

STRAIGHTWAY

“And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him.” (Mark 1:18)

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“How Should We Then Live” in the Days of the Demise of Public Christianity?

Dr. H. T. Spence

Having entered into the twenty-fourth year of this new millennium, we never expected that the rapture for God’s saints would be delayed this long. We have experienced the powers of providence pressing us onward in our walk with God while the powers of darkness have taken us increasingly into the vestibule of the coming of Antichrist.

These present articles of *Straightway* will introduce six areas of present history that consider “how should we then live?” in the light of the present distress rapidly enveloping the world. This first article sets forth the question in the light of “the days of the demise of public Christianity.”

Demise Versus Death

The term *demise* rather than the word *death* is carefully chosen for each of the titles of the leading articles of this issue. Both of the terms *demise* and *death* mean the end or ending of life, but *demise* is generally used in formal contexts to refer to the death of someone or something very important or well known, rather than to the death

of things such as plants or animals. A *demise* is a death; but in the context of law, it refers to the transfer of an estate or a transfer of royal power by death (or by abdication). *Demise* may also refer to the death of a principle. Therefore, when a certain person dies, what will become of his estate, or who will take ownership in the transfer, or what will take his place in the aftermath? Because of that demise, what will actually be inherited due to the death of this individual, or the death of a principle, an ethic, or a concept of living? Will such a death or cessation of existence alter the course of history or the very course of humanity?

Two aspects must be carefully pondered in each of these articles. First, what contemporary problems will arise due to the demise of a certain person, of a crucial principle, or of a vital character trait? Secondly, what will be the biblical remedy for our living in such days of this sad and grievous demise?

How Should We Then Live?

We must also understand the

question “How should we then live?” in the light of the burden of Ezekiel 33:10. This passage comes as part of the predictions given to Ezekiel after the destruction of Jerusalem. In chapters 33 and 34, Ezekiel is noted as God’s watchman. God then reveals to him the false shepherds that have arisen, which Ezekiel the prophet must deal with in chapter 34. But within chapter 33, and especially in the first twenty verses, God renewed His call to Ezekiel to be a watchman, appointed by God Himself, for the people.

Ezekiel was taken captive in the second deportation by the powers of Babylon in 597 B.C., but instead of being taken to the great city of Babylon (where Daniel was taken), the providence of the Lord appointed this man of God to be taken to Tel Abib, northwest of Babylon, where he was enslaved as a dock worker. Chapter 33

historically takes place after the city of Jerusalem was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C. News had traveled all the way from Jerusalem to Tel Abib, hundreds of miles away. Ezekiel 33:21–33 reveals that Ezekiel’s mouth was opened on the day he heard of the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple.

The question may be asked, “When had the prophet become mute in his speaking in order for his mouth now to be opened?” Note Ezekiel 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 reprov-er: for they are a rebellious house.

Was his mouth shut from that time to the day he heard of the destruction of Jerusalem? Had he only spoken to the elders and key individuals as God told him to, but not in public preaching? Note also 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.

At this time, we read of Ezekiel opening his mouth and proclaiming God’s Word. In chapter 34 this prophet gives a scathing message to the false shepherds, both the political leaders of Judah in the captivity as well as to the religious leaders. Yet, beginning in 33:20 he prophesies of the coming true

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O. Talmadge Spence, Founder

**H. I. Spence, Editor
President**

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800-849-8761**

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Shepherd (the Messiah) and the final restoration of Israel.

Our text in Ezekiel 33:10 is declared when the principles of righteousness and truth were at their lowest ebb in the history of Judah. The decline from the Word of God was so consistent and the disease of sin that caused this decline was so deeply rooted, that at that time the despairing soul knew not where to look for deliverance. The question "How should we then live?" is a sort of remonstrance offered by the prophet when he turns to a more hopeful view. To the captives the destruction of Jerusalem was believed to be the end of everything, including the nation itself (at least in their thinking at that time). Thus, we are led up to the burden of Ezekiel 33:10, as if the captive Jews, in hearing of the destruction of their sacred city, were saying, "If this is what is happening to us, then our transgressions and sins are upon us, and the only thing we can do is to pine away in them. And if all that you have said is true, and things are so bad as you say, how should we then live?" Their hearts came to hopelessness as if to say, "What is the hope of even living if things are as bad as this?" Yes, what is to become of life, liberty, a nation, and a people if all of this has now happened? This demise was altering everything they had hoped for; because of this death and destruction, Jerusalem's demise radically changed everything in the future for them. Thus, "How should we then live?"

