

- THINK DEISM! -

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YANKING THE TEETH THE RELIGIOUS RIGHT

by Robert L. Johnson

When smiling Pat Robertson failed in the 1988 Presidential race, due primarily to being caught in a lie about being a war hero, he didn't disregard his lust for power: he only changed his tactics. Instead of aiming for the top, he and his sheep in the religious right are attacking, and growing, at the grass-roots level. They are successfully sponsoring candidates to push their fundamentalist agenda onto the American people as two consecutive conservative Republican Congresses show. And many voters put credence in what this "son-of-a-senator" says because he has cloaked himself in robes of Biblical respectability. In the back of many peoples' minds, they think Pat and his Christian Coalition are doing God's will. The Bible Pat uses to mesmerize the well meaning masses with is the teeth of his organization and his source of authority over his followers and his supporters. The Bible has become the powerful engine of the religious right. Fortunately, for free thinking and freedom loving people everywhere, there is a kill-switch for that engine, as well as a source of spiritual inspiration and strength that is grounded in reason, logic and reality, as opposed to superstition, ignorance and fear. That kill-switch is in the form of the world-view of Deism.

As a tool to take the teeth out of the fanatics' jaws, there couldn't be a better one than Deism. For Deism not only removes the teeth, and enables everyone to see revealed religion for what it is, but it replaces man-made religion with a natural creed composed of sound principles that transverse both spiritual and political needs. Deism shines the light of solid logic and reality on all "revealed" religions, and empowers those with the courage and honesty to look, to see the fanatics stand on nothing but myth. At the same time the oracle of reason, which is nurtured by the Deist world-view, takes hold to open the minds of all sincere, thinking people. It soon becomes evident that you can believe in God without believing in the Bible, Koran or any other manufactured book. With a populace of free thinking Deists, who not only are not afraid to use their reason, but who routinely exercise it, the religious charlatans and political prostitutes will be hard pressed to continue their selfish manipulations and deceptions. A man-made book will no longer be their control mechanism over the minds and actions of individuals and their lives.

As a political action group, the religious right likes to intertwine their Biblical respectability with old fashioned Americanism. They paint a picture of our Revolutionary War leaders as religious zealots, as they themselves are. Contrary to Pat and his army, America is not a Judeo-Christian nation, and it never was. It is true, many of America's founders were religious, however, none of their personal religious beliefs were permitted to permeate the law due mainly to people with vision, like Thomas Jefferson, who helped insure the separation of church and state. In fact, the U.S. Constitution does not mention God at all, and the Declaration of

Independence mentions God, but makes absolutely no mention of religion. The name of Jesus Christ is nowhere to be found in either document, nor is there reference made to the Bible. Instead, Deism is reflected in the Declaration of Independence - that is God without religion.

Ronald Reagan, when speaking at a Religious Broadcasters' Convention, tried the same "patriotic" trick of misrepresenting our nation's founders. In his speech he said Thomas Paine and Thomas Jefferson would be proud of what the T.V. evangelists were doing! Obviously, Reagan never read any of their writings. Particularly Thomas Paine is very direct as the following example from an essay he wrote entitled **OF THE RELIGION OF DEISM COMPARED WITH THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION, AND THE SUPERIORITY OF THE FORMER OVER THE LATTER:**

"Every person, of whatever religious denomination he may be, is a Deist in the first article of his Creed. Deism, from the Latin *Deus*, God, is the belief of a God, and this belief is the first article of every man's creed.

"It is on this article, universally consented to by all mankind, that the Deist builds his church, and here he rests. Whenever we step aside from this article, by mixing it with articles of human invention, we wander into a labyrinth of uncertainty and fable, and become exposed to every kind of imposition by pretenders to revelation.

"The Persian shows the Zend-Avesta of Zoroaster, the lawgiver of Persia, and calls it divine law; the Brahman shows the *Shaster*, revealed, he says, by God to Brahma, and given to him out of a cloud; the Jew shows what he calls the law of Moses, given, he says, by God, on the Mount Sinai; the Christian shows a collection of books and epistles, written by nobody knows who, and called the New Testament; and the Moslem shows the Koran, given, he says, by God to Mohammed: each of these calls itself *revealed religion*, and the *only* true Word of God, and this the followers of each profess to believe from the habit of education, and each believes the others are imposed upon.

"But when the divine gift of reason begins to expand itself in the mind and calls man to reflection, he then reads and contemplates God and His works, and not in the books pretending to be revelation. The creation is the Bible of the true believer in God. Everything in this vast volume inspires him with sublime ideas of the Creator. The little and paltry, and often obscene, tales of the Bible sink into wretchedness when put in comparison with this mighty work.

"The Deist needs none of those tricks and shows called miracles to confirm his faith, for what can be a greater miracle than the creation itself, and his own existence?

"There is a happiness in Deism, when rightly understood, that is not to be found in any other system of religion. All other systems have something in them that either shock our reason, or are repugnant to it, and man, if he thinks at all, must stifle his reason in order to force himself to believe them.

"But in Deism our reason and our belief become happily united. The wonderful structure of the universe, and everything we behold in the system of the creation, prove to us, far better than books can do, the existence of a God, and at the same time proclaim His attributes."

BIBLE AUTHORITY

If Pat and his cohorts are going to make America a Judeo-Christian country because the "Word of God" (in Pat's case the Bible) demands it, and the Bible is the only authority Pat is claiming (other than an occasional audible communication from God as Pat claims in his comical, yet dangerous, book aptly titled *BEYOND REASON*) for his new mandate for America, we better investigate his Word of God, and be certain it possesses supernatural qualities. For if it is not the Word of God, no sincere thinking person will want to submit themselves and their children to a government guided by its myths and lies. Especially the genuine people who are currently working so hard for Pat and his organization will want to know if the Bible truly is the Word of God. They, like many people, see the order and beauty in the creation, and strongly believe a Power much greater than themselves put it there. That Power they call God. If they *sincerely* believe in God, they will earnestly want to know if what they are told is the Word of God actually is.

Looking in the World Book Encyclopedia, 1990, page 284, we see that during the 100's C.E., the church needed a "canon as authority against unacceptable religious views." The church judged which writings were the Word of God, and which writings weren't by three standards: "(1) The writings had to be widely accepted and used in the church. (2) They had to follow the church's traditional teachings. (3) They were *believed* to have been written or authorized by an apostle. ." Even if the writings were in fact written by an apostle, and not just "believed" to have been, it is no guaranty that it is directly from God. But the believers in the Bible don't even have this simple authorization!

About 125 years after adopting their canon, which consisted of the entire modern version of the New Testament minus Hebrews and Revelation, the Council of Nicaea *voted* what is now known as the Bible to be the Word of God. They did this by vote, as we now vote for politicians. That is all the authority the Bible has - that in 325 C.E. a group of religious zealots voted it to be the Word of God. To Deists, and to all thinking people, that is no authority at all.

A LOOK AT THE BIBLE ITSELF

When we move our attention from the *un*-supernatural origins of the Bible to the contents of the Bible itself, we need to keep the following advice from Thomas Jefferson in mind. It is taken from a letter he wrote to his nephew regarding this same subject. It reads: "Fix reason firmly in her seat, and call to her tribunal every fact, every opinion. Question with boldness even the

existence of a God; because if there be one, He must more approve of the homage of reason, than that of blindfold fear. You will naturally examine first, the religion of your own country. Read the Bible, then, as you would read Livy or Tacitus . . . Your own reason is the only oracle given you by heaven, and you are answerable, not for the rightness, but the uprightness of the decision." In this Jeffersonian spirit, let us examine the Bible.

We hear a lot about having the Biblical version of creation taught along with the scientific theory in our schools. But which Biblical version? Unknown to many, the book of Genesis contains two separate and distinct stories of the creation! The first one starts at Genesis 1:1 and ends at Genesis 2:3. The second fable starts at 2:4 and continues through the end of the second chapter of Genesis. In the first story the Creator is continually referred to as "God," but in the second story the Creator is always referred to as "Lord God," but never "God."

To further show these are two separate stories, and not one account of one creation, let's look at the two creations of man. In Genesis 1:27-28 we read: "So God created man in His Own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them; and God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and every living thing that moveth on the face of the earth."

Chapter 2, verse 1 reads: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished . . ." Since the story itself states the creation was "finished," it is reasonable to believe that is the end of the creation story. But it's not.

We find in Genesis 2:4 the following: "In the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up - for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; . . ." How could it be that God created man in 1:27 and then, according to the same book of the Bible, in 2:5 there is no man??? Does this sound like it is inspired by a Power capable of creating the universe, or does it sound like either bad or deceptive writing??

The attorney who was instrumental in instituting America's child labor laws, and who was the defense attorney in the celebrated Scopes Monkey Trial, Clarence Darrow, asked an interesting question regarding the Biblical version of the creation and fall of man. He wanted to know how snakes traveled before one allegedly talked Eve into eating the apple? Did they hop about like pogo sticks? For the Bible states in Genesis 3:14, "The Lord God said to the serpent, 'Because you have done this, cursed are you above all cattle, and above all wild animals; upon your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life.'" It clearly says, "shall" go, which means up to that time snakes weren't traveling on their bellies.

Another Biblical blunder is found in the story of Noah and the flood. According to this murderous myth, God was so full of hate and frustration for humanity he murdered every living thing on planet earth by drowning, except Noah and his seven family members and the animals God allegedly told Noah to bring with on the ark. Besides obvious absurdities, this story is proved false by the Bible itself for it has God telling Noah to, "Take with you seven pairs of all *clean* animals, the male and his mate; and a pair of the animals that are *not clean*, . . .". Since,

according to the Bible, the Mosaic Law was not yet given, how did Noah know what "clean" (kosher) and "not clean" animals were?

If Pat Robertson really believes in God, and loves God as he claims, he will not want to blaspheme God. And more importantly, neither will any of his sincere followers. But the Bible Pat's life is based on, definitely blasphemes the Creator. It does it numerous times, but one of the most blatant cases is the much publicized story of Passover. This grotesque myth depicts God as a perverse mass murderer, much as the horrid story of the Creator killing men, women, children and animals by mass drowning in the flood, but the passover lie has Him going door to door at midnight slaughtering babies Himself! Exodus 11:10 has Moses asking Pharaoh to release the Jews. But "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he did not let the people of Israel go out of his land." Which is followed up by Exodus 12:29 which reads: "At midnight the Lord slew every first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh on the throne to the first-born of the prisoner in the

dungeon, as well as the first-born of the animals." The god of the Bible not only ensured mass murder would be committed, by "hardening Pharaoh's heart," but savagely carried it out himself. Is this the god you believe in??? If so, why??? And do you want a religious/political gang that promotes trash like this influencing and running our government??? It's easy to see how our nation could turn into a fundamentalist religious country not unlike Iran, once the religious charlatans capture the necessary power which they're well on their way to accomplishing right now.

Turning now to the New Testament, we see its very name is inconsistent with God. The very fact it is called "New" shows the "Old" must be faulty. And if the "Old" is faulty it couldn't have come from God. In this case the "New" claims the "Old" for authenticity. How many times have we been told the Old Testament prophesied the birth of Jesus? (For a quality laser printed essay by Thomas Paine that details the blatant falsehoods of each of the alleged prophesies in great depth, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to *THINK!*, Box 47026, St. Petersburg, FL 33743).

Aren't you glad the Creator didn't make the laws of nature as changeable as man has made the dogmas of Christianity and all revealed religion? For example, how would you like to wake up one day to a world without gravity?

An obvious fallacy in the New Testament is found in the genealogy of Jesus. In Matthew chapter 1, verse 6 we find a genealogy from Christ to David totaling 28 generation. In Luke 3:23 we find the number of generations to have jumped to 43! How can this be??? And if Jesus was conceived via a "miraculous conception" why is Joseph listed not only in both of these Biblical genealogies, but why is he listed at all?

Another tooth removal from the religious right takes place when we think about the New Testament story of King Herod killing all the children under the age of two years (perhaps he was only following the example of the god in the Old Testament who allegedly spent the night butchering the innocent of Egypt). As the fable goes in Matthew 2:13-19, an angel appeared to Joseph telling him to take Jesus to Egypt because Herod was going to slaughter the children two

years of age and under. And that was exactly what happened, as the story goes. What the author neglected to mention, however, was Jesus' cousin, John, who was the same age as Jesus. Nothing happened to him! In fact, we know he wasn't murdered because, according to Luke 1:5-80, he grew up to be John the Baptist!

It is time we, as a world society, move on from outmoded and false ideas of religion, where crooked people prey on the innocent and trusting. We need a revolution in religion to break us free of the old superstitions and to press forward with sound ideas that can stand up to tough questions. Even though the American and French Revolutions of the eighteenth century brought about basic political change, there is still very much that needs to be done. Because of ingrained religious training many of the benefits these Revolutions put in place are not yet fully realized. Deadly religious shackles still remain that are holding back the populace and prohibiting us from fully utilizing and benefiting from the changes. Two examples are: (1) the basic mind-set to take things "on faith," while the priests and politicians manipulate the people. This happened on a large scale when George Bush's Christian minister told him it was within God's will to invade Iraq, and 100,000 people were killed. The influence on the people the power elite enjoys due to revealed religion is truly deadly. They use it to set us at each others throats virtually at will.

The second example is evident before the politician is even elected. They will promise and say absolutely anything to get votes. They know many people will believe them. The people will believe because they are taught to believe fiction for fact at Sunday school, CCD classes and Temple. And if we who think independently are not careful and take action *NOW*, we may end up in a country like we had before the American Revolution. In this very country, prior to the Revolution, it was a crime not to attend church every Sunday, and if you questioned the wrong people or institutions (or if you owned something the church and/or state wanted) you could be tried as a witch and executed. Don't you think Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and the rest or the "most reverends" would love to have laws like those back on the books?

Another nightmare the religious fanatics could bring about is transforming our country into a war zone. The violence and bloody scenes we witness every day on the news, which are taking place between the various revealed religions around the world in places such as Yugoslavia, Ireland, Israel and India just to name a few could very well become our reality, and that of our children, if the religious extremists are not successfully countered. Already we have the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York City being carried out by religious zealots. What's next? A crowded shopping center or movie theater? Or, with the growing availability of the material and know how, perhaps the next bomb detonated will be nuclear.

THINK! will continue to expose the Bible and writings of all revealed religions for what they are. In this way we hope to ensure the continued free expression of ideas that is absolutely vital to a free society. By promoting independent thought, coupled with positive action, it is inevitable that people will begin to demand respect from their "leaders" in a unified fashion. The populace will realize, at long last, that the abuse we've been accepting as inevitable, can and will come to an end. That we don't have to live under a self-serving plutocracy whose leaders vote themselves raises while they ruin the economy and punish the "peasants" by attacking things like the minimum wage and social programs. Their greed doesn't even spare the irreplaceable and fragile environment.

If you like the idea of freedom of thought and freedom of speech, of separation of church and state, of challenging the status quo, and if you recognize the world wide danger of the politically active religious fundamentalists, then you need to join the World Union of Deists. We use reason to counter their unreasonableness, and we attack with facts and reality. We're always willing to tolerate other peoples' views, but never willing to allow suppression of free thinking and the open exchange of ideas. In union we make a difference. Your help is greatly appreciated. To join please complete and mail in the World Union of Deists Membership Application found on page 18 of this issue of *THINK!*.

(We now have an online WUD Membership Application here:
<http://www.deism.com/member.htm>. And you can become a WUD Sustaining Member here:
<http://www.deism.com/sustaindeism.htm>)

Enlightening Deistic Quotes

"Seeing what I saw I know there has to be a Creator of the universe, a Supreme Being. For me, it wasn't a religious experience, it was a spiritual one."

-Gene Cernan, Apollo 17

"The noblest question in the world is **What good may I do in it?**"

"No longer virtuous no longer free; is a Maxim as true with regard to a private person as a government."

"Great beauty, great strength, and great riches, are really and truly of no great use; a right heart exceeds all."

"Tricks and treachery are the practice of fools, that have not wit enough to be honest."

"Seek virtue, and, of that possest,

To Providence, resign the rest."

"Fear to do ill, and you need fear nought else."

"If evils come not, then our fears in vain:

And if they do, fear but augments the pain."

"When befriended, remember it:

When you befriend, forget it."

"What signifies your patience, if you can't find it when you want it?"

"Hear **REASON**, or she'll make you feel her."

"What is serving God? 'Tis doing good to man."

"Lost time is never found again."

-Benjamin Franklin

"To the dull mind nature is leaden. To the illumined mind the whole world burns and sparkles with light."

