

# STRAIGHTWAY

“AND STRAIGHTWAY THEY FORSOOK THEIR NETS, AND FOLLOWED HIM” (MARK 1:18).

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

## “How Should We Then Live?”

### In the Days of the Public Demise of Christianity

Ezekiel 33:10b

Dr. H. T. Spence

In these days of the demise of principles in every compartment of humanity as well as the abounding of iniquity (lawlessness) in every precinct of life, how should a Christian live? In this dark hour in history, we believe this most important and crucial question demands an answer. Ezekiel 33:10 has asked this question, “How should we then live?” These next two issues of *Straightway* will consider how we should live concerning six specific contexts that control the End Time in which we live.

This first article asks, “How should we then live in days of the public demise of Christianity?” We have carefully chosen the term *demise* instead of the word *death*. Although both words mean the end or ending of life, *demise* is more frequently used in formal contexts referring to the death of someone or something very important

or well known. Often in the context of law, a death causes the transfer of an estate or a transfer of royal power (either by death or abdication). After such a transfer of estate or authority, who or what now takes ownership and responsibility?

This important and sobering question of Ezekiel 33 arises from Ezekiel’s predictions following the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel arises as the watchman of the Lord in contrast to the false shepherds of Israel (chapter 34). Within the first twenty verses of chapter 33, God renewed his call to Ezekiel to be a watchman. Providentially taken down into the captivity during the second deportation, Ezekiel was in Tel Abib, northwest of Babylon, as a dock worker for the Babylonians. By chapter 33, news has just reached Ezekiel that the city of Jerusalem has been destroyed (586 B.C.).

When the prophet hears the news of the fall of Jerusalem (by a man who had escaped the burning city and ran all the way to the captives of Babylon; 33:21–33), Ezekiel’s mouth is opened, and he begins to preach. Why had the prophet been mute; why did his mouth need to be opened? The Lord had earlier told Ezekiel that this was to be so (3:26):

*And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.*

It seems that up until this time his preaching was limited only to the elders of the captive Jews and key individuals as God would command him. Also note Ezekiel 24:27:

*In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I am the LORD.*

In this word from the Lord, Ezekiel was told that when he heard the news of the destruction of the city he was to be “no more dumb.” By Ezekiel 34, the prophet is giving a scathing message to the false shepherds, the Jewish political and religious leaders. Additionally, he prophesies of the coming true Shepherd (the Messiah) and the final restoration of Israel (34:23).

The immediate context of Ezekiel’s question in 33:10 is at the time when principles of righteousness and truth were at their lowest ebb in the history of Judah. The decline from the Word of God was so steadfast and the disease of sin so malignant that it caused a deep-rooted decline among the people. The despairing souls of the Jews were not able to look for deliverance. The despairing cry arose, “How should we then live?” amidst the prophet’s more hopeful view following Jerusalem’s destruction. The people were declaring, “If this is what is happening to us, that our transgressions and sins are upon us, and we are to pine away in them, if all that you have said about our falling away and sin is true, and things are so bad, then how should we live? What is the hope of even living if things are as bad as this?”

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

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## **Are Our Times Hopeless?**

We live in similar times as these captive Jews. How often in our preaching travels both here in America and in other countries, people ask the question, "If there is no hope for our country to return to God, and if the institutional church is as deep in the apostasy as you say, then what is the use of living for God?" Or "If Fundamentalism has fallen away, then what is our hope to even live and preach the truth and the standards of God's Word?" These are important questions! "How should we then live in the light of this deep apostasy that has so taken over all areas of human existence?"

The times have so radically changed, and the falling away is so deep in public Christianity that we cannot approach the ministry the way we did decades ago! We cannot approach missions the way we used to! And we cannot approach Christian education the same way of former days. The true remnant preacher in this generation finds himself amidst a new breed of apostasy that has taken a contemporary view of Christianity, worship, music, education, and missions. The remnant must now find from God, "How should we then live?" in the midst of all this.

O dear reader, the former America is gone and will never return. The former biblical Christianity in its public

presentation has radically changed since the days of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century revivals. Even former historic Fundamentalism has died, never to return in our times.

In addition to all these changes, we find ourselves in an era of new perceptual thinking, of new concepts of God, Christianity, and a form of Fundamentalism. If such a collapse of Christianity is evident, how are we to live now?

