

A REASONABLE FAITH?

Why we believe in an age of skepticism

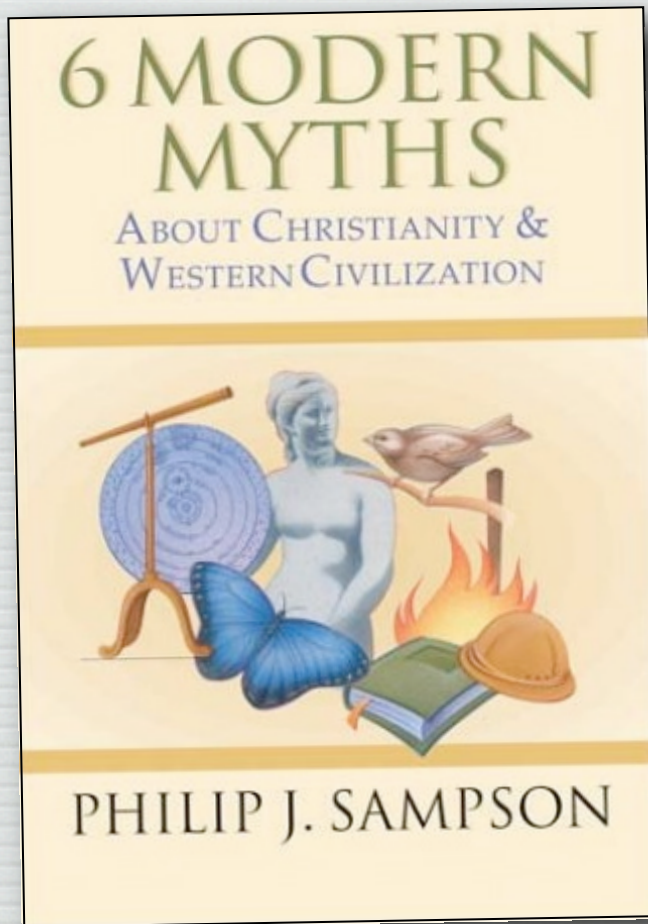
Part 5

Christianity and Injustice

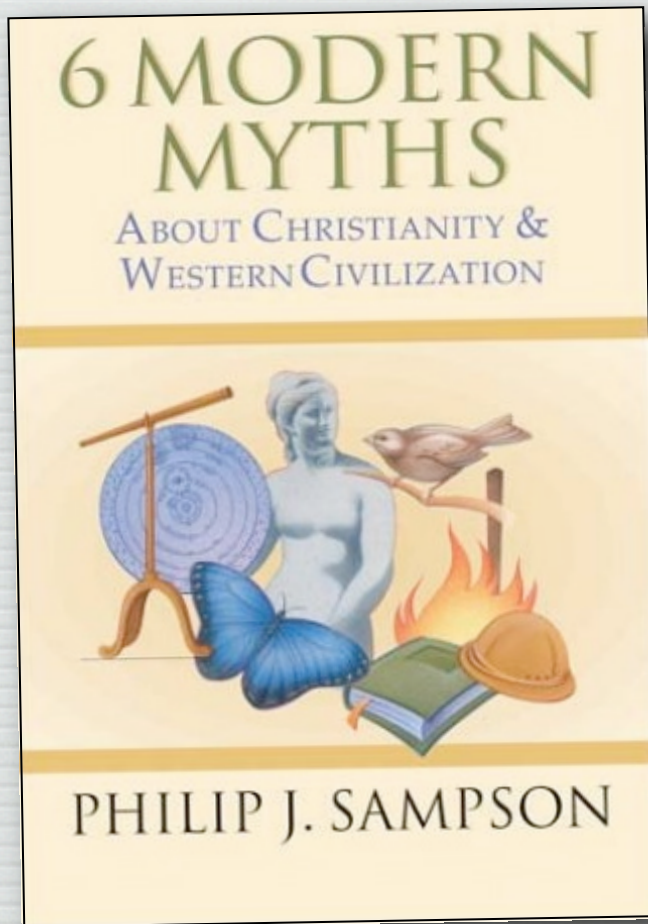
“I myself believe that the duel between Christianity and atheism is the most important in the world. I further believe that the struggle between individualism and collectivism is the same struggle reproduced on another level.”

(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 11)



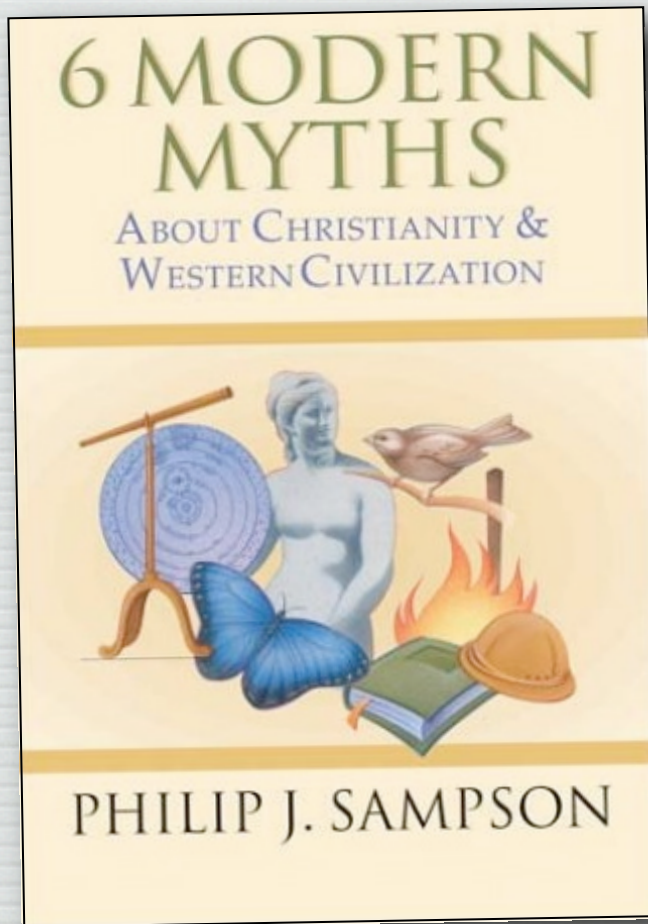


The appraisal and reform of customs and traditions is healthy for a church that seeks the will of God. Criticism is not to be feared, but honest criticism must be fair.

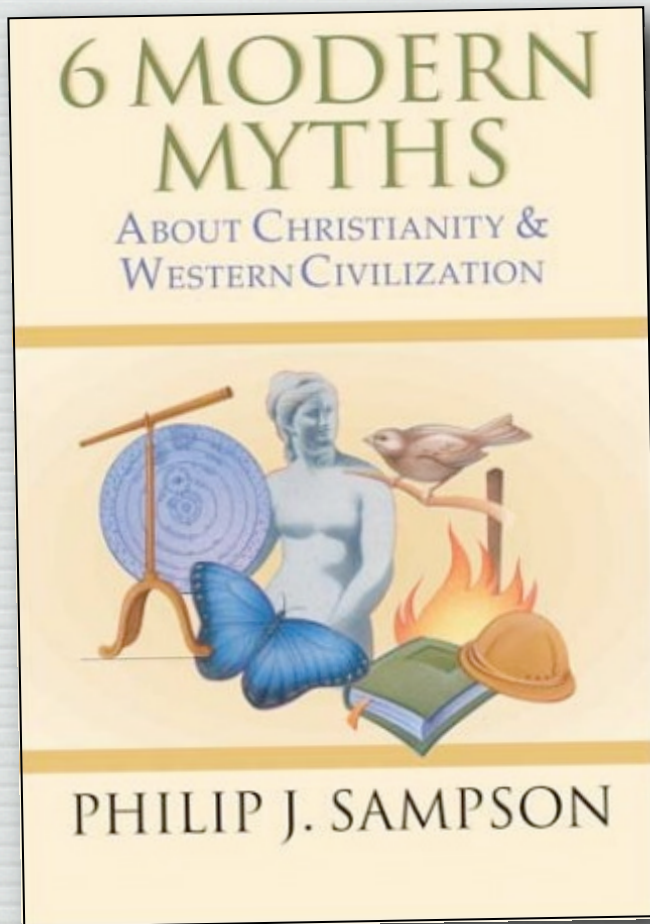


“For many people, missionary exploits prove that the Christian claim to have a monopoly on the truth inevitably leads to the oppression of other people and their culture.

