

“[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily,

[to see] whether those things were so.” —Acts 17:11

The Enigma of Calvinism

T. A. McMahon

CALVINISM, FROM my first exposure to its teachings and practices to and through today, has not ceased to be an enigma to me. In fact, the more I have learned about it, the more perplexing I find it to be. I’ve been told by a few of its advocates that I’m too dull of mind to grasp its teachings. Rather than being offended by that accusation, I consider it a criticism that puts me in great company. Dave Hunt, one of the most intelligent men I have ever known, was once accused by two young Calvinist pastors of “not having the ability” to understand Calvinism (i.e., being too stupid), primarily because he wasn’t knowledgeable of Greek and Hebrew. Dave’s gentle-yet-pointed response to them was that their own relatively brief education in Greek and Hebrew was hardly comparable to the first century Christians’ knowledge of the languages. Yet their knowledge of those languages didn’t appear to give the early believers any advantage when it came to living out the Scriptures, because much of the New Testament was written to correct their errors.

This article, however, is not an apologetic regarding Calvinism. Dave and others have written volumes critiquing that belief system, so anyone who is interested can readily access their perspectives. If you are not familiar with the beliefs of Calvinism, our extensive resource materials, from Dave’s comprehensive *What Love Is This?* to smaller books and booklets, are loaded with helpful information.

What I am presenting here are just some of the thoughts I’ve had over the years that are disturbingly puzzling to me, and I have yet to hear them reasonably explained beyond being told that “God’s ways, means, and thoughts are higher than my thoughts and understanding.” That’s certainly the case, although God does say, “Come let us reason together,” and He has given us his Holy Spirit to help us in our lack of understanding (Isaiah 1:18; John 16:13; 1 Co 2:14). Nevertheless, the thoughts that follow are some of the things that I find terribly perplexing.

Growing up as a Roman Catholic, educated in a Catholic elementary school, a Catholic military school, and a Catholic high school, I was quite serious about and knowledgeable of my faith. I was what was then referred to as a “devout Catholic,” meaning I took my religion seriously. One of the most highly esteemed Catholic “saints” was Saint Augustine. I was taught that he was the Father of and Doctor (Teacher) of the Catholic Church. He inspired some—and confirmed all—of the major dogmas of Roman Catholicism. He believed and taught the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine in the Mass; that the Mass, including the Eucharist, was an ongoing immolation (sacrificial killing) of Jesus; that baptism is absolutely necessary for salvation; that Mary was sinless and a perpetual virgin; that the Apocrypha was part of the Old Testament canon; that the popes were a fulfillment of apostolic succession; that Christ would not literally reign a thousand years on the earth, and that all spiritual authority rests in the Roman Catholic Church. Regarding this last point, Augustine

wrote, “If you should find someone who does not yet believe in the gospel, what would you [Mani] answer him when he says, ‘I do not believe’? Indeed, I would not believe in the gospel myself if the authority of the Catholic Church did not move me to do so” (*Against the Letter of Mani Called “The Foundation”* 5:6). If there is any doubt that “Saint” Augustine was thoroughly Catholic, it has to be the product of wishful thinking or a less-than-honest support for one’s Reformation theology bias.

How does Augustine’s Catholicism qualify as an enigma? Calvinist Protestants, those who protest against the Church of Rome including John Calvin himself, held and continue to hold Augustine in a reverence bordering on idolatry. Calvin referred to him as “holy father” in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* and cites him more than 400 times. Calvinist Francois Wendel acknowledges that “Upon points of doctrine [Calvin] borrows from Augustine with both hands” (*TBC* 7/12). Dave Hunt points out in *What Love Is This?* the great praise of Augustine by leading Calvinists: “One of the greatest theological and philosophical minds that God has ever so seen fit to give to His church” (Talbot and Crampton, cited in Dave Hunt, *What Love Is This?* [Bend, OR: The Berean Call, 2006], 56). “The greatest Christian since New Testament times...greatest man that ever wrote Latin” (Souter, cited in Hunt, *What Love?*, 56). “[His] labors and writings, more than those of any other man in the age in which he lived, contributed to the promotion of sound doctrine and the revival of true religion” (Rice, *Ibid.*). This is from those who represent a religious system that has historically opposed the Roman Catholic Church—at least, that’s the general perception.

