

The City of God

By George Davis

By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (Hebrews 11:8-10)



It never ceases to amaze me how our private and corporate Christian pilgrimage so thoroughly corresponds to the life and travels of Abram /Abraham. God's dealings with Abraham are undoubtedly prototypical and therefore relevant. In this article we will discuss Abraham's

pilgrimage, contrasting it with ours. We will also compare the city that he sought to the one that men have built and are still building in the tradition of Cain and Nimrod, the city of man as opposed to that city whose builder and maker is God.

We shall also consider the sad tale of those who in ignorance perceived "the city of God" as something that man could build and maintain and the unspeakable pain they caused. We shall see the flawed reasoning behind their motive to build and the consequent abusive behavior. We will consider the limitations of such thinking, in hopes that we might once again take on the posture of Abraham--waiting and seeking God, the founder, builder and maker.

It all began with the first *ekklesia* when God called Abraham to go out into

Called to Go Out Into

In Abraham we have the first example of the *ekklesia*. He was the first of many called out ones. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out. . .went out." The use of the

word ekklesia to describe the community of Christ carries with it the thought of coming out to progress toward the land of promise as the church in the wilderness.

Just before Stephen was stoned, he referred to Israel as the "church (ekklesia) in the wilderness." He took his listeners on a journey, recounting God's dealings with Israel. He spoke of the repeated apostasy of their forefathers. Then he pointed out the family likeness. "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51). It was there that they proved Stephen right by stoning him to death. It is clear that Stephen's mention of the church in the wilderness was in contrast to the stubborn and fixed status of the religion of the Pharisees. Lest I should be thought anti-Semitic, which I am not, allow me to say that all religions, exhibit the same propensity to resist God and stone the prophet. It is the Church that I speak of here. The very first step toward apostasy is to stop journeying, and the second is to build an institution. When these two conditions are fulfilled, all is primed to effectively resist the Holy Spirit. Why? God is moving on, but we are not!

The truism "Time will tell" is often used adage regarding things that are arguable, uncertain or inconclusive. Things have a way of being manifest over time. "The day will declare it"(1 Corinthians 3:13). As we look back over days gone by, we tend to affirm another old adage "Hindsight is 20/20." One thing is evident in Church History and that is that once a movement had instituted, from that point on change was nearly impossible. Almost without exception it resisted the next move of God. It is something of a law--the law of fixed resistance. Once something is fixed in man's mind, and finds an institutional expression in the world, it takes a bomb to dislodge it. Therefore reformation equals crisis equals change.

Kurt Tucholsky sums it up quite nicely, "What the church can't prevent, it blesses."

Much of what was once considered orthodox and unquestionably true has since been swept away by the winds of time. And those few lone voices of reason, then called heretics, who met with the same fate as Stephen, have now been canonized as heroes of the faith. Why does change come so hard to us? Why do we move in barely perceptible increments, dragging our feet, kicking and screaming all the way? Why does religious man refuse to go out and go on with God? It takes faith to embrace change--to go out with God--to sojourn in a strange land. Where are the daring and

trusting souls, who like Abraham will hear the call and leave behind the security and familiarity of Ur? Those who seek to inherit that city not of their own making--those who will go out from the city of man to sojourn and seek the true City of God?

Not knowing whither he went

Why does religious man when confronted with change, kill the messengers of that change, and then with the passing of time garnish their tombs? Like the Pharisees of old, they strive to fend off the present truth while saying, "Had I been alive back then I would not have stoned the prophets! I would not have resisted change as our forefathers did." Ironic isn't it?

Abraham is called "the father of faith" because he embarked on a journey not knowing where he was going but was confident in the One who was leading him. He walked in what to him was the present truth. True faith is not a mental ascent to a fixed system of beliefs as some might have us think. It is neither theology nor creed, liturgy nor doctrine. It is expressed in a willingness to leave all and follow the Lord. True Christianity is not and cannot be static. It is migratory, as if moving from one country or region to another. It is following, flowing, progressing, growing, and changing--the on-going transformation and conformity to the image of Christ, known only to those who follow on to know the Lord. It is a journey. And to the ones who will embark upon it Jesus has given this glorious promise, "He who follows me will never walk in darkness." True faith is not seen in the sedentary, stationary and predictable. But quite to the contrary, it is most pronounced on the raging waves of the seemingly out-of-control circumstances of life. This is why Abraham was so exceptional. "He looked for that city whose builder and maker is God." As a sojourner, he dwelled in the land of promise. He was following not building.

He sojourned in the land of promise

The early Church viewed themselves as sojourners just like faithful Abraham.

Clement's first Epistle to the Corinthians, supposedly written in the lifetime of John, gives a view of the churches at the close of what is now called the "Apostolic period." Clement begins thus. "The Church of God which sojourns at Rome, to the Church of God sojourning at Corinth, to them that are called and sanctified by the will of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ:" In his letter to the Philippians, Polycarp addressed "the

Church of God sojourning at Philippi." By this we see the way the first century believers viewed themselves and the world around them. They saw themselves as pilgrims and sojourners in a strange land (see 1Peter 2:11). They saw themselves in figure as strangers, pilgrims and sojourners dwelling in tents, not building cathedrals or cities. The ambition to settle and build cities for God came later with the full-blown apostasy of the church, and found expression in increasing degree throughout Church history up to the present day.

Truly the opposite of faith is manifest in man's inborn ambition to formulate and reduce everything he touches to a predictable system or methodology. To make his world secure--to clone, fix, codify, nail down, and build fortresses to protect him against the unknown. I am sure it would surprise us to know how much of what we call "orthodox" springs from man's insecurity and the consequent ambition to control and patrol uniformity. So it is in unbelief that man builds his own city.

He Looked for a City that has Foundations

Rather than build as had Cain and Nimrod, Abraham dwelt in tents. He waited in faith for a city--a city founded in God, its builder.

In his book *City of God*, Augustine was forced to conclude that "the earthly city, (Rome) which, though it be mistress of the nations, is itself ruled by its lust of rule." Here we see the chief characteristic of all that man builds. The city that man builds will inevitably be ruled by its lust of rule. It must be MANaged, even microMANaged. It is order for order's sake

It was the fall of Rome that prompted Augustine to write the *City of God*. The Roman church was shaken to the core. They believed that Rome itself was the "City of God" and it had been over run by pagans--the Goths had sacked the "Holy City." Was this the judgment of God? Augustine's failure to see the kingdom of God as the rule of God in the hearts of men led to conclusions that in the end were disastrous. He concluded that salvation came by means of sacraments and therefore by the Church. Accordingly salvation fell within the purview of an institution maintained by men. The church became the savior, not Jesus. He could not have known then that his doctrinal writings would serve to justify a thousand-year reign of terror and bloodshed.

Edmund Hamer Broadment (1861 - 1945) in his book *The Pilgrim Church* makes this point conclusively.

"In his zeal for the unity of the Church Augustine sought to unify the church around an unvarying doctrinal standard. He lost sight of the spiritual, living, and indestructible unity of the Church and Body of Christ, uniting all who are sharers, by the new birth, in the life of God. Consequently he did not see the practical possibility of the existence of churches of God in various places and in all times, each retaining its immediate relation with the Lord and with the Spirit, yet having fellowship with the others, and that in spite of human weakness, of varying degrees of knowledge, of divergent apprehensions of Scripture and of practice.

"His outward view of the Church as an earthly organisation, naturally led him to seek outward, material means for preserving, and even compelling, visible unity. In controversy with the Donatists he wrote:

"It is indeed better . . . that men should be led to worship God by teaching, than that they should be driven to it by fear of punishment or pain; but it does not follow that because the former course produces the better men, therefore those who do not yield to it should be neglected. For many have found advantage (as we have proved and are daily proving by actual experiment) in being first compelled by fear or pain, so that they might afterwards be influenced by teaching, or might follow out in act what they had already learned in word . . . whilst those are better who are guided aright by love, those are certainly more numerous who are corrected by fear. For who can possibly love us more than Christ, who laid down His life for the sheep? And yet, after calling Peter and the other Apostles by His words alone, when He came to summon Paul . . . He not only constrained him with His voice, but even dashed him to the earth with His power; and that He might forcibly bring one who was raging amid the darkness of infidelity, to desire the light of the heart, He first struck him with physical blindness of the eyes.

Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return ?.... The Lord Himself said 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in' . . . Wherefore if the power which the Church has received by divine appointment in its due season, through the religious character and faith of kings, be the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges-that is, in

heresies and schisms-are compelled to come in, then let them not find fault with being compelled." Such teaching, from such an authority, incited and justified those methods of persecution by which Papal Rome equaled the cruelties of Pagan Rome. So a man of strong affections and quick and tender sympathies, departing from the principles of Scripture, though with good intentions, became implicated in a vast and ruthless system of persecution."

