

The Summit Chronicle

Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord — Isaiah 2:3



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Table of Contents

THE HADEAN REALM

pg 1 by Hugo McCord

PAUL THE MYTH VS. THE REAL PAUL

pg 4 by Kevin L. Moore

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

pg 6 by Kevin L. Moore

INTELLIGENT DESIGN & THE ORIGIN OF LIFE (P3)

pg 7 by Rex Banks

A BOOK FROM GOD

pg 10 by Gary C. Hampton

THREE RULES OF HUMAN CONDUCT

pg 12 by Wayne Jackson

PSALMS 122

pg 15

Contributing Writers for this Month's Articles

Wayne Jackson
Rex Banks
Kevin Moore
Edwin Jones
Hugo McCord
Gary C. Hampton

Scripture of the Month

Finally, my brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are honest, whatever things are right, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report; if there is any virtue and if there is any praise, think on these things.

—Philippians 4:8

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THE HADEAN REALM

by Hugo McCord

A sincere Bible student would like a discussion in regard to "the Hadean realm":

1. "My understanding [he says] from the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16 is that there is a place for departed souls which consists of a place of comfort for the righteous (Abraham's bosom) and a place of torment for the wicked." I believe that your understanding is accurate.

2. "Another sincere brother takes Paul's statement in Philippians 1:23, 'having a desire to depart and be with Christ,' as teaching that when one dies he or she goes to be with Christ in heaven."

On the contrary, a person's being "with Christ in heaven" has to wait until after a stay in "Abraham's bosom" (Luke 16: 22), which is another name for Paradise (Luke 23:43), and "the third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12:2). And heaven must wait until "the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render to every man according to his deeds (Matthew 16:27). Jesus "is ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and the dead" (Acts 10:42; 17:31; John 5:22).

We all will be "made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ" that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what we have done, "whether good or bad"

(2 Corinthians 5:10). After "the day of judgment" (Matthew 10:15; 11:22, 24; 12: 36), the righteous will "be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4:17).

3. Another sincere brother says "that the bodies of the saints that arose when Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected went to heaven and at that time the righteous no longer go to hades but go to be with Christ," and the passages cited are 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1: 23.

I do not doubt the sincerity of the brother who says "that the bodies of the saints that arose when Jesus died on the cross and was resurrected went to heaven," but the brother is not an inspired prophet raised up to contradict Bible teaching. Matthew (27:52-53) does not say that "the bodies of the saints," nor even "the souls of the saints went to heaven."

Solomon denied that any human being in his day had "ascended up into heaven" (Proverbs 30:4), and Jesus said that "no one has ascended into heaven" (John 3: 13).

The sincere brother also affirms, when "the bodies of the saints that arose when Jesus died," that at "that time" the "righteous no longer go to hades." The Hades that Jesus mentioned was a place of "torments" and of a "flame" (Luke 16:

23-24), and righteous people have never gone to such a place.

If the brother has in mind hades as a grave (as is most often found in the 61 occurrences of the Greek word haidēs in the Old Testament), then righteous people have not quit going to hades, for “it is appointed to men [righteous and unrighteous] once to die” (Hebrews 9:27).

Our sincere brother says that when “the bodies of the saints that arose when Jesus died,” then “at that time the righteous no longer go to hades.” What is the “hades” into which the righteous went before the saints arose, and are able now to avoid? He did not say.

However, he did say that the righteous now “go to be with Christ” and the passages cited are 2 Corinthians 5:8 and Philippians 1:23. But righteous people are not “at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8) in heaven until they first have appeared “before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

Furthermore, the beautiful thought in Philippians 1:23, “having the desire to depart and be with Christ” in heaven, omits what happens to the soul of a Christian or Lazarus, after he departs this life, who is “carried away by the angels into Abraham’s bosom” (Luke 16:22), which is also called Paradise (Luke 23:43) and “the third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2), and there “is comforted” (Luke 16:25), now for 2000 years for Paul, until the second coming of Jesus “with his angels” to sit on his “judgment seat” (Matthew 16:27; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

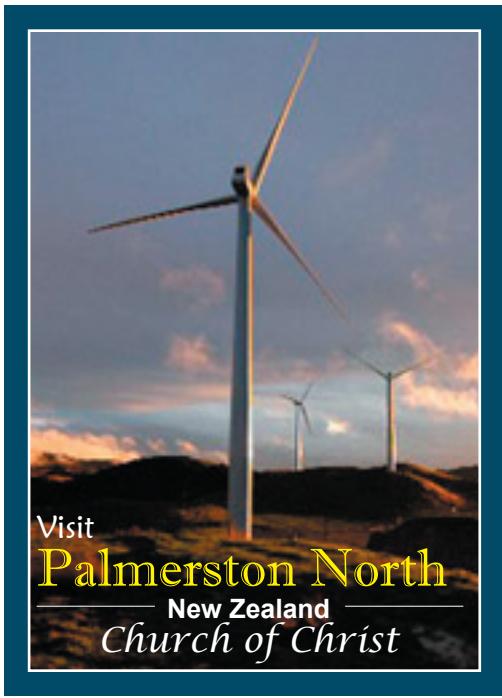
Then, after the Day of Judgment (Acts 17:31) all the righteous will be with Christ forever in heaven (1 Thessalonians 4:17; John 14:2-3; 1 Peter 1:5; 2 Timothy 4:8).

On the other hand, God, whose “understanding is infinite” (Psalm 147:5), whose “judgments” are “unsearchable” and “his ways past tracing out” (Romans 11:33), who knows “the end from the beginning” (Isaiah 46:10), keeps the unrighteous in a flaming Hades (Luke 16:23-24), and finally casts Hades “into the lake of fire” (Revelation 20:14), which is the “hell of fire” (Matthew 5:22).

God, who is “love” (1 John 4:8, 16), who gave part of him to die for me (John 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:10; Galatians 2:20), knows what is best for everybody! If I object, I must answer the question, “O man, who are you to reply against God?” (Romans 9:20).



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PAUL THE MYTH VS. THE REAL PAUL

by Kevin L. Moore

Paul gives his readers a very lofty admonition: “Imitate me” (1 Corinthians 4:16; 11:1). The problem is, we tend to have such a distorted view of Paul that this seems to be an extremely difficult, if not impossible, thing to do. One of the reasons this is such a challenge is because “Paul the myth” has been created over the centuries. Sometimes he is referred to as “Saint Paul” to distinguish him from the ordinary Christian. He is commonly viewed as an inaccessible authority figure, high up on a pedestal with a halo encircling his head. We hear of “Pauline theology,” as though he were a lone maverick who developed his own brand of Christianity distinct from that of the Jerusalem apostles. He is often regarded as a fearless missionary who boldly marched into unknown territories, bravely confronting religious error and conquering men’s souls without the slightest apprehension.