Meanwhile, the modern mind, enlightened by reason and science, is portrayed as tolerant and humane.”



Missionary influence is said to spread through fear or by gaining rice-bowl converts. Missionaries are accused of exploiting natives for commercial gain, colluding with expansionist colonialism and even committing “ethnocide.”



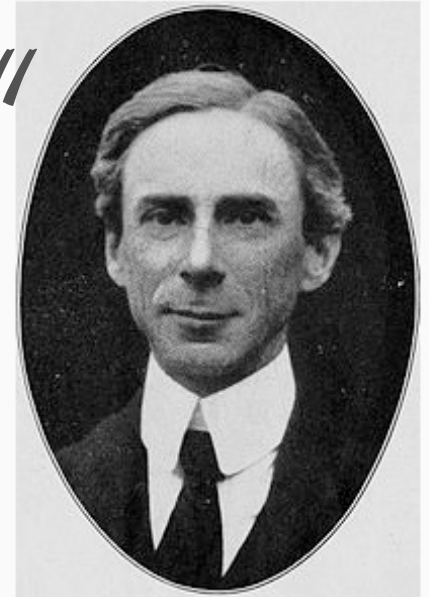
They are implicated in the theft of land, the forced removal of children from their parents, the destruction of habitats, torture, murder and the decline of whole populations into destitution, alcoholism and prostitution.

Even when they provide disaster relief, they are guilty of “buying converts.”

Bertrand Russell

The Spaniards in Mexico and Peru used to baptize Indian infants, and then immediately dash their brains out: by this means they secured that these infants went to Heaven.”

(Bertrand Russell, “*Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?*”, in *Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 92 – 93)



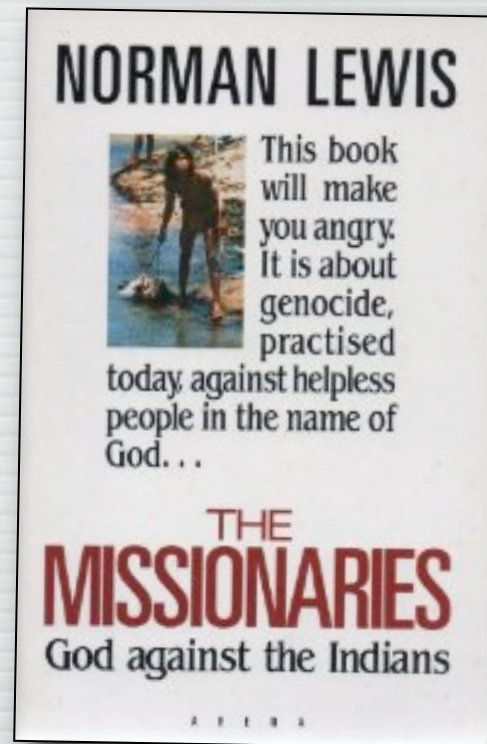
Full name	Bertrand Arthur William Russell, 3rd Earl Russell
Born	18 May 1872 Trellech, Monmouthshire, UK
Died	2 February 1970 (aged 97) Penrhyndeudraeth, Wales, UK
Era	20th century philosophy
Region	Western philosophy
School	Analytic philosophy Nobel Prize in Literature 1950
Main interests	Metaphysics, epistemology, logic, mathematics, philosophy of language, philosophy of science, ethics, philosophy of religion, history of philosophy
Notable ideas	Analytic philosophy, logical atomism, theory of descriptions, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, Russell's paradox, Russell's teapot

The Aborigines, by Pamela Odijk

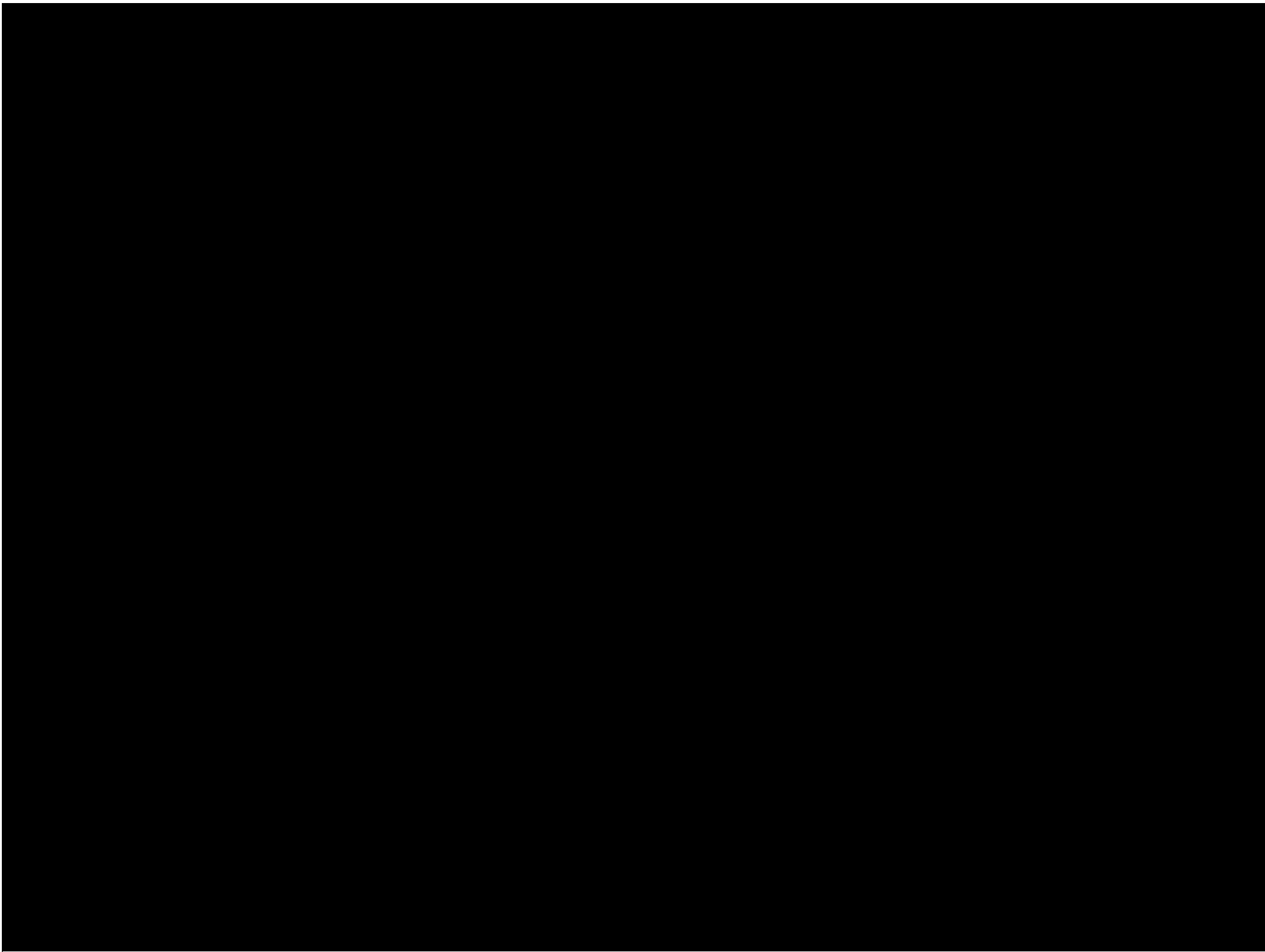
“The Europeans regarded the Aborigines as a heathen people who needed to be converted to Christianity, and put to work for the benefit of Europeans . . . Aboriginal lands were confiscated, their children taken away and put in Christian mission stations, their water holes poisoned, and many of their people massacred.”

(Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization, p. 93)

“In reality, those in control [of the areas where the majority of the atrocities in Brazil had occurred] are North American Missionaries . . . they disfigure the original Indian culture and enforce the acceptance of Protestantism . . . It was missionary policy to ignore what was going on.”



(Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization, p. 93)



Servants of God or Masters of Men, by
Victor D. Bonilla

Christian-cum-Western civilization has . . .
exploited the Indian for centuries, and
having taken a large part of his culture away
from him without replacing it with anything
at all of value, is still pursuing its work of
pillage and destruction. And it always does
it in the name of what it holds as its most
sacred principles: democracy, progress . . .
Christian charity, and the expansion of the
reign of God in Indo-America.

** No biblical author was from Western Europe*

** Most biblical events took place in Asia and Africa*

** The cultures in the Bible are pre-industrial and often nomadic - not industrialized and imperialistic*

** For 200-years the strongest churches were in North Africa and present-day Turkey*

** Early missionary journeys were to, not from Western Europe*

** The “centers of gravity” of Christianity moved from Jerusalem, Asia Minor, Europe, and now presently, to Latin America, Asia, & Africa.*

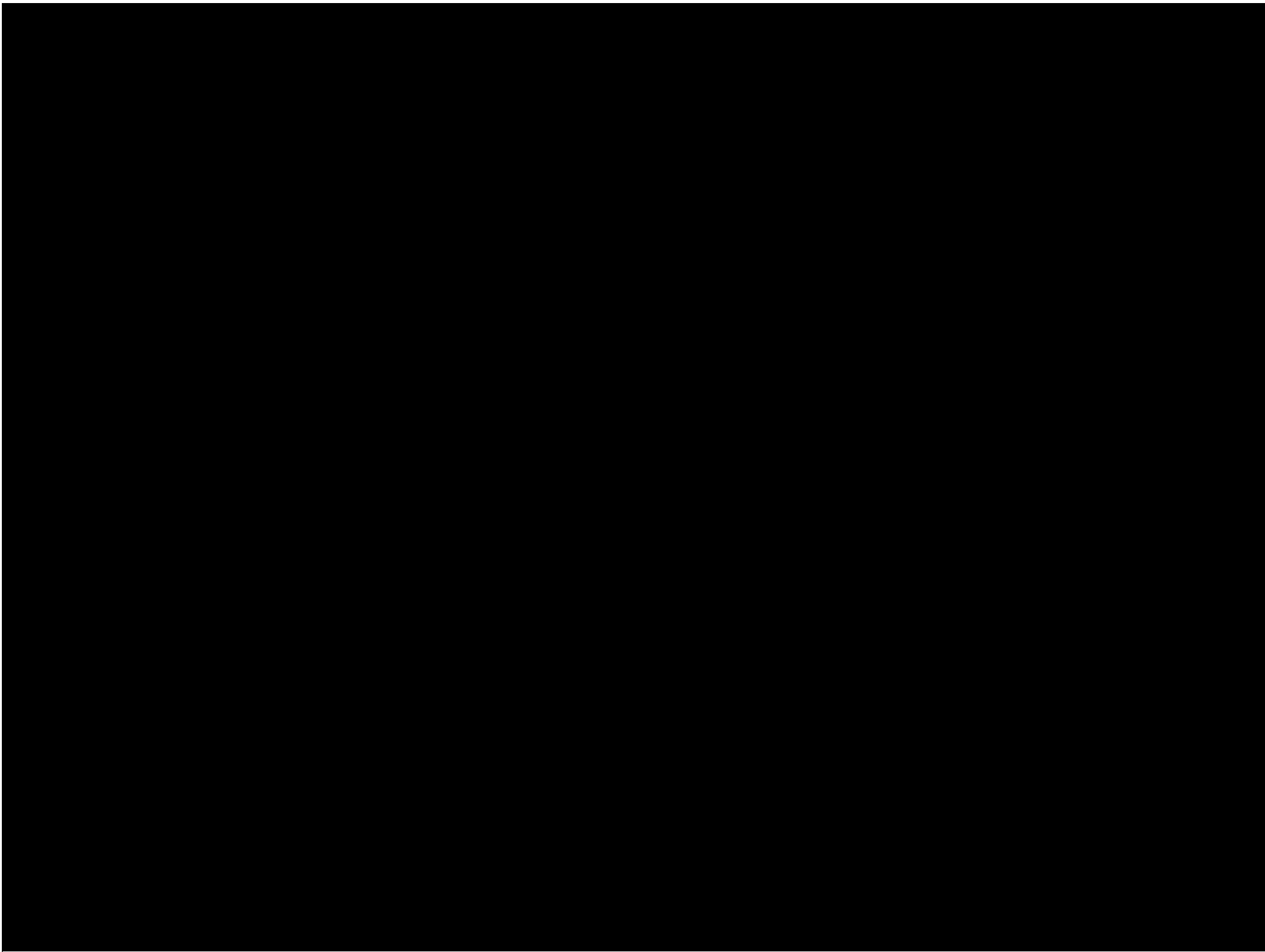
Some of the churches of Latin America, Asia, & Africa now send more missionaries to the West than they receive.



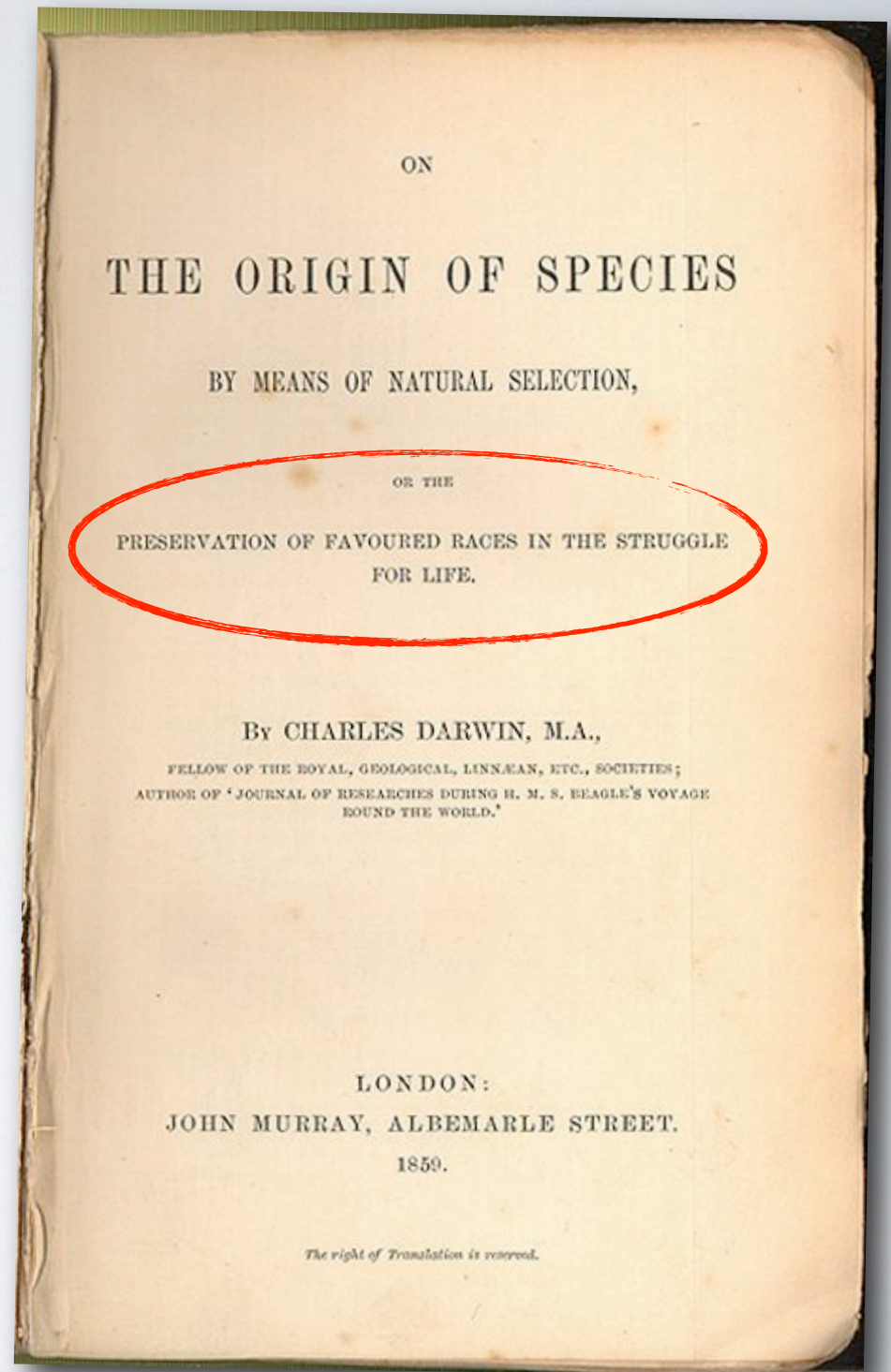
“Mankind’s final coming of age, the emancipation of the human consciousness from an immature state of ignorance and error.”

