

THE CREMATION CONTROVERSY:
PERMISSIBLE RITUAL OR PAGAN RITE?

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THE CREMATION CONTROVERSY: PERMISSIBLE RITUAL OR PAGAN RITE?

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The following collection of quotations from various sources, easily accessible to those who use the computer, hopefully will help underscore the importance of the topic and the practical significance for believers for today.

1A. THE CONTEMPORARY PROBLEM WITH CREMATION

1b. The importance of the topic:

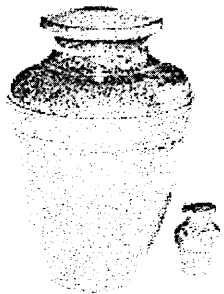
The believer has clear advice given to him by the Word of God on how to respectfully, and in a Christian way, put human bodies to rest. Over the last 50 years, the practice of the church has seen a dramatic change with individuals giving no real thought to what the burial custom declares about the reality of death and the hope the believer has in Jesus Christ.

Dr. Boettner has a helpful discussion of the topic in his classic book, *Immortality*, (1989, p. 50-51):

2b. The main points of the view:

- 1c. Cremation is pagan and the Bible teaches burial.
- 2c. The Bible does not give any specific teaching forbidding cremation.
- 3c. Cremation and burial fall under the category of Christian liberty, since neither is clearly commanded or forbidden in the Scriptures.

The description of cremation:



Cremation generally involves the application of high temperature, typically between 1400 and 2100 Degrees Fahrenheit (760 to 1150 Deg. C.), to a wooden box or casket which contains a dead body. The body and container are almost completely consumed; the *cremated remains* consist of bone fragments and particles, which usually weigh from 4 to 8 pounds. (1.8 to 3.6 kg). They are then finely ground into granule form. The entire process takes 3 to 5 hours. Although the attendants attempt to remove all of the remains, a small portion will be left inside the cremation chamber, and subsequently mingled with the next body to be cremated. (<http://www.religioustolerance.org/crematio.htm>, accessed 3/20/2009).

2A. THE PAGAN PRACTICE OF CREMATION

A very helpful background of cremation is given by Roy E. Knuteson, pages 305ff.

The Origins of Cremation

According to the historical records, the idea of reducing a dead body to ashes originated in heathen lands. The Romans, who also invented a crucifixion kind of death, were among the first to practice this abhorrent custom. The Hindus in India have always burned their dead and then sprinkled the ashes on the Ganges River. Since they believe in reincarnation they want to dispose of the body quickly so that the next incarnation can take place. Should Christians emulate the Hindus? Interestingly, Christians in India believe that cremation is as pagan as idol worship, and therefore always bury their dead.

Cremation came to America via the uncivilized and non Christian people of the Middle Ages. These same pagans bored out the eyes of Christians, tore out their tongues, burned them at the stake, and fed them to the lions.

The first crematorium in America was built in Washington, Pennsylvania in 1876 by some very ungodly and atheistic men. The Roman Catholic Church responded very quickly to the spreading of this evil practice by banning it in 1886. Long before that date however, Christian pastors spoke out against this practice and condemned this pagan way of disposing of a Christians [sic] body.

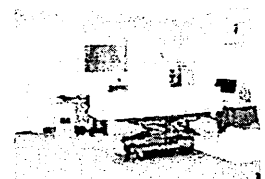
It is therefore a rather recent development in our country, and sadly, it has now been adopted by many Christians as just another way to get rid of a dead body. Some Christians respond to this revelation by saying: "We know that cremation doesn't cause anyone to by-pass the judgment as some believe, and therefore it doesn't matter how we dispose of a loved one's body." Oh, yes it does!

For a person to request cremation for themselves or another person is to go against the Bible and all of sacred history. Burial is the only biblical method as we await the resurrection, and no amount of reasoning about burial space, the sanitation of this method, and the high costs of funerals can change that. The question of cremation is not debatable, for God has spoken the final word.

The Word of God is very clear on this subject, both by direct statements and spiritual examples. As Christians we are not permitted to do with our bodies as we please. Indeed, we are challenged to exalt Jesus Christ in our bodies, 'whether by life or by death' (Phil. 2:20).