With such an inflated view of Paul, how can any of us mere mortals ever hope to comply with the apostolic directive to imitate him? Few can live up to the standard of “Paul the myth,” and since I am no “Saint Paul,” I have an excuse for not doing more for the Lord, for not being more involved in the church, and for not being more faithful in my Christian walk. However, to be fair to Paul, to give more credit to God (who was the real reason for the apostle’s success), and to take away some of our excuses, we need to have a more realistic view of Paul. The purpose of this article is not to take anything away from the apostle that is his due, but simply to dispel some of the Pauline myths.

Paul the “Theological Genius” is a Myth

Is it legitimate to speak of “Pauline theology” as though Paul developed his own doctrine and his own brand of Christianity? What does Paul himself say? “But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ” (Galatians 1:11-12). The gospel which Paul preached was something that he himself had “received” (1 Corinthians 15:1-3), and the things he wrote were ultimately “the commandments of the Lord” (1 Corinthians 14:37).

Whether or not Paul was highly intelligent, talented, or creative, no one really knows. What we do know is that everything he believed, taught, and stood for did not come from himself. It all came from a much higher source. Rather than promoting anything about himself, he hid behind the message of a crucified and risen Savior. How, then, do I

imitate Paul in this regard? “If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God . . .” (1 Peter 4:11).

Paul the “Fearless Warrior” is a Myth

Is it realistic to think of Paul as a man without inhibitions, apprehensions, or fears? If so, it makes it much more difficult for most of us to imitate him. But is that what the apostle was really like? During their first missionary tour, Barnabas and Paul were working in areas familiar to them, namely Cyprus and Southern Galatia (Acts 13–14). On the second tour it seems that again Paul was wanting to stay fairly close to home, namely in Asia and Bithynia (Acts 16:6-7). However, the Lord wanted him to go even further a field into Macedonia (Acts 16:9-10). While Paul obeyed this missionary call, it was anything but easy for him. He later wrote, “when we came to Macedonia, our bodies had no rest, but we were troubled on every side. Outside were conflicts, inside were *fears*” (2 Corinthians 7:5, emphasis added). From there Paul’s team moved to Achaia, where the Lord reassured him: “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent: for I am with you . . .” (Acts 18:9-10). Paul later admitted to the Corinthians, “I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling” (1 Corinthians 2:3). If that does not destroy the “Pauline myth,” I don’t know what will!

Simply based on the information available to us, there does not appear to have been anything all that remarkable about Paul. Both his bodily presence and his speech were considered unimpressive (2 Corinthians 10:10). A second-century description of him portrays him as a man of small stature, with a bald head, hooked nose and crooked legs (*Acts of Paul and Thecla*). Considering the extreme maltreatment he endured through the years (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:23-28), it is not surprising that his body bore visible scars (Galatians 6:17). On top of all that, what he describes as his “thorn in the flesh” (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) was probably some physical malady that he struggled with for the rest of his life.

If Paul were such a pitiful and unimpressive specimen of humanity, how does one explain his phenomenal success as a missionary? First and foremost, credit must be given to the mighty working of God (1 Corinthians 2:4-5; 15:10). Secondly, one cannot discount the invaluable assistance of Paul’s co-workers (Acts 20:4; etc.). But as far as Paul

continued on page 6

THE ROLE OF WOMEN

by Kevin L. Moore

Does the statement in Galatians 3:28 mean that “in Christ” men and women are equal in every respect and hence there is no fundamental difference in their designated roles?

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28). God does not care about one’s ethnic, social or gender status, and He shows no partiality with regard to whom He offers salvation (Rom. 2:11; 1 Tim. 2:3-6). A woman has just as much right to be “in Christ” as a man. But created gender differences do not disappear in the Lord. The respective male and female roles were established in the Garden of Eden and continue to be relevant in the Christian Age (1 Tim. 2:11-14). In the church of our Lord both men and women share the benefits of salvation, and they are equal in these higher things, but redemption in Christ does not eliminate their divinely appointed functions, responsibilities, or positions (1 Cor. 11:3).

If women are to “keep silent” and “are not permitted to speak” in church gatherings (1 Cor. 14:34-35; 1 Tim. 2:11-12), wouldn’t this prohibit them from singing or from making comments in Bible class?

In the context of 1 Cor. 14, “to speak” (*laleō*) has reference to the exercise of spiritual gifts to lead the assembly (vs. 5, 6, 19, etc.). Instead of “speaking” as to lead the worship assembly, women are told to be submissive (*hupotassō*) and remain “silent” (*sigāō*). To take this word in its absolute sense is to ignore the context. Paul had just said to the tongue-speakers to “keep silent” (v. 28), and to the prophets to “keep silent” (v. 30), i.e. to refrain from using their gifts to lead the assembly in certain circumstances. This obviously does not refer to singing (v. 15), saying “Amen” (v. 16), making a public confession (1 Tim. 6:12), etc. Women are simply forbidden to speak as to lead the corporate assembly.

The word translated “silence” in 1 Tim. 2:11-12 is *hêsuchia* and has reference to a quiet, gentle disposition. A godly woman will not be authoritative, nor will she seek a leadership position in the church, but will be submissive and possess “a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious to God” (1 Pet. 3:4). Simply making comments, asking questions, or even reading in a Bible class do not violate these principles. However, a woman who stands before a mixed assembly and at least gives the impression that she

is leading does not exhibit the attitude enjoined by these directives.

What is meant by “let them ask their own husbands at home” (1 Cor. 14:35)?

To take this universally would exclude unmarried women, widows, and those married to unbelievers (7:8, 13). The word translated “husbands” is *andras* (literally “men”) and may refer to “their own men” (i.e. husbands, fathers, brothers, or even ‘brothers in Christ’). It is reasonable to infer that at least some of these women possessed spiritual gifts (cf. 11:5), which may have included the gifts of interpretation and discerning of spirits (12:10). What was a spiritually gifted woman to do when she questioned the message of a male prophet or tongue-speaker in the assembly? Paul says “keep silent,” refrain from using your gift, and reserve your questions for a setting outside the assembly. There were things appropriate at home that were inappropriate at church gatherings (cf. 11:22), and Paul dissuades women from the appearance of taking a lead in the worship assembly.

