

Quotations & Reflections¹

“Besides being wise, the Preacher also taught the people knowledge, weighing and studying and arranging many proverbs with great care”

—Ecclesiastes 12:9 (ESV).

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“Apt quotation is a great aid in all forms of public address. It illustrates a point or clinches an argument. It brings to the enforcement of the truth the wisdom of other men, and sometimes in forms so striking or so beautiful that the quotation is the barb to the arrow, which makes it stick in the mark, after it has flown swift and strong from the hand of the bowman.”

—J. O. Murray, “Homiletic Illustrations from Shakespeare,” *Homiletic Review* 9.1 (Jan, 1885): 13.

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“Constant quotations in sermons are, I think, a sign of...crudeness. They show an undigested knowledge. They lose the power of personality. They daub the wall with un-[160] tempered mortar. Here is the need of broad and generous culture. Learn to study for the sake of truth, learn to think for the profit and the joy of thinking. Then your sermon shall be like the leaping of a fountain and not like the pumping of a pump.”

—Phillips Brookes, *Lectures on Preaching: Delivered Before the Divinity School of Yale College in January and February, 1877* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1888), 159-60.

¹ In compiling this collection the editor has asked several friends and Midwestern colleagues to contribute reflections and favorite quotations relating to the life and calling of Christian scholars and apologists. Where quotations have been submitted I have included the initials of the contributors, hence M. A. (Dr. Matthew Arbo), M. M. (Dr. Michael McMullen), B. H. (Dr. Blake Hearson), A. B. (Dr. Alan Branch), M.H. (Marguerite Huggins), M.A.G.H (Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin). Where no initials are given the selection or reflection was contributed by the editor. Quotations are chosen on the basis of their aptness, with no necessary agreement with views of the authors who penned them, nor any representation that those authors were necessarily Christians (see, e.g., the quote from Steve Ross).

“*Ignoratio enim Scripturarum ignoratio Christi est*” (“Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ”)

—Saint Jerome (*Comm. in Is.*, prol.: PL 24, 17).

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“History has shown that crimes of logic can be more catastrophic for humanity than crimes of passion.”

—Ravi Zacharias, *Can Man Live Without God* (Nashville, TN: W. Publishing Group, 1994), 11.

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“If we wish to see the Baptist denomination prosper, we must not expend our zeal so much in endeavouring to make men Baptists, as in labouring to make Baptists and others Christians. If we lay out ourselves in the common cause of Christianity, the Lord will bless and increase us.”

—Andrew Fuller, “The Necessity of Seeking those Things First which Are of the First Importance,” in Andrew Fuller, *Dialogues, Letters, and Essays on Various Subjects* (Hartford, CN: Oliver D. Cooke, 1810), 141-42. (M.A.G.H.)

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“...there have been few more frequent sources of difficulty in theology, than the common fallacy of summing up inquiries under two alternatives, neither of which corresponds to the true nature of the case.”

—Benjamin Jowett, *The Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, Galatians, Romans* (2d ed.; 2 vols.; London: John Murray, 1859), 209.

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“How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour, and that one, is what we are doing.”

—Annie Dillard, *The Writing Life* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1990), 32.

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“Fallacies...do not cease to be fallacies because they become fashions.”

—G. K. Chesterton, “Novels on the Great War,” *Illustrated London News* (April 19, 1930) in *The Illustrated News 1929-31* (Collected Works of Chesterton 35; San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1991), 293. (M. A.)

“Freedom and not servitude is the cure for anarchy; as religion, and not atheism, is the true remedy for superstition.”

—Edmund Burke, “Speech on Moving his Resolutions for Consolation with the Colonies” (March 22, 1775), in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke Vol. II* (Boston, MA: John West & O. C. Greenleaf, 1807), 57.

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“The ministry of Christ makes its appeal to the men of the noblest gifts, but God is not dependent on any set of men... it must not be forgotten that Jesus chose his apostles from the unschooled fishermen and artisans of Galilee save Judas the Judean. He passed by the rabbinical theological seminaries where religious impulse had died and thought had crystallized. He will bypass the schools today if the teachers and students close their minds and hearts to him. Jesus seeks the open mind and the warm heart. He knocks at the door of the heart of every university and seminary man in the world. The answer is more important to the student than it is to Christ. Jesus will go to the highways and find others to heed his call, but the student will not find another Christ to serve.”

—A. T. Robertson, *The Glory of the Ministry* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1911), 153. (A.B.)

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“Now faith means believing what you don’t yet see, and the reward of this faith is to see what you believe.”