Immanuel Kant

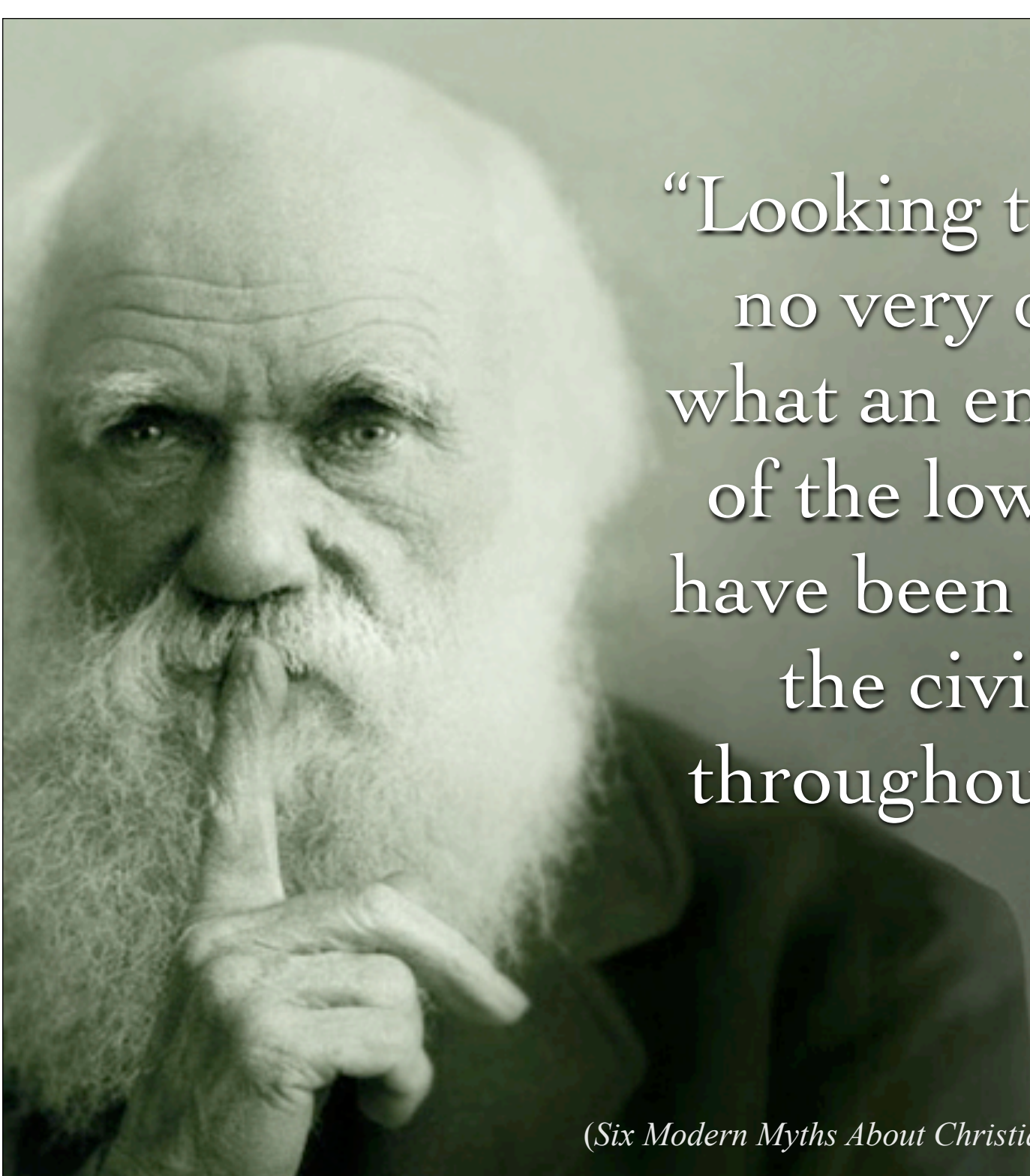
(From Roy Porter’s book entitled *The Enlightenment*, cited on Wikipedia)



“Evolutionary ideas of progress mixed with Greek ideas of the inherent superiority of civilized peoples and became a powerful ideology for colonists and traders. Just as animals evolve, so do ‘the varieties of man . . . with the stronger always exterminating the weaker.’”