If that isn’t mystifying, consider this: One of the revered icons of Calvinism, B. B. Warfield, who headed Princeton Seminary, claimed that Augustine was both the founder of Roman Catholicism and the father of the Reformation (Warfield, *Ibid.*, 59). It takes more than a creative imagination to make sense of that perspective.

The cry of the Reformers was *sola scriptura*, which means that the Bible *alone* is to be the Christian’s authority in all matters of faith and practice. I couldn’t agree more. However, although Calvin and Luther, among others, waved that banner, they did not live by its important truth. They kept some baggage from their former faith that isn’t even found in God’s Word, or it is contrary to the teachings of Scripture. Infant baptism, for example, was kept, and it was claimed that it makes children Christians and opens the doorway to heaven. The ritual of baptism, rather than being a public declaration of one’s identification with Christ, involved the removal of sins and granted spiritual regeneration. They also continued clericalism, giving special authority to their priests. They pushed Christ’s ordinance of communion far beyond its scriptural instruction. Communion became an efficacious sacrament with its sacred elements. It could be administered only by the clergy rather than performed as a simple act carried out by all believers in remembrance of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection. Calvin, in particular, continued the Catholic practice of state churches, in which the secular government of Geneva supported his sometimes lethal decrees. Obviously, the *sola* of *sola scriptura* was functionally lost by those who said they desired to reform Roman Catholicism.

I'm bewildered and grieved that such a critical abandoning of Scripture is passed over by Calvinists.

But there is much more that baffles me, and the Calvinist teaching on predestination is at the top of the list and infects the rest. I cannot comprehend how any Bible-believing Christian could possibly accept Calvin's view of predestination and God's sovereignty, which he took primarily from the writings of "Saint" Augustine. Calvin declared, "I say with Augustine, that the Lord has created those who, as he certainly foreknew, were to go to destruction, and he did so because he so willed. Why he willed, it is not ours to ask...."

Calvin taught that everything depends upon the mere will of God. Calvinist R. C. Sproul Jr. writes, "God wills all things that come to pass... God desired for man to fall into sin... God created sin" (Sproul Jr., *Ibid.*, 275) Another Calvinist adds, "God is in back of everything. He decides and causes all things to happen... He has foreordained everything 'after the counsel of his will': the moving of a finger, the beating of a heart, the laughter of a girl, the mistake of a typist—even sin" (Palmer, *Ibid.*). Think for a moment about the implications of what these men have said, and what multitudes of other Calvinists who agree with them likewise teach. Do they truly believe that God is the author of every wicked act of mankind? If so, and I can't see how they can rationalize their way around such a conclusion, it is the ultimate blasphemy directed at the character of God. My mind-boggled reaction is how men who profess to know and love God and are highly esteemed in Christendom, could even think that, let alone preach it? Has their "intellectual reasoning" blinded them to the clear and overwhelming number of Scriptures that contradict their theology? I don't get why they don't get it.

This is not so-called hyper-Calvinist thinking. Predestination is central to Calvinism's teaching on sovereignty, foreknowledge, unconditional election, the denial of free will, irresistible grace, limited atonement, regeneration prior to belief, and most certainly the eternal destiny of millions, perhaps billions of souls, who were predestined to the Lake of Fire before time began.

I could fill up every page of this newsletter and more with the contradictions, the absurdities, and the tragic mischaracterizations of our God and Savior that the Calvinist beliefs in predestination and sovereignty generate. They are a dreadful offense to biblical truth and common sense. The space designed for this article however limits me to just a few. Nevertheless, I hope that those who call themselves Calvinists or lean toward that belief system will give some serious thought and prayer to them.

My questions: Why would Jesus preach repentance to the multitudes (Matthew 4:17) if their fate had already been predestined? What was the point of Jesus upbraiding cities where His miracles were done because they did not repent? Did they have a choice? Why would Jesus beckon all who labor and are heavy laden to come unto Him (Matthew 11:28) if those who are not of the elect cannot? Why would Jesus draw a little child to Himself (Matthew 18:1-4) and say, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven"? Shouldn't He have qualified that: "Elect little children"? He said further (Matthew 18:14), "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these [elect?] little ones should perish." Why would Jesus call "all the people unto Him" (Mark 7:14) and say, "Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand," if they could *not come or understand* until they were regenerated? Did the angel who appeared to the shepherds (Luke 2:10) get his message wrong when he said, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people"? If Jesus predestined untold numbers of souls to a horrendous destiny, why would He say, "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke 9:56)? Why is there "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Luke 15:10) if it was coerced by "irresistible grace" and was previously

programmed? John writes, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 John 4:14) and "Many more believed because of [Jesus'] own word; and said unto the woman [at the well], Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (John 4:41-42). Were all those Samaritans regenerated before coming to Him?

