

What Saith the Scripture?

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The Essence of Evil Or, What is Evil?

"The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God"
(Psalm 14:1; 53:1).

"There is none good but One, that is, God"
(Matthew 19:17).

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Preface

For too many people, evil is merely a black picture of gruesome hideousness, chilling the senses with untold thoughts of pain and suffering. But, God warns, "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not" (Isaiah 66:4). Both good and evil are mutually exclusive moral choices that demonstrate the heart and character of the Moral Agent. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh" (Luke 6:45). From Scripture, evil is morally the opposite choice of good, i.e., "refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isaiah 7:15, 16). And, we have been assured by the LORD Jesus Christ, "There is none good but One, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17). God is the sole personification and definition of good, but what then is evil? The essence of evil is the heart asserting, "No God" (Psalm 14:1). As surely as God exists, evil exists. "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Man is to be solely blamed for his own evil. "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man" (James 1:13). Evil proceeds out of the heart of man, that is, it comes by man's choosing, not by any metaphysical predisposition to do what could not be helped. "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: 23 all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). Not so strangely, God has restricted our research and understanding of evil to a conceptual level only, as demonstrated voluminously and repeatedly in the Scriptures, and forbidding the experiential knowledge of evil, as He did by forbidding the eating of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Garden of Eden. "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19). Evil may be categorized as:

- (1) *the adamant denial of God's existence,*
- (2) *the stubborn refusal of obedience to God, and*
- (3) *the practical ignoring of God.*

Evil Denies God's Existence

An adamant denial of God's existence is one of the basic expressions of evil, i.e., *There is no God*. Any number of prominent names from the past and present may be assembled to illustrate the face of the atheist, who believes in no God; but, the evidence that God exists is declared by Scripture to be *the First Truth* of the human understanding, requiring specific experience or motivation to believe otherwise. "For the invisible things of Him from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Though demonstrations of the fact of God's existence may be given, it is unwise to argue endlessly or quarrel about even this most basic assumption. "And the servant of the LORD must not strive [Greek, *machomai*, to engage in a war of words]; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (2Timothy 2:24). Until or unless the Spirit of God intervenes with providential circumstances to prepare the skeptic, we would argue to no avail. "Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Zechariah 4:6).

Several arguments may be given in support of the Truth of God's existence. The following five arguments were taken from Charles G. Finney's "Skeletons of a Course of Theological Lectures" (1840) on the "Existence of God."

First, the Moral Argument reasons from the fact that we have a moral nature that God exists. Since we possess a sense that something is right and other things are wrong, our moral constitution implies that there must be a Creator, Law-Giver, Judge, and Author of that moral nature, which is God. "1 Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. 2 But we are sure that the Judgment of God is according to Truth against them which commit such things... 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these, having not the Law, are a law unto themselves: 15 Which shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:1-2, 14-15).

Second, the Physical Argument maintains that God must exist because every event must have a cause. "The first cause must have been *uncaused, self-existent, independent, and eternal*. This must be God." "For every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God" (Hebrews 3:4).

Third, the Argument from Final Causes contends that means imply an end, which implies design. Wherever there is a design, there must be a Designer, which is God. "I will praise Thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psalm 139:14). The evolutionary concept of random selection constitutes an impatient attempt by man to dethrone the Creator, when they voice their dissatisfaction that things would have been better, if they had assembled the Universe themselves. For example, the man Antichrist "opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God" (2Thessalonians 2:4).

Fourth, the Historical Argument contends that men with intellect and reason from all nations and all ages have agreed with the proposition, "There is a God." "Therefore his existence is, to say the least, highly probable." "22 Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' Hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. 23 For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, Him declare I unto you. 24 God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is LORD of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the Earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek the LORD, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: 28 for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring. 29 Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. 30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: 31 because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in Righteousness by that Man [Jesus Christ] Whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead" (Acts 17:22-31).

Finally, the Argument from Consciousness asserts, "I think, therefore I am." Since I have not always been and did not create myself, then I must be descended from a series of men, beginning with the first man. "He must have been *self-created, or self-existent, and uncreated*, or created by some other being. He could not create himself. Self-existence is *necessary* existence. He had not a *necessary* existence, for he is dead. He must have begun to be, and must have been created. His Creator must have been uncaused, and eternally self-existent. This cause is God." "11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. 12 Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. 13 And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart" (Jeremiah 29:11-13).

