

Pascal's Wager; Ockham's Razor; The Divine Laser

Three Putative Reasons to Believe in God

Richard Dawkins is the author of *The God Delusion*. It is a literary invective and a highly emotionally charged tirade against the true, infinite personal God of the universe, rightly directed against false gods, but likewise defying all religions (true or false) and all religious persons. In one section, Dawkins cites Blaise Pascal as an example of an ignorant, naïve and deluded person who believed in the ridiculous notion that God is.

First a word about professor Dawkins. He is an avowed atheist and a professor of zoology at Oxford University in England who has written extensively on the non-existence of God. He is a supremely arrogant elitist who refers to all believers as deluded, wholly unintelligible, lower class fools who need the crutch of faith to carry them through their lives of trials and tribulations. While he declares all Christians (as well as Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, etc) to be fools, God had long ago placed that moniker on professor Dawkins himself. Through the quill of King David, God affirmed, *The fool has said in his heart, there is no God* (Psalm 14:1). By means of the Holy Spirit indwelling the apostle Paul, God declared the fact that atheists like Dawkins who *claimed to be wise...became fools* (Romans 1:22) and then *exchanged the truth of God for a lie* (Romans 1:25). The "lie" for which Richard Dawkins substituted the true truth concerning God (God's Holy Word) is that of biological macroevolution and natural selection; the theory of the origin of life to which Dawkins avers explains everything we see. He has said that at the age of fifteen he saw the "light" of Darwinian evolution and was "set free from the bonds of religion." He was raised in the Anglican Church of England.

Pascal's Wager

Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) was a French religious philosopher, mathematician and scientist; Dawkins shares only the latter proficiency with Pascal. He was obviously a brilliant man, cut down in the flower of his youth, and undeserving of the jocularity and

ridicule with which professor Dawkins treats his very cunning caveat concerning one's belief or disbelief, as the case may be, in the existence of God. Dawkins entitled one of his sub-sections *Pascal's Wager*, in the book's third major division entitled *Arguments for God's Existence*. Pascal did not call it a gamble, but implied as much. He put it this way, "Should a man be in error in supposing the Christian religion to be true, he could not be a loser by mistake. But how irreparable his loss, and how inescapable is his danger should he err in supposing it to be false." In the Las Vegas vernacular, if you roll the dice on the existence or non-existence of God (betting on the latter), it's going to come up "snake eyes;" sorry pal, you lose. However, there is still the fact that you can never be a loser if you lay a wager on God.

In other words, if I live the Christian life in all sincerity, enjoying the freedom and form I find within God's Holy Word, and I am proven wrong, when I die and merely become a rotting mass of worm-eaten flesh with no soul to pass on into an eternal pleasure with the God in whom I have placed my trust and who I have sought to glorify, I have lost nothing. That life as I have experienced it is a lot more fulfilling and filled with a sense of accomplishment and hope than some of those others I have seen who have ignored God and God's Word.

On the other hand, if I, like this zoology professor and convinced atheist, bet on the notion that God is a myth and Christianity is composed of an accumulated mass of intellectually deficient, hopelessly deceived, naïve fools who are chasing straws in the wind, and as one of William Shakespeare's characters put it "full of sound and fury accomplishing nothing," and I am wrong, I have not only lost the opportunity for an inner peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4) and hope and joy that sustains us in any and all trials while here on earth, but I have most importantly lost an opportunity to enjoy an eternal home with Christ my Savior in heaven, and escape the rejection, darkness, pain, regret and never ending suffering in a competition-riddled Hell and later in a lonely, pitch black, depressing Godless, eternal Lake of Fire.

Dawkins certainly erred greatly when he put down the caveat that Pascal posited over three centuries, but then he seemed to get it right when on page 104 he wrote "Believing is not something you can decide to do as a matter of policy." He must have read the works of St. Augustine, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards, C.H. Spurgeon or Francis Schaeffer. Better yet, he may have stumbled across these words spoken by Jesus and found in John 6:65: *No one can come to me unless the Father has enabled him*. The professor goes on to say, "I can go to church and recite the Nicene Creed and swear on a stack of Bibles that I believe every word inside of them, but none of that can actually make me believe if I don't." That is so true, and we must all pray that God will draw Richard Dawkins to Jesus Christ (as He avers in John 6:44) and that the light of truth (the Laser of the third section in this paper) will shine brightly into his spiritually dead and sin-darkened soul. There is no better champion of the faith than a person who has been an inveterate skeptic: i.e. C.S. Lewis, G.K. Chesterton and Malcom Muggeridge to name just three. As a believer, Richard Dawkins could be a tremendous defender of Christianity in this day of post-modernism and relativism.

