

A Question and Answer Session with Steven Colborne (Interviewed by David Robertson)

Why is your blog called Perfect Chaos?

Firstly, thank you David for the opportunity to answer your questions. I always love talking about spirituality so it's a great joy to be able to elaborate a little on my beliefs.

The tagline for my blog is 'God's Perfect Purpose in a Chaotic World'. The name Perfect Chaos encapsulates my belief that God is in absolute and total control of everything that happens in existence, even though from a creaturely perspective events often seem random and chaotic.

Why did you settle on Christianity over other religions?

At this stage in my life I haven't actually finally settled on Christianity. Believing as I do that God is in control of everything that happens, this creates problems in terms of various key Christian doctrines which depend on the idea that we have free will.

I believe it is a logical contradiction to state that God is everywhere (omnipresent) and that we have free will. Free will necessarily implies freedom from God's control, but I am unwilling to accept any limitations on God's control, as I believe His being is boundless. If God is boundless then every atom in creation is a part of God, so there is literally no room for free will. And if we are not free to act independently of the will of God, then Christian ideas such as sin, salvation, and judgment, are hard to make sense of.

On the other hand, I find the words of Jesus in the New Testament to be incredibly compelling, and His claim that He is God and the only way to have peace with the Father exerts a powerful pull over my soul. Hopefully you can see

from what I have written here why Christianity presents a difficult predicament for me.

In today's world, what do you think are some of the biggest reasons for people rejecting God or any form of spirituality for that matter?

The first thing to point out is that I believe even the actions and thought processes of people rejecting God are under God's control. I see the entirety of existence as a grand play being directed and unfolded by God, and it seems that God enjoys variety in His creatures (which is why He has created different religions, and atheists and agnostics as well as believers).

I believe that knowing God depends entirely upon revelation, so people will only believe in God if He wills for them to become aware of Him. God veils Himself from many human minds. In my case, I used to be an atheist, but through a series of profound spiritual experiences God revealed Himself and left me in no doubt that He exists. Reading the Bible was one of the means God used to open my mind to the spiritual dimension, but my journey has also involved in-depth explorations of Eastern and Western spirituality in its various forms.

With your panentheistic conception of God, why do you think there is suffering in the world?

The so-called 'problem of evil' is something I have been forced to consider deeply, and I've written about this issue extensively on my blog and in my books. Because I believe God is in control of all things, this means I have to accept God is the author of everything human beings describe as sin, evil, and suffering.

So why would God cause creatures to suffer? I think we need to look at the bigger picture. The lives we live on Earth are only a small part of a greater reality. It may well be the case that those who suffer terribly in this life are rewarded with great joy in the next life. Also, I believe that although people suffer terribly, their

suffering is always under control, and limited. It seems that God always liberates people, either through healing, a change in circumstances, or death. When we consider that God has the power to make all creatures suffer terrible agony for all eternity, the reality is that He appears to be much more merciful, unfolding our life stories with great care, love, and attention to detail.

I tend to be of the opinion that all suffering has a purpose in God's eyes, even though it can be difficult for us to see what that purpose is at times. God is the master of reality, so we have to trust Him.

If there ever comes a time to choose between one or the other, would you abandon writing or music?

Great question! I suppose I consider music a hobby, whereas writing is my great passion. I think I'm a more natural writer than I am musician. Music is something that I have to really work at, while writing comes more easily. Of course, with any craft, mastery takes hard work and I still have a great deal to learn both with writing and songwriting. But if you forced me to choose, I would (very reluctantly!) give up music. At least I could still write lyrics and poetry, even if I couldn't sing them!

This interview originally appeared on 'A Perennial Follower', the website of David Robertson, in March 2018.