proaches separate reason and faith, Scripture and nature. Both tend to say that faith and the Bible are irrelevant to academic studies. The difference is this: The "reason alone" advocate still pursues academic studies, but reason becomes his guide. The "faith alone" advocate, on the other hand, decides that academic pursuits are not really worth the time, and becomes indifferent or even hostile to the intellect.

Having looked briefly at the vast and varied Christian intellectual tradition, you may be puzzled that any Christian would adopt a "faith alone" approach. Why do so many American Christians distrust the mind? Why do so many Christians think that Christianity is a religion of feelings, but not a religion of thoughts? Why are so many Christians against the mind?

There are some passages in Scripture that give the impression that the mind is not very important. This is really a false impression. To get a better perspective on today's Christianity, we need a little history lesson. In this country, Christian anti-intellectualism can be traced to the revivals that began in the 1740s. A revival is a period of history in which the church grows rapidly, many unbelievers are saved, and many believers commit themselves in a new way to Jesus Christ. A revival may also be described as a special preaching service, when a traveling preacher comes to preach in a particular area. Billy Graham's crusades are modern "revival meetings."

Before the revivals began in the middle of the 1700s, American Christians placed enormous emphasis on the development of the mind. Only six years after settling in Massachusetts Bay Colony, the Puritans founded Harvard College. The pastors were especially well educated, not only in theology and biblical studies, but in the classical languages and ancient literature. Many were interested in developments in science.[6] Cotton Mather, a late 17th-century Massachusetts pastor, believed that a minister should master Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Rhetoric, Logic, Natural Philosophy, Mathematics, Astronomy, and Divinity.[7] Many clergymen earned a reputation for absent-mindedness that we often associate with university professors. Historian Ann Douglas writes:

> . . . according to popular lore, such men occasionally rode off on the wrong horse after service or even occasionally made themselves at home in the wrong house: they had more important things on their minds than such mundane distinctions. Reverends West, Whitridge, and Hopkins used to meet together regularly and talk theology for hours. On one occasion, just as night fell, Whitridge came out to see West to his horse. They fell again into theological debate and were absorbed until they thought they detected a fire in the east -- it was the rising sun.[8]

After the revivals, all this changed. The excitement of the revival meeting overwhelmed common people. After hearing a stirring sermon from George Whitfield, they were no longer satisfied with the intricate sermons of the parish pastors. At a revival, they really felt the presence of God; regular Sunday worship seemed dry and abstract by comparison. So the people began demanding more feeling and less mind in preaching.

The revivals also broke down the existing church government structure. After the revivals, the pastors had less control over who would become a preacher. Many revivalist preachers entered the ministry without any academic training and were often proud of their ignorance. They boasted that they were far more successful than the well-educated clergymen of the past. The following quotation is certainly extreme, but it shows how far some were willing to go.

> I look upon the system of education for the ministry to be of the Devil. . . . If God has promised to furnish His servants with every necessary qualification for their great work, what have they to do but step into the [mission] field, depending on *Him* for *all*? . . .[9]

For nearly 150 years after the "First Great Awakening" of the 1740s, revivals were at the center of American Christianity. With each revival, the anti-intellectual tradition received new strength.

To show how this view works out in practice, let's look at the "faith alone" approach to the creation/evolution debate. To study the creation/evolution issue would a waste of time for the consistent "faith-alone" believer. A Christian would have to be familiar with logic, techniques of debate, biology, archeology, general science, and paleontology to deal with the issue in an effective manner. There are also constitutional principles at stake for those who insist that the teaching of creation is inherently "religious."[10]

The "faith alone" approach simply will not work. If consistent, the "faith alone" advocate would not even enter the debate. But Christians should be ready to give answers to unbelievers, even to well-educated unbelievers. If Christians are going to be leaders in academic pursuits, we must always be prepared to deliver the best answer in the best way at the right time. This will mean a great deal of study and understanding of the issues.

