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THE JOHN 3:16 CHRISTIAN

HEBREWS 12

Again, we point out that Hebrews is a letter written to the Hebrews within the church. They believed in Jesus as their Messiah King, but they could not accept Him as their High Priest, so they desired to return to the temple and the sacrificial system. The Judaizers encouraged the Hebrew Christians to “go back”, and they urged the Gentile Christians to convert to Judaism, and take part in the Levitical priesthood that was continuing in the Temple.

The book of Hebrews, as well as all of the New Testament, tells the readers that going back to the old Levitical priesthood and that sacrificial system for their mediation between God and man was apostasy, and worthy of the most terrible wrath of God. Nine times in the New Testament, He is identified as a consuming fire against apostasy.

We certainly live in an age of great apostasy where “Christians” have sought to add many things to “grace alone through Christ alone through faith alone according to Scripture alone” for their hope of heaven.

This section deals with Esau, and we are shown that though there may be much weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth, “**John 3:16**” **Christianity is not Biblical Christianity**. Nowhere in Scripture are we told one is a Christian based only on John 3:16. V. 3 is the context of v. 16: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (The new birth is the necessary first step of salvation.)

Without going into great detail, Jesus Christ tells us that a dead man, those who are dead in trespasses and sin, cannot believe on Him. He must first be born again from above, for God must give him saving faith in Jesus Christ. One cannot be a Christian on his own terms, but only on God’s terms. We are born again into newness and wholeness of life.

Chapter 11 presents this question: If there is no chas-

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tisement, is one a Christian based only on John 3:16 or on Romans 10:13?

Since the Lord has promised that he will not allow temptation above that which his people can endure, we understand that God uses the hatred of this world to bring glory to himself, and to form Christ in the believer. (Note that all the good, bad and hurtful events that come into our lives are according to God’s predestined counsel, including the social turmoil around us. Even George Soros has been raised up by the God who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: Eph 1:11.)

Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. (Ps 76:10)

This letter to the Hebrews was written to deal with their desire to return to the Temple and its Levitical priesthood. It was to convince them that to do so was wrong; it was sinful idolatry.

From the time of the completed work of Christ and the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom, any effort to worship or serve the Creator through the Levitical Priesthood and sacrifice was and is idolatry. Though the Levitical Priesthood became idolatry with Christ, the Priesthood did not stop until the final destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. However, the undying effort to serve God according to one’s opinion continues. Accordingly, any effort to add anything to “Christ alone” is idolatry.

Faith is the supernatural gift of God. Faith is God

centered. Arminianism is man-centered, as it places faith and salvation in the hands of man, and makes the Creator God man's servant. The sinner is told that if he "Believes in Jesus, his troubles will be over" or "Believe in God, turn your life over to God", and many other false promises that places man in the center of faith. "Say this prayer, and God will come rushing to your aid". These things can be identified as John 3:16 salvation, which totally bypasses the work of the clear words of Christ concerning the Spirit in John 3:3-7; that is to say, one must be born of the Spirit before he can believe unto salvation. (The wind, or Spirit of God, bloweth where it listeth, and we can only see the results of that wind: "the Spirit of God is a free agent in regeneration; he works how, and where, and when he pleases;" Gill. We certainly will not get into Election at this time.)

Added note: According to Winston Churchill, early fifth century Britain was founded on Augustinianism. "A History of the English Speaking People, The Birth of Britain", pp. 70-76. Dodd, Mead & Company, New York. 1956. At that time "Christians" were killing "Christians" in their desire for more land and power. Augustine (354-430) was the Roman Bishop of Hippo, and his writings laid the foundation for Western Civilization. All Christians were Roman until Peter Waldo, AD. 1173, and the Waldensians came into history. "Calvinism" is based on Scripture as developed by both Augustine and the Waldensians. Augustine believed that the grace of Christ was indispensable to human freedom. His treatise against Pelagianism killed that heresy until it reappeared as Armenianism.

Note what has happened as "the grace of Christ" has been forgotten, ignored or outright rejected. "Many Protestants, especially Calvinists and Lutherans, consider Augustine to be one of the theological fathers of the Protestant Reformation do to his teaching on salvation and divine grace." One would do well to read a little about the "father" of Western Christian Culture. A short overview can be found at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Augustine_of_Hippo.

According to St. James, there can be no salvation without "confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus", and living that confession out daily. We know from the lives of the past saints, Paul's especially, that such offers without the "Lordship of Christ over the believer" contain no eternal hope.

And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? (Lk 6:46)

As we have visited various churches, we have noticed

that the vast majority of their hymns are man-centered, particularly the "modern" songs. (In the past, we also sang man-centered hymns and thought nothing about it, but now that we are aware, it seems that the vast majority of church songs are man-centered. See Man-Centered in this issue.)

The saints who have gone on before did not have a free ride to glory on flowery beds of ease; rather, they were persecuted and even killed for their faith in God and His Son. It is not until the battles of this life are over that we shall wear a crown.

How many have fallen away because following the Son brought down the wrath of the world upon them?

Saint Paul's troubles began with his conversion, which has been the experience of millions since then. In a fallen world, the man of faith finds the world warring against him, as David said: "*I am for peace, but when I speak they are for war.*" (Ps 120:7)

Properly, "I am peace"; desirous of peace, peaceful, forbearing, — in fact, peace itself.

But when I speak, they are for war. My kindest words appear to provoke them, and they are at daggers drawn at once. Nothing pleases them; if I am silent they count me morose, [brooding, ill tempered] and if I open my mouth they cavil and controvert. Let those who dwell with such pugilistic company console themselves with the remembrance that both David and David's Lord endured the same trial. It is the lot of the saints to find foes even in their own households. Others besides David dwelt in the place of dragons. Others besides Daniel have been cast into a den of lions. Meanwhile, let those who are in quiet resting places and peaceful habitations be greatly grateful for such ease. "*Deus nobis haec otia fecit*": God has given us this tranquility. Be it ours never to inflict upon others that from which we have been screened ourselves. (Spurgeon)

Ver. 7. When I speak, they are for war. He spoke with all respect and kindness that could be; proposed methods of accommodation; spoke reason, spoke love; but they would not so much as hear him patiently; but cried out, To arms! To arms! so fierce and implacable were they, and so bent on mischief. Such were Christ's enemies: for his love they were his adversaries; and for his good words and good works they stoned him; and if we meet with such enemies we must not think it strange, nor love peace the less for our seeking it in vain. "Be not overcome of evil," no, not of such evil as this; "but," even when thus tried, still try to "overcome evil with good". (MH)

Observe: No matter how kindly we may speak to the ungodly, words of truth are to them words of war. Thus, the Christian faces two problems.

First, this fallen world hates the believer because he is a Christian, and represents the sovereign Lord God of Heaven who will judge all men according to the truth of his Law-Word in the last day.

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; (Gen 3:15)

The Lord himself said he would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. That enmity can be traced throughout history, e.g., Cain against Abel, Pharaoh against Moses, Haman against God's people, and the modern-day hatred of the world against any kind of a Christian testimony, e.g., the sodomites' war against Christianity. That enmity has been shown to us in Hebrews 11, and it will continue until the Lord God himself says, "That's enough".

The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. 13 The Lord shall laugh at him; for he seeth that his day is coming. (Ps 37:12, 13. See Ps 2)

Second, God chastens and disciplines the believer as a son. It is the bastard who lacks discipline. But the adopted son of God is being prepared for time and eternity. This is why the wicked prosper while the righteous are troubled, "*plagued, and chastened every morning.*" (Ps 73:14)

Hebrews 12:12, 13. Knowing these things, we who are strong are to strengthen the weak. We are to strengthen those who are discouraged in their Christian work and walk. We are to make sure that as we walk, our paths are straight and even, so we might prevent problems in the faith of the weak; we must not place a stumbling block in the path of the lame. The Christian's goal must be healing those who are weak and discouraged in the faith. (Heb 10:25)

V. 14 Follow peace with all men... If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (Rom 12:18)

First, if it be possible... Paul was at war with many men because he spoke and stood for God's Truth. Clearly, no matter how "pure" a Christian life one may live, conflicts must arise if he lives and speaks the Truth. But the conflict must not originate from God's adopted sons.

Second, as much as lieth in you... Peace requires work and humility to preserve. Pride certainly gets in the way of humbling ourselves and making things right with our neighbors.

Third, with all men... It is our Christian duty to live peaceably with both the saved and unsaved, but especially with those who are fellow members of the household of faith.

I have found that many times there is more conflict and warfare in the "household of faith," the church, than there is in "secular households," such as the Masons. However, wherever sinful men gather, there will be power struggles.

Fourth, we must not stir up strife, but continually strive for peace as a peacemaker, appeasing anger and malice when possible. An argumentative spirit will certainly bring conflict.

A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. (Prov 15:1)

How many times have we seen the truth of v. 1 in action in the face of the most hostile anger?

Fifth, we are not to begin nor to originate a quarrel.

Surely the churning of milk bringeth forth butter, and the wringing of the nose bringeth forth blood: so the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife. (Pro 30:33)

[S]o the forcing of wrath bringeth forth strife; irritating the passions of men, and provoking them by scurrilous and reproachful words to wrath and anger, produce contentions, feuds, and lawsuits, which are not soon and easily ended; and therefore such a conduct should be carefully avoided. The same word is used in the three clauses, and signifies pressing, squeezing, forcing. (Gill)

Did not our Lord tell us that it is better to suffer loss than to produce contentions, feuds and lawsuits, especially with a neighbor? *And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. (Mat 5:40)*

So far as we are concerned, we are to seek peace. But then it does not always depend on us. Others may oppose and persecute us; they will hate religion, and may slander, revile, and otherwise injure us; or they may commence an assault on our persons or property. For their assaults we are not answerable; but we are answerable for our conduct towards them; and on no occasion are we to commence a warfare with them. It may not be possible to prevent their injuring and opposing us; but it is possible not to begin a contention with them; and when they have commenced a strife, to seek peace, and to evidence a Christian spirit. This command doubtless extends to everything connected with strife; and means, that we are not to provoke them to controversy, or to prolong it when it is commenced. See #Ps 34:14 Mt 5:9, 39-41 Heb 12:14. If all Christians would follow this command, if they would never provoke to controversy, if they would injure no man by slander or by unfair dealing, if they would compel none to prosecute them in law by want of punctuality in payment of debts or honesty in business, if they would do nothing to irritate, or to prolong a controversy when it is commenced, it would put an end to no small part of the

strife that exists in the world. (Barnes) (And the strife that exists in the church, I must add.)

Sadly, I am part of those who have found that far too many times the reprobate has more honesty, uprightness and integrity when it comes to finances than do those who claim to be His people.

In the late 1960s, I worked for a man who supplied used school buses to churches. I remember going with him to deliver two buses to a church. The pastor took him into his office. On our way home, he told me that the pastor wanted him to give the buses to him because he, Bob was a Christian businessman, and the church was doing the Lord's work. Bob was confronted more than once with that plea from pastors. I do not think they make the same plea to their bank, even though the bankers might have been Christians, and even have been aithful members.

