

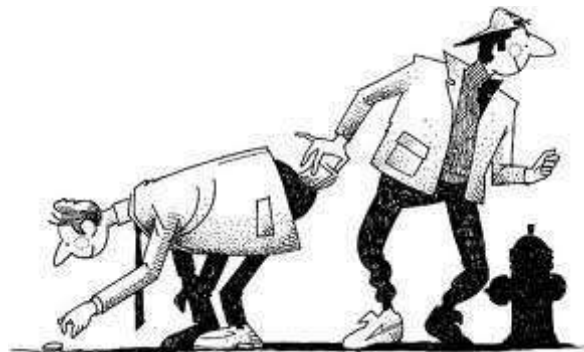
From those conjoined truths – sin and salvation – flow all the subsidiary truths of Christianity. If you do not accept those premises, you won't accept what follows. Well, at least you won't accept the legitimacy of the subsidiary conclusions by virtue of their provenance in the first truths. It is still possible you could reach them via different avenues. But that means the part of religion that is not reason or experience did not lead to the consensus, and so was not effectively shared. Which then brings me back full circle to asking whether religion offers any added value *that can be shared*.

But perhaps I'm getting ahead of myself. Greg promises a response next week, to which I will look forward with anticipation.

*1 Thought*

## RE: COMPASSION UPON CULTURE OR CONSIGNED TO IT

*Posted on October 30, 2012 by Daniel Kelly*



## *Compassion?*

Kyle, your proposed series of posts will be a valuable service. But let's make sure we aren't arguing against straw men. Your friend notwithstanding, the divide between left and right has not been that the left engages in "compassion" by coercively redistributing goods, while the right cuts the poor loose to fend for themselves. We all agree the poor need help; the question is whether the government is the appropriate instrument for the project.

Our conversation will be more productive, I think, if we use our terminology carefully. I used the phrase "forced 'compassion,'" with compassion in quotes, to illustrate that it is an oxymoron. There is no such thing as forced compassion. Once force enters the picture, compassion disappears. They are like light and dark – they cannot be at the same place at the same time. So we can call a governmental program that takes from one person to give to another many things, but the list does not include "compassion."

Similarly, there is no such thing as "free compassion." There is always a price. If my friend and I encounter a man in need as we stroll down the boulevard, and he picks my pocket to give him \$10, has he been compassionate? Of course not. My friend gave nothing that belonged to him. Compassion occurs when the desire to help and the assistance coincide in the same person. Compassion is free only in the sense that it is free of government coercion. There will still be provision, because the essence of compassion is giving of one's own self.

So the real question is whether we should (a) exercise compassion, or (b) just take from those who have created to give to those who have not. If it is the former, then government cannot be involved and we need to rediscover what the church is all about. Apparently, we could learn from our Mormon friends

on this score. If it is the latter, however, we can declare the job done. Our welfare state is about as advanced as you can get without actually sliding into socialism.

*1 Thought*

## RE: DO THEY KNOW? HOW DO WE KNOW THEY KNOW?

*Posted on October 27, 2012 by Daniel Kelly*

**O**KAY, I'M STARTING TO THINK GREG IS PULLING MY LEG WITH THIS whole "people are stumbling around not knowing what they do" thing. He even goes so far as to label as "poppycock" and Pelagianist the idea that people act rationally (when they have a vested interest in it and have the intellectual horsepower to do so).

To his mind we are incapable of understanding the consequences of our actions, unable to connect the dots between cause and effect. It's all the fault of that dratted original sin, he says – it has confounded everything. Not only did it leave us with an appetite for immorality, it even robbed us of the ability to think rationally. Well, I'll see your "poppycock" and raise you a "pish posh."

Greg has made for himself an untenable model of human behavior and responsibility. In a nutshell, it is this: