

Our purpose is to “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

OLD PATHS ADVOCATE

“To continue speaking the truth in love,” “endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace,” “keeping the ordinance as delivered.”

“Thus saith the Lord, ‘stand ye in the ways, and see and ask for the Old Paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest of your souls.’ (Jer. 6:16) “And they that be of Thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Paths to Dwell in.” (Isa. 58:12).

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A CONVERSATION WITH AN ATHEIST

By BRAD SHOCKLEY

Daily, we all carry on conversations. Most are mundane. We converse about the weather, local stories in our communities, and often reminisce about yesteryear. Occasionally, we find ourselves immersed in a conversation which captivates our attention, the likes of which will not soon be forgotten. Since I’ve never met a stranger and I’m willing to discuss nearly any issue, I could probably write a book titled, “A Conversation With....”. This past week I had another exchange; not your typical variety of conversation. Apparently, I had hit a nerve with a recent sermon I preached. Although I’m used to people objecting to truth, this time the sarcasm and mockery were slightly over the top. Thus my conversation with an atheist.

I won’t record word for word my recent discussion with this particular atheist. It was interesting and surprisingly conducted in a gentlemanly tone. He was very intelligent, nice and engaging. If I’m allowed to confess, I’d call him again and discuss the search for truth, one of life’s most compelling subjects—not to mention such a quest is essential. Instead of the dialogue, I would like to share with you a few of the valuable lessons I learned. With atheism on the rise you may very well find yourself in a similar position. Perhaps your children will confront you with some of the same issues. In either case you should be prepared.

Biblical Knowledge

This was not my first encounter with an atheist. Unfortunately, it is becoming more and more common. Several reasons can be identified for the growth of this “religion.” Yes, you read that correctly, it is a religion, a belief system just like many of the false religions in existence. It is growing more organized and disciplined with each passing year. Perhaps the

most surprising element to this movement is their Biblical knowledge. Most have as much, perhaps even more, knowledge of the Bible than the “Christian” on the street. (Please understand I am using the word “Christian” from a secular perspective, not from the correct understanding provided by the teachings of the New Testament.)

I kindly asked this man, “Why are you an atheist?” To which he immediately answered by quoting Scripture. A little ironic, is it not? He started with a famous passage from the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus says, “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Mt. 5:18). The basis of his argument was all the Bible is in effect until the end of time. He then used this as a springboard to argue against the “unethical, cruel and inhumane nature of the God of the Old Testament.” I didn’t ask, but I’m pretty sure he would not have capitalized the word God. At the end of his accusations against God he proposed a question. “Do you believe in the Ten Commandments?” followed by a statement, “All Christians believe in the ten commandments.”

It was then my privilege to explain his misunderstanding on several points. When one forgets to consider the context in which a verse is used a great many mistakes result. Consider the previous verse, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt. 5:17). Notice carefully it was “the law, or the prophets” which Jesus came to “fulfil.” Therefore “one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” The anticipated fulfillment is realized in the death of Christ. The harmony and unity of the Bible should never be forgotten. One must consider Colossians 2:14, Hebrews 8 and Ephesians 2:15-16.

As for the Ten Commandments, I offered the
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Editorial

THE BIBLE TELLS ME SO

By DON L. KING

Years ago we recall children singing the familiar song, “Jesus loves me, this I know, For the Bible tells me so.” indeed, the Bible tells us that and much more. In fact, the answers to all spiritual problems can be found in the Bible. However, many look for answers everywhere but the Bible. Even some church members seem to look for answers from men rather than the Word of God. Some time ago I received a request to answer a number of queries about life and all of the answers were in the Bible. Mind you, we are not discounting the various doctors practicing in our society. No doubt they may be able to answer many of the questions relating to the problems of life. We simply wish to remind the people of God of the many faceted blessings found in the Bible. We need to make an application of the Wisdom of God to our lives. Notice a few:

1. How can I know what to do to be saved?

Think of the day Peter preached on Pentecost and many in his audience asked what they should do? Acts 2:38 gives the answer: “...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” You see, this was exactly what Jesus Christ instructed the apostles to do back in Matthew 28:19, 20. There the Lord said, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.” Also read Mark 16:16: “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.” By the way, there is a false doctrine making the rounds among even some of our own that baptism is not necessary to be saved. Make no mistake that doctrine cannot survive a close inspection of the Bible by any honest student. Just consider the passages above and you will agree.

When one obeys what the above scriptures say, he has obeyed the “form of doctrine.” In Romans 6:17, 18 Paul said: “But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.”

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QUERIST COLUMN

By RONNY F. WADE

Question: We often have strangers come to services and ask for financial help. What duty do we have to these people? We also, at times, receive phone calls from supposed brethren who say they found our name in the church directory and are in need of help. Since we have no way to confirm that they are members of the church how should we deal with these situations?