Now back to Pascal's wager. I wonder how Richard Dawkins would handle these odds. Suppose you are in a barber's chair or sitting under a hair dryer in a beauty salon. There are ten cars parked outside, each one belonging to one of the shop's patrons. Suddenly a cop enters the shop and informs you that a bomb has been placed under the hood of one of those cars and it is connected such that it will explode when the key is placed in the ignition switch and turned to start the car's engine. Which of you now reading this paper would test the odds 1:10 that your car was not the one which had been booby-trapped? Remember, there is a 90% chance that your car wasn't rigged with the bomb. Suppose further that there is a 90% chance that Dawkins is right, there is no God, and there is a mere 10% chance that all of the evidence we see for an Intelligent Designer behind every plant, animal and human body is merely a mish

mash, misconception and deception. I am not a betting man by nature, but I don't have the intestinal fortitude (guts to put it more bluntly) to follow a fool's errand such as that mapped out by Richard Dawkins. I am going to bet on the side of God and enjoy my life here and now, and the one His Word has promised me later in heaven.

Ockham's Razor

Richard Dawkins decided that the special revelation we find in God's Word as to the origin of the universe, the earth and all of its creatures - both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms and all humans - was too simple, fallacious, unprovable and hard to fathom. Furthermore, the natural revelation (teleology) that is evident everywhere we look, utterly escaped his attention. Instead, at the age of 15, he found his satisfactory answers in the Darwinian theory of macroevolution. Dawkins spends a great deal of his writing in *The God Delusion* citing the alleged evidence for that theory. Much of what he claims as evidence can be attributed to micro-evolution, or the adaptation of a species within a species to natural changes in the locale in which it thrives: i.e. the peppered moth. Scientists who are Christians have no problem with micro-evolution; it is patently observable. Macro-evolution, on the other hand, while theorized, has never been observed, nor has the fossil record left traces (transitional life forms) that it ever occurred in the past. The alleged intermediates that were found are merely extinct species within certain animal families which undoubtedly perished in the worldwide flood in the time of Noah. That is the only valid explanation for the ubiquitous fossils of lower life forms and tropical flora scattered throughout the planet.

However, that aside, what Dawkins fails to elucidate is the seminal explanation as how life began on earth. In fact, he admits, the origin of life is the purview of biologists (not his field of science, he being a zoologist) and he would leave the explanation of the genesis of life on our planet up to them. There has never been a successfully designed experiment that has proven that one can take an assemblage of organic and inorganic

compounds (that is amino acids, fatty acids, nucleic acids, salts and metallic substances such as zinc and iron, respectively) and produce a living organism - even one living, self replicating cell. If you have a theory, a premise, that evolution explains all that we see alive and active on planet earth, and you begin by postulating that life arose from non-life by a formula of matter, plus time, plus chance, and then by random mutation and natural selection that primal, simple life form evolved into ever more complex life forms over massive spans of time, you had better be able to prove step number one; that is, the notion that life arising from non-life has occurred and does occur. Richard Dawkins has neither cited an example in the laboratory called nature, nor has he ever alluded to an experiment that was designed by his highly intelligent, biological counterparts and processed in a science lab that proved his theory that life arose from non-life. The theory of evolution remains an imaginary, aborted embryonic notion that never saw life. It hangs on a theory, suspended in a vacuum of speculation and supported by nothing.

Evolutionists jump through all kinds of circuitous, unproven hoops consisting of complex hypotheses to arrive at an explanation for what they observe all around in this world. They utterly ignore the simple answer: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*" (Genesis 1:1). In John 1: 3 we again read the simpler solution as to the origin of all we see: *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.* That may be too simple an explanation for a zoologist the likes of Dawkins, but I too studied zoology (his only field of expertise) along with, biology, botany, comparative animal anatomy, organic chemistry, general chemistry, qualitative and quantitative analytical chemistry, physics, embryology, geology and mathematics while in college. In medical school, my scientific training included human anatomy, histology, biochemistry, pathology, bacteriology, genetics, pharmacology, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics, and surgery. I said all of that to show that someone with a scientific background can believe in the simple fact of creation by fiat; God spoke and it was done: He did it, reveals it, I believe it and that settles it!