What if God were to deny our existence? But, this He would never do, because the Immortality of the Human Soul demands that we all will live forever somewhere, either in a Godless Hell or in the presence of God in Heaven. "So God created man in His Own Image, in the Image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27). God holds Himself to a Higher Standard than man does for himself, when refusing to question the other's existence. "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). Depending upon the level of hatred towards the Almighty, evil may take the form of the atheists' utter disavowal of any such possibility of a Supreme Being or the agnostics' prideful conclusion that God may exist, but it is not possible to be sure. "22 How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate Knowledge? 23 Turn you at My Reproof: behold, I will pour out My Spirit unto you, I will make known My Words unto you. 24 Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out

My hand, and no man regarded; 25 but ye have set at nought all My Counsel, and would none of My Reproof: 26 I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; 27 when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you" (Proverbs 1:22-27). God has been more than fair in His conduct toward us, e.g.,

- in Creation (giving us the Gift of Physical Life),
- in His transmission of the Scriptures (giving us the certainty of Divine Truth),
- in His Ten Commandments (giving us, in particular, a clear idea of how we ought to love God and man),
- in His offering of His Only Begotten Son as our Sin-Bearer (giving us a way to escape the penalty of our sin for not having kept those Ten Commandments),
- in His warning us to repent (giving us repeated warnings before His Judgment of our sin),
- in His continual-- but not endless-- pleadings by His Spirit to submit to His Love (giving us the sting of conscience to halt our rebellion),
- and in His Divine Aid to assure our obedience (by giving us His Spirit in the New Birth).

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have Everlasting Life" (John 3:16).

Evil Refuses Obedience to God

The stubborn refusal of obedience to God is simply another basic expression of evil, i.e., *No God, I will not obey You*. "If ye will not obey the Voice of the LORD, but rebel against the Commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you" (1Samuel 12:15). What were all of the properties of the "Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil" (Genesis 2:9) in the Garden of Eden? We do not know. "And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the Tree of Life also in the midst of the Garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil" (2:9). But, we do know that eating of that fruit caused death for our First Parents, and hence, to all their offspring. "But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (2:17). [See our article, "[Must We Then Sin?](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, to see a discussion of how man's First Sin does not necessitate anyone else's sin.] The disobedience and consequent death from eating the forbidden fruit was the great evil of that particular tree, while the great good of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is the life associated with obedience. "See, I have set before thee this day Life and Good, and death and evil" (Deuteronomy 30:15). It is often easier to depict evil with the macabre, but God sees evil as the plain choosing of that in which He does not take pleasure. "I also will choose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them; because when I called, none did answer; when I spake, they did not hear: but they did evil before Mine eyes, and chose that in which I delighted not" (Isaiah 66:4).

Since man does not transform from Innocence to Moral Agency without making an informed choice between good and evil, doing good requires one to first know then choose what the understanding and reason testifies to be good. "14 Therefore the LORD Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His Name Immanuel. 15 Butter and honey shall He eat [i.e., giving the Divine But Human Messiah a normal physical upbringing and preparation for development into a Moral Agent], that He may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isaiah 7:14-15). On the other hand, doing evil demands that the testimony for good has been established then subsequently rejected, thus, the Moral Agent evilly engages in the forbidden or wickedly abstains from the required. "And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of Us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the Tree of Life, and eat, and live for ever" (Genesis 3:22). And, what Good *is* it that all Moral Agents know? Scripture affirms that all Moral Agents know that God is, which is *the* pivotal First Truth-- that can be demonstrated, but the honest mind requires no further proof. "For the invisible things of Him from The Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His Eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). And, Jesus "was the True Light, which lighteth **every** man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9). But further, Jesus testified that "there is none good but One, that is, God" (Mark 10:18). Therefore, all Moral Agents, even without the benefit of Bibles or Christian teachers, are bound to do the good and refuse the evil, because their understanding and reason testifies to their consciousness that God is the Highest Good to be sought and their neighbour is to be treated as well as themselves, whether they ever commit it to practice. This is the Foundation of Moral Obligation, which can be proficiently demonstrated to the willing mind, but needs no proof to neither the skeptical nor honest mind, since it is a foundational First Truth. "37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the First and Great Commandment. 39 And the Second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. 40 On these Two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40). [See Charles G. Finney's "[Lectures on Systematic Theology](http://whatsaiththescrpture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescrpture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.html> -- (1851) for a discussion of what [Finney](http://whatsaiththescrpture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html) -- <http://whatsaiththescrpture.com/Fellowship/Charles.G.Finney.html> -- regards "as the true theory of the foundation of moral obligation, namely, that the intrinsic nature and value of the highest well-being of God and of the universe is the sole foundation of moral obligation" ([Lecture XIII](http://whatsaiththescrpture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.2.html) -- <http://whatsaiththescrpture.com/Voice/Systematic.Theology.2.html> --).]

