

light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Light shall shine out of darkness,' is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

I Peter 1:23-25 -- "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God. For, 'All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, but the word of the Lord abides forever.' And this is the word which was preached to you."

Does a Christian have a responsibility to attempt to change the spiritual character of the non-Christian members of his or her society? The scriptural answer is a resounding "Yes!" As the Father sent the Son into the world to accomplish salvation, so the Son sends us into the world to be His instruments in the application of salvation.

B. The Christian's obligation to attempt to influence the moral conduct of the non-Christian members of his or her society.

By "moral conduct" we mean human behavior that has a moral quality; behavior that is good or bad, right or wrong, righteous or sinful.

1. The need for a definite, clear standard of right and wrong behavior that applies to all human beings

Since Christians are interested, not in influencing others for evil, but in influencing them for good, they must be able to decide whether moral conduct is good or bad; and this requires a definite, clear standard of right and wrong behavior that applies to all human beings. Christians find that standard in the revealed will of God directed to man's obedience, as that will is found in the Bible.

But what about the non-Christian? What about the follower of Islam or Hinduism or Buddhism or Confucianism or Sikhism or Shamanism or Bahai'ism or Shintoism or Jainism or Taoism or Secular Humanism, who does not acknowledge the Bible as an authoritative revelation of the will of God addressed to man's obedience? Does the biblical standard of right and wrong conduct apply to him or her also? Or is there some other standard by which he or she can decide whether his or her behavior is good or bad? Or is there no fixed standard, but only the variable, changing standard of what the members of a society at a given moment can agree on concerning what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behavior? Or is there no such thing as right or wrong or sinful or wicked conduct, so that the very idea of a fixed standard of right and wrong conduct becomes meaningless?

Among the world religions there are certainly some forms of behavior considered right or wrong, but there are no fixed authoritative scriptures that claim to be from God except those of Islam (the Koran), which are heavily dependent on the Bible, and those of orthodox Judaism (the Talmud) which are heavily dependent on the Old Testament.