

Errors of Darwin Fish

The website of Darwin Fish ('A True Church') is an example of someone having an unduly powerful influence as a result of the Internet. He leads a small cult of 50 people teaching that there are no one other genuine Christians bar his group, and a few others. Indeed he consigns most evangelical believers in history to hell, including famous sound theologians. In pre-Internet days he would have escaped attention and been dismissed by anyone coming across him; but by having multiple papers on the net, he carries undue weight for people attracted to some pages and not having the time or ability to evaluate his whole position.

Then there is the problem that he appears sound at first sight, since he marshals multiple Biblical texts in all his papers. Readers will not realise that these are often false references or wrongly applied verses. The best way for deceit to gain a foothold is to be 30% lies in the context of lots of Biblical verses and 70% true statements. Before long, after reading many articles, a person is suffering significant damage. I know of people who have been very disturbed after reading his stuff.

The simple fact is that Fish is a serious heretic of the first order. The fact that some of his articles focus on important issues that we may agree with is irrelevant. He is a false teacher and must be denounced as such. He appears to be taken in by his own delusion (as 2 Thess 2 predicted) and thus comes across as very zealous and sincere, but he is wrong. He may oppose many other teachers whom we oppose, but Fish's articles are dangerous heresy.

Fish is also an example of the mess one gets in when refusing to fit into a specific salvific system. There are only two possible, consistent, interpretations of Biblical salvation.

1. The first is monergism (one work): God is sovereign and is the sole author (Calvinism – atonement, grace and faith for the elect only).
2. The other is synergism (joint work): God provides the framework and opportunity allowing man to initiate the process (Arminianism – universal atonement gained by free will).

There are no other consistent approaches. Various attempts have been made in history to combine these systems, the most notable being Amyraldism (or hypothetical universalism - God provides atonement for all but then only chooses some anyway); but these become hopelessly confused and theologically inconsistent. Most are a total mess of self-contradiction, bewilderment, ambiguity, misrepresentation, deliberate falsity, unclear terms, shoddy reasoning and false exegesis. Such would be the system of Andrew Fuller, but Fish's system is even more chaotic. In 2,000 years no one has developed a consistent system other than that God controls salvation (Calvinism) or man co-operates with God in it (Arminianism). For Fish to condemn both and then claim that he alone is Biblical in setting up a new system is a measure of his hubris.

It seems to me that Fish's main problem is a refusal to humbly be counselled by the sound, Biblical teaching of godly men, churches or standards that have stood the test of time, and instead rely on a proud, independent spirit. He wears the isolation he is in as a badge of honour. By all means question and be convinced in your own mind; but when godly men, from differing systems, for centuries, have clearly agreed on a certain cardinal issue, then the likelihood is that your contrary opinion is wrong. To affirm that you are right and everyone in the world and church history is wrong is delusional. Why do his flock not question this, unless they are also caught up in the delusion through trusting a man?

I intended to evaluate more of his errors, but this task is so tasteless that I had to stop reading his material. To identify and evaluate all his errors would take a book since there are so many. This simple paper seeks to outline a few.

General Theological Errors

Sandemanianism

Fish believes that people are saved by knowledge, by a worship of the Bible in its entirety; though they also claim that it is Christ who saves. But this salvation is dependent upon a person knowing and understanding all the truth of scripture. The Sandemanians taught similarly that salvation was intellectual, dependent upon knowing the right things. This is close to Gnosticism, which is salvation by knowing mysteries – however in Gnosticism this is imparted via a mystical experience. Fish teaches knowledge by an intellectual experience.

- **Q9. Are you saying that you have to do more than just believe on Christ's death and resurrection to be saved?** Yes, you need to believe in Christ Himself (John 3:16), not just what He did. Jesus Christ is all of the Bible, the word of God (Revelation 19:13; Hebrews 4:12-13; James 1:21; Matthew 4:4). Your trust must be in God's word, because that's who Jesus is (John 1:1, 14). **Q10. Are you saying that you worship the Bible?** Yes, not the paper, ink, or cover, but all that it says we worship and live by (Psalm 138:2). ... Being saved = coming to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4; John 14:6; Hebrews 10:26). Therefore, theological error is greatly diminished in true salvation. Anyone whose theology characteristically contradicts Scripture is lost (1 John 2:4). They do not believe in Jesus, no matter what they claim. They do not have God (2 John 9). ... The crux of salvation is finding the truth and remaining in it (John 14:6; 15:1-6). Therefore, theological error, no matter what the issue, has the potential to damn the soul. [FAQ; Q9, 10, 11] [In other places he makes relatively minor scriptural subjects to be determinative of salvation; to disagree on such minor matters means you are lost.]

The thief on the cross went to Paradise with the Lord but had no time to understand any formal doctrines other than his desperate trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour and Master, the Son of God. There are great varieties of understanding doctrine and scripture, but salvation is dependent upon believing in Christ (Jn 1:12; Acts 14:23; Rm 10:10) and submitting to his Lordship (Jn 6:68; Acts 16:31; Rm 10:9). To make it a matter of understanding greatly damages those who have inherent problems in learning and suggests that minors cannot be saved.

Pre-Tribulational Dispensationalism

Fish believes in the secret rapture, the seven-year tribulation, two second comings and so forth. Despite claiming to be leading one of the few churches in history that will be saved because he believes the Bible while everyone else is false, he fails to know that Dispensationalism did not exist until 1830 and was first formed in Edward Irving's heretical church founded on ideas proposed initially by a Jesuit (Manuel Lacunza) and a deranged, occult inspired sick girl (Margaret MacDonald).

Meritorious Works

- The crux of salvation is finding the truth and remaining in it (John 14:6; 15:1-6). Therefore, theological error, no matter what the issue, has the potential to damn the soul. [FAQ; Q11]

This is making salvation dependent upon the knowledge of man and his own continuing faith in this knowledge. True salvation is obtaining faith as a sovereign gift from God and trusting in Christ as a result of this unmerited grace.

Specific Theological Errors

Denies total depravity

After accepting the Calvinist position initially, he then states, Yet, it should also be noted for clarity, that a lost man could, if and when God so determined (Psalm 16:2; Romans 11:36), perform that which is truly good, yet the man may never come to salvation. ... People do indeed choose good [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001]. As usual his quotes do not support his position. Ps 16:2 supports Calvinism; Rm 11:36 is irrelevant to the argument.

The Bible teaches that Calvin was correct in that all an unregenerate man can do is commit splendid sins, even the ploughing (i.e. honest work) of the wicked is sin before God (Prov 21:4). Good works only arise from God and these are all planned in eternity (Eph 2:10). God does not give grace to those he has predestined to wrath in order to do good. The 'good works' he quotes are cases where God's sovereignty overruled evil men to perform his providential work (Balaam, Jehu).

Confused on free will

He also supports the doctrine of free will, despite earlier contending that man's will is not free, doing evil continually. This is typical of his double-mindedness and self-contradiction. A little later, he then again says that there is no free will. A little while later he then says, God deals with man as if he did have free will, and he does. After various arguments he says, So, in conclusion, it is evident, that Scripture teaches total depravity, free will, and no free will. [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001] What kind of logic is this? How does this edify people and help them understand scripture?

Confusion about God's love

God has indeed loved the minority of mankind unto salvation, and has indeed hated the rest of mankind unto eternal hatred, eternal torment (Luke 13:24; 1 Peter 4:17-18; Romans 9:6-23). This does not mean that the Lord has not and does not also love all mankind (Matthew 5:44-45; John 3:16). But, when it comes to His predestination to either mercy or wrath, God loves and hates, according to His own purpose (Romans 9:11). [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001] Fish teaches that God loves and hates the same people at the same time. This shows a deep confusion and misrepresentation of the attributes of God. It is true that God loves both the wicked and the righteous ... it is also true that before the world was created, God choose to love only a few people and destine them to eternal life in the kingdom of heaven ... He choose to hate the rest of mankind and destine them to hell for eternity [Statement of Faith; 'Predestination']

God only does things fully, perfectly and eternally. If he loves someone, he has loved them from eternity and will love them everlastingly. The source of this love is Christ. God only loves those who are in the beloved Son. The elect were placed by God into Christ in eternity and thus were loved from then (Eph 1:4-5). No one else is loved by God. He does not love for a while and then remove his love, or he would have done a temporary and incomplete work. Neither does he love some with a lesser love than the elect, or again he would be doing something imperfect. God's love is full, eternal, perfect and final.