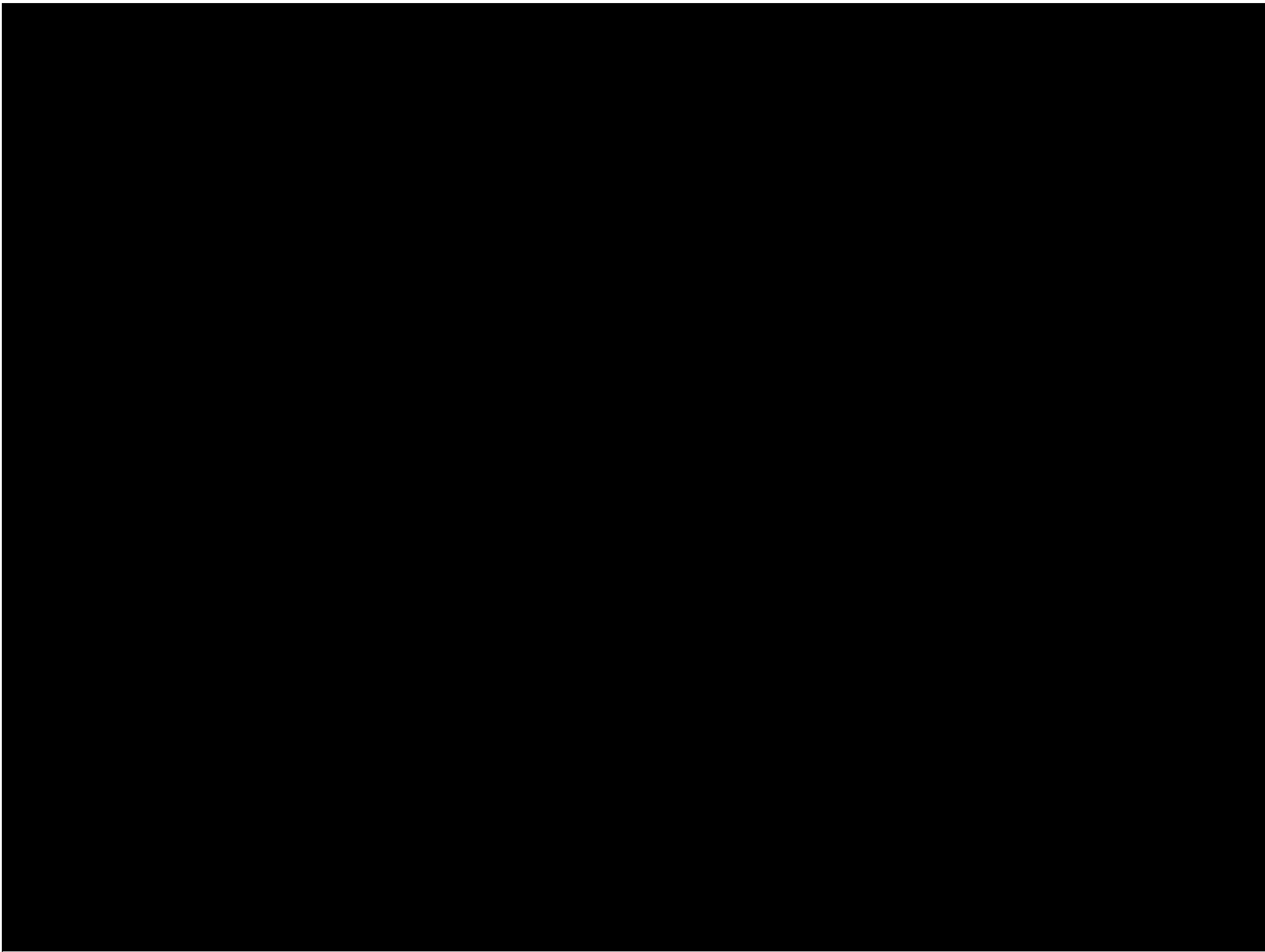


(*Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization*, p. 97)



“Looking to the world at
no very distant date,
what an endless number
of the lower races will
have been eliminated by
the civilized races
throughout the world.”

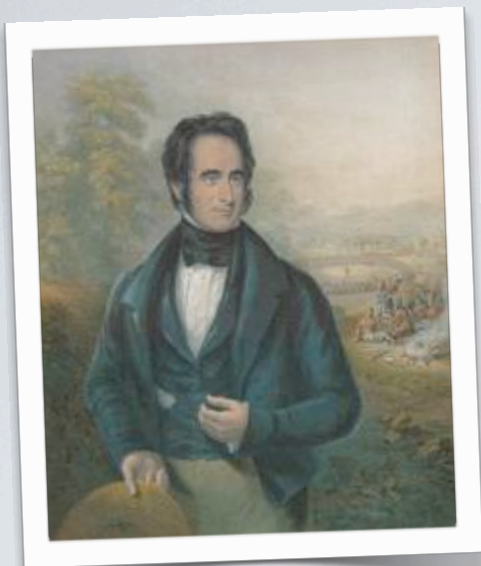
(Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization, p. 97)



²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

Genesis 1:26 & 27



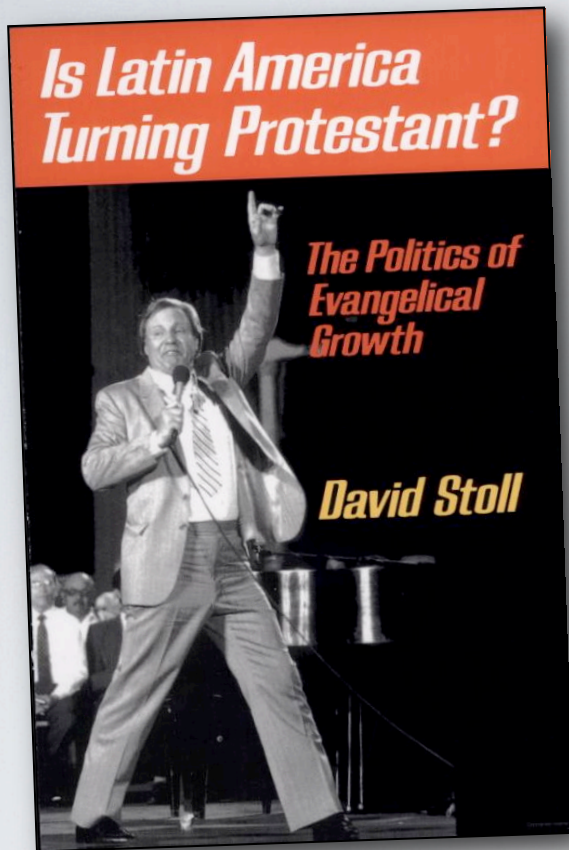
John Philip



Lancelot Threlkeld

John Eliot



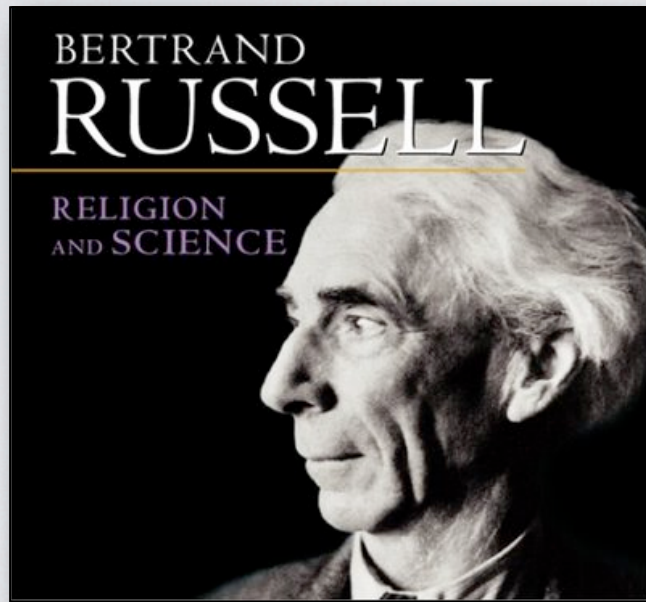


“ . . . tended to treat native people with more respect than did national governments and fellow citizens.”