Is it permissible for a Christian woman to pray aloud in the presence of and on behalf of Christian men in light of passages like Acts 1:14; 4:24; 12:12?

When Christians assemble together and pray together, it is to be done in an orderly manner (1 Cor. 14:40). If everyone spoke their personal prayers out loud at the same time, this would be distracting and at least give the appearance of disorder and confusion. In the assemblies at Corinth it seems that one person led the prayer on behalf of the congregation (1 Cor. 14:16), and this person was to be a man (1 Cor. 14:34). While one person was actually speaking aloud, all the rest of the church would have followed his address to God with their hearts and minds, thus the church collectively prayed together. The passages that mention men and women praying together (e.g. Acts 1:14) say nothing about women actually praying on behalf of men. It is important not to read into the text something that is not there and to ensure that the overall context of Scripture is considered.

Incidentally, in Acts 12:12-17, before Peter’s arrival the only ones specifically named in this prayer group are females (cf. Acts 16:13), and they are then told to go report

to James and the *adelphois* (“brothers”). But whether this was an all-female prayer session or not makes no difference to what the passage actually says and does not say.

In Acts 4:24, the context seems to indicate that this was **the apostles** praying rather than the whole Jerusalem church. Peter and John had just been released from custody (vs. 19-21), and they returned to their “own” (v. 23). Their own what? The New International Version unnecessarily inserts the word “people,” whereas the New King James Version uses the word “companions.” They prayed for boldness to speak God’s word (v. 29) and to work miracles (v. 30); they were filled with the Spirit and spoke God’s word with boldness (v. 31). Only the apostles are recorded as working miracles and speaking God’s word for the first five chapters of Acts. In Acts 4:32 a new subject begins, and the multitude of believers is mentioned, but it is still only the apostles working miracles (v. 33).

There is a general biblical principle which should govern our Christian activities: God has given the role of leadership to Christian men, and women are instructed to have a spirit of quietness and submissiveness (1 Cor. 11:3; 14:34-35; 1 Tm. 2:11-12). Notice that this even applies to public prayer: 1 Tm. 2:8-13, “Therefore I desire that the **men** [Greek *andras* in contrast to women] pray . . . Let a woman learn in silence with all submission . . .” When one person voices a prayer and others follow along in their minds with the words, that person is actually *leading* the thoughts of the group. God has not authorized women to lead men. Some may reason that if the man is in a position of authority, he may therefore delegate certain things for the woman to do. However, a Christian man is not given the authority by God to delegate to a woman things which God would not have her do (e.g. preaching).

There is also the question of *actual* authority and leadership, and *perceived* authority and leadership. For example, if a woman stands before a mixed assembly to distribute communion, she might not be in a position of actual authority or leadership, but it leaves the impression (at least in the minds of many) that she is in such a position. But a Christian woman must modestly show that she respects her God-appointed role of submission and ought to do nothing that will leave the wrong impression with others.

Does 1 Corinthians 11:5 suggest that women are allowed to lead prayers and preach in a mixed worship assembly?

In 1 Cor. 11:4-13 Paul merely identifies the activities of praying and prophesying without specifying the environment of these activities. Notice that he is not necessarily discussing a setting where there is both praying AND prophesying, but rather praying OR prophesying. Neither praying nor prophesying is restricted in the NT to the corporate worship assembly (Acts 13:1-3; 15:30-32; 21:10-11; etc.), and mentioning both in the same context does not demand such a setting (cf. Rom. 12:6-12; 1 Thess. 5:16-20). When Paul first wrote this epistle to the saints in Corinth, it was not divided into chapters and verses as in our current English translations. The subject matter of what we now call chapter eleven actually begins in verse two, and nearly everyone agrees that it was a mistake to mark the beginning of the chapter at verse one. Moreover, Paul’s original text did not have a chapter heading, like “The Corporate Worship Assembly.”

As Paul begins a new subject at verse 17 and introduces matters relevant to the Christian assembly, there is no reason to reverse the context to incorporate the previous discussion. Paul seems to be using the example of men in this discourse as a means of contrast to point out his main theme -- the conduct of women. Since women were not permitted to speak as to lead in a mixed assembly (1 Cor. 14:34-35), the only legitimate setting for them to exercise their spiritual gifts was in all-female gatherings (cf. Ex. 15:20-21; Acts 16:13; Titus 2:3-5). It is unnecessary to infer that Paul was limiting these instructions to a mixed assembly, and in light of what he goes on to write in 14:34-35, he is obviously not giving women permission to lead in a mixed assembly.

Was there a position in the early church for the “deaconess” (i.e. female deacon)?

In Romans 16:1 Phoebe is called a *diakonon* of the church in Cenchrea. This word is the accusative form of *diakonos*, which is rendered “deacon” in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tm. 3:8-13, and “minister” in 1 Cor. 3:5 and 2 Cor. 6:4. Is it proper, then, for a woman to serve as a “deacon”



or a “minister” in the church? When we understand what the word *diakonos* actually signifies, there is no problem. Its basic meaning is “servant” or “helper,” and in this sense every Christian is to be a *diakonos* (Matt. 20:26; 23:11; Mark 9:35). Furthermore, the word *diakonos* is used in both a generic and an official sense in the NT.

For example, the word *presbuteros* (“elder”) generally refers to someone who is older (cf. Luke 15:25; Acts 2:17), and even applies to older women (1 Tim. 5:2). But the same word is also used in a special sense, referring to the position of leadership in a local congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). In order for a person to serve as either a *presbuteros* (elder) or a *diakonos* (deacon) in the official sense, he must meet specific qualifications, which, incidentally, clearly exclude women (1 Tim. 3:1-13). When applied to a Christian lady, therefore, whether the word *diakonos* is rendered “deaconess” or “servant,” it does not change the function designated by the term nor does it alter what a woman is allowed or not allowed to do in the church. The terms *diakonos* and “leader” represent completely opposite concepts.

How can female leadership be unacceptable to God considering the account of Deborah in Judges 4-5?

As the fourth chapter of Judges begins, we find the Israelites in open rebellion against God and consequently suffering oppression by Jabin, king of Canaan, and the commander of his army, Sisera (Judges 4:1-2). “Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time” (v. 5). It will be helpful to consider what this “judging” entailed and whether it sets a precedent for female leadership in the Lord’s church today.