Answer: The church is obligated to care for needy saints. The church in Antioch contributed to the needs of "brethren in Judea" in a time of famine Acts 11:27-30. The money for this effort was raised by the disciples in Antioch. The brethren gave "every man according to his ability." Sometime later churches in Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia contributed to the need of the church in Jerusalem Romans 15:25-28; 1Corinthians 16:1-2; and 2Corinthians 8 and 9. The primary responsibility is for each congregation to care for its own needy saints. However when the need is greater than the local church can support, it is scriptural for other congregations to contribute i.e. send to the need, hence the command by Paul in 1Corinthians 16:1-2 "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also; on the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper that there be no collections when I come." In 1Timothy 5 Paul gives instructions regarding the care of widows. Those widows who meet the requirements may be supported by the church. The above passages clearly state that church funds may be used in caring for those members who are in need. This does not mean, however, that money from the treasury may be used indiscriminately in helping all church members. In second Thessalonians 3:6-15 Paul declares that those who refuse to work shall not eat. In other words the church is not under obligation to help just anyone who asks for money. Unfortunately there are some who seem to feel that every time they have a hardship the church should bail them out. Not only is this incorrect, it establishes a dangerous precedent that often leads from one unscriptural practice to another.

But now to those who are outside the body of Christ. Does the church have an obligation to them? Should we take money from the treasury of the church and help those who come by asking for help? I do not believe so. There is no indication in the scriptures that the church is obligated to support or supply the needs of unbelievers. In fact it would be impossible for the church to care for

the needs of all the hungry in the world. When people stop by and say they are in need, what should our practice be? I would suggest that there are at least two ways such cases might be handled. First, if the request seems to be legitimate several who choose to do so can take money from their pockets to help those requesting help. Secondly, long before someone comes by asking for help, the church members can bring canned goods to the church house and store them so that when someone stops by asking for food they can offer them a box or sack filled with those goods that have been stored away for that purpose. Unfortunately many who ask for help don't want food they want money. In fact those standing on street corners with signs that read "need food" or "will work for food" don't want food either, they want money. I see people almost daily with signs saying they will work for food when four or five stores within eyesight have signs in the windows which read "help wanted." The truth is many of these people don't want to work. They only want a hand out. There are cases where some have obtained a copy of the church directory and they memorize the name of some nearby church member or congregation and present themselves as members of the church. In such cases I believe it is legitimate to call those churches or individuals to check if they are indeed what they claim to be. Also ask what congregation they attend. By doing this, it is easy to establish the validity of their claims. It is often easy to feel guilty when we refuse help to someone who might be in need. We must remember, however, that when we dole out money to people who are dishonest we only feed the problem. In fact many people who beg for money want it for smoking tobacco or strong drink. Often when someone asks for food if you offer to take them and buy them a meal, they refuse. If they need a place to stay or spend the night I suggest that you point them to the shelters in most towns that are equipped for such situations.

When I was young we often had men stop by our house and ask for food. I remember my mother would fix them a sandwich or some such food and give it to them. She did not refuse their request. They then went on their way. Unfortunately today people have become rather resourceful in their quest for help. They really want money, and nothing else. This is sad and it puts people who are interested in helping someone in a difficult situation. I personally would rather help someone who didn't need it, than refuse someone who really was in need. It seems to me that the answer is to go and buy them some food or give them food or clothes but don't dole out money just to satisfy their request. (Send all questions to Ronny F. Wade P.O. Box 14352 Springfield or ronnywade36@gmail.com)

IS THERE REALLY A GOD?

Al Felder

“He hath made everything beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end.” (Ecc. 3:11) The question of how everything originated has always been within man. In fact, the Bible teaches us in this verse that God placed it there. The word translated as world in this verse actually means eternity. Man has a desire to know how he came to be as well as the universe around him. Yet, God’s creation is so vast that we simply cannot know it all, otherwise, we would be God. God has, however, provided us with the information we need to know Him. It is this very information that we would like to discuss at this time and ask the question, “Is there really a God?” 1 Strong, James. 2001. *The Strongest Strong’s*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001 p.1545.

In past generations of our society the question of the existence of God was taken for granted. The majority of people believed in God, but that has changed. Now an increasing number of people in our society say that there is no God. What happened? For years now, children have been taught in school that there is no God. In God’s place, man has put evolution as the reason for the existence of life.

This of course was foretold within the word of God.

“3Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, 4And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. 5For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: 6Whereby the world that was, being overflowed with water, perished: 7But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.” (2 Peter 3:3-7)

Man seeking to reject God has developed his own theory for the existence of life. As stated in the word of God it is based upon the premise that life continues just as it always has. Thus, the evolutionist motto is, “the present is the key to the past.” In other words, man believes that through the observation of present events he can understand the past. For example, since fossils very rarely form in today’s world, evolutionists conclude that the vast layer of rocks containing billions of fossils must have taken millions of years to develop. Yet, God states in His word that the world of today is

not the same as the world of the past. God destroyed the past world by means of a global flood.

