

"The False-Equivalency Dodge"

by Thomas Edward Ulatowski

Bill Maher is hilarious and he hits on the core issue: "Is religion a responsible option?" The American Founders were very interested in this exact question.

I would argue that responsibility is central to morality because responsible behavior is love manifest. In other words, love is expressed by responsible, careful concern. Responsibility requires reacting to reality, so morality requires a concern to learn the truth about important issues.

In a debate with Christopher Hitchens theologian Douglas Wilson declares, "You have faith in reason," and "Both our positions are faith positions!" In a debate with scientist Richard Dawkins, Professor John Lennox argues as follows:

"I think atheism undermines science very seriously because if you think of the basic assumption that all of us who are scientists have, that is, we believe in the rational intelligibility of the universe. And, it's interesting to me that scientists of the eminence of Eugene Wigner and Albert Einstein used the word "faith." They cannot imagine a scientist without this faith because, of course, they point out that you've got to believe in the rational intelligibility of the universe before you can do any science at all. Science doesn't give you that."

This false-equivalency dodge is ridiculous. Over 90% of America's top scientists are not at all religious, and even crows and chimps know that it's worthwhile to try to figure some things out. Every day, education and know-how are proven to be worthwhile. Think about it. If reason wasn't reliable there would be no difference between sanity and insanity! No proposition could be better corroborated by our everyday experience than the proposition that some things are understandable. Professor Lennox is attempting to equate an outlook that is sober, rational, disciplined, responsible, objective and evidence-based with religious faith: a geographically-localized folly based on provincial, minority-endorsed hearsay. This is not fair, not balanced, and not even sensible. What it is, is sick!

Religion's ability to destroy common sense explains how Christian education produced Nazis and Bolsheviks and why almost nobody worries about preventing World War III.

"Where knowledge is a duty, ignorance is a crime."
Tom Paine

Morality requires a concern to learn the truth about what matters because responsibility requires reacting to reality: Preachers and suicide bombers actually say that they are assisting the Almighty by helping us to understand and appreciate the Almighty's perfect message.

This is a fact: there are over four thousand religions. The planet's circumnavigation occurred five hundred years ago--over the past five hundred years it has finally become very obvious that there is no worldwide religious consensus. Consequently, the religious belief in a divine revelation produces this devastating dichotomy. Either God is not almighty because He failed at making Himself clear regarding the existence of one true religion, or the Almighty created mostly defective people who can't recognize His clear message. So, if the clearest fact is that there is no clear-cut successful revelation, then the religious are insulting the Creator by insisting that there was an inadequate revelation or a botched creation!! And, when the religious claim that they understand God's perfect message while the majority of humanity just don't get it, it's a perfect rationale for eternal arrogance and almighty prejudice.

"Every sect is a certificate that God has not plainly revealed his will to man." Robert Ingersoll

"The representation of a God, who (as we are told by certain divines) from all eternity elected an inconsiderable part of mankind to eternal life, and reprobated the rest to eternal damnation ...is a selfish and inferior notion of a God void of justice, goodness, and truth, ...which, if admitted to be true, overturns all religion, ...resolving the whole into the sovereign disposal of a tyrannical and unjust being, which is offensive to reason and common sense, and subversive of moral rectitude in general." Ethan Allen

Here is a summary of Tom Paine on revealed religion:

The evidence for revelation is deficient in many ways:
The want of a universal language.

The mutability of language.

The errors to which translations are subject.

The possibility of totally suppressing such a word (in print).

The probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole.

The so-called reveling was unreasonable, hap-hazard and unjust!
It's all just deficient, minority-endorsed hearsay to us. There
is no deciding evidence to point to, nothing testable that would
get most reasonable people to acknowledge that any particular
revelation is true.

"Is it not a species of blasphemy to call the New
Testament revealed religion, when we see in it
such contradictions and absurdities?" Tom Paine

"When it is revealed to me, I will believe it to
be a revelation; but it is not,...neither is it
proper that I should take the word of a man as the
word of God..." Tom Paine

"Reason therefore must be the standard by which we
determine the respective claims of revelation; for
otherwise we may as well subscribe to the divinity
of the one as of the other, or to the whole of
them, or to none at all." Ethan Allen

"Therefore if we would acquire useful knowledge,
we must... sincerely endeavor to search out the
truth: and draw our conclusions from reason and
just argument, which will never conform to our
inclination, interest or fancy; but we must
conform to that if we would judge rightly."
Ethan Allen

"The easy confidence with which I know another
man's religion is folly teaches me to suspect that
my own is also."
Mark Twain

"All Wars are Follies, very expensive, and very
mischievous ones."
Benjamin Franklin