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Preface

The Gods of the Mind

The means by which one person is able to rule many others is a fascinating subject of study. Invariably, the explanation of such control is that it is a matter of the mind. Any ruler, no matter how numerous his weapons or great his wealth, must finally rule by other means. He must rule by persuasion, the ultimate weapon through which influence on a culture is produced and sustained. The truly powerful leader must influence the minds of men.

To do this, he must produce in the minds of others something more, something stronger, something more compelling than what we normally call an idea. This "thing" he must produce within the minds of others actually exists, but in the form of a mental construct. It is an image the influencer sets up in the minds of others, an image that can become an object of occupation, then of concentration, and then—dare we say it—of veneration. The influencer must produce in the minds of those he influences a kind of little god. This god of the mind is a "real thing" he plants in the mentality of unsuspecting people. This "real thing" may externally resemble Marx, Lenin, or Freud, but in reality it is a thing unto itself. It goes beyond the limitations of

Introduction

“There is a tide in the affairs of men.”

Truer words were, in all probability, never spoken by Shakespeare or any other who looked at the turning pages of history and their influence upon our lives. The certainty is that men and nations have not infrequently been caught in the swirling tide of multiple events, which tide takes to itself a life of its own. In fact, there have been eras in the history of our beleaguered world in which multiple sets of tide-like influences have impacted upon a civilization and its culture at nearly the same time. It has therefore become popular for commentators to speak about such things as “a crossroads of history” and similar expressions that would suggest that we are at a confluence of historic tides.

Such a time and such a confluence has been the twentieth century. It is called by some “this fabulous century,” and such a denotation is not without reason. In a relatively short span of time within this century, the world has experienced many remarkable changes in the realms of science, technology, medicine, space, and a hundred other well-known ways of describing “modern times.” Strangely, this century has also seen more developments that would come under the column “distressing things” than any previous century: devastating wars and monstrous new weapons. The new biological, nuclear, and chemical means mankind has of exterminating itself are a wonder to all.

Awesome is at least the word for it. Better words might well be *provocative*, *challenging*, *dangerous*, and even *adventurous*. At least we must all agree that our generation lives in the midst of a swirling tide of events, dreams, promises, threats, and changing ideas of the present and the future. Certainly our cen-

ture has been the most politically interesting, the bloodiest, the most revolutionary, and the most unpredictable of any century in history. This confluence of strange conditions presses this generation to ask and answer anew such questions as, Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? and especially, Why is life and reality the way it is?

The question, Why are things the way they are? has been asked by successive generations of curious men from the dawn of history until this very moment.

The question is not a superficial intellectual exercise. No, indeed, for what we view as determining the nature of life in this world and what our response is to that nature is the cornerstone of our living. It is a truism that a person can be expected to put into practice tomorrow what he believes today. That is true of individuals, groups, nations, and entire cultures. Again and again it must be asserted that to believe in the wrong engine of history or the wrong purpose of living can lead to grievous errors, great tragedies, and devastating consequences. Conversely, to have a correct view of man, God, and history is the key to sanity and survival for individual men and for the entire culture.

In this century our culture has experienced many dark and fateful events. The leaders of our time are bewildered when they are called upon to explain the reasons that our world is the way it is or to suggest a direction for the future. Many in positions of public trust confess that they are just trying to keep the lid on, and others have abandoned even that hope.

The contradictions of the present and of what we can see of the future are overwhelming to many. That is so because few persons today have taken the time to evaluate the issues and agree with the true and resist the false. Many believe that they are borne along by streams of intellectual and philosophical influence that are of their own choosing—but alas, they have not chosen at all. Rather, a high percentage of men and nations today are ruled by a few, select seminal thinkers who, though they are now in their graves, still have influence through their ideas, convictions, and obsessions. Much of modern education, commercial interaction, social planning, intellectual conviction, and even religion is still guided by the constructs formulated by those thinkers of an earlier generation.

Everyone agrees that there is something profoundly wrong with our world. In that wrong actions and wrong results spring from wrong premises, we would do well to consider the assumptions that govern our society. As we try to articulate those assumptions, we may find ourselves standing before grave markers silently asking, *Why did you think the way you did? Why did you say what you said to us?* We can find the answers to those questions in the pages written by the men before whose graves we stand and in the words they spoke to others. It is my hope that by remembering what was believed and preached by seven men who rule the world from the grave the reader will come to know himself better and be better able to understand his generation.

