

An Answer to the “Free-Thinker’s” Non-tract – Part II

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a continuance . . .

Since the greatest part of this entire “non-tract” and its validity rests upon the presumption that there exists no spiritual world, and that the “contradictions” found in the Bible are valid if and only if there is no spiritual world, this portion is devoted to looking at the existence of the spiritual world and the fact that all of the Bible is predicated upon the existence of the spiritual world.

In fact, the Bible declares that the spiritual preexisted and predominates the physical world. The Bible’s proof for this is found in two short succinct verses of Scripture.

God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth. (*John 4:24*)

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (*Genesis 1:1*)

Now, there is far more in the Scripture than this that attests to the fact that the spiritual world pre-existed the physical, and is greater than the physical. However, the above two verses are clear and plain enough to make the point without belaboring it. Thus, for one to say the Scripture has contradictions without studying and attempting to understand the spiritual world, is to judge it without basis. In the previous section it is plainly shown that the atheist cannot

authoritatively state that the spiritual world does not exist. To then cast off the Bible and declare it full of contradictions is to prove oneself a very foolish individual.

To this the Scripture speaks plainly, for the Scripture speaks of those individuals who have leaned on their own understanding, and have concluded that they have sufficient knowledge to determine everything about their destiny and all the ramifications and consequences for their thoughts and actions. In fact, not once, but twice this mindset is spoken of. In fact, it is spoken of so close together that we could conclude that this concept is a trap and snare in which man is easily caught.

There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death. (*Proverb 14:12*)

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death. (*Proverb 16:25*)

Since none of the atheists can conclusively declare that there exists no spiritual world (and thus no God). It would behoove them to give consideration to texts that speak authoritatively on the spiritual world. ((Not every text that claims to be about the spiritual world is accurate. This is due to the fact that the devil exists and is a real person, though not physical. The power of the Devil is to influence individuals in their mind to put forth information that will mislead and deceive men as to the true nature of the spiritual world. Only the Scripture is protected by the LORD God from this meddling as it is forever settled in heaven. What we have here on earth are copies. Though the Devil and men may alter some of the copies, they cannot alter or destroy all the true copies of the word of God. For the English-speaking people, the Scripture is the King James Version.)) If the atheist does not do this, we must conclude that the atheist is speaking only from the benefit of his or her own experience. In fact, if any of us depend only upon our own perception and experience, we

will find ourselves extremely limited in what we can know and perceive. Moreover, to be incorrect about the spiritual world will have disastrous consequences for the individual for all of eternity. To deny that it exists insures that the one will not be prepared for the experience they will surely have when they pass from this world into eternity.

Indeed, it is one thing to be wrong about a question on a math test. After all, there are many questions on the test, and it is only a test. The worst that can happen is that we have to retake the course, or reapply for admission, or something of that sort. It is another thing to be wrong about black ice being on the highway instead of just rainwater. After all, we could die in the accident, or kill someone else. At a minimum, we are going to have a nasty scare. What if we are wrong about a firearm being loaded? The implications and possible consequences are dangerous and horrible to consider, both to us and those around us.

But let us consider the implications and consequences if we are wrong about the spiritual world. Does it matter to us what happens when we die if we do not have a soul at all, or do not have one that does not continue on in eternity? Certainly, it would not matter. The Scripture does show that there are people that believe that way, but that this view is also foolish.

If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die. (*I Corinthians 15:32*)

In the above verse, the apostle Paul is addressing the church at Corinth about the fact that there existed in that church some who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They believed that once they died, that was all there was to it: no resurrection, no judgment. This was despite the fact that the Old Testament speaks plainly of the resurrection of the dead and subsequent judgment.

And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. (*Daniel 12:1-3*)

Oh that my words were now written! oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever! For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth: And *though* after my skin worms destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; *though* my reins be consumed within me. (*Job 19:23-27*)

Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.

Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. (Acts 2:22-31)

Thus, the apostle Paul is declaring to them by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that if there is no subsequent resurrection and judgement, but we simply die and are not conscious for the rest of eternity or that we wink out of existence, then what profit was Paul's perseverance in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. After all, he suffered considerable physical persecution for preaching the gospel. If there is no resurrection, then there is certainly no point in suffering persecution for the cause of Christ.

Moreover, Paul earlier made the point: What is the purpose of having believed the gospel if there is no resurrection? After all, if there is no resurrection, then there is no eternal life and no salvation and they were yet in their sins and condemned.

But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then *is* our preaching vain, and your faith *is* also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. (I Corinthians 15:13-19)

And indeed, I would have to agree, if there is no resurrection, no eternal life, no spiritual world of any sort, then the preaching of, and obedience to the gospel of the Lord

Jesus Christ, is pointless and worth nothing more than to make life miserable as there would be no hope, no expectation of things to come. All would be in vain.

However, the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians at the beginning of the chapter that the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ (and thus the resurrection of all) was an established fact. Moreover, that there were a multitude of witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection.

For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. (*I Corinthians 15:3-6*)

So it is that the historical evidence of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is and was attested to by those who knew the Lord Jesus was crucified and died on the cross at Golgotha. ((It should be remembered that those who initially saw the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection did not believe that it had happened, even though He plainly instructed them that it would occur. They could not believe it as they were also stuck in the physical and not understanding the spiritual at all. (Ref. Luke, chapter 24.)) They saw the Lord Jesus Christ after His resurrection and thus would confirm the validity of what Paul taught. In addition, this confirmation attests to the fact that there is also a spiritual world.

Since the Scriptures are express and consistent about the existence of the spiritual world, and about the resurrection and eternal judgment, it behooves one to pay attention to the admonition the Lord Jesus Christ gave those who followed Him. In the following passage, the Lord Jesus Christ points out the

foolishness of not preparing for the day of one's death. In this parable He tells of the rich man who took no thought of the life to come. This rich man was focused entirely upon life in this world, with no thought of the spiritual world and the consequences of his actions in this life affecting his destiny in eternity. ((At this point I must ask: What is the difference between the rich man of this parable, and the atheist and freethinker of today? Is there really any difference at all?))

And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, *and* be merry. But God said unto him, *Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.* (Luke 12:16-21)

So then, the Scripture points out that a disregard for and unbelief in the spiritual world was not unusual during the time of the Lord Jesus, or of Paul the apostle. At that time there existed a certain sect of the Jews that denied the reality of the spiritual world. Unfortunately, they were one of the predominate sects of the time. When the apostle Paul was arrested at Jerusalem, it was the ruling class of the Jews that wanted Paul dead for the preaching of the gospel. Thus, to fulfill their legality, they attempted to prove Paul guilty under their religious law.

And Paul, earnestly beholding the council, said, Men *and* brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day. And the high priest Ananias commanded them that stood by him to smite him on the mouth. Then said Paul unto

him, God shall smite thee, *thou* whited wall: for sittest thou to judge me after the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?

And they that stood by said, Revilest thou God's high priest? Then said Paul, I wist not, brethren, that he was the high priest: for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.

But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Men *and* brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee: of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question.

And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and the Sadducees: and the multitude was divided.

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both.(Acts 23:1-8)

Therefore, as the last statement shows, a denial of the spiritual world even among the people that had a covenant with God, is nothing new. Now, I know this raises questions as to how this can be. If God dealt directly with the Jews, how could some of them deny what should have been (to them at least) utterly plain; that the spiritual does indeed exist? Moreover, if this is the case, then how can I possibly believe there is a spiritual world, and life after my body ceases to function? Also, if it were true, would not God simply make them believe, if He were dealing with them?