## **The Public Demise of Historic Fundamentalism**

If we are in the days of the public demise of Christianity, to whom is the estate being given? Is the Christian faith in America growing, or is it dying? Are we moving to a full abandonment of Christianity as the Europeans? Or are we in America submitting to the adoption of a convenient and more comfortable form of Christianity? Perhaps ultimately, we will be a nation that has abandoned historic Christianity altogether. In the end, both the changing and the abandoning of Christianity will powerfully impact the church worldwide, further ushering in modernity and finally postmodernism into the heart of the institutional church.

Sad to say, it seems this has already taken place. We must acknowledge that we have already moved into a redefining of Christianity and of Fun-

damentalism, and both are breeding a form of Christianity which is not that of Scripture.

Public Christianity has abandoned biblical truths. It is now experimenting with other perspectives, including a variety of secularist perspectives with the hope that a “neo” reformation accepted by all will spring forth. We have yet to see the final new shapes that Christianity will take in the postmodern world. It must also be acknowledged that all the religions of the world, including Islam, are in the throes of a postmodern rebirth. Because of the fluid, elastic nature of postmodernism, one cannot predict what will be its final product. Not even the leaders of such a movement can predict where this contemporary ship is headed or what sandbars it will hit. The church’s aggressive pursuit of uncharted, non-absolute waters provides a dark exhilaration in such ventures.

Fundamentalism is openly making friends with Neo-Evangelicalism. The visit of the president of Bob Jones University to Wheaton College (the bastion of Neo-Evangelicalism) and open dialogues between BJU, Wheaton, Furman, and other Neo-Evangelical schools all give witness. Existential, postmodern thinking has rapidly made inroads into Fundamentalism. The “anything goes” mentality manifests itself in the casual dress infiltrating churches. American mis-

sionaries spread this dress-down style to indigenous churches throughout the world just as they dumb down the souls of the people with shallow preaching and limited accountability to God. Fundamentalism is increasingly blending itself in with the world. Reverential attire of respect for God and His house is basically absent in most of Fundamentalism.

Another sad commentary of postmodernism in Fundamentalism’s seminaries is a nebulous presentation of various interpretations of Scripture. This approach has opened the door for the acceptance of many “subjective interpretations” of Bible passages. “Thus saith the Lord” of past Fundamentalism has now been given over to simply letting the student decide which subjective interpretation he wants for his life. It is to be viewed as equal with any other interpretation. Owning, carrying, and reading a Bible are biblical habits being lost today. Having lost its identity as the “Book,” the Bible is placed alongside the many “apps” on laptops, tablets, and phones. Yes, the Bible has become nothing more than another entertainment of the electronic age. We blend Christianity in with our living, rather than changing our living to be conformed to the Christian Faith. Is this “American” Christianity? Is this becoming the trendy, Western religion around the world?

Postmodern Christianity does not

care about the creeds or of asking if Jesus rose from the dead or if He is the everlasting Son of God. The questions that seem to matter to the churches today are, "Why does not the Christian tolerate all lifestyles?" "Why do Christians support warfare?" "Why is Christianity against sodomy?" "Why is Christianity against pro-choice or abortion?" Increasingly, today's Christianity is about questions of the contemporary rather than declaration of eternal truth. Wine is now accepted by many Fundamentalists. Christian schools promote intercollegiate sports and secular or contemporary Christian accreditation. Christian colleges seek new avenues to be "trendy." They want to be accepted by the world under the evangelistic cry, "We are witnessing for Jesus."

There were a few past movements that swept through the Evangelical and Fundamentalist world which were believed to be the answer to this falling away. First appeared Bill Gothard, who brought the Institute in Basic Life Principles. His approach influenced well over 25,000 pastors. His movement seemed to have several good things that mesmerized families with its delusion. But can what seems to be a good thing exist in the context of heresy? His ministry was built upon ecumenicity and toleration of the Neo-Christianity, even with its contemporary music. Then in later years Mr. Gothard's bachelor life of risqué

affections with young women finally surfaced. Perhaps he saw the definite problems in Fundamentalism and the Evangelical world; however, methodologically his ministry was based on the flesh, though mixing Bible principles. And whatsoever is born of the flesh, is flesh.

A second movement was Doug Phillips' Vision Forum. This "ministry" endeavored to address problems within the American family. However, it approached these problems through biblical heresy rather than truth. Mr. Phillips built his theology upon the old postmillennialism of R. J. Rushdoony. His views were against the local church, the local Christian school, and the pastor's responsibility in the Christian life and home. His Reconstructionist philosophy was perceived to be the hope to bring America back to Christian culture. Vision Forum never took a stand against the contemporary views of Christianity; it took no stand against the Charismatic movement or any other part of apostasy. It too was based on outward appearances without inward change. Vision Forum's hope was in the power of the flesh, the works of a home, rather than the grace of God coming within the human heart. Sad to say, Doug Phillips also fell into immorality.