Sixth, we are absolutely forbidden to seek peace by compromising the word of God:

It may so fall out, that some men are of such froward and unpeaceable tempers, that it is impossible to live peaceably with them, or by them: or such conditions of peace may be offered as are not lawful for you to accept; it will not stand with the truth and glory of God, and with a good conscience, to agree with them. But, however, do your part, let there be no default in you why you should not live in peace with all men whatsoever. (Pool)

While conflict is at times necessary, normally we should follow peace with all men, as much as lieth within us.

12:14, *Holiness; without which no man shall see the Lord.* The author is moving toward their reference to Esau, vv. 15-17.

We need to keep in mind the special circumstances of those to whom this letter is addressed. They were Hebrew Christians living among unbelieving Jews. The Judaizers worked to separate the Hebrews from their faith alone in Christ alone. They also did all they could to stir up hatred and turmoil among their fellow Jewish citizens against the Christians – they considered the Hebrew Christians apostates, who were warring against the faith of their fathers. They worked to poison the minds of their fellow-countrymen against the Gospel of Peace, and those who followed that gospel.

Being hated by their fellow Hebrew countrymen for no reason made it difficult to live peaceably with them. It opened the door for hatred and bitterness of heart against their Hebrew brethren, as Esau, who denied his birthright, and was bitter against his brother Jacob. Esau did not want it and its responsibilities, and then he was

bitter against his brother who sought it.

“Many be defiled...”

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (1 Cor 5:6, Gal 5:9)

From the very first days of both the Old and New Testament Church, there has been grave danger of the poisonous root of bitterness destroying individuals and churches.

V. 16. Esau! One single act has often the greatest power either for good or for evil. (JFB)

Then Jacob gave Esau bread and pottage of lentils; and he did eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way: thus Esau despised his birthright. (Gen 25:34)

Despise: Scorn, contempt, vile and worthless.

He was controlled by his passions. He was pleased with the agreement, and he rose up and went his way. For a moment of fleshly pleasure, he sacrificed the blessings of God. Throughout history, men have forfeited the blessings of God for a mere moment of pleasure, e.g., David, Amnon, &c.

Esau was the elder son. Thus, he was the logical heir to the blessing or the promise, yet he threw his inheritance away for a morsel of bread. The Hebrews of the apostles' day, like Esau, were the natural and logical heirs to the blessing or promise of the Messiah. Yet when the Messiah presented Himself to them, they received him not, and followed their passions; they wanted to return to the Temple and its Levitical system. They despised the blessing that was theirs, which made their sin far worse than was Esau's.

Esau or Edom became a plague to Israel. Even at the time of this letter, an Edomite ruled. Herod was an Edomite, and the Hebrews hated the house of Herod, the Herodians. (See *Rulers of New Testament Times*, by Charles Ludwig.)

This letter tells the Hebrews that the idea of returning to the Temple and forsaking Jesus was sin far greater than was Esau's sin.

First, lest any man fail of the grace of God, or fall back from the grace of God. That is, become deficient of the grace needed to prevent bitterness from taking root.

Being confronted with the Grace of Christ Jesus, they wanted to turn from Him back to the old priesthood. By virtue of their birth as Hebrews, they were the logical heirs; their offense was that they turned their backs on Him. The offense of the Hebrew leaders who crucified Christ was a fearful offense, and the Hebrews turning back from Him was at least as fearful.

Second their problem was apostasy, which permits a

root of bitterness to grow. (Even the slightest defection from the Truth is apostasy, as we have developed in the past.)

Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood; (Deut 29:18)

The word here and in #De 32:32 rendered “gall,” is in #Ho 10:4 translated “hemlock.” It is the name of a plant of intense bitterness, and of quick growth; and is therefore repeatedly used in conjunction with “wormwood,” {compare #La 3:19 Am 6:12 } to express figuratively the nature and effects of sin (compare the marginal references.). The herb is probably the poppy. Hence, the “water” (i.e. juice) “of gall” {#Jer 8:14; 23:15 } would be opium.

This would explain its employment in the stupefying drink given to criminals at the time of execution, {compare #Ps 69:21 Mt 27:34 } and the use of the word as synonymous with poison. {compare #De 32:33 Job 20:16 }

Wormwood is the plant “absinthium.” It is used to denote metaphorically the distress and trouble which result from sin.

“The root that beareth gall and wormwood,” means in this place any person lurking among them who is tainted with apostasy. (Barnes) Note how the love of the pleasures of sin can act as opium.

Accordingly, the Hebrews are warned that apostasy from the true Mediator back to the Levitical Priesthood is treason. Apostasy results in a bitterness that consumes the apostate, and defiles those around him.

Third, fornicator: In its Biblical usage, it includes blasphemy and rebellion. It is similar to profane, and so we are told: Lest any fornicator or profane person. That is, someone outside the faith; one who is not and will not be governed by the faith. The profane person will not take God seriously enough to be ruled by Him. Esau’s spirit is found in a great many “religious” people in the church. We could call them “John 3:16” Christians; they have “believed in him” without submitting themselves to his absolute and total authority to rule their lives. I have heard many disparaging words against “Lordship Salvation”, but is there any other kind? (I understand “Lordship Salvation” as meaning He must be both Lord and Christ.)

Or profane person: βεβηλος imports one who had a bitter frame of spirit against the first table, one of an impure mind to God-ward, opposite to godliness, who neglects and spurns at holy things, rolling itself in its own pleasures, riches, honours, with a despising of God, his grace, and glory, #1Ti 1:9 4:7,16 2Ti 2:16. (Matthew Pool)

That is to say, the profane person neglects the holy things as revealed in the Law-Word of God in favor of personal pleasure, riches and honor. Esau did not want a God who ruled and controlled every aspect of life, but wanted a God who would supply his personal needs and natural desires when he needed Him. (“Personal peace and prosperity”. Frances Schaffer.)

Afterward, when Esau wanted to inherit the blessing, and despite his tears of repentance, he could not. He had rejected his birthright, for which he was sorry, but he was not sorry for his rejection of God’s authority over him: There is a difference.

7 And not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me; so that I rejoiced the more. 8 For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. 9 Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. 10 For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. (2Cor 7)

Hebrews comes down hard on “John 3:16” Christianity, as does the whole of Scripture. Esau could have repented of his sin of following self over God, and God would have forgiven him, but the damage could not be undone. But rather than repentance, he sought to nullify what he had done.

God does not repeal our past history. We cannot nullify the past, but we can find forgiveness. How many times did King Saul admit his wrong, yet refused to change? He was unwilling to accept God’s choosing of David to replace him, yet Jonathan fully accepted God’s will concerning David. David is identified as a man after God’s own heart, because he was always ready to recognize sin, and repent and forsake sin.

How many “repentant” sinners have pastors seen come to the altar with great tears of remorse? Yet they go back as a dog returning to his vomit, or as a pig returning to the mud from whence he came. That could be identified as “John 3:16” Christianity for it seeks personal salvation, peace and prosperity without the Spirit’s new birth in v. 3. (See “The Other Jesus” by this pastor. It is posted at biblicalexaminer.org.)

The book of Hebrews was carefully written to make a strong appeal to fellow Hebrews to reconsider their desire to apostatize back to the Temple and its Levitical Priesthood. It was a plea for the Hebrews to become

faithful believers in the only Mediator between God and man, “the man Christ Jesus.” Will they be an Esau and despise their birthright or a Christian?

Many have made a profession based solely on John 3:16, and many more hope in the only verse they know, “God is Love.” But He must be much more: He is one to be feared and honoured as both Lord and Christ -- 9 times we are told that our God is a Consuming Fire; His love made only one way of escape.

Esau wanted the carnal benefits of the blessings without the spiritual responsibility placed upon the one who would have the blessing.

How do we see Christ: Lord and Master with the total authority to direct our lives from his Law-Word, or simply a “fire escape” from whom we desire carnal benefits?

Bro Need

Man-Centered

GOD VS. MAN-CENTERED SPIRITUALITY

By Pastor Bill Randles

The Church is currently being divided. Like the broader culture in which we live, the Pentecostal and Charismatic, and to a large extent, the Evangelical world, is engaged in a profound philosophical struggle. None of the old dividing lines are adequate. It is no longer liberal or conservative, or “Spirit-filled” versus “cessationist.” The real schism goes deeper.

We are seeing two competing visions of the very definition of Christianity struggling for the hearts and minds of those in the Church. The faultline could be designated as being either “God-centered” or “man-centered” spirituality. It is clearly illustrated in our view of the basic elements of the Gospel itself, which are the contrasting views of God, Christ, man, and our response.

In the new man-centered view of God, love is the first and foremost attribute of God. It is primary. “God isn’t mad at you. He loves you with an unconditional love, and He longs to help you and to meet your needs” is the substance of much of the preaching today, particularly much of the evangelism these days. But, it is a love out of context. ...

<http://www.deceptioninthechurch.com/99v4n6.htm>

MAN-CENTERED GOSPEL

During the 20th Century a man-centered gospel began to emerge in evangelistic presentations of the Gospel. Evidence suggests that the

man-centered gospel had its origins in the USA. The gospel message is sometimes altered in a way that gives man prominence in the gospel message (and songs, ed.) given to people. For example, it often begins with: “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life” (note than man gets two mentions here, while God only gets one and Jesus is not even mentioned at all!). Neither Peter nor Paul ever preached such a message, nor does any book of the Bible - since it is not the Gospel. While it is true that God draws the sinner out of love for His creation, and that Christ died to make it possible for him to be saved, it is not true that God has a wonderful plan for every lost sinner. His plan for lost sinners who reject Jesus Christ is that they will be cast into Hell. That is not very wonderful!

Some concentrate on a way of preaching that sets out to address the “felt needs” of the people. This, again, puts man in front as the major player. According to John the Baptist, Jesus and the Apostles Peter and Paul, it is God’s - not man’s - priority that constitutes the true Gospel: “God commands all people everywhere to repent”. (Acts 17 verse 30) ...

<http://www.whatisthegospel.org.uk/mancentred.html>

THE DANGERS OF MAN-CENTERED THEOLOGY

by Jordan Standridge

I recently stumbled across a video where a guy who looked like he was possibly preaching, claimed to have had a real vision of Jesus. In the video he claims that, get this, Jesus asks him for forgiveness! It was just an incredible reminder of the times we are living in. We live in a day where the Church has become completely man-centered to the point where now Jesus needs to ask us for forgiveness.

Man-centered theology is natural. We are born worshipping ourselves. It is in our veins because of original sin. We think the world revolves around us, and ultimately we think God exists for us. Man-centered theology can show up many different ways, but ultimately it is the exaltation of man and the belittling of God.

Your theology matters. It affects the way you think, the way you live, the way you approach others around you, and ultimately it affects your relationship with God. ...

<http://thecripplegate.com/the-dangers-of-man-centered-theology/>

A TOUCHSTONE FOR GOD-CENTERED SALVATION VS. MAN-CENTERED

SALVATION

The “Calvinist vs. Arminian” debate is substantially a debate between what is called “synergism” and “monergism.” There is no third option (unless one is willing to affirm Pelagianism). For those who are new to the Calvinist-Arminian debate, the following is a primer on the two perennial branches of theological systems in Christianity. Or to put it another way, there are two very different ways for believers to view their salvation.

In general, the first type (the Arminian-Synergist) affirms what is called “synergism.” Synergists believe that two forces in the universe are necessary to bring about regeneration in the life of the sinner. In specifics, the two forces at work (cooperation) that are necessary to bring about regeneration, or spiritual life, is the will of man and the Holy Spirit (grace).

