

J17 [JONES, Dan.] *Anffyddiaeth sectyddiaeth!* (Atheism of sectarianism!) *Merthyr Tydfil: Printed and published by D. Jones, 14 Castle Street, Merthyr, [1854].*

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*Atheism of sectarianism!* is advertised in the 8 April 1854 *Zion's Trumpet* (p. 211) as a treatise in which ‘the barrier of the supposed difference between the two [atheism and sectarianism] is eliminated, and they are found shaking hands as two sisters of the same father, for *only a penny!!*’

Dan Jones’s initial statement in the pamphlet is that it is illogical for more than one religion to be true. He then takes the reader through a line of logic and scripture to determine the characteristics of the one true religion. It was to be as Jesus Christ himself organized it, having apostles and prophets. The spiritual gifts of old, writes Jones, are still an essential ingredient of Christ’s church. He concludes that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the one true religion and that all are welcome to prove that for themselves.

## ATHEISM OF SECTARIANISM!

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IT is illogical to assert that there is more than one *true* religion; because before it can be *true*, it must be divine; before it can be divine, it must have a divine *author*; if its author is divine, then it is perfect, *unfailingly*; the perfection of the religion will show the perfection of its author. Admittedly the aim of religion is to perfect its followers to the perfection of its author; and the perfect cause will achieve the desired effect to perfect in proportion to one's devotion to it, which is the driving force that is in it to cause devotion; consequently, since there is but one correct standard of perfection, then there is but one perfect religion that can perfect. Since perfection symbolizes something beyond improvement, why, if a perfect religion was indispensable in order to perfect others in former times, does not the perfection of each person now depend on having the one perfect religion to perfect him? If one can answer that need without religion, then religion is unnecessary; and if religion is unnecessary, the author of it is imperfect! And that is atheism.

To say that a perfect author has made two, not to mention hundreds of religions to perfect man, is to accuse him of mutability, and of having made all of them except one unnecessarily: for, if one was perfect, then it was able and suitable to answer every purpose to perfect everyone, everywhere, and under every circumstance, who obeyed it. The enjoyment of one such religion would prove all others unnecessary. The only way to avoid that kind of atheism is to acknowledge our statement, that it is self evident that the divinity of a religion proves its uniqueness. Its uniqueness proves that every religion that differs from it is a false religion. It is true that a false understanding of it may cause a man to think it different; but correctness of ideas concerning religion will show it to be in accordance with its essential and unshakeable standard.

In order to accomplish God's purpose through religion, namely to perfect man, there must be some substance in it, or in connection with it to bring that effect. Every effect has its appropriate cause, for it is just as impossible for an effect to be without a cause, or for

a cause to be without substance, as it would be for a void to have an effect on nothingness and give birth to substance. Not *belief*, but *unbelief* or *DIS-belief* is the *profession* without the perfecting *foundation*, pertaining to religion, and indispensable in order for that religion to perfect. This substance is not secular, rather it is divine; and it is called the "Holy Ghost," "the Comforter," the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, &c. For the purpose of presenting this to men there is a divine plan, and correct obedience to the proper administering of its ordinances is that which will put man in the appropriate condition and attitude to receive it;—correct knowledge of these ordinances and divine authority to administer them are the indispensable qualifications to have success. The laying on of hands of the Elders is the ordinance through which one may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; but the Spirit of God is so pure and holy that it will not swell in the heart of an unrepentant sinner; still, God organized a way for the forgiveness of his sins by being baptized "FOR forgiveness," and adopting him as his child so that he can pour out his Spirit abundantly in his heart to cry, Abba Father. But his sins will not be forgiven even if he were baptized a hundred times, except there be a determination in him to leave sin to the extent of his capacity—which is repentance: he cannot truly repent until he is convinced of the great evil and hatefulness of sin, until he has belief in the offering of the life of the Son of God for the sins of others, until he forms the correct and effective image to convince every reasonable man of the hatefulness of sin, and until he loathes sin and abstains from it; clearly then the wisdom of God is seen, through the foolishness of preaching and saving those who believe, and doing these things that are taught to them by duly commissioned and pious preachers.

