

On The Frontier

“For the glory of God and the furtherance of the Gospel”

Two Birds With One Stone

by Linus A. Mathis III

The epistle to Titus is what's known as a pastoral epistle. It contains instructions regarding Church order, Christian discipline and doctrine (directions for right believing). God gave this revelation to the Apostle Paul in order to admonish and exhort Titus. As an overseer of God's people this Divine guidance was an absolute necessity for Titus in order to ensure his success and help him remain in the center of God's Will. Titus was given lucid counsel regarding his dealings with both believer and gainsayer. The timeless message found in this letter has a relevancy to today's Church leaders that remains unparalleled. In the opening chapter, God gives a detailed list of the qualities that Titus should demand from spiritual leaders. What I'd like to look at with you is the one principle that underscores them all.

Titus 1:9

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught . . .

The Word of God is faithful because God is faithful. A leader for God **MUST** hold fast to that faithful Word. His or her opinion is of little consequence. It's God's Word that's supreme and the only and final authority for faith and practice. Therefore, a spiritual leader holds fast to that faithful Word. This does presuppose that there has been a teaching. Not a teaching of dogmas,

traditions, history, philosophy, viewpoints or denominational creeds. NO! None of these will ever do. The Word of God must be taught to that individual or that individual will be incompetent and ill-equipped. This is the foundation upon which all godly leadership must be built. It's this truth which underscores everything else that man or woman does. Notice what the balance of the verse declares.

. . . that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

There you have it! That he (God's servant) may be able. If you don't have sound doctrine you are going to be inept. At what you may ask? Exhorting and convincing. A superficial reading gives the sense that the "gainsayer" will be exhorted and convinced. But a careful study of this verse is much more revealing.

To exhort is to encourage and strengthen. This is done by sound doctrine or "wholesome teaching." Only by the purity of God's Word are we strengthened and encouraged. Those who listen to anything else are left with doubt and confusion. And God's people need to be exhorted. Especially when faced by those who ridicule the Word. Making excuses for what we believe will never do. Only by sound doctrine are we comforted and admonished.

The English word convince would be better rendered as refute or correct. It's the gainsayer who's exposed and shamed for contradicting God's

Word. While at the same time the believer is strengthened in his beliefs. The Englishman's Greek New Testament presents it as follows:

Holding to the faithful word according to the teaching, that he may be able both to encourage with sound teaching, and to convict those who gainsay.

The Darby version has it this way:

clinging to the faithful word according to the doctrine taught, that he may be able both to encourage with sound teaching and refute gainsayers.

Holding fast to God's wonderful Word gives you something. The ability to "kill two birds with one stone." The Word of God provides the wherewithal to comfort the believers while simultaneously proving those who contradict to be wrong. Nothing else can do this! Nothing less will do! Why then aren't we doing this? Why do we have these aimless dialogues with those who choose to reject the Word? Why do so many Christians make excuses for what they believe. Why do so many Christian leaders compromise on so many issues? That being said, I'd like to broach the subject of what has been called the six days of creation. (We could call a number of matters into question, but for the sake of brevity we'll concern ourselves singularly with this one.)

Recently the state of Kansas voted for a ban on the teaching of Darwin's

theory of evolution within their school system. This was a very good call if not a belated one. Frankly, Darwin's theory should never have been taught in the first place. His theory is full of holes and has little semblance of being "scientific." Nonetheless, this decision sparked numerous debates. The religious conservatives are thrilled, as well they should be. But the "humanists" are outraged (which comes as no surprise). As for my self, I like the idea. But it's too little too late. That the subject matter of Darwin's godless philosophies should ever have made their way to the halls of learning is a shameful testimony to the unbelief in our educational system. And the spineless lack of resistance in the spiritual leaders of the day is only exceeded by their evident neglect of the Scriptures.