-Emerson

"We do not err because truth is difficult to see. It is visible at a glance. We err because this is more comfortable."

-Alexander Solzhenitsyn

"Next to our *holy* religion, which would be the least exceptionable? Would it not be the most simple - that which taught a great deal of morality and few doctrines - that which tended to make men virtuous without making them fools - that which did not impose the belief of things impossible, contradictory, injurious to the deity, and pernicious to mankind; and which did not take on itself to threaten, with eternal punishments, all who had common sense? Would it not be that which did not support its articles by executioners, and deluge the world with blood, for unintelligible sophisms? Would it not be that which taught only the adoration of one God, of justice, forbearance and humanity?"

-Voltaire

Freightening Religious Quotes

"Specifically, I commanded that storm, in the name of Jesus, to stop its forward movement and to head back where it had come from. By then, it was almost up to Cape Hatteras, North Carolina. Even as I write these words, I know it may seem absurd to talk to a giant hurricane. But that was what the Holy Spirit led me to do, and that's exactly what I did."

"Although he had a limited income, Clyde knew that the Bible encourages giving - and so he became a "cheerful giver." In fact, this decision to give seemed to be the spiritual trigger that led directly to his healing." (*Sounds like a good caption for The Far Side. Editor*)

"However, there are times when He speaks in an audible voice."

-Pat Robertson, BEYOND REASON

"Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father."

-Genesis 19:36

"And you shall eat it as a barley cake, baking it in their sight on human dung."

-Ezekiel 4:13

***THINK!* November 1993**

ANIMAL SACRIFICE KOSHER WITH COURT

The Court ruled on the side of myth yet again in another case involving revealed religion. This case concerned the practice of animal sacrifice. In *Church of The Lukumi Babalu Aye, Inc. and Ernesto Pichardo v. City of Hialeah*, 61 LW 4587, the Court ruled animal sacrifice is permissible. This decision is largely the result of the City of Hialeah's tacit approval of religious Jews slaughtering animals using the Kosher method of slaughter (the carotid arteries are severed and the animal bleeds to death in agony), but vehemently disapproves of anyone else torturing animals for religious purposes. The Church of The Lukumi Babalu Aye is a part of the Santeria revealed religion. They sacrifice animals in virtually the same way Jews kill them using the Kosher method. Both groups claim God told them to do it. Yet the Hialeah City Council singled out the Santeria group. This fact is evident in the statement of Council member Mejides who said, "The Bible says we are allowed to sacrifice an animal for consumption, but for any other purposes, I don't believe that the Bible allows that." And the chaplain of the Hialeah Police Department said, "We need to be helping people and sharing with them the truth that is found in Jesus Christ. I would exhort you not to permit this Church to exist." These are the words of public officials! Sounds like Salem, Massachusetts in the seventeenth century.

The World Union of Deists does not agree with any of the parties involved in this case, including the Court. We feel the Court should have suggested the City Council rewrite the ordinance to include the Kosher slaughter of animals. Just as society does not permit people to practice polygamy regardless of what their religion teaches, likewise we should outlaw cruelty to animals no matter what religion is practicing it.

A LETTER FROM MR. THOMAS JEFFERSON TO THE DANBURY BAPTISTS

January 1, 1802

"The affectionate sentiments of esteem and approbation which you are so good to express towards me on behalf of the Danbury Baptist Association give me the highest satisfaction.

"My duties dictate a faithful and zealous pursuit of my constituents, and in proportion as they are persuaded of my fidelity to those duties, the discharge of them becomes more pleasing.

"Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legislative powers of government reach actions only, and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislative should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,' thus building a wall of separation between Church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.

"I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association, assurances of my high respect and esteem."

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to thank everyone who has subscribed to *THINK!*, not only for your subscription, but also for your patience. The last few months have been very demanding and stressful for me because of several major family problems. They are all pretty much behind me now, so I will have the time I need to put into this publication. The purpose of *THINK!* and the World Union of Deists, I feel, is very important and well worth the cost, effort, energy, and time. With millions of good intentioned, but mislead, people being used by self-serving political and spiritual prostitutes like Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell, ad nauseam, something is definitely needed to counter this abuse. And to make matters worse, some of the evangelists have more than mere money on their minds. What they lust after is raw political power. Political power that would, in their hands, make America a living hell. That is why we must stop them. Besides, it's fun pointing out the holes in their superstitions.

I would also like to thank all of you who have shared your introductory editions of *THINK!* with friends and family. We've had a very positive response due to your efforts. Please continue to spread the word that there is an alternative to man made artificial religion, and that it is Deism, the natural religion.

*When we see the power of the Bible based neoconservatives which caused the unnecessary war in Iraq, and political Christian preachers like Hagee who have thousands of followers pushing for more blind and unnatural support for Israel, what was in THINK! back in 1993 seems prophetic. If Deists don't do all we can **now** to put an end to this nonsense, the "revealed" religionists will have their bloody and destructive Biblical Armageddon at the entire world's expense. The editor. April 10, 2007*

***THINK!* December 1993/January 1994**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY THOMAS PAINE

"I have always regarded Paine as one of the greatest of all Americans. Never have we had a sounder intelligence in this republic . . . It was my good fortune to encounter Thomas Paine's works in my boyhood . . . it was, indeed, a revelation to me to read that great thinker's views on political and theological subjects. Paine educated me then about many matters of which I had never before thought. I remember very vividly the flash of enlightenment that shone from Paine's writings and I recall thinking at that time, '*What a pity these works are not today the schoolbooks for all children!*' My interest in Paine was not satisfied by my first reading of his works. I went back to them time and again, just as I have done since my boyhood days."

Thomas Paine, the great writer and thinker praised by the above quote of Thomas A. Edison, was born in Thetford, England on January 29, 1737. His father, Joseph Pain, worked as a staymaker and belonged to the Society of Friends, or Quakers. His mother, Frances Cocke, was a member of the Church of England. As a boy Tom Paine was required to read and study the Bible, and was made a member of the Church of England.

Like most people in that time who belonged to the financial lower class, Thomas Paine worked in his father's line of business as a staymaker. He opened his own shop in the village of Sandwich, and there he met and married Mary Lambert in September 1759. She died less than a year later during premature childbirth.

His business failed and in 1764 he began working as an exciseman for the Crown. He kept that position until 1774 when he was discharged after taking up the unsuccessful struggle to win a pay raise for the excisemen. Between 1764 and 1774 he married Elizabeth Ollive, was divorced, operated a tobacco shop and watched as this business, too, failed. Years later he said, "trade I do not understand."

This period of his life, though generally negative, was not completely so. A positive turning point took place when George Lewis Scott, who was a superior of his in the excise office, introduced him to Benjamin Franklin in December of 1772 while in London. They attended scientific lectures together, and it was here that Thomas Paine began to develop Deist ideas. He wrote of this time, "After I had made myself master of the use of the globes, and of the orrery, and conceived an idea of the infinity of space, and of the eternal divisibility of matter, and obtained, at least, a general knowledge of what was called natural philosophy, I began to compare, or confront, the internal evidence those things afford with the Christian system of faith."

With a letter of introduction from his benefactor and mentor Ben Franklin in his possession, and repeated failures in England recently behind him, Thomas Paine sailed for America in late September 1774. He arrived in Philadelphia on November 30 stricken with typhus. While

bedridden and receiving care from a doctor who was a friend of Mr. Franklin, he wrote an essay entitled "Dialogue Between General Wolfe and General Gage in a Wood near Boston" which, a year and a half before the U.S. Declaration of Independence was written, encouraged the separation of the Colonies from Britain.

After regaining his health, he worked at various jobs and eventually settled on one at a print shop owned by Robert Aitken. He ran the routine operations of the business and also wrote essays and poetry for the owner's magazine, the *Pennsylvania Magazine*.

Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense* and published it anonymously in January 1776. This powerful and though provoking pamphlet made it clear a revolution was necessary. It influenced many people who were on the fence regarding a clean break with the established government of England. Paine sold 500,000 copies of *Common Sense* in the first year. What he did with the money shows the very high quality of Thomas Paine's character. Instead of buying a house and property, he donated it to the Cause of the American Revolution! Paine was very altruistic as his actions proved.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, "Shouldering a musket, Paine joined the rank and file, and won reputation as a brave soldier." (Life and Appreciations of Thomas Paine, Vincent Parke and Company, 1908) But he made an even bigger contribution to the American Revolution when, in its darkest hours, he wrote *The Crisis*. The ideas in *The Crisis*, which is a total of fifteen separate essays each written when an obstacle arose which to weaker hearts and minds seemed insurmountable, strengthened the beleaguered Americans. They planted hope in the hearts of the active idealists even as thousands of Continental soldiers were deserting, those loyal to the legally established government were harassing the rebels whenever possible, and no other nation was willing to assist the radicals fighting and struggling against the most powerful government on earth to bring forth not only a new nation, but a new ideal and way of life.

After the Revolution was finally won, the New York legislature, to show its appreciation, gave Tom Paine a 300 acre farm, which had been confiscated from a Tory, in New Rochelle, New York. (The farm house and Thomas Paine Museum are cared for by the Thomas Paine National Historical Association, 983 North Avenue, New Rochelle, New York 10804, 914-632-5376).

Working towards his goals and interests in science, inventing, designing, and writing, Thomas Paine invented the first iron bridge to be constructed in Europe. While in Europe he wrote *Rights of Man* which was directed against the anti-people writings of Edmund Burke of England, who blasted the French Revolution in order to insure his pension.

THE AGE OF REASON

Tom Paine wanted to write about religion for a long time. However, he wanted to save it for his last writing, believing that when a person is facing imminent death, they will be most honest about their beliefs concerning God and theology. He also felt his ideas would be attacked by revealed religion, which they were and still are, and the fact that he wrote them when he did would strengthen his arguments put forth in the work.

During the French Revolution he went against popular sentiment and publicly admonished the provisional government not to execute the King and Queen. He said to abolish the title and position, but to spare the lives of the persons who hold the positions. This didn't sit well with those in power who were jealous of him. He was aware of his powerful enemies, as well as the guillotines they were making frequent use of on a daily basis. Believing he would soon meet the same fate as thousands of others the government didn't approve of, he began writing *The Age of Reason*.

At about 4:00 a.m. on December 29, 1793 Thomas Paine was arrested by French authorities. The reluctant guards and interpreter went through his papers. After examining the manuscript of *The Age of Reason*, the interpreter said, "It is an interesting work; it will do much good." Paine was then taken to the prison of the Luxembourg

On pages 101 and 102 of *The Age of Reason* Mr. Paine writes concerning an illness he contracted while in prison. ". . . I was seized with a fever that in its progress had every symptom of becoming mortal, and from the effects of which I am not recovered. It was then that I remembered with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of "*The Age of Reason*." I had but little expectation of surviving, and those about me had less. I know, therefore, by experience, the conscientious trial of my own principles."

After Paine spent ten months and nine days in the Luxembourg prison, James Monroe, who was the new American Minister to France, won the release of Thomas Paine. Paine was very ill due to the inhumane conditions he was subjected to in prison. James Monroe and his wife Elizabeth took him in and nursed him back to health. While a guest of the Monroes he wrote the second part of *The Age of Reason*. This time he had a Bible in his possession and used it most aptly against itself. Irate religious leaders tried, all in vain, to refute the solid and sound arguments Thomas Paine unleashed against superstition. It seems what upset that day's System the most was his bringing Deism to the masses of people. After Thomas Paine, Deism was no longer just an intellectual parlor topic. However, the System prevailed by slanderous sermons of damnation against Mr. Paine and anyone who followed his demonic Deism. He was viciously and unreasonably attacked not only from pulpits around the world, but also from the press. In particular, the Federalist press attacked him as well as his good friend Thomas Jefferson, who was running for the presidency. He was hanged in effigy by good Christians the world over, and in England *The Age of Reason* was banned as blasphemy and the government prosecuted a bookseller who carried the work.

When he returned to America Paine was vilified by almost everyone. People threatened him, mocked him, and some attempted to ostracize him. They did everything but successfully counter his arguments against revealed religion. Elihu Palmer, a blind ex-Presbyterian minister, published a Deist monthly called *The Prospect, or View of the Moral World*. He printed many essays written by Tom Paine in this journal, some of which came from works Mr. Paine intended for a third part of *The Age of Reason*. These essays are being published in their entirety in *THINK!*. The first one is found on page 3 of the November edition entitled LETTER TO BISHOP MOORE FROM THOMAS PAINE. The next two pieces are found starting on page 5 of this edition.

After giving everything he had to America, France, and in fact to all humanity in the most altruistic way, Thomas Paine died . His friend Clio Rickman wrote concerning his death, "On the eighth of June, 1809, about nine in the morning, he placidly, and almost without a struggle, died, as he had lived, a Deist." Because his public ideas regarding religion were so radical and in direct opposition to superstition (superstition equalling all man-made *revealed* religions), he died virtually alone. Only seven people attended his funeral, and the Quakers refused to allow his burial in a Quaker cemetery, so he was buried on his farm. Ten years later a one time adversary turned admirer, William Cobbett, dug up his earthly remains and brought them to England, where they were later lost.

The following is a list of major accomplishments of Thomas Paine taken largely from *Life and Writings of Thomas Paine*.

1. He was the first to advocate the end of slavery.
2. He was the first to say "the American nation," and "the Free and Independent States of America."
3. He was the first to propose constitutional government for the United States.
4. He was first to form a plan of international arbitration.
5. He was a pioneer in national and international copyright.
6. He was a pioneer in the fight for equal rights for women.
7. Had France heeded him the Reign of Terror never would have happened.
8. He proposed equitable, progressive, and workable land reforms, and industrial and wage systems.
9. He invented the first iron bridge used in Europe.
10. He inferred that the fixed stars were suns, twenty years before Herschel.
11. He correctly surmised the cause of, and thereby pointed to the remedy for yellow fever.
12. He, more than anyone else, presented Deism to all the people, thus breaking the old confines that had previously limited Deism to the few bold intellectuals who were primarily of the financial upper class .

Let's make the important decision to work together, through the World Union of Deists, to build upon the unshakable foundation of reality and truth so heroically put forth by Thomas Paine. Through the Union we can combine our energy and resources into an overwhelming counterattack on the religious right, and put a stop to their destruction of our liberties. We can make their efforts to turn America into a land hostile to honest, open-minded, free thinking

people null and void. Send us a request for a World Union of Deists application. Their continued growth makes the time for us to act ***RIGHT NOW!***

THE CONTAGIOUS COALITION

Not Amazing Grace, but amazing cash-flow was demonstrated on Pat Robertson's 700 Club telethon last week. In only 30 minutes (about all I can stand to watch at one time) he raised a little over \$500,000.00. According to *Newsweek* of 11-8-93, Robertson's empire is already "worth well over \$1 billion." His Christian Coalition, of which he is the founder and president, is one of many powerful arms of the religious right that is filled with credulous but well meaning and mislead people. Right now they are in the process of broadening the Coalition's base of support to infect not only Protestants but also conservative Jews and Catholics. They currently have 450 thousand dues paying members with 850 chapters nationwide. They hope to add an additional one million members from these two groups, plus an additional 550 thousand evangelical Protestants. If they are successful in infecting both of these new targets with their unAmerican message of mixing religion and politics, the future of free thinking people will be dark indeed, for there isn't an ideal void politician that could withstand their influence. Not only are they adversely affecting the politicians already in office, but they are placing their own people in office. Our children will be forced to, among many other things, waste their time studying "creation science" instead of true science, as is being attempted in Vista, California where the religious fanatics already have a majority elected to the school board.

In order to lure a larger number of conservative Catholics and Jews into their flock, Ralph Reed, the executive director

of the Christian Coalition, is beginning to have the organization focus more on issues such as taxes, crime, and the economy. This move to give the Coalition a more mainstream facade, however, is being met with opposition from the Coalition's fundamentalist base. According to the January 1994 issue of *Reason* magazine, Dean Arnold, a Coalition activist, states his motivation for promoting the Coalition. "I am motivated because I've given my life to Jesus Christ completely and totally, and Jesus Christ is the ruler of the nations, and that concept has been robbed, not only from me as a Christian and not only from the Christian church today, but it has been robbed from our country that understood Jesus Christ is the ruler of the nations. We are the most prosperous country in the history of mankind, and the most influential, and the most free because of the fact that we were founded on that concept." (Future editions of *THINK!* will present means of removing this motivator of the religious right's rank and file: patriotism). Any government controlled by religious zealots of this magnitude would not only stifle peoples' opinion, it would eventually bring back inquisitions to insure everyone held the correct concept sacred. It would be the least they could do for Jesus.