This is a brief and correct portrayal of the way of salvation, of the conditions of adoption, or the instructions that get men started in the only true religion of Jesus Christ, and guide them as members of his church or his kingdom on the earth: and perhaps more of our readers will agree with us up to here than will agree with us in the next statement; namely,—Those *Spiritual Gifts* promised by Jesus Christ to all the true believers in him; and which, according to the accounts too numerous to quote in this small treatise, but which are scattered throughout the New Testament, prove powerfully the deeds of the Spirit of God through those gifts that demonstrated the strength and power of their religion: these gifts were the life that

was in it, the influences that purified their minds and sanctified their souls, and that did all things that were done by belief in them, through them, and for them; and without them there was no sanctification or perfection; and without them there was no religion. To deny the need for these spiritual gifts is tantamount to denying the need for the Spirit that causes them; for that is its way of operating; and claiming to worship without the Spirit of religion is atheism under the guise of hypocrisy. It is the same thing to deny the works of the Spirit through the gifts and to deny the Spirit that causes them, and that is the same thing as denying a religion entirely, simply because it is a religion: and the "*believers*," as they call themselves, cannot deserve a better name than atheists, while denying the need for the one thing and the other; for it is all indispensable in order to have religion.

Despite how obvious these truths are; despite the scriptures' being woven and intertwined with them; despite being bound by the logic the Creator gave to man, for him to see these things clearly, presumably; and although not a single idea is given to anyone by scripture or reason that anything else but this is true belief; yet, with great surprise, if anything that did such things were a reason to be surprised, we say that one can hardly ever stand before a congregation to preach religion, trying to convince one's fellow man of his great need for religion, without their ready response being immediately, especially if they are in chapel, Sunday school, or reading commentaries, "Oh, those spiritual gifts have ceased since the time of the apostles, and there is no longer any need for them; their only purpose was to establish Christianity." One will have this as readily from the tip of practically every tongue, as the little story of the parrot: and they relate it from one to another as does the parrot, having hardly any more logic in it, than they have understanding of it! Here we have the greatest light of the religious age in the land of the Bibles, asserting loudly and clearly that there are no revelations, and no spiritual gifts, that which is the root and branches of all that "faith which was once given to the Saints:" and at the same time they profess that that is the only true faith! We cannot imagine anything more like atheism than this, without mentioning the contradictory illogic of such deceptive reasoning!

The professed atheist will honestly claim that there is no need for revelations except those that are in "*The Great Book of Nature*." They believe that the "great first Cause," is what gave to all the

elements throughout the universe their established laws by which they are governed, and that the light of logic is the governing laws of mankind; but the current species of “Christians” maintains that, although revelations and spiritual gifts were indispensable in order for earlier and more pagan ages to be able to properly believe and be saved, they have no need for them and that they are amply able and intelligent without them and that therefore they have ceased! Of the two this is worse than professed atheism; for the latter acknowledges in all things around him continuing revelations of power and wisdom of the great Creator; and thus his God is a God that is present in his own manifestations of himself. But, according to his profession, the former should have a more perfect standard for his faith; nevertheless, the God of old, and not the present God, is the one he worships. His God does not have so much desire to save any of his thousand million children who generation after generation are swept to another world totally ignorant of him, and of his religion, as to reveal a single word of his mind or will, to give them a word of guidance or to send them a messenger; it was sufficient in his sight to do that centuries ago for other people, although he understood perfectly well, says he, that all of them would grope in darkness for the right path. The atheist is not so inconsistent as to deny modern-day revelations; but the mistaken idea, namely nature, is the means; for the zealous atheist will not allow God to give revelations nowadays to anyone through his Spirit, although he professes at the same time that he has that Spirit; and he says to the other that it is indispensable for his salvation! And thus, he is not against the Spirit, but he forbids the Spirit *to speak* in him, or to do one single thing for him! He permits him to hide quietly and secretly in a recess somewhere inside him; yes, he prays sincerely and zealously for him, except that he, after coming, must take care to refrain from uttering a word about anything, for that would be a “*revelation*,” and consequently impudent deceit, as bad as that of the Mormons! Again he must keep himself a mute and ineffective spirit! This is the Christian spirit of the age!