The Bible makes it clear that man is without excuse in his denial of God. “18For that wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: 21Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.” (Rom. 1:18- 21)

There is enough evidence in nature to convince man of the existence of God. That evidence points to an intelligent design. Why does an archeologist become excited when he finds ancient artifacts? It is because they are a sign of intelligence. The scientist recognizes that these objects did not create themselves, rather, they were created by an intelligent being. It is in that same manner that creation points to God.

The very existence of the Universe points to a Divine Creator. Many atheists rejected this line of reasoning by holding to the belief that the Universe itself was eternal. Recent scientific discoveries have shown this idea to be impossible. In his book, *God and the Astronomers*, Dr. Robert Jastrow makes the following statement, “Now three lines of evidence - the motion of the galaxies, the laws of thermodynamics, and the life story of the stars - pointed to one conclusion; all indicated that the Universe had a beginning.”² Dr. Jastrow is an astrophysicist who is considered by many to be one of the greatest science writers of our time. 2 Jastrow, Robert. 1978. *God and the Astronomers*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1978. p.111.

According to the laws of thermodynamics the total amount of mass-energy is limited, and the amount of usable energy is decreasing. In short, the Universe is winding down and will come to an end someday. This is not a problem for those who believe in the Bible for God states that He will bring things to an end when He judges the world.

The beginning of the Universe is not a problem for those who believe in the Bible either. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) Since the Universe had a beginning something or someone existed before it, and caused its existence. The Bible begins with God being that someone who caused the Universe.

It is amazing to consider the fact that the Bible does not

begin with an attempt to prove the existence of God. It starts with the fact that He is and has always been. He is outside of time, for time did not exist until He created it. He is eternal with no beginning and no end.

Also, the scientific laws of the conservation of mass and energy are consistent with the teaching of the Bible. Basically, as far as mass and energy are concerned no new material can come into existence neither can existing material cease. "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." (Genesis 2:2) Only God can create and the Bible states that He ended His work on the seventh day, therefore, no new material will come into existence. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." (Heb. 1:3) Since God created all things, the Bible teaches that he also sustains all things.

The Universe further points to God by the rules to which it conforms. We often refer to these rules as the laws of Nature. These laws are exact and precise. They are consistent, predictable, and can be studied through scientific experimentation. Because of man's understanding of the laws of Nature he is able to make predictions as to weather patterns and solar/lunar eclipses among many other things.

If, however, everything came about by chance how could the Universe have such order? How could we depend upon anything to be consistent? These are questions that are difficult for the evolutionist to answer, but not for those who believe God and His word. God created the laws of the Universe. "Thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth." (Jer. 33:25) We can expect that these same laws that applied yesterday will apply today, and in the future as well, because God is consistent. "For I am the Lord, I change not." (Malachi 3:6) Natural laws exist because the Universe has a Creator who is logical and has imposed order on His creation.

God's most prized creation is also a display of intelligent design and further evidence of the existence of God. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the seal and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." (Genesis 1:26) Man is unlike anything else that God created. Man was made in the image of God. Evolution teaches that man evolved over the course of

time. Through the process of chemical reactions simple organisms came into existence and through a series of mutations became present day man. However, recent scientific researches on human DNA have shown this to be false. DNA contains a code, a language for the instructions to build life. It is similar to a computer program, but it is far more complex.

Such evidence has caused some within the ranks of the atheists to change their thinking about creation verses evolution. Antony Flew was renowned as one of the top atheistic minds of the twentieth century, but when these discoveries concerning DNA were made he came to believe in the idea of intelligent design. He is quoted as saying, "Can the origins of a system of coded chemistry be explained in a way that makes no appeal whatever to the kinds of facts that we otherwise invoke to explain codes and languages, systems of communications, the impress of the ordinary words on the world of matter?" He compares the information stored in DNA to explain by evolution because there is no known natural law through which matter can give rise to information.

Further, scientists have discovered that everything can be present within the brain, all of the systems present within it, and consciousness cannot be produced. Once again this is difficult for evolutionists, but not for those who believe the Bible. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26) The brain plays a part in the process of consciousness, but there is clearly a non-physical part as well. Through God's word we know this to be a soul. God has made man a spiritual being like Himself.

Finally, morality points to the existence of God. According to evolution, everything came about by chance. Everything is the result of a series of chemical reactions and mutations. In such a belief there is no basis for determining right and wrong. Each person is left with his or her own beliefs. Each person decides what they believe to be right and wrong. It is all just someone's opinion.

Earlier we read from Romans and I would like to do so again in order to show the consequences of man rejecting God. "28And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30Backbiter, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful." (Rom. 1:28-31)

PAGES FROM THE PAST

The following article is from the January 1964 issue of the Old Paths Advocate. In this article Brother Ronny Wade talks about division in the church and gives us insight into one of the major causes of it. You might be surprised at what he considers to be one of the major causes. Rick Martin

SENSELESS DIVISION

By Ronny F. Wade

Division is a terrible thing, a work of Satan and the result of following the flesh. Whenever division occurs, sin is involved. I can think of no division in which all involved are free from guilt. Instead of being looked down upon and detested by all believers, it has become quite popular in some quarters. Many brethren, it seems, are taking the attitude of some young married couples, who, when they discover they have differences, instead of trying to work them out, just divorce and look for another mate. I am afraid there are far too many senseless divisions among us today. In fact, I am sure if we tried harder and loved more fervently, greater unity could eventually be achieved.

