**“The Fool Hath Said in his Heart there is No God.”**

Atheism, as the name implies, is primarily a negative philosophy; it is first and foremost a denial of the existence of God and of all things supernatural. Strict atheists claim to know that God does not exist. Many atheists have now seen the folly in making such a claim and no longer so argue. Nevertheless, they can be classified as practical atheists in the sense that while they claim technical ignorance of God’s existence, they live their lives consistently with their disavowal of God. These are the most common atheists today and fall under the definition of atheist as offered by Baron d’Holbach:

An atheist is someone who destroys human chimeras in order to call people back to nature, experience and reason. He is a thinker who, having meditated on matter, its properties and ways of behaving, has no reason to imagine ideal forces, imaginary intelligences or rational beings in order to explain the phenomena of the universe or the operations of nature – which, far from making us know nature better, merely make it capricious, inexplicable and unknowable, useless for human happiness.[1]

So while they plead technical ignorance regarding the question of the existence of God, they see the concept of the existence of God itself as useless so far as making any real contributions to the betterment of society.

In large part, most atheists hold that belief in God has brought more harm upon the world than good. Atheists may distinguish between the major religions, but beyond that, they do not draw distinctions between religious groups. They react largely against Calvinism as the predominant Christian belief and paint most religious beliefs with this broad brush. Such arguments can be truly classified as straw men since the majority of those who profess to be Christians do not adhere to Calvinistic theology. Nevertheless, atheism presses forward and continues to press for freedom from religion in all aspects of society.

D’Holbach’s statement truly fits the statement of the “fool” in Psalm 14:1. Perhaps the best thing that can be done in regard to atheism is to point out its true implications. What does it mean to say, “There is no God?” What does this imply? In this article we will look at three basic implications of atheism as pointed out by atheists themselves and in so doing will see how Psalm 14:1 is truly vindicated.

It is foolish to say there is no God because that implies no purpose of life.

To say God does not exist implies that there is no ultimate purpose of life. The name of this philosophy of purposelessness is called “Nihilism” and it was championed specifically by the 19th century atheistic philosopher Frederick Nietzsche who rightly realized that if God did not exist, then one could not claim any objective absolute purpose of life. “The end of the moral interpretation of the world, which no longer has any sanction after it hast tried to escape into some beyond, leads to nihilism. ‘All lacks meaning.’” [2]

Some atheists have tried to get around this by claiming that there are purposes in life. This is simply a rouse. To say that there are purposes in life reduces the purpose of life to one’s creating his own purposes in life, a self-contradiction. Jean Paul Sartre wrote:

If man as existentialists conceive of him cannot be defined, it is because to begin with he is nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus, there is no human nature since there is no God to conceive of it. Man is not only that which he conceives himself to be, but that which he wills himself to be, and since he conceives of himself only after he exists, just as he wills himself to be after being thrown into existence, man is nothing other than what he makes of himself. [3]

Richard Dawkins has weighed in on this matter in his book River Out of Eden. He writes,

In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, and other people are going to get lucky; and you won’t find any rhyme or reason to it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good. Nothing but blind pitiless indifference. [4]

One cannot consistently uphold the notion that there is no purpose in life without adopting a self-destructive nihilistic attitude. Such was the attitude of the atheist Ernest Hemingway who after realizing that he could not escape his purposelessness decided to end his life with his favorite hunting rifle. Such is the utter folly of those who, along with Sartre, say “even if God were to exist, it would make no difference.” [5]

It is foolish to say there is no God because that implies no absolute values in life.

To say that there are no absolute values means that each person may create his own values as he sees fit. This was the situation in the period of the Judges when “every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25). If there are no absolute values, then all actions become morally equal and everything is permitted. The atheist Sartre accepted this when he wrote: “Dostoyevsky once wrote ‘If God does not exist, everything is permissible.’ This is the starting point of existentialism. Indeed, everything is permissible if God does not exist, and man is consequently abandoned.” [6] He then wrote: “If, however, God does not exist, we will encounter no values or orders that can legitimize our conduct.” [7] In another one of Sartre’s works he wrote: “… nothing, absolutely nothing, justifies me in adopting this or that particular value, this or that particular scale of values. As a being by whom values exist, I am unjustifiable.” [8] Nothing justifies the atheist in adopting any value or any particular scale of values. The wholesale abandonment of absolute values is utter foolishness. It implies that there is no absolute obligation to do what is right in any given circumstance.

Such was the position taken by atheist Dan Barker when he said “If we choose, and you don’t have to, I don’t think there is a moral imperative, but if we do choose to be moral, then those of us who intend to act in ways that minimize harm are the ones that can be called moral or ethical people.” [9] Morality is just a choice we make like deciding whether to have Combo #1 or Combo #2 at McDonalds. Lack of moral imperative means that anyone may decide to act in any way he or she chooses at any given moment. Now, is that foolishness or what?

Nietzsche agrees. “Finally, at the highest stage of morality until now, he acts according to his standard of things and men; he himself determines for himself and others what is honorable, what is profitable.” [10] Sartre also agrees. “….we remind man that there is no legislator but himself; that he himself, thus abandoned, must decide for himself….” [11] What utter foolishness, yet this is atheism.

It is foolish to say there is no God because one cuts oneself off from faith, hope, and love.

There can be no doubt that atheism seeks to undermine and destroy religion, the basis of faith, hope, and love. As Karl Marx wrote: “Atheism is humanism mediated with itself through the supersession of religion….” [12] For the atheist, there is no God in whom to believe, there is no ultimate destiny for which to hope, and there is no objective basis upon which to love one’s fellow man. Atheism produces nothing but doubt, despair, and selfishness. Sartre opines: “There is no other universe except the human universe, the universe of human subjectivity.” [13] When faith, hope, and love are removed, one cannot help but agree with Sartre’s conclusion in his play “No Exit,” “Hell is other people.” What a pessimistic view of life and horrendous attitude to have toward one’s fellow. Such a view is borne out of one’s doubts, despairs, fears, and contempt of one’s fellow man. What a foolish attitude! How much greater is the Apostle Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:12-13 “And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.” Atheism cannot admit of any pure altruism because the doctrine of organic evolution implies personal and selfish adaptative advantage in every individual behavior. What a truly foolish world that would be.

Atheism is a foolish philosophy because it implies that there is no purpose of life, that there are no values above our own creation, and that there is no reason to have faith, hope, or love in one’s life. Madeline Bunting summed up what atheism has offered over the past century when she said:

There’s an underlying anxiety that atheist humanism has failed. Over the 20th century, atheist political regimes racked up an appalling (and unmatched) record for violence. Atheist humanism hasn’t generated a compelling popular narrative and ethic of what it is to be human and our place in the cosmos; where religion has retreated, the gap has been filled with consumerism, football, Strictly Come Dancing and a mindless absorption in passing desires. [14]

“A mindless absorption in passing desires” – utter foolishness!