This concept of "Jesus Christ being the ruler of the nations" is a fixed dogma of Pat Robertson and his power grabbing organizations. No matter what type of artificial front they scheme to put

on it, it will remain. Since Jesus Christ hasn't directly communicated with humankind for about 2,000 years, once Pat gets enough political power, we'll just have to depend on him to tell us what Jesus wants. He really has this attitude of being God's spokesman, as the inside of the dust-cover of his book *ANSWERS To 200 of Life's Most Probing Questions* betrays when it states, "Suppose you could ask *God* just one question.", and the remainder of the book is *Pat* answering questions in God's place. With Pat and his army in power we would just have to believe him if he says Jesus told him to implement his "ideal taxation system", as he reveals on pages 145 and 146 of his *ANSWERS* book, which states, "Thinking about this (the Old Testament tithe and offerings passages. Editor.) causes me to speculate on an ideal taxation system. It would be wonderful if 10 percent of everyone's income would go toward religious instruction, teaching, and worship so that the whole population could be instructed in the Word of God. Then, a second 10 percent could go for welfare, roads, harbors, various social projects, old age relief, and any other social needs. Then, another 5 percent or so could be spent on personal vacations. Not vacations that were orgies of lust and personal pleasure, but vacations where people rested, worshiped and enjoyed God, thanking Him for what He had done. This would be a time when people could go to pleasant places and eat good food. They could relax, praise the Lord, and acknowledge that He is in their midst."

When Ralph Reed was preaching/lecturing to a group of Christians/political activists of the Christian Coalition, after mentioning the political victory of Mike Huckabee, a Baptist preacher who was recently elected lieutenant governor of Arkansas, he told them, "Years from now we'll be hugging each other on *our* night of the big victory." And they will, if we don't take action *NOW* to stop them.

JESUS SAID ???

For the last 300 years Deists such as Dryden, Johnson, Voltaire, Paine, Jefferson, Washington, etc. were stating the Bible is *not* the word of God. In fact, Thomas Jefferson was so adamant concerning this that he literally cut out large portions of the gospels that his God-given reason lead him to believe were not the words of Jesus. Now scholars are "discovering" that "almost 80 percent of what Jesus is reported to have said in the gospels is an approximation or outright inaccurate telling of his sayings."

The scholars belong to a liberal group called the Jesus Seminar. They are concerned about mainstream Protestants allowing the Christian right exclusive right to the Bible. But why??? Why would they be upset about the enemies of progress relying on a weapon as full of holes as the Bible? They are trying to make people "literate about the Bible", as if this will transform the Bible from what it really is, no more than a poorly written Middle Eastern version of Grimm's Fairy Tales, into a tool for the advancement of mankind. Instead of trying to resurrect a useless

corpse of mythology, they should join together with other free-thinking people to let the sincere people in the rank and file of the religious right know the Bible is definitely *NOT* the Word of God. That is all the power the Pat Robertsons, whether Christian, Jew, or Moslem, of the world have over their supporters: the misconception that their holy book is the Word of God. Once it is brought to light on a large enough scale that they are wrong, they will shrivel up and die like the wicked witch on the Wizard of Oz.

The Seminar concluded the gospels were written not by Christ or the Apostles, but by members of the early Church about two generations after the death of Jesus. Much of what is in them was put there to satisfy the needs of the various Christian leaders of that time in their efforts to win control over the people.

PROPAGATING DEISM

Deism is appealing to the common sense that is found in many people. Whether their common sense is currently covered with fear, superstition, or ignorance doesn't matter - it's there and it will eventually respond favorably to Deism. All the televangelists in the world can't stop Deism once it reaches critical mass. Deism's unique attribute that makes it vital in the struggle against revealed religion is its offensive nature. Unlike People for the American Way and similar organizations, Deism offers a progress friendly belief to replace the progress retarding mythology of Christianity, Judaism, and all the other man-made revealed religions. The most important goal at this point is to reach critical mass.

Our resources are currently limited, so the means we employ to accomplish this necessary goal must be inexpensive. One method that has already produced positive results is the word of mouth method. If everyone who reads this publication tells someone else about it, and about Deism, then we move several steps closer to achieving our goal.

Another effective way of creating a world free of fear and superstition for ourselves and our children is writing letters to the editor in our local newspapers. These reach many people at one time, and if they are written in a somewhat provocative manner they will generate some discussion among the readers. The following is an example of one such letter that appeared in the *Daily Progress* of Charlottesville, Virginia, Thomas Jefferson's hometown.

"The July 18 letter to Readers' views, headlined "American Revolution based on Christian ideas" is full of holes.

"Romans 13:1&2 states, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment." According to this direct quote from the Bible, Thomas Jefferson and all of our nation's founders

were acting against God when they rebelled with violence against King George and the British monarch.

"Like most religious fundamentalists, the religious people who left Europe to escape religious persecution only attempted to set themselves and their chosen sects up in America as the established religion. Prior to the American Revolution, people were being fined for not attending church on Sundays. Because of the numbers of different sects in America, no one sect was strong enough to murder the members of another as was done in Europe for hundreds of years. (Inquisition, etc.)

"If the American Revolution was really based on Christian ideas, as the writer of the letter as well as Pat Robertson and his Christian Coalition preach, doesn't it stand to reason that either the Declaration of Independence or the U.S. Constitution would mention Christ or at least the Bible? This, however, is not the case. The Constitution mentions neither. The Declaration refers to the "Creator", "Nature's God", the "Supreme Judge of the world" and "divine Providence", but nowhere does it mention Jesus Christ or the Bible. This is because the Declaration is a Deist document, not a Christian document. It does not reflect any revealed man-made religion, but only the natural religion of Deism.

"The writer used a quote of Mr. Jefferson's to imply he (Mr. Jefferson) was a Christian by today's evangelical standards. This is a misrepresentation. Thomas Jefferson did not believe in the trinity or the divine nature of Jesus as is required by Christianity. Jefferson was in fact a Deist as is stated in the book, *The Religious Life of Thomas Jefferson*."

Leaflet distribution is another method of spreading the Deist idea. One of our readers wrote for copies of our Deist leaflets and said, "It will be interesting to put them on the windshields of cars with the fishes on them." We couldn't agree more. You can order Deist leaflets for a self-addressed stamped envelope by filling out the order form at the back of this newsletter and sending it to us.

Of course, now we have many more opportunities to spread Deism, such as through downloading and printing our Deist leaflets from <http://www.deism.com/deistleafletsmain.htm> and by posting links in online discussion groups to www.deism.com, etc. The editor.

BILLY GRAHAM - MINISTER OF DECEIT

Readers of *THINK!* are already aware that the Judeo-Christianity preached by the System approved Billy Graham is nothing more than man-made mythology. However, it is helpful to be aware of the hypocrisy of the purveyors of superstition. The following quote is taken from pages

34 and 35 of Pierre Salinger's book *WITH KENNEDY*. The incident it concerns took place during the 1960 presidential primary campaign of Jack Kennedy.

"The flare-up of the Catholic issue during the West Virginia primary resulted in an effort by top Kennedy aides to obtain support for a statement by leading Protestant ministers throughout the country calling for tolerance in the election.

"While this effort was in progress I had to make a trip from Bluefield, West Virginia, to Indianapolis, Indiana, and while breakfasting on the train I saw evangelist Billy Graham sitting two tables away. Acting on impulse, I walked up to him, introduced myself, and asked if I could join him. During our breakfast discussion I told him of the ministers' statement that was being drafted and asked him if he'd be willing to sign it. He said he would. I then arranged to have Ted Sorensen call him the next day to clear the wording of the statement with him. Sorensen tried for two days to get the reverend on the phone, and when he finally reached him Graham flatly refused to sign the statement on the grounds that he should not interfere in the election. Later in the campaign, however, he participated in rallies on behalf of Vice-President Nixon."

***THINK!* February 1994**

A LETTER TO ANDREW DEAN FROM
THOMAS PAINE

I received your friendly letter, for which I am obliged to you. It is three weeks ago today (Sunday, August fifteenth), that I was struck with a fit of apoplexy, that deprived me of all sense and motion. I had neither pulse nor breathing, and the people about me supposed me dead. I had felt exceedingly well that day, and had just taken a slice of bread and butter for supper, and was going to bed.

The fit took me on the stairs, as suddenly as if I had been shot through the head; and I got so very much hurt by the fall, that I have not been able to get in and out of bed since that day, otherwise than being lifted out in a blanket, by two persons; yet all this while my mental faculties have remained as perfect a I ever enjoyed them.

I consider the scene I have passed through as an experiment on dying, and I find that death has no terrors for me. As to the people called Christians, they have no evidence that their religion is true. There is no more proof that the Bible is the Word of God, than that the Koran of Mahomet is the Word of God. It is education makes all the difference. Man, before he begins to think for himself, is as much the child of habits in *Creeds* as he is in plowing and sowing. Yet creeds, like opinions, prove nothing.

Where is the evidence that the person called Jesus Christ is the begotten Son of God? The case admits not of evidence either to our senses or our mental faculties: neither has God given to man any talent by which such a thing is comprehensible.

It cannot therefore be an object for faith to act upon, for faith is nothing more than an assent the mind gives to something it sees cause to believe is fact. But priests, preachers, and fanatics, put imagination in the place of faith, and it is the nature of the imagination to believe without evidence.

If Joseph the carpenter dreamed (as the book of Matthew (i) says he did), that his betrothed wife, Mary, was with child by the Holy Ghost, and that an angel told him so, I am not obliged to put faith in his dreams; nor do I put any, for I put no faith in my own dreams, and I should be weak and foolish indeed to put faith in the dreams of others.

The Christian religion is derogatory to the Creator in all its articles. It puts the Creator in an inferior point of view, and places the Christian devil above Him. It is he, according to the absurd story in Genesis, that outwits the Creator in the Garden of Eden, and steals from Him His

favorite creature, man, and at last obliges Him to beget a son, and put that son to death, to get man back again; and this the priests of the Christian religion call redemption.

Christian authors exclaim against the practice of offering up human sacrifices, which, they say, is done in some countries; and those authors make those exclamations without ever reflecting that their own doctrine of salvation is founded on a human sacrifice. They are saved, they say, by the blood of Christ. The Christian religion begins with a dream and ends with a murder.

As I am now well enough to sit up some hours in the day, though not well enough to get up without help, I employ myself as I have always done, in endeavoring to bring man to the right use of the reason that God has given him, and to direct his mind immediately to his Creator, and not to fanciful secondary beings called mediators, as if God was superannuated or ferocious.

As to the book called the Bible, it is blasphemy to call it the Word of God. It is a book of lies and contradictions, and a history of bad times and bad men. There are but a few good characters in the whole book. The fable of Christ and his twelve apostles, which is a parody on the sun and the twelve signs of the zodiac, copied from the ancient religions of the eastern world, is the least hurtful part.

Everything told of Christ has reference to the sun. His reported resurrection is at sunrise, and that on the first day of the week; that is, on the day anciently dedicated to the sun, and from thence called Sunday - in Latin *Dies Solis*, the day of the sun; and the next day, Monday, is Moon-day. But there is no room in a letter to explain these things.

While man keeps to the belief of one God, his reason unites with his creed. He is not shocked with contradictions and horrid stories. His bible is the heavens and the earth. He beholds his Creator in all His works, and everything he beholds inspires him with reverence and gratitude. From the goodness of God to all, he learns his duty to his fellow-man, and stands self-reproved when he transgresses it. Such a man is no persecutor.

But when he multiplies his creed with imaginary things, of which he can have neither evidence nor conception, such as the tale of the Garden of Eden, the Talking Serpent, the Fall of Man, the Dreams of Joseph the Carpenter, the pretended Resurrection and Ascension, of which there is even no historical relation - for no historian of those times mentions such a thing - he gets into the pathless region of confusion, and turns either fanatic or hypocrite. He forces his mind, and pretends to believe what he does not believe. This is in general the case with the Methodists. Their religion is all creed and no morals.

I have now, my friend, given you a *facsimile* of my mind on the subject of religion and creeds, and my wish is, that you make this letter as publicly known as you find opportunities of doing.

Yours, in friendship,

Thomas Paine

New York, August 15, 1806

***THINK!* April 1994**

ZOROASTRIANISM: The Forgotten Source

By Stephen Van Eck

"Also Sprach Zarathustra" - This composition by Richard Strauss, featured in "2001", is a piece of powerful drama: rich in majesty, awe-inspiring, and with devastating portent. It is an appropriate memorial to the Persian prophet Zarathustra, whom the Greeks called Zoroaster.

Zarathustra's influence upon Judeo-Christianity and all of Western Civilization is little told, but should not be underestimated. His life and words changed the course of Western Civilization, setting it on a course that departed from the static cultures of the ancient Middle East. Without his impact, Judaism would be hard to recognize, and both Christianity and Islam would probably never have existed.

It is largely to Zarathustra that Western Civilization owes its fundamental concept of linear time, as opposed to the cyclic and essentially static conceptions of ancient times. This concept, which was implicit in Zarathustra's doctrines, makes the notion of progress, reform, and advancement possible. Ancient civilizations to that time, particularly Egyptian, were profoundly conservative, believing that the ideal order had been handed down to them by the gods in some mythical Golden Age. Their task was to adhere to the established traditions as closely as possible; to reform or modify them in any way would be a deviation from and diminution of the ideal. Zarathustra gave Persian (and through them, Greek) thought a teleological dimension, with a purpose and a goal to history. All people, he declared, were participants in a supernatural battle between Good and Evil, the battleground for which was the Earth, and the very body of the individual man as well. This essential dualism was adopted by the Jews, who only after exposure to Zoroastrianism incorporated both a demonology and an angelology to their religion. Retroactively, what was only a snake in the Genesis tale came to be irrevocably associated with the Devil, and belief in demonic possession eventually came to be a cultural obsession, as amply reflected in the Gospels.

Zarathustra claimed special Divine revelation, and had attempted to establish the worship of one Supreme God (Ahura Mazda) in the 7th Century BC, but after his death the earlier Aryan polytheism reemerged. But many other features of his theology have endured to the present time, through the religions that superseded it.

The Babylonian Captivity of the 6th Century BC transformed Judaism in a profound way, exposing the Jews to Zoroastrianism, which was virtually the state religion of Babylon at the time. Until then, the Jewish conception of the afterlife was vague. A shadowy existence in Sheol, the underworld, land of the dead, (*not* to be confused with hell!) was all they had to look forward

to. Zarathustra, however, had preached the bodily resurrection of the dead, who would face a Last Judgment (both individual and general) to determine their ultimate fate in the next life, either paradise or torment. Daniel was the first Jewish prophet to refer to resurrection, judgment, and reward or punishment (12:2), and insofar as he was an advisor to King Darius (erroneously referred to as a Mede), he was in a position to know the state religion thoroughly.

The new doctrine of resurrection was not universally accepted by the Jews, and remained a point of contention for centuries until its ultimate acceptance. The Gospels (Matthew 22:23) record that the dispute was still going on during the time of Christ, with the Sadducees denying and the Pharisees affirming it. It may be a mere coincidence, but notice the similarity between the names "Pharisee" and "Farsi" or "Parsee", the Persians from whom the doctrine of resurrection was borrowed.

Exposure to Zoroastrianism substantially altered Jewish Messianism as well. Zarathustra predicted the imminent coming of a World Savior (Saoshant), who would be born of a virgin, and who would lead humanity in the final battle against Evil. Jewish Messianism incorporated these conceptions with their pre-existing expectations of a Davidic King who would redeem the Jewish nation from foreign oppression.

It was at this time, in response to their captivity, that the era of apocalyptic literature commenced in Judaism, based on Babylonian models and incorporating their symbolism. This was to have a strong influence on later Christian thinking/superstition. But with the key elements of resurrection, judgment, reward or punishment, a Savior, apocalyptic belief, and the ultimate destruction of the forces of Evil, it can be concluded that Jewish and Christian eschatology is Zoroastrian from start to finish.

Not just eschatology, either. Much of the tradition and sacramental ritual of Christianity, particularly Catholicism, traces back to Zoroastrian precursors. Zoroastrian faithful would mark their foreheads with ash before approaching the sacred fire, a gesture that resembles the Ash Wednesday tradition. Part of their purification before participating in ritual was the confession of sins, categorized (as Catholics do) as consisting of thought, word, or deed. Zoroastrianism also has a eucharistic ritual, the Haoma ritual, in which the god Haoma was sacrificed (or rather, his presence in a plant). The worshippers would drink the juice in expectation of eventual immortality. Finally, Zoroastrians observed All Soul's Day, like the Catholics reflecting a belief in intercession both by and for the dead.