He denies Limited atonement

To attack the Calvinist position he again uses false exegesis. Over and over he marshals texts and misinterprets them, sometimes in a cavalier fashion. For instance he wrongly uses the Greek word *pantos* calling it 'pontos' (yet he claims to be a graduate Biblical languages scholar) and wrongly defines the word denying that it can mean 'some of all types' when that is exactly what it means in many controversial places. 'All' (*pas*) does not always mean 'every', or 'all' or 'the whole'. It sometimes does but can also mean 'some of all

types' or 'all of some types'. Thus the context has to be carefully examined in the passages used to teach unlimited atonement. The word 'world' is also often used in a very restrictive sense, just as we use it today. When I say, 'where in the world is my pen' I do not mean that it could be in China but that it is in my study somewhere.

Then again, these universalistic passages teach too much if they are interpreted as meaning all men. If Jesus died for everyone, or gave his life as a ransom for everyone, then everyone is saved and there is no hell. Either that or you have to teach a universal atonement that is restricted by man's decision to claim it (Arminianism), thus making man the initiator of salvation – which Fish denies.

Fish's theology is a mess, note: we noted the erroneous gospel of Arminians (a faulty free will and conditional election), so the Calvinistic gospel is grossly in error ... Calvinists preach another gospel (Galatians 1:8-9) as they reject the truth of John 3:16 and the host of passages above. [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001] Fish denies Arminian notions of free will and election (being based on divine foreknowledge), so he more or less asserts unconditional election - double predestination [God has indeed loved the minority of mankind unto salvation, and has indeed hated the rest of mankind unto eternal hatred, eternal torment]. Yet he then firmly asserts that Christ died for everyone. Having claimed that God decrees reprobation, he then teaches that Christ died for those reprobates. How odd is that?

God is the cause of sin

He teaches that God is the cause (originator) of sin; God, who is nonetheless holy and righteous in all His ways (Psalm 99:3, 5, 9; 145:17), is the cause of all things, even sin. ... Thus, the God who cannot Himself lie (Titus 1:2), but sends lies (e.g. 2 Chronicles 18:18-22; 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12), is the cause of all, even lies. [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001] Failing to understand that God's sovereignty over evil makes sin work in conformity to his purpose but does not originate sin (Jm 1:13). How can a holy God cause sin? God controls the actions of men but the sin is their choice as a result of a fallen nature.

He is confused about perseverance

Scripture does dictate that God's elect (His sheep) will endure to the end ... here is described the possibility and reality of believers who are in God's goodness, in His salvation, and then get cut off! ... This believer was set apart, made holy, by the blood of the covenant, that is, the covenant of salvation which comes through faith in Christ. Yet, this believer ends up perishing. [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001] This is typical of his mixed up double-thinking and it is repeated in his article over and over. He criticises Calvinists and Arminians, and then tries (but fails) to coalesce the two systems by one of his own making, but it is a mess.

He tries to explain this mess by simply saying, How can there be people in the salvation of God, and yet they end up perishing (John 15:1-6; Hebrews 10:26-31); and at the same time, there are others who are in the salvation of God and it is impossible for them to perish (Romans 8:30-39; John 10:27-29)?" The answer is found in Matthew 22:14. And then he closes with no further explanation.

So he teaches sovereign election, then teaches that true believers can be lost then says the reason is election. What a confused foolish system.

Denial of God's sovereignty over men

Given different circumstances, there are people who would have chosen good rather than evil, and would have gone to heaven, rather than hell, because the influences in their lives would have encouraged them toward good rather than evil (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:33). In other words, given a different time, or a different chance (set of circumstances), they would have chosen differently, and the result of this choosing would have eternal

consequences. [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001] Men are elected to salvation by God's sovereign choice, not by their own decisions affected by their circumstances. Again the chosen text is irrelevant.

Teaching confusion, double-mindedness and contradiction in God

He "desires all men to be saved" (1 Timothy 2:4), and "has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all" (Romans 11:32), but He acts in ways that make sure people do not get saved! [*Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001]

Here he wrongly exegetes 1 Tim 2:4 which is referring to the elect not all men. The context clearly shows that it is all types of men in view, even those who were enemies of the church (kings etc). The church is to pray for all men (2:1), so it clearly can't be everyone on earth, but all types of men, even those oppressing the church. Then he wrongly exegetes Rm 11:32 which is in the context of talking about Israel and election. From these he makes the point that God is in two minds, The Lord clearly desires that they would have "a heart in them that they would fear" Him. Yet, Moses later points out that God did not give them "such a heart" so they could. ... Similarly, God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30), and desires that they do (1 Timothy 2:4), yet they cannot repent unless God grants them repentance (2 Timothy 2:26; Romans 11:36); and this He only grants to a few.

All of this is nonsense. God provides redemption only for the elect. The church is to pray for all types of people and God will save all types of people, even the church's enemies (such as Paul). God does not desire the salvation of all since the reprobate are committed unto wrath. God commands all men to repent because that is the responsibility of every man as a created being; he owes worship to the creator.

Denial of the Trinity

The "Trinity" falls short of the glory of God. [Where do we stand, Part One]

Following an excessive literal hermeneutic, he claims that there are seven Spirits in God resulting in a Godhead of nine persons altogether: If the seven Spirits are accepted, then it becomes apparent that there is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (who is seven Spirits). Adding this up equals 9 [See: *Seven Spirits in God*] This is utterly foolish and results from literally interpreting a phrase from a clearly symbolical book (Revelation 1:4-, 'the seven Spirits who are before his throne' – meaning the perfection and divine fulness of God's Spirit) and ignoring multiple statements that identify the Holy Spirit as a single person (such as 'when HE is come').

Fish shows much double-thinking. For instance, There is no reason to believe these seven Spirits are anything other than just that, seven literal Spirits, who are all the one God, the one Holy Spirit. [See: *Seven Spirits in God*], yet would not also teach that the picture of the Lord Jesus as: in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes (Rev 5:6) is also literal.

Exegetical errors

Excessive literalism

This is a result of his Dispensationalism; this theology demands arbitrary literal interpretations, especially of prophecy, even when the NT interprets the prophetic passages spiritually. His ridiculous literal interpretations result in claiming that there are seven Holy Spirits resulting in a Godhead of nine persons [see above].

He teaches that God is Jerusalem, God has also revealed Himself to be Jerusalem. [Statement of Faith; 'God'; see also article 'Jerusalem']. Even the worst literal errors of Dispensationalists pale before this nonsense.

According to Fish, man looks like God [Statement of Faith; 'Man'] failing to understand metaphorical language or that God is a Spirit with no corporeal body that looks like anything material.

Specific examples of errors

Paul reveals the gospel (God's word) is proclaimed in creation, in particular in the heavens. [FAQ; Q13] No he doesn't, the heavens reveal God's glory. Men should see this glory and seek after God but the knowledge of the Gospel comes via preaching God's word to the elect (Rm 10:14). Seeing God's glory in nature is insufficient for salvation.

Everyone will be held accountable and be judged by His word (Hebrews 4:12-13). Even those not having the actual written word (e.g. Romans 2:12) will be judged nonetheless by the written word, because it is written upon their hearts (Romans 2:14-15). [FAQ; Q13]

Paul is talking about the Law of Moses here; indeed it is the work of the law that is written in men's hearts – i.e. conscience, not the whole Bible.

Technical errors

Wrong use of scripture quotes

Fish repeatedly places many scriptural quotes in brackets in the argument in order to give the appearance of a Biblical teaching; yet when these texts are examined, they are either irrelevant, sometimes just plain wrong or mean something quite different. This is a disreputable and deceitful way to behave.

Use of straw men arguments

Fish often makes a case against a certain man by insisting he says this or that, or taking something out of context, when the bulk of the man's teaching shows no such doctrine. Essentially this is a lie; it is setting up an easy target (straw man) and then knocking it down, when the target (the supposed doctrine) is not a true feature of the man in question. This is an unrighteous tactic, and if Fish is supposed to be one of the few that are saved, he is committing sin and thus cannot be one of God's special people on earth today. But what is worse, he uses this tactic in order to state that the man is now in hell for teaching such a thing.

An example of this is charging Spurgeon with ecumenism and proposing many ways to salvation, claiming that he is now in hell as a result. Those who know Spurgeon's works, and have a sense of his heart, know that this is untrue. He treats Martin Luther in a similar way, taking no cognisance of the times in which Luther lived, nor understanding his arguments and use of typically medieval colourful invective and metaphor, nor understanding the bulk of Luther's teaching.