Let us carefully consider what is being said here. Augustine believed that there were two means by which men came to God, teaching and fear of punishment or pain. He did acknowledge that teaching is indeed better, but He quickly qualified that simply because teaching "produces the better men," those who do not yield to fear should none the less not be neglected. Thus he proceeds to explain the need of being compelled by fear or pain. Hence he concluded, "Whilst those are better who are guided aright by love, those are certainly more numerous who are corrected by fear." He used as his proof text God's dealings with Paul. When God "came to summon Paul...He not only constrained him with His voice, but even dashed him to the earth with His power; and that He might forcibly bring one who was raging amid the darkness of infidelity, to desire the light of the heart, He first struck him with physical blindness of the eyes." Note the verbiage of control, constrained, dashed, forcibly bring, struck, etc.

Carrying this argument to its logical conclusion Augustine presents the deadly question: *Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return?*

One must completely ignore the government of the Spirit of God to make such a conclusion. It was God who struck Paul down. It was the glory of God that blinded him. Can we conclude from this that our calling is to strike people down and blind them? This is not too far afield from Augustine's conclusions.

Norman Park lists the unholy troika that such conclusions indulge.

"Force! Power! Authority! This is the triumvirate which rule the City of Man. They are barred from the City of God. Force is the means to compel another to do one's will or to punish his disobedience. Power is the silk-gloved hand of force utilizing law and tradition. Authority is power consented to or accepted as rightful." (*It Shall Not Be So Among You*)

From Augustine until now, in greater and lesser degree, the same conclusions have been passed down like an unholy torch. Even the reformers could not seem to rid themselves of it altogether. They still could not envision a Church without the control of man, and were therefore destined to repeat the papal error. Although their conclusions differed slightly from that of the papacy, one thing remained the same--they saw the church as an institution, and as a "Divine Institution," they concluded that the church is God's instrument to enforce morality. Therefore, their institutions took on the nature of their perceptions of the severity and judgment of God

It all began with their inability to believe that the church could be divinely held together without the aid of officers, rules, and institutions. They experienced a quandary similar to that of Bishop Lightfoot. Regarding which Philip Schaff, (1819-1893) wrote.



'Bishop Lightfoot begins his valuable discussion on the Christian ministry (p. 179) with this broad and liberal statement: "The kingdom of Christ, not being a kingdom of this world, is not limited by the restrictions which fetter other societies, political or religious. It is in the fullest sense free, comprehensive, universal. It

displays this character, not only in the acceptance of all comers who seek admission, irrespective of race or caste or sex, but also in the instruction and treatment of those who are already its members. It has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place alike are holy. Above all it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man, by whose intervention alone God is reconciled and man forgiven. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. To Him immediately he is responsible, and from Him directly he obtains pardon and draws strength." But he immediately proceeds to qualify this statement, and says that this is simply the ideal view--"a holy season extending the whole year round, a temple confined only by the limits of the habitable world, a priesthood co-extensive with the race"--and that the Church of Christ can no more hold together without officers, rules, and institutions than any other society of men. "As appointed days and set places are indispensable to her

efficiency, so also the Church could not fulfill the purposes for which she exists without rulers and teachers, without a ministry of reconciliation, in short, without an order of men who may in some sense be designated a priesthood. In this respect the ethics of Christianity present an analogy to the politics. Here also the ideal conception and the actual realization are incommensurate and in a manner contradictory." (HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH, CHAPTER X. ORGANIZATION OF THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH. § 58. Literature.)

Lightfoot was unable to harmonize the obvious contradictions surrounding the concept of "office" as relates to the priesthood of believers. He admitted that the two are "incommensurate and in a manner contradictory." But he reasoned that "appointed days and set places are indispensable to her efficiency, so also the Church could not fulfill the purposes for which she exists without rulers and teachers, without a ministry of reconciliation. . ." He was reduced to double-talk. In short, this unbiblical system cannot function without unbiblical officers, rules, and institutions.

Martin Luther (1483-1546), in article three of "The German Mass and Order of Divine Service," also advanced the same incommensurate and contradictory rationale.