There are some brethren who are so intolerant of another's views, that the minute they discover he has such views, they do not rest until he is either driven away or the church is divided. This all being done in the name of "seeking a pure church." They immediately brand all as heretics who do not see things as they do; that is, if the subject happens to be a "certain thing." Many in a very charitable way can forbear and work with others even though they might disagree on such things as "The Gift of The Holy Spirit," "Worldliness," "The Ordination of Church Officers," etc., but when it gets to something else, well, that's a "horse of a different color." I say it is senseless. There is no reason, logic, or consistency in it; and what is more, it is sinful.

Seldom does a month pass but what some notice crosses my desk about a division in some part of the Brotherhood. In many instances, the sin of division is not the only one committed. Hatred is fostered in the hearts of many and feelings are harbored, which are never forgotten. Whereas, at one time brethren met, hugged, prayed, and worked together, they now hesitate to speak to one another when they meet on the street.

Again, I say this is not only senseless, it is sinful. When will it stop? What is more, what will happen to us if

it does not? Brethren, if this continues unabated, we will eventually end up a fragmented society with little or no staying power at all. Think what all of this does to the church, and its influence. Instead of being the shining example of unity that we should be to a divided religious world, we are presenting and offering them the very thing we condemn and say is wrong-division.

There are many, and I am sure that they are honest (though not very consistent), who foster and encourage division for the sake of what they call purity. Since purity is a very broad term, I hardly see how it can be limited to one specific sin, but seemingly satisfaction is had by them if the church is free from this one sin. To show you, however, how such a position leads to radicalism, I merely call your attention to the following facts. I can show you any number of congregations where division has occurred, not because immorality was there, but because brethren refused to allow others to differ with them, or because they forbade the use of any preacher who did not hold their views on certain subjects. I personally have begged and plead with brethren to work with me and my former home congregation only to be told that "this could never be," as long as I believed as I did. I have seen and witnessed the heartbreak, pain, and tears that result in such division. I know what they are. I have also known and worked with those who in the aftermath of such a tragedy pick up the broken pieces and try to make the best of it, but to the sorrow of all, much like "humpty dumpty," it was almost impossible to do.

The best way to prevent a division is to stop it before it starts. The only way this can be done is to eliminate the cause. What is the cause? Well, I am sure there are many, far too many in fact for us to mention in this brief article. However, we mention what we consider to be a major cause of division today, and that is preachers. Since I am a preacher, I had rather not mention this but, I am afraid it is true. Brethren, know your preacher. Is he a peace maker or a trouble maker? I shall never forget what Bro. Gay said one time. The gist of it is as follows: "It is possible that sometime a Preacher might get involved in trouble, however, if trouble follows a preacher around everywhere he goes, you better mark him." I say amen! Check up on the Preachers you use. Do they ever have any trouble where they come from? Are they ever involved in division? Do they preach for those who are factious or who have caused division? You may say, "Well, what does this have to do with it?" Simply this: The fact that divisive brethren call a certain preacher or preachers to the exclusion of all others is evidence that he condones their actions. If he did not he would not go; and if he went in all good

conscience and condemned them for their division and they failed to repent he would cease then and there to have fellowship with them in it. Do not be deceived by pleasing personalities or good public speaking. Many times the seed is sown in private only to spring forth unexpectedly months or years later, after the preacher is gone. Beware of those who work undercover or who preach loud and long about a certain subject at one congregation, but who are as silent as the tomb on it at the next one. Remember what Paul said, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Rom. 16:17).

In conclusion, brethren, let us all back off a few steps and take another look at the situation. Can we not solve our problems without division; hear Paul: “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment” (1 Cor. 1:10). Remember, too, that in the works of the flesh Paul lists seditions (divisions into separate factions) and heresies (party spirit, dissensions arising from differences of opinions and aims. Factions) and they that do such shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The above is submitted in the spirit of love, hoping that it will cause us all to think, and then act-with the help of God.



CONVERSATION . . . continued from page one

following explanation. It is not my belief in the Ten Commandments which needs to be questioned; it is the proper legislative role of the Mosaic Law that needs to be properly discerned. Since I believe the Bible (2 Tim 3:16-17; 2 Pet 1:21), I certainly believe in the Ten Commandments. They were given by God on Mount Sinai to guide and direct the lives of Israel (Exod. 19-20) The Law was, as Paul writes, “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster” (Gal 3:24-25).

It wasn't the Biblical dialogue that struck me. It was his ability to freely quote Scripture to argue his point. How clever! Attack God using the very words He gave to humanity. The point is clear, as God's children, we must know the Bible well, in context and harmony, to be able to identify when one is improperly handling the Scripture.