A deep, blinding problem among many of the Evangelical and Fundamentalist professing Christians is that

they tend to be “evidentialists” rather than Biblicists. Rather than searching out the doctrinal heart of a ministry or movement, they tend to be drawn only to the outward or superficial product. Vision Forum invested much time and money on the outward appearance, endeavoring to perfect it to the neglect of a transformed heart.

### **How Should We Then Live?**

If the only true religion is now in a global apostasy, how should we then live? Amidst its sin, hypocrisy, and redefinings, how should we then live? The prophet Ezekiel sounded the alarm to the people telling them of the conditions of Israel and of their individual lives. Instead of rousing themselves to meet and overcome the danger that was all around them, they began to sink down paralyzed in the darkness of despair. This was implied by the people to Ezekiel concerning his preaching to them. “If you preach to bring us into a consciousness of our guilt, this will overwhelm us, and the sudden awakening to the black darkness is going to lead us into despair.”

It is very true that knowledge given in preaching to the people brings accountability to the people. Judah was now experiencing the consequences of this preaching, “We pine away in them” (33:10). While sin and heresy are destroying our churches, our homes, to say nothing of our communities, our country, and the very

world in which we live, still people do not want to be warned about destruction. Preaching produces conviction, and conviction produces guilt, and guilt produces bad feelings, and bad feelings bring discouragement and depression. The question was then asked of the prophet, “How are we then to live?” Perhaps the question was given with no expectation of answer. “The apostasy is so definite, the disease of sin has pervaded to the most advanced stage, how can we even look for deliverance?”

It is true that we are in imminent peril of death in the history of public Christianity. We cannot save our souls through the church, its programs, positivism, or slick formulas of contemporary Christianity. If the world denounces and our nation turns from the message of the Gospel, if denominations leave the truth of former days, if families and relatives separate from us, we must realize that such conditions or people are not our hope. Even if the world redefines everything, including its view of Christ, the way we must live is through the only revelation God has given to us; and, thank God, we still have it and it is still true. We must return to the Book, or remain in the Book, the Bible, the Scriptures, the Word of God.

The Lord told Ezekiel in 33:11:

*Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in*

*the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

Though it seems that nearly everyone today is turning away, following the changes, the redefinings, the permissiveness of sin, yet we cannot go their way. Though according to prophecy the last church age ends in apostasy, we do not have to fall away with it. Its departure from truth does not have to affect us—we do not have to change! God is able to keep us from falling, to keep us from deception, to keep us from apathy and backsliding!

### **Conclusion**

How should we then live? O dear reader, let us live by the eternal Book, the Bible! Let us live by the precious shed blood of our Saviour! And let us live in the blessed hope of His Second Coming. Only the Bible gives us the insight for living in the End Time, exhorting us to simply remain and abide in Christ! In these days of a false eternal security promoting a loose, carnal, worldly, professing Christian life, let us ever abide in God's Word. Let us abide in the promises and provisions of His redemption. We do not have to go the way of all flesh!

As the public preaching of the Gospel brought much good to homes, churches, and even countries in the past, the legacy of public Christianity's

estate is now being given over to the very enemies of God; its demise has brought a change of owners. The tares have taken over the field and the public view of the church gives evidence that another gospel has taken over publicly the true Gospel.

But, thank God, it does not have to be so with our lives, our local churches, or our homes and families. There is power in the Christ and power in His Word and Spirit to keep us from becoming what this age has become and what the church age has become. "How should we then live?" Let us remain, abiding in Christ and in His Word!

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Morning Worship, 10:30

Prayer, 5:30 PM

Evening Worship, 6:00

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# **“How Should We Then Live?” In the Days of the Demise of Sound Thinking**

Dr. H. T. Spence

One crucial key in the burden of the demise of sound thinking is realizing the world has a different mindset today from all previous centuries of thought. For nearly two thousand years, Western civilization has embraced linear logic and reason, advocating absolutes of thesis and antithesis and rejecting the blending together of opposites. The Greek metaphysical philosophers did much to establish this approach. This logic was built upon the premise of law, order, design, purpose, and beauty and the reality of right and wrong, truth and error, as well as both the distinction and the separation of such thesis and antithesis.

## **A Brief History of Logic**

From Augustine to the Reformation, one of the assets that strengthened the continuation of reason as the form of logic was the promotion of biblical truth by theologians who dominated Western thought. This strength was the light of the revelation of the Scriptures given by God in the natural logic of reason. This logical approach was brought to a superiority of secularistic perspective during the Age of Enlightenment (17th and 18th centuries), otherwise called the Age of Reason.

