

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

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Did The Church Give Us The Bible?

Roman Catholics have often repeated the claim that the Catholic Church gave us the Bible, and that this means the voice of the Church is more authoritative than the Bible. This kind of reasoning is behind many of the non-scriptural and anti-scriptural doctrines and practices of Romanism. To them the New Testament is authoritative only when the traditions of the Church or the pronouncements of the Pope do not contradict it.

However, the truth of the matter is that the Bible did not originate with the Church. It is true that the church existed before the books of the New Testament were written, but that does not prove the church to be the ultimate source of these books. Those who penned these books were all members of the Lord's church, but "the church" did not produce the Bible.

Moses existed before there was a Law of Moses, and was one of the children of Israel, but this does not mean that Israel produced the Law. The Law originated in the mind of Almighty God, who delivered it to Moses who delivered it to the children of Israel. Only those who would completely discount the activity of God and

look on this from a purely humanistic standpoint would dare think that "Israel gave us the Law."

God speaks to mankind today by Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1). He called and prepared men to send out preaching His word. Shortly before His death he promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them to enable them to remember what he had taught and to guide them into all the truth (cf. John 14:16, 26; 16:13). To hear these men would be to hear Christ (cf. Matt. 10:40; John 13:20).

In that classic passage where we find Jesus promising to build His church (Matt. 16:18), we find him promising Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven and stating that "whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven" (v.19, NASB). The same language is addressed to all the apostles in Matt. 18:18. The tense of the verb is future perfect, which conveys the idea that when the apostles bound something, it had already been bound in heaven. Apostolic teaching originated with God, not the church! For a while the Divine Message was being delivered both orally and in written form, but the message originated with God. The church of the New Testament resulted from this Divine Word.

— James E. Cooper

FOUR WAYS TO SERVE GOD

The work which mankind does in the Lord's service can be accomplished in many ways and for many reasons, but the salvation of a man's soul depends not only on doing the Lord's things in His way, but for His reasons, too.

(1.) Many attempt to serve God ***sparingly*** or ***grudgingly***. Having carefully calculated just how much they can "get by with," they do that and not one thing more. Paul said, "He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly" (1 Cor. 9:6).

(2.) Others serve God out of nothing more than ***compulsion*** or ***obligation***. Like the Pharisees whose hearts were not right, but who stuck very closely to the Law, these modern "have-to" Christians will only do what they are forced to do. Jesus said, "Unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

(3.) Still others render service to God out of ***abundance***, or ***convenience***. They are willing to let Him have what is left over of their time and effort. Paul reminded Timothy that he must stand ready to serve the Lord "when it is convenient and when it is not" (2 Tim. 4:2).

(4.) Finally, there are some few who serve the will of the Father ***from the heart***. They "seek first His kingdom and His righteousness" (Matt. 6:33), and they are "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that (their) toil is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58). These are they whom Jesus said will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21), rather than those who for other reasons cry out, "Lord. Lord."

- Gary P. Henry

The Confession Of An Agnostic

Dr. Robert Jastrow is the founder and director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies. He is the author of the most widely used space textbook in the United States. He is Professor of astronomy and geology at Columbia University and Professor of earth science at Dartmouth College. Dr. Jastrow has produced over 100 CBS television programs on space science, and he is regarded by many as "the greatest writer on science alive today." He is also a confessed agnostic (i.e., he claims that one cannot know whether there is a God or not).

In view of his philosophical inclinations (he's a hardcore evolutionist), therefore, one is quite surprised at the startling admissions that Dr. Jastrow has made. In one of his books, Until The Sun Dies (W. W. Norton & Co., N.Y., 1971), this prominent scientist declared:

"What is the ultimate solution to the mystery of the origin of the Universe? The answers provided by the astronomers are disconcerting and remarkable. Most remarkable of all is that the fact that in science, as in the Bible, the World begins with an act of creation. That view has not always been held by scientists. Only as a result of the most recent discoveries can we say with a fair degree of confidence that our Universe has not existed forever; that it began abruptly, without apparent cause, in a blinding event that defies scientific explanation" (p. 2).

"Picture the radiant splendor of the moment of creation. Suddenly a world of pure energy flashes into being;

light of unimaginable brilliance fills the Universe; the cosmic fireball expands and cools; after a few minutes, the first particles of matter appear, like droplets of liquid metal condensing in a furnace.Science, unlike the Bible, has no explanation for the occurrence of that extraordinary event. The Universe, and everything that has happened in it since the beginning of time, are a grand effect without a known cause.

"An effect without a cause? That is not the world of science; it is a world of witchcraft, of wild events and the whims of demons, a medieval world that science has tried to banish. As scientists, what are we to make of this picture? I do not know" (pp.4-5).

"At present, science has no satisfactory answer to the question of the origin of life on the earth.

"Perhaps the appearance of life on the earth is a miracle. Scientists are reluctant to accept that view, but their choices are limited; either life was created on the earth by the will of a being outside the grasp of scientific understanding, or it evolved on our planet spontaneously, through chemical reactions occurring in nonliving matter lying on the surface of the planet.

"The first theory places the question of the origin of life beyond the reach of scientific inquiry. It is the statement of faith in the power of a Supreme Being not subject to the laws of science.

"The second theory is also an act of faith. The act of faith consists in assuming that the scientific view of the

origin of life is correct, without having concrete evidence to support that belief" (pp. 51,52).

Dr. Jastrow has established two valid points here. First, the Bible is absolutely correct in its assertion that the Universe is not eternal; that it did commence to be "in the beginning." Secondly, this agnostic makes a remarkable and most unusual concession to the fact that the evolutionary view of the origin of life is actually non-scientific (i.e., beyond the pale of scientific investigation). These are powerful acknowledgements and ought to be pressed by Christian apologists to great advantage.

- Wayne Jackson, 1981

Origin of Sect-dom

The doctrines and commandments of men are responsible for every denomination under the sun. Christ and the apostles did not build them. Had men always spoken as the oracles of God, there would never have been a denomination in all the world, and there would be no division among the people of God. A thing that is not in the word of God cannot come from it.

- C.M. Pullias, via Gospel Advocate, 1933

THIS WEEK'S LESSONS: Sunday morning: "*The Worst Possible Scenario!*" (Text: Matt. 25:41); Sunday evening: "*Not Even In Israel Have I Found Such!*" (Text: Luke 7:2-10).