

DOWNLOAD PDF HOW I SUFFERED FROM MY THEOLOGY AND REGAINED MY FAITH BY QUESTIONING 3 BELIEFS

Chapter 1 : Jennifer Brost (Contributor of Faculty and First-Generation College Students)

saudi arabian army suffered casualty on a border with yemen;tanks moving up to the border.

Print When someone we love dies, it is inevitable that questions of faith and spirituality arise. For some faith is challenged, for some it is dashed, for some it is a comfort, and for some it is a new exploration. I believe we are all spiritual beings, although formal religious belief may not be a part of our life. Listen without judgment or advice. Each individual grieves differently. Additionally, individuals grieve different losses differently. Be flexible, and gentle with yourself and others, and allow the grief and mourning to unfold naturally. Remember that for the young child, play is the focus of their world. Play is spiritually uplifting for a child. Children grieve in spurts, and may move quickly from sadness to play, and back again. Play helps children cope and heal. Join them if you are up to it, and always make it OK for them. Support groups where others are experiencing some of the same struggles are often very helpful. They should never be forced, but included as appropriate to age. The very young may just attend with a loving adult. The adolescent may read a poem or speak. Excluding a child from these rituals does not protect them, and including them helps start their healing journey. Create new rituals that touch the spiritual side. Rituals affirm landmarks in our lives – birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, baptisms, etc. The loss of someone we love is also a landmark in our lives and deserves the attention rituals give. However spirituality takes form in your beliefs, embrace it for yourself, and nurture it in others, as they seek peace and comfort at such critical times in life.

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Chapter 2 : I Was a Hardcore Christian, But This Is Why I Lost My Faith | HuffPost Canada

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Barlow I have before me a series of letters a private elementary school teacher reportedly assigned her students to address to God. The letters pose questions. Here is one by a girl named Jennifer: But what I prayed for was a puppy. In adults, they may take the form of protest—against the injustices of the world, against the implausibility of a theology, against the universe itself. Such protests range as broadly as humanity and often morph into anger towards or rejection of God and contempt for or indifference towards religion. Protest against the gods was widespread in ancient Greece and even manifests itself in many biblical passages: Humans sometimes find their gods inconvenient, questionable, inscrutable, malevolent, even absent. Is it God alone, however, who needs to be questioned? In the natural world, we come to know wonder, awe, delight, and an awareness of our own contingency. At least we do unless we allow these experiences to be dulled by fatigue, distractions, bustle, bad teaching, hormones, and who-knows-what? We experience the amazing capacity to contemplate ourselves, to contemplate a sense of right and wrong that eclipses cultural particularities. We may feel beckoned by a power beyond ourselves and toward something higher, finer, and filled with enduring meaning. These are seeds of the religious impulse. Alas, we also know pain. We encounter it, read about it, watch it on television and in the cinema. Some suffering seems beyond rational justification. Despite auxiliary causes, a world-history soaked to its core in blood and heartbreak is the spine of traditional atheism, certainly in Western civilization. This conflicting combination of awe and questing, on the one hand, and woe and horror on the other, can be so potent as to separate us from ourselves and from God. The contradiction may even lead some to say, as Voltaire allegedly did: Before turning to the specific concerns of Mormonism, however, permit me two observations. The first is to acknowledge that there is an element of choice in my faith, notwithstanding all prayer, spiritual intuition, and reasoning. A broad existential contradiction looms in sensing that there is something or someone to which we are responsible that is higher and beyond the reality we know—and yet who at the same time reigns over a tormented creation without making things clearer and more palatable to us. This two-pronged problem confronts not only Latter-day Saints and other religious people; it is a problem posed to all human beings. Skepticism or indifference, no less than belief, are matters of choice—ones with intellectual difficulties of their own. My second observation notes that while untenable suffering is the most influential reason for discarding religion, it also is the seedbed for the rise of religion itself. In short, critics cannot successfully dismiss religion on the grounds that there is horrendous suffering in the world and with the presumption that a good God would not allow it, for suffering contributes to why religion arises in the first place. Within such wider contexts as these, I remain a Latter-day Saint because I find in Mormonism an extraordinary social and personal resource for responding to such existential questions about the nature of the world. Mormonism proffers assistance for the pursuit of the good, the true, and the beautiful—it is an aide in the quest for what is meaningful, enduring, and loving. The gospel and the supporting structure of the Church provide a marvelous laboratory of practical action for those seeking states of mind and soul and relations and futures worthy of aspiration. Why would I ever forfeit such a resource? Why would I abandon a people exquisitely organized to help relieve suffering, to foster self-improvement, to serve, and to seek righteousness and the things that matter most? In truth, I have considered stepping back from Mormonism at two junctures in my life: These were for me substantive matters, not to be ignored. What follows suggests why these problems do not compel me to abandon Mormon virtues, understandings, and the fellowship I find distinctive and admirable. Along with published scholarship, formal education, independent pondering by diverse individuals, and word-of-mouth networks, the Internet sometimes responsibly, often not has introduced questions about such matters to a wider circle than formerly. Such an introduction can be a shock if one construes the Church to be essentially divine, marred only by the