Those are just a few of the verses that raise reasonable questions about Calvinist beliefs. Both the Old Testament and the rest of the New Testament are filled with hundreds more. Regarding the Old Testament, why would Joshua say, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" and "as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" if, in fact, he and they had no choice in the matter? In the Book of Revelation we are told of the great white throne judgment of the lost (Revelation 20:11-15). If the Calvinist's teaching of predestination were true, i.e., that the souls standing before Christ for judgment were preordained to the Lake of Fire before mankind was created, giving them no opportunity for salvation, what is to be judged on their part? If Calvinism is true, and not only the destiny of the lost was predetermined, but the sins that they committed were authored by an absolutely sovereign God, there is nothing to judge. Any attempt to reconcile those judgment verses with Calvinism turns what the Scriptures teach into a charade at best, and a mockery of Jesus and a travesty against God's Word at worst.

Reading Calvinist writers, we find that the one thing that is consistent is their inconsistency. John MacArthur's commentaries in his *Study Bible* are loaded with teachings that contradict his five-point Calvinism. For example, referring to Deuteronomy 30:15 he writes, "Here Moses pinpoints the *choice*—to love and obey God is life and good, to reject God is death and evil. If they *chose* to love God and obey His Word, they would enjoy all God's blessings" (emphasis added).

For me, Calvinism has been an ongoing enigma. Having been a Roman Catholic for 30 years of my life, I'm grateful for the Reformers' having stood up to the most powerful religious institution of the day and turning Christians in the direction of the Scriptures. I'm nevertheless grieved and appalled at the unbiblical theology the reformers created under the banner of *sola scriptura* and the distortion it presents of the character of God and its potential for misrepresenting the Gospel. Its growing influence is also very troubling and personally unsettling due to the fact that some of my good friends and family members are Calvinists or hold to some Calvinist teachings. Although I'm thankful that through prayer God provides opportunities to challenge their views through the Scriptures, it continues to be a burden that weighs upon my heart.

Even so, God provides encouragement. At one point, when I seemed to be getting nowhere with my Calvinist friends and it was getting me down, I blurted out a question to a pastor with whom I was riding. It had nothing to do with anything that we were talking about previously, so it took him by surprise when I asked him what he thought about Calvinism. He reflected on that for a moment and then explained that when he was in seminary nearly all of his favorite professors were Calvinists. Many of their favorite Christian writers were Calvinists, and he had read some of their books. Therefore, while he was in school, he believed that he was a Calvinist as well. My glum response was, "So, you're a Calvinist," which was more of an unhappy conclusion than a question. He looked at me with a grin. "No, I'm not!" At that point, I think I laughed in relief. To my question of "So, what happened?" he replied matter-of-factly that the more he read the Word of God, the harder he found it to reconcile his Calvinist beliefs with the Scriptures.

The only thing I can add to the above is my prayer that all who are attracted to Calvinism would do likewise by searching the Scriptures to see if such teachings are true to God's Word.

TBC

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Submit your own questions to: PO Box 7019 • Bend, OR 97708

or e-mail: editorial@thebereanall.org

QUESTION: Augustine used Ezekiel 44:2 as “proof” that Joseph and Mary did *not* consummate their marriage: “This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it. Because the LORD the God of Israel hath entered in by it” (Ezk 44:2). He interpreted the “closed gate” through which passed the “prince” in Ezekiel 44:2 as a “type” of Mary’s perpetual virginity. Mary is the closed city, and the prince miraculously passed through the closed gate.

Augustine’s “explanation” went on: “What means this closed gate in the house of the Lord, except that Mary is to be ever inviolate? What does it mean that ‘no man shall pass through it,’ save that Joseph shall not know her? And what is this: ‘The Lord alone enters in and goeth out by it,’ except that the Holy Ghost shall impregnate her, and that the Lord of Angels shall be born of her? And what means this – ‘It shall be shut for evermore,’ but that Mary is a Virgin before His birth, a Virgin in His birth, and a Virgin after His birth.”

