

Cellar Rats – Reverend Hap Arnold
Church of the Faithful Centurion - Descanso, California

While I know what I should do at one level, I oft find my actions incongruent with what I am supposed to do. This incongruence is most evident amongst those with whom I am most comfortable; my family and closest friends. Is it because they “bring out the worst” in me? To quote Paul, “God forbid!” Perhaps it is because they are closest to my soul and I have no wall between us. Those actions, unacceptable amongst strangers, are even more unacceptable amongst family and closest friends. Yet they persist. Why? Perhaps because as an imperfect creature with free will my only hope is God. I need His help to grow closer to Him and to those around me. I need the Light of the Holy Ghost to shine into the deepest corners of my heart, to eradicate the darkness there and plate those crevices with His Light.



Apparently I am not the only imperfect creature with free will who has this issue¹, what a surprise! Consider this short piece by Jack Lewis:

Rats in the Cellar on our Journey towards Christ

We begin to notice, besides our particular sinful acts, our sinfulness; begin to be alarmed not only about what we do, but about what we are. This may sound rather difficult, so I will try to make it clear from my own case. When I come to my evening prayers and try to reckon up the sins of the day, nine times out of ten the most obvious one is some sin against charity; I have sulked or snapped or sneered or snubbed or stormed. And the excuse that immediately springs to my mind is that the provocation was so sudden and unexpected; I was caught off my guard, I had not time to collect myself.



Now that may be an extenuating circumstance as regards those particular acts: they would obviously be worse if they had been deliberate and premeditated. On the other hand, surely what a man does when he is taken off his guard is the best evidence for what sort of a man he is? Surely what pops out before the man has time to put on a disguise is the truth? If there are rats in a cellar you are most likely to see them if you go in very suddenly. But the suddenness does not create the rats: it only prevents them from hiding. In the same way the suddenness of the provocation does not make me an ill-tempered man; it only shows me what an ill-tempered man I am. The rats are always there in the cellar, but if you go in shouting and noisily they will have taken cover before you switch on the light.

Jack Lewis
Mere Christianity

Looking at the little graphic, it seems that the little rats are enjoying their time in the cellar and thus will be hard to drive out. But, driven out they must be. Those cellar rats

¹ 9 The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:9)

must go, they cannot be tolerated no matter how comfortable we are with them, no matter how much we think they cannot go. They must go.

Belfry rats, on the other hand, with their relationship to those same bats, would appear to be necessary to survival in this world.

Think about it.