"But the third sort [of Divine Service], which the true type of Evangelical Order should embrace, must not be celebrated so publicly in the square amongst all and sundry. Those, however, who are desirous of being Christians in earnest, and are ready to profess the Gospel with hand and mouth, should register their names and assemble by themselves in some house to pray, to read, to baptize and to receive the sacrament and practise other Christian works. In this Order, those whose conduct was not such as befits Christians could be recognized, reprov'd, reformed, rejected, or excommunicated, according to the rule of Christ in Matt. xviii. Here, too, a general giving of alms could be imposed on Christians, to be willingly given and divided among the poor, after the example of St. Paul in 2 Cor. ix. Here there would not be need of much fine singing. Here we could have baptism and the sacrament in short and simple fashion: and direct everything towards the Word and prayer and love. Here we should have a good short Catechism about the Creed, the Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer. In one word, if we only had people who longed to be Christians in earnest, Form and Order would soon shape itself. But I cannot and would not order or arrange such a community or congregation at present. I have not the requisite persons for it, nor do I see many who are urgent for it. But should it come to pass that I must do it,

and that such pressure is put upon me as that I find myself unable with a good conscience to leave it undone, then I will gladly do my part to secure it, and will help it on as best I can. . ." (The German Mass and Order of Divine Service, Jan. 1526 by Documents Illustrative of the Continental Reformation, from B.J. Kidd, ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911), pp. 193-202.)

Luther expressed his understanding of the true nature of the Church--what he saw to be the ideal, but opted, for reasons whether legitimate or not, to settle for less. In his flawed reasoning he was left to conclude, "In the meantime, I would abide by the two Orders aforesaid." Hence the ideal suffered at the hands of the present disorder. Neither Lightfoot nor Luther could deny that God's best was other than the then contemporary ecclesiastical system.

Whose builder and maker is God.

Luther could believe God for salvation but not to build His church. His language evidences this. "But I cannot and would not order or arrange such a community or congregation at present. I have not the requisite persons for it." We must remember that Luther had never seen anything remotely resembling the true City whose builder and maker is God. He had only seen what man had built and was still deeply impacted. He could not imagine a church ordered and orchestrated by God alone. This was in excess of his ideal that still required his order and arrangement. I am certain that Luther did not know that he opted for a system that, like its predecessor the Roman Church, would likewise come to be ruled by its lust of rule. What man orders he must constitute by a legislative process. If we attempt to accomplish God's goals by this fleshly means, what we build will take on the abusive characteristics of man rather than the love and character of Christ. Christ in you, us, them, is the only hope of glory. His reign in our hearts is the only hope. As He lives out through the believer the true Kingdom is seen--a kingdom that does not come with outward observation, offices, rules, and institutions, but is revealed through hearts conquered by His love.

Luther's understanding of the Spirit's work was purely a theological one--never finding its way off the pages of the Holy Writ. Hence he reasoned long and hard over the question. "If salvation comes by faith alone, what motivation is there for morality?" Obviously Luther did not understand what Jesus meant when He said "And when he (The Spirit of truth) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and

of judgment" (John 16:8). Hence we see the Spiritual decadence of the Christianity of Luther's day--a seemingly utter ignorance of, and lack of dependence on the Holy Spirit to rule in the lives and hearts of men. Had not Jesus said, "The kingdom of God is within you"? Had He not said that He would take up residence within us--that His Spirit would rule in our hearts? What motivation is there for morality? Didn't Paul say, "Christ in you is the hope of glory"? That it is God who works in us "both to will and to do of His good pleasure"?

Luther had escaped the Roman church and its exclusive hierarchy. He had witnessed its bent toward corruption. He had seen the elitism of the Roman council or synod, and their exclusive power of legislation and governance, which neither God nor the so-called "laymen" had a voice over. Luther was willing to embrace the concept that there is no difference among Christians but qualified his comments as follows.

"All Christians, are truly of the spiritual estate, and there is no difference among them, save of office alone."

So on the one hand he acknowledges the priesthood of believers and on the other he reaffirmed a slightly altered papal state. He could not imagine a unity based upon the Spirit of God alone, and for that reason he introduced to Europe a modified papal institution called Lutheranism.

About that same time in Switzerland, Geneva also broke with the Catholic Church. All allies of Rome were driven out. With the yoke of Rome off their necks they cast off all restraints. Due to the resulting vacuum of moral discipline, a man by the name of Calvin took the responsibility of bring order into the chaos. He envisioned an ideal society, a city of God, a holy commonwealth. He wrote the laws to govern all of Geneva. It was Calvin's laws that set the standard for the trials and executions of future heretics. Because they could not agree on the doctrine of the Trinity, Calvin caused Servetus to be burned on the hill of Champell.

Man's version of the city of God is always expedited by his attempt to legislate morality. But most tragic is his brutish enforcement of it. No matter how harsh his tactics, he exhibits a profound ability to both console and content himself with thoughts of the end justifying the means. And thus, with bloody sword in hand, he perceives himself as God's champion--the enforcer of the kingdom.