There is a distinction between leading, prophesying, and judging. Miriam was a prophetess (Ex. 15: 20), but she was not Israel’s leader. Abimelech was the leader of Israel but not their judge (Judg. 9:2-6, 22). Samson and Eli each served in the position of judge but apparently not as Israel’s leader (Judg. 15: 10-11, 20; 16:31; 1 Sam. 4:3, 18). Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life (1 Sam. 7:15-17), even while Saul was leading as king (1 Sam. 10:1-24). Sometimes leaders judged (1 Kgs. 7:7; Prov. 29:14) and judges led (Judg. 3:9-10; 11:11), but not always (2 Chron. 19:1, 5).

In the book of Judges most of the **male** judges appear to have been leaders in Israel (cf. 3:9-10, 15, 31; 6:34; 11:

11; etc.), but in Deborah’s case we find a different scenario. Deborah was like “a mother in Israel,” and “the children of Israel came up to her for judgement” (Judg. 4:5; 5:7). However, the text identifies **Barak** as Israel’s leader (Judg. 4:10, 14; 5:12, 15). When Deborah said that “the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman” (Judg. 4:9), reference was being made to Jael who drove a tent peg through Sisera’s head (4:17-24; 5:24-27). Deborah accompanied Barak (at his request) as he led the army (Judg. 4:8-10), though she later sang: “My heart is with the rulers of Israel” (Judg. 5:9).

Regardless of the significance of Deborah’s position in ancient Israel, it does not serve as a pattern for Christian activity any more than multiple marriages, animal sacrifices, stoning disobedient children, or other accounts of action recorded in the Old Testament. It is important to consider what this particular account says and does not say and to interpret it in view of the whole context of the Bible.

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continued from page 3

himself is concerned, what made the difference in his life was a convicted heart and the burden he carried for a lost world (1 Corinthians 9:16). No matter how inadequate, untalented, or fearful you might feel, if your heart is convicted by the message of Christ, you will be compelled to step out in faith and allow God to accomplish great things despite your weaknesses.

Paul the “Individualist” is a Myth

The “lone maverick,” the “inaccessible authority figure,” and the “saint on a pedestal” are not the images of Paul we get from the New Testament. Of the thirteen letters bearing Paul’s name, only five begin with his name alone (each for a special reason). However, Paul’s normal practice was to include references to co-senders: “Sosthenes” (1 Corinthians), “Timothy” (2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon), “all the brothers with me” (Galatians), “Silvanus and Timothy” (1, 2 Thessalonians). In addition, there are numerous co-workers mentioned in the body of Paul’s letters as well as those who send greetings at the end. The apostle was anything but a solo missionary. On his first journey he worked in partnership with Barnabas and for a time with John Mark (Acts 13-14).

Continued on page 9

INTELLIGENT DESIGN & THE ORIGIN OF LIFE (Part 3)

by Rex Banks

What about pre-biotic evolution?

Author and scientist **Richard Dawkins** begins his immensely popular and influential book **The Blind Watchmaker** with the statement that: "We animals are the most complicated things in the known universe." A few lines later, this is followed by the equally non-controversial observation that: "Complicated things, everywhere, deserve a very special kind of explanation." Dawkins thinks he knows what this explanation is, and he goes on to explain that "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the *appearance of having been designed for a purpose*, (emphasis mine) but which are in reality, the product of blind, non-purposeful forces operating upon inert material."

Dawkins goes on to acknowledge that "a complicated thing...could not have come into existence *in a single act of chance*," but he insists that it could have been produced by a process of piecemeal modification. He explains:

"We shall explain its coming into existence as a consequence of gradual, cumulative, step-by-step transformations from simpler things, from primordial objects sufficiently simple to have come into being by chance. Just as (big-step reductionism) cannot work as an explanation of mechanism, and must be replaced by a series of small step-by-step peelings down through the hierarchy, so we can't explain a complex thing as *originating* in a single step. We must again resort to a series of small steps, this time arranged sequentially in time."

Thus, like all other proponents of naturalism, Dawkins acknowledges that unguided physical processes cannot account for the *sudden abrupt* appearance of fully developed organisms. However, he is also convinced that if such organisms can be explained as the product of countless small improvements over vast periods of time, a purely naturalistic explanation of biological complexity is possible. Allegedly the process of *natural selection* described by Charles Darwin, (and supplemented

by neo-Darwinian's *mutations*) provides the purely naturalistic mechanism necessary. Mutations are changes to the genetic material. Supposedly when such changes produce *favourable traits*, an organism's ability to survive and reproduce is enhanced and the organism has a greater chance of passing on its genes to the next generation. Thus by means of natural selection, favourable heritable traits accumulate step by step and allegedly, over vast periods of time, this unguided natural process has produced life in all its complexity.

The vital role of *incremental development* in this process is abundantly clear from the following quotation from **Darwin** himself:

"If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which *could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications*, my theory would *absolutely break down*. But I can find out no such case." (**Origin of the Species** - emphasis mine).

Darwin is quite correct. In fact, evidence that certain complex organs or organisms could not have arisen incrementally would completely demolish *all* naturalistic explanations and constitute proof of *design*. That's why developments in the area of microbiology in recent decades have had such a favorable impact upon the argument from design. Current origin of life studies are buttressing the argument from design by exposing the inability of the Darwinian and neo-Darwinian model to account for the arrival of the first living organism by means of a piecemeal process. **Spetner** points out that in **Watchmaker**, Dawkins "defined life as a self-replicating system."

He tells us that Dawkins also makes the obvious point that "cumulative selection can work only on systems that can reproduce." It is clear that genetic material is necessary for *mutations* to occur and it is equally clear that self replicating organisms are required for *natural selection* to take place. Thus mutations are found in *dogs* which possess genetic material, but not in *amino acids* which lack this material. Natural selection may explain certain

traits in camels, which produce offspring, but since natural selection cannot occur in pre-biological (non-living) systems, it cannot account for the structure of proteins. Thus “one can’t make use of natural selection for the *beginning of life*” (ibid). At the risk of labouring the point: the *first* self-replicating system cannot *itself* be the product of mutation and natural selection, because prior to the arrival of the *first* self-replicating system, mutation and natural selection could not occur.

But if natural selection cannot account for the *first* self-replicating system, the evolutionist needs to “strive for a theory that has the present complexity of life develop from as simple an organism as possible” (ibid). He needs “as simple an organism as possible” because he cannot appeal to cumulative selection to explain the origin of this organism, and the greater the complexity of the organism, the greater the challenge. On the other hand, he also needs an organism sufficiently complex to start the process which has resulted in “the present complexity of life.” The problem is this:

“Living systems distinguish themselves from nonliving ones by processing energy, storing information and replicating. Although it is widely agreed that the first living system must have been much simpler than the simplest modern living system, which is bacteria, a certain base level of complexity is necessary to provide these three functions” (Walter L. Bradley and Charles Thraxton, *Information and the Origin of Life, The Creation Hypothesis*, ed. J. P. Moreland).

