

knowledge of words, as in any other way. This seems to be a satisfactory answer. But still it must be conceded that if the Spirit of God exercised any direction over the selection by these men of their words, their modes of expression, or the matter of their narrations, it is but natural to suppose that we may find traces of the fact in characteristics which the writings would not otherwise possess - characteristics by which they may be distinguished as inspired writings. I believe that such characteristics can be pointed out, and that, when properly considered, they furnish conclusive proof of the inspiration in question. I shall confine myself, for the sake of brevity and concentration, to the historical writings of the New Testament, and to

their matter rather than their style.

We invite your attention, first of all, to a peculiarity of the historical writers of the New Testament, which has often elicited wondering comment, the unexampled impartiality with which they set forth the sins and follies of friends and foes alike. There is no attempt at concealment of their own sins; there is no toning down, no apology. They are described without hesitation, and with the same fullness of detail, as are the worst deeds of their enemies. The proposal of James and John to call down fire from heaven on an offending village, is as bluntly recorded as the murder of the innocents of Bethlehem by Herod; the dispute among the apostles as to who

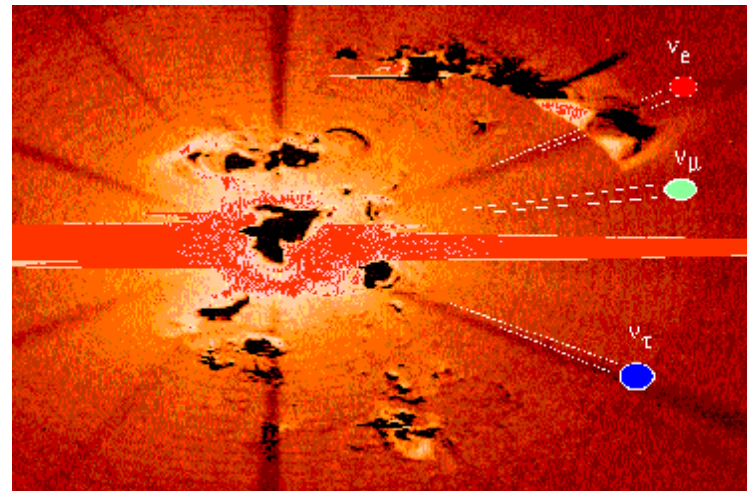
should be greatest, is as plainly set forth as the dissensions among the Pharisees concerning Jesus; and although, when the Gospels were written, Peter was the most prominent and the most honored man in the whole church, they every one describe his cowardly denial of his Lord with as much fullness of detail as they do the dastardly betrayal by Judas. They offer no apologies for Peter; and they have no word of reproach for Judas. What writers since the world began, describing events in which their deepest feelings and their dearest interests were involved, have approached these writers in this particular? If they were guided by the impartial Spirit of God, this accounts for it; but who shall account for it on any other hypothesis? *(to be continued)*

NAVARRE MESSENGER

Volume 3 Issue 53

August 10, 2008

"Incredible" Beginning



bilities for how the physical began: 1) It happened by accident, or 2) It happened on purpose. Expressed another way: 1) It happened by random chance, or 2) It happened by design. Stated yet another way: 1) It began spontaneously from ignorant nothingness, or 2) It began intentionally from intelligence.

In modern parlance it is the debate between "Big Bang" and "Intelligent Design" or "evolution vs. creation." While some have attempted to harmonize the general theory of evolution and creation theory, at its core such an attempt is futile.

To borrow from the apostle Paul, "what fellowship has purpose with accident, what communion has design with chance, what accord has intelligence with ignorance, what agreement has creation with evolution," (adapted from 2 Corinthians 6:14-16). The answer is none.

When anyone is challenged to give a historical explanation for

Andy Diestelkamp

beginning of the physical universe.

The beginnings of things always intrigue us. We often mark them with great ceremony at the time if we anticipate their importance (weddings, ribbon-cutting, grand openings, signings, etc.). We frequently research beginnings if only later we realize someone's or something's importance (the work of historians). It is therefore of no surprise that thinking men and women have often pondered the

While many are content to not give it any consideration and perhaps assume that because it is here it has always been here, most observe and realize that all physical things have measurable deterioration and, therefore, cannot be eternal but must have had a beginning point.

Essentially, there are two possi-

We meet on James M Harvell Rd next to the public library in Navarre.
Call for directions and more information (850) 939-8109



Assembly Schedule Sunday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 9:00 AM
Morning Worship Service ___ 10:00 AM
Evening Worship Service ___ 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Class for all ages ___ 7:00 PM

VISITORS ARE WELCOME!

If you know of someone who would like to receive this publication, please let us know.

For a free Bible correspondence course by mail, call us.

Navarre church of Christ
8490 James M Harvell Rd
Navarre, FL 32566

Place
Stamp
Here

the existence of something physical, spontaneous generation from nothing is never considered sound reasoning. Yet this is what modern science teaches is the best explanation for the beginning of all things.