America: Its Demise and the Future of Its Estate

Oh, the United States of America: we have witnessed its demise! Its inheritance, its legacy, and what should have been our estate, have now been completely overthrown. But what has been the key and the root of its political, ethical, economic, and cultural demise? The key has been the demise of Christianity in our nation's history. Our nation was great at one time and appeared to have been destined for greatness for its coming generations. But the heart and character of the country have come to a grieving death simply because of the demise of Christianity within its national soul. America was the last frontier of Western civilization; and of all the nations that are part of Western civilization, America knew the deepest working of Christianity in history. America became a haven for religious freedom by the mid-1600s, and Christianity was a prominent principle in those early years. But there was a falling away within the colonies in the *living* of Christianity in the latter part of the 1600s and into the 1700s. Yet, God graciously sent the First Great Awakening in the 1740s that ushered in a reviving of religious affection in the New England colonies. George Whitefield, crossing the Atlantic Ocean many times, fed the flames of revival on both sides of the Atlantic. Even so, there was a falling away in the ensuing years.

By the time our nation was born in

1776, another falling away had taken place, especially in its schools. Then God brought a Second Great Awakening. Nevertheless, the French Revolution came in 1789, led by the principle of the overthrow of Christianity identified with the Romanist Church. This Revolution affected all perspectives of Christianity. Amidst these events happening, God used the Methodist movement in America to keep us from the profound effects of the French Revolution while we entered into our own American Revolution. But sad to say, some of the atheistic thinking of the French Revolution washed ashore in America during those decades through men like Thomas Jefferson, who brought over from England more than five thousand copies of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* and circulated them among key leaders in our country. There was also the deist Benjamin Franklin, and other religious powers such as Unitarianism moved into the colonies by the 1800s. If the Second Great Awakening had not been sent by God, America would have been in the abyss of spiritual destruction much earlier.

By the 1800s, God brought other movings of revival through men such as Peter Cartwright and D. L. Moody. Perhaps the final outpost of spiritual moving in our country came in the years of the Civil War, which (looking back in our history) may have been the final true move of God nationally in America. While this movement or awakening was more evangelistic, it

also had less depth of Scripture needed to sustain the hearts as the years unfolded. It must also be seen that the 1800s birthed Liberalism (an open denial of the infallibility and inerrancy of the Scriptures) within Christianity as well as Modernism (which elevated reason over the revelation of God's Word, the Bible). Although these movements began in Europe, they subtly and overwhelmingly made their way to the shores of America. Along with all of this was the rise of the cults, of evolution, and even the change of the winds of education under Horace Mann. The darkness that overshadowed the 1800s was also promoted by the infamous birth of psychology under Sigmund Freud and his belief that the repression of the sexual drive is the formative force of character within a man. His contemporary Alfred Adler created his formulation of the theory of "individual psychology," which became an integral part of the growing desire of the individual to secure authority in the social realm. And then Carl Jung poured into this atheistic, seething pot of psychology his perspective doctrine which he called at first, *analytical psychology*, and then *complex psychology*, which gave a greater premium to other forces such as the *psychic experience*.

The dialectic powers of these forces, as well as the rise of Form Criticism among the Protestants, amalgamated to aggressively confront Christianity in the 1800s. All these forces were adamantly against Christianity, yet

they were permitted to infiltrate Christianity and be identified with Christianity. Christianity became so elastic that its expansion included anything and everything with the name of *Jesus* and *Christian*.

Fundamentalism, born between 1840 and 1860, was truly used of God during the latter part of the 1800s and through the mid-part of the 1900s. However, it never was able to strike a deathblow upon these enemies of the Faith within the Christian seminaries.

Although for many decades Fundamentalism maintained "ecclesiastic separation," Fundamentalism was relaxed in personal separation of heart and living from the world. Because of this vulnerability, it eventually assimilated with a *new* breed of Christianity that came in the later twentieth century.

The New End-Time Christianity

Among a number of professing Christians in the latter part of the 1800s, there was a growing belief that the twentieth century would be a century called "The Christian Century" and that there would be a universal peace because of the spread of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. But then the first World War exploded in the early part of the twentieth century. This war brought disillusionment, that in turn gave birth to the reactionary

1920s, a decade known for its carefree, non-Christian, liberated attitude in morals and human autonomy throughout America. The Great Depression then fell on our country in 1929 somewhat slowing the inevitable spiritual and moral collapse in America.

Yet it was obvious that a new Christianity had been born and rising from the past century, ever mutating, which brought growing paradigm shifts politically, morally, and reli-

The question still remains: "How should we then live?" The answer is that we must live by *the Book, the blood, and the blessed hope* of His coming!

giously in our society. The moods of this trilogy radically changed our society. The aftermath of

World War II brought a quest and thirst for prosperity and enjoyment of life. By the 1950s Neo-Christianity was now becoming the warp and woof of the "Christian" fabric of America. This Neo-Christianity included the mixture of Neo-Orthodoxy, Neo-Morality, Neo-Evangelicalism, and Neo-Pentecostalism, which eventually gave birth to the all-pervasive Charismatic movement. At one time, the only hope we had through these oppressive changes was Fundamentalism, for historically, it not only believed in the call "Ye must be born again" but also that we must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

However, it must be noted with deep grief that Fundamentalism openly be-

gan making friends with Neo-Evangelicalism, which led to changes in dress and music standards. There is also the evidence in the more recent years that the bastions of Fundamentalism increased their fellowship with academic bastions of Neo-Evangelicalism (e.g., Wheaton College) through the guise of intercollegiate sports with open citadels of the secular world (e.g., Furman University).