All who do not trust the God that *is* will also evilly refuse true obedience to whatever command of Scripture that is revealed to their mind. "And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and forgat the LORD their God, and served Baalim and the groves" (Judges 3:7). True obedience always conforms to the Law of Love that finds its expression in the Ten Commandments. "For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Galatians 5:14). Obedience to the rule of God is the doing of good that demonstrates that we presently behold Him. "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God" (3John 11). Evil cannot deceive a willingly and prudent man, who will be prepared by God to see and know the deception, but the "simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 27:12). To doubt God is to call "Him a liar" (1John 5:10), which is no different from calling "evil good, and good evil" (Isaiah 5:20). When the decay of "evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17) is strewn about these End Times, it is because False Prophets have been particularly successful in deceiving Professing Christians into thinking that Good Men can produce Evil Fruit and that Evil Men can produce Good Fruit. What confusion! How absurd and unscriptural! What next? Will it be told that the Antichrist is

good, as well as God? But, we will "follow the Thing That Good Is" (Psalm 38:20). "15 Beware of False Prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. 16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? 17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:15-20).

And, to the Wayward Professing Christian, who continues to disobey God-- God always wins! "14 But if ye will not hearken unto Me, and will not do all these Commandments; 15 and if ye shall despise My Statutes, or if your soul abhor My Judgments, so that ye will not do all My Commandments, but that ye break My Covenant: 16 I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it. 17 And I will set My face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies: they that hate you shall reign over you; and ye shall flee when none pursueth you. 18 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto Me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. 19 And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your Heaven as iron, and your Earth as brass" (Leviticus 26:14-19). If you really are a Backslider, you have but yet begun to see how the Omnipotent God will break you. He can. But, do not count upon the integrity of your past recollections that you have ever come to Christ, because your sin corrupts and clouds even your memories. Repent at once, like you have never done before. "7 Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His Voice, 8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: 9 when your fathers tempted Me, proved Me, and saw My Works forty years. 10 Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My Ways. 11 So I sware in My wrath, They shall not enter into My rest.) 12 Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the Living God. 13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we are made partakers of Christ, **if** we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:7-14).

Evil Ignores God

Possibly subtle to man, but a glaring affront against God, evil manifests itself as a practical ignoring of God, e.g., *it cannot be known for certain if God exists*. "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" (Romans 1:28). This is especially done by agnostics, because it gives them the appearance of thoughtfulness for their primal hatred of God. "Because the carnal [Greek, *sarx*, fleshly] mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be" (8:7). Scripture never speaks of agnostics as those that could not know that there was an Almighty; instead, the Holy Spirit speaks of agnostics as those who choose to forget God. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver" (Psalm 50:22). Sadly, there are still more who make no claim to faith in Jesus Christ than those who do, so the skeptical agnostic is a common feature in the moral landscape. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (Psalm 10:4). However, it is far worse when the Backslidden, who

have known God, for them to ignore God. "For My people is foolish, they have not known Me; they are sottish [Hebrew, *cakal*, foolish] children, and they have none Understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do Good they have no knowledge" (Jeremiah 4:22).

To the agnostic, why does God allow evil? God suffers evil in order that He might make known His Merciful Loving Kindness to man. "14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. 15 For He saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 16 So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy [loving kindness]. 17 For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew My Power in thee, and that My Name might be declared throughout all the Earth. 18 Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He [wisely] hardeneth. 19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His Will? 20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast Thou made me thus? 21 Hath not the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? 22 What if God, willing to shew His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: 23 and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, 24 even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:14-24). Thank you, LORD God, for your marvellous Loving Kindness!