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minor imperfections of a few well-meaning leaders or by outright sinners or those who suffer from a lack of faith. All significant decisions at Church headquarters and all Church publications are, in this view, inspired and right. By contrast, I construe the Church to be made up entirely of human beings, from Joseph Smith onward—“with all of the implications that view implies. These generally admirable people are not immune from human failings: It helps me to remember that the Church at every level is made up entirely of imperfect people, like me, who are trying to respond to the divine with which they have in faith been touched. This formula spares me the temptation to suspend critical thinking in the face of thorny issues of history or Church policy. It also calls forth my charity, humility, and loyalty. I assume weakness, error, and limited understanding to abound in all of us, and I am delighted and humbled as I work with those who aspire to be saints and when I discover inspired strands that invite us to something higher. I can sympathize with those who do feel betrayed. I used to be startled when I encountered in my college classes students who were disturbed to learn basic facts of Mormon history: This launches some on a search, variously fueled by legitimate or sensationalized questions, by honest inquiry, or by manic anger. I also sympathize with Church leaders who want church meetings to be spiritual and inspiring and thus do not focus on problems. In general, their intent is not to deceive but to edify, and many who have prepared inadequate Church curricula over the years, to say nothing of the lay teachers who enact the resulting manuals, have been earnest but not historically well-grounded. But, yes, we need as a church to address this issue. Augmenting that, we need do a better job with the quality of our curricula and manuals as a whole, which can be done in an informed, honest, and faith-promoting way. Overall, I judge the history and practice of Mormonism to be remarkable, defensible, and often inspiring. I am not leaving, but I do wince. Latter-day Saints are not necessarily chosen because of inherent moral and spiritual superiority. We tell ourselves otherwise often enough, citing the Book of Abraham 3: The Book of Mormon similarly targets elitist presumption: Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? Rather, we are a people tasked with a commission. We have good news and good ways to share it. This, however, does not preclude the Lord from commissioning others in their own roles. The God of heaven and earth is not so small as any number of clans have presumed. The Church is not the only source of that which is good, true, and beautiful—“after which we are invited to seek. If I believed it was, I should quickly run into two problems. The first is experience—“experience with people outside my Mormon faith, contemporarily and across history, who regularly enlighten me with their wisdom and goodness. The second problem is that such a misconception would introduce not merely paradox but contradiction into Mormonism. And I encounter these good elements all around me. It is also that I have much to learn and garner from them. Not in any way does that prompt me to a loss of faith. For one thing, Joseph Smith rapidly grew and evolved in his understanding. The most popularly understood is the restoration of that which is lost: A third sense of the word is the completion of that which is partial: Disregard for the intellect, though lamentably common in our culture that values revelation, is not intrinsic to Mormonism. Moreover, while it is scarcely possible to think too clearly or be too informed, it is possible to think in excess or to grow entangled in minutiae. A student can overthink and get lost while studying for a major exam; a pianist may overthink and diminish her performance. So the meaning of intelligence requires discussion, and its uses demand adroit and contextualized application. His revelations assert that our very essence is intelligence; we are intelligences fully as much as we are spirits, and were both before our birth. God also is an intelligence, the greatest intelligence of all. His notions of exaltation addressed body, mind, and spirit. Certainly there are cultural and policy bounds and currents to navigate, just as in the worlds of business, education, or community relations so as to minimize giving offense and expand constructive action. I am free, however, to believe as I believe and to act as I judge best. I find it helps to distinguish among notions of freedom. One primary distinction divides freedom from rules, obligations, or dangers, perhaps and freedom to act or achieve something. I may imagine that what I want is freedom from

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rules or obligations, but, in its healthy expression, the Church assists us in engaging the freedom to become what we need to be for others and for eternal joy. Only through sacrifice and discipline of lesser freedoms are we able to become the most free form of ourselves—just as high-performing athletes are free to become the best version of themselves only through strict control of their impulses, time, talents, diet, and training. Furthermore, adherence to Church strictures, as with athletic or musical participation, is voluntary; we are free likewise to choose another, less disciplined path. The powers of heaven, he said, cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned. But that does not render authority implicitly evil. Authority and loyalty to that authority enable coordinated action in good causes that is far more potent than that mustered by circles that demand scant sacrifice and responsibility to a wider group and to God. Private complaints on this front are not uncommon in the modern Church and the problem costs us active members of all ages. Many lament what they find to be bland, overly correlated manuals for instruction. On the other hand, the issue is trickier than it may seem to Church members who live where the faith is well established. The Church grows most rapidly in international settings where the members range widely in education and resources. How do we reach new converts in such settings, while not treating long-term members as children, while yet remaining a coherent single church? And what would alternative methods actually produce in a church where lay members teach one another? Any time spent searching the Internet for LDS-related themes reveals not only veins of thoughtful faith and discussion, but a world awash with amateur eggheads ready to beat their drum astride individual hobby horses, asking questions of dubious merit that lead to thickets of esoteric speculation, and even division. I trust we would not, as a church, prefer our Sunday instruction to resemble sessions of the British parliament or a thread of comments on YouTube. As a church, we have over-corrected for such dangers and can do better than we are doing to grow deep, thoughtful spiritual roots.