But I digress. Let's consider the discourse surrounding the Kansas decision. Or at least one which I observed. The individuals present represented what's lately being called the left and right. I suppose this is accurate since they are bipolar one of another. At any rate, the liberal humanists were confronting (not being confronted by) a prominent Christian minister. He wasn't the only one supporting the Creation side of the issue but he was singled out more than his affiliates. (This particular debate seems common so it will serve our purposes as a model.) The person in favor of teaching evolution contended that the Christian view point was just that, a view point. Furthermore, he condemned it as ignorant and unscientific and that to present it at all in our schools was a clear violation of "separation of Church and State." He asserted that what Kansas had decided set education

back 100 years or more. To make matters worse, he was arrogant, defiant and condescending. He compared today's Christians with those who believed the world to be flat.

Meanwhile, the man on the other side of the ledger was quiet and reserved. Which I applaud. However, he endeavored to defend the Christian belief rather than testify to the greatness of God's Holy Word. He made compromises and concessions in his dialogue and never once made an accurate reference to the Bible. In an effort to appear tolerant (which those who opposed him weren't) he made mention of how the university he presides over teaches all current theories of origin. The two main ones being, Creation theory (that's what he called it) and Darwinism. His contention was that they make all this available to the student for open consideration. He said that there has never been even one student who graduated his university believing that Darwin was correct. Well sure! It's a Christian university, they come to it believing in "Creation theory." This learned and venerated man succeeded in elevating the position of his antagonist while degrading his own. The average observer (without any preconceived ideas) would have to conclude that Christians have no sound basis for believing that God created man. Any doubts about the biblical record would have been reinforced and Darwin's theory (as unscientific as it is) would appear more credible than ever.

First of all we need to remember that truth never needs to be defended. A person may defend error but this is not the case with truth. All that truth needs is a witness. We declare the

truth of God's Word and testify to His greatness. God doesn't need us to defend Him. I assure you, He can defend Himself. With that in mind we set forth the Word of God. His Word is truth. Consequently, we don't defend or make excuses for it.

Psalms 119:160

Thy word *is* true *from* the beginning; and every one of thy righteous judgments *endureth* for ever.

John 17:17

Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.

Secondly, all secular jargon must be done away with. If we are going to describe what God does or has done we ought to do so Scripturally. Phrases such as "Creation theory" are tantamount with error. A theory is an assumption, speculation, guess, postulation, philosophy or hypothesis. With God's Word there's no speculation or guess work involved, only truth. So, when we are talking about man's origin we need to take our language from the Bible and not from our worn out creeds and religions. Most, if not all, of the criticism is leveled at non-scriptural beliefs. Men have ignored God's Word and therefore are ignorant. When answers are demanded of this ignorant man, having none, he makes up his own. Like the six days of creation. There's nothing to substantiate this belief. The creation itself is witness to its own age and it's quite a bit older than this would allow. Furthermore, the Bible doesn't support the six day concept. Where then did it come from? Not from God or His Word, that's for sure. If we would simply drop that nonsense in favor of the Word we'd have no problems whatsoever. The

evolutionists would have to rethink their position. Incidentally, the theory of evolution can't be proven. It can, however, be disproved with consistency. In science, when you have a theory that's disproved you scrap it. Your theory is no longer valid. There are many scientists who know this. They don't come forward often for fear of being labeled a "creationist." With all the error and lack of God's Word there, who can blame them?

Which brings me to the third point. Darwinism is rife with error, it should be earmarked for the trash. It should never be given serious scientific consideration. Yet, despite the weakness of evidence to support it, Darwin's theory has been elevated from a speculative hypothesis to an unchallenged dogma. Something's fishy about that! Maybe the Adversary had something to do with it? What do you think? Take the missing link for example. None have ever been found because they never existed in the first place. It's that simple. Order out of chaos? Oh please! Random selection? When was the last time a woman gave birth to a rhinoceros? There's no such thing as random selection. My dog will always choose a dog to mate with. He's got more sense than most people. Even very learned ones. Divine design is the order of the day. This is why it all works so well and no stone has been left un-turned. God's thinks of everything. He's the Architect of life. Let's just call Darwinism what it is. A very weak attempt at discrediting the Bible. The ONLY success it has enjoyed has been against un-biblical positions.