To put it another way, the work of the Holy Spirit is dependent on the creature’s will, hence, “synergism” (working together). These individuals will sincerely say, “I believe in grace alone.” But in reality, they believe that grace is not alone (sufficient), but that man’s will is necessary for regeneration to be effective.

It could be said that these individuals are “functional” Arminians because even though some will deny the label, their theology functions synergistically (thus, how they identify themselves is inconsistent with what they teach and believe).

The second group of believers (the Calvinist-Monergist) affirm what is called “monergism.” Monergists believe that there is only one force in the universe (grace alone) that brings about regeneration in the life of the sinner. In specifics, because of the deadness of man’s spiritual state, his moral inability, the Holy Spirit performs the miracle of spiritual resurrection (regeneration) in that person, hence, “monergism” (one work). Grace is sufficient to be effective, and does not depend on some action of man.

In other words, the Holy Spirit does not merely whisper in the hardened sinner’s ear, hoping that the rebel sinner will “cooperate”; rather, while the sinner is in a state of hardness and rebellion, the Holy Spirit penetrates in the will of man and performs the miracle of spiritual life (regeneration). That is grace alone. Faith does not precede regeneration, regeneration precedes faith.

But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions— it is by grace you have been saved. Ephesians 2:4-5

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.” John 1:12-13

He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.” John 8:47

[Editors note: KJV, *power* rather than *right*:

The right (εξουσιαν). In 5:27 εδωκεν (first aorist active indicative of διδωμι) εξουσιαν means authority but includes power (δυναμις). Here it is more the notion of privilege or right.(RWP)

(s) He condescended to give them this power to take them to be his children. (Geneva)

One cannot become a child of God on his own, but the Spirit must give the power to believe on his name. Hebrews 11 makes it clear that faith is a result of the supernatural work of the Spirit in the sinner.]

Arminians cannot affirm monergism (grace alone); they must always have the creature’s will as the final determiner of their destiny, not God. Inconsistently, Arminians pray (without knowingly) Calvinistically, “God, change my unbelieving relative’s heart.” I have never heard them pray, “God, only whisper in my relative’s ear, but don’t change their heart unless you’ve been given permission.” But the Calvinist prays and affirms biblical truth consistently.

<http://www.aomin.org/aoblog/index.php/2010/10/29/a-touchstone-for-god-centered-salvation-vs-man-centered-salvation/>

MAN-CENTERED SONGS

Of course, we cannot get this close without dealing with Man-Centered songs. Compare our modern songs with the God-Centered songs of the past. The Man-Centered songs of today are a very dim shadow of yesterday. Read the history of those old songs in books like “101 Hymn Stories” and “101 More Hymn Stories”, by Kenneth W. Osbeck, Kregel Publishers. Even when modern music companies use the old words and music, they add words, ruining beautiful songs, e.g., *A Mighty Fortress is our God*, with “Woa, Woa, Woa” and minor changes to the tune. In the bottom of the screen was the copyright notice, so they had to purchase the song.

I imagine most of modern “religious” songs emanate from a mystical feeling in the heart of the author. On the other hand, those old songs came from the heart as the individual many times faced extremely devastating situations, and they found God’s amazing grace to keep

on following him. The “spirit” in the two types of songs differs widely. The old songs generally have a high and lifted up spirit to them. On the other hand, most new songs do not seem to be much more than just singing. To me, it is similar to the difference between Handel’s music, and most other classical music. His contains a high and lifted up spirit as he composed from a distinctly Christian mind-set, and to the Glory of God.

Man-Centered music appeals to the natural spirit in man. God-Centered music appeals to God’s spirit in man. We must pay attention to what is going on around us, for we are commanded to try the spirits in light of God’s Word. (1 Jn 4:1) My pastor used to say, “Sift everything through a theological sieve.”

THE HERESY OF WORSHIPTAINMENT

By Ron Rumburg

The great heresy of the church today is that we think we’re in the entertainment business. A.W. Tozer believed this to be true back in the 1950s and 60s. Church members “want to be entertained while they are edified.” He said that in 1962. Tozer grieved, even then, that it was “scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting where the only attraction was God.”

More recently, David Platt has asked: “What if we take away the cool music and the cushioned chairs? What if the screens are gone and the stage is no longer decorated? What if the air conditioning is off and the comforts are removed? Would His Word still be enough for his people to come together?”

Would it be enough?

Tozer got it right: “Heresy of method may be as deadly as heresy of message.”

HALLOWEDNESS, NOT SHALLOWNESS

Like Tozer, we should be concerned that so many people in our churches want to be entertained while they worship. We should be concerned when we no longer recognize the difference between the two. And we should be concerned by the growing belief that adding more entertainment value to worship is necessary for the church to accomplish its mission.

I may stand alone, but it grieves me when I see worship services characterized more by props, performances, and pep rally atmospheres than by any sense of divine sacredness; and hallowedness giving way to shallowness.

This is not about worship styles. The issue is not traditional versus contemporary versus blended worship. It’s not about organ versus worship band. That discussion

misses the point completely. This is about the heart and focus and intent of worship. The real issues, for me, are these:

1. Who or what is the spotlight really on?

If the figurative spotlight in our church services is on anyone other than God, it is not worship. If the spotlight shines brighter on human performance than on the gospel of Christ, it is not worship. If anyone other than Jesus is receiving our adulation and applause, it is not God we worship.

2. What message are we communicating?

The message of the church—the message the world needs to hear from us—is not, “Come and have a good time,” “Come and be entertained,” or “Come and find your best life now.”

Tozer said: “Christ calls men to carry a cross; we call them to have fun in His name.”

The message of the church is the message of the cross. Lest we forget, Jesus’ cross was a source of entertainment only for those who mocked Him as He hung on it.

3. How are lives changed?

“But our methods are attracting and winning people!” some will say.

Tozer addressed that sentiment: “Winning them to what? To true discipleship? To cross-carrying? To self-denial? To separation from the world? To crucifixion of the flesh? To holy living? To nobility of character? To a despising of the world’s treasures? To hard self-discipline? To love for God? To total committal to Christ?”

THE WORST WORSHIP SERVICE EVER

by Stephen C. Spence

Market driven ministries and man-centered celebration services are permeating churches with the speed of a winter flu virus. The justification of these practices is based upon two time worn excuses, “Every one is doing it,” and, “It works”. In the face of this pragmatic approach the fundamentalist must remember that man-centered worship is an affront to God and must be rejected by God’s people at all cost.

Exodus thirty-two provides a perfect example of the danger that man-pleasing worship practices pose, and the swiftness with which they can become accepted into our ministries. Walter C. Kaiser, in his volume on Exodus in the Expositor’s, Bible Commentary, writes. “The appearance (of chapters 32-34) at this point in the text deliberately contrasts the authorized worship of God set forth in the tabernacle instructions with the fabricated human worship of the golden calf.” Consider carefully

the record of The Worst Worship Service Ever.

It had been a little less than six weeks since the Israelites had heard God speak the ten commandments. At that time, the fear of God rested upon them so strongly that when they “saw the thunderings, and the lightnings and the noise of the trumpet. and the mountain smoking... they removed and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” Forty days later, while still camped at the base of that burning mountain, enshrouded with the cloud of God’s glory, they exchanged the true worship of God for a man-made religious service. How did it happen that Israel turned away so quickly from truth to embrace error?

REASONS FOR APOSTASY

The failure behind the apostasy was two-fold. Scripture identifies the first part as the failure of the people’s faith. Israel had existed as a nation for less than three months. They were truly in the infancy stage of their relationship with God. Certainly their conduct during Moses’ absence speaks of an immature, even childish faith. Notice the ways their childish behavior revealed itself.

IMPATIENCE

Parents are all too familiar with a young child’s insistence for immediate gratification of his wants. Children don’t like to wait for anything. They exhaust their patience on a long trip within fifteen minutes after the car pulls out of the driveway. They begin chanting that dreaded question, “Are we there yet?” Impatience is a mark of immaturity. Observe the impatience of the nation of Israel in the opening verse of this chapter.

And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up make us gods, which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him.

The Israelites concluded that they had lost a leader and with him God’s power and presence. They decided to take matters into their own hands. How tempting it is still for the Lord’s people to grow weary of waiting on Him, especially when it seems as though God is not doing anything, as though His way is not working. The Psalmist and the prophets remind us of the importance of learning to wait upon the Lord. The New Testament reinforces this concept by identifying patience as part of the fruit of the Spirit. We can look at other men’s ministries and envy the results they have to the point of

convincing ourselves that we need to make something happen. When we follow such impulses we set ourselves in the way of compromise.

BABY FAITH

Along with impatience was a second evidence of their failed faith, Israel’s need to walk by sight and not by faith. A baby grows upset when he is left in his room alone. He wants to be held. He wants to see mom and dad. A parent must train a child to realize that he has not been abandoned simply because mom or dad steps out of the child’s sight into another room. Franz Delitzsh, in volume two of the commentary series he coauthored on the Old Testament, explains how Israel’s faith was “corrupted by the impatience and unbelief of a natural heart, which has not been pervaded by the power of the living God, and imagines itself forsaken by Him, whenever His help is not visibly and outwardly at hand”. Israel demanded visible evidence of their God’s presence, “make us gods which shall go before us.” Likewise, many churches demanding immediate results have chosen to follow the growth gurus whom they can see and hear. God’s Word is set aside for man’s programs.

GROWTH GURUS OR GOD’S WORD

I called on a visiting family who was in search of a church home. They had left their former church where they had been actively serving for many years. The issue that led them to pull out was the decision on the part of the leadership to change the music standards and begin using Contemporary Christian Music. They questioned the church leaders about this shift, pointing out the fact that there should be greater concern over pleasing God with our music than with pleasing men. They were told that the reason for this change was because the church marketing data showed it was the only way to reach the younger families in the community.

Completing the evidence of her collapse in faith, Israel showed her ingratitude by dismissing the mighty works of the Lord as the efforts of “this fellow Moses”. Due to the failure of their faith, the Israelites forsook the true worship of God and opted for worship that was appealing to their flesh.

This alone, however, would not have resulted in the debauched worship of which we read in this chapter. Moses had prepared the people for his prolonged absence by appointing the men who were to fill in for him. If these men had offered a united voice to address the cries of the people, things would have turned out much differently. Sadly, there was a failure in leadership.

FAILED LEADERSHIP

In chapter twenty-four of Exodus we read of the seventy elders who partook of the Covenant feast in the presence of God. Where were they when the people came to Aaron and demanded that he make the golden calf? Where was the backing from the leadership? Where was Aaron's backbone? No one was willing to take the unpopular position and resist the current of public consensus

Good men can and do collapse under pressure to accept false worship. Aaron had been chosen by God to be the nation's high priest. He should have boldly stepped forward and squelched the clamoring of the people. Aaron should have defended God's power by which He delivered Israel from bondage; the fatherly care which He exercised in guiding them to this mountain; and His unprecedented grace by which He entered into a covenant relationship with Israel, had spoken to them and chosen to dwell in their midst. Aaron should have done these things, but he was too fearful of the people. If only there had been a united voice from some of the other leaders, perhaps, Aaron would have found the courage to say "no" to the people. Certainly pastors must shoulder the brunt of the responsibility for failures in leadership, but where are the voices of the lay leaders? The elders or deacons of a church need to stand shoulder to shoulder with their pastor in resisting the pressure of following market driven strategies. The apostle Paul's warning to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28 is equally timely for this day. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers..." This responsibility falls upon the whole of spiritual leadership not just the pastor. The fear of man has always been a snare to leadership. The temptation to please men, to save face publicly, instead of following the unseen God at all costs remains a constant battle for all leaders.