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Chapter 3 : Elie Wiesel's Relationship with God

Pastor's Wife, Jennifer Brost, questioned her faith until she regained it. After the deaths of her mother-in-law How I Suffered From My Theology and regained my faith by questioning 3 beliefs: Jennifer Brost: calendrierdelascience.com: Books.

Lewis left his childhood Christian faith to spend years as a determined atheist. Disillusioned that God had not healed his mother, Lewis set out on a path toward full-bodied rationalism and atheism. The road back to faith was cluttered with obstacles Lewis once thought impossible to overcome. His conversion to a robust Christianity required years of intellectual struggle and came only after being convinced that faith was reasonable. The journey of C. Lewis, perhaps the greatest defender of the faith of the twentieth century, provides valuable lessons for Christians today in sharing the Gospel with an unbelieving generation. In time, Lewis came to see evil and suffering as both an argument against atheism and an argument for God and Christianity. Suffering was a dilemma for atheism; only within Christianity did Lewis find a satisfactory explanation. My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. Just how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? Consequently atheism turns out to be too simple. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning. Mere Christianity , Lewis came to recognize that suffering and pain are not without purpose. Like Joseph, who told his brothers in Genesis God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to our conscience, but shouts in our pains: The Problem of Pain , Lewis was left to face the problem of grief and unanswered prayer. Through the ordeal, Lewis learned that prayer is not about calling down miracles on demand. Lewis was shocked to hear the strong atheist T. Weldon concede that the evidence for the Gospels was really quite good. Early in the hardest boiled of all the atheists I ever knew sat in my room. It almost looks as if it had really happened once. Was there then no escape? Surprised by Joy , After his conversion, Lewis insisted that myths in other religions shadowing the Christian story are not surprising since God is a revealing God. We should therefore, expect to find in the imagination of great Pagan teachers and myth makers some glimpse of that theme which we believe to be the very plot of the whole cosmic story—the theme of incarnation, death, and rebirth! It is not the difference between falsehood and truth. It is the difference between a real event on the one hand and dim dreams or premonitions on the other. The Weight of Glory , To be effective evangelists and apologists we must be good theologians. Lewis argued this longing is common to all mankind. The atheist Bertrand Russell wrote of the same yearning. The center of me is always and eternally a terrible pain—a curious wild pain—a searching for something beyond what the world contains—something transfigured and infinite. I do not find it, I do not think it is to be found—but the love of it is my life. Lewis made a case for God by arguing that every natural, innate desire corresponds to some real object that can fulfill that desire. Since humans desire something this world cannot satisfy, something exists outside this earthly world that can satisfy—God. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world. Christians must present the faith as fulfilling our deepest desires. We too often present Christianity as merely a philosophical system, or the conclusion to a string of inferences made based upon Scripture, but the salvation promised us in Scripture applies to the whole person. Christian friends such as J. Tolkien, Hugo Dyson, Owen Barfield, and others, faithfully and patiently walked beside Lewis as they helped him resolve his many misgivings about Christianity. Lewis recognized that God seeks us out personally and makes demands upon us. We have a personal God who calls us individually to make a personal response to the Gospel. Friendship is invaluable in communicating the Gospel. Lewis found his friendships with Christians before coming to Christ deeply satisfying as they shared interests on many levels. Who in your life needs to know Jesus as Lord? Do you want to know the God that C.

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Chapter 4 : Faith and Spirituality after Death, when Grieving a Loss | Hello Grief

How I Suffered From My Theology and regained my faith by questioning 3 beliefs by Jennifer Brost published by Deliverance Publishers () [Paperback] Unknown Binding out of 5 stars 1 customer review.

Okay, so I need help with believing in God again. Back in , when people were saying how we were going to die in , it made me start thinking about what happens to us after death and all that. Like, what if they are right, and all that. Then I go into the state of being depressed and not wanting to do anything. That is just a scary thought to me. Also, my friend is an athiest and said that he "died" for 2 mins and saw nothing. I have been so scared. I have questioned alot of stuff like how God was created and all that. I need spiritual advice. So, please, if you can, help me with this, Bible verses, anything. I just need help, I have been depressed with everything and I just need help. Thank you so much. I would guess those thoughts have entered every believers minds at least a few times. Just what is a nonbeliever supposed to see upon death? They are flawed because the heart stopping and the breath stopping does not mean the brain has died. So I neither deny what people see is real or imagined. But I do know a few things about faith. A previous poster brought up a verse about faith coming from hearing and hearing by the Word. This has nothing to do with reading your Bible. When it was penned, there was no Bible but only scrolls of a fulfilled covenant. Faith be be strengthened by reading but I think simply reading your bible might not be something that would touch you as it would the one who posted that. And hearing by the Word of God. So before we can deal with the faith issue, we need to see how to hear. And this is not simply through your ears. Only God Christ can cause you to hear so that your faith can be restored. This does not mean you must hear Jesus through some spiritual strength. You can hear Him through the mouths of Christians. It can be shared. But your not just anyone. It really seems to have bothered you that your in this state. I assure you you will not gain faith from your atheist friend. As that Christian has Christ, he also has what you need. That, my friend is something you may covet without fear of sinning. With a desire to help and to give. One small enough to notice you sitting there and loving enough to help you along your journey. Not a Church with a long list of rules but one with a long list of love, excepting you just as you are. My prayers are with you. If you desire Christ, you will receive Christ. Faith make no earthly sense. It causes us to believe the unbelievable. If you require proof that Christ is the Way you may not find it. But you friend is dead wrong. Christ IS the Way and everlasting life comes through Him.