Earlier I mentioned the use of the phrase, "the six days of creation."

Let's have a look at Genesis and see how that fits in with the Word.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Simple and beautiful! When did God create the heaven and the earth? In the beginning. That's 100% accurate. If that was 600 go-zillion years ago or three million it would still be in the beginning. Yet, because we have such reverence for science, the learned ones can be billions of years apart in their postulations and no one says a thing. In the beginning is accurate, you can't touch it.

Verse 2:

And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

This makes it sound as if God did a low-grade job. That's inconsistent with His genius and His Word.

Isaiah 45:18

For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I *am* the LORD; and *there is* none else.

God declares to us from His Word that He didn't create the earth in vain. On the contrary, He established it. A careful study of the original language is enlightening. The phrase "without form" in Genesis 1:2 is translated from the same word as the phrase "in vain" in Isaiah 45:18. So we can conclude from this proof (and many others like it) that the earth was not created

without form and void.

If you happen to have a King James Version of the Bible, as I'm using here, you'll notice that the second occurrence of the word [was] in Genesis 1:2 is in italics. In the King James Version whenever a word is entered in italics it's an admission by the translators that they have added it. In other words, the second [was] is not found in the original manuscripts. Furthermore, there are no being verbs in Hebrew. These are being verbs: is, are, was, were, be, am, been, have, has, had, do, does, did, can't, could, shall, should, will, would, might and must. Since was is a being verb there's no corresponding Hebrew word like it. There is a form in Hebrew that could be translated to become, or became. And that's exactly what we have here. So, the correct reading of this verse would be:

Genesis 1:2

And the earth became without form, and void and darkness upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

When God originally created the earth it wasn't formless and void. Something happened to make it that way. That something was the revolt led by Lucifer. A great spiritual war pitting the forces of God against those of the Devil caused the earth and everything on it to be laid waste. This is a fascinating study which we'll have to leave for some future date but you can begin to understand what happened. God's plans were damaged. He had a purpose in mind and had to set about to restore the planet so it could be inhabitable. Thus we read:

... And the Spirit of God moved [brooded, like a mother hen upon her eggs] upon the face of the waters.

Next Genesis gives the details and order of this restoration and the number of days it took. Which we know from reading was six.

In our consideration of this topic we must realize that (within the confines of God's Word) the term create can only be assigned to God. To create means to bring into being something from nothing. To cause something to exist that previously didn't. And whenever God creates something, He never has to create it again. We have a scientific law which describes this truth. We know and can prove that matter can neither be created nor destroyed. It can change form but not cease to exist. So, after the cataclysm that occurred which caused the earth to be void and formless God simply reformed and reconstituted what He had already created. Consequently, you don't read about Him creating this on the first day and that on the second and so on. Notice the following:

Day one - Verse 3: And God said, let there be light: and there was light.

Day two - Verse 6: And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

Day three - Verse 11: And God said ...

Day four - Verse 14: And God said ...

Day five - Verse 20: And God

said ...

He simply spoke it all into being. He can do that, He's God. I said earlier, notice the following. If you're reading this then you must concede that I spoke that into being. If you haven't read this far it won't matter. Only kidding! You speak things into being all the time. So do I. He didn't have to create anything because whatever He put back together was done by utilizing something that already existed.

Verse 21:

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that *it was good.*

Uh oh! Now we have the word create! No problem. This is one of two times that God does create something in His work to put the earth back in order. Obviously, whatever He had to create didn't exist before. So, when He created the heavens and the earth in the beginning these two things weren't a part of it. If they were, He wouldn't have to create them. Why? Because once God creates something, that's it. The first mentioned here being great whales and every living creature that moveth. The word creature is the same word as soul. Whatever soul is then, had to be created.