I also hope that out of this understanding a vast, societal-wide change of mind may take place in which men are transformed by the renewing of their minds and the world is re-oriented toward a better destiny than the fate toward which it now stumbles.

Yes, even at this late hour we may yet open the windows of our minds to a clearer, stronger voice, a voice emanating from a higher provenance than the graves of those who are now gone but whose influence still remains. We may well profit by hearing from the seven men who rule the world from their graves. If we do not, we may find ourselves occupying the eighth grave at Esdraelon, the grave of humanity itself.

I am aware of the reactions that will inevitably come from those who study these pages. The first reaction will certainly be in the form of a question: *Why did you not include Mr. So-and-so?* I assure my readers that I have a real interest in the views and careers of a hundred other characters in history who started influential movements and, more important, were the source of seminal ideas. Having taught philosophy in days gone by, I have studied with interest the ideas of many and have evaluated with appreciation the accomplishments of some and with loathing the activities of others. This having been said, I believe that the seven men discussed in this volume were the progenitors of the most influential movements of this century. Each man was himself influenced by others, but each forged some new concept that became tidal and global. Each man presented his views in so

piercing, strident, fanatical, and forceful a way as to produce a social penetration. For each of them, *believing* a view was not enough. You had to act on it. And that they did, driving their ideas like spears into the social structure of their time. Those spears have not been removed to this day.

I am aware that I will be accused of reductionism in this discussion. I confess myself to be guilty as charged. Most of the men presented here have had multiple biographers, and some have had literally hundreds of texts written about them, their lives, their views, and their continuing influence. More than two hundred biographies have been written about Napoleon Bonaparte, the dictator who once ruled more of Europe than any other, and yet he is not one of the seven seminal thinkers discussed in this volume. That is because the men of whom we speak in this book ruled the world more permanently than did the fleeting human rocket that was Napoleon. The seven in this book ruled the world more permanently because they and their ideas became gods of the mind rather than masters of real estate. For them, the battle for the minds of men was the ultimate thing.

It is impossible to say in a chapter or two all that could be said about such thinkers, men of whom whole books have been the subject. I have instead dealt with the particular aspect of their thinking that penetrated the culture. Other considerations regarding their lives, their loves, and their travels, although not uninteresting, would call for further, later consideration. This book, however, will deal primarily with the way in which the seven have contended for our minds.

1

Biology Is Destiny: Charles Darwin

“After having been twice driven back by heavy southwestern gales, Her Majesty’s ship *Beagle*, a ten-gun brig, under the command of Fitzroy, RN, sailed from Devonport on the twenty-seventh of December, 1831. . . .

“The object of the expedition was to complete the survey of Patheonia and Tierra del Fuego, commenced under Captain King in 1826 to 1830—to survey the shores of Chile, Peru, and of some islands in the Pacific—and to carry a chain of chronometrical measurements round the World. On the sixth of January, we reached Teneriffe, but were prevented landing by fears of our bringing the cholera; the next morning we saw the sun rise behind the rugged outline of the Grand Canary island, and suddenly illumine the peak of Teneriffe, whilst the lower parts were veiled in fleecy clouds. This was the first of many delightful days never to be forgotten. On the sixteenth of January, 1832, we anchored at Porto Praya, in St. Jago, the chief island of the Cape de Verde archipelago.”¹

1. Charles Darwin, *The Voyage of the Beagle* (New York: New American Library, 1972; first published in 1839; known also as *Journal of Researches into the Geology and Natural History of the Various Countries Visited by H.M.S. Beagle, 1832-36*), p. 1.

Those are the opening words of a diary. Similar entries have been made in similar diaries in the early days of many a voyage from many a port down through history across the world. This entry, however, is something special. It is the beginning of a diary that was to become one of the most important in history, a diary that would chronicle a set of experiences that led to a decisive shift in thinking about the natural sciences, a change that would, in turn, influence the world of thought outside the natural sciences, leading ultimately to changes in the entire culture of many a nation.