Between the fourteenth-century Renaissance and the seventeenth cen-

tury, thinkers progressively elevated man himself to the center of reality. If present-day modernism were viewed through a family tree, the Renaissance would be modernism’s grandmother and the Enlightenment its mother. Renee Descartes’ declaration, “I think, therefore I am,” personified the beginning of this era. God was not the center of truth any longer—man was.

Contemporary thinkers of that time embraced this to such a point that they believed man could actually change or alter the way God had made the mind to think in its logical context. Rejecting a divine revelation, man’s independent thought was considered the truth.

In the 1700s, Georg Hegel toyed with the idea that there were various forms of logic. He presented the idea of *dialecticism* whereby a thesis and its antithesis were literally blended together in thought to form a new truth (or thesis). By this innovative form of logic, pure reason began to decay in society.

In the latter part of the 1700s and into the 1800s another form of logic came to the forefront called *existentialism*. This concept totally denied absolutes, even denouncing dialecticism’s blending of opposites. Existentialism discarded all previous forms of think-

ing. Now the individual was at liberty to create and think his own personal truths irrelevant of any other absolutes but himself. In this form of logic there are no universal principles; there are no universal absolutes. The desired existence for the individual is simply his own created concept of truth. In the previous centuries linear reasoning was based upon proof by principles and adherence to what was proved through logic. This process established universally held truths.

In contrast, existentialism rested upon no other principle than the individual himself; he determined what is true for himself without the need of proof. The individual only had to think it to be true, and it then became truth. This move in the history of logic finally became known as *post-reason* or *postmodernism*.

For nearly two thousand years linear logic was accepted as the natural metaphysical concept of logic. This form of logic claimed there were universal and eternal truths and values founded upon absolutes and governing principles even beyond man. But just as (in 1983) the United States Supreme Court changed its presupposition from interpreting the U.S. Constitution to interpreting “public policy,” the philosophical and ideological world has changed its thinking from absolutes of reason to existentialism, now called *postmodernism*.

Postmodernism has now become the

logic of nearly all world governments and human organizations. All concepts of ethics are now interpreted through this presupposition and worldview. We have now come to an hour that “sound thinking” has been so affected by the contemporary that the question needs to be asked, “How should we then live?”

### **God: The Author of Sound Thinking**

As Bible Christians, we are adamantly opposed to the hypothesis of evolution. We believe God created the entire system of the human body. Therefore, we firmly believe that God not only created the brain and mind but also the actual concept of thought that man should use with his brain.

In the Greek New Testament language, we have several terms that carefully unfold the truth of how God designed the concept of the mind and thought. First, the term *nous* is translated *mind*. *Nous* is the faculty necessary for understanding what is true or real. Therefore, the faculty to think (*nous*) becomes the very substance of the ability to think.

Secondly, the term *phroneo* designates the content of the process of thought expressed, or the object of thought within the mind. A companion word is *phronesis*, which denotes prudent and wise understanding that leads to right action.

A third term *noia* refers to the *perceptive mind*. It references the object of

nous thinking that comes to perception. Perceptive thinking then leads within the mind to a collection of thoughts that builds a *logos* in thinking. *Logos* is the essence of all that a person knows; it is his epistemology.

Because we are born into sin, the mind over the years grows older in sin. The mind can be taken over by lusts. The mind can be so saturated with the world's thinking that the human heart fully collaborates with the world. Satan then adds his own powerfully blinding thoughts. Depravity, the world, and Satan all can contribute intensity of thoughts that control the mind, paralyzing its ability to think as God initially created it to think.

As the serpent changed Eve's thinking about God and His creation of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (and ultimately against the very Word of God), so the mind can leave its created purpose and enter another realm of thinking. Note Ephesians 4:17, 18:

*This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart.*

We must understand that the world and the Devil have their strong influences upon the mind and its concept of thinking. Paul warned in Colossians 2:8 to

“beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”

Man is now rising in the earth to destroy everything that God created, including the concept of right thinking. This is revealed in Romans 1:18, 19:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [or willfully suppress] the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.*

When man in hatred goes so far in the rejecting of God, and when he does not like to retain God in his knowledge, “God will give him over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” Having first tested God, man then turns aside from Him. They did not desire to retain God in their knowledge (Gr., *epignosis*, their “full, experiential knowledge”). They having rejected God, God rejects their mental attitude, giving them over to a reprobate mind. God intentionally affects the very creature He created for sound (healthy) thinking. He gives that creature over to cloudy, irrational, and insane thinking. When this happens man literally loses his mind and the capability of sound thinking.

