

The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins  
Bantam Press 2006

Perhaps of all people I shouldn't say so, but this is a superb book, written with passion and conviction and mercilessly exposing the failures, flaws and inconsistencies of religion and the religious way of life.

One of the reasons why I like Richard Dawkins' work as much as I do, and read all his books so avidly, is because he writes with great clarity and with a sense of assurance that inspires confidence rather than a sense of the author's arrogance.

Dawkins successfully demolishes the God 'hypothesis' and also investigates associated areas such as the foundations of morality, the role of biblical texts, what's wrong with religion and the possible origins of the idea of a godhead.

I cannot imagine that anyone who cherishes a deeply held faith would even read this book, but for those of us whose lives are not built on certainties yet nevertheless maintain an allegiance to one religious doctrine or another it is essential reading. Dawkins challenges slack thinking and hypocrisy as well as forcing anyone, lay or religious professional, to think very hard about what they are doing and why within a faith-based construct.

In the end, Dawkins does allow those of us whose agreement with his central thesis may be much greater than is comfortable a fig leaf of consolation, by not denying us a continuing connection with an ancestral religion on the grounds of culture, history or ethnicity, but on the issue of deity he is unrelenting, urging all those with a mind to free themselves of the chains of what he sees as an indefensible, and historically damaging concept.

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