RESPONSE: Augustine’s reduction of the Bible by spiritualizing it has generated all sorts of evil, as has been pointed out in other places [See <https://goo.gl/sX8E7f>; <https://goo.gl/coEYSc>]. Proper exegesis of the passage by “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15) could never honestly allow this Scripture to support the idea of a perpetual virginity for Mary. Only the limited imagination of man as he is influenced by Satan would dare to place unholy hands upon a holy text in such a manner. Matthew 1:25 states plainly that Joseph “knew her not *till* she had brought forth her firstborn son...” (emphasis added). Yes, they consummated their marriage, and Mary and Joseph had children (Matthew 13:55-56, Mark 6:3).

What do these verses mean? If one reads the full context of Ezekiel 44, not only does it *not* support Augustine’s spiritualization of the passage, but it also roughly handles Augustine’s replacement theology, or the false idea that the Lord has finished His dealings with physical Israel. When the Lord Jesus returns to the earth, He specifically does so at Jerusalem, fulfilling the promise to physical Israel that “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Matthew 23:39). In Ezekiel 44:2, Scripture clearly says, “Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.” At His triumphal entry (Matthew 21:1-5) the Lord Jesus came via the Mount of Olives and entered the city by the Eastern Gate. That hardly parallels or suggests a human birth.

History reveals that the East Gate was closed by the Muslims in 810, but it was reopened in 1102 by the Crusaders for the short time they controlled the land. It was Ottoman leader Saladin who had it walled up again after taking Jerusalem back in 1187. The Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent kept the East Gate walled up when he rebuilt the city walls. It has remained sealed since 1541. It has been suggested that Suleiman may have taken this decision purely for defensive reasons. In any case, it has remained that way until today.

So, the gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened. We see the fulfillment of that today. Who hasn’t seen a picture of the blocked up East Gate entrance of Jerusalem, before which the Muslims have placed a cemetery? Muslims learned that Jewish rabbis spoke of the Messiah as a great military leader sent by God from the East. The Messiah would enter the Eastern Gate and liberate the city

from foreign occupation. The Muslims sealed the gate and put a Muslim cemetery in front of it believing that such a holy man as the Messiah would not defile himself by walking through a Muslim cemetery, little knowing that they were fulfilling prophecy by doing this! Though the cemetery was placed there to make the ground unclean for the Lord to tread upon, Ezekiel 44:3 tells us, “It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same.”

Acts 1:9-12 states, “And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day’s journey.”

Zechariah 14:3-4 prophesies of the Lord’s return to the earth: “Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle. And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east...” Ezekiel 43:2,4 tells us, “And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east: and his voice was like a *noise of many waters*: and the earth shined with his glory.... And the glory of the LORD came into the house by the way of the gate whose prospect is toward the east.” The Holy Spirit, which departed from the temple in Ezekiel 8-11, will return as the glory of the “Son of Man,” whose voice is, “...as the *sound of many waters*” (Revelation 1:13-15). The Mount of Olives faces the Eastern Gate, which will be opened by the Lord at His coming regardless of what man may plan or spiritualize concerning the plain meaning of Scripture (emphasis added).

QUESTION: I’ve been reading Matthew 5:13-16 and 2 Peter 1:5-7. Could you help me understand how these verses tie together?

RESPONSE: Matthew 5:13-16 tells us that we are the “salt of the earth” and therefore must *walk in a manner that will keep us from spoiling the effectiveness of that salt* as we are witnesses to those around us. Salt is used both to purify and preserve. If it is spoiled (loses its savor), it’s good for neither purpose.

Second Peter 1:5-7 is part of the equation by which we keep ourselves from ruining our *value* as salt on the earth. It tells us, “And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall *neither be barren nor unfruitful* in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Incorporated into all of this, 2 Timothy 2:15 tells us that one must “*Study to show thyself approved unto God*, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”

All of these work together to show us that our lives as Christians are not designed to be static. We are to continually grow in our relationship with the Lord and in His Word. As a consequence of this, we will be strengthened in our walk and in our testimony to the world. If these areas of our lives are made stronger, we are less likely to lose our value as the “salt of the earth.”

