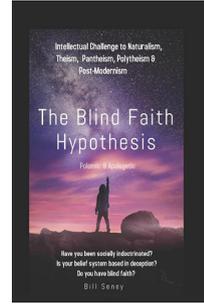


Book Review

Bill Seney.

The Blind Faith Hypothesis: Intellectual Challenge to Naturalism, Theism, Pantheism, Polytheism, and Post-Modernism
Author. 2019. 978-1-0917-7849-8.

Reviewed by, Kenneth R. Marple, Director/Founder of C2U Ministries



Bill Seney is an avid researcher of theology, philosophy, and the sciences. Seney works in the business and marketing field, where he specializes in performance management and solution development. Seney has married his professional experience with his research interests which culminates in this large research project, *The Blind Faith Hypothesis*.

The Blind Faith Hypothesis is broken up into two major sections. The first deals with the structuring and evaluation of each worldview (naturalism, polytheism, etc.); the second reveals Seney's apologetics endeavor.

In section one, Seney explores the factors that comprise a worldview and some of the cultural "invasions" (influences) that have occurred and affect the development of a worldview. He discusses how each worldview attempts to construct a coherent view of man, reality, truth, and morality, noting that each of these rubrics must also be logically consistent, empirically adequate, and experientially relevant. Individually these worldviews are evaluated upon this basic structuring. A great deal of the text is dedicated to naturalism and how it has been ingrained into the societal psyche. Seney suggests that naturalism is a view based on blind faith and social indoctrination. The author argues that under scrutiny, naturalism fails in each of the above categories. Emphasis is placed on genetic coding and the probabilities associated with these systems

becoming functional without a mind to ensure the transfer of information into the system. By the end, Seney points out how naturalism fails to prove the origin of this information. His thesis, suggesting that most beliefs are held because of social indoctrination or authority, seems to have merit. Based on the arguments he presents and the inability of naturalism to find grounding, it seems the only way to believe that naturalism is true is a negative disposition towards the idea of God or the social order tells you to believe it.

In section two, Seney lays out a formal defense of Christian theism. This section spans roughly 80 pages and covers material that could be categorized as biblical apologetics, with the primary focus centering on defending biblical concepts, teachings, and the quality of the text (i.e., reliability). Seney investigates and defends the existence of God through the Design Hypothesis and biblical archeology. There are two chapters dedicated to biblical prophecy concerning the first and second coming of Christ. Also included is an evaluation of scientific statements made throughout the Bible. For example, the Bible asserts that the Earth is circular, as opposed to flat (Isa 40:22), and modern-day science confirms this. There is material from many fields but deals heavily with probability within the design hypothesis and the likelihood of observable things arising by chance.

Seney has fully documented the book, but unfortunately included is a spattering of unreliable sources that could be replaced with better material. The text also suffers from several minor grammatical issues that affect the overall readability of the book (e.g., p. 34: sources). The text is reminiscent of Ravi Zacharias' work, in the sense of how he describes the structure of a worldview. Nevertheless, much of Seney's material is a rehashing of biological and philosophical criticisms already established but stated in different terms and from a different perspective. An interesting exception occurs in the section on naturalism. Here, Seney employs arguments against naturalism not encountered by this reviewer. For example, Seney argues that according to Solar nebula theory, Mercury's core should be frozen solid and that its core should not be composed of sulfur. Yet Mercury lacks a frozen core and its core is composed of sulfur. The reason this is interesting is that all naturalistic theories suggest that, based on the placement of Mercury within the solar system and how certain elements come about, Mercury should not have the characteristics it has.

Information revealed in the section dealing with naturalism, and the scientific/philosophical data can be used against the other "isms;" Seney does exactly that with strong and convincing exposition against the other worldviews. He shows that pantheism or polytheism fails when considering information known outside of the cultural setting where these beliefs exist. For example, eastern religions hold that all of the physical world is an illusion or not ultimate reality; however, this does not find its grounding in either reason or observation. Worldviews that do not take into account what we can see and what we can know from experience should not be considered a valid pursuit truth.

Seney states a few times the aphorism made

popular by Carl Sagan that "extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." Though the sentiment, in this case, is understood, it does seem to be a false statement. The idea if a claim is extraordinary (i.e., something that is very rare or remarkable), one needs overwhelming evidence is a misunderstanding of probability theory. One must consider how likely the evidence would be if the event claimed were not to happen. If an event has happened, what would be the probability of the evidence supporting this claim to be present if the event did not happen? If the probability of the evidence being present is sufficiently low, then there is no problem. If the probability is sufficiently high, that the evidence would be present without the event, then there is a problem. There should be care taken when borrowing a statement that is traditionally used against the stance you are defending and attempting to turn it around. As it is often said, these sorts of things can be a two-edged sword and can cut both ways.

The Christian apologetics section focuses on the non-standard arguments traditionally associated with this discipline (e.g., Cosmological argument). Seney takes a look at the biblical evidence. He shows the Bible to be a reliable source of information, that scientific observations made in the Bible are accurate, biblical prophecy is, has been, and is being fulfilled, and the resurrection happened based on observing the historical evidence. The material presented in the apologetics section is biblio-centric. Seney's case for Christian theism is one that can be used across different spectrums of belief. A major benefit is Seney's attempt, successfully, to remain biblically accurate and relevant. This approach is effective and if taken seriously, does provide a solid case for not only the Bible and its reliability but also for the Christian worldview.

This book is nearly four hundred pages and covers a wide array of information but is focused primarily on naturalism. This book seems to be geared towards a lay, high school to college-educated audience and makes a good introductory perusal of polemics and apologetics. Though there are some editorial concerns, those can be remedied with a subsequent edition and do not affect the message of the text in any major sense, though readability is affected.