Biblical separation is no longer part of the fabric of so-called conservative Christianity, to say nothing of the moderate evangelical spectrum. We are grieved in heart to see the open decline of Bob Jones University and its growing assimilation with the Neo-Christianity of the End Time. Perhaps the word *Fundamentalism* has become a blight to live with, and the evidence of this is the blending of former Fundamentalism more and more with the world. They desire no difference with Neo-Christianity in their appearance, their music, their terminology, their dramas, and their approach to evangelism. Even the liturgy of worship is becoming more *neo* in its approach. The line of demarcation has been erased, and where will you find the true remnant now? Though compromise has become the norm, such men talk nostalgically about the past; but they view it through the contemporary, believing they are the same as historic Christianity yet *updating* Christianity for our time. They speak of praying, seeking God, and revering the landmarks of former days when truth was

viewed differently than it is today. Somehow, they have been able to assimilate it all in order to convince and quell the conscience. The public Christianity of today is not the same as that of former days. The term *Neo-Fundamentalism* was used to make a transition into Neo-Evangelicalism. Jerry Falwell used this ploy to effectively make his mutating change. Fundamentalism then tried to sanitize the Bill Gothard ministry and his Institute in Basic Life Principles (with over 30,000 pastors heavily involved), but it only affected temporarily the outward man through the power of the flesh. Then Vision Forum swept through Fundamentalism with its founder and first president Doug Phillips' emphasis upon the family. Again, it was the show without the spiritual change within; the leaders' lives eventually gave evidence of this. It was another movement of the power of the flesh.

Trying to Make the Past Great in the Present

Dear friend, the former view of America is gone! The former biblical Christianity in its public presentation has changed as well. Even the former historic Fundamentalism has changed—never to return to its former days. We hear the slogan “Make America Great Again,” yet the very fabric of conscience and character has now so changed in society; even the concept of God has changed in the public arena of America. We cannot

get back what we once had because of the fabric of what America has become. Our very understanding of Who God is and Who Jesus Christ is, is no longer the same. Yes, today's Christianity in America is so interwoven into the fabric of the contemporary that as a nation, we will never return to God. The greatness is gone, the history of the past is no more. We dare not pray for God to bless America, for He will not bless the mess of deep apostasy.

We are in a new perceptual thinking and viewing of Christianity, the viewing of God, and even the understanding of true biblical ethics. As Europeans have fully abandoned Christianity, America has moved radically into a more convenient and comfortable form of Christianity. This abandonment and laxity of living the Christian life have brought about the breeding of a new form of Christianity which is not that of Scripture. Such thinking of "anything goes" is to be found in the wide variety of Bible versions on the market today, as well as in casual dress, contemporary music, dumbing down of the people in the preaching, limiting accountability to God, and redefining spirituality as an existential term. Postmodern Christianity does not care about creeds, doctrine, truth, absolutes, right and wrong. It will tolerate all lifestyles. The elasticity of Christianity includes anything and everyone.

How Should We Then Live?

If this is the way the world has gone, if this is the direction in which Christianity has mutated, and if everything that once was true is now dead, what hope do we have? "How should we then live?"

Yes, Ezekiel gave the falling away of Judah in its detail, for all of it was prophesied to come to pass. But does this mean we must give up Christianity, the Bible, Christ, His rich atonement, and the hope of His coming? What is the use for us to even live the Christian life if it seems that so many people, schools, and churches are falling away?

Remember, the Bible told us that all of this would happen in the End Time. Though visible, public Christianity has fallen away, and even the most conservative movement in the past—Fundamentalism—has gone the way of all flesh, we dare not sink down, becoming paralyzed in the darkness of despair. This is what the people began to do in Ezekiel's day.

Almost daily people write us or call us declaring, "There are no churches to attend that have not been affected by the contemporary. It seems everyone is falling into the trap of the apostasy." Well, thank God, not everybody. There is a remnant that is remaining true to God's Word and will. Yes, we are in the End Time of the Last Days; yes, the day of the vomiting of the Laodicean church out of Christ's mouth is here; yes, we live in the worst church age of human history, the most compromis-

ing, redefining hour of postmodern Christianity. But thank God we do not have to be part of it in heart and in life. God is able to keep us from falling, to keep us from deception, to keep us from apathy, and to keep us from backsliding!

The question still remains: "How should we then live?" The answer is that we must live by *the Book, the blood, and the blessed hope* of His coming! Revelation 12:11 declares how God's saints overcame the accuser of the brethren, the Devil himself. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death."

Conclusion

How should we then live in days such as these? Remain, continue, abide in Christ! Abide in His Word, His promises, and the grand provisions of His redemption. We do not have to go the way of all flesh!