So it was that in the introduction to a 1972 reprinting of the diary Walter Sullivan said:

This book was prelude to what became probably the most revolutionary change that has ever occurred in man's view of himself. The change, in fact, has still not fully run its course. It demands that we regard ourselves as inseparably a part of nature and accept the fact that our descent was from more primitive creatures and, ultimately, from the common origin of all life on earth. It is the view that we will never fully understand ourselves until we understand our origins and the traits—chemical, biological, and behavioral—that we share with other species.²

Those are large, ambitious words, but Sullivan is accurate in saying that the diary led to “the most revolutionary change that has ever occurred in man's view of himself,” for the adventure that was so significant and informative for the writer that it grew into a set of concepts, then a book, and then an approach to life, was to change fundamentally man's very understanding of himself.

The writer of the diary was Charles Darwin.

The diary was *The Voyage of the Beagle*, Darwin's account of the expedition that embraced the five most exciting years of his life. In fact, most of what occurred in his life before the voyage Darwin held to be but the prelude to the expedition to the shores of South America, and most of what came afterward was meditative and sedentary, a life characterized by illness and reclusion, but mostly by the recounting of the observations of the *Beagle* voyage. It was as if Darwin lived on those memories.

2. *Ibid.*, p. vii.

What Darwin formulated came to be seen as a plausible new understanding of man and nature important enough to be thought the work of a genius and the beginning of a new epoch in world history. In the years following the publication of the diary (1836) and the books that grew out of the experiences described in the diary, most notably the landmark *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859), the academic world has attempted to repudiate its pre-Darwinist past and to think of mankind as part of a common continuum with nature and the universe. This intellectual revolution has caused man to reinterpret his past, rethink his present, and revise his anticipations for the future. Darwin is seen as giving the world a comprehension of itself so unlike the view held in the past that, in a sense, he restarted history. Darwin's influence continues to be pervasive today, and he holds a leading rank among those men who rule the world from the grave.

Who was this man, and what was the intellectual revolution he produced?

Charles Robert Darwin was born in 1809 to a family already given to a tradition of involvement in the world of thought as it intersected the world of biology and botany. Darwin's grandfather was the well-known Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), a physician and man of letters, known especially for his poetry. Erasmus Darwin practiced medicine as a physician in Lichfield, England, and cultivated a botanical garden. He was the author of a long poem, *The Botanic Garden*, written in 1789, in which he expanded the botanical system of the earlier botanist Linnaeus. In another work, *Zoonomia*, Erasmus Darwin attempted to explain organic life along the lines of evolutionary principles, a presentation that anticipated Charles's later theories.

Young Darwin's educational career was somewhat inconclusive. He studied medicine at Edinburgh, but could not stomach surgery without anesthetics. He then changed to ministerial studies at Cambridge, though he lost interest in the ministry during those college years. Referring to that period of his life, Darwin said in his autobiography:

From what little I had heard or thought on the subject, I had scruples about declaring my belief in all the dogmas of the church

CHARLES DARWIN
KARL MARX
JULIUS WELLHAUSEN
JOHN DEWEY
SIGMUND FREUD
JOHN MAYNARD KEYNES
SØREN KIERKEGAARD
REST IN PEACE?

Though their bodies lie cold and dormant, the grave cannot contain the influence these seven men have had on today's world. They continue to rule because they have altered the thinking of society. They generated philosophies that have been ardently grasped by masses of people but are erroneous and antiscipatural. Today these ideas pervade our schools, businesses, homes, even the church. As we continue to unknowingly subscribe to their philosophies we keep the grave open for:

Charles Darwin, who systemized and advanced the principle that evolution was behind the origin of the species

Karl Marx, who developed and advocated the notion of modern Communism

Julius Wellhausen, who initiated "higher criticism" and "modernism"

John Dewey, who argued for an educational system focused on problem solving and the growth of the child in all aspects of his being

Sigmund Freud, who promoted the view that the sexual instinct is the driving force behind all human action

John Maynard Keynes, who advocated the policies for reducing unemployment and expanding the economy that today find their expression in deficit spending and governmental activism

Søren Kierkegaard, who stressed the obligation each person has to make conscious, responsible choices among alternatives, a major tenet of existentialism

Dave Breese warns us of the dangers of believing unreservedly the ideas of these seven men. He also reminds us of the only man whose life and words we can trust completely—Jesus Christ.

DAVID BREESE was the president of Christian Destiny Ministries, Hillsboro, Kansas and World Prophetic Ministry, Colton, California. He was an evangelist, author, lecturer, and university speaker who ministered in more than sixty countries. In addition to a widespread broadcast ministry, Dr. Breese wrote several books, including *Living for Eternity*, and *Satan's Ten Most Believable Lies*.

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