LETTERS

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Hello Brother McMahon,

I...continue to be blessed with the newsletter you send here. However, I am writing in response to your TBC Notes from May 2015, "The Bible Betrayed – Shepherds Stumbling the Sheep." I truly enjoyed the article...however, [neither] race nor racial pluralism needed to [be] mentioned....The race [of the actors] should be of no particular importance....As yourself, I uphold the Scriptures according to the good doctrine your ministry projects...I just pray that in the future you will be more sensitive to issues regarding racial matters. JW (PA, prisoner)

TBC NOTES

Our Affection Direction

Last month there were a host of notices that went out to remind everyone to vote. That's a good reminder. We have the opportunity to affect what goes on in our community, state, and country, although more often than not our vote may seem ineffective. That's probably the way it's going to continue as the world turns increasingly away from what biblical Christians value. Yet we ought to vote our values as witnesses at least, even though it goes no further than that. It may be successful in ways that only the Lord knows.

On the other hand, being preoccupied with the world to the degree that our confidence is placed in man and his potential for solving its problems is ultimately a temporal delusion. Even so, this is the tune that we seem to be hearing everywhere today. Some of the latest movies trumpet that wishful thinking. Disney's *Tomorrowland* is a blatant example. At the grandiose ending, a diverse group of young people rises up out of a wheat field to face the futuristic city in the distance. They are, we are told, the hope of mankind.

There is a television commercial running right now that could be joined at the hip with *Tomorrowland*. The message is exactly the same, and the images of diverse "races" of people in whom all hope for the world is placed could have been taken right from the movie. The commercial, however, featured an in-your-face propaganda music track: John Lennon's "Imagine." The lyrics include: *Imagine there's no heaven, its easy if you try, no hell below us, above us only sky...Nothing to kill or die for, and no religion too. You may say I'm a dreamer, but I'm not the only one. I hope someday you'll join us, and the world will be as one.*

Although the deceptive influence of such presentations grieves us (indeed the world will be as one—under the Antichrist), it also causes us to evaluate where our heads and hearts are regarding our being influenced by the world: "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Ephesians 5:15-17). His will for us is not a mystery: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Greetings,

Thank you for your [November] article on Pre-trib and Rapture and Dr. Paul Wilkinson's excellent rebuttal of this DVD [*Left Behind or Led Astray?*]. Sadly, many will swallow [its teachings] as truth; "hook, line, and sinker" as us Aussies say! Praying that many more will have their eyes opened to the truth....Thank you once again for being faithful in exposing the lies and always using the Bible as your source. May your ministry continue to be blessed. PA (Australia)

T.A.,

Just wanted to drop you an email to thank you for showing me TBC's app... at the Appleton prophecy conference....I cannot tell you how much I have used that app and all of the great stuff that you have on it. Better yet, I have shown it to many people who are getting the same use. There is so much that can go so deep into the Word, but at the same time I use it for people I am witnessing to that gets them started. The Bible Survival sequence is excellent for that. I have been and will continue to pray for the ministry. CV (email)

Dear Friends,

I so appreciated the article by T. A. in September ("Fellowship: Fortification against Apostasy"). Many of my Christian friends in different parts of the country are going through the dispiriting quest of finding a good fellowship. I've gone through the same myself, and were it not for the good counsel of Ed [on your staff], who, a few years ago when I called, said there were no exceptions to Hebrews 10:25, I would have given up. I'm glad I heeded his advice because it pressed me to fervent prayer for the pastor and the congregants, and as a result there has been not only the peaceful fruit of obedience but also the increasing evidence of God's working in the fellowship. Thank you all for your faithful ministry. How much you are needed at this time! PB (MN)

T. A.'S SPEAKING SCHEDULE

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Jan 16-24 | South Africa
<i>julie.e.leo@gmail.com</i> |
| Feb 11-16 | Albania
<i>geosturm01@aol.com</i> |
| Apr 2-3 | Roseburg Christian Fellowship
Roseburg, OR – (541) 672-7222 |

For up-to-date schedule information visit: www.thebereancall.org/tom

STS 24/7 BROADCAST SCHEDULE

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|---------------------|--|
| Dec 4 | Ed Newby
<i>Media Influences: Conservatism as Religion</i> |
| Dec 11/18 | Jim McCarthy
<i>Calvinism</i> |
| Dec 25/Jan 1 | Chris Quintana
<i>New Apostolic Reformation</i> |

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NEWSWATCH

News stories are selected for reader awareness and as an exercise
in discerning the times from a biblical perspective.