We should also note that the story of the Magi, who were said to have visited the newborn Jesus, resembles an earlier story of Magi who looked for a star foretelling the birth of a Savior, in this case Mithras. Magi were not kings, but Zoroastrian astrologers, and the birthday of Mithras on December 25th was deliberately borrowed by the Church to be that of their Christ, whose actual date of birth is undocumented and unknown.

They may also have borrowed the story of the temptation in the desert, since an earlier legend places Zarathustra himself in the same situation. The principal demon (Ahriman) promised Zarathustra earthly power if he would forsake the worship of the One Supreme God. Ahriman, like Satan, failed.

For a final interesting parallel, the three days that Jesus was said to have been in the grave may have been due to the Zoroastrian belief that the soul remains in the body for three days before departing. Three days would establish that he was dead, yet leave his soul in a position to re-animate his body.

As a Messiah, Jesus functioned purely along Zoroastrian lines. While purportedly of the Davidic line, he offered only redemption from sin, rather than national salvation for the Jews. He was a World Savior, rather than a Jewish Messiah. Jews did not recognize him as their Messiah, and in a real sense he was not. Their Messianic expectations, those which originated prior to the captivity, went unfulfilled; in fact their nation was ultimately destroyed. Neither did Jesus effect a final triumph over Evil; this has been reserved for a Second Coming, in conjunction with the Last Judgment and the reward of Heaven or the punishment of Hell.

Although Zoroastrianism is almost extinct today, it lives on in its spiritual descendants. Zarathustra, a prophet beyond any in the Old Testament, still speaks today, unrecognized by his children.

***THINK!* May 1994**

BOOK REVIEW:*Revolutionary Outlaws*

by Robert L. Johnson

". . . Jonathan Lee became concerned when he heard that Allen denied the doctrine of original sin, telling Allen that without original sin there would be no need for atonement, or Christ, or, indeed, Christianity. After several months of reflection, Allen decided that Lee was right: there was no need for Christianity."

The clarity and pungency found in the above quote taken from *Revolutionary Outlaws - Ethan Allen and the Struggle for Independence on the Early American Frontier*, written by Michael A. Bellesiles and published by University Press of Virginia, are found throughout this enjoyable and informative book.

Mr. Bellesiles brings to light the motivating forces that inspired people, most often poor and without resources, to successfully rebel against established governmental authority. His revisionary examination of colonial frontier life encompasses not only their struggle against Britain and wealthy entrenched New York elitists, but also their creation of the state of Vermont, with its strong republican (eighteenth century definition) constitution.

Also covered is the fighting organization these people of principled action formed themselves into. Under threat from powerful real estate speculators who had the power of the government of New York at their disposal, the farmers and future "average Americans" began an extralegal guerilla band known as the Green Mountain Boys "as their first real act of resistance" to government power.

The leader of these history making people was Ethan Allen. *Revolutionary Outlaws* engagingly covers his full life. Ethan's failures as well as his astounding victories are covered in an informative yet entertaining manner. Allen's priorities, which were based on his heart-felt convictions, are brought out in amusing ways. Ethan placed the priority of truth higher than the priority of popularity, even though he greatly valued his popularity with his peers and community. This is evidenced by his conviction to destroy superstition for the good of truth. One instance occurred on a Sunday in 1764 when Ethan was inoculated in front of a meetinghouse in Salisbury, Connecticut. He was not silent during the inoculation either, but made derogatory remarks regarding Jesus Christ, Beelzebub, and hell. This bold act was not only illegal by state

law, but was blatant blasphemy against the Christian god. He was tried, found guilty, and socially ostracized, which economically ruined him and his family. That sounds like a law Jesus would "reveal" to Pat Robertson, to "reveal" to Ollie North, to "reveal" to the nation, to put back on the books.

Ethan Allen's *Reason the Only Oracle of Man*, is used to expound on Ethan's Deist beliefs. Mr. Bellesiles does a good job tracing Mr. Allen's spiritual/philosophical evolution. Like most Americans, Ethan was born into a Christian family, and raised accordingly. His father died when Ethan was seventeen years old. The day of his father's funeral, his brothers found him at the grave asking his father if there was an afterlife. As many of us know, Christianity offers no realistic answer to this question. Realizing this, Ethan began to question Christian dogma and eventually rejected Christianity as just another man-made religion. As Mr. Bellesiles writes, "Reason is superior to revelation for discerning the laws of nature and of God, which are, Allen thought, the same thing. Those who rely on 'dreams and visions' to understand the universe are subject to their own 'deceptions, blunders and inaccuracies.' If God intends to relay information to humanity, the deity will, in 'the spirit of truth and uniformity,' tell everyone. History is full of messages straight from God, most of which contradict each other, so why accept the vision of one lunatic over another?"

Ethan Allen has, in general, been tragically overlooked by most historians. When historically prominent Deists are covered, their Deistic beliefs are usually either completely avoided or superficially glossed over. Fortunately, Mr. Bellesiles explores this very important part of Ethan Allen's life. A world view that was basic not only to Mr. Allen and many leaders in the fight against unreasonableness and oppression, but without which America never would have been born. Instead, the government could continue to mesmerize its subjects with Biblical nonsense such as Romans 13:1-2, which states, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment."

Words of Wisdom

The following is taken from page 39 of the book *Solzhenitsyn's Religion*. The definition it gives for Marxist-Leninist philosophy also applies to Judeo-Christianity and all man-made revealed religions.

"Paul Neuberg reports a common joke from the satellite countries of Eastern Europe:

Question: 'What is philosophy?'

Answer: 'Searching in a dark room for a black bed.'

Question: 'What is Marxist philosophy?'

Answer: 'Searching in a dark room for a black bed which isn't there.'

Question: 'What is Marxist-Leninist philosophy?'

Answer: 'Searching in a dark room for a black bed which isn't there and shouting, I've found it.'

***THINK!* June 1994**

FUNDAMENTALISTS GRAB FOR G.O.P.

From the ashes of "the Most Reverend" Pat Robertson's political defeat in his 1988 presidential bid has risen, not a phoenix, but a vampire. A vampire intent on sucking what little altruism and truth is left from our body politic, and installing its leaders as the modern era's new inquisitors. With deadly efficiency the good-intentioned but reality challenged followers and foot soldiers, who compose the body of this vampire, are steadily destroying the remnants of the U.S. Constitution and ideals of America's founders. Their vehicle of choice, which they are using to reach their thought suppressing and superstition promoting goals, appears to be the Republican Party.

Their death grip on the G.O.P. is so strong that on Thursday, June 23, 1994 *all 44 Republican U.S. Senators* wrote Clinton asking him to disavow criticism of the Religious Right.

Already, the fundamentalists have captured the Republican Party organization in the states of Iowa, Minnesota, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia, not to mention dozens of smaller scale victories across the country. One high profile example of their work product can be found in Virginia, where Oliver L. North enjoyed the stunning victory in the G.O.P.'s Senate nomination. Despite his baggage from the Iran Contra scandal, he won 55% of the vote.

In the Minnesota situation we see demonstrated the raw power the mislead zealots have attained by selflessly working and giving of themselves for their much desired goal of a fundamentalist Christian nation. Normally, incumbents can depend on the full support of whichever party they belong to. In this situation, however, the Republicans have nominated a fundamentalist to run against their own governor. The religious right, in exercising their control of the Republican Party, has nominated Republican Allen Quist to run against Minnesota's incumbent Republican Governor Arne Carlson.

To further demonstrate this was done for strictly religious purposes, it is important to note that Carlson is far from being an embarrassment to the traditionally conservative Republican Party. As most people know, the issue of primary importance to conservatives is always money - Arne Carlson eliminated the state deficit. Despite this accomplishment, the Christians had him removed as the Republican candidate.

One tactic being used to lower the guard of voters and the general public is comparing candidates from the spawning pools of the Christian Coalition to John F. Kennedy. This maneuver was used by Ollie North in a debate in Virginia. The Washing Post of June 28, 1994 reports, "North

labeled as `religious bigotry' the recent criticism by President Clinton of Virginia televangelists Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell. He also compared Clinton's remarks to concerns about John F. Kennedy's Catholicism in the 1960 presidential campaign."

The huge gaping abyss which separates the political activities of today's crusading religious right from the Kennedy campaign of 1960 is insurmountable. There is no logical comparison. Kennedy received no organizational help from fanatic Catholic organizations, nor did he seek it. He openly stated he would not serve the Pope and the Church but would instead serve the American people and the U.S. Constitution. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church, as an organization, was leaning away from John Kennedy as is pointed out on page 240 of Theodore H. White's book *The Making of the President - 1960*, which reads in part, "In many of the most important dioceses of the nation it was known in 1960 that if the Catholic Church had any silent inclination, it leaned to Richard M. Nixon rather than to John F. Kennedy." Can this obvious lack of support by religious organizations and leaders be said of Ollie and the boys who are *actively* promoted by not only Pat Robertson and his Christian Coalition, but also by other religious/political leaders and organizations?

The following quote taken from a speech given by John Kennedy on September 12, 1960 in Houston, Texas further illustrates the absurdity of the religious right comparing themselves with John Kennedy.

"I believe in an America where the separation of Church and State is absolute. Where no Catholic prelate should tell the President, should he be Catholic, how to act. And no Protestant minister would tell his parishioners for whom to vote. Where no church or church school is granted any public funds or political preference, and where no man is denied public office merely because his religion differs from the President who might appoint him or the people who might elect him.

"I believe in an America that is officially neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jewish. Where no public official either requests or accepts instructions on public policy from the Pope, the National Council of Churches or any other ecclesiastical source. Where no religious body seeks to impose its will, directly or indirectly, upon the general populace or the public acts of its officials. And where religious liberty is so indivisible that an act against one church is treated as an act against all."

AN ANSWER TO A FRIEND REGARDING *THE AGE OF REASON*

by Thomas Paine

Paris, May 12, 1797

"In your letter of the twentieth of March, you give me several quotations from the Bible, which you call the Word of God, to show me that my opinions on religion are wrong, and I could give you as many, from the same book to show that yours are not right; consequently, then, the Bible decides nothing, because it decides any way, and every way, one chooses to make it.

"But by what authority do you call the Bible the Word of God? for this is the first point to be settled. It is not your calling it so that makes it so, any more than the Mahometans calling the Koran the Word of God makes the Koran to be so. The Popish Councils of Nice and Laodicea, about 350 years after the time the person called Jesus Christ is said to have lived, voted the books that now compose what is called the New Testament to be the Word of God. This was done by *yeas* and *nays*, as we now vote a law.

"The Pharisees of the second temple, after the Jews returned from captivity in Babylon, did the same by the books that now compose the Old Testament, and this is all the authority there is, which to me is no authority at all. I am as capable of judging for myself as they were, and I think more so, because, as they made a living by their religion, they had a self-interest in the vote they gave.

"You may have an opinion that a man is inspired, but you cannot prove it, nor can you have any proof of it yourself, because you cannot see into his mind in order to know how he comes by his thoughts; and the same is the case with the word *revelation*. There can be no evidence of such a thing, for you can no more prove revelation than you can prove what another man dreams of, neither can he prove it himself.

"It is often said in the Bible that God spake unto Moses, but how do you know that God spake unto Moses? Because, you will say, the Bible says so. The Koran says, that God spake unto Mahomet, do you believe that too? No.

Why not? Because, you will say, you do not believe it; and so because you *do*, and because you *don't* is all the reason you can give for believing or disbelieving except that you will say that Mahomet was an impostor. And how do you know Moses was not an impostor?

"For my own part, I believe that all are impostors who pretend to hold verbal communication with the Deity. It is the way by which the world has been imposed upon; but if you think otherwise you have the same right to your opinion that I have to mine, and must answer for it in

the same manner. But all this does not settle the point, whether the Bible be the Word of God, or not. It is therefore necessary to go a step further. The case then is: -

"You form your opinion of God from the account given of Him in the Bible; and I form my opinion of the Bible from the wisdom and goodness of God manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all works of creation. The result in these two cases will be, that you, by taking the Bible for your standard, will have a bad opinion of God; and I, by taking God for my standard, shall have a bad opinion of the Bible.

"The Bible represents God to be a changeable, passionate, vindictive being; making a world and then drowning it, afterwards repenting of what he had done, and promising not to do so again. Setting one nation to cut the throats of another, and stopping the course of the sun till the butchery should be done. But the works of God in the creation preach to us another doctrine. In that vast volume we see nothing to give us the idea of a changeable, passionate, vindictive God; everything we there behold impresses us with a contrary idea - that of unchangeableness and of eternal order, harmony, and goodness.

"The sun and the seasons return at their appointed time, and everything in the creation claims that God is unchangeable. Now, which am I to believe, a book that any impostor might make and call the Word of God, or the creation itself which none but an Almighty Power could make? For the Bible says one thing, and the creation says the contrary. The Bible represents God with all the passions of a mortal, and the creation proclaims him with all the attributes of a God.

"It is from the Bible that man has learned cruelty, rapine, and murder; for the belief of a cruel God makes a cruel man. That bloodthirsty man, called the prophet Samuel, makes God to say, (I Sam. xv. 3) *'Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not, but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.'*

"That Samuel or some other impostor might say this, is what, at this distance of time, can neither be proved nor disproved, but in my opinion it is blasphemy to say, or to believe, that God said it. All our ideas of the justice and goodness of God revolt at the impious cruelty of the Bible. It is not a God, just and good, but a devil, under the name of God, that the Bible describes.

"What makes this pretended order to destroy the Amalekites appear the worse, is the reason given for it. The Amalekites, four hundred years before, according to the account in Exodus xvii. (but which has the appearance of fable from the magical account it gives of Moses holding up his hands), had opposed the Israelites coming into their country, and this the Amalekites had a right to do, because the Israelites were the invaders, as the Spaniards were the invaders of Mexico. This opposition by the Amalekites, *at that time*, is given as a reason, that the men, women, infants and sucklings, sheep and oxen, camels and asses, that were born four hundred years afterward, should be put to death; and to complete the horror, Samuel hewed Agag, the chief of the Amalekites, in pieces, as you would hew a stick of wood. I will bestow a few observations on this case.

"In the first place, nobody knows who the author, or writer, of the book of Samuel was, and, therefore, the fact itself has no other proof than anonymous or hearsay evidence, which is no

evidence at all. In the second place, this anonymous book says, that this slaughter was done by the *express command of God*: but all our ideas of the justice and goodness of God give the lie to the book, and as I never will believe any book that ascribes cruelty and injustice to God, I therefore reject the Bible as unworthy of credit.

"As I have now given you my reasons for believing that the Bible is not the Word of God, that it is a falsehood, I have a right to ask you your reasons for believing the contrary; but I know you can give me none, except that *you were educated to believe the Bible*; and as the Turks give the same reason for believing the Koran, it is evident that education makes all the difference, and that reason and truth have nothing to do in the case.

"You believe in the Bible from the accident of birth, and the Turks believe in the Koran from the same accident, and each calls the other *infidel*. But leaving the prejudice of education out of the case, the unprejudiced truth is, that all are infidels who believe falsely of God, whether they draw their creed from the Bible, or from the Koran, from the Old Testament, or from the New.

"When you have examined the Bible with the attention that I have done (for I do not think you know much about it), and permit yourself to have just ideas of God, you will most probably believe as I do. But I wish you to know that this answer to your letter is not written for the purpose of changing your opinion. It is written to satisfy you, and some other friends whom I esteem, that my disbelief of the Bible is founded on a pure and religious belief in God; for in my opinion the Bible is a gross libel against the justice and goodness of God, in almost every part of it."

WHY DEISM?

by Robert L. Johnson

Regarding society, anything useful is worth preserving, anything useless should be purged. What usefulness does revealed religion (in this article, Christianity) serve? What usefulness does the natural religion/philosophy, Deism, serve?

Christianity has long outlived its usefulness in today's society. Its dogmas have been proven false, its teachings without foundation. The perverted and distorted image of God it offers can only repulse a thinking person.

A good example of the absurdity of Christianity still being a major religion in the modern era is found in Ephesians 6:5, which deals with the way slaves should treat their masters and masters should treat their slaves. As most people are aware, slavery has not existed for well over 100 years. And the fact that the Bible doesn't speak out against it, but instead openly encourages

slaves to "obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, . . ." is nauseating to people with a soul and who employ God's gift of reason.