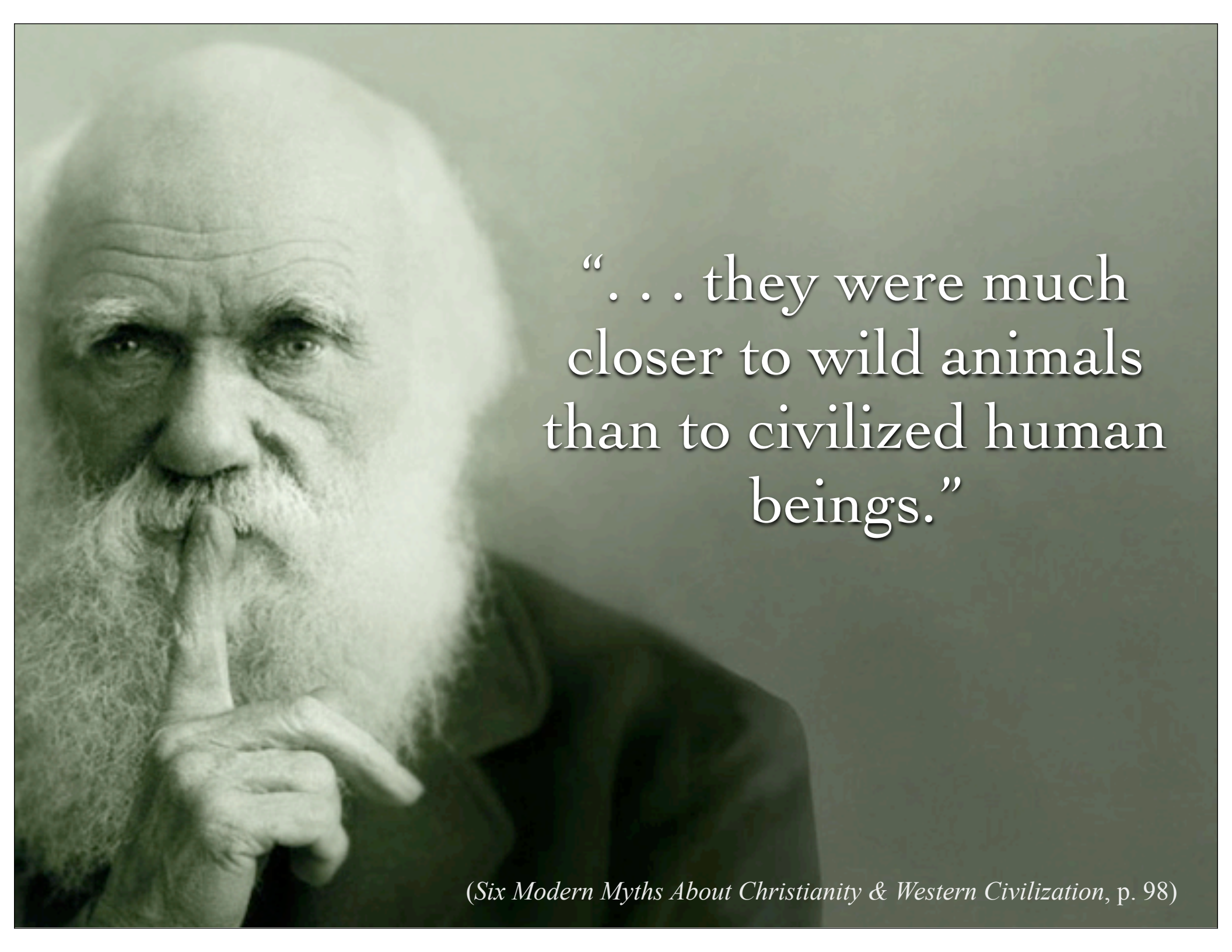


(Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization, p. 98)

“the churches, as everyone knows, opposed the abolition of slavery as long as they dared.”



(Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization, p. 98)



“ . . . they were much closer to wild animals than to civilized human beings.”

(Six Modern Myths About Christianity & Western Civilization, p. 98)

