

Beware: Deceptions of Philosophy, Deceit, & the Tradition of Men, Scruton’s “Shameless & Loveless”; Empedocles’ “Elements,” Col 2:8

- h. Therefore we see that some believers in Colossae were deceived by demonic lies which had no basis in doctrinal reality. This indicates that believer’s are at the mercy of false teachers if they do not have enough doctrine in their souls to identify the lie.

Scruton, Roger. “Shameless and Loveless,” *The Spectator*, 16 April 2006, 30:

Sexual intercourse began, according to Philip Larkin’s famous poem, in 1963. Four decades have elapsed since then, and these decades have seen a growing recognition that sexual liberation is not the answer to the problems of sex but a new addition to them. Traditional sexual morality reinforced the society-wide commitment to marriage as the sole legitimate avenue to sexual release. It is easy to understand such a morality. It has a clear social function—ensuring stable families and guaranteeing the transfer of social capital from one generation to the next. And it has an intrinsic rational appeal in making sense of love, commitment, jealousy, courtship and the drama of the sexes. The problem is that, by impeding our pleasures, it creates a strong motive to escape from it.

The condition in which we now find ourselves is novel in many ways. Perhaps the most interesting is the enormous effort that is now devoted to overcoming or abolishing shame.

Shame still existed in 1963. Couples hid their desire from the world, and sometimes from each other—at least until the moment when it could be clearly expressed. Obscenity was frowned upon. Shame has since been banished from the culture. All fig leaves, whether of language, thought or behaviour, have now been removed.

This shamelessness is encouraged by sex education in our schools, which tries both to discount the differences between us and the other animals, and to remove every hint of the forbidden, the dangerous or the sacred. Shame, according to the standard literature now endorsed by the DES [Department of Education and Skills], is a lingering disability. Sexual initiation means learning to overcome such ‘negative’ emotions, to put aside our hesitations, and to enjoy ‘good sex.’ Questions as to ‘who’, ‘whom’ or ‘which gender’ are matters of personal choice—sex education is not there to make the choice, merely to facilitate it. In this way we encourage children to a premature and depersonalized interest in their own sexuality, and at the same time we become hysterical at the thought of all those paedophiles out there, who are really the paedophiles *in here*.

Equally novel is the loss of the concept of normal sexual desire. In 1963 we still saw homosexuality as a perversion. We still believed that sexual desire had a normal course, in which man and woman come together by mutual consent and to their mutual pleasure. We regarded sex with children as abhorrent. Thanks in part to massive propaganda from the gay lobby, in part to the mendacious pseudo-science put out by the Kinsey Institute, we have abandoned the concept of perversion, and accepted the official view of ‘sexual orientation’ as a natural and inescapable fact.

Copyright © 2005 Roger Scruton. All rights reserved.

- i. The word **φιλοσοφία**, **philosophia** means literally the “love of wisdom.” There is absolutely nothing wrong with a philosophy that is based on wisdom developed from the Word of God.
- j. However, the philosophy about which Paul warns the Colossians is based on doctrines of demons which means they are founded on the lie.

- k. The lie in context is defined. It is referred to by the term: **παράδοσις ἄνθρωπος, *paradosis anthrōpos***: “the tradition of men.” These traditions have to do with those philosophies which have been verbally passed down from generation to generation and have come together to identify the current Zeitgeist in Colossae. It was influenced by Gnosticism and paganism and was characterized by a worship of angels.
- l. In addition to this the “philosophy” of Colossae was also steeped in a pantheistic concept that emphasized earth worship.

NOTE: What “traditions” can survive from generation to generation if the culture is suffering from a “Long march through the institutions” (Antonio Gramsci)?

- m. This is brought out by the phrase, **στοιχείον τοῦ κόσμου, *stoicheion tou kosmos***: “the elements of the world.”
- n.) The word *stoicheion* is translated “rudiments” in the KJV, “basic principles” in the NIV, and “elementary principles” in the NASB. We are translating it the “elements of the world.” Here’s why.
- o.) The word *stoicheion* as used in Colossians 2:8 goes back to the fifth-century B.C. Greek philosopher Empedocles \em-ped'-a-klēz \ who developed the theory that four elements, governed by Love and Strife, compose the physical world.
- p.) According to Empedocles everything can be reduced to these four elements—fire, air, water, and earth. He referred to these in the plural as does Paul in our verse, the accusative plural **στοιχεῖα *stoicheia***.
- q.) Empedocles was influenced by the writings of Hippocrates \hip-äk'-ra-tēz \, the “Father of Medicine,” who also wrote about these elements in relation to the body.