It may be thought that those who ignore God could not be so evil as those who adamantly deny His existence, but both are "haters of God" (Romans 1:30), e.g., "If there is a God, He's got a lot to answer for." [See our article, "[God Has Done Nothing Wrong](http://whatsaiththescriture.com/Fellowship/God_Done_Nothing_Wrong.html)" -- http://whatsaiththescriture.com/Fellowship/God_Done_Nothing_Wrong.html --, for more on this topic.] "39 See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with Me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of My hand. 40 For I lift up My hand to Heaven, and say, I live for ever. 41 If I whet My glittering sword, and Mine hand take hold on Judgment; I will render vengeance to Mine enemies, and will reward them that hate Me. 42 I will make Mine arrows drunk with blood, and My sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy" (Deuteronomy 32:39-42). Not to trust in the Eternal, Self-Existent God is to hate God and selfishly establish confidence in any object or thing of our own designation, such as money. "For the **love** of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1Timothy 6:10). Scripture settles the concept of the Unity of Moral Action, that a Moral Agent cannot be both good and evil, obedient and disobedient at the same time, because "no servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon [Greek, *mammonas*, riches]" (Luke 16:13). [The concept of the "[Unity of Moral Action](http://whatsaiththescriture.com/Voice/Unity.of.Moral.Action.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescriture.com/Voice/Unity.of.Moral.Action.html> -- (Lecture 9)-- "That obedience cannot be partial in the sense that the subject ever does, or can, partly obey and partly disobey at the same time"-- is discussed in Charles G. Finney's "Lectures on Systematic Theology" (1878), which is an updated chapter from the 1851 English edition.] Confusion on this concept breeds a sickening familiarity with evil, since the distinct moral focus between good and evil becomes lukewarm shades of gray rather than forceful black and white, like the present day Laodicean Professing Christian. "14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the Creation of God; 15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou

art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent" (Revelation 3:14-19).

Scripture predicted, "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2Timothy 3:13) in these Last Days, and the Professed Church is finding itself attracted into the mainstream of that evil society. As a consequence, its ministers and people are finding themselves compromising the Truth and embracing evil, while ostensibly holding up a banner of morality. "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully" (Jeremiah 48:10). The world sees the duplicity of the two-faced conduct of these Professed Christians, and either applauds their conduct in front of them, while rationalizing their own immoral behaviour, or sneering at the hypocrisy of the Professed Christians, while justifying themselves in their own ignoring of God and the Christianity of the Bible that has been so misrepresented. "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1Peter 4:18). Why do Professed Christians give the world such an alibi to ignore and evade the just claims of Christ upon the Sinner's life? Unfortunately, Professed Christians often use their misunderstanding that men are either Saved Sinners or Lost Sinners, but all born into sin, as if sin could come by birth and not solely by a moral choice of the human heart against the known will of God. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the Law: for sin is the transgression of the Law" (1John 3:4). Sin can *only* be a choice of the evil over the good, i.e., even the young child Jesus had to learn to "refuse the evil, and choose the good" (Isaiah 7:15, 16). Therefore, neither Saint nor Sinner nor atheist nor agnostic can properly claim the right to deny, refuse, or ignore God's supreme claim upon them. "32 And the scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, Thou hast said the Truth: for there is One God; and there is none other but He: 33 and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask Him any question" (Mark 12:32-34). Before a young child comes to Moral Agency, he is neither holy nor sinful but innocent. And, that innocence in a human being is sufficient to assure that physical death in that condition qualifies that one to come into the presence of God, e.g., still-born babies, aborted babies, etc. "22 And he [King David] said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? 23 But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2Samuel 12:22-23). Agnostics cannot truthfully ignore the LORD Jesus Christ without committing *the* Great Evil, for Jesus is the "Light of the World" (John 8:12; 9:5). "19 And this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than Light, because their deeds were evil. 20 For every one that doeth evil hateth the Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. 21 But he that doeth Truth cometh to the Light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:19-21). [Many resources may be offered that demonstrate that men are *not* born sinners *nor* do they possess an innate goodness *but* innocence *only*. See our articles, "[An Exposition of Christian Perfection](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Exposition.Perfection.html> -- (where perfection may be equated to abiding in Christ) and "[Must We Then Sin?](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html> --, that Scripturally attempts to present sin as a crime and not an unfortunate, unpreventable calamity. In the lectures entitled "[Moral Depravity](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Voice>

/Systematic.Theology.4.html#LECTURE 38 --, Charles G. Finney's "Lectures on Systematic Theology" (1851) extensively delineates the difference between moral and physical depravity, where our inherited, continually run-down physical condition or physical depravity *induces but not forces* us to commit sin or moral depravity.]