As public Christianity is now in its demise, its estate has been turned over

to "another gospel" that is most accommodating to the world. The institutional church has given itself over to the world and its pragmatic, existential, fluid philosophies. But there is power to keep us from becoming what this age has become! Again, we declare: remain in Christ and in His Word. People have failed, Christians have failed, churches have failed, movements have failed, schools have failed, leaders have failed, even at times our human hopes have failed, Washington has failed, America has failed; BUT CHRIST has never failed! The message of the Bible will never fail!

Therefore, dear friend, let us live victorious over the world by *the Book of God, the blood* of our great Saviour, and with *the blessed hope* of His soon coming for His own. Let that hope purify you even as He is pure!

How should we then live in the days of the public demise of Christianity? We shall live in *the Book, the blood, and the blessed hope!*

"How Should We Then Live" in the Days Of the Demise of Sound Thinking?

Dr. H. T. Spence

One of the crucial keys in the unfolding of this burden is that the world has come to a different mindset than that which existed in previous centuries. For nearly two thousand years, the global thinking (at least in Western civilization) has been the logic of reason, particularly linear logic that is

based on absolutes of the thesis and antithesis. Linear logic was grandly explored by the metaphysical Greek philosophers. This logic was built upon the premise of law, order, design, purpose, and beauty, as well as the reality of right and wrong, truth and error, and both the distinction and the

separation of a thesis and antithesis. It was also based on absolutes and the fact that opposites in logic cannot be blended together.

A Brief History of Logic

One of the assets that strengthened the continuation of reason as the form of logic was the contributions of men from the days of Augustine to the Reformation. These leading thinkers were theologians who promoted the concepts of biblical truth. Natural logic and reason were pursued and understood best in the light of the revelation of the Scriptures. Beyond the Reformation, the absolutes of logical thinking even helped elevate the secularistic perspectives of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment philosophies expounded in the Age of Reason.

Beginning with the Italian Renaissance, thinkers began to elevate man himself to the center of reality. If the present view of modernism were viewed as a family tree, the Enlightenment would be modernism's mother and the Renaissance, its grandmother.

Personifying the beginning of the Enlightenment is René Descartes' declaration "I think, therefore I am." God was not the center of truth any longer—man was. Contemporary thinkers of that time embraced this maxim, even declaring man could alter the way God had

made the human mind to think in its logical context. Any thought, irrespective of God, could be declared true; man could now be the author of "truthful thinking."

In the late 1700s, Georg Hegel began to toy with the idea that there are various forms of logic. He posited the idea of *dialecticism*, a human philosophy which combines a thesis and antithesis, literally blending opposites together for a new conclusive belief or thought. By this innovative form of logic, pure reason literally began to decay in academic and practical thinking.

In the 1800s, another form of logic came to the forefront called *existentialism*. This concept of thinking or logic is one that totally denies all absolutes, even denouncing the blending of opposites (dialecticism). Existentialism discards all forms of thinking from previous centuries. In existentialism, the individual thinks only what he wants to think, and truth is only what the thinker wants to be true according

We must live by giving ourselves over to the One who made the mind, the thought concept, and letting His Word become the premise and foundation for all of our reasoning.

to him. 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 previous centuries, linear logic reasoning was based upon proving by

principles and adhering to what was proven by logic; its conclusion was considered truth. But this new form of logic does not rest upon any principle other than that the individual himself becomes the determining factor of what is true, without the need of proof; only thinking it to be so becomes truth for the individual.

This move in the history of logic is known as *post-reason*, *post-truth*, or *postmodern*. For nearly two thousand years, linear logic reasoning was accepted as the natural metaphysical concept of logic. This form of logic claimed there were universal and eternal truths and values which were founded upon absolutes and governing principles that lay beyond man. Just as the Supreme Court back in 1983 changed its presupposition from the US Constitution's interpretation to that of a "public policy" interpretation, the philosophical and ideological world changed in thinking from absolutes of reason to existentialism in what is known as *postmodernism*. This form of so-called reasoning has now become the logic of nearly all the governments and human organizations of the world. All concepts of ethics are now interpreted through this presupposition and this worldview. We have come to an hour that the thinking of man is so affected by the contemporary that *sound* thinking is destroyed. We must now ask the question, "How should we then live?"

God: The Author of Sound Thinking

As Bible Christians, we believe that God created the entirety of the systems of the human body, including the brain, the mind, as well as man's capacity to think orderly. We adamantly oppose the hypothesis of evolution.

In the Greek language of the New Testament, several terms carefully unfold the truth of how God designed the capacities of the mind to think. First, there is the term *nous*, translated "mind." The *nous* is the faculty necessary for understanding what is true or real. Therefore, the faculty to think becomes the habit of thought or the very essence of thought.

Second, there is the term *phroneo*, or the "content of the process of thought expressed," or the "object of thought within the mind." A companion word is *phronesis*, which denotes "an understanding, leading to right action"; it is an understanding in prudence and wisdom.