All Fluff No Filling

I love pie. Especially one that is cream filled. However, sometimes it is deceiving, not to mention disappointing. When the meringue or whipped cream is several inches thick, yet the sweet filling couldn't be measured with a ruler, it is disheartening. Thus goes the argumentation for atheism—it is all fluff no filling.

Listen carefully to rabid attacks against God, His nature, His actions and His Word. At first they seem insurmountable, and if the person is a good speaker, they even sound impressive and intellectual. However, analyze and scrutinize them carefully. They love to attack God based on who He is, what He has done or what He has promised. They are not academically sound, they are accusatory. When you press them on the issues they appeal to emotion instead of intellect. Please don't let their smooth enticing words discourage you—they are words without substantial evidence behind them.

On the other side, how are our evidences? Are they all fluff and no filling? Or do we respond with precision, reason and logic? He asked me, “Why do you believe?” Then went on to explain he didn't want any “I just know”, “because I have a feeling in my heart”, or “I once prayed for great aunt Betty and she was healed” type of “nonsense.”

Space and time fail to explain all, however we discussed, at great length the following proofs: Cosmological, Teleological, Moral and Historical. If you are unfamiliar with these, then you need to take the time to understand them. You don't need to become an expert, but you should have a basic grasp of the basic arguments for God's existence. Make sure that in your reasoning and arguing for belief in God, you have plenty of filling.

The New Atheism

The New Atheism is a term given to describe the nature of certain militant, modern atheists. As already noted, they rely heavy on emotional appeal instead of hard facts. Have you watched any debates between an atheist and theist lately? The theist typically provides compelling and thought provoking answers while the atheist rants and raves. It is as if these atheists believe that the one who yells the loudest or causes the biggest spectacle is the winner. It is their belief that “religion should not simply be tolerated but should be countered, criticized, and exposed by rational argument wherever its influence arises” (from

Wikipedia on the entry “New Atheism”). Strange as it is, somehow they have forgotten to use “rational argument,” and they are getting away with it!

Frank Turek, an apologist, theist, author and lecturer often proposes the question, “What kind of God don’t you believe in?” The typical response, as recorded in his book *Stealing from God: Why Atheists Need God To Make Their Case* is as follows: “The God the new atheist rejects is not the actual God of the Bible. They project a caricature of Him. They think the God of the Bible is some kind of superhero, akin to Zeus or Thor—a limited being inside the universe that theists call on to fill the gaps that science can’t explain. He’s also morally arbitrary and can fly off the handle at any moment” Obviously, such is not the nature of the true God, the One in Whom we place our confidence.

Culture and society have shifted the paradigm on atheism. The illogical attacks used against God carry no weight. The lack of intellectual and scientific logic and reasoning being spewed from the mouth of the new atheists should be brought to everyone’s attention, especially to our children’s attention. Let us always “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Pet 3:15).

LESSONS FROM THE GENEALOGY

By Nathan Battey
Matthew 1:1-17

Matthew introduces our Savior to us and his Jewish audience by giving the ancestral heritage of the Lord. There are several key teachings within this list of names that often go unnoticed and unlearned. Never underestimate the important role the genealogies served in Matthew’s day, nor the lessons that can be learned from them today. Consider the following points:

1- Matthew is proving to the Jews that Jesus has a legal right to the throne of David through his step-father Joseph. The genealogy found in Luke traces Jesus’ blood line through Mary and shows that Jesus is the brother of all mankind, while Matthew points out that Jesus has the right to the throne.

2- Matthew’s genealogy outlines the unfolding of God’s plan of redemption for the world, not just the Jews. Within the royal blood line of the Messiah were four women of foreign birth: Tamar and Rahab were Canaanites (Gen. 38, Josh. 2), Ruth was a Moabitess (Ruth 1), Bathsheba was likely a Hittite (2 Sam. 1). God’s plan of salvation has always been universal in scope.

3- Matthew notes the failings of many of the fathers of Israel and uses those failings to demonstrate the need for salvation. Judah’s two sons came through his incestuous relationship with Tamar who he mistook for a prostitute. Solomon was born to David through the adulterous and murderous relationship he had with Bathsheba. In short, the bloodline of Israel’s elite was far from pure, and the record was far from spotless.

4- The genealogy is broken into three groupings for several reasons:

a. Names are left out of the genealogical table for the sake of emphasizing the symbolism found in the numbers three and seven which represent completeness all throughout the Old Testament. Matthew divides the genealogy into three groups of double sevens to show that Israel’s history is complete.

b. The genealogies are divided into three groups to distinguish the three major periods of Israel’s history and show that Jesus is the fulfillment of time and God’s redemptive plan.