Christianity is not only useless, but is also very dangerous. Christian organizations are successfully fighting to gain political power in the United States as is evident from observing groups like Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition and Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. If their current political victories continue, such as their two governorships, two Senate seats, two House seats, and the mayoral position for both Los Angeles and New York^[1], it is just a matter of time until we find ourselves living in a fundamentalist controlled, superstition centered America. Because all the people at the grass roots level in the religious right are firm believers in revealed religion, we will be at the complete mercy of Pat Robertson and the others. The Christian leadership will be able to turn the most primitive, regressive, and oppressive Judeo-Christian dogma into the law of the land. With a majority of both Houses of Congress (which they are in the process of attaining right **NOW**), the inquisitors will be back on their circuits rounding up the heretics for their Lord Jesus Christ, who the religious right considers "the ruler of the Nations." Just as they now remove books from schools, so they will then remove freedom from the land.

Not only will we lose our individual liberties, we, and the entire world, will be pushed closer to nuclear war due to the fundamentalists' ingrained image of the apocalypse. The overwhelming potential for self-fulfilling prophecy in this situation would have irreversible consequences for the entire planet.

The magnitude of the above probable dire possibilities, should the Judeo-Christian fundamentalists continue to meet with success in the field of politics, is obvious to every thinking person. The trouble is, not enough people think. This lack of thought is due in large part to revealed religion. It teaches us, usually at a very early age, to neglect God's gift of reason and substitute in its place what the priests created and call faith. What they are actually saying is, "Trust me." The credulous mind-set this breeds in mankind is exploited not only by religious leaders, but also by political charlatans. It is what makes possible nightmares such as the Viet Nam war, the slaughter in Iraq, and many other deadly games of revealed religion, government, and big business. The natural religion/philosophy, Deism, teaches us to utilize Gods gift of reason by thinking. When enough of us do this the nightmares will end.

A large part of the usefulness of Deism to society is found in its role as the only answer to the threat from the religious right. Because Deism firmly embraces a belief in God, even though it doesn't recognize revelation except through the Creation itself, a large number of the rank and file, the people doing the actual work for the right, will be attracted to it. The sincere activists, the ones who want to serve God, will see one preacher after another loose debates against Deists. The ones that truly believe in God will still feel in their hearts that God is real, but will realize, that by following a religion that has been honestly proven wrong and which continues to preach obvious falsehoods, they are not on the correct path. After all, if God is real you won't learn anymore about Him by following a religion that isn't. Deism is much closer to the true nature of God than Christianity is. This realization will win over many soldiers of the Falwells, Robertsons, Norths, and others, thus knocking the wind out of the charlatans, and removing them as a real threat to our basic freedoms, to progress, and to life itself.

The above is the first part of a two part article. Part two will appear in the July edition of THINK!

[\[1\]](#) Scripps Howard News Service, 7/16/94

THINKonline! December 2004

Deism Without Action is Dead

by Robert L. Johnson

Have you noticed the "fighting" in the "Holy Land" and the Middle East? Did you hear about the mothers who killed their babies while under the influence of "revealed" religion? How about the laws that allow otherwise normal people to withhold medical care for their minor children, laws which were written and passed by a society that is sadly under the influence of revealed religion and its unGodly rejection of God-given reason?

The best solution to the above problems is Deism. Because Deism is so grounded in God-given reason, it's impossible to have Deism without reason. It's also impossible to have a healthy and happy society without reason. If we held reason in its proper and rightly deserved exalted position, all of the problems mentioned above, plus many more, would be gone. For example, if people weren't suckered into actually believing that God gave land to the Jews and that the Jews are "above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6), I don't believe the US would be so subservient to Israel. Subservient to the point of being targets of terrorism due to our putting Israel's interests above those of our own country. To deviate from reason in one situation only sets a precedent to deviate from reason in other situations. For example, we abandon reason when we accept the above Bible lie about the Jews being better than everyone else. This opens the door to believing the tragically comical story of Jesus walking on water. This, in turn, lets the floodgates of superstition and rejection of reason swing open to actually believing that our sick or injured innocent children, who depend on us as their parents and guardians, can be healed based on Biblical myth. This results in the unnecessary deaths of children every year. None of this would be happening if we embraced God's gift to us of reason! Deism is the acceptance of God's gift of reason and applying it to religion and philosophy. This huge part of society and of individuals' lives is off limits to reason. This is not right. We, as Deists, need to smash through this unnatural barrier and bring reason and Deism to everyone - especially to those suffering under the superstition of revealed religion. If Deism and reason held their rightful place in society and in the lives of individuals, we would not be targets of Islamic terrorists because we would not give a blank check to Israel and turn the other way while they use US weapons to slaughter their neighbors. Due to this, well over 1,000 Americans and well over 100,000 Iraqis have lost their lives. The mothers who killed their own children would not have the Biblical example of killing your child for God, as the Bible claims in the insane and blasphemous story of Abraham. Deism and reason would not permit us to tolerate laws that allow superstition to kill our children by placing more credence on ancient lies and myth than on God-given reason and science. If we want to help the world and its people progress out of the dark ages of the Bible and its trinity of revealed deadly progress retarding religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we can only do it through reason and Deism. And we have to do it ourselves. Nobody is going to do it for us.

Is God In Our Genes?

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D

On October 25, the *Time* magazine startled many readers with its cover that highlighted the words: "The God Gene" in bold, gold letters. Across two pages, in large black letters, the question was asked, "Is God in Our Genes?" Both titles referred to a new book entitled "The God Gene: How Faith is Hardwired into Our Genes."

The author of this book is the molecular biologist Dean Hamer, Chief of gene structure at the National Cancer Institute. In that position, Hamer commands attention. He got mine and also that of many readers of *Time's* article which asks, "Is God in Our Genes?" My essay provides two answers: the first from the scientist Hamer and the second from myself, a Deist philosopher. In *Time's* article, Hamer says, "I'm a believer that every thought we think and every feeling we feel is the result of activity in the brain. We follow the basic law of nature, which is: we're a bunch of chemical reactions running around in a bag."

On that premise, Hamer attempted to locate and identify the gene or genes involved in spiritual thoughts and feelings. For this research, he recruited more than 1,000 men and women who took a standardized, 240-question personality test. The participants also provided DNA samples. To narrow the field, Hamer confined his work to nine specific genes known to play major roles in the production of monoamines. These brain chemicals regulate such fundamental functions as mood and motor control.

According to *Time's* article, Hamer quickly hit the jackpot in a gene know as VMAT2 - for vesicular monoamine transporter. Variations in this gene seemed to be directly related to how the volunteers scored on the test.

Hamer pointed out two caveats. First, feelings of spirituality do not impel people to seek God and to believe in him. Secondly, VMAT2 is not the only gene that affects our spirituality. Something as complex as belief in God could involve hundreds or even thousands of genes. In conclusion, Hamer says, "My findings are agnostic on the existence of God. If there's a God, there's a God. Just knowing what brain chemicals are involved in acknowledging this is not going to change the fact."

In short, to the question posed in *Time's* magazine "Is God in Our Genes?", Hamer's answer is simply, "I don't know." His research established only that the chemical mix (the hardwiring) of VMAT2 is involved in thoughts and feelings about things spiritual, period!

After reading the recent writings of the scientist Dean Hamer, I realized that his knowledge about God's existence was less conclusive than mine, that of a Deist philosopher. I know that God exists. The designs, the structures and laws in nature presuppose a Designer, a Creator who is supremely intelligent. My logical mind comes to that simple yet definitive conclusion.

I am grateful to Dean Hamer, as I am to Einstein and to all scientists who uncover and reveal to us the marvelous handiwork of God. VMAT2 is only one among zillions of beings all requiring,

at their common origin, a supremely intelligent Creator. VMAT2 exists and so does God. Alleluia!

Why It's Important to Stop the Fundies

by Peter Murphy

I would like you to look at the following quote and consider that Pat is not the only person with such a view. "It is interesting, that termites don't build things, and the great builders of our nation almost to a man have been Christians, because Christians have the desire to build something. He is motivated by love of man and God, so he builds. The people who have come into (our) institutions (today) are primarily termites. They are into destroying institutions that have been built by Christians, whether it is universities, governments, our own traditions, that we have.... The termites are in charge now, and that is not the way it ought to be, and the time has arrived for a Godly fumigation." -- Pat Robertson, New York Magazine, August 18, 1986 As can be seen from the above quote, people like Pat Robertson not only have distorted history, demonized nonChristians, but also advocate violence against those demonized. The fact that such people would so easily profess such a position only shows that the Bible is a book advocating intolerance and violence; the Bible allows one to hide their hatred behind "quotes." In order to debunk such decadents (a decadent being someone with defective ethics) as Pat Roberston, it is essential to debunk the foundation of his justifications -- the Bible. If Deists and all Freethinkers wish to make the world safer, then it is necessary when the opportunity presents itself to debunk the Bible. One of the best tactics is to keep it simple. For example, when people asks me why I am not a Christian, I reply that Matt. 12:38-40 is reason enough not to be a Christian. In order for Jesus to fulfill Matt. 12:38-40, and not be a false prophet, he would have had to arise from the dead no earlier than the 4th day after his burial. But repeatedly we are told in the gospels that Jesus prophesied that he would rise "on the third day," contradicting his Matt. 12:38-40 prophecy, and we are told that he rose on the 3rd day after his death. If he rose on the 3rd day, then he could not rise AFTER the 3rd day which is prophecy of Matt. 12:38-40. So if the gospels are correct, then Jesus is a false prophet; on the other hand, if he rose after the 3rd day as the Matt. 12:38-40 prophecy states, then the gospels are wrong when they state he rose on the 3rd day. Jesus may have risen on or after the 3rd day -- but he did not rise on both the 3rd and 4th day. The problem of Matt. 12:38-40 needs to be preached from the housetops.

New Deist Ezine ***THINK & ACT!***

Deism is a great belief system. The unlimited amount of good it can bring to both the individual and to all of society is desperately needed. All you have to do to realize the truth of this is to look at the headlines -

religion based wars killing thousands of people and leaving still more homeless. America falling back into the pre Revolutionary days of strong ties between church and state that brought about

such Bible based superstition that citizens were actually executed for being witches. These unreasonable ties between religion and government are instrumental in attacking science and reason by teaching Biblical nonsense as science in school textbooks and even in the National Park Service, which now sells books that say the Grand Canyon was created in six days by Noah's flood! (http://www.yubanet.com/artman/publish/article_14313.shtml). Before the benefits of Deism can be realized on a large enough basis to make a real positive difference, we need to take ACTION to make Deism known throughout the world. Our new Deist ezine *THINK & ACT!* is intended as a tool in this phase of the Deist struggle. *THINK & ACT!* will give us the opportunity to fund the Deist outreach program. If everyone who receives the free *THINKonline!* subscribes to *THINK & ACT!* for \$10.00 a month, it will put us at the point where we can really build critical mass! To take action and help get the word out about Deism, subscribe to *THINK & ACT!* by going to <http://www.deism.com/thinkact.htm> and clicking on the subscribe button! Action begets action!

Thought Provoking and Inspiring Quotes

"For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

Thomas Jefferson

"We can know God only through His works. We cannot have a conception of any one attribute but by following some principle that leads to it. We have only a confused idea of His power, if we have not the means of comprehending something of its immensity. We can have no idea of His wisdom, but by knowing the order and manner in which it acts. The principles of science lead to this knowledge; for the Creator of man is the Creator of science, and it is through that medium that man can see God, as it were, face to face." "Deism, then, teaches us, without the possibility of being deceived, all that is necessary or proper to be known. The creation is the Bible of the Deist. He there reads, in the handwriting of the Creator himself, the certainty of His existence and the immutability of His power, and all other Bibles and Testaments are to him forgeries."

Thomas Paine, THE AGE OF REASON

"There never was a good war, or a bad peace."

Benjamin Franklin

"The first advice I am going to give my successor is to watch the generals and to avoid feeling that just because they were military men their opinions on military matters were worth a damn."

John F. Kennedy

***THINKonline!* January 2005**

Help Deism Grow in 2005 (With Deism's Unique Quality)

by Robert L. Johnson

No sane person would argue the fact that in order to have a good and enjoyable life we must employ our reason. In fact, it's expected of us in every aspect of our lives. At work, we'd soon find ourselves unemployed if we refused to be reasonable. The same holds true for our relationships. If we throw our reason out the window and are rude or inconsiderate to our spouse or friends, we'll soon find we no longer have a spouse or a friend. That's reasonable. However, when we look at our spiritual or religious lives, we're expected to discard our reason and replace it by that unanchored fleeting thing called "faith". We're expected to take outrageous Bible and Torah and Koran stories as truth, even though they go directly against our God-given reason. And this in a place where we're supposed to be worshipping the source of our reason - God!

As Deists, we need to greatly increase our efforts in this new year to reach the millions of people who truly want to serve God, but who are sadly being misled by the various "revealed" religions. If we really exert ourselves in this effort, we can do much to make the world a better place.

One fact to keep in mind while we're working to get the word out about Deism, is that we have the ace when trying to reach religious people with Deism. No one can successfully argue the fact that our reason is a gift from our Creator. We can't give reason to ourselves. But what people can do is write a book and claim it's from God. Therefore, since our reason could only have come from God, by stifling or ignoring our reason in order to follow a religion and its "holy" book, it is obvious that we're turning our back on God and His gift to us of reason, so we can accept scribblings of men. With the conversion of Antony Flew, the 81 year old life long atheist, to Deism, we've now shown up on the radar screen of the revealed religionists. I've noticed a few articles on Christian sites that lamely attempt to explain why Deism has failed. But what they don't realize is, if Deism has failed, so have all of the "revealed" religions, for the very first tenant of all of the revealed religions is the belief in God. That simple and beautiful belief is the beginning and end of Deism. The belief in God period. The various revealed religions add to this gem all the trappings of superstition and myth and then call it Judaism, Christianity, Islam, etc. But without their cornerstone of Deism, they would not exist!

We can use this reality in our efforts to reach people with Deism. It is a fact that is unique to Deism, so let us make the very most of it! 2005, if we all pitch in and do our share, will be a banner year for Deism and its accompanying progress!

How I Relate to Nature's God and Dad

by Raymond Fontaine, PhD

Yesterday, my cousin Thien asked whether or not I pray to God for help. I answered, "No, because I have no good reason to believe that God intervenes in the course of events." Thien then said, "If that's so, prayers are useless and God is irrelevant in our lives." Applied to God, the word "irrelevant" sounded grossly irreverent. Within minutes, it sparked a comparison between God and my dad, as regards their role in my life and my reverence for them.

About 15 billion years ago, God originated a nodule that exploded, spewing gases and dust into space. In time, the particles gathered and formed zillions of stars and some planets such as our earth. Then three billion years ago, single living cells originated on earth and eventually evolved into a billion species, one of which is the human race. Today's humans, including me, date our origin not only from the first humans, nor from the first living organisms on earth, but as far back as the Big Bang set off by God. Without him, there would be no "me".

Similarly, but on an infinitesimally smaller scale, my dad fertilized my mother's egg and produced a single human cell in February 1917. Within hours, this microscopic embryo started a duplication process that in time produced ten trillion cells. Within the first nine months, my arms and legs formed, so did my ears and eyes, and my brain and heart. For their existence and development, all depended on my original cell fertilized by dad. Without him, there would be no "me".

From the first moment of my life, dad assisted me in various ways until he died 50 years later. He began by holding my bottle of milk and changing my diaper. Later he made me a sled, a swing and a desk. He cut my hair and repaired my shoes. He showed me how to hammer nails, saw wood, and much, much more. Later when I headed a seminary for boys, he helped me build them a gym. While he assisted me all those years, I saw him, I heard his voice and I felt his hand.

During all that time, the priests in church and the seminary told me about God's assistance in spiritual and supernatural matters. According to the Church, God created my soul and infused it into my body. God also assigned a personal guardian angel to take care of me. At my priestly ordination, the Church says, I received the miraculous power to transform bread into the living body of Jesus. Moreover, in the confessional I could absolve sins. God also helped me with sanctifying grace and indulgences and a lot more. I could not observe and verify any of this supernatural assistance from God. I believed it all solely on the authority of the Church claiming infallibility.