—Augustine, “Sermon 43: On What is Written in Isaiah: Unless You Believe, You Shall Not Understand,” in *Sermons II (20-50) on the Old Testament (The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century trans. Edmund Hill, O.P.; ed. John E. Rotelle, O. S. A.; Brooklyn, NY: New City Press, 1990), 238. (M. A.)*

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“Everybody is identical in their secret unspoken belief that way deep down they are different from everyone else.”

—David Foster Wallace, *Infinite Jest* (New York: Back Bay, 1996), 205. (M. A.)

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“A man who is unaffectedly himself turns out to be uncommonly like other people.”

George Santayana “‘The Comic Mask’ and ‘Carnival,’” (1920) in *Theories of Comedy* (intro. and selection Paul Lauter; 415 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday/Anchor, 1964), 415.

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“I have been called an Arminian Calvinist or a Calvinist Arminian, and am quite content so long as I can keep close to my Bible.”

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon, “Heart-Disease Curable,” *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* 27 (1881): 346.

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“All the beauty of nature withers when we try to make it absolute. Put first things first and we get second things thrown in: put second things first & we lose *both* first and second things.”

—C. S. Lewis, Letter to Bede Griffiths (April 24, 1951).

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“The Bible tells us to love our neighbors, and also to love our enemies; probably because they are generally the same people.”

—G. K. Chesterton, “The Man Next Door,” *Illustrated London News* 7/16/1910 (Collected Works of Chesterton XXVIII; San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 1987), 563 (B.H.).

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“7. Resolved, never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.”

—Jonathan Edwards, “Letters and Personal Writings” (*Works of Jonathan Edwards* 16; ed. George S. Claghorn; New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1998), 753 (Or online at <http://edwards.yale.edu/archive>. (M. M.)

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“The people of this world generally like to take a little religion as spice, but almost never as the main dish of life.”

“But when we perform duties of religion only to be seen and applauded of men, we make God only our pretense, but men our idols; and set up as many Gods before him, as we have spectators and observers.”

—Ezekiel Hopkins (d. 1690), *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments* (rev. and slightly abridged; New York: American Tract Society, n.d.), 60.

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“Suppose someone invented an instrument, a convenient little talking tube which could be heard over the whole land—I wonder if the police would not forbid it, fearing that the whole country would become mentally deranged if it were used...On the whole the evil in the daily press consists in its being calculated to make, if possible, the moment a thousand or ten thousand times more inflated and important than it already is. But all moral upbringing consists first and foremost in being weaned away from the momentary.”

—Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) in *Søren Kierkegaard's Journals and Papers* (7 vols.; trans. & ed. Howard V. Hong & Edna H. Hong, with Gregory Malantschuck; Bloomington, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1967-78), 2:483.

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“No one in the English-speaking world can be considered literate without a basic knowledge of the Bible. Literate people in India, whose religious traditions are not based on the Bible but whose common language is English, must know about the Bible in order to understand English within their own country...The Bible is also essential for understanding many of the moral and spiritual values of our culture, whatever our religious beliefs...No person in the modern world can be considered educated without a basic knowledge of all the great religions of the world—Islam, Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Judaism, and Christianity. But our knowledge of Judaism and Christianity needs to be more detailed than that of other great religions, if only because of the historical accident that has embedded the Bible in our thought [2] and language. The Bible is a central book in our culture, just as the Koran is central in other nations.”

—E. D. Hirsh, Joseph F. Kett, & James Trefil, *The Dictionary of Cultural Literacy* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1988), 1-2.

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“Of course, you are not such wiseacres as to think or say that you can expound Scripture without assistance from the works of divines and

learned men who have laboured before you in the field of exposition...It seems odd, that certain men who talk so much of what the Holy Spirit reveals to themselves, should think so little of what he has revealed to others...The temptations of our times lie rather in empty pretensions to novelty of sentiment, than in a slavish following of accepted guides. A respectable acquaintance with the opinions of the giants of the past, might have saved many an erratic thinker from wild interpretations and outrageous inferences. Usually, we have found the despisers of commentaries to be men who have no sort of acquaintance with them; in their case, it is the opposite of familiarity which has bred contempt.”

—Charles H. Spurgeon, *Commenting on Commentaries* (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1876), 2.

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“The words of the Lord hurt and offend until there is nothing left to hurt or offend. Jesus Christ had no tenderness whatever toward anything that is ultimately going to ruin a man in the service of God.”

—Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (various editions, Sept 27, on Luke 9:57).