ACTS OF APOSTASY

The reasons for Israel's apostasy serve as a clear warning to us. Her acts of apostasy are equally instructive for our hearts. Aaron's remarks regarding the golden calf indicate that Israel's intent was not to abandon her God, as much as she was accommodating her desire to more easily relate to God. "And when Aaron saw it (the golden calf), he built an altar before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, Tomorrow is a feast to the Lord." Israel's efforts to make God more relevant resulted in demeaning the Creator God by portraying Him in terms of one of His creatures.

DEMEANING THEIR GOD

The efforts of the contemporary worship crowd produce the same results. They seek to give men a God who is not concerned with holiness; who does not deserve man's best; who is pleased with sensual, fleshly worship; who does not demand a broken and contrite heart or true repentance. They would tell us, "Let the worshiper come in his sin, let him enjoy his fleshly music. Make sure he is not offended by the message and leaves the church feeling good about himself. As long as the people are pleased and keep coming it should not matter to God how they worship." On page five of his work, *The Knowledge of the Holy*, A. W. Tozer points out, "The essence of idolatry is the entertainment of thoughts about God that are unworthy of Him.... The idolater simply imagines things about God and acts as if they were true."

DEGRADING THEMSELVES

Besides the demeaning of her God, Israel was guilty of degrading herself. "And they rose up early on the morning, and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Verse twenty-five explains the phrase, "rose up to play". It says, "...Moses saw that the people were naked..." Literally this means that they "let loose". The Israelites were totally unrestrained in their conduct. They were controlled by their bodily passions rather than by any semblance of devotion to God. The text indicates that they made themselves objects of ridicule in the sight of their enemies by their behavior. The raucous sounds of many contemporary worship services might cause one to conclude as Joshua did that "there is the sound of war in the camp".

HIP-HOP EVANGELISM

A recent article carried in "The Dallas Morning News" spoke of the anticipation building prior to the Billy Graham Crusade that came to Dallas. The writer, Berta Delgado said, "What is known is that the Dallas crusade will follow the intricate high-energy blueprint used in Cincinnati." What did that "blueprint" entail? "Fifty thousand people have filled the stands... on this humid June evening, rocking to the throbbing Christian hip-hop of dc Talk." "Christian artist Kirk Franklin comes on stage, and the response is electric. 'Let's make this a Holy Ghost party' he says, starting to sing and dance all over the stage." Such practices must be seen for the shameful behavior that they are and not passed off as acts of worship. Though men may approve these changes in worship, such methods fall far short of God's approval. Moses' evaluation of Israel's experimental worship is summarized in verse thirty, "Ye have sinned

a great sin.”

The siren song of those who declare themselves to be church growth experts, calls to the fundamentalist to change his worship, to be more relevant to people of the twenty-first century. He must resist their call and maintain the pure and true worship of the Lord. Let him guard against weaknesses of faith and leadership which would compromise worship standards. Let him leave the demeaning of God and the degrading of worshippers to those who are more concerned with their attendances waxing large than with God’s wrath waxing hot.

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(Editor’s note: I know both from experience and from what other pastors have said that the “hip-hop” churches are not growing from conversions to Christ and holy living. Rather, they are growing by proselytizing those who are in sound churches. May God see fit to raise up pastors and “elders” who will stand against the corruption in the modern churches. I am amazed at the churches who will stand against “hip-hop”, fleshly music (which has no verse that says “Thou shalt not”, or “Thou shalt), yet see no problem with violating a clear Scripture such as Titus 2:5.)

A DEFENSE OF THE FAITH

THE WAR FOR THE MIND

Jude 3, ...ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; (1 Tim. 1:18.)

Paul tells us that we are involved in a warfare. Sure, there are open battles in warfare, but those open, public conflicts require many hours, if not many months or years, of contemplation, planning and preparation. (Luke 14:31.) Our enemy knows of the preparation required, and he does it well. However, it seems as though God’s army many times enters into the warfare totally unprepared, or if prepared, it enters in with a very limited arsenal. It is time for God’s army to arm itself with the Word of God, so it can fight an effective warfare against the enemies of God.

Though the following is not a theological study, it does deal with a matter that should be of importance to

home schoolers. This writer enjoys “defending the faith” with the pen. Thus, Mr. Dabney caught this writer’s attention because he pointed out that one of the primary reasons the South lost the War of Northern Aggression was because the South failed to publically defend its position.

We must admit that Christians are losing the War of Evil Aggression because rather than defending the faith at every opportunity, they are compromising the faith. Our prayer is, therefore, that the Lord will raise up godly young people who will know what they believe from the Bible, and who are able to write a serious defense of that faith. And thus we present the following for your consideration.

There has been and continues to be a great amount of discussion concerning the War Between the States, i.e., the War of Northern Aggression, as the North invaded a sovereign nation. This pastor has not made a study of that great war. However, contained in the preface and introduction of an excellent book by Robert L. Dabney—*A Defence of Virginia and the South*—are a couple points that must not be ignored. (1977 reprint of the 1867 book by Sprinkle Publication.) These few points are extremely applicable considering the fact that we are seeing a similar war against Christianity as was waged against the South.

That war was basically a war for men’s minds. The South, not realizing the importance of that war for public opinion, lost the war, and, therefore, it lost a way of life. Likewise, Christianity is losing the war for public opinion. This pastor fears that Christians in general have not grasped the importance of defending the Biblical faith before the public at every opportunity. As did the South, they are losing the war by default.

Let us follow Dabney to the point where he placed his finger on the problem. It is in his PREFACE and INTRODUCTION where the parallel between what happened in that terrible war and what is now taking place against Christianity is clearly revealed. Dabney opens his book with this statement, “A discussion of a social order totally overthrown, and never to be restored here...” He also points out that, “Nothing but the hand of a retributive Providence can avail to reach” the “great anti-slavery party which now rules the hour,” for their minds are deliberately made up, and “are not within the reach of reasoning.” [5] In other words, the minds of wicked men were made up, and it was too late to change them.

Dabney rightly believed that “History will some day bring present events before their impartial bar; and then her ministers will recall my obscure little book, and will

recognize in it the words of truth and righteousness...” We must say that time has arrived, for there seems to be much discussion today of what truly took place in the War of Northern Aggression. Dabney points out that “if there is indeed any future for civilized government in what were the United States, the refutation of the abolitionist postulates must possess a living interest still.” [6] The facts that led to that war must be brought to light and dealt with.

“Abolitionism lives” in the Churches, said Dabney, “and is more rampant and mischievous than ever, as infidelity... Therefore, the faithful servants of the Lord Jesus Christ dare not cease to oppose and unmask it.” “Abolitionism still lives in its full activity,” said he in 1867, “as Jacobinism ; is the destroyer of every hope of just government and Christian order.” [6]

“The most fearful consequence of the despotic government to which the South is now subjected, is not the plundering of our goods, nor the abridgment of privileges, nor the death of innocent men, but the degrading of the helpless victims” with “the weapon of physical force of the arbitrary rulers.” [7]

Dabney concludes his PREFACE by saying that only if men will repair the mischiefs done by the North, will America be saved from “chronic anarchy and barbarism.” [8] We see that Dabney indeed precisely called the shot: America has dissolved into “chronic anarchy and barbarism.” However, we happily see an increased desire in the hearts of men to uncover and know the truth behind the War Between the States. And we must say that all interested in understanding that truth must read Dabney’s book.

He introduces his study by saying that those who will study nineteenth century history will find it curious “that the Christianity and philanthropy of our day should have given so disproportionate an attention to the evils of African slavery.” In other words, why did not the Christian spirit in the South of that age before the war pay more attention “to the evils of African slavery.”? [9] He raises the question: Why did not the abolitionists pour out their “vials of holy wrath” upon other civilized nations of the world if they were so much against African slavery? Why did the North, who professed such holy indignation against African slavery, continue very friendly relations and trade with those nations who “continued the explicit practice of slavery, in so stern a form...”? Throughout his book, he points to the utter hypocrisy of the anti-slavery crowd, for as long as there was money to be made in the African slave trade, the North refused to let it be cut off. [10] “Then the

North, having ceased to find its own interest in the slave trade and slavery, changed its ground, and began to cast about, merely from a desire of sectional power in the confederacy, for means to destroy the institution.” [350]

In this writer’s opinion, the following leads up to the key issue of the whole war, being the most important lesson to be learned. If Christians do not read and learn, they bring their demise upon their own heads.

They [“the Yankee people,” ed.] made it their business to direct the whole storm of odium, from abroad and at home, on our heads. They, having the manufacture of American books chiefly in their hands, took pains to fill Europe and their own country with industrious slanders against their own brethren : and so occupied the ear of the world with abuse of us, as to make men almost forget that there were any other slaveholders. For this they had two motives, one calculated, and the other passionate and instinctive. The latter was the sectional animosity which was bred by the very intimacy of their association under one government, with rival interests. The man who learned to hate his brother, hates him, and can abuse him, more heartily than any more distant enemy. The deliberative motive was, to reduce the South to a state of colonial dependency upon themselves, and exclude all other nations from the rich plunder which they were accustomed to draw from the oppressed section, by means of the odium and misunderstanding which they created concerning us... It did not suit their selfish purposes, that Europe should know, that in this slaveholding South was the true conservative power of the American Government, the most solid type of old English character, the greatest social stability and purity, and above all, the very fountain of the international commerce and wealth; lest Europe should desire to visit and to trade with this section itself. And the readiest way to prevent this was to paint the South to all the rest of the world, in the blackest colours of misrepresentation, so as to have us regarded as a semi-barbarous race of domestic tyrants, whose chief occupations were chaining or scourging negroes, and stabbing each other with bowie-knives. The trick was a success. [11, 12, emp added.]

Let us stop and consider for a moment what he said, for the same “trick” is being successfully used today against Christianity. There were those in the North who sought to pillage the prosperity of the South, both its gold and political power. The North, therefore, did not want the world to know that anything existed in the South except “a semi-barbarous race” of tyrants, for if the world knew the truth, it would have traded with the South, and the South would have easily been independent of the North: the North’s prospect of pillage would have slipped away. Thus the ones in the North who wanted

the wealth for themselves painted the South with a very black brush for the purpose of turning public opinion, both domestic and foreign, against the South.

The pillagers from the North, “having the manufacture of American books chiefly in their hands,” filled American and all Europe “with industrious slanders” against those they desired to pillage. Through their printed material, public opinion moved to the side of the thieves and plunderers, and, hence, they were not only able to make their move and pillage the South with no opposition, but they had “brother against brother” to help in their insidious plunder of the South.