Then in 1967, my dad died and so did my faith in the Roman Catholic Church. During five years in Uganda, Africa, while doing missionary work, I had reviewed the heinous crimes and humongous errors of the medieval Popes. At the end, I no longer believed in the infallibility of the Pope. I abandoned his Church and all its supernatural doctrines, including the divinity of Jesus. But I held on to my belief in God, not as reputedly revealed in the Bible, but as required by the designs, structures and laws of nature. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson calls him "Nature's God".

Since there is no reliable evidence that humans possess immortal souls distinct from their bodies, I do not believe that my dad is alive in heaven. But he lives on in my memory and heart. To remember him daily, I keep his photo just above my computer. On the same shelf, an album of pictures refreshes my memory of things dad made for me, such as a wagon and a sled; an altar and a desk. In other photos I see him planting daisies and ferns in our rock garden.

When I glance at my dad's pictures, I don't look up to heaven and thank him audibly. I don't sing hymns praising him. I don't burn incense and light candles before his pictures. I just feel good and peaceful looking at him and the things he made. My love for him will always be intimate, personal and private.

Unlike my dad, God lives on, hopefully aware of my enduring admiration and gratitude. To conserve these sentiments, I don't need paintings of God as in the Sistine Chapel. I don't need Holy Books like the Bible recounting divine deeds. I don't need priests in the pulpit praising God's works. I don't need candles and incense, organs and choirs, and large gatherings to inspire my worship of God. I have abundant inspiration from nature wherever I am. For me, everything in nature carries an invisible label that reads "Designed by God".

Literal Translations – Are Christians Serious?

by Peter Murphy

There is a tendency among Bible literalists to assert that certain translations are literal translations. This school of thinking, or more accurately lack of thinking, is best represented by KJV-only fundamentalist Christians. These ignorant and unreasonable people assume that the Hebrew of the Jewish scriptures and the Greek of the New Testament can be directly translated, word for word, into Elizabethan English.

The truth of the matter is that a literal translation can only exist when languages contain a number of common elements and the sentences or phrases being translated are very basic. For example, French and English can be directly translated only in some cases, yet both share a common alphabet and some grammar rules. "Oui" can be directly translated into "Yes." And "Comment Ça Va" can be loosely translated into "How Are You"? But, "J'ai trente ans" directly translates into "I have thirty years." So to make sense of this, one needs to take the context into consideration and not be slavish to the words that compose the French phrase. Using common sense tells us that the proper English translation to the French sentence is "I am thirty years old." A literal translation from English into French or visa versa does not work. If one considers that the ancient Hebrew or Greek language share almost nothing in common with each other or English, only compounds the problem of translation. Much is left to the imagination of the translators involved. Any attempt to literally translate a French book into English would result in illegible nonsense, and any attempt to literally translate Hebrew and Greek into English would fail.

It is self-evident to the Reasonable mind that a literal translation from one language into another language is an oxymoron. Excuses that God inspired the translators do not change the fact that

these translators cannot directly translate ancient Hebrew and Greek into Elizabethan English – such a feat is impossible. God cannot make a right angle have more or less than 90°, and it remain a right angle. God cannot make one plus one equal anything but two. And God cannot inspire someone to literally translate books in one language into another language. The less the languages have in common the worst it is to translate an idea and not lose the meaning of the original. It is no accident that Muslims keep the Qur'an in Arabic; they recognize the impossibilities of translations to carry the meanings of an idea from one language into another.

There is no such thing as a literal translation. Anyone who asserts otherwise is either deluded or dishonest.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"The Brahmins say that in their books there are many predictions of times in which it will rain. But press those books as strongly as you can, you can not get out of them a drop of water. So you can not get out of all the books that contain the best precepts the smallest good deed."

"Nature is full of genius, full of the divinity; so that not a snowflake escapes its fashioning hand."

"Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and go to the grave with the song still in them."

"Live your life, do your work, then take your hat"

Henry David Thoreau

"I do not feel obliged to believe that the same God who has endowed us with sense, reason, and intellect has intended us to forgo their use."

Galileo Galilei

"Your will needn't be affected by an incident unless you let it. Remember this with everything that happens to you."

"It is our attitude and reactions that give us trouble."

"Don't dread death or pain: dread the fear of death or pain."

"Conduct yourself in all matters, grand and public or small and domestic, in accordance with the laws of nature. Harmonizing your will with nature should be your utmost ideal."

Epictetus, Roman Stoic and philosopher

THINKonline! February 2005

Should Deists Confront Superstition?

By Robert L. Johnson

Occasionally I receive input that www.deism.com is "hateful" because of the way we deal with the revealed religions. Some people say we should not discuss political issues. I disagree with both points of view.

At the bottom of our main page (www.deism.com) is the statement, "Deists don't hate the superstitious, we hate the superstition." This is the right thing to do. Billions of people are taught to be superstitious from birth. It would be foolish to hate them for that. But to hate something evil like superstition, even when it goes by the name of one of the many "revealed" religions, is a good thing. How else can the cycle be broken?

Deists believe in God, or, as is suggested by Deist Ray Fontaine, the author of the following article, in NID (Nature's Intelligent Designer). We love God/NID and greatly appreciate the gift of life we have through the Designer's design and creation. If you love someone or something, you won't stand by while vile and disgusting things are attributed to who/what you love. Deist's love of the Creator demands that we actively oppose the Bible, which paints a derogatory picture of Nature's Intelligent Designer. The Bible has, for example, stories that depict the Creator as killing everyone on earth in the myth of Noah's ark and the flood. It has God telling Moses and Joshua to butcher whole races of people. As a Deist, we should not sit ideally by and refuse to take issue with such garbage. To quote Thomas Paine in his book *The Age of Reason*, "Is it because ye are sunk in the cruelty of superstition, or fell no interest in the honor of your Creator, that ye listen to the horrid tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference?" In another part of *The Age of Reason* he wrote, "It is incumbent on every man who reverences the character of the Creator, and who wishes to lessen the catalogue of artificial miseries, and remove the cause that has sown persecutions thick among mankind, to expel all ideas of revealed religion, as a dangerous heresy and an impious fraud."

Regarding Deism and politics, it would not be the first time that Deists injected their reason based Deism in the political arena. America's founders did just that when the Deist Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence! The Deistic ideals of the American Revolution went directly against the Biblically encouraged idea of people being ruled by the select few in the families that were born to rule through the monarchy. Romans 13:1-7 teaches people to obey and to fear the governmental authorities and to pay their taxes, for the rulers are ruling by God's direction. <http://www.skepticsannotatedbible.com/rom/13.html> Thank God there were Deists to actively oppose such Biblical nonsense!

Today, reason friendly Deism is badly needed, not just in the lives of individuals, but in society in general. With the world gripped in religious war, only Deism can provide a way out. Now, however, the revealed religionists are stirring up more trouble because of their insane Bible

based ideas of Armageddon. Click on the following link for a great article on this important issue <http://www.startribune.com/stories/1519/5211218.html>

In addition to countering the deadly and destructive religious wars that are being inflicted on us, Deism is needed to counter the deadly superstition that is killing children across the country. Right now, all but a few of the 50 states in the union have religious exemptions to child abuse laws and to immunization laws. This is a direct result of coddling the unreasonable revealed religions. People would rather let little children die than to say Christianity is nonsense!

Because so much of our misery is caused by the superstition of the revealed religions, Deism has the most to offer the world. The strongly held reason based belief in God that is the heart of Deism can be used to bridge the gap between reason and superstition. And once the superstitious are reached with God-given reason, their superstition dies. As Tom Paine wrote in his *The Age of Reason*, ". . . The evidence I have produced, and shall produce in the course of this work, to prove that the Bible is without authority, will, while it wounds the stubbornness of a priest, relieve and tranquilize the minds of millions; it will free them from all those hard thoughts of the Almighty which priestcraft and the Bible had infused into their minds, and which stood in everlasting opposition to all their ideas of His moral justice and benevolence."

If you want to DO something to help us get the word out about Deism, you can subscribe to our Deist monthly ezine *THINK & ACT!* by clicking on this link <http://www.deism.com/thinkact.htm> and then clicking on the SUBSCRIBE button at the bottom left of the page. We need to all work together to spread the word about this beautiful life and world changing belief called Deism!

Theories of Origin: Creationism, Evolution, and Intelligent Design

By Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

Part 1: Extracts from a Washington Post Article

On December 26, 2004, the Washington Post reported that the school board in Dover, Pennsylvania has voted to make the theory of evolution share a seat with another theory: Intelligent Design. If it survives a legal test, this school district of about 2,800 students could become the first in the nation to require that high school science teachers at least mention the "intelligent design" theory. This theory holds that human biology and evolution are so complex as to require the creative hand of an intelligent force.

Eleven parents have joined the American Civil Liberties Union and filed suit in federal court in Harrisburg seeking to block mention of intelligent design in high school biology, arguing it is religious belief dressed in the cloth of science.

In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court seemed to settle this question, ruling that Louisiana could not make creationism a part of the science curriculum.

Of late, conservative school boards have launched a counteroffensive, often marching under the banner of intelligent design. This theory has lingered on the margin of mainstream scientific discourse with just enough intellectual heft to force its way into some discussions of evolutionary theory.

The Washington Post quotes Michael J. Behe, a biology professor at Lehigh University and leading advocate of intelligent design. He says, "The human cell is irreducibly complex - what we find in the cell is stuff that looks strongly like it was designed by an intelligence."

Part 2: Published Definitions of the Theories of Origin

Creationism is the theory that matter and the various forms of life and the world were created by God out of nothing as described in the first chapters of the Bible.

Charles Darwin's theory of Evolution holds that all species of plants and animals developed from earlier forms by hereditary transmission of slight variations in successive generations and that natural selection determines which forms will survive.

The theory of Intelligent Design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause. Intelligent design is simply the science of design detection - how to recognize patterns arranged by an intelligent cause for a purpose. Intelligent Design does not identify or describe that intelligent cause.

Part 3: My Observations on This Hot Issue

In January, when I first read the Washington Post's article about Intelligent Design, I was pleased because I agreed completely with Michael Behe, the leading advocate of intelligent design. The intricate and complex designs in nature required intelligence. Like professor Behe, I know that scientists can observe the intelligent design in nature but not its Designer. To go from design to a supernatural Designer is a leap in logic - a mental process outside the domain of science.

When people portrayed Behe as a creationist, he answered by saying, "my starting point is from science, not from Scripture on which creationists base their faith in God."

For the moment, until the courts decide that intelligent design in nature may and should be taught in science class, it is wiser not to talk about the Designer. This is a separate issue beyond the scope of scientists and the courts.

The theory of Intelligent Design, as it now stands, does not mention the cause and designer of the designs in nature. That's why this theory could be accepted by everyone interested in the origin of nature. Since the Intelligent Design theory does not mention God at all, Atheists might not

oppose its being taught in science classes. Nor would the die-hard Creationists object. Nor should the Evolutionists because the theory of Intelligent Design can co-exist side by side with Darwin's theory of Evolution. One theory discusses the design in nature; the other, the evolution process in nature.

As for myself, I have no problem with teachers of science mentioning the theory of Intelligent Design among the other theories of origin.

The designs in nature required intelligence at their origin. Being a philosopher seeking the truth about nature's designs with my reason, I believe in the principle of causation. An effect requires a cause. A painting calls for a painter; a statue presupposes a sculptor. Also the designs in nature were caused by someone or something which I call their Intelligent Designer.

Cheers to the school board of Dover Pa. that instructed the high school science teachers to mention in class the theory of Intelligent Design in nature. Bravo to professor Michael Behe for advocating that theory. Wishes of wisdom and courage for the judge in the federal court in Harrisburg who must decide whether or not teachers may mention Intelligent Design in their high school science classes. Thanks to all who are playing a role in this momentous breakthrough in public education.

King James Version Versus NASB

by Peter Murphy

The KJV vs the NASB, you decide which makes more sense.

*Acts 4:25 NASB, "Who by the Holy Spirit, through the mouth of our father David Thy Servant, didst say, WHY DID THE GENTILES RAGE, AND THE PEOPLES DEVISE FUTILE THINGS?" vs.

Acts 4:25 KJV, "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" Note: The KJV leaves out the Holy Spirit.

*Jude 25 NASB, "To the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now forever. Amen." Vs

Jude 25 KJV, "To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen." Note: The KJV leaves out Jesus Christ.

*Matt. 15:1-3 KJV, "Why do you ALSO transgress the commandments of God"

Note: Jesus admits he is ALSO transgressing the commandments, and like a child in a school yard, offers the inane defense: "So did you!!! na, na, nanana...." If the KJV is right, then Christian assertions that Jesus kept the Law perfectly are false.

The KJV vs itself.

Changes between the 1611 and 1850 editions.

Gen. 19:21 "concerning this thing" vs "concerning this thing also"

Note: Wow, a whole new word added.

Gen 39:16, "her lord" vs "his lord". Note: Now the sex has changed.

Gen 47:6, "any man" vs "any men". Note: The singular becomes the plural.

Ruth 3:15, "and he went into the citie." vs "and she went into the city."

Note: Another sex change operation!

Jer. 51:30, "their" vs "her".

Note: Now the plural not only becomes singular, but feminine.

I Cor. 15:6, "And" vs "After"

Note: Now the word changes completely. LOL

Here is some further comparisons, the KJV illogic verses a more logical translation:

KJV- Job 22:30 He shall deliver the island of the innocent vs.

NRSV Job 22:30 He will deliver even those who are guilty.

KJV Genesis 49:6 [. . .] for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. vs

NRSV Genesis 49:6[. . .]for in their anger they killed men, and at their whim they hamstrung oxen.

Gad's different speeches to David over David carrying out a census [which YHWH ordered him to do in II Sam. 24: 1].

KJV 1 Chronicles 21:12 (KJV) Choices worded as a list (not questions)

- a) "Either, three years of famine;"
- b) "or three months to be destroyed by thy foes,"
- c) "while that the sword of thine enemies overtaketh thee;"
- d) "three days the sword of the LORD, even the pestilence in the land,"
- e) "and the angel of the LORD destroying throughout all the coasts of Israel."
- f) "Now therefore advise thyself"
- g) "what word I shall bring again to him that sent me." vs.

2 Samuel 24:13 (KJV) Choices worded as questions:

- a) "Shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?"
- b) "or wilt thou flee for three months before thine enemies,"
- c) "while they pursue thee?"
- d) "or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?"

- e) [missing]
- f) "now advise, and see"
- g) "what answer I shall return I shall return to him that sent me?"

Thought Provoking Quotes

"Never depend on the admiration of others. There is no strength in it. Personal merit cannot be derived from an external source. It is not to be found in your personal associations, nor can it be found in the regard of other people, even people who love you, will not necessarily agree with your ideas, understand you, or share your enthusiasms. Grow up! Who cares what other people think about you!"

"You have been given your own work to do. Get to it right now, do your best at it, and don't be concerned with who is watching you. Create your own merit."

"Nothing truly stops you. Nothing truly holds you back. For your own will is always within your control."

Epictetus

"Words need to be sown like seed. No matter how tiny a seed may be, when it lands in the right sort of ground it unfolds its strength and from being minute expands and grows to a massive size. Reason does the same; to the outward eye its dimensions may be insignificant, but with activity it starts developing. . . . The mind will then respond by being in its turn creative and will produce a yield exceeding what was put into it."

Seneca

"But when the divine gift of reason begins to expand itself in the mind and calls man to reflection, he then reads and contemplates God and His works, and not in the books pretending to be revelation. The creation is the Bible of the true believer in God. Everything in this vast volume inspires him with sublime ideas of the Creator. The little and paltry, and often obscene, tales of the Bible sink into wretchedness when put in comparison with this mighty work."

"The Deist needs none of those tricks and shows called miracles to confirm his faith, for what can be a greater miracle than the creation itself, and his own existence?"

"There is a happiness in Deism, when rightly understood, that is not to be found in any other system of religion. All other systems have something in them that either shock our reason, or are repugnant to it, and man, if he thinks at all, must stifle his reason in order to force himself to believe them."

Thomas Paine

***THINKonline!* March 2005**

Disgusting Religious Practice

by Robert L. Johnson

Deists are generally aware of the absurdities of the various "revealed" religions. Claims that Moses parted the Red Sea, or that Jesus did a little soft-shoe on water are ridiculous far-fetched claims. The Bible, which is "holy" to all three of the major revealed religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, also contains some vile disgusting content. For example, the idea God would tell Abraham to murder his son to prove his love of God is disgusting. Or, that God told the Jews they should circumcise themselves and their eight day old sons as, "a token of the covenant betwixt me and you." (Genesis 17:10-11) This is not natural or normal.