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“JESUS’ WORDS: HOW THEY MAKE US FEEL? Many people have the impression that Jesus’ words should represent every positive cultural model that we currently uphold; the motivational professional speaker, the esteem building parent, or the positive teacher. We expect that since Jesus is held up as the pinnacle of perfection, His words should always reflect *our* highest standards. Then we begin reading the Bible and find some sayings that make us less than comfortable. The bulk of words that Jesus actually speaks aren’t found in our best and brightest how-to books. His emphasis is neither making us feel good about where we are right now nor tutoring us on how to become experts at time and financial management. Granted, we like it when He speaks comfort to us or lets Pharisees have it, but much of what he says lies outside the perimeter of our comfort zones. How do we process this seeming inconsistency? One person that I was talking to this week asserted that the harsh parts were added later by powerful people who wanted to control the behavior of the masses. Glib cut and paste theology is convenient, but hardly historically plausible. We have a complete picture of Jesus’ sayings that precedes the time frame of Christendom’s rise to power. Jesus was never a product of our culture and it is ludicrous to assume that if his ideas don’t match ours they must have

been changed. Rather, they would more likely be phony if they exactly reflected our ideals. I wonder if it would be a valuable experiment to immerse ourselves straight into the Bible text, to read the four gospels for what they say, to allow the unvarnished words to pierce us straight into the heart and see what happens. Why not lay aside preconceived notions and get on the emotional roller coaster? Why not allow ourselves to feel and see if perhaps there is a purpose in Jesus' strong language."

—M.H.

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"The unbelief of man cannot make the threatenings of God's word of no effect, but, sooner or later, they will take place, if the prescribed course be not taken to prevent the execution of them."

—Matthew Henry, *Commentary on Zech 1:1-6*.

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"Low-sunk life imagines itself weary of life, but it is death, not life, it is weary of."

—George MacDonald in *George MacDonald: An Anthology 365 Readings* (ed. & pref. C. S. Lewis; HarperSanFrancisco, 1973 [1946]), 67 (reading no. 127).

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"The Word we study has to be the Word we pray. My personal experience of the relentless tenderness of God came not from exegetes, theologians, and spiritual writers, but from sitting still in the presence of the living Word and beseeching him to help me understand with my head and heart his written Word. Sheer scholarship alone cannot reveal to us the gospel of grace. We must never allow the authority of books, institutions, or leaders to replace the authority of *knowing* Jesus Christ personally and directly. When the religious views of others interpose between us and the primary experience of Jesus as the Christ, we become unconvicted and unpersuasive travel agents handing out brochures to places we have never visited."

—Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1990), 42.

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"To most people God is an inference, not a reality. He is a deduction from evidence which they consider adequate; but He remains personally

unknown to the individual. 'He must be,' they say, 'therefore we believe He is'...for millions of Christians, God is no more real than He is to the non-Christian. They go through life trying to love an ideal and be loyal to a mere principle...The Bible assumes as a self-evident fact that men can know God with at least the same degree of immediacy as they know any other person or thing that comes within the field of their experience."

—A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1982), 49-51.

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"Man cannot admit into the catholic Church. No one is admitted into the Church by water baptism, nor by vote of a church meeting, nor by the decision of a session. A person enters the Church when the Holy Spirit baptizes him into Christ. All the other things may be necessary in order that the discipline of the local church may be maintained. There ought to be solemn recognition of some kind when a man joins the outward and visible church, but all such matters are outward and visible recognitions of inward and invisible facts. The only condition on which any person should be admitted to a local church is that evidence is given of membership in the catholic Church by the baptism of the Holy Spirit."

—G. Campbell Morgan, *Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 34-35.

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"It is vital in a discussion...that we should make sure we are going by meanings and not by mere words. It is not necessary in any argument to settle what a word means or ought to mean. But it is necessary in every argument to settle what we propose to mean by the word."

—G. K. Chesterton, *The Appetite of Tyranny* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1915), 15.

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"Whatever sin the heart of man is most prone to, that the devil will help forward. If David be proud of his people, Satan will provoke him to number them, that he may be yet prouder (2 Sam. 24).

If Peter be slavishly fearful, Satan will put him upon rebuking and denying Christ, to save his own skin (Matt. 16:22; 26. 69-75). If Ahab's prophets be given to flatter, the devil will straightway become a lying

spirit in the mouths of four hundred of them, and they shall flatter Ahab to his ruin (1 Kings 22). If Judas will be a traitor, Satan will quickly enter into his heart, and make him sell his master for money, which some heathens would never have done (John 13.2). If Ananias will lie for advantage, Satan will fill his heart that he may lie, with a witness, to the Holy Ghost (Acts 5.3). Satan loves to sail with the wind, and to suit men's temptations to their conditions and inclinations. If they be in posterity, he will tempt them to deny God (Prov. 30.9); if they be in adversity, he will tempt them to distrust God; if their knowledge be weak, he will tempt them to have low thoughts of God, if their conscience be tender, he will tempt to scrupulosity, if large, to carnal security; if bold-spirited, he will tempt to presumption, if timorous, to desperation; if flexible, to inconstancy; if stiff, to impenitency.