Concerning the Northern plunderers work to sway public opinion, Dabney makes this key point which caught this pastor’s attention, and should catch every Christian’s heart:

But the South should have been impelled by the same facts to defend its institutions before the public opinion of the civilized world ; for opinion is always omnipotent in the end, whatever prejudices and physical powers may oppose it. If its current is allowed to flow unchecked, its silent waters gradually undermine the sternest obstacles. This great truth men of thought are more apt to recognize than men of action. While the true statesman is fully awake to it, the mere politician is unconscious of its power ; and when his expedients—his parties and his statutes—have all been silently swept away by the diffusion of abstract principles opposed to them, he cannot understand his overthrow. ... They [the South’s politicians, ed.] failed to meet the Abolitionists with sufficient persistence and force on the radical question—the righteousness of African servitude as existing among us...

Though the South’s clergymen and literary men produced a number of works, the “egotism of the Yankee mind” refused to consider anything beyond “their own shallow and one-sided arguments.” [13, 14]

“There were two courses, either of which might have been followed by our politicians, in defending our Federal rights against Abolitionism. One plan would have been, to exclude the whole question of slavery persistently from the national councils, as extra-constitutional and dangerous, and to assert this exclusion always, and at every risk, as the essential condition of the continuance of the South in those councils. The other plan was, to meet that abstract question from the first, as underlying and determining the whole subject, and to debate it everywhere, until it was decided, and the verdict of the national mind passed upon it. Unfortunately, the Southern men did neither persistently.” [15] “While the swords of our people were fighting the battles of a necessary self-defense, the pens of our statesmen should have been no less diligent in defending us against the adverse opinion of a prejudiced

world.” [20, 21]

But the pens were silent, and the battle lost. The “Southern politicians usually satisfied themselves with saying that the whole matter was, according to the Constitution, one of State sovereignty...” Though the “State sovereignty” premise was true, the results were disasters: “If the Congress had no right to legislate about slavery, then it should not have been permitted to debate it.” [16] In other words, when the South lowered itself to debate what they held to be undebatable, they lost the debate in the public’s eye. [16] The Constitution gave the Federal Government no power over the master-slave relationship, leaving that up to the States. If slavery as practiced in the South were morally wrong, then the North by supporting the Constitution, supported wrong. The North, therefore, should have worked to lawfully amend or appeal the Constitution or even withdrawn from the voluntary compact. Rather, the North chose to enjoy the benefits of the compact while agitating under it matters excluded from the compact. “Constitutions and laws which contravened this [Dabney refers to the higher law, the law of God, ed.], ought to be lawfully amended or repealed; and it is the duty of all citizens to seek it.” In other words, if the Constitution failed to forbid moral wrong, e.g. African slavery, then it is the duty of every citizen to change it. [17]

UNJUST LAWS

Dabney gives this response to unjust laws:

“It would have become the duty of any private citizen, who might have been summoned by a United States officer, to act in a posse [to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law, ed.], or any other way in enforcing this law, to decline obedience; and then, in accordance with Scripture, to submit meekly to the legal penalty of such a refusal, until the unrighteous law [sic] were repealed.” In other words, if the abolitionists were so convinced that African slavery was morally wrong, why did not the average citizen refuse to help enforce all laws which supported slavery before the war and “submit meekly to the legal penalty of such a refusal”? Why did they not seek to change the Constitution within its framework rather than killing their fellow man?

The lies of the Northern pillagers were effective: By the time they were ready to move against the South (not in congress, but by armed might), the “eyes of the Northern people were” closed to any reasoning “by a foregone conclusion.” [20]

“The teachings of Abolitionism,” Dabney argues, “are clearly of rationalistic origin, of infidel tendency, and only sustained by reckless and licentious perversions of the meaning of the Sacred text.” Moreover, he likens the

Abolitionists' methods to those of the "Reign of Terror in France." [21] He warned in 1867 that the "the status of the negroes was just beginning to develop itself as an agitating and potent element in the politics of America." He saw it as a serious subject of moral strife between the North and the South. [20] How right he was! He, furthermore, trusts the hands of Divine Providence to vindicate the South against the "anti-scriptural, infidel, and radical grounds upon which our assailants have placed themselves..." [22] As we mentioned earlier, Dabney clearly saw that some day honest historians would be raised up, and the South would be vindicated. We are living to see that day.

Finally, Dabney points out that his defense of Virginia does not rest "on an assumption of a diversity of race, with is contradicted both by natural history and by the Scripture, declaring that 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'" Nor does he rest any defense upon an idea that the normal or preferable condition of society is master-slave relationships. [23] Moreover, no matter how good or pure a social order, there will proceed a hideous amount of wrongs and woe "because it is administered by depraved man." [24]

Passing the points we desire to make, we will stop here and urge the reader to pursue the study of that war on his own.

First, the abolitionists claimed a moral high ground, but were the very worst of hypocrites: Rather than working within the framework as provided by the founding fathers of that nation—it was destroyed by the War Between the States—for peaceful, lawful change, history shows that the pillagers chose armed conflict. Following in the footsteps of the "Reign of Terror in France," the wicked chose violence rather than lawful, peaceful means to change the Constitution. Dabney thus effectively points out the hypocrisy of the abolitionist movement. [Armed "Peace Keepers"!! The "Patriot" movement?]

There are many today who profess a moral high ground against wickedness in high places, but they seem to be far more ready to take up arms than they are to work for change within America's remaining framework. Are they any better than the pillagers of the South? Are they any better than those who took part in the "Reign of Terror"?

Example: The wicked abortion crowd worked quietly and steadily behind the scenes and changed the Constitution—without a Constitutional Convention, while

the righteous made little attempt to defend their position in the public's mind. If the wicked can change the Constitution to suit their evil intentions, why cannot the righteous for Godly intentions? Do we get in too big a hurry?

The South lost because it did not consistently defend its cause, and what it did write did not find its way into general circulation. However, would the defense have been more widely known if the South had pursued the debate everywhere and at every opportunity?

Christianity has likewise lost its power in the minds of the public because rather than defend its sound Biblical premise and foundation, it quietly compromised to become more acceptable to the world. However, the cause of Christ is different than the cause of the South, for those who should be defending the Christian faith are scattered throughout the world.

If Christian ministers do not start defending their stand in their local communities, the public itself will join with the wicked in stoning Christians.

The Christian pen that should be consistently defending the Word of God and the Christian faith is silent. By the time it is awakened, will the public's mind be totally closed by those who seek to plunder the house of God? Will the public be so totally swayed that it will itself "take up arms" against the cause of Christ? We should learn from the "Civil War" that the most rational minds can be swayed to irrational actions if lies are told often enough, and if they are not countered with the Truth of God's Word.

Admittedly, the plunderers have "the manufacture of American books chiefly in their hands..." And, yes, the plunderers have filled America and the entire world "with industrious slanders" against those they desire to pillage, Christians and the church. And, yes, the wicked consistently paint Christianity with a very black brush for the purpose of turning domestic and foreign opinion against the cause of Christ. But how much blame lies on Christians who fail to or refuse to get involved in any effort to defend the Christian faith before the public?

• ANSWER

The home school movement is a breath of fresh air. Here Christians can train up a mighty army. They can withdraw the Lord's army from the enemy's training camp (the government schools), and train them up in the way they should go. In the home, they can pass on to their children the teachings of God's Word; they can teach their children proper use of their mother tongue; they can train their children to write in a coherent man-

ner. With confidence and a good command of God's Word and of language, the new army can wage an effective warfare for the minds of men.

Christians must take up pen and paper and defend their faith at every opportunity: Letters to the editor is one means left to defend what is Scripturally right and wrong in the public's eye. "But I can't write" is an extremely poor excuse for not doing what one can do to defend the faith. (I have found that editors are likely to publish good letters from school age young people.)

A good home school project would be to issue small family "news letters" (for lack of a better term). Computers are cheap, and good laser printers are also quite inexpensive. Any good word processing package can put together an attractive paper. Young people need to Scripturally confront anti-Christian ideas, put the defense or attack in well-written papers, and pass the papers out to those they know, in the church or in the community. Simply apply Scripture to current events. Don't do anything anonymously; place the author's name and age on the paper.

Such a public defense of the faith requires study, contemplation, planning, preparation and hard work, but we must train up an army to earnestly contend for the faith—an army to war a good warfare.

Zerubbabel (Zec. 4:6.) was told that Israel could never reach its calling "by the increase of its might and the exaltation of its strength, but solely by suffering itself to be filled with the spirit of Jehovah." (Keil-Delitzsch.)

The Lord of hosts describes the Lord as the "prince of a mighty army of God." The church, made up of families, is the army of God, to be trained in the art of the warfare to which she has been called—that is, conquer the world for the kingdom of God. (Mat. 28:19, 20.) The horse must be prepared for the battle, but the victory is the Lord's. (Pro. 21:31.) The Spirit tells us that we must work hard to defend the faith, and the victory is the Lord's to accomplish. (2 Cor. 10:4, 1 Tim. 1:18, Jude 13.)

Personal Note: I have found that lasers produce better results than ink jets, at about ½ the cost. Manufacturers will give you an inkjet printer to get you to purchase the ink from them. Ink is where the money is.

Bro Need

OUR DANGER AND OUR DUTY

A sickly boy made his way slowly through the streets of Columbia, South Carolina. Few would have predicted any kind of future for him. He was short and thin. His eyes were half-obsured by heavy lids that drooped no-

ticeably. His skin was a sickly yellowish color. Everyone believed that he would die young. Some people jokingly said that he looked to be "twenty years old" when he was born. Young James had what was called "consumption" in the early 1800s, a wasting disease we now call tuberculosis. Sometimes he would cough up blood as he sat up late at night poring over his books.

Few would predict that this sickly boy would one day become a mighty champion of truth. His pen would deal blows against rationalism, Unitarianism, abolitionism, communism, statism, and every other error that dared threaten the truth he loved so dearly. But all of this was not yet. A small twenty-five-cent book he would buy in a small bookshop would change the course of this boy's destiny.

James had become an orphan at the tender age of eight. A kind planter, out of respect to the boy's parents, had decided to fund his education. James had come from his small rural village on the Pedee River to be educated at Columbia College.

One thing soon became clear. Behind those droopy eyelids were eyes that glowed with an earnest search for truth. All that James read, he remembered. And he had read much.

James was considered to be the most brilliant student at Columbia College, and could quote the ancient Greek poets in the original with ease. He was also skilled in debate, in philosophy, and in English literature. However, in spite of all his learning, the boy was empty. His pious mother had committed him long ago to God, but he had been raised by an intellectual patron, and reason had gradually pushed out faith.

But one evening in Columbia, the hand of God drew young James to a bookstore. A twenty-five cent book caught his eye. It was simply titled "Confession of Faith." The boy carried it back to his small room. It is needless to say that the book was the "Westminster Confession." James was riveted by its contents. The hours of the night slipped by. James opened his Bible, eagerly looking up every Scripture that the Confession referenced. After long hours of study, the light of dawn began to dispel the darkness of night. Just as surely, the Light of Divine Revelation had dispelled the darkness of human reason.

James Henley Thornwell was a changed man from that moment forward. Brilliant prospects were offered to the promising student. Positions as a professor in philosophy, opportunities in law, business, and politics were all offered and rejected. Thornwell set his course for the Gospel ministry.

Turning from Aristotle and Plato as philosophers, he fixed his eyes upon Christ, the fountain of true wisdom. Abandoning Locke as a teacher of natural law, he took up Moses as the source of revealed law. Thornwell would later write:

“The speculations of Aristotle break down just where a higher light was needed to guide him. He tracked truth through the court and sanctuary to the mystic veil which he was not permitted to lift. . . A single line of Moses would have saved a world of perplexity.”