Genesis 2:7

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

This verse tells us that God fashioned

Adam's body out something that already existed. Namely, the elements that the dust of the ground is comprised of. If you were to take your physical body and break it down in a laboratory you'd find that it's made of the same stuff found in the dust of the ground. In fact, the earth in the part of the world where Adam was from is red. The name Adam means red. Some coincidence, eh? Anyway, I want you to notice a particular phrase in this verse.

... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

The breath of life! A living soul! Soul life therefore is breath-life. Let me ask you something. Do whales breath air? Yes, they do. They're what we classify as mammals. They get their oxygen the same way we do. What ever it is that makes you alive, soul life, was not a part of the original creation. Therefore, God had to create it.

You see, there was life in the original creation. It was extinguished in that great battle between God's angels and Lucifer's. This accounts for all the fossil remains. Now you know what really happened to the dinosaurs. However, they did not share in the same life as the animals we know. They didn't have soul life. They had life, but some other type. Any similarity to life today can be credited to the Designer. For instance, look at the construction of an atom. The smallest building block and it has the same basic structure as the solar system. Why? Same Engineer! Like a big Ford and a small one. They may be different but they're still Fords. And even if you can't see the engineers who built the Ford you know that the Ford didn't

just happen randomly. Right?

Now for the second and final reference to creating which occurred on the sixth day.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man [Adam & Eve] in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

What is the image of God?

John 4:24

God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth.

God is spirit. That's what He is. He doesn't have a form like you and I have. The proper understanding of Genesis 1:27 is that God created His image within man. He put spirit in man. This is what gave Adam his connection with God. This was the crescendo of all God's creative brilliance. One could properly call this event the *CROWN OF CREATION*. Prior to this there was no spirit for man or anything else. If there had been, God wouldn't have needed to create it.

The following is an example of how we might better understand this verse:

So God created His image within man, in man was His image created; both in male and female, in them created He His image.

Note the following:

Genesis 1:28

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth,

and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Replenish it, fill it up again, be blessed and fruitful.

Verse 31:

And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

A wonderful summation of God's thoughts. He saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good. A great conclusion to the sixth day. God's crowning achievement being spirit for man.

You don't need to be the regent of a university or hold a doctorate in theology. There's no need for you to assuage those who contradict. Don't worry about being politically correct. You needn't be an ordained minister or recognized by the media as an eminent authority. What you do need to do, is hold fast to the truth. God's Word is the answer, the only answer. Nothing else will do nor satisfy.

Titus 1:9

Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers.

If those who claim to stand for God would do as Titus was instructed there would be an ability evidenced which none could deny.

Two birds with one stone! It works every time. The believers are encouraged and those who contradict are refuted. Why miss the target or

settle for less than the best? God's Word is the very best. His way is the only way to live and lead. The only way to comfort and encourage the believers is with His Word. The only thing that will refute the gainsayers is sound doctrine. God's Word is sound doctrine. God's Word is truth. God's Word is the best. There's no better way than God's!

I have yet to hear a minister or theologian give this wonderful section in God's Word its due. I've heard them defend their religious beliefs and make excuses for their errors. But never have I seen the truth given an honest hearing. Isn't it about time someone does? That someone could be you!

The Counselor's Corner

With Rev. Linus A. Mathis III

BEAT THE RUSH

I'd like to indulge in something usually reserved for the department stores. Even though it's early I'm going to delve into the topic of being "seasonally appropriate" regarding our kids. After all, it's back to school time and as you well know the wonderful world of merchandising has us looking at swim suits in winter and parkas in summer. You know it's true. Just how many times have you gone to the store to purchase Thanksgiving articles only to be greeted by Christmas paraphernalia? Perhaps you've noticed that the latest issue of your favorite magazine is two or three months into the future. Don't you get June's issue in March or April? How about your automobile? Surely you're cognizant of the fact that next

year's models are manufactured and sold in the eighth month of the previous year? Well, if they can do it, I can too. I want to be the first to give you the opportunity to "beat the holiday rush."