Cremation Conclusions

1. Cremation is of heathen origin and therefore is unscriptural and non-Christian. Any practice, regardless of its nature, that is contrary to God's Holy Word is to be shunned by all conscientious believers.



2. Cremation removes the healing process that takes place naturally through a Christian burial. Usually, the four pounds of charred remains are sprinkled, in Hindu fashion, on some streams of water, or scattered by airplane to the four winds. Some people divide the ashes among the relatives so that each may have a part of their loved one's remains. Others just leave the ashes with the mortician who will probably throw them in the city dump. When this happens, there is no committal of the body to the ground, no sacred place where the body is buried, and no place of remembrance in future years.



There is something absolutely horrifying about the cremation process itself. The body is placed in a gas oven heated to 3,000 degrees where it is burned to a crisp, and reduced to ashes. Can you imagine yourself being responsible for the cremation of the body of your mother or father, or a mate or your child?

Understand, there is no loving concern as an unknown mortuary worker pushes the body into the flames and afterward crushes the remaining bones with a mallet before placing them in an urn. How different from a Christian burial, which is so beautifully illustrated by the burial of Jesus and others in the Bible.

Cremation dishonors the redeemed body of a Christian and is the cheapest, legal way to avoid a sacred responsibility. It is a barbaric act that is unscriptural and therefore unwarranted.

(http://mmoutreachinc.com/cult_groups/cremation.html accessed 3/20/2009)

John Russell, in a helpful volume, *Cremation*, likewise stresses the pagan origin of cremation:



Archaeologists tell us that practically all primitive peoples at one time or another during their history cremated their dead. Nomadic tribes had really little choice if they wished to carry with them the remains of their ancestors. Other peoples were prompted by religious considerations: they looked on cremation as a rite which permitted the soul, purified by fire, to escape more easily from the prison of the body and migrate to whatever region disembodied spirits were consigned to. Excavations carried out in Palestine reveal that the Jewish People at an early date adopted the practice of inhumation (or more correctly entombment; the dead body was placed in a sepulcher rather than buried underground). In the land originally occupied by the Canaanites, cremation was the earlier practice. But at about the year 2000 B.C., this practice abruptly gave way to entombment. The date corresponds more or less with the arrival of Abraham and his family in the land of Canaan. The Old Testament confirms the universal Jewish practice of internment. The First Book of Kings tells us that the bodies of those slain in battle were sometimes cremated (cf. 31:12). The Book of Leviticus ordained the burning of those guilty of especially serious crimes (20:14; 24:14). These exceptions only confirm the general custom of inhumation.

Cited by: (<http://www.ukapologetics.net/cdeath.html> accessed 3/20/2009)

3A. THE GREEK PHILOSOPHERS ON THE BODY

For the most part, for the Greek philosophers matter was evil, spirit good. The body was evil, the human soul good. This explains the disrespect that philosophers like Plato had for the human body:

The Platonic doctrine tended to an extreme Transcendentalism. Soul and body are distinct orders of reality, and bodily existence involves a kind of violence to the higher part of our composite nature. The body is the "prison," the "tomb," or even, as some later Platonists expressed it, the "hell" of the soul.
(<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14153a.htm> accessed 3/20/2009).

In Plato's famous allegory of the cave, he identifies the world of bodies as the realm of darkness and illusion. Quoting a helpful statement on Plato's philosophy:

Plato believed that the body distorts the truth and deceives the soul, distracting it from the acquisition of knowledge. The soul's unfortunate relationship is compared to a prisoner in a prison cell. Reflection reveals that the soul "is imprisoned in and clinging to the body, and that it is forced to examine other things through it as through a cage." This picture helps Plato argue that the best service philosophy can render to human nature is to liberate the soul from the attachment to its cave-like bodily prison.
(<http://library.thinkquest.org/18775/plato/bodp.htm> accessed 3/20/2009).