Double-thinking and self-contradiction

- Fish teaches that God predestines the reprobate to eternal damnation, but then claims that Jesus died for all men.
- Fish asserts that God hates the reprobate but then teaches that God loves all men.
- He teaches that God's grace is irresistible and then immediately avers that it can be resisted. [Can this be called irresistible grace? Yes, it may. ... (8 lines later) the Word also teaches

that God's grace *can* be resisted. The grace of God can be received in vain (2 Corinthians 6:1) - *Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001]

- He teaches that God sovereignly chooses who will be saved, then claims that a saved person can fall away [and a believer can even fall from grace ... If a believer stops believing, and dies in such a state, they go where all unbelievers go, the lake of fire - *Calvinism & Arminianism, Neither Are In The Truth*, July 2001]
- He strongly teaches that God is sovereign over all, and then later denies that God is sovereign over some.

Ethical Errors

He condones masturbation. [See *Masturbation*]

He says that, God has made a way for even those who are not married (male or female) to at least somewhat satisfy the sexual drive via masturbation. It is oppressive to teach that such an act is against the will of God, and it is evil to maintain such a cause against the innocent in this matter.

While noting that the evil imagination is the real sin behind the act, he fails to see that it is impossible for someone to engage in this activity, even if married, and not submit to lewd thoughts. To encourage the unmarried to practise this will lead them into sin.

Marriage

Fish dishonours Biblical teaching on marriage by teaching that polygamy (more than one spouse) for men (polygyny) is acceptable but that polyandry (more than one husband) is not allowable for women. He also claims that it is acceptable for a man to have concubines. However, he states that this must be under secular law, and is thus not applicable in the USA. [See *Polygamy*]

He fails to see that God tolerated a number of sins committed in the Old Testament. He also fails to understand that some things accepted by Moses, resulting from the Israelites' hardness of heart, were condemned by Jesus (such as divorce Matt 19:7-9). If all the actions of OT saints were condoned by NT teaching, then we could kill and commit genocide; instead the Lord tells us to love our enemies.

Some of his arguments are radically foolish; such as substantiating this position by explaining that when scripture teaches that a man and wife are one flesh, it means one flesh with each of his wives.

Personal Character Errors

Pharisaism

This is setting up human obstacles as being necessary to salvation, above believing in Christ, just as the Pharisees made many laws above the Law of Moses and demanded strict obedience. Fish does precisely this with his system.

Cruel Judgmentalism

Setting himself up as sovereign judge and jury, Fish declares that almost everyone in history is in hell, including godly men such as CH Spurgeon and Martin Luther. Since the standard of salvation is of his definition, anyone outside his company is not saved. He lists name upon name, some erroneous teachers, some evangelical but with a few problems, and some sound evangelicals, as being lost.

Elitism

See Cruel Judgmentalism. Though not precisely stating that only his little church of 50 people is saved, he virtually says this. Indeed he virtually states that only his church and a few others are the only ones saved in history.

- We have not yet, as of this date, found another church that is in the truth. [FAQ; Q1]
- In regards to other Christians, we believe there may be at least one Rechabite (Jeremiah 35:18-19) and other believers on the planet (Romans 11:2-5). But, we have yet to meet any other disciples of Christ who we are convinced are among those who continue in the faith. [FAQ; Q1]
- To our recollection, we have only met one believer that was already in the truth before they met us, and in this case, they had just recently repented. Other than this one exception, everyone we have met has been in some way caught in the deceit of this age. [FAQ; Q1]
- **Q3. Can you name any other true believers/teachers in history (outside of the Bible) since the early church (100 AD) until now?** No, and some are aghast that we would answer in such a way. [FAQ; Q3]
- I do not know, as of this date, any other pastor that is in the truth. Nor have I seen any in history other than those recorded in Scripture. [Biography page]
- I did not realise every single last person involved in a false church (i.e., evangelical churches) was lost until 1998. [Biography page]

What follows are two of his acerbic articles with comments added by myself to show the fallacies of his arguments. My comments are bracketed in sans-serif typeface coloured purple.

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You think that you're saved but you're not

(January 2002)

What a horrifying reality, to think you will enter God's presence on the day of your death, but then, come to find out on that day, you were actually deceived, and you find yourself in hell. Such is, and will be, the terror of most who call themselves Christians today (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24; 2 Peter 2:2). They will find themselves weeping and gnashing their teeth (e.g. Matthew 8:12; 22:1-14; 25:14-30; Luke 13:28).

If you are involved with the kind of Christianity that views the "[church of Christ](#)", or [Billy Graham](#), or [Rick Warren](#), or [Joel Osteen](#), or [James Dobson](#), or [Pat Robertson](#), or [John MacArthur](#), or [Tony Evans](#), or [Greg Laurie](#), or [Charles Stanley](#), or [Chuck Smith](#), or [Fred Price](#), or [J. Vernon McGee](#), or [Charles Blake](#), or Chuck Swindoll, or Gene Scott, or Harold Camping (Family Radio), or John Piper, or [T. D. Jakes](#), or [David Jeremiah](#), or [Charles Spurgeon](#), or [Dave Hunt](#), or [David W. Cloud](#), or [Perry F Rockwood](#), or Neil Anderson, or [Robert Schuller](#), or [Jack Hayford](#), or [Benny Hinn](#), or [Miles McPherson](#), or Ray Comfort, or [Jim Cobrae](#), or Chuck Colson, or C. S. Lewis, or [Pope John Paul](#), or [Hank Hanegraaff](#), or [Paul Chappell](#), or any of the like (or any of the likes on "Christian" TV or radio) as godly men, you are not saved. Why? Because, you are on the broad way (Matthew 7:13; 2 Peter 2:2; 2 Timothy 4:3). You have not the characteristic of Christ's sheep (John 10:5). And, men such as these are wells without water (2 Peter 2:17

[This is severely judgmental: It is impossible to know men's hearts. It is Pharisaic – people are judged by his rules, his interpretations of scripture that conflict with godly men throughout history and conflict with sound confessions. Some of these men are godly and evangelical. Some of these men may teach errors or be in various stages of error, but people 'involved', perhaps in a minor way, may be genuine believers. We are not judged for other men's sins.]

I. The Broad Way

Jesus warned,

Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. (Matthew 7:13)

The false teachers mentioned above, and the many like them (2 Timothy 4:3), all teach a broad theological road that supposedly leads to heaven (e.g. [see some of our reports on these men](#)). False teachers differ as to how broad this way is, but nonetheless, they all teach a broad way. As Charles Spurgeon put it,

What is the reason why there are so many [Christian] sects in the world? Surely it must be because we don't follow the guidance of the Spirit of God. If we followed the Word of God and the will of God in all things, we should be very much more alike than we are. I do not think that even then we should all run in the same groove, for the road to heaven may be sufficiently wide to have several different paths in it, and yet shall they all be in the same way and in the same road. (Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, Vol. 61, p. 514-515, Sept., 28, 1870, bold added)

Spurgeon lies and speaks the exact opposite of Christ when he says, "the road to heaven may be sufficiently wide to have several different paths in it." Spurgeon believed both

Calvinists and Arminians were on this wide path to heaven (see our report [Spurgeon, An Ecumenical False Teacher](#)). Jesus says it's narrow. Spurgeon says it's wide. Such teaching is damning.

[This is unnecessary nit-picking. Spurgeon does not teach an ecumenical path to salvation as his many writings prove. He claims that the narrow way to heaven may still contain variety due to theological differences. Baptists as well as Presbyterians, Independents and Anglicans may be on it while disagreeing over various issues. He is saying that the church is currently fragmented; good men differ. The paths he refers to are all Christian but of different denominations. Denominations may be wrong and we should be in unity, but this does not mean that they are all unbelievers. Fish here creates another denomination by separating his church from everyone and calling it 'a true church'.]