William of Ockham lived in the fourteenth century. He was a Franciscan friar from that little English town for which he is known and along with St. Thomas Aquinas was one of the greatest thinkers of the time. He engaged in major political and intellectual controversies of the day and excelled in physics, logic and theology. He, like Pascal who would come along later, obviously saw no contradiction, and for that matter even a connection between science and theology. He posited the following principle: *Pleuralitis non est ponenda sine necessitate*. Translated into English that tenet reads "entities should not be multiplied unnecessarily." In today's vernacular, it would read "Keep it simple, stupid" (KISS).

Fr. William proposed the idea that if you have two opposing theories regarding cause and effect, an end result of some sort (i.e. the origin of the universe or life itself), it is always best to find the answer through the simplest logical means. Thus in the opposing theories concerning the origin of life, one must either prove that life arose from non-life (which has never been done), or one must subsume the only other plausible, simple, clear-cut and straightforward explanation: life came from a living, eternal, and uncaused being we know as Yahweh, the I AM. Yes, life coming from another life is axiomatic and ubiquitously observable; that is true science. Life coming from non-life remains an unproven, illogical, inane pipe dream.

The Divine Laser

The word laser is an acronym that was coined in 1959 by Gordon Gould, a graduate student at Columbia University to describe Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. The initial work on such a device began with Albert Einstein in 1917 as he proposed the principle of "stimulated emission" and it was massaged by others at the Bell labs (They called the device a Maser - substituting the word microwave for light in their acronym). However, it fell to Gould to put the finishing touches on the idea and coin the word which we all use, but about which we know very little. That is so true about many of the devices we speak of, or use or that are used on us, like computers, MRIs, ultrasonic procedures, plasma TVs, etc.

The Divine Laser (my designation) is that third person of the Trinity who hovered over the dark face of the deep waters on the first day of creation (Genesis 1:2). It was He who spoke the command, *Let there be light* (Genesis 1:3) and suddenly the entire, vast expanse of the universe (the edge of which is reportedly 15 billion light years from planet Earth) was permeated by the entire electromagnetic spectrum. That gamut consists of X-rays, cosmic and gamma rays, electricity, radio waves and physical light waves, the latter being an extremely small section of the spectrum and extending from infra-red, through red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet to ultraviolet emissions.

It is the same Person of the Godhead (the One who created physical light) who enlightens sin-darkened souls with spiritual light. Paul described it like this: *For God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ* (II Corinthians 4:6). King David put it this way, *The Lord turns my darkness into light* (II Samuel 22:29) and in Psalm 27:1 he testified, *The Lord is my light and my salvation*.

The enlightenment of the soul begins with our new birth. Jesus said, *Except a man be born again he cannot see...* (John 3:3). Christ was speaking of the abrupt indwelling of the Holy Spirit who takes us from a state of spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1) and makes us spiritually alive (Ephesians 2:4-5) so that we can immediately see those spiritual realities which were previously hidden from our spiritually blind eyes. The spiritual light is at first dim, but as we grow in Christ, it becomes progressively brighter as we study God's Word and put it into practice. That is the process of progressive sanctification or gradual enlightenment. The Word is essential in that process of ongoing, soul-centered illumination. David, an expert in the field of spiritual physics (metaphysics) wrote, *Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path* (Psalm 119:105). Further on, he also wrote *The unfolding of your words gives light...* (Psalm 119:130).

The **light** that brightens our souls and lights our path is the Divine Laser. It is

amplified by study and practice in spiritual Truth. It is **stimulated** by the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). Its **emission** is the witness of a changed life that those around us observe in our conversation, manner of life and changed worldview. The **radiation** that proceeds from us is the Christ-like quality that develops as we live for Christ and emulate His example. Again, we turn to the words of the apostle Paul for clarification: *And we....all reflect the Lord's glory, being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit* (II Corinthians 3:18).

Jesus, who called Himself *the light of the world* (John 8:12) also said to us, *You are the light of the world*. (Matthew 5:14). As the sun, possessed with massive amounts of energy, some of which is light, serves to illuminate the earth during the day, the moon, which has no intrinsic, physical light of its own, serves to illuminate the darkness of night by simply reflecting the sun's light rays. Likewise, we are called and challenged to reflect the Lord's glory in a sin-darkened world by means of transmitting the metaphysical light of truth. The Divine Laser has called us to be lasers as well. Thus, I propose this acronym (LASER) for our role in the propagation of spiritual light: **L**et's **A**ll **S**trive to **E**mulate the **R**edeemer. When people see the change He has made in our lives and the hope we reflect, they will be constrained to ask why. It is then that we can flip the switch and Laser their souls. However, as the apostle Peter has said, we must *Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for this hope that you have*, and then he wisely adds the caveat that we must, *do this with gentleness and respect* (I Peter 3:15).

Soli Deo Gloria.