4A. THE BIBLICAL PRECEDENCE FOR CREMATION

Boettner has a helpful discussion of the two key passages where individuals are burned in the Old Testament:

In the Bible fire is the type or symbol of destruction, complete and without remedy, the condemnation due for sin. In the sacrificial offering the animal was regarded as bearing the sins of the person, as being under condemnation, and therefore it was consumed upon the altar. In a few cases the bodies of criminals were burnt, to indicate the greatness of their sin and the severity of their punishment. After Achan had brought defeat upon Israel by taking "the accursed thing" that God had forbidden, we read: "And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? Jehovah shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and they burned them with fire, and stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day," Joshua 7:25,26.

Another case somewhat similar is that of King Saul. After he had disobeyed God, he was defeated in battle by the Philistines and died a shameful death that was practically suicide. His three sons died with him, and the armies of Israel fled. The Philistines cut off the head of the king, hung his armor in their heathen temple, and "fastened his body to the wall of Bethshan." We read that "when the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead heard concerning him that

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IMMORTALITY

which the Philistines had done to Saul, all the valiant men arose, and went all night, and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Bethshan; and they came to Jabesh, and burnt them there. And they took their bones, and buried them under the tamarisk tree in Jabesh, and fasted seven days," I Sam. 31:10-13.

The narrative shows that the procedure followed in regard to Saul was an abnormal and desperate measure. One Bible commentary says: "This was not a Hebrew custom. It was probably resorted to on this occasion to prevent all risk of further insult . . . Burial was the usual Hebrew mode of disposal of their dead," (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown).

IMMORTALITY
by Loraine Boettner

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One of the most detailed discussions of the Bible and cremation is found in the article "Cremation vs. Burial: Jewish and Christian Beliefs":

What Does the Bible Say About Cremation?:

The Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) has a few references to the disposal by burning in fire. Some verses describe executions by Philistines or Babylonians. Burning of bodies and objects in ancient Israel were mostly reserved for idols, criminals or enemies:

- **Genesis 38:24:** Judah initially ordered his pregnant daughter-in-law to be burned to death because she was guilty of prostitution. This action would have caused the death of the woman and her twin fetuses.
- **Exodus 32:20:** Moses destroyed the golden calf by burning it.
- **Leviticus 20:14:** If a man marries both a woman and her mother, then all three "*must be burned in the fire*" (NIV). The passage is ambiguous: it is not known whether they would be burned alive, or would be stoned to death first, and their bodies burned
- **Leviticus 21:9:** If the daughter of a priest becomes a prostitute, then she "*must be burned in the fire.*" (NIV)
- **Numbers 16:35:** God exterminated Korah and 250 Israelite men with fire because

they opposed Moses.

- **Deuteronomy 7:25:** God commanded that the idols of Pagan Gods be destroyed with fire.
- **Joshua 7:15-25:** After Joshua and his army exterminated the men, women and innocent children of Jericho, a few soldiers disobeyed God's command and looted the city. As punishment for the theft, and to pay for Israel's disgrace, God ordered the thieves to be burned. They were stoned to death; their bodies were burned and buried in what was called the *Valley of Achor*.
- **Judges 15:6:** The Philistines burned Samson's wife and father-in-law to death.
- **1 Samuel 31:11-13:** Earlier in the chapter, Saul had been wounded and asked for assisted suicide from his armor-bearer. The latter refused, so Saul committed suicide himself. The Philistines impaled Saul's body and those of his sons and left them on public display. The people of Jabesh Gilead retrieved the bodies, burned them and later buried the remaining bones in Gilead. There have been a number theories raised to account for this unusual treatment to a hero:
 - burning might have a local custom in Gilead.
 - the people of Gilead may have been worried that the Philistines might dig up the bodies and further desecrate them.
 - burning might have been necessary because their bodies may have partly decomposed.
 - the Hebrew word translated as "*burnt*" might actually mean "*annointed*"; thus, the bodies might not have been burned after all.
- **2 Kings 10:26:** Jehu demolished a temple consecrated to the God Baal and burned its sacred stone.
- **Jeremiah 29:22:** This verse contains a curse which refers to the time that the Babylonians burned Zedekiah and Ahab by fire.
- **Amos 2:1:** God proclaimed a death curse on Moab because he had reduced the bones of the king of Edom to lime through burning.

