

What's Really Wrong with Us

and How the Answer Leads to Good Friday

"What causes quarrels, and what causes fights among you?" —James 4:1a

The very first *outward* sinful action recorded in the Bible occurred when "*Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him*" (Genesis 4:8). Although nothing specific is stated as to the means of this murder, it is clear that his methods were primitive, although effective. Everything he needed to accomplish his deed was right at hand including both his means and his motive.

As I am writing this article, my radio is repeatedly announcing the one-month anniversary of what is among the ten worst school mass killings in recorded history at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Today, in a call to "solidarity" with the seventeen people who were killed, students across the country are observing a seventeen-minute period of silence. In addition however, they are insisting on an overthrow of our current firearms laws out of a belief that banning or restricting certain weapons will radically diminish the level of violence in our society.

Yet it is not my purpose to discuss gun laws so much as it is to turn our attention to our society's glaring neglect of that very cause which precedes either the raising of a stone (perhaps) in Genesis or the pulling of a trigger today. The Bible identifies that cause with the tiny word "sin," while James 4:1-2 as a whole fleshes it out very effectively. The Bible teaches that there is something morally wrong with human beings because more profoundly there is something spiritually wrong with us. We have fallen out of our intended relationship with God and for that reason we are consequently also utterly out of sync with His creation. The proper center of our lives is replaced with self-centered us! As James puts it, if we don't get our way, then violent acts of varying degrees becomes the means in order to wrest what we desire from our neighbors.

I find it astonishing that our society habitually neglects to direct our anger onto the perpetrator and to name the cause of such massacres as personal sin and wickedness. Now there is no question but that our culture dismisses this kind of language as outdated, irrelevant, and outright offensive. But the major question of our time is what is our culture offering in its place? The preferred politically-correct method of addressing such social malfunctions is to name as the cause some overriding sociological malady, label certain laws (pertaining to guns or methods of criminal punishment) as barbaric, or source the cause of crimes to the existence of weapons (be they a gun, a knife, a stone, a heavy stick, you name it —and that's the point!) themselves. Even on today's news, in response to the attempted kidnapping of a child, it is proposed that the suspect have "mental evaluation." No request at all is made for a *moral* reassessment! One overriding reason for this glaring neglect is that our culture's former *biblical* worldview has become replaced with an opposing worldview. For the purpose of this article, secularism doesn't merely hold to an even-handed view of competing values. Driven by secularized academic circles, it holds to a view of human beings that is based on Darwinian evolution. In addition to insisting on unguided evolution however, Darwinism also denies the existence of all things spiritual, which both removes the authority for moral law and undermines the foundation of an objective purpose for living. Worse still, Darwinism holds that human "thinking" consists of nothing more than the interactions between molecules and electrical charges inside our brain. What logically follows is that what we call "free choices" are merely the effects of such "physical" events in the past which firmly determine what we do in the present.

Yet despite the fact that secularists today claim their “reasoning” to be superior to biblical revelation, such perspectives entail serious self-contradictions.[1] Firstly, if everyone is the product of nothing more than blind processes, then leaders who teach this cannot exempt themselves. If we are mindless machines, then they are too! If then, on the basis of Darwinism, what we call “thoughts” are nothing more than the electro-chemical interactions, it must also be true that the arguments secularists advance cannot have any grounding in actual reality. Also, since Darwinism teaches that there is no such thing as freedom from the unbroken line of material cause and effect even within our brain, then Darwinist proponents are likewise also mere impersonal machines who possess no freedom either! As a Darwinist at the time, Dr. Dean Kenyon sought to undergird this Darwinian position in his book titled, Biochemical Predestination. Secondly, since Darwinism denies that humans have the capacity for personal choice, then it is self-contradictory for Darwinists to either argue for the superiority of their position or expect us to change our minds.

In light of such a sea of contradiction, should it be surprising that secularists are failing to resolve the problem of violence? Now they could attempt to counter that Christianity appears no more successful in addressing this problem. Yet we may reply to them that the reason the problem is ongoing is that human beings habitually resist the Lordship of Christ. The bottom line is that the most plausible diagnosis of the cause of the brokenness of our world is the biblical concept of sin (James 4:2) described above.

Sin is no trivial matter. Far from the concept of sin being outdated, it is so highly relevant as to qualify as our most urgent need in the transformation of rational (1 John 1:7) thinking. Not only will we all stand before the judgement of a holy God at the close of this world, but present reality confronts us with the truth that a life which ignores or disobeys God’s purposes issues in brokenness at a number of levels. No one at all is exempt from the judgment that, whether we open our lives to Scripture or ignore God’s revealed Word altogether, we all are guilty of disobeying what we at bottom know to be true.

When God sent His Son into the world to die on the cross, He was not delving into trivialities, but addressing our most profound need of all, namely that we both have our sins forgiven, and our lives restored back to the One for whom we were made, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. However, understanding the problem He came to address is a vital step to being receptive to the gift He came to bring.

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[1] John West. Darwin Day in America: how our Politics and Culture are Being Dehumanized in the Name of Science. (ISI Books, 2007). I hasten to highlight West’s ultimate point that Darwinism is not real science.