



IVP
CLASSICS

Escape
from Reason
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ESCAPE FROM REASON

“If a man goes overseas for any length of time we would expect him to **learn the language of the country** to which he is going. More than this is needed, however, if he is really to communicate with the people among whom he is living. He **must learn another language**—that of the thought-forms of the people to whom he speaks. Only so will he have real communication with them and to them. So it is with the Christian church. Its responsibility is not only to hold to the basic, scriptural principles of the Christian faith, but to **communicate these unchanging truths** “into” the generation in which it is living.

Every generation of Christians has this problem of learning how to speak meaningfully to its own age. It cannot be solved without an understanding of the **changing existential situation** which it faces. If we are to communicate the Christian faith effectively, therefore, we must know and understand the **thought-forms of our own generation**. These will differ slightly from place to place, and more so from nation to nation. Nevertheless, there are characteristics of an age such as ours which are the same wherever we happen to be. It is these that I am especially considering in this book.

[Schaeffer, Francis A. *Escape from Reason* (IVP Classics) (p. 11-12). InterVarsity Press]

ESCAPE FROM REASON

Francis Schaeffer sets the tone for his apologetical procedure by explaining the crisis of truth in America.

We are fundamentally affected by a **new way of looking at truth and communicating that truth.**

This change in the concept of the way we come to knowledge and truth is the most crucial problem facing America at the time Schaeffer wrote, as well as today”

He believes a paradigm shift occurred around 1935 when the American attitude toward truth changed.

Prior to this time, American’s were devoted to thinking about the existence of **absolutes**, particularly in the areas of **morals** (ethics) and **knowledge** (epistemology).

ESCAPE FROM REASON

But the average American took it for granted that if a certain idea was true, it's opposite was false.

- In other words, “absolutes imply antithesis.”
- The working antithesis is that God exists objectively (in antithesis) to His not existing.

Schaeffer believes that **presuppositional apologetics** (PA—Cornelius Van Til) would have stopped the decay, but something occurred to erode its authenticity

- PA asserts that the Christian Faith is the only basis for rational thought
- The basic tenet of PA is that the Christian must at all times presuppose the supernatural revelation of the Bible as the **ultimate arbiter of truth and error** in order to know
- Pre-suppositionalism contrasts with classical apologetics (*reasonable defense of truth*) and evidential apologetics (*based on shared acceptable evidence*)

ESCAPE FROM REASON

Incidentally, Schaeffer maintains that the use of **classical apologetics** was effective prior to the shift to evidential apologetics, because non-Christians were functioning on the surface with the same presuppositions as believers without an **adequate base for them**.

I think it interesting that Schaeffer identified 1935 as the line of demarcation from truth to something less than absolute Truth. So let's see what happened in 1935:

- *The years of depression continued with unemployment still running at 20.1%*
- *The war clouds were started gathering as Germany began to rearm and passed the Nuremberg laws to strip Jews of their civil rights*
- FDR signs the Neutrality Act into law, preventing the U.S. exportation of war related items to nations at war.
 - ❖ The act was born out of the desire to keep the United States out of any impending European conflicts.

ESCAPE FROM REASON

- ❖ A wave of Fascism had begun sweeping over Europe as several dictators took power and started to gear up for war.
- ❖ American citizens were afraid of becoming involved in these conflicts as the devastating costs of World War I were still in the public's mind.
- ❖ The president had initially opposed the Neutrality Act but eventually bent to the will of the people in support of taking these, ultimately useless, steps.
- Mussolini's Italy attacked Ethiopia leading to the 2nd Italo-Ethiopian War

There was an international crisis in 1935 known as the **Abyssinia Crisis**, originating in what was called the Walwal incident; which was the then-ongoing conflict between the Kingdom of Italy and the Empire of Ethiopia (then commonly known as "**Abyssinia**").

- Dec. 6, 1934, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia protested Italian aggression at Walwal.
- Oct. 3, 1935, shortly after the league exonerated both parties in the Walwal incident, Italian armed forces from Eritrea invaded Ethiopia without a declaration of war, prompting Ethiopia to declare war on Italy, thus beginning the Second Italo–Abyssinian War.

ESCAPE FROM REASON

The League of Nations ruled against Italy and voted for economic sanctions, but they were never fully applied.

Italy ignored the sanctions, quit the League, made special deals with Britain and France and ultimately annexed and occupied Abyssinia after defeating it in the 2nd Italo-Ethiopian War.