A morality that is legislated must be enforced. But what do you do with those who do not obey? You must consider the appropriate punishment. If we are to have punishment, we must have officers or constables to both determine who is deserving of that punishment and to carry it out. It is no surprise that Geneva under Calvin became a Protestant police state that all but equaled the papacy in abuse. He tried to build a city of God after the Augustinian order--a city maintained by man, which resulted in unbelievable control and abuse.

"No relics, church bells, candles; no rouge or "powdering," no jewelry, no immodest dress. (Guess who decided what was and wasn't!) No sorcery, cards, drunkenness, lace, hunting. No books that were not religious or moral in nature. No dancing. No singing of non-Christian songs. No statues. If a child struck his parents, he was beheaded. But, as always, sex was the big no-no. Any sex outside of marriage and you were drowned. Pregnant outside of wedlock, the same. The man was drowned, too. You don't believe? Calvin's stepson was caught and drowned. His daughter-in-law was caught and drowned; so were the other two people involved."No relics, church bells, candles; no rouge or "powdering," no jewelry, no immodest dress.

Tenderhearted soul, this Calvin. Fourteen women accused of witchcraft were burned alive. Reasoning behind such cruel punishment? I quote Calvin: "When the Catholics are so harsh and violent in their defense of their superstitions, are not Christ's magistrates shamed to do less in defense of the truth." I think Jesus would have been burned alive in Geneva. But what of the man Calvin? Well, he called those who disagreed with him: idiots, riffraff, pigs, asses, stinking beasts, and dogs." (Gene Edwards, *John Calvin Revisited*)

How could such things happen in the name of Christ--in the name of love? Answer: Calvin's view of the city of God was the same as that of Augustine. Augustine's erroneous conclusions differ little from those of Calvin.

Augustine:

"Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return? The Lord Himself said 'Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in' . . . Wherefore if the power which the Church has received by divine appointment in its due season, through the religious character and faith of kings, be the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges--that is, in heresies and schisms--are compelled to come in, then let them not find fault with being compelled."

Calvin:

"When the Catholics are so harsh and violent in their defense of their superstitions, are not Christ's magistrates shamed to do less in defense of the truth . . . Whoever shall now contend that it is unjust to put heretics and blasphemers to death will knowingly and willingly incur their very guilt. This is not laid down on human authority; it is God who speaks and prescribes a perpetual rule for his Church. It is not in vain that he banishes all those human affections which soften our hearts; that he commands paternal love and all the benevolent feelings between brothers, relations, and friends to cease; in a word, that he almost deprives men of their nature in order that nothing may hinder their holy zeal. Why is so implacable a severity exacted but that we may know that God is defrauded of his honor, unless the piety that is due to him be preferred to all human duties, and that when his glory is to be asserted, humanity must be almost obliterated from our memories?"

Calvin's magistrates were the same as Augustine's kings, and were both considered by each as "the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges-that is, in heresies and schisms-are compelled (struck, constrained, dashed, forced,) to come in." Yes, Gene Edwards, I am sure you are right. Jesus would have been burned alive at Geneva. In fact, I am sure some of His children were!

Like the pope, Calvin ruled by the temporal sword. So even with the Protestant reform tyranny was not dead, because man was yet the builder of this city. Rather than sojourn, Calvin built a city. Rather than dwell in tents he erected a Calvinian empire over which he resided as magistrate.

I am sure Calvin sought an expression of God in the earth, but he sought it in ignorance. It is given to us to pray, "Thy kingdom come," not to build it. It is given to us to seek that kingdom, not to rule it. It is our lot to be governed by the King of kings, not to rule as magistrates. Christ has no magistrates. He has no kings, only servants. He himself will not force, nor strike, nor constrain anyone against his will but draws with cords of love. If the Lord is a servant, how are we kings and magistrates?