Conclusion

The willful negation or refusal of God is evil, while good wittingly chooses Him. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). The concept of good cannot be developed without the admission that God exists, though parents may quickly corrupt the novice Moral Agent against any such idea that God is. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). Evil foolishly says, "No God" (Psalm 14:1; 53:1). Morally, God has ordained that man can only overcome evil by good; and, the truth is that "there is none good but One, that is, God" (Matthew 19:17). "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). It is the necessity of all Moral Agents to learn the wisest means to perform the good and overcome the evil. "Behold, the fear of the LORD, that is Wisdom; and to depart from evil is Understanding" (Job 28:28). However, Scripture declares the truth that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23), that is, all Moral Agents have allowed their normal desires to become their supreme preference instead of the supreme love of God and an equal love of their neighbour as themselves (Matthew 22:37-39); hence, allowing Self to become the ruling motive of what then becomes the life of a Sinner. "1 The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. 2 The LORD looked down from Heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. 3 They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Psalm 14:1-3). [See the "[Every Man is Tempted of His Own Desires](#)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Must.We.Then.Sin.html#Every> -- section of our article, "Must We Then Sin?", to see an exposition of James 1:14-15: "14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:14-15).]

God has providentially offered His Only Begotten Son as the Divine Solution to stem the tide of evil. "12 But as many as received Him, to them gave He Power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name: 13 which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13). God's Simple Plan of Salvation not only cleanses the Sinner from the guilt and punishment for his past sins, but introduces him to the Spirit of God that will teach him obedience, victory, and the overcoming of evil in his own life. "Hereby know we that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit... Whereby are given unto us Exceeding Great and Precious Promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (1John 4:13; 2Peter 1:4). It is the covenanted Spirit that lifts up a banner against the evil that would overcome the Saints. "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him" (Isaiah 59:19). And, it is our very lack of understanding of how the Holy Spirit is to guarantee our obedience and overcome evil that has allowed the Professed Church to have reached such a dismal present condition. "And I will put My Spirit within you, and *cause* you to walk in My Statutes, and ye shall keep My Judgments, and do them" (Ezekiel 36:27). [See our editorials, "[Can God Guarantee Our Obedience?](#)" -- http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Guarantee.Obedience.html -- and "[The Secret of Abiding in Christ](#)" -- http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Fellowship/Edit_Secret.Abiding.Christ.html --, for instruction and encouragement in assuring victory over evil in our own lives.]

Though evil presently exists in this world, shortly the LORD Jesus Christ will return, judge all sin, and establish "New Heavens and a New Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteousness" (2Peter 3:13). "14 That thou keep this Commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our LORD Jesus Christ: 15 which in His times He shall shew, Who is the Blessed And Only Potentate, the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords; 16 Who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no man can approach unto; Whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to Whom be Honour and Power Everlasting. Amen" (1Timothy 6:14-16). Evil holds sway in this world, but *not* in Heaven-- *not* now *nor* in the future. "Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, as in Heaven, so in Earth" (Luke 11:2). Despite the fact that evil has such influence in this world, the Christian is willing to "spend and be spent" (2Corinthians 12:15) for the LORD Jesus Christ in doing whatever good he may find to do, like the Master. "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with Power: Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil; for God was with Him" (Acts 10:38). The influence of the Saints in this world must and always will be for good in the overcoming of evil. "Ye are the salt of the Earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13). Even the smallest action of good contributes to the defeat of evil. "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42). The Saints should arm themselves with the "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" (2Peter 1:4) of the Word of God to do the good that overcomes evil. For example, look for the Promise in the Word of God concerning:

(1) dwelling for evermore, i.e., "Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell for evermore" (Psalm 37:27),

(2) living with the presence of God, i.e., "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of Hosts, shall be with you" (Amos 5:14),

(3) protection from evil and plagues, i.e., "There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling" (Psalm 91:10), and

(4) foreseeing the evil in time to take action, i.e., "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 27:12).

[See our article, "[Exceeding Great and Precious Promises](http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html)" -- <http://whatsaiththescripture.com/Promises/Exceeding.Promises.html> --, to see how the Promises of God are designed to sanctify us, as well as overcome evil.]

May the God that is Good prevail, and evil fail!

Amen, and Amen.