When enough people think irrationally the same way on earth, then they are viewed as the sane. Those who

oppose them are considered the insane of society. Only the God Who made the mind can maintain that mind in soundness of thought and thinking. When man leaves the consciousness of God and rejects Him, God affects the mind in its capability of sound and sensible thinking. He truly gives man over to a reprobate mind.

In the End Time (according to the pattern of Genesis 6 of the last days), the wickedness of man will be great in the earth. We are told that "every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Evil thinking, wicked thinking, destructive thinking, terrorist thinking, all become the rising thinking of the End Time.

Additionally, the reprobate mind becomes the instigator and collaborator of the reprobate heart. Oh, dear reader, this is where we are on the planet Earth today. Not only are the thoughts of man's heart collectively evil, but also his mind is reprobate in its ability to think. Mankind collectively and globally has now entered its rejection of God. We have come to a "social mind," a "social will," and a "social thinking" against the very laws that God created for the mind in its ability to think. Thus, the individual mind becomes the product of the *nous* and the *noia* of the world, taking on a worldview thought life.

Because of sin and the mind of an

age thinking for society, man can become irrevocably damaged in his ability to think. Therefore, even through natural theology, man in such a state will never come to God; he will never come to true, sound thinking. Everything about God to the reprobate mind is foolishness: the Gospel, the cross, the concept of depravity. The natural man will never discern the things of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them.

### **The Demise of Sound Thinking**

Considering this demise of sound thinking, we must remember the term *demise*. Demise is a death of something that results in the transfer of the estate to another. Once sound thinking is dead (in an individual, a nation, or the world), the concept of thinking is transferred to another. This is where global society has come. Our society is so irrational that right has become wrong, truth has become error, God has become the Devil, morality has become immoral. Likewise, evil has become good in every field of human epistemology. This irrationality pervades Liberals, Conservatives, Moderates, Constitutionalists, Abolitionists, Socialists, Communists, Democrats, Republicans, the Tea Party, etc. Although these all have thoughts about God, Christ, Christianity, the purpose of Christianity, what a Christian is, none of their thinking in these sacred precincts is correct. How can those who claim to be so

conservative in politics become so liberal in their views of God and Christianity? From the beggar and his homelessness, to the billionaire with his wealth, they all have their mind, their thoughts, their thinking, their *logos*, and their presupposition of thought. This world is now saturated through the overwhelming powers of modern media and education helping the world to come to a one-mind-worldview of everything.

In days of the demise of sound thinking, it is important to ask, "How shall we then live?" How can we live for God in such a world as this? The first thing that must happen for an individual to even come to God is that his mind must be changed. The only way for this to happen is that God Himself must grant repentance (Gr., *metanoia*), meaning the very perception of his mind must change. The Holy Spirit must bring godly sorrow to the sinner's mind for everything he has thought and done. It is from that godly sorrow that the Spirit must work this mind-changing repentance.

Man must have a change of mind before he can have a change of heart. His whole irrational perspective of life must change; he must come to himself as the prodigal son (Luke 15). Grace must teach his heart to fear, for the fear of the Lord will be the beginning of knowledge and wisdom. Grace will bring his mind to what God intended for him to think. Only the Bible can

provide the preconditions for the intelligibility of man's experience and reasoning. It provides the laws of logic. It alone provides the uniformity of nature. It provides absolute morality.

God's thinking is presented in the laws of logic. He is omnipresent and unchangeable; in Him there can be no contradictions because God cannot change; God is universal in His thinking. All logic is in God, and He cannot deny Himself. The Bible brings us an absolute morality that goes back to Creation. God made the laws; if man does not take this position, then he will do what he wants to do and change the rules as he goes along. Universally, man cannot live that way, for if he does he will destroy himself, which is what is happening today. The evolutionist may say, "I don't believe in God and I can think logically; I don't believe in the biblical worldview and I can use logic." It would be like saying, "I don't need air to breathe, I don't believe in air, and I can breathe just fine." This is not a rational response. Evolutionists, atheists, agnostics, and secularists have no foundation for their worldviews; their views are based on self-concepts of thought. If the Bible is the highest authority, then it must be the standard for everything in our life, including our living.