And the “level of complexity... necessary” to provide the three functions mentioned, (*processing energy, storing information and replicating*) makes “the first living system” an organism of mind-boggling complexity (see below). Clearly since “cumulative selection can work only on systems that can reproduce” and since systems which can reproduce are staggeringly complex, the origin of the CSI required for the first self-replicating organism is a real problem for those seeking a purely naturalistic explanation for the origin of life.

What about self organization?

In the 1960s and 1970s, some origin of life researchers began to explore the idea that life was in some way the result of certain properties inherent in matter and they suggested that some process involving “directed chance” or “biochemical predestination” held the key to life’s origin.

“Some have suggested that simple chemicals might possess “self-ordering properties” capable of organizing the constituent parts of proteins, DNA, and RNA into the specific arrangements they now possess. Just as electrostatic forces draw sodium (Na+) and chloride ions (Cl-) together into highly ordered patterns within a crystal of salt (NaCl), so too might amino acids with special affinities for each other arrange themselves to form proteins” (Stephen Meyer, *Word Games in Signs of Intelligence* edited by William A. Dembski and James M. Kushiner).

One obvious problem with this approach is that it confuses *order* with *complexity*.

“To see the distinction between order and information, compare the sequence ‘ABABABABABAB’ to the sequence ‘Help! Our house is on fire!’ The first sequence is repetitive and ordered, but not complex or informative. Systems that are characterized by both specificity and complexity (what information theorists call specified complexity) have information content. Since such features have the qualitative feature of aperiodicity or complexity, they are qualitatively distinguishable from systems characterized by simple periodic order. Thus attempts to explain the origin of order have no relevance to discussions of the origin of information content” (ibid).

Clearly any chemical bonding affinities between the constituents in DNA would produce an ordered sequence incapable of carrying real information. By way of illustration, if our keyboard always linked the letter ‘A’ to the letter ‘T,’ the letter ‘T’ to the letter ‘N’ and so on throughout the entire alphabet, we could never produce a meaningful sequence of words and sentences. As scientist and philosopher **Michael Polanyi** explained in the late 60s:

"A DNA molecule is said to represent a code - that is, a linear sequence of items, the arrangement of which is the information conveyed by the code. In the case of DNA, each item of the series consists of one out of four alternative organic bases. Such a code will convey the maximum amount of information if the four organic bases have equal probability of forming any particular item of the series. Any difference in the binding of the four alternative bases, whether at the same point of the series or between two points of the series, will cause the information conveyed by the series to fall below the ideal maximum" (Life's Irreducible Structure, Science, Jun 21, 1968 - emphasis mine).

Suppose that the chemical compounds adenine (A), thymine (T), cytosine (C) and guanine (G) in the DNA molecule were chemically attracted to one another. In this event, as **Polanyi** explains "such a DNA molecule would have no information content. Its codelike character would be effaced by an overwhelming redundancy." Thus "an ordinary chemical molecule" because of its orderliness "lacks the capacity to function as a code." It is precisely because (for example) the four bases A, T, C and G do *not* possess different bonding affinities that the DNA molecule functions as an effective code. **Meyer** concludes:

"The tendency to confuse the qualitative distinction between 'order' and 'information' has characterized self-organizational research efforts and calls into question the relevance of such work to the origin of life. Self-organizational theorists explain well what doesn't need explaining. What needs explaining is not the origin of order (whether in the form of crystals, swirling tornados, or the eyes of hurricanes), but the origin of information - the highly improbable, aperiodic, and yet specified sequences that make biological function possible."

Thus "Attempts to relate the idea of 'order' in a crystal with biological organization or specificity must be regarded as a play on words which cannot stand careful scrutiny" (**Herbert**

P. Yockey, A Calculation of the Probability of Spontaneous Biogenesis by Information Theory, Journal of Theoretical Biology vol 67 [1977]). Order which results from constraints within a particular material is quite different from order which is not the result of anything within matter itself.

Interestingly, one of the early proponents of chemical evolutionary theory is now an outspoken supporter of intelligent design. In 1969, senior biology professor **Dean Kenyon** co-authored a widely used graduate textbook entitled **Biochemical Predestination** in which he proposed that chemistry alone could explain the origin of life. Today Kenyon rejects this view and argues that the evidence favours the design hypothesis.

In Part 4 we discuss chance and the origin of life

continued from page 6.

On the second expedition he labored with Silas, Timothy, Luke, Aquila, and Priscilla (Acts 16-18). On the third tour at least ten companions are mentioned in the text (Acts 19-20). Of course the chief partner in Paul's lifelong ministry was the Lord himself (cf. Acts 14:27; 15:4; 21:19; 1 Corinthians 3:6-7).

Paul "the theological genius," "the fearless warrior," and "the individualist" are myths that have no basis in scripture. The apostle did not give an impossible directive when he said, "Imitate me." To truly imitate Paul, as he imitated Christ, we must: (1) hide behind the message of a crucified and risen Savior; (2) step out in faith, confront our fears, and do what the Lord has commissioned us to do; and (3) understand that we are called upon to work within a community, in partnership with one another and ultimately with God.



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A BOOK FROM GOD

by Gary C. Hampton

Before we start to study the Bible, we need to recognize that it is God's word. Such recognition will help us to study with a more serious attitude.

The Bible Claims to be Inspired

The Bible lays claim to inspiration. Paul told Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16-17). Paul used the Greek word *theopneustos* in the place where we find "inspiration." *Theo* means "God" and *pneustos* means "breathed," thus, God breathed, or God breathed out. The idea is that God spoke, since we exhale, or breathe out, through the vocal cords to speak.

Peter explained inspiration when he wrote, "For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). The Hebrew writer must have recognized this as he often said God said a certain thing, when we know man did the actual writing (see Hebrews 1:5, 8; 5:5-6).

Many Old Testament writers claimed inspiration, as did some New Testament writers (see Isaiah 1: 1-2, 10, 24; Jeremiah 1:1-2; 2:1; Ezekiel 1:1-3; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Peter 3:2). Jesus considered Old Testament scriptures inspired and used them as authoritative (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). His whole purpose in coming to earth was to do God's will by fulfilling Old Testament prophecy (Matthew 5:7-18; John 15:25). The New Testament writers considered Old Testament writers inspired (Acts 1:15-16; 4:25; 28:25-27; Galatians 3:16-19).

