

## A Socratic Dialogue with the Almighty God

By Norm R. Allen Jr.

Recently, a religious friend of mine shared a Facebook posting about an imaginary dialogue between a disgruntled believer and God. The believer was complaining that God did not wake him up on time and apparently failed him in many other ways. However, as it turned out, God was actually steering the believer away from many problems of which the believer was simply unaware. In the end, God tells the believer to believe in the plan He has set for him. It is a warm, fuzzy story, indeed.

However, I would like to imagine such a dialogue from the viewpoint of a well-meaning humanist. Here it goes:

Humanist: God, as you must know, the freethinker Robert Green Ingersoll was once asked what he would change if he were God. He said that he would have made good health catching rather than disease. Why did *you* not make good health catching rather than disease?

God: In the beginning, the Earth was a paradise and there was no disease. Disease came into the world due to human disobedience and Original Sin.

Humanist: That sounds like another way of saying that *you* permitted disease to come into the world in reaction to Original Sin. So, you chose to inflict infants, toddlers and pre-school age children with cancer and other crippling and deadly diseases because two human beings disobeyed the orders that you knew they would disobey. That sounds somewhat unfair and unreasonable. But Lord, why did you also decide to inflict other animals and even plants with such diseases? Obviously, they committed no sins.

God: To be honest, I don't really care much for other animals and plants. I am concerned with human beings. My sacred texts make that clear.

Humanist: Then God, does that mean that human beings are wrong to promote animal welfare and/or animal rights?

God: No. As long as human beings come first, there is no problem.

Humanist: God, why do acts of God such as earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, tsunamis and tornadoes exist?

God: Again, the world was a paradise for human beings before the advent of Original Sin. So, I permit those things to occur.

Humanist: But isn't that pretty extreme. That's sounds a lot like child abuse.

God: Hey, when I get pissed, I really give it to 'em with both barrels.

Humanist: But why?

God: Because I can!

Humanist: Lord, why did you condone patriarchy and slavery in the Bible?

God: That's what everyone else was doing at the time.

Humanist: But God, if everyone else was jumping off a bridge, would you do it?

God: Don't be so smug!

Humanist: Lord, you supposedly performed miracles for people in biblical times. Why, in this day of deep philosophy, freethought, good science, advanced technology, higher education, widespread literacy, knowledge of magic and critical thinking, don't we see miracles of a religious nature as they supposedly occurred in biblical times?

God: Been there, done that. I'm just chillin' these days.

Humanist: Speaking of miracles, Lord, you no doubt are familiar with the book *Atheist Universe* by David Mills. He says that when Jesus supposedly walked on water, cursed a fig tree, drowned pigs, brought a dead man back to life, turned water to wine, made a blind man see, etc., this was all a magnificent waste of omnipotence. Mills wonders why Jesus did not cure cancer or heart disease, end

world hunger, end illiteracy, etc. Indeed, God, why didn't Jesus cure blindness or deafness altogether or make some other major contribution to humanity?

God: Beats me. I guess he didn't wanna be a complete show off.

Humanist: Lord, Christians have been waiting for 2,000 years for the return of Jesus. But God, how much longer do they have to wait? How long is too long? Twenty-thousand years? Two hundred-thousand years? Two million years? Two hundred-million years? Two *billion* years?

God: I have to admit, if he doesn't return within the next two billion years, even *I'm* gonna be a little skeptical.

Humanist: Lord, why did you permit the Middle Passage, the Holocaust, the decimation of Native Americans and countless other onslaughts?

God: I gave human beings free will.

Humanist: Yes, Lord, but without your gift of free will, they could not have carried out these evil acts. Doesn't that make you ultimately responsible?

God: Nah!

Humanist: Just one more question Lord? Believers say "God never gives you more problems than you can handle." But God, what about those people that go insane, go on homicidal rampages, and/or commit suicide? Doesn't that mean that they had more than they could handle?

God: Aw, why don't you go to hell already?