## Conclusion

The mind is the door between the world and the heart; therefore, we

must live with a constant vigil concerning our mind and thinking. Note 1 Peter 1:13:

*Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

Paul declares in Romans 12:2,

*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

We must remember as Christians that conformity to the world begins in the mind, in our thinking. First Peter 4:1 tells us,

*Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin.*

The Apostle reveals needed truth in Philippians 2:5:

*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*

This term *mind* in the original Greek is designating the “process of thinking.” Hebrews 12:3 calls us to

*. . . consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.*

We must also take heed to the words of Paul in 2 Corinthians 10:3–6:

*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.*

And yet, there is also the warning of Romans 8:5, 6:

*For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Yes, we must always be on guard; for the flesh is ever drawing our thinking back to our former thought life.

May God ever anoint us with His Spirit for right thinking. But may we also ever “stir up the gift of God. . . . For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind” (2 Timothy 1:6, 7).

In these days of the demise of sound thinking, “How should we then live?” The answer: By giving ourselves over to the One Who made the mind, the thought concept, and letting His Word become the precondition for all our intelligibility.

# **UNTIL I DIE, A PREACHER AM I!**

**H.T. SPENCE, TH.D.**

Amidst the great falling away of our times, I believe the greatest need at this hour in history is godly, Holy Ghost anointed preachers who are willing to pick up the mantle of God's men of the past and declare uncompromisingly, "Thus saith the Lord!" to this present ungodly and wicked generation.

It is with this pressing burden that I have desired to write this book, pondering and investing in its hopeful reality for the last 30 of my 48 years in the ministry. Therefore, written for the younger generation and especially for those who will dare heed the call of God to preach His Word, I send its burden forth.

May the fire of the calling ever burn until the end of our days! For "until I die, a preacher am I."

**New book from  
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# **“How Should We Then Live?”**

## **In the Days of the Demise of Morality and Manhood**

Dr. H. T. Spence

Christ warned us that the time of His coming would be as the days of Noah and Lot—both their generations abounded in immorality. Although the days of Noah abounded with immorality between male and female, the days of Lot were noted for the rise of immoralities between male and male. Particularly, Christ called attention to the sodomite cities with which Lot had become identified. Paul deals strongly with this great sin in Romans 1 and in 1 Corinthians 6; the epistle by Jude calls this sin “strange flesh.” In the demise of morals of the End Time, how will these powerful sins of the flesh affect the consciousness of our young men becoming true men of God?

### **The Concept of Morality**

It is important that we define *moral-ity* in both its traditional and post-modern views. In his first printed dictionary (1828), Noah Webster defined morality as follows:

*The doctrine or system of moral duties, or the duties of men in the social character; their ethics. The system of morality to be gathered from the writings of ancient sages, falls very short of that delivered in the gospel. The quality of an action which renders it good; the conformity of an act to the divine law, or to the principles of rectitude;*

*this conformity implies that the act must be performed by a free agent, and from a motive of obedience to the divine law. Virtuous, honest according to the rules of the divine law.*

The World Book Encyclopedia’s companion two-volume dictionary by Thorndike-Barnhart also defines morality:

*The relative right or wrong of an action. Good in character or conduct; virtuous according to civilized standards of right and wrong; proper in sexual relations, not lewd, but virtuous; principles or habits or behavior with respect to right or wrong conduct. Moral refers to the customary rules and accepted standards of society.*

In the field of ethics, one of the great problems regarding morality and moral behavior concerns who or what we believe determines the principles respecting right and wrong? According to the Christian worldview, morality is exclusively based upon God’s moral nature that is absolute and unchanging; God always hates evil and loves good. Though God is the fountain of the principles of morality and ethics, the Bible (the revelation from God) is of supreme importance because it tells us the difference between good and evil. The Bible is the framework on which a completely unambiguous

standard of ethics must be built for man to live by.

In contrast, ethical relativism leads to destruction. Matthew 7:13 declares,

*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.*

Christian ethics is inseparable from the Christian theology of Scripture for the simple reason that Christian ethics is grounded in the character of God. Rather than believing in some ethical scheme bound to society's ever-changing whims, the Christian worldview has a specific moral order revealed to man through both the general revelation of nature (Romans 1) as well as the special revelation of the Bible and the person of Jesus Christ.

There is no moral law without a moral lawgiver. Christians do not find their ethics in the standards of Christians; we derive our ethics from the one standard, the Bible. Our global society has entered into a corporate denouncing of God and His Word, and has chosen to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. According to man, the lawgiver is no longer God, but man himself.

The world has rejected God as the Judge Who declares what is right and wrong. This demise of God in ethics has taken morality into the possession of another estate. Now there is neither

right nor wrong, true nor false, good nor evil. The world now believes there is no such thing as absolute truth. Yet, they believe the world outside of themselves is in error; for no one has the authority to define truth or impose upon others his idea of moral right and wrong. Therefore, the world is being forced to accept the voice of naturalism and evolution rather than God and Creationism.