Thornwell laid aside prospects of brilliant advancement to take a humble pastorate in an obscure town in rural South Carolina. There he met and married the daughter of one of his church members, and Nancy Witherspoon truly proved the truth of the verse, “a prudent wife is from the Lord.” The Thornwells raised seven children to love and serve Christ.

Thornwell’s faithful preaching and fidelity to the truth soon led to other assignments. He became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Columbia, where he wielded a powerful influence over both church and state. He eventually became the president of the very college where he had once stumbled blindly after truth. At the helm of Columbia College and later the Seminary, he endeavored to point every young man under his influence to the rock of eternal truth.

As his friends predicted, Thornwell did not live a long life. He never reached the age of fifty. But in thirty years of ministry, he became a valiant and uncompromising champion of truth.

He became a champion for many causes that were then and still now are unpopular. We will briefly discuss some of the positions that Thornwell took. He was a gracious but polemic writer and was not afraid to attack some cherished opinions.

Thornwell argued that seminary boards were not authorized in the Word of God. In a sharp but gentlemanly debate, he argued with Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton that the education of ministers should be directly under church authority. He said:

“I believe that the Boards will eventually prove our masters unless they are crushed in their infancy.”

Thornwell openly asserted that dancing was a shameful and licentious practice and that Christians should never be seen on a dancing floor. He said,

“Just think of dancing soberly, and at the least, it cannot but appear ridiculous. And yet, like most follies, it is fatally contagious; and men freely engage in it without being aware of its enormity. It is an insult to God.”

Thornwell saw the danger of German rationalism. Even while Princeton was accepting some of the tenants of higher criticism, Thornwell warned:

“I am sorry to see that rationalism is making such progress in this country. If God spares my life, I intend to deal some harder blows than I have yet done . . . Upon the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures and the authority of the Bible, we shall have some desperate battles to fight with false brethren before the enemy is subdued.”

Thornwell argued that the War of Northern Aggression would radically change this country, and that the struggle was a desperate battle for orthodoxy in the church and order in the state.

“The parties in this conflict are not merely abolitionists and slaveholders—they are atheists, socialists, communists, red republicans, jacobins on the one side, and the friends of order and regulated freedom on the other. In one word, the world is the battleground—Christianity and atheism the combatants, and the progress of humanity at stake.”

Thornwell died in 1862 and, like the prophet Isaiah, never lived to see the grim realities of his warning. He wrote a pamphlet which he called “Our Danger and Our Duty.” The danger he feared was much more pernicious than the external invasion of enemy troops, and the duty he advocated was much more sweeping than even the bravest and most heroic armed resistance. Thornwell warned that only a return to the law of God would bring success to any people.

Thornwell suggested that the following amendment be presented to the Confederate Congress. It never was. Oh to God that some nation on this earth would take up these words and make them a glorious reality:

“We the people of the Confederate States, distinctly acknowledge our responsibility to God and the supremacy of His Son, Jesus Christ, as King of kings and Lord of lords; and hereby ordain that no law shall be passed by the Congress of these Confederate States inconsistent with the will of God, as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.”

Drawn from The Life and Letters of J. H. Thornwell by B. M. Palmer; Preachers With Power by Douglas Kelly, Lectures on the South by Joe Morecraft, and Our Danger and Our Duty by J. H. Thornwell distributed by Ron Rumburg and the Society for Biblical and Southern Studies in Appomattox, VA Sept 2016. John Huffman, Mighty Men Herald. cbcbelleville@gmail.com

THE REAL PROBLEM

By Dr. Everett Ramsey

I have been reading the Trump Bashing and the Constitution bashing by Christians on FB. I am not naive. I know Trump is not God and he is not perfect. Neither is the Constitution what it should be. Patrick Henry and many early preachers and citizens opposed the federal Constitution. However, it seems to me to be a little hypocritical to say that all our problems are because of a Godless Constitution. After all, Israel never did have a Constitution, Godless or otherwise, they had the Law/Word of God and they sinned all of our sickest sins including pornography and killing babies for false gods. Our real problem is that the preachers changed. When our country was founded, preachers taught the Laws of God from their pulpits for 2 hours every Lord's Day. People who would not go and listen were cut off. Parents even demanded that their children be taught how to read the Bible. Preachers stopped doing this when the colleges and Seminaries convinced them that the Law of God and the Old Testament were no longer valid. When they stopped preaching it, they stopped enforcing it in their churches and the membership openly forsook God's law and stopped demanding it of people in positions of education, pastor and government. There are divorced men and women as well as lesbians and homosexuals holding pastoral positions in churches today. I can assure you that if we had adopted the Laws of God as our constitution, wicked men would still have ruled against God and His Law. We would still have unqualified leaders and Aborticide. Israel's Kings did it for many years before God stopped them. A piece of paper will not maintain righteousness, even if it is the Bible. The Law must be written on the hearts and minds of God's people and God must restrain His people with the power of His Word from the pulpit and the power of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Without this, there is no righteousness, revival or anything else as a nation. If the law of God was our national law, how would you enforce the Law of God? The people of the churches today are not about to stone anyone or flip the switch on an electric chair. They believe God loves everybody including the Devil. They will tolerate anything. The enemies of God have always known that God's people can be bought with money, riches, prosperity and things. Until the Lord replaces the preachers in the pulpits, we won't see much change. But all evil does and will come to an end.

WATCHMAN NEE

Thomas Williamson

Watchman Nee (1903-1972) was a widely read and admired Chinese preacher and theologian, who died a martyr's death in a Red Chinese prison. He is best known for the devotional classic "The Normal Christian Life," and was the author of many other books.

His legacy is preserved in the Local Church movement led by Witness Lee, which has adherents and a very active publications ministry in America and worldwide.

While we can be appreciative of and thankful for the good aspects of Nee's ministry, we should be aware of possible problems with his teaching, and that of the Local Church movement. No man or movement is infallible - all teaching, even by admirable and godly men such as Watchman Nee, should be tested against the teaching of the Word of God.

What follows here is not intended as an attack on Nee or his modern-day followers, but it is presented for informational purposes, so that we may beware of deficiencies in Nee's theological approach.

MODALISM is the teaching that God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not separate persons of the Trinity, but are mere manifestations of the one God. Nee's teaching was understood by many of his followers to be a presentation of modalism:

"The Holy Spirit is the Lord Jesus, and the Lord Jesus is the Holy Spirit . . . the Son is the Father, and the Son is also the Spirit... the Son is the embodiment of the Father . . . the Spirit is the realization of the Son . . . the resurrection of Christ . . . made Christ the life-giving Spirit." Nee's successor Witness Lee appears to have taken a more explicit anti-Trinitarian and modalist position, teaching that "The Son must be the Father . . . the entire Godhead the Triune God became flesh. . . . The traditional explanation of the Trinity is grossly inadequate and borders on tritheism. . . . the Son is the Father, and the Son is also the Spirit. . . . Because the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are all one with the Body of Christ, we may say that the Triune God is now the '4-in-one' God. These 4 are the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and the Body."

This teaching by Lee on the "deification" of the Church may be a logical development from Nee's original teachings. Lee teaches "the deification of man - that man could become God in life and in nature but not in the Godhead." His notion of deification appears to be a form of perfectionism.

Local Church defenders have denied that they hold to

the heresy of modalism, and some evangelical observers of the movement have given it a clean bill of health with regard to doctrinal orthodoxy. Other reviewers insist that the movement is tainted with false doctrine derived from Nee. The Faithsaves.net web site carries a detailed, negative review of Nee's theology.

PARTIAL RAPTURE AND PURGATORY. Nee held to a partial rapture theory, believing that some Christians, especially those affiliated with his movement, would be taken up in the Rapture, while others, not so worthy, would be "left behind" to suffer in a form of purgatory:

"Over some Christians hell still has its threat. . . . The Lord shows us that if Christians tolerate sin, they will suffer either the casting into the eternal fire with both hands and both feet, or the entering into life with one hand or one foot. . . . The fire is an eternal fire, but it does not say that they will remain in the eternal fire forever. . . . The eternal fire here is the Gehenna of fire. The Bible shows us that a Christian has the possibility of suffering the Gehenna of fire. Although he can suffer the Gehenna of fire, he cannot suffer it forever. He can only suffer it during the age of the kingdom."

CHARISMATIC LEANINGS. Nee believed in the typical charismatic doctrine that believers could choose not to be sick, even though he suffered from chronic illnesses himself. "Since the Bible takes 70 as a general standard for human life, we can hope to live until that time if we have faith. . . . Some ask me if I oppose speaking with tongues. Certainly not. . . . As to visions and dreams, I too have seen great light. . . . I do not oppose visions and dreams. I myself have had some experience of them."

MYSTICISM. Nee was a thorough-going mystic, placing subjective new revelations received by the believer on the same level with the Word of God: "Only the word which the Lord speaks to us is of any use. . . . The written Scriptures ... and the living human messenger . . . contribute to our Christian life . . . but neither of these can take the place of the living voice of God to our hearts. . . . To the Christian there is no absolute right or wrong . . . What is right or wrong depends upon the level of life he has attained. . . . When I was young I did much searching and researching of the Bible. But, Hallelujah, today I have given it up. . . . Forget about reading, researching, understanding and learning the Word."

The Apologetics Index web site describes Nee's teaching in the book "The Ministry of God's Word" as "very philosophical, mystical and incoherent."

EXAMPLES OF NEE'S INCOHERENT MYSTICISM: "In our spirit we see something; we are able to fix it in our mind and we are also given inward words. These inward words contain the thought we have as well as the light we receive. God gives us a few words which are called words of revelation. Revelation means seeing, lifting the veil so that light shines and we see the thing behind the veil. When we see that inner reality we at first cannot express it. God grants us sufficient mental power to hold the light and translate it into our own thought - as though photographing the thing. He also grants us words to embrace all the meaning of the revelation. The words God gives include the whole meaning of what is behind the enlightenment. Such words of revelation are therefore seeing words. They are more than words, for they speak of our inward seeing and inward revelation. These words in us are simultaneously a seeing." - "The Ministry of God's Word," p. 197. If you didn't understand that, don't feel bad - I can't figure out what he is saying either.

WHEN PUSH COMES TO SHOVE. The entire book goes on in that vein of incomprehensible mysticism. On page 230 Nee says, "All who have truly been ministers of the word know what is meant by pushing out the spirit. While you are speaking, you receive the strength (but not the fleshly kind) to push out the spirit within you. It itself is strong in you, and you try to send it forth. As your words go forth, your spirit goes forth too. Only in this way will people touch reality. Whether the audience hears the word of God or merely hears a sermon depends on how you push out your spirit. If you are willing to extend it they hear more than a message, because they meet the reality behind the words. But if your spirit is not released, then they will not touch the reality behind the words."

Please don't ask me to explain that, because I don't understand a word of it. I question the value of such teaching, even from a highly regarded and recommended author like Nee.

ONLY ONE TRUE CHURCH IN EVERY CITY. The Apologetics Index web site article on Nee states that "Nee taught there should only be one congregation in each city. Whenever Nee's followers moved into a city, they proclaimed themselves as the only church approved by God in that city. These doctrines have been picked up by various abusive churches and cultic movements, such as the International Churches of Christ."