It is through modern-day and continual revelations that God governs everyone and everything; and it is impossible for him to govern or to carry forth his work without that, and it is proved irrefutably to us by every parable and fact; our very existence proves that “we live, move and exist in him;” but even more clearly, the scriptural accounts and the nature of things and their connections

prove that it is through continual revelations, through his Spirit, that he carried forth his work and his spiritual government for four thousand consecutive years. We have no account of his establishing or carrying forth a church or a religion, or saving as much as one man, without revelation; neither can we comprehend the possibility of such a thing happening.

From among those who profess religion,—those who acknowledge that the purpose of religion is to save man,—to perfect him and make him suitable to dwell with God, and consequently subjected to his law, and completely obedient to his will; for anyone from among such as those to claim there is no need for revelations of the Spirit of God, which is the only means for that until that work has been completed, and the last of the race of Adam has been perfected by it and has become omniscient through it, is error so self evident—so illogical, that we wonder that there is one reasonable creature who believes it, not to mention the scholars, the secular learned men, the theologians, and all the religious teachers of this enlightened age, as it is called by those who deny revelations of the light from on high. In the spiritual part, as in every other portion of the government of God, the effect is so dependent on, and so connected to the cause, that the one cannot exist without the other, any more than a shadow can exist without substance to cause it.

The inconsistency of the professors of the religions of Wales shows up quite readily in their creed of religion, and while they claim that this creed is substance, power, and essential, they also state that the soul of religion “has ceased, and is not needed any more!” They assert that the chief salient characteristics of the true apostolic church have disappeared and that her spirit has died, or is sleeping, or has lost her speech, and that her chief splendor has become too unpopular to desire her; “there are none but the impudent and un-Christian Mormons who seek for her or see her necessity any longer, in this enlightened age, and that proves them in darkness as black as coal.” And in their next breath they all claim to have that church and religion in her purity, and that before them their pious forefathers of every sect had that religion, and that they had been sanctified and saved by her! And sternly and openly they thrust Paul forward to condemn the Mormons for preaching some other gospel, and Anathemas are pronounced on them for that, little realizing that the same gospel preached by Paul is exactly what the “Mormons” preach as being correct; nor do they realize that by

claiming blessings and revelations of Paul's gospel they condemn themselves; or that they themselves are as justly deserving of the Anathema as was David when he pronounced the verdict on himself. They frequently quote Paul to prove that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the *power of God* unto salvation; and at the same time, as if purposefully to contradict that, they claim that the deeds of the Spirit of God which showed his POWER "are unnecessary," and they expel from their synagogues, as Mormon heretics, any man who dares to be so presumptuous as to say there is need for that POWER now, but that salvation can be had without it! They read in the Epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, Chap. iv., that the main gifts of the great Head of his church to his Saints after his ascension to heaven were inspired officials to teach them in his will and his counsel, that which he had promised to give them from time to time, line upon line, by means of marvelous revelations through his Spirit, through prophecy, visions, tongues, interpretations and every other means that he deemed necessary. They read in definite words that the purpose of all this was to carry forth his ecclesiastical ministry, and that the purpose of that was "to perfect the Saints." They confess, and they do so easily if they themselves are the Saints, that they have not reached the desired perfection, nor have they reached "a unity of the faith nor a knowledge of the Son of God." Yet they claim as unnecessary for achieving perfection now, or as foolishness to strive for, the offices and gifts that Christ considered indispensable! What shall we say to convince men of such anti-Christ contradictions? What can anyone say! May the gracious Author of true religion take pity on their wretched condition and continue sending rays of the Spirit of truth to accompany this effort, or by some other means, to cause light after a long black night on their minds, poor things!

