



The New Atheists

Joe Renick
Intelligent Design Network
New Mexico Division
nmidnet@comcast.net

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Several books published recently by atheists such as Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), Daniel Dennett (*Breaking the Spell*), Christopher Hitchens (*God is not Great*) and Sam Harris (*The End of Faith*), have nothing good to say about Christians or Christianity. The attitude of this modern breed of Epicurean materialists (ID-notes, March 2010) is that Christianity is a plague that must be eradicated...like smallpox.

A generation ago atheists were reasonably content to just look down their noses at Christians as harmless ignorant fools and let it go at that. After all, Christians generally make good neighbors, they tend to have a strong work ethic, they are reasonably honest, they pay their taxes and they fight our wars.

But the new atheists are taking the conflict to a new level. They hold that Darwin got it right, materialism is true, and Creators exist only in mythology and in the hearts and minds of the ignorant and superstitious. The work of The Enlightenment must be finished. Mankind must once and for all be set free from the superstitions of the pre-scientific age but this cannot happen as long as Christianity remains as a dominant force in public life. Christianity has to go and must be replaced by a new social order based on science and reason. Having finally cleansed the world of this ancient corruption, we will then be ready to usher in the long-awaited utopian age, free from the rule of God.

Hallelujah!

Early in the twentieth century the prevailing view of Western intellectuals was that by the end of the twentieth century, all phenomena in nature...including life...would be explained scientifically in terms of material causes and there would no longer be any basis for belief in a Creator. This process was called "reductionism", i.e., reducing nature to its fundamental

parts thereby exposing the underlying material causes behind all phenomena. With God finally out of the picture and scientific materialism as the reigning worldview, utopia would become reality in the twenty-first century.

But, here at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, when we look up and down the streets of America, utopia is nowhere in sight. Something went terribly wrong.

The reductionist program, instead of exorcising God from nature, found signs of intelligence lurking in every nook and cranny of the universe. We found out that the universe had a beginning and that the laws of physics have the unmistakable appearance of being fine-tuned for life. The properties of the Solar System and the complex interaction of physical, chemical, thermodynamic and geological processes that produce Earth's life-sustaining biosphere are so improbable that even mainstream materialistic scientists have to admit that our planet may in fact be one-of-a-kind in the entire universe. Finally, spectacular discoveries in biology have revealed design-like features down in the fundamental machinery of life that present staggering challenges to a strictly Darwinian account of origins.

Like it or not, the clear message of scientific discovery supports the hypothesis that the unifying principle of all reality, the single grand idea that makes sense of everything we know about the cosmos is *DESIGN* and the central focus of that design is mankind. For the Christian who has listened to the declaration of the heavens, believed the testimony of the scriptures and through faith has been born again in Christ, these things are indeed pleasing...but come as no surprise. For the atheist who has built his entire life on a lie, it is his worst nightmare. Having found themselves cornered like rats, the new atheists are launching a counter-attack.

This latest barrage from radical atheists is not exactly tearing down the gates of Heaven. The arguments they make in support of evolution are little more than unsupported grandiose authoritative assertions and they never even attempt to explain the real dilemma that the evidence of design in nature presents to a Darwinian account of life. At bottom, Darwinism is a great lie, a lie that is told every day across America in our public schools.

In 1983 John Dunphy wrote in *The Humanist*, "I am convinced that the battle for humankind's future must be waged and won in the public school classroom by teachers who correctly perceive their role as the proselytizers of a new faith...utilizing a classroom instead of a pulpit to convey humanist values in whatever subject they teach...The classroom must and will become an arena of conflict between the old and the new - the rotting corpse of Christianity...and the new faith of humanism..."