Nee branded all Baptist and Protestant churches as unscriptural and called for all believers to leave those

churches and join his movement.

AUTHORITARIAN LEADERSHIP. According to Apologetics Index, Nee “taught that all Christians must have a ‘Covering’ - a person who has delegated authority, must be obeyed unconditionally, and who must be imitated. This ‘covering’ does not stop with matters of faith and doctrine, but also extends to personal and secular matters (such as choice of employment, place to live, whether or not to marry, etc.)”

Nee explained, “People will perhaps argue, ‘What if the authority is wrong?’ The answer is, If God dares to entrust His authority to men, then we can dare to obey. Whether the authority is right or wrong does not concern us, since he has to be responsible directly to God. The obedient needs only to obey; the Lord will not hold us responsible for any mistaken obedience, rather will He hold the delegated authority responsible for his erroneous act. . . . Insubordination, however, is rebellion, and for this the one under authority must answer to God.”

Admittedly, Nee had no monopoly on this unscriptural emphasis on blind obedience to religious leaders. Preachers of various denominations, including some Baptists, have proclaimed the same error.

G. Richard Fisher, in Apologetics Index, states that “Nee outlines no method of Bible study and interpretation and appears to deny evangelical hermeneutics. In his book ‘Spiritual Authority,’ he sets himself and his elders up as the unquestionable authorities. By all appearances, Nee saw himself not as a servant but as a guru.”

CONCLUSION: NEE’S TEACHING CANNOT BE ENDORSED. It is not my intention to issue a blanket condemnation of the Local Church movement or of those believers who are affiliated with it. However, there are sufficient questions about the theological position of this movement, so that we can safely say that it has nothing to offer to believers with a sound, fundamentalist Baptist background, and should be avoided.

Nee’s publications should be treated with caution, as should be all publications of Living Stream Ministry in Anaheim, California, which is the publications ministry of the Local Church. One of their published works is their own “Recovery Version” of the Bible, which contains extensive annotations by Witness Lee.

As Christians, it is our duty to “abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment, That ye may approve things that are excellent,” Philippians 1:9-10. In my opinion, many of the writings and teachings of Watchman Nee fail to meet the standard of excellence.

PERSONAL

This winter has been unusual, to say the least. The temperatures have dipped into the single digits a few times, but more times it has gone into the high 60s. It has not been cold enough long enough to even kill the summer bugs. A thin sheet of ice has formed a couple times on our pond, but that is all. Of course, the heat bills appreciate this warm weather.

Bettie’s sister, Becky, lives in Brazil, where she teaches English. Her oldest son, Jonathan, has received a scholarship to study for his doctorate in music at Bowling Green University in Ohio, probably 3 hours north of us. He will be spending a week or so with us, and then he returns to Brazil, and marries a young lady he has been courting for a year in a civil ceremony. Then they will come to the US and marry in New York City where her family is, so she will be a US citizen. His US address will be our address. He is 30 years old, and has been waiting to finish his schooling before they marry. Becky is a Christian, and all of her children are committed Christians.

Hospital, doctor and dentist’s visits have consumed our time for the last several months. Two days after we get back from Bettie’s 50th college reunion, King’s College, Bristol TN, I will go in for surgery.

SURGERY

After getting my blood pressure down within acceptable range after the pacemaker, the VA gave the “go-ahead” to have the final opinion of the Wright-Patterson AFB hospital surgeon. Not knowing the makeup of the growth on the spleen, the surgeon ruled out orthoscopic surgery which would allow small bits to escape into the bloodstream. The other option is to remove the spleen along with the growth, and small bits of other organs the growth might be touching: stomach and pancreas. She highly doubts that there is cancer, for cancer is very rare in that area, but she wants to be safe. The scans did not show any unusual activity in the lymph system, which is good news. Though I hate the idea of vaccines, particularly the mercury they are suspended in, I need to take several before surgery, because the spleen is the body’s main front line of defense against infections. I especially need the pneumonia vaccine, as will Bettie to help protect her from infections that can be passed on to me. My nurse at the VA said her husband had his spleen removed 10 years ago, and life goes on as normal without vaccines.

Robert Kennedy Jr:

“Big money has fueled the exponential expansion of CDC’s vaccine schedule since 1988, when Congress’ grant of immunity from lawsuits suddenly transformed vaccines into paydirt.” (<http://robertfkennedyjr.com/mercury-vaccines/>)

We will go to Wright-Patterson hospital Thursday, April 13 to a final visit with the surgeon and for the pre-op check-up with anesthesiologists, etc., before surgery on Good Friday, April 14th. Wright-Patt Hospital has housing 5 minutes from the hospital for families of patients to stay with no charge, so we will spend Thursday night there, and wait to hear what time my surgery will be on Friday. Bettie will be staying at the house until she can drive me home.

The house is scheduled for eight days, for they may need to keep me in the hospital for up to a week, for fear of infection. In fact, the surgeon told me that a fever above 101.5 requires immediate attention at an emergency room. Life after surgery will be one of avoiding infections, as the spleen is one of the infection-fighting organs I will no longer have. Thus, the surgeon urged me to get the various vaccines

Neither of us have had any shots nor vaccines for many years, and we have had few colds and no flu. Actually, I cannot recall having any vaccines since my military days. How could one forget the “shot line” as they prepare the new men to go anywhere in the world? It will take up to 6 weeks to recover before I can get back into “active duty”. I will be unable to drive for a while. We do have gas heat available in the house. I expressed to my VA nurse my concern over infections after removal of the spleen, and she told us her husband had his spleen removed over 10 years ago, and life has proceeded as normal, even with no vaccinations, except the flu shot yearly. Her words were encouraging.

“CHEST WALL PAIN”

I have not heard that term either until February 18. It is a pain in or around the bones and muscles of your chest. It may take up to six weeks to get better; it may take longer if you must stay physically active in your work or activities. I leaned over to lie down on a couch, and the pain struck. The pain was so intense I could only take very short breaths. It was scary, for it felt like I was suffocating. For the first time in many years, I went to a “civilian” ER on my own as quick as we could get there, which is only about 15 minutes away.

However, as soon as I got settled in the very uncomfortable ER bed, the pain stopped, and I could breathe again. The symptoms were of a blood clot in my lungs, and the blood work had the markers of a blood clot.

However, the CT scan showed no traces of a blood clot, and I was released. That area of my chest wall is still tender and sore. And thus a serious reality check, and reminder that life is as a vapor.

Job 23:10 “But he knoweth the way that I take:” and I pray that “when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.” Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?(Gen 18:25)

Whate’er my God ordains is right:/His holy will abide;/I will be still whate’er He doth;/And follow where He guideth;/He is my God; though dark my road,/He holds me that I shall not fall:/Wherefore to Him I leave it all.

Samuel Rodigast, 1649-1708. Downloadable sheet music is readily available. 5 more verses at <http://www.hymntime.com/tch/hm/w/h/a/whateerm.htm>

Please pray for us. It seems that since we have moved to OH, circumstances and then medical and dental appointments (for the last several months, only 1 or 2 days a week with no appointments) have tied up all our time. In fact, we have not had time to finish unpacking from our move.

We both are looking forward more and more to our new bodies.

VARIOUS

What did Obama do for the past 8 years, and what will Trump do? Obama did and Trump will do what God determined before the beginning of time that they would do, as have all men done throughout history.

Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain:

“Great” men think they are getting their power from Satan, or think they are controlling the power of Satan for their own uses, but they are only doing what has been predetermined by our God. Note that the “power to get wealth”, even for evil use, must come from God. (Deut 8:18)

Exposing the works of Satan through wicked men is only showing us what God has allowed Satan to do through those wicked men. All power has been given to Jesus Christ, and everything that takes place must be in accord with His “all power”, for there is no independent power in the universe. The book of Job, especially, makes that very clear in the time of Abraham.

**** Regardless of what we think of Trump**, he is doing right on the immigration situation. However, he is right where the “Powers” want him to be: The Bushes

had their men to keep them in line, Kissinger (normally men meet with Trump at Trump Tower, but he went personally to Kissinger's office) and Cheney. President Trump now has his man. He named CFR member Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster as his new national security adviser... McMaster will remain on active duty in the Army. This link leads to a very interesting article:

https://www.thenewamerican.com/usnews/foreign-policy/item/25446-trump-picks-cfr-member-for-new-national-security-advisor?utm_source=iContactPro&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TNA+Top+Daily+Headlines&utm_content=TNA+Top+Daily+Headlines+Feb+22+17

**** Coca-Cola, ABA Accused of Tobacco-Like Deception in Lawsuit**

Federal court complaint alleges Coke downplayed sugar effects.

Sugary drinks 'are scientifically linked to obesity, diabetes'

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2017-01-04/coca-cola-accused-of-tobacco-industry-like-deception-in-lawsuit>

**** Maybelline Debuts Its First-Ever Male Ambassador, Manny Gutierrez**

"Beauty boy" @mannymua733 stars in the latest mascara campaign.

<http://www.elle.com/beauty/news/a41853/maybelline-manny-gutierrez-first-male-ambassador/>

We are seeing a serious war against any kind of manhood, even in the various sports.

**** Drudge: Socials, 'every child wins prize'** has left generation 'unable to deal with real world'..

Millennials are entitled, narcissistic and lazy - but it's not their fault: Expert claims 'every child wins a prize' and social media has left Gen Y unable to deal with the real world

Simon Sinek will be touring Australia and New Zealand following viral video

The leadership consultant blames corporations - not millennials for performance

He says they were brought up on 'instant gratification' so need more help.

**** Wow: The Gospel at the Inauguration**

<https://www.electionforum.org/culture/wow-gospel-inauguration/>

**** My wife and I like to play Scrabble**, though she wins 90% of the time. She was homeschooled and taught phonics. I grew up in the horrible age of the "look say" experiment. Those words that have the same first and last letters, or words that have the same letters but in a slightly different order are terrible stumbling blocks for me.

We had been looking for a dictionary, and have been

very surprised that the Walmart stores we have checked no longer carry dictionaries. It looks like the only place, without going to a big bookstore which are not readily available, to find a dictionary is over the web. It is a sad day when dictionaries are out of common use. Is it any wonder why corporations are having to import workers. Sadly, many American workers can neither read nor write (but they can "text" an unintelligible message); they can only do what they are told. Maybe that has been the goal of dumbing down the American population. I cannot tell you how many people we have met who do not like to read, or maybe just cannot read. They have been cut off from the past and a treasure house of important knowledge. Therefore, they must believe whatever a "newscaster" might tell them over the TV.

We are pleased to know a sherriff who keeps up on his reading, and realizes what is "coming down," so he is taking all the precautions he can.

**** School Employee Fired for Correcting Student's Spelling**

That happens when you celebrate differences instead of education.

<http://www.truthrevolt.org/news/school-employee-fired-correcting-students-spelling>

**** Is There Any Such Thing As A Principled Politician Anymore?**

I can honestly say that the people who have attacked me, defrauded me, stolen from me, lied against me, slandered me, attempted to ruin me, and even threatened to kill me have been almost exclusively professing Christians. And all I have ever tried to do was follow truth wherever it led me. As sincerely as I can say it, I've never had a personal agenda or been driven by a lust for personal gain in anything I've ever said or written. My quest has always been truth. Nothing more. Nothing less...