Quaker, George Fox



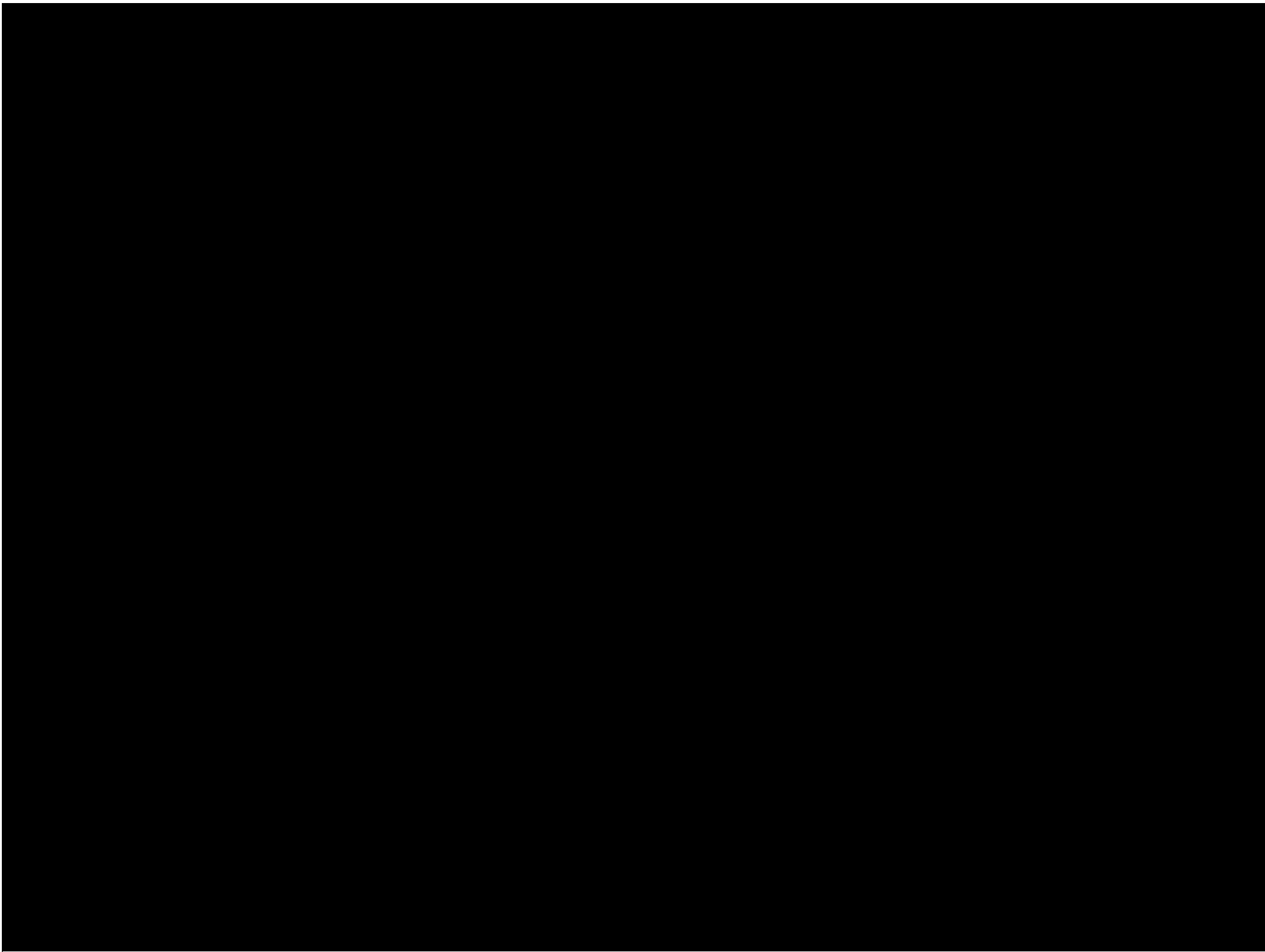
Puritans

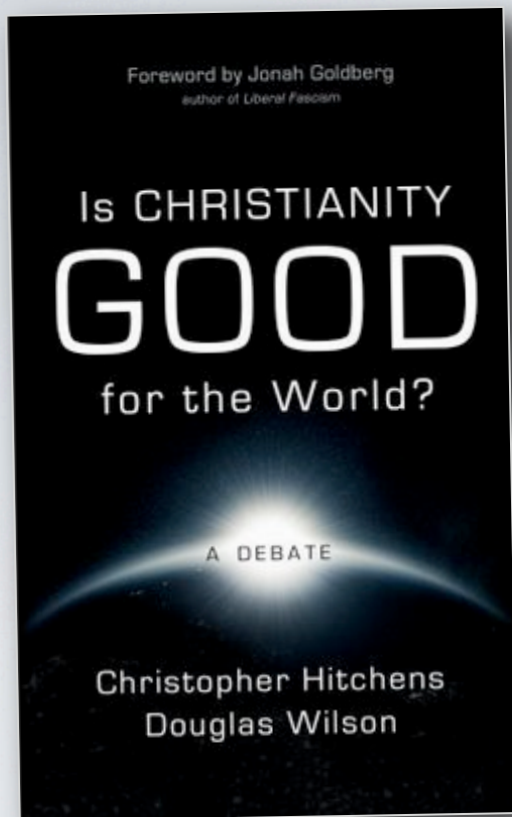


William Wilberforce



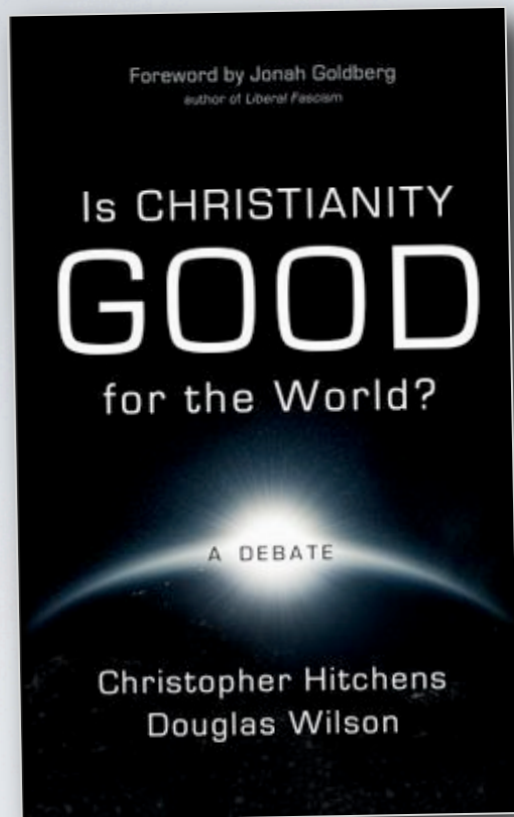
William C. Burns





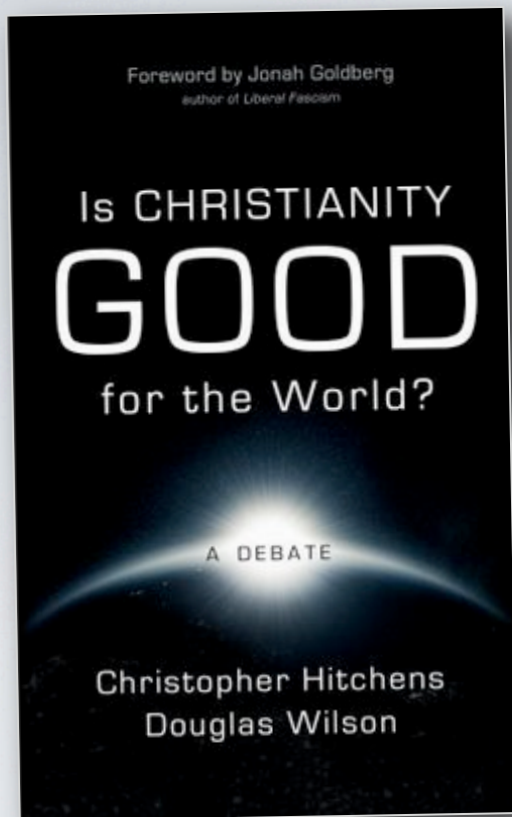
“Christianity’s history is hardly unblemished . . . but it does at least provide the resources for condemning those who do evil in its name.”

(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 9)



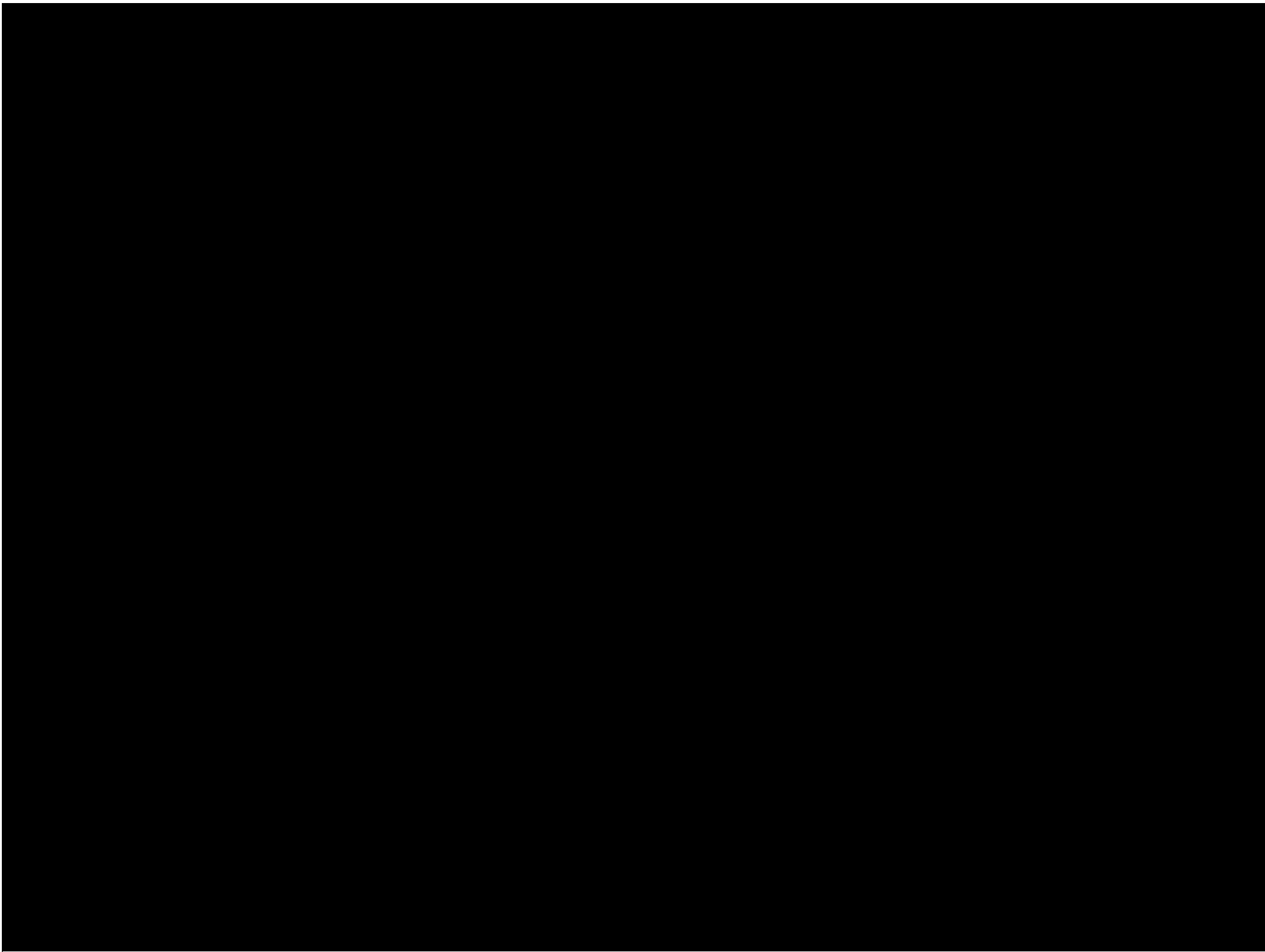
“Christianity certainly had adherents who acted sinfully in God’s name. But Christianity at least cultivates a moral imagination by which men can try to see their own actions through the eyes of a loving God.”