Third, there is the term *noia*, or the "mind with the object of its thought coming to a perception of thought." This perception then leads the mind to a collection of perceptions that builds a logos of thinking that becomes the essence of all that a person knows. The fullness of these thoughts is an individual's epistemology.

However, we are born into sin. As the mind over the years grows older in sin, there are lusts that take over the mind. As the world presents its thinking, the human heart within collabo-

rates with the world's thoughts. Satan then adds his own blinding thoughts, producing a trilogy of intense thought that influences the mind and eventually paralyzes its ability to think as God initially created it to do. As the serpent affected 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 depart from its created purpose and enter another realm of thinking, thus creating a product of that thinking. Note Paul's words in 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.

The world and the Devil have their powerful influences upon the mind and its concept of thinking. Paul also warned in Colossians 2:8:

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 fact is revealed in Romans 1:18:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodli-

ness 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 from God in the rejection 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."

Initially, God tests men's thinking; then men turn aside from Him. As a result, they do not like to retain God in their knowledge, their *epignosis*, their "full, experiential knowledge." They reject God, and God then rejects their mental attitude and gives them over to a reprobate mind. God intentionally changes the very entity He created for *sound* thinking, for *healthy* thinking, and He gives it over to cloudy, irrational, insane thinking. When this happens, man literally loses his mind and the capability of sound thinking.

When there are enough people who irrationally think the same way on earth, then these people are considered the sane thinkers; those against their irrationality are viewed as the insane members of society. Only 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 changes 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 the last days seen in Genesis 6), 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” (Gen. 6:5). Evil thinking, wicked thinking, destructive thinking, terrorist thinking, all are the growing thinking of the End Time. But there is also the “reprobate mind” that is the instigator of and collaborator with the reprobate heart, the thinking that makes the man what he is. 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 the mind is reprobate in its thinking ability. Mankind collectively has now

Because of sin and the mind of an age thinking for us, the mind can become irrevocably damaged in its ability to soundly think.

entered into a global rejection of God. We have come to a “social mind,” a “social will,” and “social thinking” against the very laws that God created for the human mind to think. Today, the minds of individuals are the product of the *nous* and the *noia* of the world; more and more, society has embraced reprobate thinking.

Because of sin and the mind of an age thinking for us, the mind can become irrevocably damaged in its ability to soundly think. Thus, in the natural man we could never come to God and never come to true sound thinking. To the reprobate mind, everything concerning God is foolishness: the Gospel, the cross, the concept of de-

pravity. The reprobate mind has lost its ability to come to God. The natural man in this condition will never discern the things of God; they are foolishness to him and neither can he know them.

The Demise of Sound Thinking

Therefore, dear reader, we are truly in the days of the demise of sound thinking. We must remember the term *demise*. Demise is a death of something. Additionally, it causes the transfer of an estate to another. Once sound thinking is dead in an individual, a nation, or the world, the concept

of thinking is transferred to another or to something else. This is what global society has come to.

In our society’s irrationality, right has become wrong, truth has become error, God has become the Devil, morality has become immoral, and evil has become good. In every field of epistemology today (Liberals, Conservatives, Moderates, Constitutionalists, Abolitionists, Socialists, Communists, Democrats, Republicans, the Tea Party, etc.), all persons have thought concepts about God, Christ, Christianity, the purpose of Christianity, and what is a Christian. However, nothing 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 homeless-

ness, to the billionaire with his wealth, they all have their minds, their thinking, their *logos*, their preconditions of reason. This world is now saturated by the overwhelming powers of the media, education, and the movie industry, to come to one mind thought and one worldview of everything. Truly we have been forced into the world's presuppositions in how we are to collectively think.

In days of the demise of sound thinking, it is important to ask, "How should 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, or *metanoia* ("a change of mind"). 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 repentance, a changing of the perception of the mind in its thinking. Man must have a change of mind before he can have a change of heart. His whole perspective of life of irrationality must change; he must come to himself, as the prodigal son did in Luke 15. Grace must teach his heart to fear, for the fear of the Lord will be the beginning of knowledge and wisdom to bring that mind to what God intended for it to think. Only the Bible can provide the preconditions for man's experience and

reasoning. We must see that the Bible fully provides all principles for the preconditions of sound thinking. It provides the laws of logic. It alone provides the uniformity of nature. It provides absolute morality.

God's thinking is represented 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 absolute morality, and it 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 this way; if he does, he will destroy himself. This destruction is what we are witnessing throughout the earth 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." This is like saying, "I don't need air to breathe; I don't believe in air, and I can breathe just fine." It is not a rational response. The evolutionist, the atheist, the agnostic, and the secularist have no foundation for their worldview; it is 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 becomes the intermediary place to get to the heart; therefore, we

must live with a constant vigil over our mind and its 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 the following 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 the conformity with the world begins in the mind, in our thinking. Note First Peter 4:1:

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 us back to our former thinking.