<http://www.newswithviews.com/baldwin/baldwin946.htm>
by Pastor Chuck Baldwin

I must agree with Pastor Baldwin. Though I have met many good, faithful and trusting Christians, in the past, professed "Christians" have been my worst "enemies". While a pastor in Indiana, a well-known pastor did his best to destroy me. In the end, I was right, and he was the one who was left with "egg on his face".

**** 92% of left-wing activists live with their parents**

Study: 1 in 3 is also unemployed

(DAILYMAIL) — The vast majority of left-wing protesters arrested on suspicion of politically-fuelled offences in Berlin are young men who live with their parents, a new report found.

The figures, which were published in daily newspaper Bild revealed that 873 suspects were investigated by authorities between 2003 and 2013.

Of these 84 per cent were men, and 72 per cent were aged between 18 and 29.

<http://www.wnd.com/2017/02/92-of-left-wing-activists-live-with-their-parents/>

**** Amazon.com exposed as massive SPY MACHINE invading your privacy**

New video details how Amazon.com SPIES on your most private thoughts, fetishes and conversations

<http://www.naturalnews.com/2017-02-10-new-video-details-how-amazon-com-spies-on-your-most-private-thoughts-conversations.html>

**** Quote from “Oroville dam emergency demonstrates how incompetent bureaucrats are marching California into catastrophic collapse at every level” by Mike Adams**

Have you learned anything yet about the coming debt collapse?

Let all this be a lesson about how incompetent bureaucrats systematically deny reality until it's too late, contributing to catastrophic failures that destroy lives and property while endangering us all.

By now, you've hopefully realize that bureaucrats will deliberately LIE to you while problems worsen, refusing to take proactive steps to prevent massive disasters from one day being triggered. It's always easier to kick the can down the road, you see.

Another important lesson to take away from this is that no one can predict exactly when a massive catastrophe stemming from bureaucratic incompetence will strike. As with financial disasters, this dam emergency in California didn't happen overnight. It was a collision of incompetence, denial and natural events that just happened to exceed “estimates of the experts” who assured us nothing could go wrong.

Does that sound a little like the coming global debt collapse? You bet it does. Remember: This is the same class of idiots who tell us all vaccines are safe, pesticides aren't killing pollinators and the global debt Ponzi scheme will never unravel. (RELATED: Follow news about the global debt collapse at Collapse.news.)

This is the same group of idiots who tell us the power grid isn't vulnerable to solar flares or EMP weapons... but that we should all be totally freaked out by “climate change,” a fake science fabrication based on wholly fabricated NOAA temperature data.

This is the group of idiots — especially in California — who tell us that national debt doesn't matter, that na-

tions should never protect their borders and that giving welfare to an endless stream of illegal immigrants is required by “compassion” (which really only means confiscating wealth from one group of people and handing it out to another).

Is it any wonder that California's infrastructure is crumbling right before our eyes? The California government — and most of its people — have been living in a state of insane delusion for so long that sooner or later the denials have to collapse into reality. To me, the Oroville dam is a powerful metaphor for the entire state of Collapsifornia, a bankrupt welfare state run by incompetent idiots who are too interested in political correctness to address the real problems that threaten everyone's future survival.

<http://www.naturalnews.com/2017-02-13-oroville-dam-emergency-demonstrates-how-incompetent-bureaucrats-are-marching-california-into-catastrophic-collapse.html>

AIR FORCE LOOSENS TATTOO RULES, RECRUITING RESTRICTIONS

A review of Air Force field recruiters showed that almost half of contacts, applicants and recruits had tattoos, the release said. One of every five had tattoos that required a review or could be considered disqualifying. By lifting the 25 percent rule, the Air Force opens the population eligible for joining the service.

...

The Air Force also reviewed medical accession standards, prompting policy changes to waivers concerning common conditions that have disqualified potential airmen. These include eczema, asthma and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Waivers for these three conditions comprise the highest volume of requests from recruiters, the release said. (“Snowflakes” rule.)

<https://www.airforcetimes.com/articles/air-force-loosens-tattoo-rules-recruiting-restrictions>

Comments: First, for the life of me, I do not understand the attraction of tattoos. They are very unattractive, costly, unbiblical and are a mark of rebellion against God's design in his creation, whether the wearer wants to admit that or not. The tattoo parlor's name in Hillsboro is “Chaos Tattoos”, which certainly is a good name. I published a serious study on the demonic nature of tattoos a few years ago. You can find it at biblicalexaminer.org, or I can send a copy upon request)

Second, ADHD, treated with drugs in schools, and then brought into the AF!! I certainly would not be comfortable having such an ADHD person working on my

aircraft.

Our military age young people have been generally destroyed by the public education system. I am confident that the armed services of China or Russia have not lowered their standards in order to fill their ranks. I am sure they are very well disciplined and far superior physically than our immature children who now make up the military. Those of us from before probably the 80s back would be shocked with what has taken place. It is disheartening to see what is taking place as manhood is removed from this nation.

As mentioned above, the 1940 generation of 18 year olds who went to one room schools faced sure death as they established beachheads in the War. Compare today's generation of 18 year old "Snowflakes" who went to the modern, fancy schools with that generation. (Colleges are training and producing Snowflakes that melt in the face of any opposition to their personal peace and prosperity. Both China and Russia are in the midst of a massive military buildup, and I am sure there are no "Snowflakes" in their Armed Forces. Reminds me of a pack of wolves sensing a weakness in their prey, and they pounce. The determination by the military to have an enemy makes me wonder how much the military/industrial complex has to do with promoting war.)

HOW CHILDREN PERCEIVE THEIR GRANDPARENTS

1. I was in the bathroom, putting on my makeup, under the watchful eyes of my young granddaughter, as I'd done many times before. After I applied my lipstick and started to leave, the little one said, "But Grandma, you forgot to kiss the toilet paper good-bye!" I will probably never put lipstick on again without thinking about kissing the toilet paper good-bye....

2. My young grandson called the other day to wish me Happy Birthday. He asked me how old I was, and I told him, 72. My grandson was quiet for a moment, and then he asked, "Did you start at 1?"

3. After putting her grandchildren to bed, a grandmother changed into old slacks and a droopy blouse and proceeded to wash her hair. As she heard the children getting more and more rambunctious, her patience grew thin. Finally, she threw a towel around her head and stormed into their room, putting them back to bed with stern warnings. As she left the room, she heard the three-year-old say with a trembling voice, "Who was THAT?"

4. A grandmother was telling her little granddaughter what her own childhood was like. "We used to skate outside on a pond. I had a swing made from a tire; it hung from a tree in our front yard. We rode our pony. We picked wild raspberries in the woods." The little girl was wide-eyed, taking this all in. At last she said, "I sure wish I'd gotten to know you sooner!"

5. My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?" I mentally polished my halo and I said, "No, how are we alike?" "You're both old," he replied.

6. A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied. "I can't read."

7. I didn't know if my granddaughter had learned her colors yet, so I decided to test her. I would point out something and ask what color it was. She would tell me and was always correct. It was fun for me, so I continued. At last, she headed for the door, saying, "Grandma, I really think you should try to figure out some of these colors yourself!"

8. When my grandson Billy and I entered our vacation cabin, we kept the lights off until we were inside to keep from attracting pesky insects. Still, a few fireflies followed us in. Noticing them before I did, Billy whispered, "It's no use Grandpa. Now the mosquitoes are coming after us with flashlights."

9. When my grandson asked me how old I was, I teasingly replied, "I'm not sure." "Look in your underwear, Grandpa," he advised "Mine says I'm 4 to 6." (WOW! I really like this one -- it says I'm only '38'!)

10. A second grader came home from school and said to her grandmother, "Grandma, guess what? We learned how to make babies today." The grandmother, more than a little surprised, tried to keep her cool. "That's interesting," she said. "How do you make babies?" "It's simple," replied the girl. "You just change 'y' to 'i' and add 'es'"

11. Children's Logic: "Give me a sentence about a public servant," said a teacher. The small boy wrote: "The fireman came down the ladder pregnant." The teacher took the lad aside to correct him. "Don't you know what pregnant means?" she asked. "Sure," said the young boy confidently. "It means carrying a child."

12. A grandfather was delivering his grandchildren to their home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian

dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties. "They use him to keep crowds back," said one child. "No," said another. "He's just for good luck." A third child brought the argument to a close. They use the dogs," she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrants."

13. A 6-year-old was asked where his grandma lived. "Oh," he said, "she lives at the airport, and whenever we want her, we just go get her. Then, when we're done having her visit, we take her back to the airport."

14. Grandpa is the smartest man on earth! He teaches me good things, but I don't get to see him enough to get as smart as him! (Copied)

ISLAM: THE WORLD'S FASTEST DYING RELIGION

Islam is losing ground fast in many nations. For example, in Africa, "... every hour, 667 Muslims convert to Christianity. Every day, 16,000 Muslims convert to Christianity. Every year, 6 million Muslims convert to Christianity. These numbers are very large indeed. From what I have heard from reliable sources, six million may be too low. Reliable accounts say that one hundred thousand Africans convert to Christianity per day, though not all of them come from Islam. - "Six Million African Muslims Convert to Christianity Each Year?" <http://www.puritandownloads.com/islam-is-the-worlds-fastest-dying-religion/>

The fastest shrinking religion in the world: Islam; it is Shrinking. Fast.

Everyone knows the slogan, "Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world". Is this true or is it propaganda? What are the facts? What are the sources?

Islam is shrinking/dying and believers are leaving by the millions.

<https://themuslimissue.wordpress.com/2014/12/27/the-fastest-shrinking-religion-in-the-world-islam/>

Do a search on Islam revivals, and you will be astounded on the number of Muslims being converted.

** A Female Doctor Working in Germany Warns the World

"Yesterday, at the hospital in Germany where I work, we had a meeting about how the influx of muslim immigrants from the middle east is simply unsustainable. Walk in Health Clinics cannot handle emergencies, being overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of

serious health emergencies, they are starting to send everything to the hospitals.

Many muslims are refusing treatment by female staff here in Germany. The muslim men make sick, crude comments and overtures to the female staff members, because to them any non-muslim woman is a whore or a future slave. After brief exposure to these cruel, sadistic, female hating beats, we, women, are refusing to go among those animals, especially the muslim men from Africa."

<http://www.bobbyanding.com/2015/10/a-female-doctor-working-in-germany.html?m=1>

END NOTES

** Surgery recovery may be lengthy, but I should be able to keep up the Examiner. I plan to at least keep up with e-mail while in the hospital, if they have WiFi.

** We are working to get the web site updated with new material. Time is precious, and it has been difficult to work on it.

** I have a limited number of the DVD, "More Than Dreams, The Amazing Phenomenon of Jesus" appearing to Muslims in dreams." (The dreams send the "dreamer" to a location where they can hear the gospel. Their conversion leads to genuine fiery persecution, even a face full of acid.) Free upon request. First come, first served.

Even smart and intelligent people do not read. It is so much easier to depend upon others to tell them how and what to think. Sadly, they then believe what they are told.

(MSNBC) 'Morning Joe' Anchor: It's Our Job to Control What People Think

<http://www.truthrevolt.org/news/morning-joe-anchor-its-our-job-control-what-people-think>