False teachers, like those mentioned above, teach that amongst saved Christians there is a wide spectrum of conflicting doctrines and this manifests itself as differing forms of Christianity (e.g., see our report on [Chuck Smith](#), or note Chuck Colson's book, *The Body*, or C. S. Lewis' book, *Mere Christianity*). False teachers create this delusion by holding to some form of creed, creeds, essentials, fundamentals, or core belief that supposedly unifies all true believers. If one stays within the bounds of this central belief, often called "orthodox Christianity," or "historic Christianity" (e.g. *Christianity In Crisis*, p. 31, 43), then a person is considered to be in the truth. And, other doctrines that the Bible addresses are counted as peripheral issues (or "secondary" or "non-essential") and are perceived as matters that do not pertain to salvation (e.g. *ibid.*, p. 47). As the phrase that's been attributed to the Catholic of old (Augustine) puts it,

In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity. (*Christianity In Crisis*, by Hank Hanegraaff, copyright 1993, p. 47)

These words well sum up the broad way (Matthew 7:13). They make room for many who do not see eye to eye regarding a myriad of Scriptural subjects. Thus, they create a wide theological path (as Spurgeon said) that supposedly leads to heaven, but in reality leads to hell; because people are led to "not receive the love of the truth" (as in 2 Thessalonians 2:10).

With this "essentials" doctrine (or any mentality like it), the broad way (Matthew 7:13-14) breeds complacency like gangrene in the hearts of men and women. Since there are so many matters in the Scriptures that are considered not pertinent to salvation, trembling before the word of God is made obsolete (Psalm 119:120; Isaiah 66:2, 5; Philippians 2:12), and no one makes haste to keep His commandments (Psalm 119:60). No one makes haste to keep all His precepts (Psalm 119:128, 151). So, wisdom cries out,

How long, you simple ones, will you love simplicity? For scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge. (Proverbs 1:22)

When "Christians" agree to disagree over what the Bible teaches, and only the "essential" matters matter (in regards to salvation), there resides an unbiblical simplicity in the mind and a deadly cancer (2 Timothy 2:16-17) in the hearts of such fools (false Christians) who learn to scorn and hate knowledge. Because, their perspective is, "Hey, it's not a matter of salvation." Therefore, their complacency will destroy them (Proverbs 1:32).

[It is not necessarily complacency but conscience that drives people to separate.]

Contrary to any "essentials," Christ said, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. (Matthew 4:4) Life is had "by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (i.e. Genesis to Revelation). It is trust in the word of God that saves, as James exhorts, Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21)

[Sincere Baptists rely on the word of God and see that immersion is called for. Presbyterians rely on the Bible and sincerely believe that infant baptism is required. Some interpret scripture to teach that baptism is by sprinkling, others by pouring yet others by full immersion. They are not ignoring God's word, they genuinely see it differently.]

It is the word of God that saves (e.g. Luke 8:11-12). It is the word of God that must be believed (e.g. Genesis 15:5-6; Romans 4:3). If you are directed away from faith in the word of God, whatever the issue, this can lead to the destruction of your soul. Because, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness (Genesis 15:5-6; Romans 4:3). If you do not believe God, it will be accounted to you as wickedness (Psalm 119:118; 1 John 5:10).

Therefore, there are no Biblical issues we can agree to disagree upon, because Scripture warns and instructs,

If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. (1 Timothy 6:3-5)

[This sets Fish up as the only arbiter of what scripture teaches. Even apostles disagreed amongst each other at times and James said that everyone makes mistakes. Note Jesus' comments when the disciples scorned others: *Now John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.'* But Jesus said to him, *'Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.'* (Lk 9:49-50) There are many Biblical issues we can disagree on and remain in unity. Note Paul: *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. ... But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.'* So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. (Rm 14:5-6, 10-13)]

If anyone teaches anything other than holy writ and does not heed Scriptural correction ("teaches otherwise and does not consent" 1 Timothy 6:3), then we are instructed to withdraw and turn away from such a person (1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 3:5).

[Fish turns scripture on its head here. 1 Tim 6:3 is about servants and masters. Paul's commandment is to those who refuse to accept what he is teaching about work. Paul then says that such are, *proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.* (1 Tim 6:4-5) Paul's command to separate would better apply to separating from Fish since he is, *proud, and obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife.* 2 Tim 3:5 is about the sort of evil men that will multiply at the end, being full of all kinds of wickedness. It is from these that we turn away, not from godly evangelicals with whom we mostly agree,]

This is the opposite of agreeing to disagree. It is rather, agreeing to leave and not fellowship with them. Because,

He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray. (Proverbs 10:17)

Those who go astray from the word of God, are not in the truth, and are not saved; and their words are words of deceit, as Psalm 119:118 declares,

You reject all those who stray from Your statutes, for their deceit is falsehood.

God rejects all those who stray from His word. It does not matter what the subject matter is. There is no salvation for any who heed not holy writ, as Psalm 119:21 proclaims,

You rebuke the proud, the cursed, who stray from Your commandments.

[This disagrees with Paul who said that one believed one thing about a minor issue (e.g. meat or a day), while another believed differently. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. Secondary issues do not require separation.

Who could have strayed more than Peter who denied the Lord three times? However, Jesus did not reject him but restored him. James said that even apostles make mistakes, *For we all stumble in many things* (Jm 3:2). Paul said, *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; ... For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice* (Rm 7:18-19). Perfection is not possible in this life while we have an old nature. The quotes from Psalms and Proverbs are talking about the reprobate, those not elect, who stubbornly refuse to obey God and always follow their own appetites. God does not reject his elect people and restores them after their failings and repentance.]

No matter who you are, you are cursed if you do not follow after God's word. Thus, it is eternally important to love correction, as Proverbs asserts,

For the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life. (Proverbs 6:23)

Cease listening to instruction, my son, and you will stray from the words of knowledge. (Proverbs 19:27)

This is what the false Christian world has done. They have strayed from the words of knowledge (2 Timothy 4:3; 2 Peter 2:18), and followed after a broad path that leads to hell (Matthew 7:13-14). In opposition to a wide path, is the theologically narrow way that leads to life (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:24). How narrow? In the very context in which Christ warned about the broad way (Matthew 7:13), He ended His sermon with this warning.

Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall. (Matthew 7:24-27)

In the context in which Jesus spoke these words (Matthew 5:3-7:23), He preached about contriteness, mourning, meekness, hunger, thirst, purity, peace, persecution, anger, divorce, adultery, oaths, love, giving, prayer, forgiveness, fasting, possessions, needs, worrying, judging, rebuking, seeking, false prophets, etc.. Do you see any "non-essentials" in there? Christ makes no distinction concerning any of the many matters He addressed in His sermon. For Him, it all matters eternally. Because, the Lord describes in a very picturesque way, life or death and heaven or hell for those who hear His words and either do them or do not do them. Christ placed an eternal importance upon all that He said, as Proverbs instructs,

My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. (Proverbs 4:20-22; see also Proverbs 8:35 & 16:22)

My son, let them not depart from your eyes, keep sound wisdom and discretion; so they will be life to your soul and grace to your neck. (Proverbs 3:21-22)

Revelation likewise affirms,

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. (Revelation 22:14)

Those who keep God's word are those who have the right to the tree of life. In other words, they are the ones who will be granted salvation. The dividing line between those who are saved and those who are not is the Bible itself. If someone truly believes in the Scripture, they are believing in Christ, because Christ is the Scripture (John 1:1, 14; Galatians 3:8; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13); and they will obey Him, as John the Baptist said,

He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him. (John 3:36 NAS, see also 1 John 2:3-5).

Believing in Jesus is identical to believing in and obeying the Bible. 2 John likewise declares,

Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. (2 John 9)

The doctrine of Christ is not only what He taught in Matthew 5:3-7:27, or all the red print in the gospels. The doctrine of Christ equals the entirety of Scripture (Psalm 119:160). Those who transgress and do not remain within the bound of holy writ, do not have God. They are not saved (2 John 9).

[Again this is virtually making salvation a meritorious work of man in obeying the word. Salvation is by grace through faith, not our weak performance. God enables us to keep his word as we walk in the Spirit and put on the new man. However, when we fall and put on the old man, we sin. We are not rejected for this error, we do not become unsaved, but God leads us to repentance and restoration.]

There are not many different kinds of true Christianity, as Spurgeon depicted with his "wide" road with "several different paths in it." There is only *one* kind of true Christianity, and it is the kind that keeps His word (1 John 2:5), all of it (Psalm 119:128, 160, Matthew 4:4). Scripture teaches that true believers believe the same on every single Biblical doctrine (1 John 4:6, for a more in-depth explanation, see [The Unity Of The Saints](#)). There is no agreeing to disagree, or essentials and non-essentials. The war is over the truth of the word of God (Genesis to Revelation), and true believers are in opposition to any and every error that would come against it (Psalm 119:104, 128). As Paul wrote,

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)

[The same Paul strongly disagreed with Barnabus about Mark, which led to their separation. There is no indication that either was rejected for this; indeed, Paul comes across as being the more contentious and later received Mark as a useful co-worker. Two apostles disagreed over apostolic work, they believed differently about something. Fish is totally wrong here. If two Biblical apostles can disagree, then us lesser mortals can also.]