The Old Testament is full of future hope. It looks beyond itself to an expected end. This forward movement, or eschatological thrust is a fundamental part of the fate of Israel. It was grounded in their experience and concept of God. God is viewed as constantly active within history for a definite purpose, working towards His desired goal for the earth and humanity. Just as Matthew has summarized Israel’s history in the form of a genealogy, so he concludes his observation in v. 17 by pointing out that Israel’s purpose is now achieved. The preparation is complete. The Messiah has come. In that sense, Jesus is the end.

5- Israel was chosen for a service: to bring the Messiah into the world. The real reason Israel was brought through the Babylonian captivity was so that Christ could come into the world and identified through the bloodlines of Abraham as God had promised (Rom, 9:5).

Other lessons and points could be drawn from Matthew’s genealogy (a bonus point has been provided below), but these will suffice for now. May we appreciate and take to heart the genealogy of Christ and the lessons Matthew was teaching to his generation. The genealogies are far more than a boring list of names; they are the outline of the Old Testament and the unfolding of the plan of redemption that culminated in Christ.

A Bonus Lesson:

Jechoniah, the last ruling king before the deportation into Babylon, ruled for 90 days and also went by the name Jehoiachin. Regarding Jehoiachin's brief rule, God swore, "Write this man down as childless, A man who shall not prosper in his days; For none of his descendants shall prosper, sitting on the throne of David, and ruling anymore in Judah." The significance of God's promise should not be overlooked or forgotten. Jesus was a descendant of Jehoiachin and as a descendant, he would never sit on the throne of David. Jesus is not going to return one day to sit on the throne of David and rule for a 1,000 years. Christ is the reigning king right now (Matt. 28:18, Mark 16:19, Heb, 10:12- 14).



EDITORIAL . . . continued from page two

A number of additional passages could be given but these will suffice.

2. How can I know which church is right?

We can read in Matthew 16:18 that Jesus promised to build His church. We can also read in Acts 2:47 that the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. Which church would that have been? It had to have been the one Jesus built as a result of His promise to Peter back in Matthew 16:18. There were no others at the time. Paul wrote in Romans 16:16, "... The churches of Christ salute you." We can therefore know that Jesus promised to build His church and obviously did so because those who were being saved were added to it on a daily basis. (Acts 2:47) We also know that the church of Christ existed in the time of the apostles (Romans 16:16), so that has to be the one to which the Lord added the saved. We know that Jesus built only one church as per Ephesians 4:4. "There is one body..." Since the body of Christ is the church, (Ephesians 1:22, 23; Colossians 1:18) and there is only one, (Ephesians 4:4) which church is right? It has to be the church of Christ; there can be no other answer to the question. Notice also Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Notice now: To be in Christ is to be in His

body and His body is the church. (Colossians 1:18) In Christ is where ALL spiritual blessings are to be found (Ephesians 1:3) If ALL spiritual blessings are found IN His Body, (which is the church of Christ) how many spiritual blessings are to be found out of Christ, or out of His church? The answer is NONE. Why? Because they are ALL IN CHRIST WHICH IS HIS BODY, THE CHURCH. The answer could not be more simple or plain.

3. How can we know what doctrine (teaching) is right?

Let's read from Galatians 1:6-9. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from Him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Anyone who reads this will naturally come to the conclusion that there was only one gospel, or doctrine (teaching) revealed unto men by the Holy Spirit. The answer then has to be that we can know for certain that the Holy Spirit has revealed no other doctrine other than the one we read in the Bible. Again, the Bible tells me so.

Let's assume someone wants to know how important the doctrine is? Hear the apostle John in 2nd John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine (teaching DLK) of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." What is the obvious answer here? We must not, under any circumstances, go beyond or stop short of the doctrine (teaching) of Christ. The doctrine of Christ consists of everything Christ taught or told the apostles to teach through the Holy Spirit

Someone says: "Are you sure this is right?" Read Romans 3:3, 4, "For what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest overcome when thou art judged."

The above are but a few of the many answers the Bible furnishes us. Truly, the Bible tells me so. Think on these things. DLK

Our Departed

Cromer, E. Christeen (Teen), was born September 9, 1940 to Raymond and Lissie (McFerron) Mink in Rockcastle County, KY. She died at UK Medical Center in Lexington, KY. She was preceded in death by her parents, her husband Garner Cromer, a brother Arlie Mink and an infant sister Juanita Mink. Surviving her are a son James Edwin Cromer and a daughter, Gail and her husband Coy Cromer, all of Mt. Vernon, KY. She leaves two sisters: Fay Mink of Mt. Vernon, KY and Aileen Richardson of Chilton, TX; two aunts Mattie (McFerron) Mink and Lela Mink. A brother-in law Eddie B. Cromer; four sisters-in law, Clea Cromer, Bernice Mink, Irene Sowder and Wanda Jean Cromer; her grandchildren are Melissa, Randy, and Teri Renner, David and Tabatha Cromer. There are five great-grandchildren, as well as several nephews and nieces. Christeen was a member of the Blue Springs congregation where she faithfully worshiped until illness prevented. She was a kind and gentle soul exhibiting a meek and quiet spirit. By her behavior she taught younger women to love their husbands and children, always expressing that when they left after a visit. While her children and family will miss her most, all who knew her will hold memories that will be cherished in time to come. If you wish to send a card, send to: Mr. & Mrs. Coy Cromer, 1058 Rank Rd., Mt. Vernon, KY 40456. James Edwin Cromer @ the same address. - Barney Owens