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 Tim. 1:6, 7).

In these days of the demise of sound thinking, “How should we then live?” We must live by giving ourselves over to the One who made the mind, the thought concept, and letting His Word become the premise and foundation for all of our reasoning.

“How Should We Then Live” in the Days of the Demise of Morality and Manhood?

Dr. H. T. Spence

One of the great tragedies of our times has been the demise of morality and consequently the demise of manhood. When these important principles die, the remaining estate of morality and manhood throughout the world lies in complete ruin.

There are several approaches that could be taken concerning the demise of morality, but we want to carefully and honorably approach this burden from the standpoint of its effect on manhood. America has been tampering with the biblical governing ethics of morality for such a long time that we have descended into an estate filled with debauchery and “strange flesh.” America’s moral legacy is bankrupt. The moral chart and compass has been destroyed, and we are found drifting from one fleshly novelty to another, taking us deeper and deeper into a cesspool of filth and stench.

Christ warned us that His coming would be a time like the days of Noah and Lot. In both situations their generation’s deep immorality had become the norm. In days of Noah the immorality abounded between the genders of male and female where all conceivable sins were explored. The mind and thought of humanity was drawn to the physical rather than to the spiritual or mystical. Christ calls attention particularly to the cities with which Lot had become identified, where the master sin was male with male, the sin

of sodomy (or the more contemporary term *homosexuality*). The apostle Paul addresses this evil sin in Romans 1 and 1 Corinthians 5 and 6. Jude in his epistle calls it “strange flesh” (verse 7). How will these powerful sins of the flesh come into play in the End Time? In all of these paradigm shifts, we are witnessing the demise of the morals of young men that inherently are destroying in them the reality of true manhood.

The Redefining of Morality

Perhaps we need to define the word *morality* both in its definitive context and what it has come to mean in the postmodern context. The Father of American Education, Noah Webster, defined morality in his dictionary published in 1828:

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

In contrast, also note the definition of *morality* in the *World Book Dictionary* by Thorndike-Barnhart (1980):

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.

It is evident that this last entry offers a change to the definition of morality based upon the present society, which has become the definer of right and wrong. As society degenerates, so does its definition of morality.

One of the great problems concerning morality and moral behavior in various contexts is its influence upon our *ethics*. Does who or what one believes determine the principles of right and wrong? According to the Christian worldview, morality is exclusively based upon God's absolute and unchanging moral nature; 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 upon which a completely unambiguous ethic must be built for man to live by. Therefore, ethical relativism will always lead to destruction:

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" (Matt. 7:13).

Christian ethics is inseparable from the theology of Scripture for the simple reason that Christian ethics is grounded in the character of God. Therefore, the Word of God must be the absolute standard of both our ethics and worldview. Rather than believing in some ethical scheme that is 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 (Rom. 1) and special revelation of the Bible, which includes the person of Jesus Christ. This standard must never change; our standards of living are not found within ourselves but in the objective Word of the lawgiver, God Himself.

The demise of morality in our present age is a direct consequence of our global society's common consensus of boldly denouncing God and His Word. Men have chosen to partake of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil for themselves. They have unashamedly and intelligently entered into the belief that they are God and have a right to become their own fountain of judgment; they alone declare the authority to choose what is right and wrong. The lawgiver is no longer God in heaven (with the gift of His written Word); man has taken the place of God in the judgment of right

and wrong. The world has brought the demise of God as the judge of morality; in His place they have set a new estate of so-called morality. This estate has become one of no *right or wrong*, no *true or false*, and no *good or evil*. Although the world now believes there is no such thing as absolute truth, they do not hesitate to denounce anyone who would use any authority to define truth or impose upon others his idea of what is morally right and wrong. Dare we wonder why the world is being forced into accepting the voice of naturalism and evolution rather than God and creation? They have created in their thinking that this will be a world of the natural man without God. They have crowded God out of the thinking of their minds.

Flowing out of this self-appointed Godhood by man is the growing belief that intimate relationships can be in any realm where man desires to pursue his pleasure. And mutating out of this is that man has the right to destroy everything that goes back to God. For man has the right to create his own reality. And if God does exist (he or she, or a non-gender god), He certainly has nothing to say about what we should believe or how we should live. All principles that are expressed are preferences and *only* preferences.

Out of the multitude of denunciations against God found in the End Time, mankind is still either male or female in the moral realm of the genders. However, more and more the in-

sanity of man declares that each individual has the right to believe what he wants to believe about himself/herself rather than how he or she was born. In a postmodern, existential world, an individual can believe what he wants to believe; that thought becomes truth to him, her, or "it." Therefore, the Bible must not only be condemned but also eradicated. Its *male or female* premise is decidedly absolute. Such insanity declares that all have a right to choose a transgender humanity despite every child being born with only xx or xy chromosomes. This has now become the battleground. The sexual appearance may be one thing, but the individual may be the opposite. It is the responsibility of the medical world to accommodate and correlate the outward appearance to the inward existential belief of the individual.