Be warned. It only takes one lie to love and practice to keep you outside the kingdom of God.

[Where does scripture teach this? We all make mistakes and all sin, hence the constant need of a saviour. It is our reliance on Christ that shows we are saved not our perfection. This is law. For those under law, only one error was necessary to result in death. But Christians are not under law, but grace.]

Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city. But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie. (Revelation 22:14-15; see also Revelation 21:8)

False teachers, like those mentioned at the beginning of this article, encourage people not only to love and practice a lie (like the "essentials" lie), but rather many lies as they divert

people's trust off of God's word and onto their own great sounding words of emptiness (2 Peter 2:18). The amazing part of this is, the false teachers, being deceived themselves (2 Timothy 3:13), have people thinking they are following the Bible, when in reality they are following the doctrines of men (Matthew 15:8-9), like the "essentials" lie which is a damning doctrine of men, nowhere taught in the Word of God (Proverbs 30:5-6).

Most people are either pagans, lost in some false religion, or false Christians caught on the broad way (Matthew 7:13-14; 2 Timothy 4:3). Most people have not even found the narrow way, the way of truth (2 Peter 2:2). Yet, Christ warns even those who have found the narrow way with these words:

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24)

Even among those who have actually found the narrow gate, many of them do not enter. Many go to perdition, as Peter writes,

For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God? Now "If the righteous one is scarcely saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?" (1 Peter 4:17-18)

[This is in accord with his false doctrine that the 'saved' can fall away and be lost. True doctrine teaches that no one can snatch us out of God's hand. How can those God has chosen and placed in Christ from eternity, be suddenly un-chosen and taken out of union with Christ. How can someone who is a new creature suddenly be reverted back to an Adamic human?]

The righteous make it with difficulty (Matthew 7:14; Acts 14:22). It is not an easy path.

Therefore, if you follow the typical Christianity that prevails in the world today, or anything like it, if you are on this broad way, and you do not reject it (2 Timothy 3:5; Hebrews 12:14), you will lie down in torment (Isaiah 50:11; 66:24; Revelation 21:8); because you have not received "the love of the truth, that [you] might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10); and because,

II. Christ's Sheep Flee.

Those who have received the love of the truth would not hang around such broad way "Christianity," because they would know the truth does matter, and in loving the truth they would "hate every false way" (Psalm 119:104, 128, 163), as Proverbs 8:13 says, "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil." False doctrine, on any Biblical matter, is evil (Proverbs 30:5-6). Note how Jesus describes His sheep. He says they follow Him. They follow the truth (John 14:6).

My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. (John 10:27)

Earlier Jesus describes Himself and His sheep by saying,

And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. They will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers. (John 10:4-5)

Jesus' sheep are those who are saved (John 10:27-28), and they are described as those who "will by no means follow a stranger." This "by no means" dictates that under no circumstances will Christ's sheep follow a stranger.

Who is a stranger? A stranger is anyone other than Christ whom the sheep do not know. The context of John 10:5 is false spiritual leaders (John 9:40-41), and a stranger is seen as equivalent to "thieves and robbers" (John 10:8). Christ's sheep hear neither strangers (John 10:5) nor thieves and robbers (John 10:8). Anyone who would speak so as to divert a person away from Christ would fit "a stranger," and this is what false teachers do. "They speak great swelling words of emptiness" (2 Peter 2:18), and bring people into the same bondage and corruption by which they themselves are held (Luke 6:39-40; 2 Peter 2:19). Therefore, anyone following any of the men listed at the beginning of this article, or any like them, are not Christ's sheep. Because the Lord says, not only will they not follow them, but they "flee from him."

[What right has Fish to identify those men with Satan, whom Jesus has in mind when talking about the false hireling shepherd. No one can know the heart of these men, even the most false teachers in the list. Even the worst can yet repent and be truly saved, just as Paul, the former enemy of the church, was converted. But on this list are genuine believers like Spurgeon. To then extend this to any who read their works or attend their meetings is ridiculous. Believers are at various stages of growth, some are being milk-fed. In this immature condition they may follow erroneous teaching for a period, only to be rescued from it later. According to Fish they are damned for this since a true believer has a mystical sense not to follow error at any time – see further]

Christ's sheep do not hang out with false teachers and false churches. They flee from those who do not speak the truth ("strangers"). Whether it is a [Catholic church](#), [Mormon church](#), [Jehovah's Witness Hall](#), [Muslim mosque](#), or any of the myriad of churches on the broad way (like a "[church of Christ](#)," or [Grace Community in Panorama City, CA](#); or [Lancaster Baptist in Lancaster, CA](#), etc.), Christ's sheep are not found counted in their ranks. The only ones who are found heeding such religion are the wicked, as Proverbs 17:4 declares,

An evildoer gives heed to false lips.

Evildoers are to be found in these churches, not those who follow Christ (John 10:5). Therefore, if you are involved in a false church, you prove yourself to be still lost in your sin. God calls you an evildoer (Proverbs 17:4), and by His Word identifies you as not one of His own by the sheer fact that you do not flee such wickedness (John 10:5; 1 Timothy 6:5; 2 Timothy 2:20-21; 3:5; Hebrews 12:14; 13:13).

Someone might argue, "But, the Lord used [Billy Graham](#) [or some other false teacher] to bring me to Christ." This too is a lie, because false teachers, like those mentioned at the beginning of this article, are,

III. Wells Without Water.

Speaking of false teachers, Peter wrote,

These are wells without water, clouds carried by a tempest, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. (2 Peter 2:17)

Peter calls false teachers "wells without water." Jude says they are "clouds without water" (Jude 12). What does this mean?

In the Scriptures, water is used to speak of the Spirit of truth (i.e. the Holy Spirit, John 7:37-39; 14:15-18; 15:26; 16:13), God (Jeremiah 2:13/17:13), and salvation (Isaiah 55:1; Psalm 36:9; John 4:10-14; Revelation 7:17; 21:6; 22:1,17). Therefore, if false teachers are without this water, they do not have the Holy Spirit (like in Jude 19). They are without God (2 John 9), and do not have salvation (2 Peter 2:3, 12-14, 17; Jude 4, 11, 13). As 1 Timothy 6:5 says, they are "destitute of the truth" and know "nothing."

The Lord calls them "wells" and "clouds." A well is a hole in the ground that is supposed to have water, or gives the appearance that it would have water. A cloud likewise gives the appearance that it carries moisture. Yet, a well or a cloud without water gives a false impression, and false teachers do this well. They fool the masses into thinking God is using them to bring people to Christ, but it is all a Satanic facade (as in 2 Corinthians 11:13-15). They have no water. They have no truth (truth mixed with lies = deceit and no truth), no salvation, and no Holy Spirit. Thus, they do nothing but deceive people. They are as Jesus said,

blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch. (Matthew 15:14).

Jesus also said,

The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. (John 10:10a)

This statement is made in the context of "thieves and robbers" (John 10:1, 8). It is not speaking solely of Satan, but rather his ministers as well (2 Corinthians 11:15; John 10:1). It lets us know the sole purpose of these charlatans, and that is to deceive (to steal, kill, and destroy). They steal using "great swelling words of emptiness" (2 Peter 2:18). They kill by being used by the devil (1 Peter 5:8) to divert people away from the words of life (Proverbs 4:20-22; 14:12; 18:21; Philippians 2:16). And they destroy with their "destructive heresies" (2 Peter 2:1). They may not be aware of the depth of their own evil (e.g. John 16:2-3; 2 Timothy 3:13), but they are nonetheless "like natural brute beasts made to be caught and destroyed" (2 Peter 2:12); and they do destroy others.

If the Lord were to use a false teacher for some good, it would be in spite of him, not because of him. As the Lord used Balaam the false prophet to bless Israel (Numbers 22-24), it was not because Balaam was a godly man or one who lead people to God (Numbers 25:1-9; 31:16; 2 Peter 2:15-16). It was simply because God turned the curse into a blessing (Deuteronomy 23:5; Nehemiah 13:2). Scripture does not teach that the Lord uses false teachers to lead people to Christ. On the contrary, the Word teaches that God uses false teachers to lead people away from Christ (Psalm 118:22-24; Romans 11:36; 1 Peter 2:7). False teachers falsely boast of giving the gospel to people. But they are like the one mentioned in Proverbs 25:14.

