The gloves come off in this electric exchange, originally hosted by Christianity Today, as leading atheist Christopher Hitchens (author of God Is Not Great) and Christian apologist Douglas Wilson (author of Letter from a Christian Citizen) go head-to-head on this divisive question. The result is entertaining and provocative – a glimpse into the ongoing debate.

Christopher Hitchens, an outspoken atheist and anti-theist, entered into a written debate with the witty pastor and theologian, Douglas Wilson. The debate was sponsored by Christianity Today. The assigned topic of debate was Is Christianity good for the world?

Hitchens argues the negative, proposing that Christianity (or any other religion) is not necessary for morality and that a great deal of evil is regularly perpetrated in the name of God. Furthermore, a God like the God of the Bible is nothing more, Hitchens says, than a praise-hungry tyrant.
who uses and abuses people to accomplish whatever he wants. Douglas Wilson argues that Christianity is good because it is objectively true, changes peoples hearts for the better, and gives people at enmity with God a means to be reconciled to God. In each of the exchanges, he reveals the irrationality of Hitchens beliefs, in that Hitchens makes many moral judgments but has no objective moral standard to appeal to. He is arguing as if there is a God, while denying His existence. Hitchens was unable to give a response to this challenge.

The full text of the debate is available on Christianity Todays website. The full text of that exchange has been compiled into the book Is Christianity Good for the World? by Canon Press. Each author is very articulate and a joy to read. At 72 well-written pages, it is easily a book that you could read in one sitting, and I recommend doing so, followed by a slower more thoughtful perusing. The content was superb.

In my opinion, this exchange is MUST reading for the Christian and atheist alike. This really exchange represented the clash of two absolutely opposing world systems and the foundations of each were revealed. Read the book slowly trying to understand each sides position. Both men were respectful, but jabbingly witty, in the exchange. Wilson was careful to rearticulate each of Hitchens points and respond. Wilson was consistently on topic and attacked the heart of atheism, seeking to reveal both the irrationality of Hitchens beliefs as well as reveal his hatred toward God. Hitchens, Wilson argues, is acting and arguing as if there is a God (who he hates), while denying His existence. Hitchens was consistent in his attacks against Christianity and religion. Wilson replied well to each of Hitchens points, while Hitchens, it seems, avoided answering Wilsons main point.

I think this book should be mandatory reading for all Christian apologists as Wilson models how to argue in a way that honors God. He modeled 2 Tim 2:23-25 and 1 Peter 3:15 in his argumentation. Wilson argued in such a way that would not grant the atheist his presuppositions, consistently attempting to bring Gods revelation of Himself in the Bible to bear on the nonbeliever. He revealed that what the Bible says about the nonbeliever is true (knows God but refuses to honor Him as God - Rom 1:21). And Wilson offered Hitchens and the readers the solution, Gods mercy made available through Jesus death on the cross. Wilson went toe-to-toe with one of the best atheistic minds in the world today, and Gods Word was demonstrated to be sufficient.

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