NOT YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL POWER BAR

CHRISTIANITY.COM, 5/23/15, "DON'T THINK OF CHURCH AS YOUR OWN SPIRITUAL POWER BAR" [EXCERPTS]: "I get fed there" is one of the classic "Christianese" phrases that puzzle outsiders. "Are you referring to a buffet?" they might ask.

For many, a rough translation [is] "I get my spiritual energy boost every Sunday to help get me from Monday to Saturday."

Joining other believers each Sunday in singing, praying, and hearing teaching from God's Word produces healthy spiritual nourishment. "As a deer pants for flowing streams," writes the Psalmist, "so pants my soul for you, O God" (Psalm 42:1). We become spiritually parched and famished with the hardships of life in a fallen world, and the Word of God refreshes our souls.

For the most part, however, I've heard this phrase used in ways that are unhealthy. I'll ask someone how church is going, and sometimes he or she will say something like: "Well I've been busy, but I get fed each week." For them, the important thing is not to commit to one church but to get themselves individually fed at any church. This mentality to treat the church like a spiritual power bar that reenergizes you is not only unbiblical but also detrimental to Christian flourishing. It promotes an individualistic and consumeristic understanding of Christianity. "How can church fulfill me?"

Instead, think of the church as a body and yourself as a vital member. The Apostle Paul used the image of a body to help the Corinthians understand the church rightly: "But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you....' If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together" (1 Corinthians 12:18-27).

When we think of the church as a body we will remember that Christ is our head, leading us in holiness and love. When we think of ourselves as members of this body, we will understand that every one of us is vital to its identity and mission. God deliberately designed the church as a body rather than a spiritual battery plug station because he wants his children to grow together in Him. If we fail to play our role

and serve the body with the gifts that God has given to us, the rest of the members would suffer just like a body would suffer without an eye.

(<http://goo.gl/jxdJJl>)

SABER-TOOTH PSYCHOLOGY

CHRISTIANHEADLINES.COM, 10/27/15, "SABER-TOOTH PSYCHOLOGY: WHY DARWINISM CAN'T EXPLAIN RELIGION" [EXCERPTS]: If there's one area of science that shows how ill-equipped naturalism is to make sense of the world, it's evolutionary psychology—the study of how evolution shaped the way we think, feel, and act. Even among outspoken Darwinists, this field is known for sensationalism and outright nonsense.

Take one study from Newcastle University that claimed to explain why boys prefer blue and girls prefer pink. The scientists' answer? Because tens of thousands of years ago, our male ancestors had to watch for predators silhouetted against the blue sky, while women had to focus on gathering berries, which are usually pink.

[Writers] have dubbed this brand of pop-science "saber-tooth psychology" because of the way the tales unfold: "Humans engage in such-and-such activity today because long ago, it gave our apelike forebears a survival advantage against hungry saber-tooth tigers."

Scientists tell us the instinct that led early humans to decide the rustle in the grass was not the wind but a predator gave rise not only to a population of paranoid primates, but to our belief in the supernatural—and in God!

How? Kelly James Clark, a research fellow at Grand Valley State University in Michigan, explains that this instinct—what he calls a "hypersensitive agency-detecting device"—causes people to see intention behind not only rustling grass, but behind daily phenomena, like the weather, disease, and failed crops. Gradually, humans began detecting agency everywhere and came to believe that supernatural beings inhabited the water, sky, and earth.

So when you hear these kinds of stories, ask yourself what the storytellers are assuming and how those assumptions affect their theory. Remember, when it comes to evolutionary psychology, some science writers wouldn't know a tall tale if it snuck up and bit them in the tall grass.

(<http://goo.gl/9vVujm>)

THE BEREAN CALL

Founder: Dave Hunt
Executive Director: T. A. McMahon

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CONTACTING US

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e-mail: editorial@thebereancall.org
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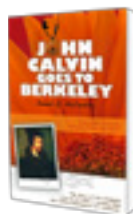
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