We're all well aware of the adamant rejection of anything Christian in our public schools. "Separation of Church and State" seems to be the battle cry of the American God rejector these days. So a celebration of the birth, resurrection or ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ is not likely to take place within the *hallowed* halls of our public learning centers. Nevertheless, what's the first "holiday" that's recognized and observed? You guessed it. Halloween! What a hypocritical sham! I say this because Halloween is a holiday. But for who? Witches, warlocks, devil worshipers and other practitioners of the occult. In fact, it's a high day for them, a special day. I'll spare you the nauseating details of its origins but suffice to say they're evil. Therefore, it's not a fun day nor a time that our children should be taught to observe.

Every year the same thing happens. Ghosts, witches, goblins and ghouls are displayed with glee in our elementary schools. It's bad enough that the supermarkets are polluted with this decorative junk, but to have it in our schools is obscene. What do you think would happen if you or I were to suggest we hang Scripture verses in recognition of Christmas? Or Easter? You know the attitude held regarding the public display of the Ten Commandments. Why then do we permit this to continue uncontested? If you love God and believe His Word, you'll want to consider the following:

Exodus 22:18

Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.

Strong words? Yes, but they're God's Words. This was the commandment that He gave to Moses. Look at the dire warnings given the children of Israel because of their exposure to the heathen:

Deuteronomy 18:9-14

When thou art come into the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations.

There shall not be found among you *any one* that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, *or* that useth divination, *or* an observer of times, *or* an enchanter, *or* a witch,

Or a charmer, *or* a consulter with familiar spirits, *or* a wizard, *or* a necromancer.

For all that do these things *are* an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee.

Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God.

For these nations, which thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners: but as for thee, the LORD thy God hath not suffered thee *so to do*.

For those of Israel who didn't heed these commands the consequences were disastrous. If God didn't want them to learn these ways, He certainly doesn't want our kids to

learn them. And make no mistake, when your child goes to school they're exposed to the ways of the heathen. Which ways are as much an abomination to God today as they were back in the time of Moses. If that's the case, and it is, we shouldn't permit our children to dress in mock pagan wear. That's right! If you aren't to be an observer of any of these things you shouldn't represent their ways in your apparel. No witch costumes or the like. Of course these days a witch costume is small potatoes. There's some hard core stuff available to your little ones and that's for sure. You as the parent must see to it that this doesn't happen. Don't get soft and compromise either. It doesn't matter what everyone else is doing, especially if what they're doing is devilish. Put your foot down and don't pick it up.

Demand of your child's teacher that Halloween be given the same recognition as any other religious holiday, i.e. "separation of Church and State." After all, "what's good for the goose is good for the gander." We can be, as the Lord directed us, wise as serpents and harmless as doves. Here's a good alternative to suggest to your child's teacher, recognition of the fall harvest season. There's nothing wrong with being thankful for fall time and harvest. Is there? Not a hint of religion either. But all the while you in your heart would know exactly where to direct the thankfulness.

While I'm thinking of it, be stalwart also regarding the songs, books and poems presented to your children. If there's anything "religious" (read devilish, my tongue is firmly in my cheek) about them, object strongly. It's your Constitutional right you

know.

So, there you have it. A chance to get a "leg up" on the enemy. Beat the rush, be forewarned and forearmed. There's no doubt about it, our children will be challenged with many things before they're mature enough to discern judiciously. But that's why God gave them to you.

Ephesians 6:10-13

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high *places*.

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Beat the rush, watch and pray early!

-"The Counselor's Corner" also appears in Alaska Parenting Magazine in an edited version and under a different title"-