The Bible Christian believes that God created male and female, and physiologically and scientifically, there can be no other genders. Human chromosomes are either xx (female) or xy (male). There is no other natural identity of gender; there is no transgender existence. Whatever the medical world may do to change body functions and appearances, the genetic reality of an individual can never be altered; the physical body still cries out at birth—male or female.

The Folly of Changing God's Appointment

Transgenderism is a mind-manipulated, existential world of existence

and irrationality being forced upon us to not only accept but also to believe. The theory of evolution gives credence to an immense abundance of time, random choice by chance, and adaptation to environment that collectively brings about all that is in nature, including man. Now man believes he has come to a season in these 4.6 billion years of existence whereby he can enable himself to be his own creator. Man now thinks he can slip into the driver's seat of evolution and through technology, science, and medicine create and make the choice of what he wants to be, even on the other side of his birth. What end-time giants will rise as the product of this obsession of man to make himself whatever he wants to be without the interference of God? Anything outside of God and His providence will be personal suicide. To dare denounce what God has made and to cut off God from the reality of that person will be the demise of an estate that will end in grotesque and destructive darkness. Transgenderism is a purely cultural construction, and it will be the sealing of the demise of humanity. For the sheer survival of the human race, this is why the coming of the Lord will be an absolute necessity. Mankind is now capable of destroying his existence.

It is evident that the demise we have witnessed has gone beyond individual preference; there is an aversion to the truth of gender that is being forced upon the world to not only accept but also to agree with. In 1987, American

philosopher Allan Bloom (1930–1992) wrote a book entitled *The Closing of the American Mind*. In this work he 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 fifty 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.

Mr. Bloom in his book argued that universities no longer taught students how to think. It is evident he believed the schools were advocating the presupposition that students should be unconcerned about the lessons of the past or about examining ideas in a historical context.

Man has moved away from the conviction that everyone has a right to his own opinions to the belief that every opinion is equally right and true. With all this floating mass of modern think-

ing, there has been for the past fifty years a growing hatred and myth in America about boys, mainly through the agenda of the feminists who seek to destroy the hope of boys growing up to be men and girls growing up to be young ladies. Truly in America today, amidst its fragmented islands of thought and resultant life being lived, we have come to an illusory world that believes girls would make better men and robust boys should be sedated to feminine qualities. Christina Hoff Sommers (who views herself as a philosopher and author) declared in her book *The War Against Boys* that the feminist movement has brought harm to our young men in America:

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.

She continues in her book to uncover the distortion and the burying of truth concerning manhood versus womanhood. False statistics (so often concocted by liberals) are suggesting that girls are diminishing in so many areas; therefore, boys need to be taken “down a notch” and reduced in importance. But this presupposition is not true, for Ms. Sommers reveals that the US Department of Education proves girls make higher grades than boys, and girls now outnumber boys in student government, honor societies, and many other areas. It is only in sports that the boys are still ahead. It is evident that more boys than girls are in-

involved in crime, alcohol, and drugs; but surprisingly girls attempt suicide more than boys; yet, more often it is boys who succeed in taking their lives.

Needless to say, we are not in a girl-crisis climate as we are being told by the politically correct; we are actually in a boy-crisis climate that is being covered up by the woke and feminist movements. We tend to believe that this is simply because boys are boys, and that we should not push them to do better. But we must remember that it is both the moral and political climate in which we live. Boys are becoming more ignorant, and this is what the feminists want. We have not pushed boys in discipline as we have girls. And until boys’ problems are acknowledged, they will never be addressed in our homes.

The so-called gender theorists are telling us that boys and men are dangerous to society, unless they are socialized away from what history has taught as “conventional maleness.” While it may be too late (they say) to change adult men, boys need to be reconstructed to be more like girls. Or as the prominent feminist leader Gloria Steinem declared, “We badly need to raise boys more like we raise girls.”

Oh, dear Christian, do we see the powers of the age pushing for transgenderism: for boys to become girls and girls to become boys? We certainly may be against the medical involvement in both drugs and surgery, but how are we raising our boys at home? Do we expect more out of the

girls than we do the boys? Do we cover up for the girls, or even have the sisters to cover up for the weaknesses of their brothers? Does the mother tend to cover up for the husband, or deceptively deal with him? We are witnessing a reversal of roles being pressed in schools, with teachers encouraging boys to dress up as girls in the classroom without telling the parents. The powers of lesbianism are radically becoming the personality authorities in every context of leadership from Washington to corporations, school teachers, media personalities, the movie industry, and even the leadership of denominational Christianity. Men are looking more effeminate while women are seeking a more masculine appearance. Body piercings have brought manhood down, promoting more and more the seduction of homosexuality among men. Sad to say, these powers of influence are marking boys at younger and younger ages. All of this has affected the genre of music and church leadership; even preaching in churches today has become effeminate or watered down into simply "teaching." It is now rare to hear a strong-voiced preacher behind a pulpit. The world is wanting a "softer" voice in preaching and singing, and what they would call "non-offensive," "non-authoritative." As the men become "nice and sweet," the women behind the scenes are becoming the more aggressive voices even in the pulpits and pastorates. The move for co-pastors of husband and

wife has been the religious vogue for several years now.

