

Rally Round The Flag Boys

C.H.McGowen, MD

Lest you think that this article has some bearing on that 1970's movie starring Paul Neuman and Joanne Woodward, let me dispel that notion at the very outset. Nor is it a call for patriotism, for we've certainly all heard enough of that lately, and thankfully so. The subject matter, which I feel the need to address, is that of symbolism over substance in the church's battle for truth over the last several decades. The theological savvy of too many believers these days is a mile wide and a millimeter deep, and the inductive Bible study has given way to self-help and co-dependency groups. Christians today are identified not so much with what they know about the God of their beliefs but by their bumper stickers and WWJD wristbands. There was recently, brewing in my town, here in Northeastern Ohio, a controversy concerning two flags; the Stars and Stripes (Old Glory) and the Christian flag. It seems that a local Southern Baptist pastor and the leaders of his congregation, of fewer than one hundred souls, recently acquired a new flagpole. Soon thereafter they raised both the American Flag and the Christian Flag upon that halyard. The local controversy has arisen over the fact that they have placed the Christian banner above "Old Glory", which according to some displays improper "flag etiquette". Now without getting into that thorny argument which has been fomenting ad nauseum over the local talk shows and newspapers, allow me to use this for the basis of my proposition that we as a body of believers are very guilty of arguing over the superficialities (flags) while ignoring on the one hand a foundation [#1] for many of the problems which the church faces today, and on the other hand the only foundation [#2]

upon which we should be building a fortification to defend the principles of our faith. Foundation number one is the religion of pagans, the theory of evolution; foundation number two is the Word of God.

John Calvin believed, as did most scientists of his day, that one should apply the special revelation of Scripture when investigating the general revelation of nature. Today, Scripture has been relegated to the area of the supernatural and thus deemed by the more “enlightened” as not pertinent in one’s search for the original processes responsible for life on our planet. Unfortunately, Christians, for the most part, have acquiesced to this notion and are either apathetic due to ignorance {they consider it a non-issue} or have joined the enemy by falling prey to the non-biblical compromise of Theistic Evolution.

Well known creation scientist from the land of “down under”, Ken Ham has beautifully illustrated this problem of symbolism over substance with his picture of two castles. The one is occupied by pagans and the other by Christians. The pagans in the first castle have raised several halyards each flying its own banner. One reads, Gay Rights, another Pro Choice, others; abolish capitol punishment, legalize drugs, free love, ban the Bible, etc. The foundation of that castle is labeled “The Theory of Evolution”. From the Christian castle there are flags flying which read, put prayer back in schools, Pro-life, God is Love, the just shall live by faith, etc. The foundation of that castle is labeled “The Word of God”.

There are cannons mounted in the turrets of each of those fortresses. The

Christian cannons are aimed at the banners flying from the pagan castle while the pagans are wisely aiming at the base, the very foundation of the Christian bastion; the very basis of our faith. The pagans are attempting to destroy the substance of our Christian principles and worldview while the church is shooting straws into the wind at the symbols of the pagan belief system; a perfect illustration of symbolism over substance.

The number of believers who are very quick to confess unapologetically that the Bible is inerrant, infallible, and inspired and still argue that one cannot take the first chapter of Genesis literally appalls me. Others hold that the word *yom* [Hebrew for day] can mean either a 24-hour day or an indefinite period of time. To them I say, all right then, let's forget that Moses ever wrote Genesis and turn instead to his next book and the encounter he had with God on Sinai. In dictating the contents of the Decalogue, Yahweh parenthetically interposed a statement on creation; one of which most Christians are unaware or which they simply gloss over. When giving instructions about the Sabbath He said this to Moses, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work...For in **six days** the Lord made the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy." [Exodus 20:8-11] [Emphasis mine]

Given the hermeneutic principle that context has great bearing on interpretation,

it is the context in which God used the word *yom* that seals the argument. He begins speaking about 24 hour work days and a 24 hour day of worship and then interjects this statement about the six days of creation and ends His statement by His resting on the seventh. What kind of improper syntax are we accusing God of if we suppose that He intertwined “indefinite periods of time” with single revolutions of the planet? The workdays are obviously each 24 hours in length, as is the Sabbath. Would God have said work 24 hour periods of time and keep a 24 hour period of time holy, because I put the universe together in six indefinite periods of time? That kind of utterance would border on a non sequitur.

Now if that doesn't convince you, and I find theistic evolutionists very hard to convince, turn with me to the New Testament. Paul tells us that sin preceded death in the grand scheme of things; that is, man sinned and then things began to die on planet earth. “Therefore just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, so death spread to all men, because all sinned.” [Romans 5:12] Paul says there was first a man, that man sinned, and out of that came death. Theistic and atheistic evolution both teach that, beginning with a single cell and followed by mutation after mutation, death after death, and a never ending struggle for life with a survival of the fittest, came the highest mutation of them all which ultimately resulted in man. The entire basis for the Christian gospel is the fact that sin preceded and caused death, and by paying the price for that sin Christ has won a victory for us over that penalty of spiritual demise. When you throw out the doctrine of creation by fiat you have

compromised the very foundation of our faith, the Word of God.

Several years ago, twenty-seven to be exact, I wrote a book entitled *In Six Days*: two years ago a revision was published. Through the years I have met dozens of people who have told me that their struggle with Scripture, which began in Genesis chapter one, was utterly eliminated through the teachings that I presented in that little book. Some of those said that came to faith in God through the work while others were able to finally begin to believe the whole Word of God after dealing with their doubts about our origins. It is high time for us to refocus the aim of our cannons at the groundwork of anti-Christian worldviews and stop this futile target practice in the direction of their pennants.

God began His special revelation to us with an explanation of His Sovereign, Omnipotent, and Omniscient, building of the universe. He repeats that message throughout Scripture and that message is the Truth of a six-day creation by our triune God. Sadly this True-truth has been “exchanged...for a lie” [Romans 1:25] and that lie is the theory of evolution.

It is a fine thing to “rally round the flag”, the symbol of our faith, but we had better remember that the halyard from which that flag is flying is planted in the groundwork from which that faith really emanates, the substance of our faith, the Word of God. In Ephesians 6:13-14, where we are instructed in the art of spiritual warfare, Paul uses the word “stand” three times; expressing the superlative. We

Christians have something upon which to stand, the groundwork, the foundation, the very basis of our faith, the Holy Scriptures, and we had better never forget it. We need to spend more of our time studying that Word of Truth and less rallying around the flag; otherwise we will not be able to stand. "If you do not stand firm in your faith, you will not stand at all" [Isaiah 7:9 NIV]

One of the many victories coming out of the Reformation was the freedom that believers were given to study the Word on their own, not relying upon the clergy, or the Holy See of Rome to do the interpreting of Scripture for them. Today many believers may as well be living in the pre-reformation era for that is exactly what they do. We need to encourage Christians to emulate the Bereans [Acts 17:11] of the 1st Century church. The sanctifying work of Scripture [John 17: 17] does not come vicariously. The battle for truth in this un-holy sea of relativism must be approached by people who have fastened upon themselves "the belt of truth" and have taken up "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." [Ephesians 6:14, 17]