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Chapter 5 : Religious views of Charles Darwin - Wikipedia

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The suffering and death at these and other concentration camps were greater than any before endured. The Holocaust created a void in the souls of many of those who survived. Elie Wiesel was one of those people. Before the Holocaust he had been one of the most devout Jewish children. Up until the end he waited for God to intervene in Biblical fashion. When that intervention was not forthcoming, he began to doubt in God and in His mercy. He began to accuse God of cruelty against his people. After the torture was over, he had to reevaluate the role of God in his life. He could be forgiving of God and allow Him another chance, as many he had seen had done. Or he could take on the role of God to himself and try to define his own destiny. To deal with this, Wiesel has to question God and himself. He does so through his writing. He receives many answers, though none are satisfactory. It might be a scary thought, but true nonetheless. They felt safe and secure in their faith. Even though things continued to get worse, as Jews were abused in the streets, and the friendly townsfolk started showing deep-seeded hatred of their Jewish neighbors, the Jews still had faith. It was simply a question of holding out for a few days Once again the God of Abraham would save his people, as always, at the last moment, when all seemed lost. People around him took the evil as a punishment for some unknown crime the Jews as a people had committed before God. If God wants to see us suffer, it is because we deserve it. It is for our good. In the face of all the suffering Wiesel noted a feeling of guilt in those in his camps, because of which they did not protest and fight back as much as they might have. If I am here, it is because God is punishing me; I have sinned, and I am expiating my sins. I have deserved this punishment that I am suffering. They thought it must be a test. He wants to find out whether we can dominate our base instincts and kill the Satan within us. We have no right to despair. The younger people felt it would be better to die fighting than to go like lambs to the slaughter. They had knives and a strong will. They listened to their teachers, when they spoke like this: We must accept it with our eyes and minds wide open. We are going to die, and God alone knows why, on whose account and for what purpose; I do not know. But He demands our lives in sacrifice, which proves that He remembers us, He has not turned His face from us. And so it is with joy-pure, desperate, mad joy- that we shall say to Him: Thy will be done. Do not therefore beseech His pity. Stifle the cries welling up in your hearts. Be proud, instead, and let your pride explode, and I promise you, I your shepherd, to whom you owe obedience, I promise you that the angels in heaven will lower their heads in shame and will never again praise the Creator of man and his universe, never! And so Wiesel and his town were indoctrinated without incident into the camps, believing that if their faith endured, they would be saved. Soon the delusions faded and Wiesel began to doubt God. But sooner or later, the seeming meaninglessness of the suffering his people endured had to burst into the consciousness of his seemingly indomitable Jewish faith. Why should I bless His name? What had I to thank Him for? No one believed the rumors of peace and safety. In the hospital at Auschwitz, Wiesel met a man consumed with this kind of despair. No longer was Wiesel convinced that the Jews were all some part of a greater plan. I have told myself: Now I have had enough, I have reached my limit. If he knows what he is doing, then it is serious; and it is not any less serious if he does not. I was going through the same crisis. Every day I was moving a little further away from the God of my childhood. He has become a stranger to me; sometimes, I even thought he was my enemy. Others, like Wiesel, were given the burden of carrying the questions with them, never to be answered. Here He is-He is hanging here on this gallows The destruction of his faith in the God of his childhood was complete. No longer did his name bring cries of praise from Wiesel. God seemed unworthy in the face of His worshipers to accept their worship. However, God did not die that day. He is not dead, as the prophet Elijah told Gavriel. As Elijah had said: If anything he can question it and feel angry about it. That is what many of those he encountered did once they got over the initial anger. He allowed the pain to continue for His own cruel purposes. The energy

