

# Two Birthdays

*“Folly is joy to him that is destitute of wisdom; but a man of understanding walketh uprightly”* (Prov.15:21).

February 12, 2009, marked the two hundredth birthday of two important historical figures: Abraham Lincoln and Charles Darwin. The world plans to go all out in its remembrance of Darwin’s birth, especially in the scientific community; while Lincoln’s birthday will be scarcely recalled outside of the United States. **This is a tragedy!** When you wipe away all the mythology and hero worship of Lincoln which developed after his death you find a remarkable human being who tried to do what was right and cared for his fellow man. Darwin, a former seminary student, left God and wallowed in unbelief which ended up in his infamous, still unproven **theory** of evolution.

Darwin’s theories became the underpinning of at least two vicious and murderous ideologies: Communism and Nazism. The **Communists** believe that since man is basically an animal, they can extinguish as many lives as needed for “the good of the many”. Nazis, drawing from evolution’s “survival of the fittest,” viewed themselves as the superiorly evolved “master” race with all others being inferior and worthy of extermination like cockroaches.

Worse yet, Darwin’s diabolical theory became the main argument of **atheism** – the belief in nothing. Many have been enslaved to this malignant philosophy which makes men into instinct driven animals rather than fallen children of God.

Lincoln left no theories behind just a wise and compassionate example. During his administration this nation suffered a tragic Civil War. History reveals that Lincoln tried to avert this war but when it was thrust upon him sought to end it as soon as possible with victory. Mistakes were made and many died on both sides but victory was attained. Because of his love of America, even of those millions who loathed him, he planned a magnanimous peace. Unfortunately, an assassin’s bullet ended his plans. Many of those who followed only saw vengeance and so they reaped decades of sectional bitterness and racial segregation.

The other great legacy Lincoln left us was the emancipation of the slaves. Lincoln’s proclamation did not immediately end slavery for many but it did start them and their descendents down the road to freedom and eventually liberty. American slavery was a horrid evil and blight upon this nation; the antithesis of what this country stands for. Most Americans believed the Bible back then or at least respected it. And the Bible teaches that God *“hath made of one blood all nations of men”* (Acts 17:26). Lincoln believed in this **fundamental value** of every human being as created in God’s image. Slavery flew in the face of this belief. I believe this is why Lincoln rose above his own racial prejudices and political instincts and signed the Emancipation Proclamation. It was the right thing to do. It was the American thing to do. I thank God he did it!

As we look at the flawed sinful state of this world let us never forget that there has been only **one perfect example** in history – Jesus Christ. I am reminded of the amazement of the nameless Roman centurion as he witnessed the ultimate act of love and compassion at Calvary: *“Truly this was the Son of God”* (Matt.27:54).

And as the world recalls the lives of Darwin and Lincoln let us not forget their legacy. One left an awful heritage of unbelief and **barbarity**; the other a continuing inspiration of hope and compassion. This is why I choose to remember Abraham Lincoln on February 12<sup>th</sup> and relegate Charles Darwin and his theory to the dustbin of history.

Roelf L. Ruffner  
Cheyenne, WY

## BELVEDERE BEACON

*“Ye are the light of the world”* (Matthew 5:14)

Volume 10                      Number 7                      February 15, 2009  
A PUBLICATION OF THE BELVEDERE CHURCH OF CHRIST

535 Clearwater Road, Belvedere, SC 29841-2574

(Greater Augusta, GA area)

## THOUGHTS ON COMPASSION

**A**mong the many attractive and ennobling traits of character urged upon servants of God and followers of Christ is compassion. Even those who possess no compassion admire and appreciate this trait in others.

God’s compassion is extolled in Psalms 86:15: “But thou, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” Notice the companion virtues to compassion: graciousness, longsuffering, and mercy. Because of His compassion, God is slow to anger (145:8). Out of His compassion, God sent the prophets to warn His people of coming doom if they failed to repent (2 Chr. 36:15).

Compassion graced the earthly life of our Savior. Upon seeing the multitudes, Jesus “was moved with compassion for them” (Mat. 9:36); cf. 14:4; 15:32; et al.). In every case where His compassion is mentioned, He did something to help the object of His compassion.

Since we are to follow God as our pattern of behavior (1 Pet. 1:16, and since Christ is to be formed in us (Gal. 4:19), it follows that we must be compassionate. The upright man is “gracious, and full of compassion and righteousness” (Psa. 112:4). The Hebrew Christians were commended for having “compassion on them that were in bonds” (Heb. 10:34). Zechariah commanded God’s people of old: “Execute true judgment, and show mercy and compassions every man to his brother” (Zec. 7:9).

While lauding this all-too uncommon virtue, a word of warning is in order concerning its misuse. We must never use compassion as an excuse for a compromising attitude toward God’s Word. In the name of “compassion” some would withhold the Truth from those who need it lest they be offended. It is no mark of compassion to neglect or refuse to speak the whole counsel of God whereby one might be saved, whether it be to a brother or an enemy. Nor does a compassionate disposition contradict the capacity to raise one’s voice in bold protest against sin and error, as our Lord often did. Paul’s compassionate spirit did not prevent his calling Elymas the sorcerer “thou son of the devil” (Acts 13:10).