Whoever falsely boasts of giving is like clouds and wind without rain. They are clouds and wells without water, a dry disappointment.

If you are going to "draw water from the wells of salvation" (Isaiah 12:3), you need to go where the water is to be found (John 4:10, 13-14). It is not found with the likes of the men mentioned above. It is not found in the myriad of false churches and ministries.

[According to Fish there is nowhere for believers to go anyway since only his group is genuine.]

It is found in the pages of the Word of God (1 Peter 1:22-23; Hebrews 4:12-13; Revelation 19:13). **Fear God** (Luke 12:4-5), cry out (Proverbs 2:3), weep (James 4:9), and seek for understanding (Proverbs 2:4) like there is no tomorrow, because for most, there is no tomorrow (Psalm 9:17; 92:7; Proverbs 1:24-32; Matthew 7:13-14).

Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I say to you, will seek to enter and will not be able. (Luke 13:24, see also **What Must I Do To Be Saved?**)
a true church, P. O. Box 797, Lake Hughes, CA 93532-0797
1-800-HOW-TRUE; www.ATRUECHURCH.INFO

[The key problem here is that it is Fish who judges what is right. His point of contention is that where Christians differ from him, even on a minor issue, they are lost; but it is he who judges this. There are matters where scripture is genuinely interpreted differently by various groups, often about ecclesiology. As this is secondary to salvation, it means that these are all believers but who see some things differently. For Fish everyone else is lost and going to hell. This is utter Pharisaism.]

God Hates Phelps

(The "God Hates Fags" Preacher)

Last edited 9-23-06

Brief Bio of Pastor Fred Phelps

Fred Phelps was born Nov. 13, 1929, in Meridian, Mississippi. Graduated Meridian High at 16 with highest academic honors, American Legion Citizenship Award, track letter, Bausch-Lomb Science Award, Eagle Scout, Principal Appointment to West Point Military Academy. The summer following graduation, he had a profound religious experience, gave up West Point, enrolled instead for Bible/ministerial training at Bob Jones College, Cleveland, Tennessee (later moving with them as they transitioned to Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina). Ordained by the Southern Baptists Sept. 8, 1947. Met his wife, **Margie M. Phelps**, in 1951 while preaching at the Arizona Bible Institute in Phoenix, Arizona. Their marriage May 15, 1952 has been blessed of God with 13 children, 54 grandchildren (to date) and 5 great-grandchildren (to date). Has served as Pastor of Westboro Baptist Church in Topeka, Kansas, since Nov. 1955. WBC has conducted more than 22,000 picketing demonstrations across America and some foreign countries during the past 12 years -- aimed at showing Americans their transgression (Isa. 58:1) and causing America to know her abominations. Ezek. 16:2.

Fred Phelps is a Five-Point Calvinist who urges all people to carefully study and discern what are the signs of the times (Mat. 16:3) in the light of the Scriptures rightly divided (2 Tim. 2:15) and church history from Adam to now. For more biographical info, pictorial record including [stills](#) and [video footage](#), and to hear his sermons -- **Bread from Westboro Oven** -- please consult www.godhatesfags.com, www.godhatesamerica.com, and www.fredthemovie.com.

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(www.godhatesfags.com/main/phelpsbio.html, hard copy on file of all documentation)

God indeed hates homosexuals (i.e. fags, Psalm 5:5). Homosexuality indeed ought to be outlawed, and the death penalty should certainly be applied to those who do such grotesque things (e.g. Leviticus 18:22; 20:13);

[This is Theonomy and false. We are not in a theocracy now.]

and America is truly under the wrath of God for its wicked tolerance of this vile sin (Leviticus 18:22-30). Also, homosexuals who stay homosexuals will surely spend forever in hell (1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8), but so will Fred Phelps, and all who follow him (if they don't repent, 2 Peter 2:1-3).

[This is terribly judgmental.]

Sadly, if homosexuals heeded WBC's message, they would still be lost in their sins and headed for eternal torment, because WBC (Westboro Baptist Church) preaches,

I. A False Gospel

In Phelps' FAQ, under the question, "How can you call yourself a Christian?" it says,

Because Christ died for our sins, and we faithfully uphold His Word.

(www.godhatesfags.com/main/faq.html)

Phelps is *not* faithful to uphold God's word, but rather, he is "faithful" to uphold the traditions of men (Colossians 2:8) via his Calvinism. In the Manifesto of Westboro Baptist Church it says,

We are a TULIP Baptist Church!

We believe -- and vigorously preach -- the 5 Points of Calvinism!

Anyone preaching otherwise is a Hell-bound false prophet, a messenger of Satan, to whom we say, Anathema Maranatha! and, Let him be accursed of God!

(www.godhatesfags.com/main/manifesto.html)

Actually, it is Phelps and his church that are accursed of God (Galatians 1:8-9). Besides Phelps' recommendation of the ecumenical false teacher and Calvinist [Charles Spurgeon](#) (www.godhatesfags.com/sermons/text.html), Phelps clearly teaches the false Calvinistic gospel of a limited atonement.

A. Limited Atonement

In his FAQ, under "Didn't Jesus die for everyone?" it says,

No. Jesus died only for His sheep (John 10). His church (Ephesians 5:25). His elect (I Peter 1:2). If He died for everyone, everyone would go to heaven. All sins of all people would be forgiven. But obviously, all sins aren't forgiven, because people are burning in hell.

(www.godhatesfags.com/main/faq.html)

Phelps' misrepresents Scripture and denies the truth of the word of God. John 10 does not say "Jesus died *only* for His sheep." Jesus clearly says, "I lay down my life for the sheep" (John 10:15), but He does not say "only" or anything about for whom He did not die. Phelps adds to John 10 (Proverbs 30:5-6). Likewise, Ephesians 5:25 and 1 Peter 1:2 say nothing about Jesus dying *only* for His church or His elect.

[Jesus didn't need to add 'only' to make it clear that there is a particularism about the cross; if he dies for the sheep then he does not die for the goats. Jesus made this point many times. It is also taught in many other places. Then there is the matter that God specifically states that some are intended for wrath e.g. Prov 16:4, so that Jesus could not possibly have died for those appointed to condemnation.]

Furthermore, Phelps' relies on an unbiblical argument to substantiate his false claim that Jesus didn't die for everyone. Scripture never teaches that "everyone would go to heaven" if Jesus died for everyone. This is simply a Calvinist (Colossians 2:8) argument found nowhere in the pages of holy writ. The reason people are burning in hell is because they did not access this grace by faith (Romans 5:2).

[This misrepresents and misunderstands the nature of God. If Jesus died for everyone then God has failed and Jesus' blood has been partly wasted. God only does things perfectly. There is no global pot of salvation waiting for people to access it and is then discarded. God never fails and never wastes anything he

does. Since men are elected to salvation, Jesus knew clearly who needed to be atoned for. His blood was shed for these alone.]

Moreover, Scripture explicitly speaks of people going to hell for whom Christ died (Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:10-13/Mark 9:42-44). Phelps' claim that "All sins of all people would be forgiven" is a lie and the exact opposite of the teaching of the word of God. Scripture clearly addresses people who are *not* forgiven, who are beyond hope of eternal life, yet Christ's blood was shed for them (Hebrew 6:6; 10:26-29; 2 Peter 2:1, 12, 17).

[Is this true? Romans 14:15; this clearly says it is a brother. 1 Corinthians 8:10-13; This also refers to a 'brother'. Mark 9:42-44; this has no reference to Christ dying for someone lost. Hebrew 6:6; 10:26-29; These two passages are notoriously difficult and complex. One cannot simply twist them to fit one's own teaching. They are usually interpreted as either a) referring to people who professed a superficial salvation after hearing the genuine Gospel and then fell away; or b) are hypothetical statements intended to urge the Hebrew readers to press on. There are no statements that categorically and unequivocally state Christ died for the ungodly. 2 Peter 2:1, 12, 17: This is referring to false teachers who were wolves in the church. Christ is not said to die for them.

All these quoted texts fail to support his argument. Fish has erroneously used many texts to give an impression that his argument is scriptural when it is anti-scriptural.]

Also, Scripture clearly teaches Christ was a ransom for all (1 Timothy 2:6). He tasted death for all (Hebrews 2:9). He is the propitiation for believer's sins (1 John 5:13) and the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2; 5:19). Yet, Phelps' calls this heresy.