The unnatural act of circumcision has recently made the headlines in Jewish publications. It seems rabbis routinely use their mouth to suck the blood from the infant's circumcised penis! This is truly DISGUSTING! How can any thinking person approve of barbaric and unnatural superstition such as this??? And to pretend the Creator ordered it!

According to the Jewish publication Haaretz, recently a rabbi infected with herpes transmitted his herpes to a baby he sucked the blood from. The baby died from the herpes the rabbi gave him. Now, instead of admitting the practice of circumcision is harmful and unnatural, and, in particular, the sucking of the infant's circumcised bloody penis only demonstrates a depraved mind and a very sick religion, the Orthodox rabbinical group, the Rabbinical Council of America, is [suggesting](#) rabbis use a tube to suck the blood from the victim's penis!

How can disgusting superstitions such as this be tolerated by a reasonable society? It's time for Deism to destroy superstition, especially when it involves child molesting and torture! How can we claim we believe in and love the Creator when things like this, that are done in the name of God, are a every day occurrence?

Was Egypt's King Ikhnaton (1375 B.C.) a Deist?

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

Last evening, as I glanced through Time's Almanac 2004, one entry caught my eye: "Ikhnaton develops monotheistic religion in Egypt (c.1375 B.C.)". Never having heard of this ancient king before, I searched the Internet for information. I landed on an historical study site at: <http://ragz-international.com/ikhnaton.htm> . That article provided information for what follows.

As usual, my bedtime readings later induced a related dream. Tonight I dreamed about God conversing with the ancient king of Egypt. "Good morning, sire," said God. "I believe this is our first face-to-face meeting, isn't it?"

"Yes, my Lord," Ikhnaton replied, "and it's a great honor for me."

"Between 1375 and 1362 B.C.", God said, "when you were King of Egypt, I watched you with great interest. What I noticed and liked most was your love of the Truth. You emphasized and appreciated truth everywhere and from everyone."

"Yes," Ikhnaton said, "to remind my subjects that I valued truth first and foremost, I always attached to my name the phrase 'living in truth'."

"You evidently did not believe in the many deities proposed by the priests," said God. "Why?"

"For personal gain," Ikhnaton said, "the priests encouraged the people to bring food and other valuables to the temples as offerings to the gods. Since no god claimed the offerings, they were confiscated by the priests."

"The priests were not teaching the truth," said God "and you didn't like that. So what did you do?"

"To avoid opposition and trouble from the priests," Ikhnaton said, "I subsidized the clergy for their silence. Then I told the people the truth about the non-existing gods. I erased all reminders of the deities. I expunged their names from all tablets and monuments. Everywhere the singular word 'God' replaced the ancient plural form 'gods'."

"Where did you get the idea of only one god?" asked God.

"From the sun," Ikhnaton explained. "Wherever I went in my expanding kingdom, the same sun shined and warmed the flowers and the trees, the birds and the fish, the animals and humans. If one sun is enough for the world, why can't one God suffice?"

"What else did the sun suggest about me?" God asked the King.

"The sun beams the same rays universally," said Ikhnaton, "without preference for any one place and without prejudice against others. Likewise you, my Lord, do not favor one race above the others, giving it certain privileges and special protection."

"That's not what your neighbor, Abraham, believes and teaches," said God. "He says that his followers and descendants are my Chosen People, favored above all others. What do you call that?"

"I call it self-delusion and self-aggrandizement," Ikhnaton replied.

"Right-on," said God, "and by the way, what did you call me? What was my name?"

"My ancestors called you 'Amon'," Ikhnaton replied, "but since Amon was associated with dozens of deities, I changed your name to 'Aton', an ancient name for the sun. At the same time, I changed my name to Ikhnaton which means 'Aton is satisfied'. I hope that was not presumptuous on my part."

"Not at all," God agreed, "because it's the truth. Before I forget, let me share with you what the scholars in the year 2004 A.D. are writing about you. Interested?"

"Of course I am," replied Ikhnaton. "Please tell me."

"Some have suggested," God said, "that your belief in one God influenced Abraham's doctrine about me."

"That's not possible," Ikhnaton said, "his idea of God was very different from mine. He claimed that you, yourself, revealed your existence and many other things. For me the knowledge of your existence came from what you created, especially the sun."

"Why didn't your true concept of me catch on as Abraham's did?" asked God. "Do you know?"

"Yes," answered Ikhnaton. "One reason is that Abraham lived a lot longer than I did. He died at 175 years old. I passed away at 30 years of age as did Jesus."

"Is there another reason for your short-lived concept of me?" asked God.

"I believe so," replied Ikhnaton. "I died without any sons but Abraham left two famous sons: Isaac and Ishmael. Isaac passed on his view of God to his progeny, the Jews. Ishmael handed down his ideas of God to the Arabs. When I died, my vision of You, my Lord, died with me. I had no sons to pass it down to others."

"During the following centuries," said God, "both traditions lost their pristine purity. Jesus, a Jew, reformed Isaac's version which his followers elaborated into a new religion, Christianity. A few centuries later, an Arab, Muhammad, transformed Ishmael's version into a separate religion, called Islamism. Both versions flourished and today there are 1.9 billion Christians and 1.1 billion Muslims."

"What happened to my monotheistic view of You, my Lord?" asked Ikhnaton. "Does anyone conceive you as I did - the beneficent Creator of the world?"

"A scattered group of people," God replied, "who are called Deists, don't believe that I revealed myself to certain prophets to enlighten all humans. They profess, however, that the structures and laws of nature presuppose an intelligent Creator. The genius Einstein believed that, so did Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine."

"So did I," Ikhnaton said. "Does that make me a Deist?"

"If you like," said God, "but the Deists don't consider you the original author of their worldview. They didn't get the idea from you, they say, but from their personal observation of nature's laws."

"That's OK by me," said Ikhnaton. "I'm honored to be associated with them even though my concept of you was not at all sophisticated and scientific. My vision of you was very primitive, in the sense of ancient."

"Just like me and the sun and Truth itself." God said. "Welcome into our prestigious company."

At this moment, I was awoken by the sun beaming its rays of glorious light. A thought struck me: this was the same sun that woke King Ikhnaton in the morning and enlightened him about God. While drinking my coffee, I reread the articles that had inspired my dream.

What the King valued most was the truth. It drove him away from the deities peddled by the priests. There was only one God. He revealed himself not only to a small group of Prophets but to everyone. He manifested himself in the wonders of nature, notably the sun. This magnificent creation beamed its rays everywhere, benefiting everyone equally.

I realized that King Ikhnaton believed like me that nature reveals God's existence, his intelligence and beneficence. I am a Deist and, in my book, so was King Ikhnaton. Bravo, your majesty.

Church and State

by Pauline Rocco

Remember a certain former Speaker of the House whose initials are N. G? (If you can't remember his name and think NG is usually understood to mean "No Good" that's ok with me)! When NG was Speaker he often denounced Bill Clinton's fling with Monica and piously brayed for a return to "family values." All the while, NG was having an affair with his employee who sang in her church choir on Sundays. My! how devout of NG and friend to so strictly keep Jesus' command to "love one another."

Lately NG has been pretending that the United States was founded as a Christian nation. He knows very well (he is a historian) that one of the things that made the Revolution so revolutionary was the fact that our Constitution was and still is an intentionally secular document. There is no mention of God, Jesus, the bible, or the word Christian in the Constitution. NG knows full well that Jefferson was a Deist who agreed with Bolingbroke's assertion that there is a "tacit alliance between priests and atheists against true religion." (Here "true religion" refers to Deism or natural religion).

Besides that, NG knows that Jefferson wrote the following statement:

“In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection of his own.”

It is urgently important for every reader to understand what Jefferson was saying in that profound statement of truth. The key concept is that the clergy and the government work in collusion, covering up each others exploitation of the people. Have you heard any Christian leader denounce the administration for lying us into war? People are dying in a needless war... gee, how important is that compared to the fact that the Ten Commandants might be removed from the lawn of the Texas capitol? Or, God forbid, what if they take “under God” out of the pledge, or “In God We Trust” off our money?!

Ever wonder why the flames of religious fervor and patriotism are being fanned simultaneously? Go back and read Jefferson’s statement. Then become a real American and know that now is the time for all good citizens to come to the aid of our country. Heed Robert Johnson’s advice to speak up about what is going on. Go to school board meetings and advocate for keeping science in and superstition out of our schools. Remind people that Science brought about the Enlightenment—religious superstition brought about the Dark Ages. Let your voice be heard.

It’s natural to be concerned about your individual security, but our collective security as thinking people is in our heritage-- our Greco-Roman heritage. With reason at its foundation, our ancestors built Western Civilization. What was the real impact of Christianity on civilization? Here is how Jefferson’s favorite historian Edward Gibbon described it (as told by Will Durant in Durant, Will. Caesar and Christ. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1944).

THE GREATEST OF HISTORIANS [Edward Gibbon] HELD THAT CHRISTIANITY WAS THE CHIEF CAUSE OF ROME’S FALL. FOR THIS RELIGION...HAD DESTROYED THE OLD FAITH THAT HAD GIVEN MORAL CHARACTER TO THE ROMAN SOUL AND STABILITY TO THE ROMAN STATE. IT [Christianity] HAD DECLARED WAR UPON CLASSIC CULTURE ----UPON SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, LITERATURE AND ART. IT HAD BROUGHT AN ENFEEBLING ORIENTAL MYSTICISM INTO THE REALISTIC STOICISM OF ROMAN LIFE; IT [Christianity] HAD TURNED MEN’S THOUGHTS FROM THE TASKS OF THIS WORLD TO AN ENERVATING PREPARATION FOR SOME COSMIC CATASTROPHE, AND HAD LURED THEM INTO SEEKING INDIVIDUAL SALVATION THROUGH ASCETICISM AND PRAYER, RATHER THAN COLLECTIVE SALVATION THROUGH DEVOTION TO THE STATE [the homeland]

(Durant 667) emphasis added.

It is your duty to defend your heritage, which is under assault as it was 2000 years ago. Remember, hubris never wins out in the long run, but Nature always does. That’s Good News for us.

The True Origin of the Name Jesus

by Peter Murphy

The origin of the name Jesus is not rooted in either the name Yeshua or Joshua, but in the Greek name Iesous. I am quoting from the Jesus Mysteries, where evidence points to the true origin of the name Jesus and that it was no accident that the Hellenistic Greeks took this name and later the growing institutional church fabricated a story linking the Hellenistic Iesous with Judaism, not unlike the religion of Mithra justifying itself by claiming to be rooted in the older Zoroastrianism religion.

In the Jesus Mysteries, the authors demonstrate that the word "Iesous" is a forced translation of Joshua or the more Jewish sounding Yeshua. The Greek construct which leads to the possibility that Jesus was merely symbol for something else. The Greeks viewed numbers in a supernatural sense, not unlike the way that kabbalah Jews view Hebrew as a magical and supernatural language.

In Christianity the number 666 is held to be the number of the beast. The reason for this number was that in Greek gematria, the number 666 was viewed as the imperfect number, the imperfect symbol. What is less known is that the number 888 was viewed as the perfect number, the perfect symbol. And what word constitutes 888? The answer is Iesous. The name breaks down into $I(10)+E(8)+S(200)+O(70)+U(400)+S(200) = 888$. So the evidence shows that a name was needed to go with 888 and Iesous was created; evidence against the idea that Jesus was an actual person but a construct invented to fit the perfect number. Here are a few quotes from the topic in general from the Jesus Mysteries.

On p. 142,

"This number was regarded as sacred and magical by the ancients for a number of reasons, including the fact that if all the numbers associated with each of the 24 letters in the Greek alphabet are added together they come to 888."

Also, from same source:

"Irenaeus wrote in 'Against Heresies,' 1.14.4: 'Iesous is a name arithmetically symbolic, consisting of six letters, as is known by all those that belong to the called.'"

Adding weight to this is that Paul wrote that the name Jesus, or in Paul's native Greek Iesous, was a name above all other names. When one realizes the true origin of Paul's Iesous being 888, then it becomes self evident that the New Testament's Iesous is a purely fictional character surrounded by a historical fiction.

Thought Provoking Quotes

“With soap, baptism is a good thing.”

“No man with any sense of humor ever founded a religion.”

“In all ages, hypocrites, called priests, have put crowns upon the heads of thieves, called kings.”

Robert G. Ingersoll

“Religion is the source of all imaginable follies and disturbances; it is the parent of fanaticism and civil discord; it is the enemy of mankind.”

“Christianity must be divine, since it has lasted 1,700 years despite the fact that it is so full of villainy and nonsense.”

Voltaire

“Man is the only animal that has the true religion - several of them.”

Mark Twain

“To be happy in old age, it is necessary that we accustom ourselves to objects that can accompany the mind all the way through life, and that we take the rest as good in their day. The mere man of pleasure is miserable in old age, and the mere drudge in business is but little better; whereas, natural philosophy, mathematical and mechanical science are a continual source of tranquil pleasure, and in spite of the gloomy dogmas of priests and of superstition, the study of those things is the study of the true theology; it teaches man to know and to admire the Creator, for the principles of science are in the creation, and are unchangeable and of divine origin.”

Thomas Paine

“... to hold fast to the divine spirit within, and serve it loyally, is all that is needful.”

“... anything that distracts you from the Ruler within you - means a loss of opportunity for some other task.”

“... due deliberation, yet no irresolution.”

“As a part, you inhere in the Whole. You will vanish into that which gave you birth: or rather, you will be transmuted once more into the creative Reason of the universe.”

“Live not as though there were a thousand years ahead of you. Fate is at your elbow; make yourself good while life and power are still yours.”

“He who ignores what his neighbor is saying or doing or thinking, and cares only that his own actions should be just and godly, is greatly the gainer in time and ease. A good person does not spy around for the black spots in others, but presses unswervingly on towards his mark.”

“Everything that happens is as normal and expected as the spring rose or the summer fruit; this is true of sickness, death, slander, intrigue, and all the other things that delight or trouble foolish men.”

Marcus Aurelius, Meditations

***THINKonline!* April 2005**

A Deist's Take on the Terri Schiavo Case

by Peter Murphy

These are in all likelihood my closing observations on plight of Mrs. Terri Schiavo and the circus that developed around her dying. Terri Schiavo died at 9:30 on the morning of March 31, 2005. It took her 15 years to die, but she was finally allowed to die with some dignity in the arms of her husband. There are a number of items I wish to comment on concerning this case.

Prayers

There can be no doubt that millions if not billions of prayers were offered up to the Christian god on Terri's behalf. Christians had reason to hope that their prayers would be answered with a miracle, consider just these nine promises of Jesus and the Bible:

Matt. 7: 7-8, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you."

Matt. 17:20, "Truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and nothing shall be impossible."

Mark 9:23, "All things are possible to him who believes."

Mark 16: 17-18, "And these signs will accompany those who have believed: in my name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues; they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it shall not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Luke 11: 9-10, "And I say to you, ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, it shall be opened."

John 14: 12-14, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatever you ask in my name, I will do it."

John 16: 23-24, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything, he will give it to you in my name. Until now you have asked for nothing in my name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."

James 5," 14-15, "14 Is anyone of you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the lord; 15 and the prayer offered in

faith will restore the one who is sick, and the lord will raise him up, and if he committed sins they will be forgiven him."

I John 3: 21-23, "Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before god; 22 and whatever we ask we receive from him,, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment that we believe in the name of his son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as he commanded us."

We know that Terri Schiavo did not recover, the liquefied parts of her brain did not solidify into healthy tissue, and she died in the manner and within the time frame doctors had publicly stated. What are the implications where prayer is concerned? Simple, prayer does not work. There is no question that there was a sufficient quantity of prayer for divine intervention. There is no question that hundreds of thousands of devote believers prayed. If the quantity and quality of the prayers offered on Terri's behalf would not move the Christian god to provide a miracle, then one must conclude that either he could not, or would not intervene. Let us look closer at the promises of the New Testament: Matt. 7:7-8 failed to deliver. The devote Christians asked in great numbers and came up empty handed. Matt. 17:20 failed to deliver. It is hard to believe that for all those praying Christians none had the faith of a mustard seed -- meaning little faith. It seems that even with the faith of a mustard seed some things are impossible. Mark 9:23 failed to deliver. It seems that not all things are possible for him who believes. One must assume Bob Schindler and Randall Terry believed. Mark 16: 17-18 failed to deliver. Are we to assume that no believer put his hands on Terri to cure her? Luke 11: 9-10 failed to deliver. Obviously not everyone who asks receives. Even when hundreds of thousands ask they still do not receive. John 14: 12-14 failed to deliver. It is extremely unlikely Jesus, if he existed, ever performed a miracle. One thing is certain beyond any reasonable shadow of a doubt, his devote followers, some who take vows of poverty and chastity for life, have performed no miracles equal or greater than Jesus. Actually, there is not one independently confirmed miracle ever taking place. John 16: 23-24 failed to deliver. There is no question the devote Christians who asked for Terri to be cured in Jesus' did not get what they asked. James 5, 14-15 failed to deliver. Although the New Testament claims clerics can cure people with prayer, laying of hands, and oils, the fact remains they cannot. When is the last time John Paul II cured anyone? I John 3: 21-23 failed to deliver. One does not receive whatever one asks.