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/crematio.htm> accessed 3/20/2009

An interesting detail concerning the abominable practice of cremation is found in the prophecy of Amos. Amos 2 records the unpardonable sin of Moab, which was the burning of the bones of Edom's king (v. 1). The result of that sin of cremation in the 8th century BC was a God-sent "fire upon Moab." Burning has always been a demonstration of God's wrath. It is therefore not a fitting practice at biblical funerals. (<http://www.theholyscriptures.org/alfredbouter/> accessed 2/9/2006)

5A. THE SCRIPTURAL PATTERN FOR BURIAL

Without question, burial is the method of the disposal of the human body in the Bible. It is well worth it to ponder the many instances of internment in both Old and New Testaments:

The burial of many important Biblical figures is described in the Bible:

Abraham **Genesis 25:8-10**

Sarah **Genesis 23:1-4**

Rachel **Genesis 35:19-20**

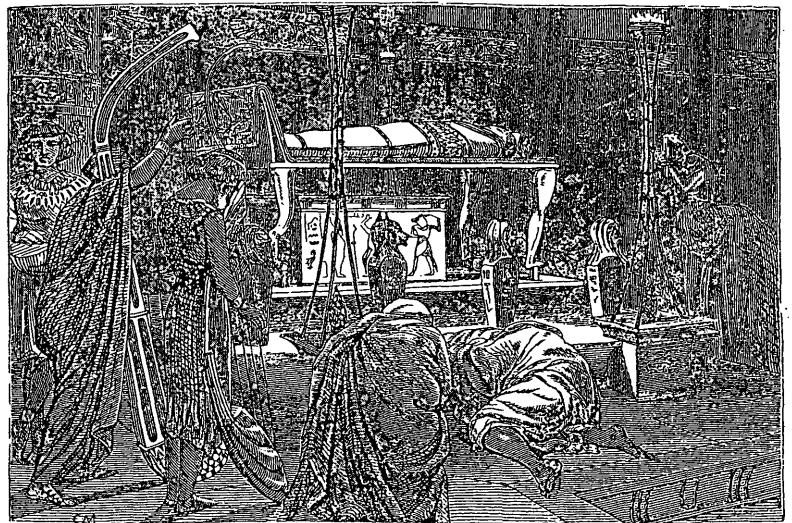
Isaac **Genesis 35:29**

Jacob **Genesis 49:33 and 50:1-13**



JACOB'S BURIAL.

Joseph (The Israelites went to great effort to bury his body in the Promised Land; they retained it for over 300 years in Egypt and after the Exodus during 40 years of wanderings before burying it.) **Genesis 50:26**



EMBALMING THE BODY OF JOSEPH.

Moses (God selected a burial site at a secret location in Moab for Moses.) **Deuteronomy 34:6**

Joshua **Joshua 24:29-30**

Eleazar **Joshua 24:33**

Samuel **1 Samuel 25:1**

David **1 Kings 2:10**

John the Baptist **Matthew 14:10-12**

Ananias and Sapphira **Acts 5:5-10**

Stephen **Acts 8:2**

Lazarus **John 11:35ff**

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/crematio.htm> accessed 3/20/2009
(adapted from this source)



Not to be given public burial was considered a great tragedy and dishonor.

1 Kings 13:22: A prophet disobeyed God by eating a meal in a forbidden location. God laid a curse on him: that his body would not be buried in the tomb of his fathers. Shortly after, the prophet was attacked by a lion and his remains left on a road.

Jeremiah 16:6: God laid a horrible curse on the Israelites: that many would die of diseases, will not be mourned and would be *"like refuse lying on the ground"* (NIV). Their bodies will be consumed by animals and birds.

Jeremiah 22:19: God laid a similar curse on Jehoiakim because of his pride and disobedience. Jeremiah said that he would be given the burial of a donkey: to be dragged away and thrown outside the city gates

Crucifixion: Of the countless number of tombs in Palestine from the era of Roman occupation which have been excavated, only one skeleton has been found which bears the marks of a crucifixion. That is because after a Roman execution, the lifeless body would be typically discarded in an open pit where it would be devoured by wild dogs. To be forbidden a traditional burial added greatly to the horror of this method of execution.