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once spent in worship of God was transferred to accusing God, denouncing God, and demanding an explanation from God. Wiesel writes autobiographically in the words of Elisha in *Dawn: Ally of God or simply his toy?* The holiness of the Sabbath was destroyed by this lack of concern. God was either ignoring what was happening or approving of it. Whoever kills, becomes God. Whoever kills, kills God. Each murder is a suicide, with the Eternal eternally the victim. In which case, there can be no searching for reasons behind the Holocaust, for there are none, as Wiesel discovered. No God ordered the one to prepare the stake, nor the other to mount it. At Auschwitz, the sacrifices were without point, without faith, without divine inspiration. If the suffering of one human being has any meaning, that of six million has none. Numbers have their own importance; they prove, according to Piotr Rawicz, that God has gone mad. Each person has his own reactions and accusations. That God is mad is just one. Gavriel, symbolic of those who escaped long enough to warn others, accuses God of actually having helped the executioners: They might have thrown themselves at his feet and tried to win his pity. That is what others would have done, but not they. A pride that came down to them from an earlier age preventing them from bowing down even before God, who was there behind the executioner. Gregor told him a story: Standing with his head held high before them, he spoke as follows: I have irrefutable proof in my hands. Judge without fear or sorrow or prejudice. Whatever you have to lose has long since been taken away. On the day after the trial, He turned the sentence against his judges and accusers. They, too, were taken off to the slaughter. And I tell you this: He wanted the Rebbe to tell him God was as cruel as He seemed. The Rebbe danced around answering him, until finally, he burst out: That I have no eyes to see, no ears to hear? That I have no desire to beat my head against the wall and shout like a madman, to give rein to my sorrow and disappointment? Yes, He is guilty. He has become the ally of evil, of death, of murder, but the problem is still not solved. I ask you a question and dare you answer: He is still stuck. Gavriel had his own answer to a cruel God.

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Chapter 6 : NPR Choice page

glasses and diamonds, how i suffered from my theology and regained my faith by questioning 3 beliefs, ingersoll rand ssr epe 50 manual, david brown selectamatic user manual, the essential its a wonderful life a scene by.

As a child, Darwin attended Shrewsbury Unitarian Church Charles Darwin was born during the Napoleonic Wars and grew up in their aftermath, a conservative time when Tory -dominated government closely associated with the established Anglican Church of England repressed Radicalism , but when family memories recalled the 18th-century Enlightenment and a multitude of Non-conformist churches held differing interpretations of Christianity. His Whig supporting extended family of Darwins and Wedgwoods was strongly Unitarian , though one of his grandfathers, Erasmus Darwin , was a freethinker , and his father was quietly a freethinker but as a physician avoided any social conflict with his wealthy Anglican patrons. After her death when he was only eight he became a boarder at the Shrewsbury School , an Anglican public school. One of his proposers for the society was the radical William A. Browne , and on 27 March Browne argued that mind and consciousness were simply aspects of brain activity, not "souls" or spiritual entities separate from the body. A furious debate ensued, and later someone struck out all mention of this materialist heresy from the minutes. This was the first time that Darwin was exposed to militant freethought and the arguments it aroused. Darwin was astonished, but had recently read the similar ideas of his grandfather Erasmus and remained indifferent. The established churches of England and Scotland and the English universities remained insistent that species were divinely created and man was distinct from the "lower orders", but the Unitarian church rejected this teaching and even proclaimed that the human mind was subject to physical law. It never struck me how illogical it was to say that I believed in what I could not understand and what is in fact unintelligible. About half of the undergraduates were destined for the church, like Darwin hoping for a comfortable parish. Study of nature was study of the work of the Lord, and scientists who were ordained clerics of the Church of England, such as themselves, could follow their enquiries without theological difficulties. Sedgwick gave a talk to the Geological Society of London in which declared that "No opinion can be heretical, but that which is not true Conflicting falsehoods we can comprehend; but truths can never war against each other. I affirm, therefore, that we have nothing to fear from the results of our enquiries, provided they be followed in the laborious but secure road of honest induction. In this way we may rest assured that we shall never arrive at conclusions opposed to any truth, either physical or moral, from whatever source that truth may be derived. The latter was becoming outdated. It opposed arguments for increased democracy, but saw no divine right of rule for the sovereign or the state, only "expediency". Government could be opposed if grievances outweighed the danger and expense to society. The judgement was "Every man for himself". These ideas had suited the conditions of reasonable rule prevailing when the text was published in , but in they were dangerous ideas at a time when the French king was deposed by middle class republicans and given refuge in England by the Tory government, and resulting radical street protests demanded suffrage , equality and freedom of religion. Henslow insisted that "he should be grieved if a single word of the Thirty-nine Articles were altered" and emphasised the need to respect authority. Darwin later wrote that he was convinced that he "could have written out the whole of the Evidences with perfect correctness, but not of course in the clear language of Paley. The logic of this book and as I may add of his Natural Theology gave me as much delight as did Euclid. For Paley, a Malthusian "system of natural hostilities" of animals living on prey was strictly connected to the surplus of births keeping the world appropriately stocked as circumstances changed, and poverty showed that the world was in a "state of probation This convinced Charles and encouraged his interest in science. I could almost formerly have said it by heart. This exemplified the natural theology that Darwin had learnt in previous years. He returned to find that his arrangements had fallen through, but was given the opportunity to join the Beagle survey expedition as a gentleman naturalist and companion to captain Robert FitzRoy. Darwin was questioning from the outset, and in his first zoology notes he wondered why deep-ocean plankton had been