Announcements

CALIFORNIA MEMORIAL DAY MEETING AT TURLOCK

We have been asked to announce the Memorial Day meeting in Turlock, CA. This year Bro Stan Owens will be the speaker. The dates will be May 25-29. Make your plans to attend now. For more information Please call: Richard DeGough 209-883-4168; or Rodney Nelson 209-883-0812

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Field Reports

Frank Brancato 12718 Larkin Drive, Bakersfield, CA 93312. April 14, 2016, email: frankbrancato@sbcglobal.net. Since returning from the Philippines, I was honored to hold meetings in Lubbock Texas, and Fair Oaks California. I enjoyed those meetings very much, and I pray that some lasting good was done. I also enjoyed working with Eric Stone in Lubbock. We knocked on doors to promote the meeting, and 5 visitors from the community attended. Eric and his family recently moved to Lubbock to work with the church there, and he is already doing a great job. The meeting in Fair Oaks was very well attended. I have held several meetings there over the years, and the crowds this time were the largest that I can remember. The work here in Bakersfield is progressing along, and the church here is growing. Several have been converted out of digression, and recently two others were baptized into Christ. We also have a number of TV leads that are still on the Bible correspondence course, and many have completed at least 2 full courses. On a sad note Brother Bob Smith, one of our male members, recently passed away. Bob was a wonderful Christian man, teacher, and friend, and we really miss him. Lord willing, I look forward to preaching this Lord's day in Turlock California. Please continue to remember the faithful everywhere when you pray.

Roger Owens Neosho, MO. 64850 (P.O. Box 239 Neosho, MO. 64860) (cell 1-417-766-8969) It has been a wonderful year with new promise and new insight. The work in Wyoming is getting ready to take off again. Brother Bill Ferguson and I are making plans to conduct a mission meeting in Casper in late May. I will be traveling to Wyoming end of April to get things in order. The efforts in Brumley Missouri continue forward. I am also assisting the efforts in Rolla Missouri with renewed interest there. I have been a bit fatigued since the coming home from News Years Meeting in Alabama that was just wonderful. Brethren, as I travel I find a number of issues that seem to be escalating in the brotherhood that sow seeds of discouragement. However, I also see a lot of interest in many areas as well and that gives me hope and renewed encouragement. I am just excited to be a part of the cause as David of old said, "Is there not a cause" Well there sure is and we need to get to the task at hand. If you know any who might like to assist in the Wyoming effort or any other areas I have mentioned please let me or Bill know. God bless and please pray for us as we do for all God's people everywhere.

Don L. King, 1147 Sherry Way, Livermore, CA, 94550, April 12, old paths@juno.com- The news from abroad is good. The work in the Philippines is still doing very well. The work in Hawaii is also doing well and we are happy about all of this. Pat and I plan to go to Hawaii and help the brethren there in early May. Others will follow us in order to guard and help the work. The brethren there are anxious to learn and willing to work. They are excited about the future there. Our meeting with Bruce Roebuck closed and all feel it was a good one. He preached the truth night after night we pray he has a great future preaching the Word. The congregation is doing well and several young men are growing in their abilities in teaching and song leading. It was my pleasure to preach to a good crowd two Sundays ago and yesterday we enjoyed hearing Mike Oestmann who was here. Mike did a great job. We have been pleased lately to receive some good articles from brethren, two of which we are happy to present to our readers in this issue. We encourage them and others as well to send us material for publication. Try to get your articles and reports to me no later than the 12th of the month as we try to mail the paper to the printers on the 15th of each month. We ask your prayers for us in the work.

P. Duane Permenter, 274 Davis St., Summertown, TN 38483, Mar 28-What an experience it has been the last two months on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. In so many ways this work is like the work I have done in Zambia. Then in other ways it is not like Zambia. It has been so exciting to work here and people have responded better than most places I have labored through the years. Laurie and I always make up our minds that we are going to like wherever we are. We have grown to appreciate Waipahu more every day. The church in Waipahu needs someone, and the brethren have requested us to move here. After much prayer and consideration, Laurie and I have decided that at the conclusion of this year in Tennessee we will move to Hawaii to work with the congregation in Waipahu. The church in Livermore, California is going to back us in this work. Words do not express the heartfelt appreciation that floods my mind for this encouragement. We do not want to leave Chapel Grove, nor do the brethren want us to leave. We believe that right now the greatest need for us is in Hawaii. It will be difficult for us to leave our home and beloved brethren in that place; nonetheless, we simply place our lives in the hands of the living God. We do our best to live by the principle of ability plus opportunity equal responsibility. What we want is not as important as what we must do. We ask you to pray for us in this decision to make another move. We pray that this will be for the furtherance of the gospel in every way. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your continued prayers and support in the great work of Almighty God! Our next meetings are in Mountain Home, AR; June 5-12, Moore, OK June 17-26; Hoyt, TX, August 7-14. Duane and laurie@yahoo.com. (931) 629-8980 cell.