The writers of the New Testament also claimed inspiration for other New Testament writers. Jesus said the apostles would be guided by the Holy Spirit (John 14:25-26; 16:12-13; Hebrews 2:1-4). The clearest and perhaps most intriguing of all these statements is that made by Peter about the writings of Paul. "And consider that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation--as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, as also

in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures" (2 Peter 3:15-16).

Scientific Foreknowledge Proves the Bible Is from God

However, such internal claims would be meaningless if they were not supported by evidence. In fact, such claims force us to test their validity. We can know the Bible is from God because of the scientific facts which were written in it long before man recognized them or knew about them. In Genesis 1:11-12, 21, 24-25, we find the expression "after his kind" in reference to the grasses, trees, fish, birds, cattle, and other beasts. These statements are made despite the fact that man, even hundreds of years later, believed in spontaneous generation. Only recently some doctors think they have found certain special elements in the blood of a boy baby eight days old which help to heal. Yet, Moses, thousands of years ago, wrote by inspiration that boy babies were to be circumcised the eighth day (Leviticus 12:3).

Long before modern medicine thought of putting people with highly contagious diseases in isolation, God's word, in Leviticus 13:45, instructed the children of Israel to do just that with lepers. "Now the leper on whom the sore is, his clothes shall be torn and his head bare; and he shall cover his mustache, and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!'" In George Washington's time, doctors believed "bleeding" a patient would rid the body of impurities. Now, doctors realize that the blood is the life of the body, just as Moses wrote in the long ago (Genesis 9:4; Leviticus 17:11, 14).

Thompson and Jackson note that the Mississippi River dumps over 6 million gallons of water per second into the Gulf of Mexico (*A Study Course In Christian Evidences*, Montgomery: Apologetics Press, Inc., 1992). One might ask, "Where does it all go and why is the land not flooded?" The answer was revealed by God through Solomon. "All the rivers run into the sea, Yet the sea is not full; To the place from which the rivers come, There they return

again" (Ecclesiastes 1:7). In 11:3a, he fleshes out the explanation by saying, "If the clouds are full of rain, They empty themselves upon the earth." Amos concurs with Solomon when he describes God by writing, "Who calls for the waters of the sea, And pours them out on the face of the earth--The Lord is His name" (Amos 9:6b).

Specific Prophecies Fulfilled Prove the Bible Is from God

Specific prophecies about an event hundreds of years in the future could only come true if they were inspired of God. The Bible has many examples of such specific prophecy that was fulfilled. Just in the case of Christ, we find prophecies made from 400 to 700 years before the event which are true in details that could not have been guessed at. The place of His birth and fact that His mother would be a virgin are found in Micah 5:2 and Isaiah 7:14. Matthew tells us He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem (Matthew 1:20-2:1). His triumphant entry into Jerusalem is foretold in Zechariah 9:9 and fulfilled in Matthew 21:1-5.

Miracles Prove the Bible Is from God

The miracles worked in the Bible prove the spokesmen who worked them were from God. God gave Moses certain miraculous signs to use in proving to the Israelites that he was from God (Exodus 4:1-5). The miracles worked in bringing the ten plagues upon the land of Egypt were done to prove there was one God in the world and He was with Moses and the people (Exodus 7:5, 17; 8:10, 22; 9:14, 29; 10:2; 11:7; 13:3; 14:14). Christ was raised from the dead to prove He was God's spokesman (Romans 1:4). That the apostles were speaking by God's direction is clear because of the signs they were able to work (Mark 16:14-20; Hebrews 2:3-4).

The Bible is also geographically correct. When it says someone, or group, went up, the reader can be sure they went from a lower elevation to a higher elevation. For instance, in the parable of the good Samaritan, Jesus said, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead" (Luke 10:30). A simple glance at a topographical map is very

revealing. Jerusalem is in a mountainous area, with the Mt. of Olives being 2680 feet high. In contrast, Jericho is near the mouth to the Dead Sea. It is actually below sea level, at approximately -500 feet. So, one truly would go "down" from Jerusalem to Jericho!

Conclusion

Other areas of proof could be explored, such as: the historical accuracy of the Bible; the unity of 66 books written by about 40 writers, in different languages, over 1600 years; geographic accuracy; and the greatness of the message. However, I believe we can already see that the Bible claims to be "God-breathed" and there are undeniable proofs that it is.



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THREE RULES OF HUMAN CONDUCT

by Wayne Jackson

[NOTE: The gifted T.B. Larimore (1843-1929) once delivered a discourse titled “The Iron, Silver, and Golden Rules” (see Srygley 1949, 190-207). That presentation furnished the seed thoughts for this article.]

Jesus had been teaching in Galilee, the northern region of Palestine. Great throngs followed him and doubtless he was weary. Accordingly, he took his disciples and ascended a mountain in the vicinity of Capernaum—traditionally, Kurn Hattin, rising 1,200 feet just west of the shimmering Sea of Galilee. It was on this occasion that Christ taught that cluster of exalted truths that has come to be known as “the sermon on the mount” (Matthew 5-7).

Within that presentation is this memorable declaration: “All things therefore whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, even so do you also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Matthew 7:12). This saying has been given a metallic designation; it is called the “golden rule.” And that appellation has given rise to two other philosophical canons of human conduct, known as the “silver rule” and the “iron rule.” Every rational individual, to a greater or lesser degree, will adopt one of these maxims as a guiding principle for his or her conduct. Let us reflect upon how these schools of thought relate to human activity.

The Iron Rule

The iron rule is the rule of power and force. Its motto is: “Might makes right.” One can do what he is big enough to do. The principle is alluded to in the book of Habakkuk. God had promised that he would raise up the Chaldeans (Babylonians) to punish the southern kingdom of Judah for her grievous sins. This pagan force was a suitable tool in the providential arsenal of Jehovah to accomplish this mission because its disposition was: “My god is my might” (Habakkuk 1:11). It is an egregious mistake to deify one’s physical prowess!

Advocates of the iron rule have been legion throughout history. Cain, who murdered Abel because his evil works were in stark contrast to his brother’s (1 John 3:12), and because he had the strength to do it, was the first practitioner of this nefarious rule.