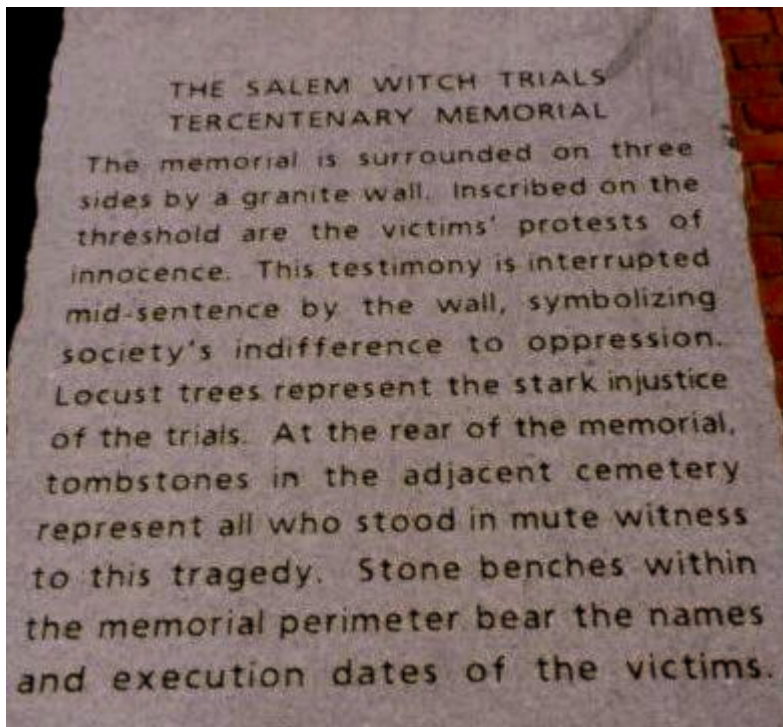
On to America-The Land of the Free?

The pilgrims that landed at Plymouth Rock were Calvinists. They also sought "a city of God." Sadly, they sought it after the manner of Calvin, so they brought much of Calvin's theological baggage with them. Salem, Massachusetts, was such a city--the

site of the historic Witch Trials of 1692 resulting in the death by hanging of nineteen innocent men and women. One man was crushed to death and seventeen others died in prison--bring the death toll to 37 in all. I am sure the hordes of hell held a party to celebrate this one. Why? More innocent people died in the name of God. And the cruel joke is that these people initially came to this country to escape religious tyranny

Once again the evidences of the city of man posing as the city of God was seen, i.e., the magistrates would kill. They would force. They would constrain.

The Salem Witch Trials Tercentenary Memorial dedicated in 1992, found adjacent to the Charter Street Old Burying Point, is a testimony against the city of man.



If such a stone were cut to contain the names of all the victims of the city of man it would have to be hewn out of a mountain. And even then I am sure it would be too small.

Unlike the popular notion that the so-called "constitutional separation of church and state" was with design to free the state of religious encumbrance, I believe the opposite was true-- that the framers of the constitution sought to protect the individual against future tyranny.

"The civil rights of none shall be abridged on account of religious belief or worship, nor shall any national religion be established, nor shall the full and equal rights of conscience be in any manner, or on any pretence, infringed." (James Madison)

The founders had seen the repeated abuse that occurs when religious man holds the temporal sword. Hence the framers sought to strip said sword from the bloody hands of the institutionalized Church. It would ensure that the witch trials of Salem would never happen again. So in America at least, the institutional church was no longer afforded the

luxury of killing its enemies. It must now resort to tormenting them. It must take its abuse to a more subtle level. It is forced to use a more tempered political means. It had been defanged but it could still gum you to death. I have witnessed the fate of some who succumbed to such a gumming.

In fact, sadly, I have personally set on such tribunals. No, no one was killed. Such things, as I have said, are illegal in our day. But there was one brother, who at the time was a close friend, who did not measure up to the status quo, who was led like a lamb to the slaughter. Certain of his beliefs were called into question and there he stood like Luther saying, "I cannot recant." We were asking him to sin against his conscience--to deny what he deeply believed. He was excommunicated because he would not and could not be forced. Even then, steeped in a sense of religious duty, my heart was divided. I wanted to embrace him, not expel him. But we in the city of man could not tolerate such divergence. The magistrates had spoken!

O Thank God! I have since learned that His Kingdom is not of this world--that it is not maintained by any force but love. This King would never resort to such tactics!

Where are you, dear reader? In what city do you live? Moreover, what city do you seek? Are you building a city or seeking that city whose builder and maker is God? Be warned that should you seek to build you run the risk of using force. And should the lord tarry what you build may be viewed as tantamount to the witch trails of Salem.

If we are ever to see the true city of God we must repent! If we are ever to see that city whose builder and maker is God, we must cease from our dead works. For it is not built here, but comes down from heaven. Its foundations are in another world. Our citizenship is in heaven, not here. This is not our home! We are sojourners and pilgrims here. We are tent-dwellers. Migrants just passing through. Let us accordingly set our affections on thing above. For there is our City and our King!