[These are references to the fulness of the elect. If it meant everyone then all would be saved and hell would not exist since it says he actually ransomed these people and propitiated their sins; not provided a potential ransom and potential propitiation. The context shows that it refers to the elect if read properly.]

The Gospel is NOT that "Jesus loves everyone and died for everyone." That is heresy.
www.godhatesfags.com/writings/gospel.html

So, the basic gospel (John 3:16) is heresy according to Fred Phelps.

B. No Love

It is true that God hates the wicked (Psalm 5:5-6), and even hates people before they are ever born completely apart from anything they might do (Romans 9:11-13). Nevertheless, God still loves them as well (John 3:16).

[Again this misrepresents and misunderstands the doctrine of God. God can only do what is perfect and full. He cannot love and hate a person at the same time. He cannot love that which is sinful and reprobate, or God would love sin. The elect are seen by God as in Christ from eternity and are loved (despite their sins in time) as they are in Christ in God's eyes. God's love is eternal. It begins in eternity and continues everlastingly. For something God loved to end up in hell is blasphemy. God loves as a Father. Consequently, he provides for those he loves, including salvation.]

Yet, Phelps preaches otherwise. In their FAQ, under "Doesn't the Bible say that God loves everyone?" it reads,

No. You are probably thinking of John 3:16, which says no such thing. The word translated "world" in that verse (kosmos) NEVER means every individual of mankind who has ever lived (see, e.g., John 17:9). Romans 9:13 says that God hated Esau, and Psalm 5:5 says that God hates all WORKERS of iniquity (e.g., fags). Other examples are Proverbs 6:16-19, Psalm 11:5, and Malachi 1:3. Given these verses, how can you say God loves everyone? Can you really say "God loves everyone" when God says "I hated Esau?" Does God love the people in hell? (www.godhatesfags.com/main/faq.html)

Phelps claims, "The word translated 'world' in that verse (kosmos) NEVER means every individual of mankind who has ever lived." This is a lie. Romans 3:6 uses this same term, and it speaks of God judging the world in the future. It is undeniably clear God is going to judge "every individual of mankind who has ever lived" (Psalm 9:8; 96:13; 98:9; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Peter 4:17).

[Kosmos is a varied and complex word meaning many things in different contexts. Proper examination of the Greek grammar and context has to be taken to see what it means; this also applies to the word *pas* and cognates, meaning 'all'. *Kosmos* frequently means only a few people, but it can mean the whole world, Context is crucial.]

Also, John 4:42 and 1 John 4:14 use this same word in which both declare that Christ is the Savior of the world. 1 Timothy 4:9-10 makes it clear that the "world" being spoken of in those passages "means every individual of mankind who has ever lived," because 1 Timothy 4:9-10 says,

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. For to this end we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

[See earlier comments on Christ as ransom for all.]

Phelps asks, "Does God love the people in hell?" The Bible never directly answers this question. But, it clearly reveals God's love for those doomed to hell. His weeping for the lost (Jeremiah 8:18-9:3; Luke 19:41), His wailing and howling and mourning and stripping Himself naked (Micah 1:8) all reveals His love for the damned. His declaration that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 18:23; 33:11) also shows God's perspective of those He sends to hell.

[Scripture never shows God as loving the damned. Fish has already accepted that God hates the reprobate from eternity, how can he then love them in hell? Fish has God as a double-minded, confused person. This is blasphemy. Jer 8:18-9:3 – this is talking about the elect remnant in Israel, the daughter of God's people, while Israel (mostly reprobate) was under judgment for idolatry. Lk 19:41 – Here Christ is weeping over Jerusalem as the city of God that has failed and the kingdom being given to another (the church). There is no weeping for the lost. Mic 1:8 – this is weeping for the sin of Israel and Judah, the complete failure of people favoured by God. The actual words regarding wailing and stripping are the reactions of the prophet not God. Ezek 18:23, 33:11 God has no pleasure in death and evil, but it is a necessary wrath for sin. There is no longing shown of God for the lost but a demand that they should repent. Again, Fish has misused scripture texts to suggest they support him when they do not.]

Yet, at the same time, the Bible reveals God mocks the wicked as well (Psalm 2:4-5; 37:12-13; 59:8; Proverbs 1:25-26), and even rejoices at their destruction (Deuteronomy 28:63), and calls others to rejoice (Deuteronomy 32:43; 1 Chronicles 16:30-33). God loves justice (Psalm 37:8; Isaiah 61:8), and rejoices in the truth (1 Corinthians 13:6), and that truth includes the truth of the eternal torment of the wicked (e.g. Revelation 19:1-3; 21:8).

Certainly, from the foundation of the world, God has hated them (Proverbs 16:4; Romans 9:11-23), but He has also loved them (Isaiah 46:10; Matthew 5:43-48; Luke 6:35). Israel is a perfect example of this. In Deuteronomy 7:7-8 Moses declares,

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Moses says to these Israelites that God loves them. These are the same people God longed that they would have a heart in them to fear Him (Deuteronomy 5:29), but He choose not to give them such a heart (Deuteronomy 29:4), even though He loved them and longed they had one. And, these are the same people God said,

So I swore in My wrath, "They shall not enter My rest." (Psalm 95:11)

In other words, God swore, while they were still living, they would not inherit eternal life, but rather eternal wrath (i.e. hell, see also Numbers 14:26-35; Hebrews 3:7-4:3). Yet, He loved them.

[He loved the remnant elect in Israel. The whole nation was chosen and favoured and treated with great providential care and patience, but God's purpose and love was in the elect remnant to come out of it, the true seed of Abraham, those that would be united in Christ. Is 46:10 – irrelevant, a wrong text. Matt 5:43-48 – this is a command for us to love our enemies; it does not follow that God loves everyone. We are not God and cannot see into men's hearts, thus we are to love all.]

Another example of God loving the wicked is found in Mark 10:21. There it says Christ (God in the flesh) loved the rich man, but the rich man did not take heed (Mark 10:22).

[We do not know what happened later to this man. If Jesus loved him, he must have been elect and Jesus (as God knowing all things) recognised this. Since he clearly was seeking true salvation, it seems that the Spirit was leading him to Jesus and led him via law-keeping under the Old Covenant. Having been confronted on his point of weakness, the man needed to go away, count the cost and repent truly. I am sure that he was later converted.]

Immediately following the above paragraph in their FAQ, Phelps adds,

Or, you are thinking of "God is love." God certainly is love, toward His elect (His children). But He certainly is not love toward the reprobate (children of the devil).

www.godhatesfags.com/main/faq.html

Scripture never says or teaches any such thing. God is love, period (1 John 4:8, 16). This is a statement of who He is to the very core of His character, and this core shines forth even upon the wicked.

[The very core of God's being is holiness not love. Only holiness is mentioned as a triplet in description of God (holy, holy, holy). Over and over God says 'I am holy'.

He never says, 'I am love'. Only holiness qualifies other attributes in God: holy name, the holy One, holy promise etc. Holiness demands separation from evil, including the wicked.]

God is extremely patient with the reprobate (e.g. Romans 2:4). *This is love* (1 Corinthians 13:4). He is kind to the wicked (Nehemiah 9:15/1 Corinthians 10:5; Psalm 104:14-15, 27-28; 145:9, 15-17; Ecclesiastes 3:12-13; Acts 14:17). *This is love* (1 Corinthians 13:4). The Lord bore long with the evil Israelites (2 Chronicles 36:15-16). *This was love* (1 Corinthians 13:7). And finally, the Lord hopes for reprobate man's salvation (Psalm 81:13; Isaiah 48:18; Acts 17:24-27; Romans 11:32) and desires that they be saved (1 Timothy 2:4). This too is love (1 Corinthians 13:7).

Patience is long-suffering, it is not love. We are patient with people we do not like. Kindness is compassion, it is not love. It is based on providence not love – he provides rain and sun for the earth to continue; evil men do not deserve this but it is not love. God does not long for the salvation of those reprobates he has already predestined to wrath, otherwise God is inconsistent, imperfect and not God. Again Fish does not understand God's perfection in his attributes.]

Indeed, God has hated and thus predestined the majority of mankind to hell and loved the minority to heaven (Matthew 7:13-14; Romans 9:11-23), but even in this, love is enacted. Because, He *endures* with much long suffering vessels of wrath, that He might make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy (Romans 9:22-23). In other words, love (endurance, 1 Corinthians 13:7) is shown toward the wicked, so that love may be shown toward the elect.