The crisis discredited the League of Nations and moved Fascist Italy closer to an alliance with Nazi Germany.

Both Ethiopia and Italy pursued a policy of provocation against each other and Italy prepared to invade Ethiopia.

Incidentally, the League of Nations was formally disbanded on April 19, 1946, and its powers and functions were transferred to the United **Nations**, which had been established on October 24, 1945

[League of Nations Official Journal, 1935, 1601. Quoted G.T.Garratt, *Mussolini's Roman Empire*, Penguin Books, April 1938, pp.46–47]

[Zapotoczny, Walter (2018). *The Italian Army in North Africa: A Poor Fighting Force or Doomed by Circumstance*]

ESCAPE FROM REASON

It has been accepted in most ages that a crisis of truth is related to the denigration of scientific credibility which serves as an index of the Truth Crisis.

- **Science** by definition is the pursuit and application of knowledge and understanding of the natural and social world supported by a systematic methodology based on evidence.

It becomes irresponsible and perverse to reject the verity of empirical data that has a trail of evidential findings.

- This occurs when truth deniers **promote** the idea of alternative truth or facts
- Truth is now and always has been the **placeholder of reality**
 - ❖ **John 17:17 Jesus said** “Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
 - ❖ Thy word is truth; it is "peculiarly" so, as the Arabic version reads it.
 - ❖ What is meant here is the Gospel, and is so called on account of its original, it comes from the **God of truth**; and because of the concern which Christ, **Who is the truth**

ESCAPE FROM REASON

- ❖ Jesus is the author, preacher, and sum and substance of Truth; and because the **Spirit of truth** has dictated it, it is declared as most effectual.
- ❖ God's Word contains all truth necessary to salvation, particularly **that eminent truth**, salvation alone comes by Christ
- ❖ The law was but a shadow of the good things of which the Gospel is the substance
- ❖ The Truth of God is the means, both of the beginning, growth and advancement of the work of sanctification in the hearts of God's people.
- In light of Jesus disciple presence in the world (**V 16**), **His prayer was for God to Sanctify them**
 - ❖ His former prayer in v 15 was “keep them” – “I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.”
 - ❖ This has a negative connotation asking protection from the poisonous world elements

ESCAPE FROM REASON

- “**Sanctify them,**” is positive, asking the *advancement and completion* of their which is initiated at the new birth and each step of their sanctification journey
- “**Sanctify them,**” through *thy truth (the best manuscripts omit thy)* – Truth is the element of consecration
- **God’s word is Truth** —God’s revealed truth, as the medium or element of sanctification; a statement this of immense importance.
 - ❖ **John 15:3** God’s word is a cleaning agent “now you are clean thru the word I spoke”
 - ❖ **Col. 1:5** For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in ***the word of the truth of the gospel***
 - ❖ **Eph. 1:13** In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise

One would have to be either mad or evil-minded to be against Truth. And this was evident in Pontius Pilate as he asked, “What is Truth?” — and then went off to wash his hands (John 18:38)

ESCAPE FROM REASON

- “Pilate’s exclamation is neither the expression of an ardent thirst for truth, nor that of the despair of a soul which has long sought it in vain

“We come therefore to an overlapping of the Renaissance with the Reformation. To this problem of unity the Reformation gave an entirely opposite answer from that of the Renaissance. It repudiated both the Aristotelian and the Neo-platonic presentation. What was the Reformation answer? It said that the root of the trouble sprang from the old and growing Humanism in the Roman Catholic Church, and the **incomplete Fall** in Aquinas’s theology which set loose an autonomous man. The Reformation accepted the biblical picture of a total Fall. The whole man had been made by God, but now the whole man is fallen, including his intellect and will. In contrast to Aquinas, only God was autonomous.

[Schaeffer, Francis A. *Escape from Reason* (IVP Classics) (p. 26-27). InterVarsity Press]

ESCAPE FROM REASON

In Chapter 2 Schaeffer advances the idea that as time went on, **autonomous Nature** began to eat up the effects of God's Grace.

- He further states "thus art and science themselves soon began to be meaningless."

The fall of man occurred sometime after God created the world and after Satan's rebellion in heaven (Gen 3).

The "Fall" cannot exist or be understood if it is extrapolated out of the Creation story, so the biblical account of creation and the fall of man are conjoined (Gen 1-3)

According to the book of Genesis, God spoke everything into existence: sky, planets, seas, vegetation, animals, and everything else. He pronounced it all "good" (Gen. 1:25).