Where Are the Men?

Yes, where are the men? Where are biblical husbands and biblical wives in the biblically portrayed, appointed roles? Where are the young men who are heads of their homes, strong in their character, and masculine in their living? We cry out, "Let our boys be boys and our girls be girls, yet without sinning!" The next generation will be lost if our boys do not become men in leadership and our girls do not become adornments in modesty and submissiveness. We are at the hour of the role reversals both of genders and of what God intended in the home and in the church.

Note the words of David to young Solomon in 1 Kings 2:1:

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.

One wonders in the life of Solomon if he was a young man who tended to be under his mother while his brothers were naturally more masculine though away from God. Solomon finally succumbed to women and never regained his manliness.

In days of the demise of morality and manhood, "How should we then live?" How does a boy become a man? Perhaps there are several areas that are needed for a boy to become a man.

The first area is *spiritual*. This bur-

den is seen in Hebrews 5:11–14. The young Christian man must become strong in faith and character. He must come to full age by reason of use in discerning both good and evil. He must come to strength for life and living for his home and leadership. Many who are men in years have not come to this mature faith in manhood. They are given to pleasure and fun and enjoyment rather than responsibilities in life.

The second area is *mental*. One of the reasons young boys and young girls do not grow up is that they have never come to sound thinking. First Corinthians 13:11 reads, “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 our thought process must grow in order to become a man. What a young man thinks about himself, about his body, and about his accountability to God, his parents, and his honorable teachers is vitally important. The young man must increase in speech, which is the outflow of thought and reason. In this generation it is rare to meet a young man in his twenties who is manly in his conversation, his thought life, and in the way he carries himself. Thoughts bring forth actions, actions develop habits, habits bring forth character, and character becomes one’s destiny.

The third area is *emotional*. The words of Proverbs 16:32 declare, “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. How does a young man or a young lady honorably express emotion? These expressions will be evidence of either immaturity or maturity.

The fourth area is *physical*, the stature of man. The Bible reveals in 1 Timothy 4:8 that “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.” We certainly observe today that sports and physique are thrown upon us as markings of being manly and womanly. But the sports’ personalities of our contemporary are so immature in the living of life; they cannot communicate, and their lives tend to be a failure, especially in their marriages. It should be noted that physical activity is part of the young man’s growing; however, it is not the most important concern. Boys and girls are bodily maturing beyond their mind and emotions at this time in history. One of the main reasons for these unbalanced maturations is the deluge of sights and sounds of a sexual world that tends to cause the body to mature faster than the mind. For the Christian youth, all of these areas must be brought under the “mind of Christ,” for their lives to fall out for good, and to the glory of God.

Conclusion

Perhaps four other areas will help to

answer the question “How should we then live?” For in these days of radical paradigm shifts taking place in the early grades of the primary schooling, the most impressionable years of a child must be carefully protected and constantly guarded as our little ones grow up in the worst of times.

A first area needed in becoming a man or woman is that we must *learn to make right decisions*. Making right decisions will strengthen the youth for later years. Always do right!

A second area needed in becoming a man or woman is to *ponder often upon what one will sow into his life?* Note what Galatians 6:7–9 makes clear:

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

What is the child establishing in his speech, behavior, desires, moods, spirit, attitudes, and thoughts?

A third area needed for consideration is *who are the men or women influencing their youthful lives?* A young person should have goals to become a certain kind of man or woman. The youth should admire and revere those who have already achieved that goal. They should make sure their heroes have lives worthy of that honor. Examples are important in a child’s life. We are

to be warned by those who failed and encouraged by those who succeeded in a most honorable way in life. The Bible is replete with such examples in both areas. And, the greatest life is the life of our Saviour.

The final area is to *pray for God to make the boy a man, and the girl a woman*. Learn to talk like a man, work like a man, think like a man, and dress like a man. Be a manly boy and become a manly man. And the young girl should be trained and taught to become a feminine woman, a womanly woman.

Again, in days of the demise of morality and manhood, “How should we then live?” If we are male, let us live as a man—a man of God! And if we are female, live as a feminine woman, a woman of God!

The day will come when God will call us home to heaven with a final charge. Note David’s declaration in 1 Chronicles 29:1:

Solomon my son, whom alone God hath chosen, is yet young and tender, and the work is great: for the palace [the Temple] is not for man, but for the LORD God.

And in Proverbs 31:10 and 11,

Who can find a virtuous [spiritually strong] woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

It will take the wholeness of life as a man or as a woman in the light of

these scriptural contexts. The “palace” children that they may grow up to be a (our life) is not for us, it is for the Lord holy seed for God in their generation. God! May God bless spiritually our

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