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created with so much beauty for little purpose as no one could see them. He concluded that the land had indeed risen, and referred to loose rock deposits as "part of the long disputed Diluvium". It was only later that glaciation was accepted as the source of these deposits. He failed to note locations of most of his finds, but fortunately recorded mockingbirds and plant life with more care. It cannot be thought so. On 20 February, Herschel had written to Lyell praising his Principles of Geology as opening a way for bold speculation on "that mystery of mysteries, the replacement of extinct species by others. The letter was widely circulated in London, and Darwin remembered the phrase "that mystery of mysteries". I suppose it was the novelty of the argument that amused them. But I had gradually come, by this time, to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world, with the Tower of Babel, rainbow as a sign, etc. His journal for records "All September read a good deal on many subject: Beginning of October ditto. On 11 November he returned and proposed to Emma. Again he discussed his ideas, and about ten days later she wrote, "When I am with you I think all melancholy thoughts keep out of my head but since you are gone some sad ones have forced themselves in, of fear that our opinions on the most important subject should differ widely. Will you do me a favour? It is the part of the New Testament I love best. Emma cherished a belief in the afterlife, and was concerned that they should "belong to each other" for eternity. Desmond and Moore note that the section continues "Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned" And this is a damnable doctrine. Unitarianism emphasised inner feeling which overrode the authority of religious texts or doctrine, and her beliefs resulted from intensive study and questioning. They socialised with the Unitarian clergymen James Martineau and John James Tayler, and read their works as well as those of other Unitarian and liberal Anglican authors such as Francis William Newman whose Phases of faith described a spiritual journey from Calvinism to theism, all part of widespread and heated debate on the authority of Anglicanism. In Downe Emma attended the Anglican village church, but as a Unitarian had the family turn round in silence when the Trinitarian Nicene Creed was recited. Methodical conscientious doubt as a state of inquiry rather than disbelief made him open to nature and revelation, and they remained open with each other. Having read the new 6th edition of the Revd. To Darwin, Natural selection produced the good of adaptation but removed the need for design, [8] and he could not see the work of an omnipotent deity in all the pain and suffering such as the ichneumon wasp paralysing caterpillars as live food for its eggs. I shall be delighted to hear how you think that this change may have taken place, as no presently conceived opinions satisfy me on the subject. Darwin scorned its amateurish geology and zoology, but carefully reviewed his own arguments. During the service, Emma continued to face forward when the congregation turned to face the altar for the Creed, sticking to her Unitarian faith. Death of Annie[edit] At the end of June his bright nine-year-old daughter Annie who had become a particular favourite and comfort to him fell sick and, after a painful illness, died on 23 April Darwin wrote at the time, "Our only consolation is that she passed a short, though joyous life. This opened a new vision of tragically circumstantial nature. Emma believed that Annie had gone to heaven and told this to the children, with the unfortunate result that Henrietta wondered, if all the angels were men, did women go to heaven? One of the first responses to review copies came from Charles Kingsley, a Christian socialist country rector and novelist, who wrote that it was "just as noble a conception of Deity, to believe that He created primal forms capable of self development Their new "higher criticism" represented "the triumph of the rational discourse of logos over myth. There was close correspondence between Darwin and his American collaborator Asa Gray, a devout Presbyterian who discussed with him the relationship of natural selection to natural theology and published several reviews arguing in detail that they were fully compatible. Darwin financed a pamphlet publishing a collection of these reviews for distribution in Britain. There seems to me too much misery in the world. Not believing this, I see no necessity in the belief that the eye was expressly designed. I am inclined to look at everything as resulting from designed laws, with the details, whether good or bad, left to the working out of what we may call chance. Not that this notion at all satisfies me. I feel most deeply that the whole subject is too profound for the human intellect. A dog might as well speculate on the mind of Newton. Though "very unwilling to give up my

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belief", he found that "disbelief crept over me at a very slow rate, but was at last complete. The rate was so slow that I felt no distress, and have never since doubted even for a single second that my conclusion was correct. Another source of conviction in the existence of God, connected with the reason and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflecting I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a Theist. This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the Origin of Species; and it is since that time that it has very gradually with many fluctuations become weaker. But then arises the doubt—can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animal, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions? May not these be the result of the connection between cause and effect which strikes us as a necessary one, but probably depends merely on inherited experience? Nor must we overlook the probability of the constant inculcation in a belief in God on the minds of children producing so strong and perhaps an inherited effect on their brains not yet fully developed, that it would be as difficult for them to throw off their belief in God, as for a monkey to throw off its instinctive fear and hatred of a snake. I cannot pretend to throw the least light on such abstruse problems. The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us; and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic. John Innes who took over in Darwin contributed to the church, helped with parish assistance and proposed a benefit society which became the Down Friendly Society with Darwin as guardian and treasurer. In he retired there and changed his name to Brodie Innes, [65] leaving the parish in the dubious hands of his curate, the Revd. Stevens, while still remaining the patron. The meagre "living" and lack of a vicarage made it hard to attract a priest of quality. Innes made Darwin treasurer of Downe village school and they continued to correspond, with Innes seeking help and advice on parish matters. Stevens proved lax, and departed in Brodie Innes offered to sell Darwin the advowson, or right to appoint the parish priest, but Darwin declined. The next was rumoured to have disgraced himself by "walking with girls at night". Darwin now became involved in helping Innes with detective work, subsequently advising him that the gossip that had reached Innes was not backed up by any reliable evidence. George Sketchley Ffinden, took over the parish in November and began imposing his ideas. Darwin had to write to Brodie Innes, explaining what had upset the parishioners. Ffinden now usurped control of the village school which had been run for years by a committee of Darwin, Lubbock and the incumbent priest, with a "conscience clause" which protected the children from Anglican indoctrination. Ffinden began lessons on the Thirty-nine Articles of the Anglican faith, an unwelcome move from the point of view of the Baptists who had a chapel in the village. Darwin withdrew from the committee and cut his annual donation to the church, but continued with the Friendly Society work. In the Revd. A furious Ffinden huffed that it was "quite out of order" for the Darwins to have gone to the inspectorate behind his back. George Jackson Mivart, and in the autumn of Darwin expressed his exasperation at Ffinden when putting in his resignation from the school committee due to ill health.

