

Human Nature and Its Restraints

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Note: In this short article, A. T. Jones shows that the removal of restraint on human nature is what contributes to the corruption of the world, and the final destruction of the people. The last message of mercy that God gives is contained in *Revelation* 14:6-12, particularly the message of the Third Angel, which produces those who “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.” This is divine restraint. It is the only real solution to the world’s problems.

LET us compare the two pictures drawn by Paul, the one of the iniquity of ancient heathenism:

Romans 1

²⁸ And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;

²⁹ Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

³⁰ Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

³¹ Without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

³² Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

And the other of the iniquity of the last days, even among those who have “a form of godliness”:

2 Timothy 3

¹ This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,

³ Without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,

⁴ Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;

⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

⁶ For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts,

⁷ Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

⁸ Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

We can see that these two pictures are exactly alike. Human nature, unrestrained, is the same in all ages. Whether in the days of Christ, or two thousand years before, or two thousand years after; whether manifested in the inhabitants of Canaan, or in the inhabitants of the United States, it is always the same.

It is for this very reason that the Bible fits men, wherever on the earth it may find them. It is a book not for one tribe only, nor for one class, nor for one nation, but for the human race. And it is the only book in the world that is. The reason for that is, that the book was given by One who knows human nature in its very essence.

God made man upright. But he turned from the bright course which God set before him; he sinned, and so sold himself to do evil; and now the sublime powers which the Lord bestowed upon him, to be exerted in the way of righteousness, are prostituted to evil;

Jeremiah 23

¹⁰ ...[his] course is evil, and [his] force is not right.

If ever, then, man shall be raised from his fallen state, if ever his lapsed powers shall be restored, it is indispensable that the tendency of every faculty be restrained, turned into the right course, and trained to follow it. The Bible meets this necessity; it meets it in every part, and satisfies it to the full. Therefore, this of itself is proof that the Creator of man is the author of the Bible.

Human nature being the same everywhere, the only thing that makes one person to differ from another is the degree of restraint each one recognizes in his own case. If, in a person, all the restraints of the law of God are recognized, he will be a man fitted for the society and fellowship of the angels. If, on the contrary, none of these are recognized, he will be a man fit only for the society and fellowship of demons.

Upon many persons, and in many ways, these restraints exert themselves unconsciously, as in the case of the infidel, who denies the authority or the existence of God, and despises His word. Yet the principles of that word are so embedded in the society of which he is a member that he yields obedience to them, while he thinks he is defying them.

But transplant him to the state of society which he advocates, where none of these principles are recognized, and none exerted, and he will run as readily in the way of iniquity as the veriest heathen that ever dwelt in the land of Canaan.

And that other class of persons who call themselves “Christians,” or even “Christian ministers,” who, in their opposition to the obligations of the ten commandments, can hardly frame sentences that will sufficiently express the bitterness of their contempt for the law of God, only let the time come when such seed shall have borne its fruit, when society in following such teaching shall have reached that condition which would be defined in the very opposite of the ten commandments, and they will go as greedily in that evil way as did Balaam of old.

Again, many will restrain themselves from doing evil through fear of punishment; but take away the prospect of punishment, or satisfy them that there will be none, and they will go to any length that circumstances may allow. Henry VIII, although he regarded not God, as long as he feared the Pope did not dare to divorce his wife, but when he had broken through that restraint, he cut off the heads of three wives, and only a witty speech saved the head of the fourth.

There is another course by which men reach the same state of cruelty. That is, not by denying the existence of God, but by making themselves the depositaries of what they choose to define as His will, and then holding themselves as the sole expositors and executors of that will. As in every single instance it is only *their own will* which is thus exalted to the supremacy, and therefore is of only human authority, the only way in which it can be enforced is by human enactment.

And then instead of being simply executors, they make themselves executioners in carrying into effect their arbitrary will. Making their own will supreme, and themselves the sole interpreters of that will, even though they claim it to be the will of God, they just as veritably put themselves beyond restraint as do the men who deny God outright.

Both classes reach the same point, and both commit the same enormous crimes, the one illustrated in the fearful orgies of the Reign of Terror, the other illustrated in the terrible torments of the Inquisition.

And now at this hour of the nineteenth century, and in our own country, under the profession of National Reform, the harlot daughters of the Papacy are preparing to revive the spirit and times of the mother. For when, by constitutional authority, they, after the similitude of the Papacy, shall have acquired a power similar to the Papal, they will be in position to commit excesses similar to those of the Papacy.

Human nature without restraint, in these, is as ruinous as in those. True, they would comfort us with the assurance that they will not hurt a “hair of” our “heads.” But as we know that it is a giant’s power which they want, so we know, by human nature as portrayed in human history, that when they get it, they will use it like a giant.

The Scriptures confirm all that this investigation suggests. In the beginning of this article we cited *Romans* 1:28-31 as the description of the ancient heathendom, and *2 Timothy* 3:1-8 as the

description of the last days of modern Christendom, and we find them exactly alike.

It is by resistance to the truth of God that men loosen its restraints upon them, and deliver themselves up to the sway of Satan.

2 Thessalonians 2

⁸ And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of His coming:

⁹ Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

¹⁰ And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

¹¹ And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

¹² That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

In the last days it is only those who “received not the love of the truth that they might be saved,” in whom Satan works “with all power and signs and lying wonders.” It is only those “who believe not the truth” but have “pleasure in unrighteousness,” who become so deluded that they “believe a lie.”

From the beginning of the world God has left no nation without witness:

Acts 14

¹⁶ Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.

¹⁷ Nevertheless He left not himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

By a then “present truth” He has witnessed to different ages. In obedience to that truth, and in the love of it, lay the salvation of the people in each respective age.

In the last days God sends a message which reaches to the end of the world, and is therefore His last message to the world. It is the Third Angel's Message:¹

Revelation 14

¹² Here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.

The commandments of God are truth:

Psalms 119

¹⁵¹ You are near, O Lord; and all your commandments are truth.

The faith of Jesus is the faith of Him who is the truth:

John 14

⁶ Jesus said unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but by me.

Both together embrace the whole word of God, which is truth, and restrain men.

John 17

¹⁷ Sanctify them through your truth: your word is truth.

“You shall not” is the key-note of the commandments of God; “and if any man will come after me, let him deny himself,” exclaims Jesus.²

Therefore the Third Angel's Message in holding forth the “commandments of God and the faith of Jesus” presents the summary of all those restraints which are demanded in checking and transforming the tendencies of human nature, and in leading them by the “right course,” to goodness and to God.

And when the world shall deliberately reject the Third Angel's Message, it thereby places itself beyond those restraints, and is then ready to be led captive by Satan at his will; and then it is that he works with all power in them that perish,

¹ *Revelation 14:9-16.*

² *Matthew 16:24.*

2 Thessalonians 2

¹⁰ ...because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.

By the Third Angel's Message, the harvest of the earth will be ripened for good or for ill; for glory or for shame; to be gathered into the garner of God, or to be bound in bundles to be burned.

Revelation 14

¹⁴ And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle.

¹⁵ And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in your sickle, and reap: for the time is come for You to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

¹⁶ And He that sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth; and the earth was reaped.

¹⁷ And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he also having a sharp sickle.

¹⁸ And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the sharp sickle, saying, Thrust in your sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

¹⁹ And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and cast it into the great winepress of the wrath of God.