Coming out of man's self-appointed deification is the belief that intimate relationships can be in any realm that one desires to have his pleasure. And mutating out of this is that man has the right to destroy everything that goes back to God. Man has the right to create his own reality; and if God does exist, He certainly has no contribution to what we should believe or how we should behave. All principles are preferences, and only preferences.

Out of the multitude of man's denunciations of God, the End Time has brought to the forefront the moral realm of the genders of male and female. Man now believes an individual has a right to believe what he wants to believe about himself/herself/itself rather than what his or her gender at birth might have been. Male and Female are decidedly absolute, but man believes he has a right to form a transgender humanity. God created male and female; physiologically and scientifically, there can be no other genders.

Human chromosomes are either XX or XY; there is no other natural identity of gender, and there is no transgender existence. Whatever the medical world may do to change bodily functions and appearances, the genetic reality of an individual can never be altered. Genetics still cry out at birth that it is male or female. Transgenderism is personal suicide. It denounces God's creation and attempts to separate man from any consciousness of the reality of God.

Beyond individual preference, there is an aversion to the truth of gender that is being forced upon the world for acceptance and agreement. Allan Bloom, in *The Closing of the American Mind*, stated the following:

*The danger is not error but intolerance. Relativism is necessary to openness, and this is the virtue, the only virtue, which all primary education for more than 50 years has dedicated itself to teaching. Openness, and the relativism that makes it the only plausible stance in the face of various claims to truth and the various ways of life and kinds of human beings, is the great insight of our times. The true believer is the real danger. We are now being told that the study of history and of culture teaches that all the world was mad in the past. Men always thought they were right, and that led to wars, persecutions, slavery, xenophobia [a hatred or fear of foreign persons or things], racism and chauvinism. The point is not to correct the*

*mistakes and really be right; rather it is not to think that you are right at all.*

## **The Destruction of the Male Gender**

We have moved from the conviction that everyone has a right to his own opinions, to the notion that every opinion is an equal right. For the past twenty-five years there has been both a growing hatred and myth in America about boys through the influential agenda of the feminists to destroy the hope of boys growing up to be men. The word *chauvinism* came from a French word going back to the days of Napoleon. It referred to any soldier who professed an idolatrous admiration for Napoleon or an unreasonable enthusiasm for patriotism. Eventually the term became attached to the word *male*, whereby male *Chauvinism* declared that men are superior to women, an idea greatly reprehensible today.

The American educational climate is especially unfriendly for boys. Christina Hoff Sommers in *The War Against Boys* declared the following concerning the harm the feminist movement is bringing on our young men:

*There is a war against boys in America; and as in all wars, the first casualty is truth. In the USA the truth about boys has been both distorted and buried.*

Part of this distortion and burying of truth concerns manhood versus womanhood. We are continually led

to believe that girls are diminishing in so many areas. To remedy this situation, the boys need to be “taken down a notch” and reduced in importance. But according to the general data from the US Department of Education in university studies, girls receive better grades, have higher educational aspirations, follow a more rigorous academic program, and participate more in the prestigious Advanced Placement (AP) programs (offering college-level courses and credits to high school students). More female than male students enroll in high-level math and science courses. Girls now outnumber boys in student government, in honor societies, on school newspapers, and even in debating clubs. Only in sports are the boys still ahead; yet, women’s groups are targeting the sports gap with a vengeance. Girls read more books; they outperform males on tests of artistic and musical ability; fewer girls than boys are suspended from school; fewer girls are held back and drop out. By the 12th grade males are four times as likely as females not to do homework. Boys are three times as likely as girls to be enrolled in special education programs, and four times as likely to be diagnosed with ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). More boys than girls are involved in crime, alcohol, and drugs. Girls attempt suicide more than boys, but it is boys who succeed in taking their lives more often.

In reality, we are not in a girl-crisis climate as we are being told by the politically correct. America is in a boy-crisis climate; and it is clearly evident that this crisis is being covered up. We tend to believe that this is simply because they are boys and we should not push them to do better. But it is the climate of our times; boys are becoming more ignorant and that is the way the feminists want it. We have not pushed the boys in discipline as we have the girls. Until boys’ problems are acknowledged, they cannot be addressed in our homes.

The political correctness of our times gives the false alarm through gender theorists and activists that boys and especially men are dangerous to society. It is assumed they can be made harmless if they can be socialized away from the conventional concept of “maleness.” They declare with great intensity of words that it may be too late to change adult men, but boys can be “reconstructed” to be more like girls. The atheistic feminist Gloria Steinem summarized her feminist view by saying, “We badly need to raise boys more like we raise girls.”