<http://www.religioustolerance.org/crematio.htm> accessed 3/20/2009



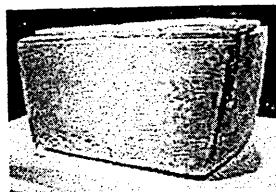
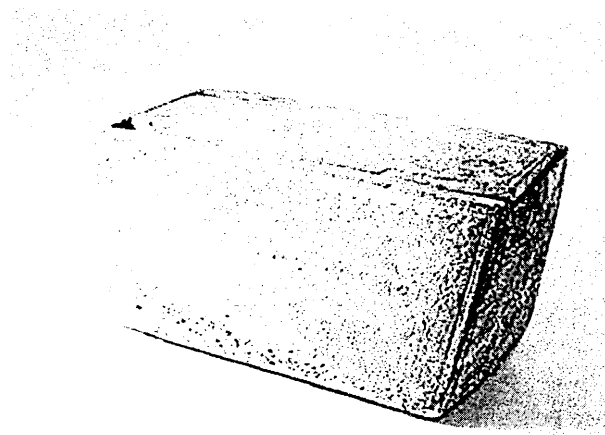
THE BURIAL OF CHRIST.

It is interesting to note that around the time of Christ, during the so-called Time of the Second Temple, many individuals were buried twice:

Jewish burial customs included primary burials in burial caves, followed by secondary burials in ossuaries placed in smaller niches of the burial caves. Some of the limestone ossuaries that have been discovered, particularly around the Jerusalem area, include intricate geometrical patterns and inscriptions identifying the deceased.

During the Second Temple period, Jewish sages debated whether the occasion of the gathering of a parent's bones for a secondary burial was a day of sorrow or rejoicing; it was resolved that it was a day of fasting in the morning and feasting in the afternoon. The custom of secondary burial in ossuaries did not persist among Jews past the Second Temple period nor appear to exist among Jews outside the land of Israel.

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ossuary> accessed 3/20/2009



6A. THE ENDURING PRECIOUSNESS OF THE BODY

The biblical emphasis on the permanence of the human body is frequently ignored, even within evangelical Christendom. It is a biblical fact that to be human is to have a body. The individual has an earthly body. When he departs this life, he has a temporary body; and at the resurrection, he will receive a permanent body. For the believer the resurrection will be at the time of the rapture, for Old Testament saints at the Second Advent (Dan. 12:1,2) and for all the unsaved of all the ages at the Great White Throne judgment at the end of the millennium (Rev. 20:15ff). There's a wonderful symbolic connection between the burial of Christ and the burial of the believer, the resurrection of Christ and the ultimate resurrection of the believer. Pollock's observation is very much to the point:

Did our Lord rise from the dead? Surely, for He had glorified God in His death, the fulfilment of all the types and shadows. The third day he arose triumphant from the tomb, the glorious Victor over sin and death and Satan's power. The pledge is now given to all believers, who shall have died in the usual course of nature, that they will be raised from the dead by the same power by which our Lord was raised.

"Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15:20 -21)

Cremation destroys the truth and beauty of the thought of the close connection between the resurrection of Christ and that of the believer. Cremation puts Scripture sadly out of joint. Think of the time-honoured Scripture that has been read over the graves of hundreds of thousands of God's saints. Please note particularly the "IT" repeated eight times in this precious Scripture, connecting the body **sown** with the body **raised**. There can be no resurrection unless what is committed to the Lord in death is raised literally. This is beyond human understanding, yet the believer relies on "the power of God," and the plain teaching of Scripture.

"IT is sown in corruption; IT is raised in incorruption; IT is sown in dishonour; IT is raised in glory; IT is sown in weakness; IT is raised in power; IT is sown a natural body; IT is raised a spiritual body." (1 Cor. 15:42-44)

How these verses are robbed of their beautiful meaning, if read over a coffin, about to be propelled by invisible machinery into a blazing furnace, and reduced to ashes in a couple of hours or less. Surely we do well to avoid a practice that weakens the meaning and comfort of Scripture at a time when hearts are torn with grief, and need all the comfort they can get in their hour of need.

At Christian funerals we have noted again and again how a note of holy triumph has been struck as the mourners looked into the grave, and realised that the body of their loved one, **sown** in corruption, dishonour and weakness, will assuredly be **raised** in incorruption, glory and power, aye, even in the likeness of their Lord and Saviour, who died for them that this hour of holy triumph might be theirs.