However, the ancient book of books, the Holy Scriptures, offers another explanation. Many find its explanation incredible, but it is far more credible than the spontaneous generation of something from nothing suggested by atheists and agnostics. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Indeed, mankind is without excuse for not drawing the basic conclusion that a powerful supernatural intelligence (God) is the cause of this physical existence (Romans 1:20).

Scripture reveals that God simply spoke things into existence. "Then God said...and it was so," is an oft repeated phrase in Genesis 1. To be able to speak material things into existence demands a power that is beyond nature and beyond our comprehension. It is super-natural!

Therefore, it is understandable that atheists assume that this creation account (along with the rest of the first eleven chapters of Genesis) is mythical, legendary or, at best, allegorical, but certainly not literal. Yet, even some believers in God attempt to explain the creation using the naturalistic assumptions of unbelievers.

Forgetting that with God all things are possible (Matthew 19:26), many find these ac-

counts incredible and unbelievable. However, again borrowing from the sayings of Paul, "why should it be thought incredible by you that" God spoke things into existence in six days? Of course, Paul was addressing Agrippa with regard to Jesus' resurrection (Acts 26:8). But beware! If you find a six-day creation incredible, you might have the same problem with the resurrection from the dead. Most people do. Whenever we doubt the power of God's spoken word, we have no foundation for faith in any aspect of His word.

As disciples of Christ, we would do well to follow His lead concerning the authority of the Genesis account. In responding to His adversaries about a point of great controversy regarding divorce, Jesus refers to the Genesis account of the beginning (Matthew 19:3-8). Jesus' authoritative use of Moses' account of creation affirms that He believed it to be accurate. Indeed, we cannot claim Christ as our Lord and reject the accuracy of Moses' words (John 5:46,47). To adapt Jesus' words to the Sadducees and apply them to the present controversy over creation/evolution, "You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God" (Matthew 22:29).

Beware, rejection of these beginning truths undermines the whole foundation of the rest of Scripture and, therefore, our faith in God's power to do anything.

~via *The Beacon*; Bowling Green, Kentucky



The Bible on the Bible

Psalm 119:105: "Your word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Matthew 4:4: "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

1 Peter 1:22-25: "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart, having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever, because "All flesh is as grass, And all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, And its flower falls away, But the word of the LORD endures forever." Now this is the word which by the gospel was preached to you."

Inspiration of the Scriptures

(Editor's Note: Transcript of a sermon delivered by J.W. McGarvey before the YMCA of University of Missouri, May 28, 1892. It is too long to be presented in full in one issue, but will be continued in the next issue and possibly beyond.)

There can be no Christian Association that is not founded on the Bible. Everything that is properly styled Christian owes its existence to the belief in the divine origin and authority of that book; for although there were Christians and a Christian church before the completion of the book, since it was completed all Christian faith depends upon it. No one is entitled to membership in such an association who does not espouse this belief; yet in a Young Men's Christian Association of our day it is scarcely possible that questioning in regard to the origin and authority of the Bible do not frequently arise. You who are members of the Association which I now have the honor of addressing, have doubtless heard it said that the earlier books of the Old Testament, instead of being such as our fathers have taught us to believe them, were written by J., and E., and D., and P., and R., of whom this is about all that we know. They were written so long after the events which they record, and by men with sources of information so unreliable, that we can depend upon the truth of very little

that they say. Indeed, it is more than hinted that they did not hesitate to perpetrate pious frauds--a kind of fraud never perpetrated by a pious man--when these were necessary to any special purpose which they had in view. As to the historical books of the New Testament, they also were written, you have been told, by men who lived at too late a day to be well informed, so that their writings must be carefully sifted before we can determine what in them is true and what is to be referred to misinformation, to myth, and to legend.



In opposition to all this you and I have been taught to regard the writer of every book entitled to a place in this sacred collection as having been controlled in the selection of his matter and guided in the composition of it by God's Holy Spirit. We have learned, in other words, to believe Paul when he says: "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man, whatsoever things

God hath prepared for them that love him. But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit. * * * Which things also we speak, not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual." (I. Cor. ii. 9-13).

These statements present the main issue between belief and unbelief as regards the books which we style, collectively, the word of God. From among the many lines of argumentation along which the discussion of this issue has taken its course, I have selected a single one for the subject of this address; and as the question is of vital importance to the existence of your Association, I am sure that I shall have your undivided attention while I attempt to discuss it.

Again and again, almost from time immemorial, it has been argued that if the Spirit of God had guided the sacred penmen after the manner affirmed by Paul, all the books would have been written in one style instead of being marked as they are by all the varieties of style and diction which naturally distinguished their respective writers. To this it has been as often answered, that the infinite Spirit of God could as easily guide a number of writers along the course of their own respective styles and within the limits of their own previously acquired