This concept of the need of overhauling the image of boys has been well underway for years in our country. Feminizing boys has become the solution in our country to hinder the boy from becoming a man. Reverse roles are now becoming the norm in our

society. Stay-at-home dads and the rapid increase in homosexuality in the past two decades have contributed to effeminacy in men. In contrast to the re-socializing of our boys, women in lesbianism become increasingly masculine. The feminists who bring about such a role reversal of the genders believe that masculine women and effeminate men will all contribute to a safer society.

The trendsetters are forcing our sons to play with dolls, to dress and look more effeminate, become less aggressive in society. They want men to become softer, gentler, as they force the women to become the leader of the home, the community, and ultimately the nation. Body piercing and tattooing have also brought manhood down. We are even witnessing church leaders coming across softer, effeminate in their singing, and softer in their preaching. As the men become “nice” and sweet,” the women behind the scenes are becoming the more aggressive voices even in the pulpits and pastorates. For several years now the move has been to have co-pastorates of husband and wife.

### **Where Are the Men?**

Where are the men? Where are the young men who are heads of their homes, strong in their character, and masculine in their living? Let our boys be boys, yet without sinning, and our girls be girls without sinning! But we

must pray that our boys will become men for the next generation.

Note 1 Kings 2:1, 2:

*Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man.*

In 1 Chronicles 29:1 David declared,

*Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great.*

One wonders if Solomon was a young man who tended to be under his mother while his brothers in stature and masculinity manifested manhood. Could this have contributed to his finally succumbing to women and not retaining his manliness?

In days of the demise of morality and manhood, “How shall we then live?” How does a boy become a man? There are several areas involved in his becoming a man.

The first area is *spiritual* (Hebrews 5:11–14). There is the great, imperative need of our boys becoming strong in faith and character. They need to come to full age “by reason of use” in discerning good and evil. Inward strength will be imperative for life and living, for a home and leadership. Sad to say, many who are men in years have never come to this truth in manhood because they are given to pleasure, fun, and enjoyment rather

than responsibility in life.

The second area is *mental*. One of the reasons why young boys do not grow up is because they have never come to sound thinking. Note 1 Corinthians 13:11:

*When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.*

Mentality and thought process must increase to become a man. What does the young man himself think about? The young man must increase in speech, the outflow of thought and reason. It is a rare thing to meet a young man in his twenties who is manly in his conversation and thought. Thoughts bring forth actions, actions develop habits, habits become your character, and character, your destiny.

The third area is *emotional*. We are told in Proverbs 16:32:

*He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*

Emotions unharnessed are a sign of immaturity, and yet one who can express his emotions with stability shows a sign of maturity.

The fourth area is the *physical*. Paul tells us in 1 Timothy 4:8:

*For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is,*

*and of that which is to come.*

Sports and body building are being thrown upon us today as “manly” or “womanly.” But many of the sports personalities today are so immature in life. They cannot communicate when interviewed, their life in the natural is a failure; most of their marriages are in shambles. The physical is certainly a part of the young man’s maturity in the natural man, but this is not all important. Boys and girls today are maturing early in body because of the emphasis on the physical; such maturity is beyond their mind and emotions. The mind must control the body.

## Conclusion

But we must plead for four other areas that will have a profound effect upon a young man’s coming to manhood.

(1) Becoming a man necessitates right decisions; making right decisions now will strengthen him for later. A Christian young man must always do right, thus making the right decisions consistently.

(2) What a young man decides to sow into his life is most important. The law of Galatians 6:7, 8 is unalterable. What is the young man planting in speech, behavior, desires, attitudes, ambitions for his life?

(3) Who are the exemplary men in a young man’s life? If a young man has goals to become a certain kind of man,

he will admire and revere those who have already achieved that goal.

(4) If you are a boy or young man, pray for God to make you a man. Learn to talk like a man, work like a man, think like a man, and dress like a man. Do not let the world squeeze you into its mold!

The Devil is out to destroy our sons! He knows what a young man could do for God in his living, in his prayer life, and in his preaching if God ever lays hold of his life as a layman or in a call

to preach. If the Devil cannot keep a young man from coming to Christ in the New Birth, then he will endeavor to keep that young man in a lukewarm spiritual state, one of mediocrity and apathy. We must pray that God will raise up men for the next generation who will give their all to God and who will know an anointed and consecrated life to His glory.

In days of the demise of morality and manhood, "How should we then live?" Let us live as a man—a man of God. **S**

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