This popular and "Christian" assertion, is not only anti-Christian, but also blasphemous, by claiming that the divine means ordained of God to the salvation of man are unnecessary, and that secular wisdom and ingenuity, college teaching, and commentaries of the forefathers, are better and more necessary to prepare men to dwell with him in the heavens, than are the influences of his unfailing Spirit. What else is this if not claiming independence from the Holy Spirit, that which sanctifies,—and from the Son of God, who is our only Savior, and from God the Father, who sent him to offer the salvation that is refused by them! And what else is claiming the super-

fluity of these, if not atheism? What worse atheism than claiming that they are sufficiently wise to establish their own churches, which bring them to the highest degree of perfection as do revelations from God, and that the gifts of his Spirit are unnecessary?

Our "Christian" friends will see their faces in a correct reflection if they read in Rev. iii, 14—21. The church of the Laodiceans, and not the Church of Christ *in* Laodicea, is what had gone to such condemnable lukewarmness; it had become as rich as the *churches* of the various modern-day denominations. The Laodiceans considered themselves so rich in human wisdom, which in fact was their poverty, that they refused the wisdom of God through his Spirit in his gifts; and, just like the sects of our country, they were so accustomed to and so intoxicated with the form of religion, that they were not aware that they were pitiable, wretched, poor, blind, and naked in the sight of God. Such are not rich who refuse the gifts of the Spirit—the riches of heaven; for everything in religion is lacking to them when they consider these to be "unnecessary."

Furthermore, the illogic of denying Prophecy can be seen, while acknowledging that a testimony of Jesus is necessary for salvation; for John testifies in Revelation, that "a testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy." What clearer proofs that they are blind and can lead the blind, than such a contradiction! Jesus Christ promised that these signs would follow the believers, making no exception for time or place. To assert that "these signs will NOT follow, and there is no need for them any longer," is to assert a shameless lie in his face! What greater impudence can any *Infidel* assert? Desire the best gifts, says Paul;—excommunicate anyone from your midst who desires gifts as a Mormon heretic, say those who claim to be brothers to that same Paul, and to preach the same gospel! "Forbid not to speak with new tongues," says Paul. "Join together every party, and from every pulpit forbid speaking with new tongues, and forbid everyone from desiring them," say the "ministers of the gospel of Paul" now! But what use is it to continue; we could prove in this manner, one by one, that they deny practically every knuckle and bone, member and joint, from head to foot, of the "body of Christ," while they claim to be part of it and to preach it correctly! Even within a whirlpool, the mind of man has never manifested itself in a more impudent manner.

The popular belief that is heard is, "The spiritual gifts were to establish Christianity" at that time, and since Christianity has been

established, they are no longer needed! For Christianity is God's endowment to his church; his church is his kingdom on the earth, and every member of it should be an obedient subject to his government; his priesthood, that which is given to the various officers, such as to the Apostles, Prophets, &c., is the right to govern under him, and his inspiration, his revelations and his prophecies to them and through them are the powers and abilities of that government, and all the spiritual gifts are the "bread of the children" in that kingdom: consequently, all these things together are Christianity: then it is the same thing to say that these things were given earlier in order to establish Christianity as it is to say that Christianity was given earlier in order to establish Christianity! Or to say that the purpose of God in giving Christianity to the world was for it to establish itself; and so it is the same thing to say that those offices and gifts are unnecessary now as to say that Christianity is unnecessary now. And do we dare ask our sectarian friends what, in the name of reason, they think about such contradictions as these! Do they think that Christianity has been established in a sufficiently solid way? If so, where is it, and where can we find any one of them who does not deny it and its power and its original splendor? If it has been established in a sufficiently solid way in the one place, would it not be better if it were established in another place also; yes, in every place throughout the world? If so, why are similar tools and means not needed to establish it in every place as it was in one place,—in every age as it was in any age, and under every circumstance which was recognized as being indispensable to establish it properly in another place, age, and circumstance? If it is not desirable to establish Christianity in the Pagan countries, why all the money collecting for that purpose?

Lastly, we testify that the Church of God has been restored with all its gifts, that its door is open with an invitation for you to come into it; the existence of such gifts is a divine fact to prove the need of them, let them say what they may. Whoever doubts, let him come and see, hear, feel, and enjoy them for himself. What use to debate any further!