Faith in the Context of Reason

In contrast to the two positions that we have discussed already, the "faith in the context of reason" position does not tear reason and faith apart. Instead, the

advocate of this approach to learning and the mind says that reason is a gift of God. Man was created with reason, so his reason is a good and useful tool. But it is not a tool that can be used any way we choose. We have to use reason in the way that God ordained. In short, our reason must be *obedient*. We must think as God commanded us to think. Unless we put our trust in Jesus Christ, and believe His Word, we will never understand the world as we should.

Unbelievers can still understand the world to some extent. But their view of the world is blurred. Because they don't recognize that the world is a revelation of God, they don't see the world as it really is. The Bible says that God has revealed Himself clearly in His works (Romans 1:18-20). But the unbeliever says God hasn't revealed Himself. One Soviet cosmonaut said that he didn't believe in God because he didn't find him out in space. In a sense, every unbeliever is like that cosmonaut. God reveals Himself to them, but they refuse to see Him. For now, notice that the "reason in the context of faith" position says that reason doesn't work properly unless it is linked to faith in Christ and His Word.

This approach was used by many of the greatest Christian philosophers and theologians in the history of the church. Augustine, the bishop of Hippo (in North Africa), has had more influence on the development of Christian theology than any other Western theologian. Augustine's thought about the relationship of faith and reason is quite complex, but it seems best to understand it as a "faith in the context of reason" position. One of his most famous comments was, "I do not understand in order to believe; I believe in order to understand." In other words, Augustine believed that you couldn't come to faith in Jesus through reason. Instead, you had to begin with faith in Jesus, and only then would you be able to use reason properly.

Anselm of Canterbury, a great medieval theologian, held the same position. In his famous treatise on the incarnation of Christ, Anselm wrote,

> As the right order requires us to believe the deep things of Christian faith before we undertake to discuss them by reason; so to my mind it appears a neglect if, after we are established in the faith, we do not seek to understand what we believe.[11]

Anselm believed that one should accept Christianity by faith, but that didn't mean that the Christian should not use his reason to understand more about Christianity. Faith was, in Anselm's view, "prior to" reason, and reason was a servant of faith.

These views were largely lost during the late Middle Ages, as the "reason alone" approach of Aquinas dominated philosophy and science. During the Reformation, however, the church recovered the views of Augustine and Anselm. John Calvin, the Reformer of Geneva, compared Scripture to a pair of glasses. Without Scripture, everything is blurred and out of focus. When we look at the world through the "glasses" of Scripture, we begin to see the world as we should. Reason should operate within the context of faith, and our understanding of "nature" should be guided by Scripture.

But I'm Never Going to Use All That Stuff

Many people, both Christians and non-Christians, are not enthusiastic about studying. Maybe you're one of them. One of the reasons for this is that they don't see the value of what they are learning. They don't see how reading the plays of Shakespeare or the dialogues of Plato, or studying the history of medieval Europe will ever pay off in the "real world." Will Shakespeare help me get a better job? Will Plato help me get a raise? Will medieval history help pay my electric bills? Many students think that the answer to all these questions is "NO!" So, they stop taking English and history and philosophy courses, and start taking business administration courses.

We're not saying that this is necessarily the wrong thing to do. Some people do not need a college education. Some people in college don't need to take "liberal arts" courses. The test of whether you need to go to college, however, is not whether it helps you get a good job. The test is whether or not it would serve the kingdom of Jesus Christ. So, you should ask yourself, will my college education help me be a more effective Christian? Will I be a better servant for Jesus if I go to college? Ask your parents the same questions. Ask your pastor. And pray about it. Examine your gifts and interests, study the Bible, look for counsel. When you have done all this, make a decision and pray that it would be honoring to God.

We think a college liberal arts education can help many people be better stewards and servants of Christ and His kingdom. Before we give some reasons for pursuing this kind of study, we must first get rid of the most common objection: it won't help me get a job. That may be true, but we think that this is the wrong way to ask the question. After all, you do a lot of things that don't directly help you get a job. You might be on a sports team. You might be in the band. You might be in the chess club. Or, you might just like to spend time with your friends. All of these things take time, and none of them directly helps you to get a job. But they are still important things to do. The discipline of sports may make you a more disciplined worker. The time you spend with your friends may help you develop skills in communication, and may contribute to your career in some service industry. In the same way, you