The complete and consistent failure of prayer to be answered should be sufficient to satisfy the rational mind that prayer does not work. Prayer is in effect a magic ritual of words designed to invoke a response from a deity or spirit. All prayer is an attempt to manipulate said deity or spirit through either flattery or complaint. In the former, prayer is to state what is for the believer the obvious, in the latter it is to educate said deity or spirit on the proper course of action. So prayer is fundamentally an expression of human cynicism with the status quo; an attempt by the impotent to change reality through magic incantations. In the case of Terri Schiavo, there is no question that there was sufficient quality and quantity to invoke a response from the Christian god; the fact that the Christian god failed to respond speaks volumes against Christians and their god. In light of this reality, why is it people continue to pray when it is obvious that the prayers are not answered?

The answer is that the believer in prayer is trapped in what can best be called Orwellian Double-Think: the holding of multiple conflicting ideas as true at the same time. Christians believe prayer works, but their prayers are consistently unanswered. In order to maintain faith in their unresponsive god, they create an out for themselves by asserting that when they don't get what they want it is "God's Will." This creates a logical paradox for the believer who must resort to Double-Think in order to maintain their belief in their god. If it all comes down to God's Will in the end, then why bother praying? Even more damaging is God promised to grant what was asked, as Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask the Father for anything, he will give it to you in my name." To qualify a prayer with its own negation, "thy will be done" is an admission at the deepest psychological levels that the believer does not really believe intervention is possible.

The Pro-life Movement

The Pro-life movement recognized the opportunity the Terri Shiavo case afforded and took advantage of it. Terri became both a tool and a cash cow (a marketing term for a product which generates money through sales or donations). Pro-life is not about human dignity but control; the movement is composed of some of the most unstable people around. People filled with anger and hate hide behind the movement and try to add meaning to their empty lives by demonizing pregnant women, doctors, judges, science, and now hospices and advocates of the right to refuse medical treatment. The goal of the pro-life movement is a theocratic state where nonconformists will be dealt with in the harshest manner possible. The pro-life movement can be said to care about one from conception to birth, after that, one is on their own. This callousness is not surprising. The pro-life movement is merely an extension of Roman Catholic ideology. "Life" in Catholicism is about suffering. If Jesus suffered for humans, and Genesis says that humans are to suffer, then everyone should suffer as much as possible for as long as possible. Delusional slogans about "it is noble to suffer" and the "dignity of suffering" are fundamentally sadistic. What can one expect from an ideology which asserts that a cracker and a cup of wine become the actual physical body and blood of their god -- if this is true, than Catholics indulge in cannibalism and vampirism when they eat the flesh of their god and drink his blood.

Human Life as Originated by God and Terminated by Death

by Raymond Fontaine, Ph.D.

On January 1, 2004, I received an e-mail from James. He was born and bred in the Christian tradition that he zealously promoted in the 1990's. "During my ministry," James wrote, "I began to base my religious beliefs on reason and hope rather than on blind faith. I became a Deist. Now I embrace truth more than ever before."

I usually reply to an e-mail with one of my own. In this case, however, I choose to answer James in an essay that I address not only to him but to everyone in cyberspace with similar concerns.

First, James calls himself a Deist without explanation. For my larger audience, let me share Webster's definition of Deism. "It's belief in the existence of a God on purely rational grounds without reliance on revelation or authority. It's the doctrine that God created the world and its natural laws but takes no further part in its functioning." That defines my Deism exactly and, I hope, that of James.

When people on the Internet ask me, "Whom can I trust to reveal the existence of God?" I usually reply as follows. Before answering that question, let me recall an event that occurred in Southern France. In 1940, cave paintings dating back 17,000 years were discovered. The painter did not leave his signature nor a self-portrait. The paintings do not reveal who he was nor how he looked. Yet no one doubts that someone living then and there painted those pictures. Their painter existed.

The same is true for all the structures and designs embedded in nature: in the flowers and the trees, the animals and the fish, the reptiles and the birds. Some intelligent Being or Force fashioned whatever later developed and evolved into all the living beings on earth. Humans call him God or some other name like Allah and Yahweh. Nature presupposes that Intelligent Being. He existed and undoubtedly still does. Human reason comes to the conclusion THAT God exists but nothing about WHAT he is.

If nature cannot provide that information, who can? Many writers and preachers claim that they know. They say that some ancient persons, like Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, declared that God revealed to them a lot about his Being and activities on earth. Other humans compiled those supernatural revelations into Holy Books such as the Bible, the Gospels and the Koran. After that, other people interpreted those reputed revelations in a whole variety of sects. All those thousands of writers and preachers were mere humans with minds like yours and mine.

For many years I was one of them - a Catholic priest. Finally I no longer believed in any reputed supernatural revelations of God. I fell back on the clear simple revelation of God in nature. Its structures and laws presuppose an intelligent Creator. He exists. But nature reveals nothing more about God.

Let's return to James' e-mail message where he says that he has now embraced the truth. Again for my Internet audience, let me recall Webster's definition of truth and fiction. "Truth suggests conformity with the facts or with reality while fiction is something invented by the imagination." Like any normal person, I enjoy a novel or a detective story that is fiction. But as regards God's existence and activities, I do not accept fiction. I want the facts - the truth. Fiction won't do, no matter how glorious it is presented in a movie or book, in a sermon or hymn. Save the fictitious fabrications about God for the theater and the church.

If the preachers and writers sincerely believe that they are teaching the truth when in fact they are spreading falsehoods, they are sadly mistaken. Unfortunately they are also misguiding others. If and when the preachers no longer believe what they are teaching, their message turns into a deliberate hoax and they become charlatans - fakes.

Let's bring James back into the picture. In his final paragraph, he addresses me and writes, "You seem to believe that God is completely good because Creation has much good." Since James got the idea, apparently from my writings, that I believe in God's complete goodness, let me clarify my position. First, I don't believe any reputed revelation about God. From nature's structures and laws, I gather that their Creator exists. Since only intelligence can uncover and unravel them, I believe that only an intelligent Being could create them.

From nature that's all I know about God. If I should say more, it would be simply my personal ideas, emotions and desires. None of these personal reflections about God reveal anything objective about the Creator but only how Raymond Fontaine feels and thinks about God and his handiwork in nature.

The readers of my [writings](#) surely have ideas and emotions of their own. I respect them. I will not ferret out ideas different from mine and try to prove them wrong. But if someone contacts me with questions and doubts about God or the teaching of their priest or preacher, I will express what I sincerely believe to be the truth as revealed in nature.

For an example I will answer here this question from James: "The only way that I can continue to believe that God is completely good is to believe in an afterlife. If God is completely good, then God must make creatures live after they die and give them what they deserve, eventually making all of them completely good and happy forever. Do you agree?"

To answer him, I did not check in the Bible, the Gospels and the Koran. I looked in nature that has already revealed to me that God exists. In nature all organisms die. Since the first bacteria appeared on earth 1.5 billion years ago, all organisms have eventually ceased to exist never to reappear. The future offers no hope of an afterlife for any organism including humans. I accept that fact - the truth.

Since nature reveals only God's existence and nothing about his nature and nothing about an afterlife for humans, I am content with nature's wonders and resources, its flora and fauna, especially humankind. I don't need anything more.

Differences Among Deists

by Robert L. Johnson

When I talk to people about Deism, and when I make posts to different places on the internet, I get a lot of questions about how Deism relates to various issues. For example, life after death. Personally, I take the stand that no one knows for certain. Some Deists, like Ray Fontaine, believes strongly that there is nothing after our bodies die. Then, there are Deists like Ben Franklin who strongly believed in an after-life.

There are controversial issues like abortion. I believe, based on reason, nature and science, that at the time of conception a new individual is created. Therefore, I believe that abortion on demand is wrong. I put a page up regarding this question. <http://www.deism.com/abortion.htm>

In relation to being a Deist, it doesn't matter what your beliefs are on these topics or any others. A Deist is simply a person who believes in God/Creator/Designer who designed and created the universe, and who rejects the unreasonable "revealed" religions based on their irrational claims that contradict our God-given reason. Our Bible is the creation and nature.

Just because we have differences on some of these issues doesn't mean we should stop working together to advance Deism. We need to do everything we possibly can to get the word out about Deism. Think of how much better society and the lives of individuals would be if we were not burdened down with the superstition and fear based revealed religions. We can make a very positive difference in this world through Deism. It's up to us.

Below is an email I received from someone who has been helped by our efforts to spread Deism. There are millions more like him out there who we really need to reach with the message of reason-friendly Deism. Once enough people are reached, the dark days of "revealed" religion will be over and true natural progress will begin. What are you doing to make that day a reality?

Dear Bob,

I have long been a very active member of a Christian church and in recent years I have really started to question everything. I think God is a God of reason and order and sense. The more I studied and questioned the more I found myself separated from what I had always held as the truth. Up until now I thought I was out here all by myself. I knew nothing of Deism and without ever reading any materials on Deism until tonight I have come to virtually the exact same conclusions as what I have been reading on your website. Even where Jesus is concerned. I really appreciated the quote from Thomas Jefferson talking about Jesus never talking about himself as God incarnate etc. etc. It was the subsequent religious leaders that painted that picture. I am not sure I think they were all money motivated, but you know it had something to do with it. It is so encouraging and refreshing to realize that I am not crazy or . . . whatever. I have still been accompanying my wife to church, but the rubbish that is taught seems so demeaning once you start allowing yourself the luxury of actually using your God given mind. I am located in Vancouver WA and I was wondering if there are any congregations of Deists that believe as you do in this area. I am looking forward to staying tuned in to your website. Thank you so much for all the good material there.

Sincerely,

Steve

Thought Provoking Quotes

"A man is rich in proportion of the number of things he can afford to let alone."

"Be not simply good; be good for something."

"It is not part of a true culture to tame tigers, any more than it is to make sheep ferocious."

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived. I did not wish to live what was not life....I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner, and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion."

Henry David Thoreau

"None are so hopelessly enslaved as those who falsely believe they are free."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it."

"The only religion that has not been invented, and that has in it every evidence of divine originality, is pure and simple Deism. It must have been the first, and will probably be the last, that man believes. But pure and simple Deism does not answer the purpose of despotic governments. They cannot lay hold of religion as an engine, but by mixing it with human inventions . . .; neither does it answer to the avarice of priests."

Thomas Paine

THINKonline! May 2005

Book Review: My Life With God IN and OUT of the Church

By Robert L. Johnson

Think of all the people you know. How many truly seek the truth wherever it leads them? How many really want to make the world a better place, and actually DO something about it? Not many people that I'm aware of are like that. Most people have a well paying career as their primary goal in life. Financial and material security at all costs. Of course, many of them say it's for the kids and family. But by not putting reason and truth first, what kind of world are we leaving our children and future generations? Because of reason's banishment from government, many peoples' kids are being sent off to war and coming home minus limbs or in a box. The politicians don't care because they know the average person doesn't care enough to actually do anything to bring about change. If more people were like the author of *My Life With God In and Out of the Church*, Ray Fontaine, we wouldn't have these deadly problems.

Ray's book tells the story of his life from a little kid going to Catholic school, to being ordained as a Roman Catholic Priest, to developing free reason to the point of realizing that "revealed" religion and God don't have much in common. In the book he shares the deep questions he asked himself about life, God, nature, religion, and philosophy. His answers can be utilized and benefit everyone who reads his book.

Watching the news and listening to the reports about the 30th anniversary of the termination of US involvement in Vietnam made me realize what an outstanding person Ray is. Ray became a priest because he wanted to serve God and do what is right. When he realized the Catholic Church and Christianity are wrong, he never lost his belief in the Creator. And he didn't give up his quest, not only for the truth, but to DO what is right. In 1968 he shipped out to Vietnam with USAID. He worked in Vietnam helping war refugees survive. When the Communists were approaching for the final kill in Vietnam, Ray had to crash a bus full of refugees through a guarded gate to get to freedom. His life and experiences could easily be made into a meaningful movie.

While in Vietnam he met his future wife, Minh. After all these years, without Catholic dogma or any "revealed" superstition dictating to them, they are still happily married. Ray, in his late 80's, is a caregiver to his disabled wife. Even though his time is restricted, he makes time to help me run deism.com by answering emails and writing outstanding articles for *THINKonline!* and *THINK & ACT!*. I couldn't ask for a better partner in getting the word out about Deism! I greatly appreciate Ray!

If you love a good read and would like to read something of substance by someone of substance, by all means read *My Life With God In and Out of the Church*. You can order it through amazon.com here: **My Life With God In and Out of the Church**.

A Problem With Daniel

By Peter Murphy

The Book of Daniel is regarded as prophetic among Christian circles because of its implied references to the messiah. In the Christian Old Testament it is placed following Ezekiel in order to make Daniel look like one of the great prophets of old. On the other hand in the Tanakh (Jewish Bible) the Book of Daniel is placed among the least inspired books and there is no Daniel listed as a Major or Minor Prophet.

Irrespective of this difference the problems with the Book of Daniel historically are legion. This essay will address merely one moral problem. The question of just how loyal was this Daniel to YHWH. It is important to start at the beginning.

In chapter 1 Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon selected Daniel, to be trained in Babylonian literature and language. In chapter 2, during the second year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, Daniel interprets a dream of the king and is made as a reward the ruler over the whole province of Babylon and chief prefect over the wise men. Daniel recognizing the need for assistants appoints Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego to deal with the administration of the province, while Daniel remained at Nebuchadnezzar's court. This last item is very important to the point of this essay.

In chapter 3 Nebuchadnezzar raises a gold statue of approximately 90 feet in his own honor and decreed that all his subjects worship it. Nebuchadnezzar also decreed that any who would not worship his statue was to be thrown into a furnace. It must be conceded that Daniel, who was at Nebuchadnezzar's court, knew about this statue and decree.

Chapter 3 tells us what happened next. In verses 7-12 we are told that certain men disobeyed the decree and charges were brought against them. According to the text they were the only ones who disobeyed the decree. The three accused were the men Daniel had appointed to deal with the administration of the province of Babylon, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. These three men are arrested and brought before Nebuchadnezzar, who threw them into his furnace. Anyway, to make a long story short an angel shows up to keep the men company and they are rescued and the king admits their god is the real god.

What is missing is where was Daniel while this was going on? According to chapter 2 Daniel was at Nebuchadnezzar's court, as such he would have been one of those who bowed down to the golden image -- if not, then why was he not accused along with his deputies! Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego are the ones who put their lives on the line for their beliefs; Daniel is nowhere to be seen. If he was at court, as chapter 2 maintains, then he must have bowed and worshipped the image because he did not get in trouble. And if he was an idol worshipper, as he must be, then what kind of prophet was he!

Once again the Christian belief in Daniel being a real person and a prophet falls apart just by a simple critical reading of this furnace affair.

Thought Provoking Quotes

"The man, though, whom you should admire and imitate is the one who finds it a joy to live and in spite of that is not reluctant to die. For where's the virtue in going out when you're really being thrown out? . . . there is nothing the wise man does reluctantly."

"Philosophy's power to blunt all the blows of circumstance is beyond belief."

"A person who has learned how to die has unlearned how to be a slave."

Seneca

"In any weather, at any hour of the day or night, I have been anxious to improve the nick of time, and notch it on my stick too; to stand on the meeting of two eternity's, the past and future, which is precisely the present moment; to toe that line."

"To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, nor even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust. It is to solve some of the problems of life, not only theoretically, but practically."

"There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers."

Henry David Thoreau

"The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything save our modes of thinking and we thus drift toward unparalleled catastrophe."

Albert Einstein

Thank You!

Thank you for ordering the e-Book *The Best of THINK! And THINKonline!, Volume 1!* It's greatly appreciated and helps us earn the required funds to continue to promote Deism. Please share this e-Book with friends and family and let others learn about Deism.

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Progress! Bob Johnson
www.deism.com