[Fish is utterly in confusion and self-contradictory. His thinking is all over the place - God hated and condemned most men, but then on earth he truly loves them equally with the elect, then he hates them again in hell. Fish is a shambles of wrong exegesis and false thinking. How can God love (with all that this means – commitment, care, relationship, salvation, grace) a vessel created for wrath?]

Phelp's claim that "God certainly is love, toward His elect (His children). But He certainly is not love toward the reprobate (children of the devil)" denies the very foundation of God's eternal purpose with mankind. Love is shown toward the children of the devil, so that love may be shown toward the children of God (Psalm 92:5-7; Romans 9:22-23). [For more on this, see "[How Can A God of Love Send People To Hell?](#)"]

[What utter nonsense! The elect were never children of the devil but were placed in Christ and loved from eternity (Eph 1:4-5). The children of God were always his people and loved eternally in Christ. In time we followed the course of this world, sin and Satan until we were converted, but we were never seen by God as Satan's children.]

II. More Error

A. Sodom

In Westboro Baptist Church's monograph to the Quintessential Magazine they reveal their view of Sodom is quite twisted. In there they write,

All Sodom citizens were not gays and lesbians. **Most were not.** But they were enablers! Sodomite society had reached a stage of decadence and debauchery whereby homosexuals were accepted with respect and dignity as merely innocent practitioners of a morally

neutral lifestyle. (www.godhatesfags.com/fliers/feb2004/Monograph_2-14-2004.pdf, bold added)

This is the exact opposite of the word of God. Please note Genesis 19.

Now before they lay down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, both old and young, all the people from every quarter, surrounded the house. And they called to Lot and said to him, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us that we may know them carnally." (Genesis 19:4-5)

"**All the people from every quarter**" came to "**know them carnally**." There is nothing about any "enablers." These people, all of them, were perverts. For some context, note what the Lord says about Sodom earlier in Genesis.

[This is another example of Fish's false literalism in exegesis. 'From every quarter' does not mean every single person in the city. How stupid; 'all the people' (if also applied literally) would include women and children, and thus would not be male homosexuals seeking carnality with men. How does he think many thousands could have fitted into this space around Lot's house? This is basic error and utter nonsense.]

The men of Sodom were exceedingly wicked and sinful against the Lord. (Genesis 13:13)

Phelps' claims "Most were not" gay. Scripture indicates all the men were.

[I do not support Phelps here. We just do not know the exact composition of the city. It was all in sin, but how many homosexual men were included is not known, and therefore best not to speculate.]

B. Are they in hell or not?

On the "God Hates Fags" web site they dogmatically proclaim that certain individuals are presently in hell. Yet, in their FAQ, under "If God hates homosexuals as a group, why do you sometimes aim signs at individual people, not at the group? How can you say that an individual is in hell?" they write,

We cannot know for certain that an individual person is in hell (or heaven). Only God knows that. However, we can and should look at all of the available evidence that we have, and make a reasonable assumption. We are under an obligation to discern the signs of the times, and discern between good and evil (Hebrews 5:14). For example, the evidence that Matthew Shepard is in hell is the fact that he was a practicing homosexual, who was trolling for anonymous perverted sex when he was killed. There is absolutely not one shred of evidence that he ever repented. We hope he did, as we hope everyone does, but there is no evidence. To the person who would suggest that Matthew Shepard is anywhere but hell, where is your evidence that he repented? (www.godhatesfags.com/main/faq.html, bold added)

To dogmatically proclaim that someone is in hell (e.g. www.godhatesfags.com/main/whipplememorial.html), yet then say "We cannot know for certain that an individual person is in hell" is downright foolish. It is a most serious statement to pronounce a person to be in the fires of hell, and if it cannot be made with certainty, it should not be proclaimed as certain (Matthew 7:1-2; 12:36-37).

[Yet Fish does this all the time!!! And not just concerning gay people but evangelical preachers and reformers.]

Yet, if it is known for sure that a homosexual (or any other wicked person) died in their sins, anyone who believes the Bible can know for certain that such a person is in hell, because God does not lie (Luke 16:19-31; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Revelation 21:8). For example, WBC states that Jim Wheeler was a homosexual who committed suicide (www.godhatesfags.com/main/wheeler_monument.html). If this is true, it is quite certain that he is presently in hell. By killing himself he sealed his fate, because someone who dies as a homosexual certainly goes to hell. Also, no one who knows God would ever commit suicide (for more info, see our last point on the [MacArthur report](#)).

[Even this is too strenuous. Godly men who have written on suicide have not dared to say this. There is no doubt that some people who have lived for many years as sincere, godly people, have later committed suicide under the strain of serious illness. Who dares say that they are in hell? If God has provided a salvation for every sin and every type of sinner in the Gospel of Christ, then there is a salvation for the suicide; though admittedly this is most exceptional. However, it is just as exceptional that God provides a salvation for some on their deathbed (such as the thief on the cross). Again this is exceptional, and no one can hope for this; but sometimes God does it out of grace.]

C. Love For A False Teacher

In his debate with John Rankin, Phelps says,

I love Brother Martin Luther, . . . I love Brother Luther. (www.mars-hill-forum.com/forumdoc/m070quest.html)

If the present works of Luther properly represent Martin Luther, then he was a false teacher who, according to *Luther's Works*, rejected the book of James (Volume 54, p. 176; 424-425), called Moses an enemy of Christ (*ibid.*, p.128), and believed in chasing away the devil with a fart (*ibid.*, p. 16, 78, 280). He was not a man of God, and neither is Phelps.

[This is too preposterous for words. Calling Luther a false teacher is shocking. Fish owes his salvation to him. Without Luther Fish would have been raised a Roman Catholic and had no Bible. He shows no discipline for studying works in their context, either historically or grammatically.]

Moses: This is in a section talking about the place of the law and its opposition to grace. Regarding Moses, what Luther said was: *I will have none of Moses with his law, for he is an enemy to my Lord and Saviour Christ. If Moses will go to law with me, I will give him his dispatch, and say: Here stands Christ. At the day of judgment Moses will doubtless look upon me, and say: Thou didst understand me rightly, and didst well distinguish between me and the law of faith; therefore we are now friends.* Table Talk (Works Vol 54; CCLXXIX). Luther is using typically strong language to emphasise that the believer is not under law but grace. His complete statement reveals that he is not opposed to Moses at all but explains his place under the Old Covenant as being opposed to grace. He is essentially saying that if you trust in the Law of Moses and works you will not be saved since salvation is by faith in Christ.

Regarding the devil, Luther believed that giving him too much attention was a mistake, thus he sought to belittle him. In typical, Medieval, German, colourful language he derides the devil – hence the reference to breaking wind. Luther spoke in similar ways about enemies of truth, such as using very earthy language regarding reason as opposed to faith.

Regarding James, Luther admitted that he did not understand it and called it a book of straw. Remember that this was the man God raised up to overthrow (against amazing odds) the whole might of Romanism, which dominated Medieval Europe (including emperors). In doing so he gave Luther a powerful revelation of justification by faith alone as opposed to the meritorious works of Romanism. Being overwhelmed by this sense of faith as opposed to works, Luther was not ready to understand the argument of James that justification, once established by faith, is reflected in good works empowered by God which demonstrate true faith. It took Calvin (and others) soon afterward to make this plain. We should not misjudge Luther who had more than most mortal men could handle on his hands.

It is easy to take the works of men out of context, especially those who are not around to defend themselves. Every day we all make statements that could be misconstrued. It is cheap and pathetic to denigrate someone who did so much for every believer who followed; indeed who did so much for all Western civilisation as the Reformation changed history as well as the church.]

IV. Conclusion

These are just a few things we found on Phelps' web sites. No doubt, there is more error than this (2 Peter 3:16, e.g. Amillennialism), but these have been listed that you might know Fred Phelps and those at Westboro Baptist Church do not have God (2 John 9).

[Amillennialism, in the view of this writer, is the truth. It is the conviction of the majority of evangelicals down the centuries.

Working through Fish's papers is unpleasant. It is not only full of errors, misjudgment and false statements, it reeks of evil and leaves an unpleasant taste in the mouth. Anyone who uses a multiplicity of scripture texts that have no relevance to the argument is clearly a deceiver and false teacher, to say nothing of Pharisaism, elitism, cruel judgmentalism and blatant heterodoxy.]

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