ESCAPE FROM REASON

- Genesis 3 introduces us to another being involved in the fall of man: **the serpent**.
- Satan had been cast down to earth due to his rebellion against God in heaven (Luke 10:18).
- He came to Eve as a serpent and suggested to the woman that God had not really forbidden the fruit for her good but was rather keeping good from her (Gen. 3:1–4).
- So, she ate it and gave some to Adam who was with her (Gen. 3:5-6).
- Adam also ate it, and in that moment, sin entered into God's perfect world (Rom. 5:12).

The fall of man was caused by Adam's sin -- sin being any human behavior, word, or thought that is contrary to the perfected order or command of God.

Because of Adam's sin, the concept of "Original Sin" is introduced and God places a curse upon the world, the people, the animals, the plants, and the very ground (Gen.3:14–19).

Although Eve ate first, the responsibility for the disobedience was laid upon Adam:

ESCAPE FROM REASON

- **I Tim. 2:13-14** For Adam was formed first, then Eve. And **Adam was not deceived**, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”
- **II Cor. 11:3** But I fear, lest somehow, as the **serpent deceived Eve** by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”

After the fall of man, God drove Adam and Eve out of the garden and placed a cherub to guard the entrance.

This was so that Adam and Eve could not return and possibly eat from the tree of life and live forever in their cursed state (Gen. 3:23–24).

The Reformation accepted the biblical picture of a total Fall and this idea came for tin the New Hampshire Articles of Faith – **Article III – The Fall of Man**

“We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint but choice; being by

ESCAPE FROM REASON

nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore, under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

I. We believe that man was created in holiness, under the law of his Maker.

❖ **Gen 1:27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

II. But by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state.

❖ **Gen 3:6-24** And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

III. In consequence of which all mankind are now sinners.

❖ **Rom 5:19** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

ESCAPE FROM REASON

IV. Not by constraint, but choice.

❖ **Isa 53:6** All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

V. Being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin.

❖ **Eph 2:1-3** And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins: ²Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: ³Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

VI. Without defense or excuse.

❖ **Rom 1:20** For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.

ESCAPE FROM REASON

“The whole man had been made by God, but now the whole man is fallen, including his intellect and will. In contrast to Aquinas, only God was autonomous. This was true in two areas. First of all there was nothing autonomous in the area of final authority. For the Reformation, final and sufficient knowledge rested in the Bible—that is, Scripture Alone, in contrast to Scripture plus anything else parallel to the Scriptures, whether it be the church or a natural theology. Second, there was no idea of man being autonomous in the area of salvation. In the Roman Catholic position there was a divided work of salvation—Christ died for our salvation, but man had to merit the merit of Christ. Thus there was a humanistic element involved. The Reformers said that there is nothing man can do; no autonomous or humanistic, religious or moral effort of man can help. One is saved only on the basis of the finished work of Christ as he died in space and time in history, and the only way to be saved is to raise the empty hands of faith and, by God’s grace, to accept God’s free gift—Faith Alone.

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ESCAPE FROM REASON

At the heart of Reformation Theology, we find five “solae” declarations held by theologians and clergy in the Reformed branches of Protestantism.

I. Sola Gratia (Grace alone) -- Salvation is the free gift of God to man. It is given by God’s Grace alone and not through any merit on the part of the Christian.

- **Eph. 2:8-9** “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.”

II. Sola Fide (Faith alone) -- We are judged righteous in the sight of God purely on the basis of our faith.

- **Gal. 3:11** “But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for the just shall live by faith.”
- The atoning sacrifice of Christ leads to righteousness being imputed as a legal declaration
- This is often stated as *Justification by faith alone*.
- There is a clear distinction between **Justification** and **Sanctification**, the latter being the growth in holiness arising from the work of the Holy Spirit in the Christian.

ESCAPE FROM REASON

III. Solus Christus (Christ alone) -- Christ is the one Mediator between God and man and our salvation is accomplished only through His death and resurrection.

- **I Tim. 2:5** “For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”

IV. Sola Scriptura (Scripture alone) -- Scripture alone is the only infallible source of divine revelation and the final authority for matters of faith and practice.

- **II Tim. 3:16-17** All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”
- *Sola Scriptura* does not mean that all truth is contained in the Bible; rather the Bible is the foundation for all human creeds and codes of conduct

V. Soli Deo Gloria (To the glory of God alone) -- Every aspect of the Christian life ought to be seen as giving glory to God.

- **I Peter 4:11** “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

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