The answer to those questions is this: The choice to believe or disbelieve is an individual choice that the LORD God will not make for you or anyone else. Whether it is the existence of a spiritual world, an acceptance of the fact that there is one God, and a belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, or any of the things in the Scripture; all these things are choices the individual has to make. No one can or will make these choices for you. Moreover, since we are made with the knowledge that there is a God, and there is a right and wrong,

it is more an issue of believing what we already know to be true.

Now, we could say that if we already know it in our hearts, then we should automatically believe it. However, this is not so. As a technician, I have seen many people look right at a malfunction in a piece of equipment and flatly deny that there is anything wrong, even though they have been plainly taught that what they are looking at is improper operation of the equipment. Why? Because to acknowledge the malfunction would place a burden on them that they did not want. They would have to fix the problem. How many times have we seen or heard of people denying what was plainly evident to everyone around them? After all, how can someone possibly miss the fact that a train is coming when the whistle sounds, the train is quite large, and very loud? Yet, every year a number of automobiles are struck by trains at railroad crossings. What happened? Did the train pursue them down the road? Or, is it more likely that they did not want to acknowledge what was plainly true – that there is a train coming, and it is far too close to attempt crossing the tracks? (The old 'I can beat the train syndrome.')

Even so it was with the Jewish people. Though as a whole they had a covenant with the LORD, it was still the individual Jew's choice to believe and be obedient. When Israel was brought out of Egypt, the LORD God gave the Jewish nation the choice to enter into the covenant, and told them expressly what would happen if they did not fulfill their end of the agreement. And yet for all that, and the things that the Children of Israel had seen, the book of Judges is very express about what happened when the generation that had seen the miracles God had performed for Israel, passed away.

And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the

great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, *being* an hundred and ten years old.

And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnathheres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. (Judges 2:6-12)

Oh, how short are our memories. Every generation thinks that it is the generation, and that they know more than their fathers. Of course, that is true even today. Many people have forgotten the sufferings of the Great Depression, of World War I and World War II. Even Korea and Vietnam fade in the memory. I once saw a survey of High School students that demonstrated that the majority of them could not even recount in what half-century the American Civil War occurred, let alone the details of the conflict.

Now, this being the case, is it such a surprise that people would forget the LORD God and all He has done? That, unless they were slammed in the face with spiritual realities every day, they would get all wrapped up in their lives and forget all about the fact that every one of us will one day die. It certainly did not enter into the mind of the rich man that Jesus spoke of above. Moreover, what about those who do not wish to be accountable to anyone at all? Certainly they will not wish to acknowledge that they are accountable to the LORD God that they cannot see, and they certainly will work to actively deny any judgment to come in which they will have to answer for their choices and behavior.

So it is that we have the choice to pay attention to the reality of the spiritual world, or we can deny it exists – until we die. However, once we die, the Scripture points out that it will be forever too late to change our destiny.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (*Hebrews 9:27-28*)

So then, of what profit is it to deny even the possibility of a spiritual world? How does it help one in the slightest to dismiss out of hand the existence of the spiritual world, and thus the existence of God? Now, I know that many, if not most of the atheists and Freethinkers claim that they have tried religion and found it to be wanting. In that regard, I would agree whole-heartedly; religion, either for the sake of religion, or to salve one's conscience is not in the least worthwhile and will not bring anyone any closer to understanding anything about the LORD God. However, it is also not at all profitable to utterly dismiss the Scripture and say that it is of no value either.

So then, how are we to determine anything about the existence of a realm that cannot be seen, heard, touched, tasted, or smelled? How then can we be certain of something that even the Jews, God's chosen people, were not entirely certain of, to the point of denying anything spiritual at all? Moreover, even those Jews that believed in the spiritual world (the Pharisees), apparently were dead wrong about what God was requiring of them. After all, the Lord Jesus Christ made both of the following statements concerning the Pharisees:

For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. (*Matthew 5:20*)

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. *Thou* blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. (*Matthew 23:25-28*)

To be continued . . .