Military leaders have found the iron rule quite convenient. Alexander the Great, known as the greatest military leader of all time, is a prime example. In the short span of twelve years, he conquered the antique world from Macedon to India. An example of his disposition may be seen in his capture of the city of Gaza in southwest Palestine. He took the governor, Betis, bored holes through his heels and, by chariot, dragged him around the city until he was dead (Abbott 1876, 176). The military exploits of Julius Caesar are too well known to need elaboration. His inscription, given after the defeat of Pharnaces II in Pontus, says it

all: “Veni, vidi, vici”—“I came, I saw, I conquered.”

Charles Darwin gave scientific respectability to the iron rule with the publication of *The Origin of Species* (1859). The full title was *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favored Races in the Struggle for Life*. Natural selection was Darwin’s tooth-and-claw law of the jungle. Species survive, thrive, and develop by destroying their weaker competitors. In a companion volume, *The Descent of Man* (1871), Darwin vigorously argued the point:

With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. We civilized men, on the other hand, do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man (130).

Adolf Hitler, in a political way, implemented Darwin’s iron-rule policies before and during World War II. In his ambitious scheme to develop a master race, the mad Führer slaughtered millions of Jews, as well as those who were mentally and/or physically handicapped.

America adopted the iron rule as official policy in 1973 when the U.S. Supreme Court, in its landmark *Roe v. Wade* decision, determined that a woman has the right to destroy her unborn child in order to facilitate her own interests. Since that time, millions of innocent, defenseless children have been systematically executed in the abortion clinics of this nation.

Each lock on every door and window throughout the world is testimony to the iron rule. The penal institutions of the various nations are monuments to the rule of force. Every corrupt political official who manipulates his power for personal advantage lives by this system. Bully husbands and fathers who abuse their families are iron-rule devotees. Even those within the church, like Diotrephes (3 John 9-10), who bludgeon others into submission, are apostles of this system of intimidation.

Few have the effrontery to openly advocate this brutish ideology; but there are legions who practice it to one degree or another.

The Silver Rule

The silver rule has sometimes been described as the golden rule in a **negative** form. It is the golden rule without the **gold**. “What

you do **not** wish done to you, do **not** do to others.” In this mode it has found expression in the literature of many different cultures. For example, among the Greeks, Isocrates and Epictetus taught the silver rule. The latter condemned slavery on the ground that one should not do to others what generates anger in himself. William Barclay, the famous scholar so long affiliated with the University of Glasgow, has chronicled a number of these cases in his commentary, *The Gospel of Matthew* (1958, 276-281).

The renowned Jewish rabbi Hillel said: “What is hateful to yourself, do to no other.” Some have described this concept as a reflection of selfish egoism that withholds injury for personal reasons (see Lenski 1961, 295). In the apocryphal book of Tobit there is a passage in which Tobias says to his son: “What you yourself hate, do to no man” (4:16). Confucius (551-479 B.C.), a Chinese philosopher, also taught the silver rule. Tuan-mu Tz’u inquired of him: “Is there one word that will keep us on the path to the end of our days?” The teacher replied: “Yes. Reciprocity! What you do not wish yourself, do not unto others” (Ware 1958, 24).

The unifying feature of all these sayings is that they are negative in emphasis. They forbid much; they enjoin nothing. The silver rule would forbid you to steal your neighbor’s purse—because such is hateful to you. On the other hand, if one finds a purse containing \$200 in the mall parking lot, the silver rule is mute. It, in effect, leaves you with the option, “finders keepers, losers weepers.”

In 1964, there was a case that shook this country at its very foundation. Catherine Genovese was returning from a night job to her apartment in the respectable Kew Gardens area of New York City. As she approached her home in the early hours of that April morning, she was attacked by a knife-wielding assailant. He stabbed her repeatedly, fleeing the bloody scene as she screamed for help, only to return—when no one responded to her cries—stabbing her again and again, until she died. Subsequent police investigation revealed that thirty-eight residents of the neighborhood admitted that they witnessed at least a part of the attack. No one went to her aid; not a soul telephoned the police—until after she was dead!

The nation was incensed. A United States senator from Georgia read the *New York Times*’ account of the incident into the *Congressional Record*. Everyone wanted to know, “How could this have happened?” The answer is not difficult to deduce. Many people live by the principle of the silver rule: “It’s not my problem”; “It’s no skin off my nose”; “Mind your own business”; and “Take care of ‘numero uno’.”

Following the Genovese tragedy, two professors from Harvard University wrote an article analyzing this episode. They alleged that their essay was not “intended to defend, certainly not to excuse” the conduct of the Kew Gardens neighbors. On the other hand, they argued: “We cannot justly condemn all the Kew Gardens residents in the light of a horrible outcome which only the most perspicacious could have foreseen” (Milgram and Hollander 1964, 602-604). With typical academic confusion, the

professors reasoned:

1. Big cities are “organized on a different principle.” Friendships are not based upon “nearness”; those who might have helped the unfortunate woman were simply not nearby.
2. It must be borne in mind that these neighbors did not commit the crime; one must focus upon the murderer, not other people.
3. It is difficult to know what any of us would have done in a similar circumstance.
4. Hindsight is always better than foresight.
5. People hesitate to enter a violent situation alone; but organization takes time, and there wasn’t enough time that night.
6. No one knows “the quality” of the relationship that Miss Genovese had with the community.
7. A “collective paralysis” may have seized the neighbors.
8. People in the city are hardened to street life; the “street” is often symbolic of the vulgar.
9. Heroic efforts frequently backfire. A young man named Arnold Schuster, while riding the subway, recognized the notorious bank-robber, Willie Sutton. He reported this to the police, and the criminal was arrested. Before a month passed, Sutton made arrangements to have Schuster killed.
10. There are “practical limitations” to initiating the “Samaritan impulse,” and if one acted upon every “altruistic impulse” he could scarcely keep his own affairs in order, etc.

We have detailed the foregoing list of rationalizations because they illustrate a sterling example of silver-rule logic!

The Golden Rule

Finally, there is the golden rule—so designated in the English-speaking world since the mid-sixteenth century. Though some argue that there is little, if any, significant difference between the silver rule and the golden rule, and that the contrast has been “exaggerated” (Hendriksen 1973, 364), most scholars contend that the golden rule marks “a distinct advance upon the negative form” (Tasker 1906, 654).

D.A. Carson has noted that the positive form is certainly more telling than its negative counterpart, for it speaks against sins of omission as well as sins of commission. The goats in [Matthew] 25:31-46 would be acquitted under the negative form of the rule, but not under the form attributed to Jesus (1984, 187).

A.B. Bruce writes: “The negative confines us to the region of justice; the positive takes us into the region of generosity or grace”

(1956, 132). Let us consider several elements of this famous principle.