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Chapter 7 : Questing and Questioning – Sunstone Magazine

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Part I - The beginning Five years ago, there would be no way in hell that I could ever conceive of leaving the Christian faith. But here I am today, only mere months after I finally garnered the courage to change my Facebook status oh, heaven forbid! Friends have asked me why, and how, someone who was as zealous a Christian as I could so intentionally and deliberately leave the faith, so I decided I am in a good, and secure place Before I go into the full reason, I feel the need to offer a couple of disclaimers. The first is that I feel in order to fully explain why I left the church, I need to offer some background into the events that led up to this decision Also, what makes this article especially difficult is that in writing it, inevitably I will be thinking of people who have influenced my decision to leave the Christian faith, and some of those people might find themselves reading this article. I do not wish to speak ill of anyone, and I will do my best to not name anyone outright, but people who know me well enough might be able to identify people I reference, and for that, I apologize. I do not wish to put anybody in a bad light. Do I have friends that are Christian? Do I care about them very much? With that being said To start at the beginning, I did not grow up in a Christian home. My parents, who are two loving and supportive people, both grew up in Christian homes Dad was Lutheran and Mom was Catholic but both stopped going to church very quickly after they grew up. But also, when I was a kid and this should come as no surprise to anyone who knows me I was totally that awkward kid, with the bad haircut and glasses and my nose in a book all the time. I saw this individual and this youth group he had as a welcome invitation, to make friends and meet people who were welcoming and would accept me unconditionally for who I was, books and all. And I was exactly right. I started going out to this church youth group and felt very welcomed, and loved, and developed a very positive friend community that had a great effect on my self-esteem. My teenage years were very happy, and I do want to stress that. I also wonder if I "accepted Jesus" because all my friends at that time had already done so and there was a bit of peer pressure involved. Either way, I really did love Jesus. I kept my bible in my backpack, I went to church every week it was also convenient because I played piano for various church choirs so I had a commitment to go, and playing was so easy and fun for me I even prayed the rosary. At the end of my high school career, I applied and got accepted into a year-long missions program where you travel across North America going to churches and go to Ghana. This is where my seemingly unshakable faith, started to crumble. Churches where there were pastors literally screaming at each other behind closed doors, we were at one church over the Easter weekend, and minutes before the service had started for Easter Sunday, found out that the two pastors had been screaming at each other and threatening to quit And yes, they already had a completely functional parking lot, but they wanted a nicer parking lot. I was furious at the thought, especially when we had just gotten back from Ghana and had encountered some of the most blatant and unfair forms of poverty I had ever seen in my life. The one thing I seemed to continually come across, was the fact that I was Catholic, and the majority of churches we were visiting were very Protestant. I have heard it all. And the thing is, Catholics feel the same about Protestants -- they have "some of the truth, but not all of the truth. So who was right? They think they are right, and I think I am right. But further than that, this thought caused me to realize, how arrogant I was, to think that my form of small-town Southern-Ontario Catholic Christianity was the only way that people could come to know God properly, when there are billions of people all over the world who reach out to all kinds of higher powers and forms of spiritual enlightenment all the time? And those people feel the same kind of assurance, peace, and goodness that I do? Which is exactly what I was doing. And exactly what those people who thought being Catholic was wrong were doing to me. Part III - What happened out there After the year was over I went to university, and after my first year of university, I had a very difficult summer. I was also very lonely, which made me very vulnerable. A person whom I thought was a friend paid to have me fly out to