We end with a solemn warning. The effort of the enemy is to break down all God's basic laws. This is clearly seen in marriage, parenthood and death. These basic laws are being trampled under foot in an alarming way today. Marriage, if convenient, is tolerated; if not, lightly set aside. Divorce courts are full, and queues waiting for their turn to be released, very often brought about by the connivance and arrangement of both parties. A few years ago a single judge was sufficient to attend to these matters; today it needs several judges to deal with this avalanche of unsavoury uncleanness. Parenthood is being lightly treated. Illegitimacy is woefully on the increase. Responsibilities of parenthood are largely refused. Children are being brought up as pagans.

So it is with death. There is a desire to keep death out of sight as much as possible. No more unsightly cemeteries, but columbariums with beautiful flowers, and no sign of death about them, must take their place. Crematoriums are built to be temples of light, and even the coffin is covered with a purple pall on which are placed wreaths of flowers. Put death out of sight as much as possible seems to be the order of the day. But will this feverish desire to put out of sight all trace of death alter grim facts? Will it do away with what comes after death? Assuredly not.

http://www.biblecentre.org/topics/ajp_cremation.htm accessed 3/20/2009

In a similar vein, Phillips describes the importance of the believer's body as being asleep and ultimately awakened, pictures of His burial and ultimate resurrection.

The New Testament describes those who have died as being "asleep" (1 Cor. 11:30; 15:6, 18, 20, 51). This is not a description of the soul or spirit, for those are not asleep but with the Lord in heaven. It is the body that sleeps, and sleep is a temporary condition. The bodies that sleep – yes, I suppose even those that are decomposed – are awaiting their wake-up call on the resurrection morning.

Without doubt, it is the doctrine of the resurrection of the body that has motivated the Christian practice of burial and the Israelite practice before it. Everywhere Christianity has spread, cremation has given way to proper and respectful burial. Christians have a robust view of the body, both in life and in death. One of the great comforts as we face disease and sickness and death in this life is the knowledge that they will not have the last word. No, it is these bodies that are so integrally a part of ourselves that will be resurrected in glory, imperishable and immortal. And though we acknowledge the physics of the grave we are not in

alliance with them, nor with death at any level. The apostle Paul writes, in 1 Thessalonians 4:

Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him... For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. (vv. 13-16).

Everything about that description tells us to honor, to preserve, yes, even to dedicate real estate to the bodies of those our beloved who having died are with Christ in the spirit, and awaiting the resurrection of their bodies in the morning of the new creation.

http://www.tenth.org/qbox/qb_000709.htm accessed 3/20/2009

In his fine study, "Is Cremation Christian?" Mark Creech concludes:

Although cremation can in no way effect the outcome of our resurrection, the practice is clearly not Christian. Rather than consenting to destroy God's property in the oven of a crematory, Christians should affectionately lay away their loved ones in the earth, like the body of our Savior. His body was tenderly and lovingly prepared for burial according to the customs of God's people (Jn. 19:38-42).

Divine precept and example tells us that there is but one Christian way to dispose of our dead: Bury them.

(<http://www.worldnewspaperpublishing.com/News/FullStory.asp?loc...> accessed 3/20/2009)

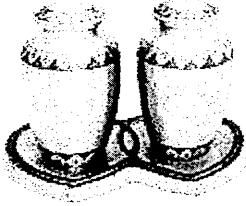


7A. THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR BELIEVERS

1b. Arguments offered by cremation advocates:

Tony Warren has listed the three major arguments for cremation but shown how unsatisfactory they really are:

It is a more aesthetic, sanitary, and economical practice



The 'aesthetic argument' is without a doubt the most ridiculous and self-serving defense for cremation that I have ever heard a professed Christian attempt to make. What Christian is going to have to look at a decaying corpse after it is buried? For the most part, once a corpse is buried, it stays buried. And even if moved, the loved ones never see an exhumed body. So this is a spurious defense, and really beneath the Christian to attempt to use it to justify himself.