When all facts are considered, the golden rule represents, in a succinct and formalized fashion, a unique approach to human conduct. Jesus' statement captured the very essence of "the law and the prophets." While some contend that others (e.g., Confucius) came close to expressing the sentiment of the golden rule (see Legg 1958, 239), most investigators argue that Jesus was the first to state it in its purest form. Barclay asserts:

This is something which had never been said before. It is new teaching, and a new view of life and of life's obligations. . . . there is no parallel to the **positive** form in which Jesus put it (1958, 277,278; emphasis in original).

The golden rule is grounded in divine revelation, and so provides valid motivation for its implementation. Jesus said: "[T]his is the law and the prophets." His statement suggests that the golden rule is a summary of everything the Old Testament attempted to teach in terms of ethical conduct (cf. Matthew 22:36-40). Carson made this important observation:

The rule is not arbitrary, without rational support, as in radical humanism; in Jesus' mind its rationale ("for") lies in its connection with revealed truth recorded in "the Law and the Prophets" (1984, 188).

In other words, it is founded on belief in God, and the intrinsic worth of man which issues from that premise (cf. Genesis 9: 6). Just where is the logical/moral motivation for noble human conduct apart from evidentially-supported divine revelation? It simply does not exist. We have argued this case more extensively elsewhere (Jackson n.d., 136ff.).

Additionally, some see the conjunction *oun* ("therefore") as connecting the golden rule to what had just been said. In particular, "we ought to imitate the Divine goodness, mentioned in ver. 11" (Bengel 1877, 204).

The golden rule is universal, applying to every segment of life. Jesus said: "All things, therefore, whatsoever . . . " If legislators enacted all laws premised upon the Lord's instruction, society would be wonderfully altered. If homes operated on this principle, would there be marital infidelity, divorce, or child abuse? If our schools were allowed to teach the golden rule, with its theological base (which the modern judiciary has forbidden), would not the academic environment be remarkably enhanced?

The golden rule requires action. It does not countenance passivity, but says "do you unto them."

The golden rule commends itself to reason. It assumes that an honest person, properly informed concerning principles of truth and fairness, would have a reasonable idea of what is right for himself. Therefore, he should render the same to others (see Clarke n.d., 96). Remember, Jesus is teaching disciples—not someone who has no sense of moral responsibility. The rule contains the presumption of some moral sensitivity.

Finally, we must not neglect to mention that the golden rule is very special in that it is consistent with the other components of Christ's teaching as revealed in the Gospel accounts (e.g., Matthew 22:37-40). Moreover, the personal character of Jesus himself was (and remains) a living commentary on the rule in action.

The Critics

Some, like Dan Barker (a former Pentecostal preacher who converted to atheism), have suggested that the golden rule should be characterized as "bronze," since it is vastly inferior to the silver rule. Barker argued that if one were a masochist, the golden rule would justify his beating up on someone else (1992, 347-348). His argument assumes that it is rational to be a masochist!

Others, not quite so much of the fringe element, have suggested that the golden rule might at least be improved: "Do unto others as they would have you do unto them." Such a view, however, is fatally flawed, and even someone who is as ethically confused as Joseph Fletcher (the famed situation ethicist) has acknowledged such (1962, 117). The weak may want you to supply them with drugs, or indulge them with illicit sex, etc., but such a response would not be the right thing to do. If I am thinking sensibly, I do not want others to accommodate my ignorance and weakness.

Suppose a man is apprehended in the act of robbing the local market. A citizen detains the thief and starts to telephone the police, at which point the law-breaker says: "If you were in my place, you would want me to release you. Therefore, if you believe in the golden rule, you will let me go." Is the thief's logic valid? It is not. For if one's thinking is consistent with principles of truth, he would realize that the best thing for him, ultimately, would be that he not be allowed to get away with his crime, that he not be granted a license to flaunt the laws of orderly society. The rule works when properly applied by those who have some semblance of rational morality.

Even some of the enemies of Christianity have done obeisance to the value of the golden rule. John Stuart Mill wrote: "To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbor as one's self, constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality." Thomas Paine declared: "The duty of man . . . is plain and simple, and consists of but two points: his duty to God, which every man must feel, and with respect to his neighbor, to do as he would be done by" (as quoted in Mead 1965, 192,193).

Conclusion

In his discourse on the three rules of human conduct, T.B. Larimore observed that Christ's parable of the good Samaritan forcefully illustrates each of these philosophies of life (Luke 10: 30ff).

A certain Hebrew man was travelling the twenty-mile-long road that led through a barren region of crags and ravines from Jerusalem to Jericho. As he journeyed, he fell victim to robbers who tore off his clothes, beat him, and left him half-dead by the roadside. The bandits' reasoning was: "We are several; you are

one. We are strong; you are weak. You have possessions; we want them. Case closed.” Theirs was the clenched-fist rule of iron.

As the man lay wounded, unable to help himself, presently a Jewish priest came by, and then later, a Levite (one who served the priests in temple ceremonies). Both, likely horrified by the bloody scene, crossed to the opposite side of the road, and hastened their steps. Their respective thinking doubtless was: “This tragedy was not my fault. It’s none of my affair, etc.” They did not kick the afflicted Jew; they did not rifle his pockets. They simply passed on. They were silver-rule men.

Finally, a Samaritan (normally, a dedicated enemy of the Jews—see John 4:9) came by. He saw a fellow human in need and was moved with compassion. He tended the injured man’s wounds, set him on his own donkey, and conveyed him to a nearby inn where, amazingly, he paid for more than three weeks of lodging (Jeremias 1972, 205)—and pledged even more! The Samaritan’s code of ethics was this: “But for the grace of God, I could be writhing in agony by the roadside. What would I desire on my behalf if our respective circumstances were reversed?” It did not take him long to find the answer, for his compassionate heart was bathed in the golden glow of divine love.

The golden rule is a thrilling challenge to contemplate. None of us observes it perfectly, but let us never criticize it. Rather, let us applaud it, and strive for its lofty heights.

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Psalms 122 A Song of degrees; of David

I was glad when they said to me,
Let us go into the house of Jehovah.

Our feet shall stand within your gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built like a city that is all joined together
as one;

Where the tribes go up, the tribes of Jehovah, to the
testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name
of Jehovah.

For there were set the thrones of judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem;
those who love you shall be blessed.

Peace be within your walls, blessings within your palaces.
For my brothers and companions’ sakes, I will now say,

Peace be within you.

Because of the house of Jehovah our God
I will seek your good.