As with the noble virtue of sincerity, so with compassion—it is not the totality of virtue. Let us cultivate the sweet disposition that can be born only of compassion, all the while determined to stand firm in all of the Truth.

Dub McClish  
Denton, TN

### SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

<b>SUNDAY:</b>		<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>	
Bible Classes for all ages	10.00 am.	Bible Classes for all ages	7.00 p.m.
Morning Worship	11.00 am.		
Evening Worship	6.00 p.m.		

EVANGELIST: Ken Chumbley - Tel. No. (803) -279-8663

www.belvederechurchofchrist.org E-mail church@belvederechurchofchrist.org

## “OVER A THOUSAND DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN CHURCHES”

In our continuing e-mail discussion, my correspondent stated: “I read your Feb 4th article in how you cite one quote and then offer your interpretation. There are some that choose to interpret these scriptures as you do, and also many that don't. That is why there are over 1,000 different Christian churches, all with their own interpretation of the Bible, many claiming theirs is the genuine religion and the only true path to salvation. I choose to be more ecumenical.” This was, of course, in reference to the scriptures that I had quoted in my response to him. Such is a common answer amongst denominationalists to justify differing doctrines. However there are at least two problems with such a statement.

First, is the concept that we can all have our own interpretation of scripture and whatever interpretation is put on a particular scripture is acceptable to the individual, the concept being that one interpretation is as good as another and any interpretation is acceptable to God – even when diverse doctrines are the outcome, for example, baptism. Some say that sprinkling or pouring infants is acceptable to God while some insist on adult immersion. Some insist that baptism is for the remission of sins while others say that one is saved at the point of belief and one does not have to be baptized. In this, what God meant by what is recorded in Scripture, is brushed aside in favor of one's own interpretation even though they may accept that differing viewpoints are acceptable to God, as seen by our correspondent's statement that he chooses “to be more ecumenical.” However, the Bible clearly teaches: “*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*” (II Peter 1:20-21). The only interpretation of Scripture that is acceptable to God is that meaning that He intended when the Scripture was given to inspired men. Choosing “to be more ecumenical” is nothing more than placing one's own “*private interpretation*” above God's intended meaning making one's own interpretation valid as opposed to God's intended meaning. Such becomes a convenient way of ignoring the clear teaching of Scripture. Our correspondent speaks of the “only true path” to salvation” but by his statement, he clearly indicates that there is more than one way. Such may be his “*private interpretation*” but it is NOT the teaching of God's Word. Note what Jesus clearly stated: “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*” (John 14:6). Indeed, the Lord also taught that there is a broad way and a narrow way – the broad way leading to destruction and the strait or narrow way (singular) that leads to life (Matthew 7:14).

A second problem with such a statement is for one to teach that “over 1,000 different Christian churches, all with their own interpretation of the Bible” are acceptable to God is to actually indict God Himself. It is saying that God did not reveal His Word in such a way that man could know the truth that would set him free (John 8:32). If God did not reveal His word clearly enough and thus enable man to know the truth would indict God as not being a God that is all-powerful and all-knowing. The truth of the matter is that our God is all-powerful and all-knowing and that He did reveal His Word to the inspired penmen in such a way that man can know and be obedient to the truth. The reason why there is a multiplicity of denominations teaching different doctrines is that people refuse to accept what God has clearly said and choose to substitute their own doctrines that are in opposition to God's will. Sometimes you will quote just a passage of Scripture to someone and they will respond that such is “just your interpretation” simply because they refuse to accept the Word of God and would choose their own “more ecumenical way.” Such fail to accept what Jesus said: “*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day*” (John 12:48).

*Ken Chumbley*

## NEWS AND NOTES

Keep in your prayers the following: Helen Culpepper, Pam Gossett, Lavonne McClish, Linda Chumbley, and Rachel Fitzpatrick's aunt (Eula Baker) who has cancer, Maomi Aaron' sister who is having health problems, Myrtle Grimsley, Lanny Niver together with his daughter, Justine Hall's husband, Joe and Tim Smith.

Rachel Fitzpatrick, Pam Gossett, Lanny Niver and Aiden Arnold were all sick and unable to be out last Sunday.

Our next pot-luck fellowship will be on February 22, after the morning services. Plan to stay and eat with us.

## A Great Difference

An English writer has said, “The early Christians did not go around saying, ‘Look what the world is come to.’ Rather they went out with great joy and said to all men, ‘Look what is coming to the world!’” There is a great difference between these two attitudes. Yes, the world is in bad shape; but read the second chapter of Romans and you will find that the world was in an awful condition in Paul's time.

Nearly all thoughtful men agree that man is in a terrible predicament, but the unique Gospel of Jesus Christ offers the solution to man's problems.

Look! See what has come into the world—God's revelation of Himself in all His power, wisdom, and love through Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son. This is indeed glorious news! This is a message which we cannot keep to ourselves, but we must tell everybody it. No wonder Christians are radiant with joy. They have found the treasure all men are seeking. They have seen what has come into the world in the advent of Jesus Christ, and they are working for the advancement of His kingdom until He comes again.

*Author Unknown*