

The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006. Pages 406. Price \$27.00.

Since 1995, Dawkins has served as the Charles Symonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford University. He has been one of two or three articulate atheists of our day who passionately believes that all of life and reality is best explained in terms of natural processes. God is a delusion (Christian God as well as Muslim god or any other). Therefore believers are delusional and therefore are dangerous if given any leadership role or political power.

Dawkins is a clear and seemingly informed writer. His *Blind Watchmaker* is perhaps best known among creationists and advocates of intelligent design. That book was Dawkins' critique of William Paley's *Natural Theology*, the most famous of the historic intelligent design proposals.

Early on in *The God Delusion*, Dawkins takes on the theists who try to use Einstein to support some version of theism. He said Einstein used allusions to God (such as, God does not play dice with the universe), but that Einstein never took the references literally and certainly did not believe in God. I have no way to confirm this, but even if it were true, the quote still seems to apply. Whatever Einstein believed personally about God is no proof one way or the other about the existence of God. Intelligent people can be wrong just like the rest of us.

Dawkins believes many have already lost their childhood faith but do not know how to get out of it without embarrassing friends and family. But, says Dawkins, the world would be less warlike and far better if religion were eliminated. Dawkins is quite hard on the Taliban and the Muslims, but it is God he is after, not merely a religion.

In chapter 2, Dawkins tries to show that agnosticism is no better than atheism and that atheism is to be preferred. The traditional arguments for God turn out to be spectacularly weak, he says. Chapter 4 explains his view of why there almost certainly is no God. The illusion of design is found in his mind to be better explained by natural selection. Of course, there has to be something to select, but Dawkins believes biological selection will eventually help us to explain the origin of the cosmos itself. Sounds like wishful thinking to me.

The universal recognition of God among the various cultures of the world, he claims, is not evidence of the reality of God, we don't need religious beliefs to have moral values, and religion really is not such a good thing for the world. Religion, according to Dawkins, is almost always what you were brought up to believe. It is not really a choice. What would you believe if you were born in Afganistan? But Richard, what about my Pakistani nurse who grew up Muslim and is now a devout, excited Christian?

The magnificence of the natural world can fill the inspirational role religion has provided in the past, so Dawkins believes (and argues). This should lead to atheist pride. Atheists simply have been reluctant to "come out." He hopes that *www.richarddawkins.net* will remedy that fact.

I can admit many of the points he makes but for a very different reason. Where divine truth is involved, there is a spiritual deception in the world. False views of God do not prove there is no true view. The life, miracles, death and resurrection of Christ set Him apart from Mohammed and from all other religious leaders. I have identified at least twenty-five almost irrefutable evidences that Jesus was crucified, died, was buried, and rose again as a miraculous fulfillment of prophecy. It still seems more reasonable to me to interpret the complexity and purposefulness of life and the environment, and the size of the universe and the placement of the earth in the universe, as the product of purpose. The natural universe has no inherent purpose

unless there is a personality embedded in nature itself. There is no reason or rationality in the “pre-big bang” void. So where did Dawkins’ reason come from? Evolution is not initiated or guided by reason. Rationality is supposedly a late development in biological evolution, produced exclusively by natural selection, itself not recognized until the mid-nineteenth century. How can reason, this late random product of environmental pressures, ever be trusted to produce a mental structure that observes accurately and reasons correctly? This seems utterly impossible. The statistical odds against the original cell coming into being randomly are overwhelming. It just would never happen unless there is an intelligent purpose behind it, guiding it to its destiny.

God is not only necessary for explanations of the real world, but the central significance of this truth has led to the spiritual deception that exists in the world. God has a powerful enemy, but God will not finally be defeated. There will be a resolution. My prayer is that Dawkins will eventually see this truth himself before it is too late. As I say, I can agree with so much of his concern about misrepresentations of God, but the existence of error does not eliminate the existence of truth. God may be hidden, but He is no delusion. The best evidence for this is Christ. Creationism explains everything and more than does natural selection. Dawkins is to be commended for reminding us of our many errors, but he has not yet seen the error of denying the most basic of all truths. God is the most necessary being of all reality. Everything else is contingent, dependent on this necessary being. There is no delusion about that.

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