

Book Title: Persuasions: A dream of reason meeting unbelief

Author: Douglas Wilson

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Reading Level: College

Reviewer: Pastor Cheah Fook Meng

Persuasive, fascinating, and thought provoking. Douglas Wilson explores the worldviews underlying unbelief and exposes their follies and inconsistencies. But instead of presenting his materials in a usual textbook format, he tries a storytelling approach. The result is a very readable, amusing and challenging book, one that is sure to make you think deeply about Christianity.

The story is about a man called Evangelist. Like many Christians, he was traveling towards the Heavenly City. But along the way, he met several individuals who traveled the other way, heading for the Abyss. Evangelists felt compelled to stop and engage them in a conversation. He hoped that he could persuade them to turn around and walk the other way. The book records these conversations.

There are thirteen conversations in the book. All thirteen of them are on their way to the Abyss. Each of them has his own reason for rejecting Christianity. Each of them holds to a secular worldview that is anti-Christian. Randy, one of the individuals Evangelist met, was a hedonist. He was on his way to flirt with women when Evangelist met him. He espoused immorality and believed that he should enjoy his life as much as possible. Then there was Janice, the feminist, who believed that Christianity, like others, was “too male”, and even abusive. Dorothy was a deep thinker and she rejected Christianity because of the hypocrisies she saw in the Church. Not all who traveled the road to Abyss were unbelievers who had strong opinions against Christianity. There was also Rev Howe and Bill. Rev Howe was a liberal, and did not believe in the inspiration or accuracy of the Holy Scriptures. Bill was a believer alright. But he did not think that Christians need to walk in sanctification. Holiness was an option. Christianity is by grace alone, he argued. And to insist on the Lordship of Christ, he asserted, was to add something to saving faith. He too, was on his way to the Abyss. Other characters Evangelist had conversations with include an evolutionist, a New Ager, a Roman Catholic, an atheist and an agnostic.

All of these conversations are captivating. Evangelist’s answers are often sound in logic and cleverly argued. Take for example the following conversation with Dorothy, who complained about the hypocrites in Church. ‘Now, what does God think of hypocrisy? Is He for it, or against it?’ “Well, against it, I suppose.” “Correct. So hypocrites are on the other team?” “That’s right.” “So what team are those on who reject God because of all the hypocrites? Whose team have they refused to join?”

All these are difficult conversations. Not all of them were persuaded by Evangelist at the end of the conversation. Some became angry, some began to doubt their own presuppositions, and some others began to rethink their own beliefs.

By reading this book you will learn about the fallacies of the non-Christian world views. You will also learn how to use logic in a way that is consistent to your faith. You will also learn how to evangelize the unbeliever, and lead them to see the soundness of the Christian faith.