsing the divine, can be set on a course towards true self-realisation.

In Dostoevsky’s story the Grand Inquisitor claims that when Christ rejected the temptations of the devil he rejected miracle, mystery and authority. In the light of our experience in the modern world, we are able to elaborate further on this claim. Transposed into the modern context *the rejection of miracle* may be seen not merely as the rejection of the sufficiency of the miracle of bread for all, but rather as a rejection of the whole notion of the self-sufficiency of economics. Economic miracles bring servitude to economics. *The rejection of mystery* may be seen as a rejection of the mystification surrounding the scientific enterprise. Science and technology are not ends in themselves. *The rejection of authority* may be seen as a rejection of the vision which sees a homogenized human culture as the answer to strife and dissension. One cannot solve the problem of being human by making people less human.³⁴

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ENDNOTES

1. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (NY: Bantam Books, 1970), p. 299.
2. *The Brothers Karamazov*, pp. 301f.
3. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 308.
4. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 307.
5. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 306.
6. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 308.
7. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 310.
8. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 311.
9. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 316.
10. Harold Bloom, *Fyodor Dostoevsky* (NY: Chelsea House Publications, 1989), p. 7.
11. Sigmund Freud, *The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud* ed. Ernest Jones (NY: Hogarth Press, 1959), p. 222.
12. Malcolm Muggeridge, *Christ and the Media* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), p. 39.
13. Rene Fuelop-Miller, *Fyodor Dostoevsky: Insight, Faith and Prophecy* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1950), p. 97.
14. P. Travis Kroeker and Bruce K. Ward, *Remembering the End: Dostoevsky as Prophet to Modernity* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2001), p. 244.
15. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 304.
16. Michael Ignatieff, *The Needs of Strangers* (NY: Viking Press, 1985), p. 77, puts it this way: 'As Augustine, Pascal and Bosch so profoundly understood, moreover, the great enemy of religion is not science, nor the active profession of unbelief, but rather the silent and pervasive plausibility of earthly need as a metaphysics of ordinary life...[the idea that] in the desires and needs of the body, human life can find all its justification.'
17. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 310.
18. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 303.
19. Jerry S. Wasserman (ed.), *The Brothers Karamazov* (NY: Merrill Publishing Co., 1970), p. 74.
20. Harvey Cox, *Atlantic Monthly*, March, 1999, pp. 19-20.
21. *Atlantic Monthly*, p. 18.
22. William Greider, *One World, Ready or Not* (NY: Simon and Shuster, 1997), p. 473.
23. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991), p. 273.

24. See David J. Hawkin, *The Twenty-First Century Confronts its Gods* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), pp. 40f.
25. *The Brothers Karamazov*, p. 311.
26. B. F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (Boston, Beacon, 1964), p. 262.
27. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (NY: The Free Press, 1992), p. 48. We can see in Fukuyama how the second temptation fuses with the third. We must, he says, take our cue from Francis Bacon, and understand that knowledge is the key to the directionality of history. If we look at the “entire range of human social behaviour” we will see that the only one that is unequivocally cumulative and directional is modern natural science. When science is wedded to technology we have the engine that drives globalization. Says Fukuyama: ‘Technology makes possible the limitless accumulation of wealth, and thus the satisfaction of an ever-expanding set of human desires. This process guarantees an increasing homogenization of all human societies, regardless of their historical origins or cultural inheritances. All countries undergoing economic modernization must increasingly resemble one another. They must unify nationally on the basis of a centralized state, urbanize, and replace traditional forms of social organization like tribe, sect, and family with economically rational ones based on function and efficiency...’ (p. xiv).
28. *The End of History*, p. 312.
29. See Francis Fukuyama, *America at the Crossroads: Democracy, Power, and the Neoconservative Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
30. See, for example, Christopher Hitchens, “The End of Fukuyama”, in *Slate* published March 1, 2006, at: <http://www.slate.com/id/2137134/>
30. Quoted in Greider, *One World*, pp. 447-448.
32. Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993): 22-49; *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 1996).
33. Samuel P. Huntington, “If not Civilizations, What? Paradigms of the Post-Cold War World”, *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 5 (1993):191-92.
34. This article is a revised version of a public lecture given at the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society, University of Victoria, BC, Canada, on Ash Wednesday, 2006.