(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 9)



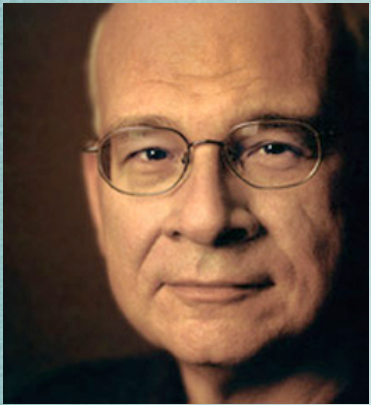
“Christianity is good for the world because it makes hypocrisy a coherent concept. The Christian faith certainly condemns hypocrisy as such, but because there is a fixed standard, this makes it possible for sinners to fail to meet it or for flaming hypocrites to pretend that they are meeting it . . .”

(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 33 & 34)



What should we do?

1. Refute the critics by your good behavior



“Many people who take an intellectual stand against Christianity do so against a background of personal disappointment with Christians and churches.”



(*The Reason for God*, p. 53)

Jesus told his disciples “. . . you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

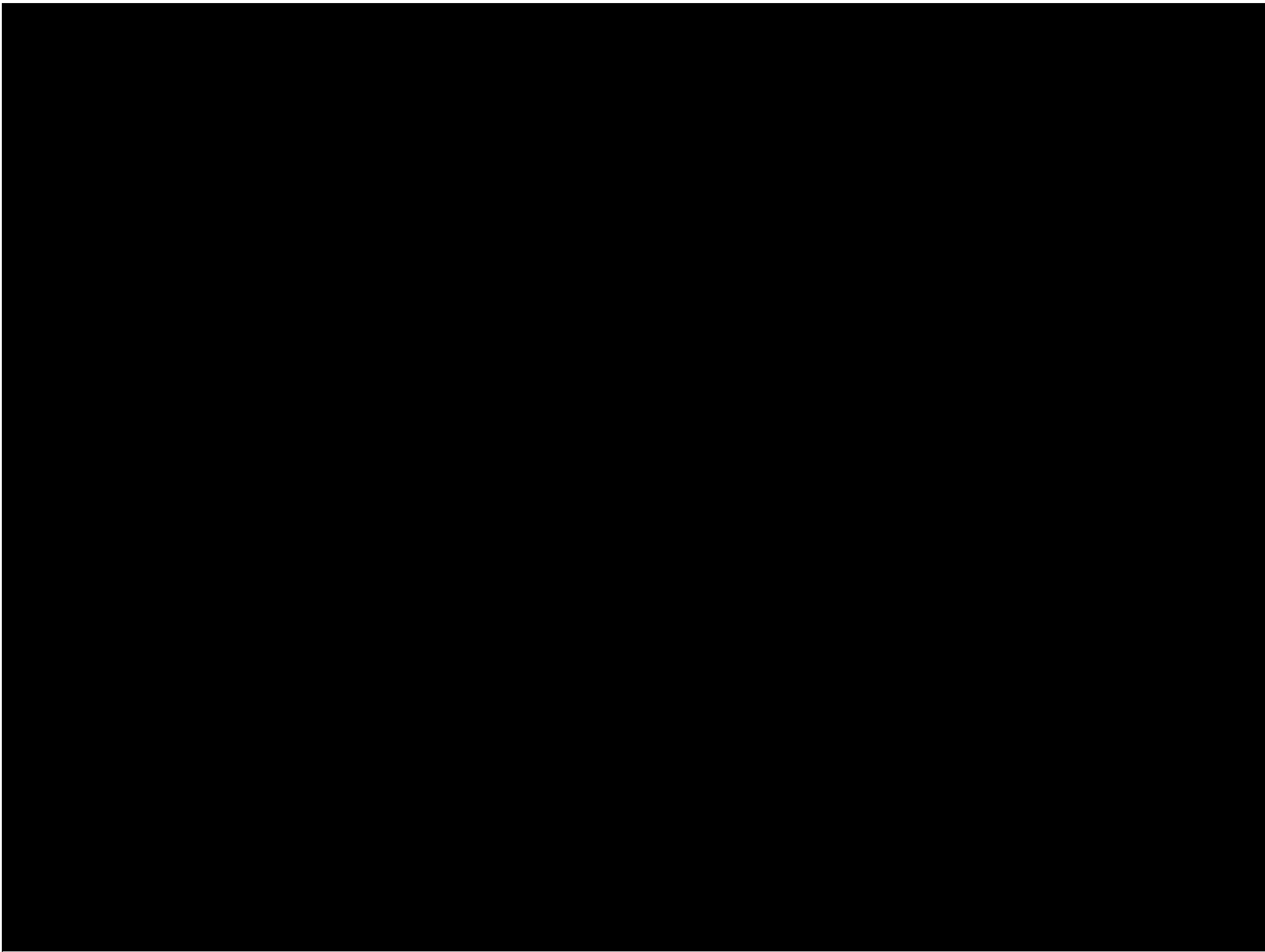
Acts 1:8

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

John 13:35

“If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?”

1 John 3:17



“Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

1 Peter 2:12

“⁸ Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. ⁹ Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing.”

1 Peter 3:8 & 9

“³ Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.

⁴ Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.”

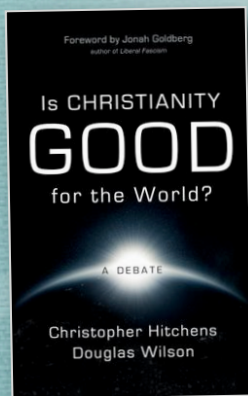
Proverbs 3:3 & 4

What should we do?

2. Stay thankful



God knew that we were going to need to pick up dimes, and so He gave us fingernails. He knew that twilights displayed in blue, apricot, and battle gray would be entirely astonishing and beyond us, and so He gave us eyes that can see in color.



(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 17 & 18)

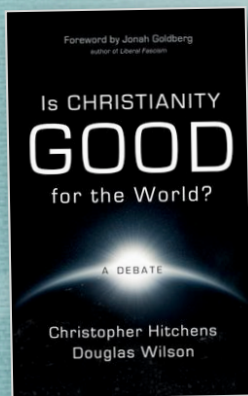
What should we do?

2. Stay thankful



He could have made all food quite nourishing, but which tasted like wadded up newspaper soaked in machine oil.

Instead He gave us the tastes of watermelon, pecans, oatmeal stout, buttered corn, apples, fresh bread, grilled sirloin, and twenty-five-year-old scotch.



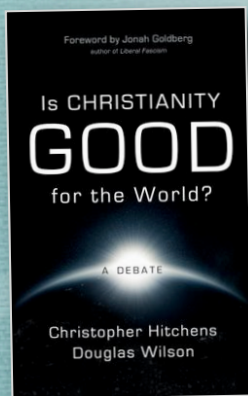
(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 17 & 18)

What should we do?

2. Stay thankful



And of course he knew that we were going to need to thank Him, and so He gave us hearts and minds.



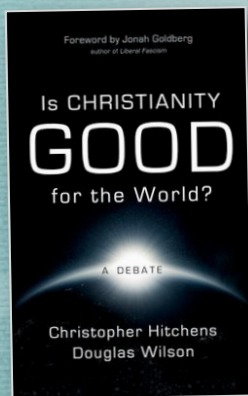
(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 17 & 18)

What should we do?

2. Stay thankful



The issue of Thanksgiving is really central to the whole debate about the existence of God. On the one hand, if there is no God, there is no need to thank anyone. We are here as the result of a long chain of impersonal processes, grinding their way down to our brief moment in time.



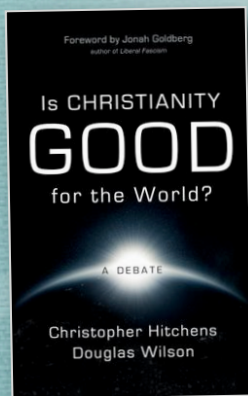
(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 17 & 18)

What should we do?

2. Stay thankful



If there is a God, then every breath, every moment, every sight and sound, is sheer, unadulterated gift.



(Is Christianity Good for the World?, p. 17 & 18)

What should we do?

2. Stay thankful

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

Romans 1:21