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visit him in Vancouver. And I was in a terrifying place, having no money, being thousands of miles away from home and friends and familiar faces, and having no means to escape and run away. A large portion of my reasoning was those analogies about what happens when you have sex before marriage kept playing over and over again in my head. I felt tremendously ashamed, as though I had done something wrong, and this was a tremendous lie that took a long time to get over. Oddly enough, I only ever had one friend who directly cut through my bullshit story and asked me what really happened. Only one, out of all the friends who knew I was going. And I was too afraid to tell him, and when I finally did, he reacted in a way that made me feel even more wretched about myself. He and I have talked about this and apologies have been made. But still, I wished somebody had warned me, or said something, or kindly reminded me to be careful. I had one friend email and caution me against going Two weeks too late. And when I finally started to tell people what really happened, a lot of people reacted inappropriately, saying that I should forgive the guy, or that God was going to heal me, or that good things will come out of it. The question, "where was God? God is supposed to love me, and protect me, and keep me from harm. This is what I had been taught, yet here I was, feeling like my church had failed me by keeping me sheltered and naive, and feeling like I was continually let down by Christians in their dismissive, harmful reactions when I had finally got the courage to stop thinking about those "sex before marriage ruins you" analogies and talk about what happened. I reasoned two things to answer my question about where was God, when I was in Vancouver: God either was present and there, and did nothing about it, or God was not there, and does not exist. It is easier for me to think that God does not exist, than to think that God was present and did nothing. A God who is present and does nothing is not all-powerful, and is not all-loving, and I simply cannot forgive a god who stands by and watches while people get hurt after he promised to protect people. If I had the power to stop something bad happening to someone I loved, I would do everything I could to stop it. Of all of the times in my life that I needed God, God was not there. This is where I stopped believing in God -- I would rather think that God simply does not exist, then think that God abandoned me. Further than that, I began to think of how randomly senseless the world could be. I grew up in a safe and loving environment in a stable country with a good economy. The majority of the world cannot say the same. Where is God then? I had people ask me to pray for them in a village we were visiting in Ghana because they have no clean drinking water. I met a homeless person in Toronto who asked me to pray for him so he could overcome his drug addictions and find a safe place to sleep that night. Is God protecting him? Where is God in the face of natural disasters that destroy countries and leave countless numbers of people devastated? How can an all-powerful, completely loving, benevolent God allow that kind of random injustice and suffering? I started to think of the many times where I have heard other people, and have also found myself, thanking God for being present in the little things -- God helped me ace that test, or God helped me get to work on time, or God led me to my true love. And then, maybe those people in that village in Ghana do get clean drinking water one day, and they are thankful that God provided for them. What kind of God denies people basic necessities for living and then demands their thankfulness if he does choose to provide? I would rather that God does not exist, than choose to follow that kind of god. The more I started doubting my faith, the more the bible made perfect sense to me, and the easier it became to read: Jesus loved the poorest of the poor. He spent time with the prostitutes, the tax collectors, and the people with the worst reputations, and loved them unconditionally, contrary to the culture they were a part of. So naturally it would feel like this kind of unconditional love, and this unity and welcomeness should be extended to all people, regardless of gender, race, and class, just as Jesus embodied in his life. Yet I fail to see that in so many churches. I know I speak broadly, and am at risk of generalizing, but too often I feel like in so many parts of the North American church, there is far too little emphasis on an ongoing option for appropriately caring for the poor, and that such care manifests itself in ways that do not "inconvenience us" or involve colonialism like short-term missions trips, for instance. In a Facebook note where I wrote about these thoughts many years ago, I said, "It has become too easy, too passive, and expectations have fallen too low. Where is the challenge if I begin to feel like the view towards salvation is that it is assured simply because I fill up a space in a church

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pew? There is too much brokenness in this weary world, and too great a responsibility, and by the way Give me the courage that Jesus had to love tax collectors, prostitutes, and to approach the lowest caste, the diseased, dirty, and dying, and love them. Give me the weight of the world, and the responsibility of the impoverished, the dying, and the hungry. I was very quickly running out of answers and reasons. Part IV - Nails in the coffin And then a couple of things happened, that in my mind, I refer to as the "nails in the coffin. We all know this post is long enough already The first "nail" that happened was that I volunteered at a weekend youth retreat that I volunteer at every year, and for the first time in a tremendously long time, deeply related with what the speaker had to say. The people who organize the event who are also good friends of mine and the organizers of the year-long missions program I went on had invited a speaker they had seen at an earlier event, and his message was very clear, and very simple: It is OK to doubt your faith. In fact, doubting your faith and questioning it helps your faith to grow. If, in my actions or inactions, I am supporting systems or institutions that enable oppression, this is what I believe in. I loved his message. His message resonated deeply with me, and for the first time in this dark night of the soul I was experiencing, I felt a glimmer of light, and a chance for encouragement. I could doubt my faith, and that was OK. However, I was one of only a few people who resounded with what he had to say. People were walking out on talks, arguments were taking place all over the grounds this event was held at, and the poor speaker was getting harassed everywhere he went. People were telling him they needed to pray for him to receive Jesus into his life, saying he was a heretic, and looking for opportunities to argue him at every turn. The hardest part for me, in the midst of witnessing this insanity, was that a lot of the people who disagreed so strongly with him were people I knew personally. People whose churches I had visited, or people I had lived with or worked with or spent extended time with.

Chapter 8 : Jennifer Brost (Contributor of Faculty and First-Generation College Students)

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Jennifer Brost is the author of How I Suffered From My Theology (avg rating, 0 ratings, 0 reviews), How I Suffered from My Theology and Regained My F.