Another weak argument for cremation is the Hygiene question. This has nothing to do with biblical principles or sound Christian behaviour, it leans upon social philosophy and science, rather than theology. The current graveyards pose absolutely no problem in terms of hygiene and health. The argument that burial is unsanitary (particularly in this country), is to dabble in absurdity and is just another excuse which some people choose to use in order to ease their mind and allow this un-christian action.

As for the '*economics defense*,' it is somewhat true that there is a price difference, but it is not that great a price difference 'providing' one chooses a reputable funeral director, and an economical coffin and service. Of course if one is encouraged by funeral directors to select the best of everything, funerals can run well over the \$10,000 figure. The point is to have a simple funeral service with a simple coffin, and the price will not be much more than cremation, and will be totally in line with the scriptures and the Christian faith. What is the price put on doing the right (Biblical) thing? And the bottom line really is, Christians should try to do the 'Biblical' thing. To surrender 'all' for the cause of Christ.

2b. The preferred practice in the Church:

Warren makes a cogent case for Christian burial rather than cremation:

But again I reiterate, '*burning a body in cremation in no way affects God's ability to resurrect either the believer, or the unbeliever.*'

Unfortunately, because of this Biblical fact there are some who rationalize that, *'because we know that cremation doesn't affect anyone's Salvation or judgment, therefore it doesn't matter how we dispose of a loved one's body.'* That is an untrue, and misleading conclusion. It matters because the desire of the Christian is to do the will of God, not to sin that Grace may abound. It matters because it's a matter of Christian principle and because the Word of God itself matters.

<http://mountainretreatorg.net/faq/cremation.html> accessed 3/20/2009

3b. The force of biblical examples and patterns:

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Loraine Boettner

One can only concur with Boettner:

We can only conclude that the practice of cremation, which in our day seems to be becoming more common particularly in the larger city mortuaries, is anti-Christian and should have no place in the practice of the believer. It has no support in Scripture. The early Church rejected it as a heathen custom, as dishonoring to the body, and as suggesting the denial of the resurrection. Most of those who advocate it in our day are religious liberals or humanists who have little or no faith in the literal resurrection of the body, and not a few of them have either discarded Christianity or never gave serious allegiance to it in the first place.

Another writer makes these incisive comments:

Due to Jesus Christ's victory over sin, death, the grave, and hell, believers are planted in the ground to come forth with glorified, spiritual bodies. It is either hopeless ignorance or profane rebellion that would cause them to burn the seed of their future! Death is not the end of the body! It is the planting for a new body! (Proof: Rom 6:5; 8:17-25; I Cor 15:35-58; II Cor 5:1-8).

If God's preservation of bodies, souls, and spirits to the coming of Jesus Christ was an important prayer of Paul, then why would we want to desecrate our bodies with a pagan ritual at death? How could we make such a prayer ourselves while burning each other's bodies? For consistency's sake, let us honor and preserve our bodies.

(Proof: I Thess 5:23-24; I Pet 1:3-5).

Whether by precept, principle, or example, true saints are Bible Christians, measuring everything they do by the words of God in the Scriptures. They do not need a direct verse stating the obvious, if there are plenty of principles and indirect verses to condemn a thing. The Bible easily forbids cremation by exalting burial of the body and condemning any profaning of the body, denial of the resurrection, or learning the way of the heathen.

(Proof: Ps 119:128; Is 8:20; Acts 17:11; Rom 15:4; I Cor 10:11; I Thess 5:21; II Tim 3:16-17).

<http://www.letgodbettrue.com/bible/heresies/cremation.htm>
accessed 3/20/2009

4b. The avoidance of ostentatiousness at funerals:

As an important postscript, Boettner adds to his well recent section on cremation the following advice to Christians as they plan the funerals of their loved ones.

Immortality, (1989, p. 54)

It need only to be said further that in regard to funerals Christians should avoid the ostentatious show so often seen in modern funerals, and should spend only a modest amount that will in nowise impoverish those who remain behind. It is rather noticeable that as a general rule people tend to have elaborate funerals in inverse proportion to the amount of true religion that they have. True Christians will not attempt to emulate the world, which sees in the funeral service only the end of an earthly life, but in full recognition of the Biblical truths concerning death and the future life will seek to give proper respect to the bodies of their loved ones and at the same time to center the attention of those present on the reality of the future life.