From the power, malice and skill of Satan, doth proceed all the soul-destroying plots, devices, stratagems he hath to keep souls in a mourning, staggering, doubting and questioning condition."

—Thomas Brooks, *Precious Remedies Against Satan's Devices* (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993), 16.

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"Every generation rewrites the past. In easy times history is more or less of an ornamental art, but in times of danger we are driven to the written record by a pressing need to find answers to the riddles of today. We need to know what kind of firm ground other men, belonging to generations before us, have found to stand on."

—John Dos Passos, *The Ground We Stand On: The History of a Political Creed* (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1941), 3.

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"It's an American talent to take something deep and make it as superficial as possible."

—Steve Ross, "veteran L. A. Yoga teacher," in Philip Goldberg, *American Veda: From Emerson to the Beatles to Yoga and Meditation—How Indian Spirituality Changed the West* (New York: Harmony Books, 2010), 208.

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"Mankind, unable to escape death, trouble, and ignorance, in order to make themselves happy, have hit upon the plan of never thinking about these things; the utmost efforts of their ingenuity can suggest no better consolation for such prodigious evils. But it is most miserable

consolation, since it goes not to cure the evil, but merely to conceal it a little while; and by concealing it, prevents men from attempting to obtain a thorough cure.”

—Blaise Pascal, *Thoughts on Religion and Philosophy* (trans. Isaac Taylor; Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Adams /Edinburgh: John Grant, 1894), 37 (4.4).

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“The fear of ridicule paralyzes us more effectively than flat-out opposition. How much good is left undone because of this fear? The irony is that the opinions we fear most are not those of people we really respect, yet these very persons influence our lives more than we want to admit. This desire to stand well with ‘them’ can lead to an appalling mediocrity and a frightening unfreedom.”

—Brennan Manning, *The Relentless Tenderness of Jesus* (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2004), 125.

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“It is a species of injustice to attach to any person those consequences, which one may frame out of his words, as if they were his sentiments: But the injustice is still more flagrant, if those conclusions cannot by good consequence be deduced from what he has said.”

—Jacob Arminius, “The Apology or Defense of James Arminius Against Certain Theological Articles Extensively Distributed” (1609), in *Works of Arminius* 1:51-52.

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“From experience, I knew it is no strange thing that the bread that pleases a healthy appetite is offensive to one that is not healthy, and that light is hateful to sick eyes, but welcome to the well. Your justice offends the wicked.”

—Augustine, *Confessions* 7.16.22 (ET: John K. Ryan).

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“Personally, I have found the Devil easier to believe in than God; for one thing, alas, I have had more to do with him. It seems to me quite extraordinary that anyone should have failed to notice, especially during the last half century, a diabolical presence in the world.”

—Malcolm Muggeridge, *Jesus: The Man Who Lives* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 51.

“Every age has its own outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We all, therefore, need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period. [7] And that means the old books. All contemporary writers share to some extent the contemporary outlook—even those, like myself, who seem most opposed to it. Nothing strikes me more when I read the controversies of past ages than the fact that both sides were usually assuming without question a good deal which we should now absolutely deny. They thought that they were as completely opposed as two sides could be, but in fact they were all the time secretly united—united *with* each other and *against* earlier and later ages—by a great mass of common assumptions. We may be sure that the characteristic blindness of the twentieth century—the blindness about which posterity will ask, ‘But how *could* they have thought that?’—lies where we have never suspected it, and concerns something about which there is untroubled agreement between Hitler and President Roosevelt or between Mr. H. G. Wells and Karl Barth. None of us can fully escape this blindness, but we shall certainly increase it, and weaken our guard against it, if we read only modern books. Where they are true they will give us truths which we half knew already. Where they are false they will aggravate the error with which we are already dangerously ill. The only palliative is to keep the clean sea breeze of the centuries blowing through our minds, and this can be done only by reading old books. Not, of course, that there is any magic about the past. People were no cleverer then than they are now; they made as many mistakes as we. But not the *same* mistakes. They will not flatter us in the errors we are already committing; and their own errors, being now open and palpable, will not endanger us. Two heads are better than one, not because either is infallible, but because they are unlikely to go wrong in the same direction. To be sure, the books of the future would be just as good a corrective as the books of the past, but unfortunately we cannot get at them.

—C. S. Lewis, Introduction to *St. Athanasius: On the Incarnation* (trans & ed. A. Religious of C. S. M. V; intro. C. S. Lewis; New York: Macmillan, 1946), 6-7.