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THE BACK PAGE...

WELCOME TO MONKEY TOWN

By Carl M. Johnson

For almost 100 years now Dayton, Tennessee has been referred to as “Monkey Town.” In 1925, one of the most famous and controversial trials in American history took place in this small Appalachian town of 7200 people. The official name of the trial was, “The State of Tennessee vs. John Thomas Scopes,” but it is popularly remembered as the Scopes Monkey Trial.

Scopes was a coach and science teacher indicted for violating a state law by teaching evolution in a Dayton high school. After eight days of trial, it took the jury only nine minutes to deliberate. Scopes was found guilty and ordered to pay a \$100 fine, though the verdict was later overturned on a technicality.

However, a recent article by Frank Lidz in Smithsonian magazine suggests that Scopes may not have been the crusader we have thought him to be, and he may not have taught Darwinism in the classroom after all. The American Civil Liberties Union had offered to bankroll the defense of ANY teacher who would break Tennessee’s new law, and Lidz says Dayton’s business leaders may have enlisted Scopes in order to create some publicity for the town (“Welcome to Monkey Town,” April 2016, 76-81).

If the trial began as a stunt by town leaders looking for publicity, they certainly got it. The lawyers in the case alone would have made the trial front-page news. Legendary defense attorney and devout atheist Clarence Darrow offered to defend Scopes “without fees or expense.” Darrow was sometimes referred to as “The Attorney for the Damned,” because he had successfully defended thousands of clients whose cases appeared hopeless. The ACLU was reluctant to accept Darrow, however. It worried that Darrow was too radical, was merely seeking headlines, and that his participation in the event would turn it into a circus. Scopes was advised that the town was already bristling with “screwballs and con men” that had come for the trial, and that their presence would turn the trial into a gutter fight. Scopes replied, “If it’s going to be a gutter fight, I want a good gutter fighter.” He quickly accepted Darrow’s offer.

William Jennings Bryan, three times a candidate for the presidency of the United States and a Bible-believer, volunteered to act as the prosecuting attorney as part of his campaign against atheists and agnostics. He and Darrow were extolled as the two greatest orators in America. Hundreds of members of the press and thousands of visitors swarmed into town as Darrow, the “village atheist,” and Bryan the “true believer,” squared off in what had become a carnival atmosphere.

One of the journalists was H. L. Mencken, of the Baltimore Evening Sun. As he observed the frenzied gathering—the narrow streets jammed with Bible salesmen, souvenir hucksters, freak shows, a toy-piano-playing chimp, Mencken called the proceedings a “universal joke,” labeled the townsfolk as ignoramuses, and referred to Dayton as “Monkey Town.” The term was not intended as one of endearment, but it stuck (Lidz 80).

Although William Jennings Bryan won the decision in court, he actually turned out to be the biggest loser in the trial. Darrow, in a bizarre but shrewd maneuver, called prosecutor Bryan to the stand because Bryan had been touted as “an expert witness on the Bible.” Darrow then proceeded to expose Bryan’s Bible knowledge as being so simplistic and limited that it became embarrassing even to Bryan’s most ardent supporters. The examination turned out to be the greatest humiliation of Bryan’s storied career, and he died of a heart attack in town five days after the trial ended.

Bryan’s case is evidence that God’s Truth often suffers in the hands of the ignorant (Hosea 4:6; Isa. 5:13; 2 Tim. 2:15).

While a 1960 motion picture film entitled “Inherit the Wind,” added to the unflattering image of Bryan, the townsfolk of Dayton continued to revere him. They built a statue on the courthouse lawn inscribed with the words “Truth and Eloquence.” Dayton is also home to Bryan College, a religious-based liberal arts school founded in 1930 in Bryan’s honor.

Lidz refers to the entire Scopes ordeal as “a publicity stunt gone viral,” but it appears the Dayton locals have learned to deal with the negative fallout more creatively. Dayton now has a restaurant called, “Monkey Town Brewing Co.” Since 1988 the city has conducted the “Scopes Trial Festival,” held over two weekends in July. The festival includes live bluegrass, tractor and craft shows, and a fried-Oreo food truck. The centerpiece of the festival is a town-commissioned musical which reenacts the trial in the vast, original courtroom. The play is essentially a rebuttal of the movie, “Inherit the Wind” (79-80).

While the debate between evolutionists and creationists continues to rage fiercely elsewhere, it is obvious that business leaders in Dayton are still trying to cash in on the debate financially. Therefore, each July you can expect to see some carefully marketed monkey business if you visit Monkey Town, USA. cmjthebackpage@gmail.com