

# David B. Hart wins the 2011 Michael Ramsay prize

News

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London, May 27 (ENInews)--Dr. Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, today awarded the 2011 Michael Ramsey prize to "Atheist Delusions," by David Bentley Hart. The book, said Dr. Williams in a news release, "takes no prisoners in its response to fashionable criticisms of Christianity."

"Needless to say the honor is very great," said Hart in a news release. "For me, it lies especially in the name of the prize, as I have such a high regard for Michael Ramsey, and in its being conferred by the current Archbishop of Canterbury, whose work is among the richest theology being written in English today."

In the book, Hart outlines how Christianity transformed the ancient world in ways we may have forgotten: bringing liberation from fatalism, conferring great dignity on human beings, subverting the cruelest aspects of pagan society, and elevating charity above all virtues. He then argues that what we term the "Age of Reason" was in fact the beginning of the eclipse of reason's authority as a cultural value. Hart closes the book in the present, delineating the ominous consequences of the decline of Christendom in a culture that is built upon its moral and spiritual values.

In a news release, Dr. Williams described David Bentley Hart as "a theologian of exceptional quality, but also a brilliant stylist. This book takes no prisoners in its response to fashionable criticisms of Christianity. But what makes it more than just another contribution to controversy is the way he shows how the most treasured principles and values of compassionate humanism are rooted in the detail of Christian doctrine."

Born in 1965 in Maryland, Hart has degrees from the University of Maryland, the University of Cambridge, and the University of Virginia. He was most recently a professor at Providence College in Rhode Island. He specializes in philosophical theology, religious studies, Asian religions, patristics, and aesthetics. He is also a writer on cultural issues, with an emphasis upon aesthetics.

Hart will receive an award of 10,000 pounds. The Michael Ramsey Prize is intended for theological writing in which freshness and originality change the theological landscape and reinforce the Church's institutional life.