



Atheist Universe

The Thinking Person's Answer to Christian Fundamentalism

By David Mills

Ulysses Press, 2006

“You talk to God, you’re praying: if God talks to you, you have schizophrenia.”

Thomas Szasz, M.D., psychiatrist.

The above quote is just one of the many by different people that are printed throughout this book.

The opening chapter entitled ‘interview with an Atheist’ is an eye-opener to those people who do not claim to be atheists, but often have doubts in the Christian religion and would like answers to many questions.

It is interesting that David Mills (the author) is able to quote Bible verses back to the interviewer. Atheists are often viewed as taking their stand because they have not had the benefit of Bible study. Apparently the opposite appears to be the case as atheists are often those who have received a lot of orthodox Christian teaching. Instead of just accepting all the stories of the Bible as a child and later as an adult, they begin questioning, ‘God made everything and everybody in the world, who made God?’ As the author writes, children are not born Christians, Muslim, etc.

They have to be taught those beliefs and if their family is mixing with their own kind of people who also have the same beliefs, the children naturally will accept what is taught as the only true religion.

The teaching of Creationism (now called Intelligent Design) is examined and found wanting. ‘The only way Creationism could qualify as a scientific explanation for existence of the universe would be for Creationists to detail the precise mechanism or the means by which nothing was transformed by God into something’ ... ‘Proclaiming that ‘it is a Divine mystery’ or that ‘creation resulted from the Law of cause and effect is decidedly not a scientific explanation.’

How often when a child asks a question which stumps the average adult, the answer is given that God makes the rain, the wind or sun, etc. It is very convenient to put everything we can’t explain onto God. A fundamentalist Christian is smug enough to think he is instructing the child in the truth. The preferred answer would be, ‘I don’t really know, but we could borrow a book from the library and find the answer’ (or in this age, try the Internet.)

As the author states, the ancient civilisations created gods as their explanations to cover the seasons, death, disasters and good times. Naturally to expect a good result, a payment would be given in the form of a sacrifice, worship etc. When it is pointed out that the Bible stories are very similar to the myths of ancient times, you realize that unless ancient social history is



studied there will never be much criticism of Bible writings. How many people do you meet who have deeply studied ancient history? Just as we all have a bias or different opinion on subjects, we cannot know how far our childhood beliefs still colour our adult understanding. The author seems very definite in his explanations and arguments that Atheism is the true thinking person's belief.

I enjoyed reading this book and although the author believes death is final and there is no life after death, I am not fully convinced. I still cannot dismiss the numerous stories I've read about people who are dying or have died and have at the same moment contacted (through a dream or a feeling) a close relative, e.g., a soldier calling his Mum on his deathbed and the mother knowing of her son's death at the precise same time.

Or the cases of precognition in children as well as adults. I suppose I would now answer to the 'religion' question on forms as 'agnostic' or 'no religion'. As for the beauty of nature being God's handiwork, I like to refer to it as Mother Nature's work. Nature will always win in the end, despite the advances of science. I wonder if the atheist of today has changed from worshipping a religious god to another material god, be it creating wealth or the science that often takes people away from the natural laws of nature in farming and living. I'd end with another quote, this time from the chapter titled: 'The Miracle of Life on Earth'.

'Which is it: is man one of God's blunders, or is God one of man's blunders?' (Friedrich Nietzsche).

Book Review by Beryl Myers, from the SoFiA Bulletin March 2008

