

# The Challenge of Aggressive Atheism

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*The author responds to Jonathan Miller's promotion of atheism in his recent television series*

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Last autumn BBC2 broadcast a series of three programmes entitled *Jonathan Miller's Brief History of Disbelief*, first shown in 2004 on BBC4. Jonathan Miller is well known as a television presenter of documentary programmes. A son of Jewish refugees from Lithuania, he first became a doctor and later a theatre director. The programmes show his strong hostility to all forms of religion because of their intolerance, persecutions and resistance to science and modern liberal democratic societies. The programmes advocate an irreligious view of life in which belief in God should have no part. Their approach resonates with many thoughtful people today who look askance at the past history of Christianity with its crusades, persecutions of alleged heretics, burning of supposed witches, complicity in the slave trade, resistance to scientific discovery, and opposition to freedom of thought and expression, along with the current hostility to Darwinian evolution by creationists today. Religion is seen as having had an evil past in fomenting wars between different groups and continues to impart a malign influence in many conflicts around the world.

## Sceptical Assertions

The first programme begins with interviews with well-known atheists: the American philosopher Daniel Dennett, the playwright Arthur Miller, the biologist Richard Dawkins, the anthropologist Pascal Boyer, the playwright Tennessee Williams, the historian Sir Geoffrey Lloyd, the author Gore Vidal, the physicist Steven Weinberg and the British philosopher Colin McGinn, for whom religious faith is 'a load of rubbish'. Jonathan Miller himself says that religious conviction is 'alien, uncongenial, and, to be frank, almost unintelligible'. For Boyer religion evolved from a fear of wild animals and originated in beliefs about the presence of the malignant spirits of dead ancestors.

There follows quotations from the anti-Christian utterances of nineteenth century Presidents of America. John Adams, the second President from 1797 to 1801, said, 'God is an essence we know nothing of. Until this awful blasphemy

is got rid of, there will never be any liberal science in the world.' The slave-owning Thomas Jefferson, President from 1801 to 1805, said, 'The clergy believe that any power confided in me will be exerted in opposition to their schemes, and they believe rightly.' James Buchanan, President from 1857 to 1861, asserted, 'I have seldom met an intelligent person whose ideas were not narrowed and distorted by religion.' And Abraham Lincoln, President from 1861 to 1865, declared, "My earlier views on the unsoundness of the Christian scheme of salvation have become clearer and stronger with advancing years.'

Jonathan Miller's contempt for religion became clear when he was filmed talking to his friends. For him Judaism and Christianity are 'two loony notions' and the Holy Land is 'the largest outdoor lunatic asylum in the world'. He declares, 'For many Anglicans God is nothing more than an awkward geriatric relative kept upstairs, who might embarrassingly come down and be incontinent and cause trouble.' He is a little more moderate when surveying the stained glass windows in the Chapel of King's College in Cambridge, that depict Christ's crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, when he says, 'I don't believe a word of it. I don't believe the divinity of any of this. But I would be very impoverished if I didn't have these in my imagination.' It was not his medical training that caused Miller's atheism, he says, but his exposure to modern philosophy of language. He does not enlarge, but a generation ago logical positivists like the Oxford philosopher A.J. Ayer (1910-1989) held that there was no tangible evidence that could establish the objective meaning of religious claims and so they must be dismissed as meaningless.

## Roots of Disbelief

Jonathan Miller then begins an outline history of the origins and development of atheism, beginning with some of the Greek philosophers. Democritus (c.460-c.370 BC) taught that everything is made of everlasting atoms, including the soul. Although he did not explicitly deny the gods, he excluded consideration of them from his ethical theory and he denied the possibility of life after death. One of Democritus' followers, Epicurus (341-271 BC), also rejected belief in an afterlife by questioning, 'Why should I fear death? If I am, then death is not. If death is, I am not. Why should I fear that which cannot exist when I do?' Epicurus denied that astronomical phenomena portended divine threats and people have no need to fear the gods. He threw out a challenge to belief in an omnipotent loving God that has echoed down the centuries: 'Is God willing to prevent evil but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence comes evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?' Epicurus

was eulogised by the Roman poet Lucretius (c.95-c.55 BC), who likewise denied the afterlife and wrote, 'Fear is the mother of all gods. Nature does all things spontaneously by herself without their meddling.' Quotations from Aristotle (384-322 BC) and the Stoic philosopher Seneca (4 BC-65 AD) are given to show how religion is imposed by rulers to protect their position. But no reference is made to the reasons why Plato (427-347 BC) and Aristotle believed that a transcendent perfect divine reality existed.

The second programme begins in the Arena Chapel in Padua in Italy with the frescos of the life and death of Jesus painted by Giotto (c.1266-1307). Jonathan Miller comments, 'How closed the medieval mind was.' The scene moves to the Palace of Justice in Padua built in the 1400s, where Jonathan Miller discusses the developing awareness in the Renaissance of other cultures due to the travels of merchants to Africa and Asia and the rediscovery of pre-Christian classical ideas that originated from the Greek and Roman philosophers, such as Democritus, Epicurus and Lucretius. The Medieval Church at that time followed the teaching of Aristotle that the earth is the centre of the universe and they believed that its immobility is affirmed in the Psalms (93:1; 96:10). But, despite the 'monolithic confidence' of Christianity, the medieval geocentric cosmology was challenged by Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), who argued that the sun was the centre of the solar system, not the earth. Copernicus published this new heliocentric view of the heavens in 1543 just before his death. In that same year the Belgian anatomist, Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564), published his famous book on human anatomy, which gave a new perspective on the intricacies of the human body. One might add that both Copernicus and Vesalius were Christians and that Renaissance humanism was not anti-Christian as such, but sought to give a more significant place to man in God's world than had been the case with medieval theology and culture.

## Religious Conflicts

Nevertheless, cracks in the religious ideology of the time appeared with the championing of Copernicus' heliocentric theory by Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), who pioneered the use of the telescope in astronomical observations. The Roman Catholic Church opposed Galileo's support for Copernicus' theory. The Inquisition threatened him with torture and placed him under house arrest, in total disregard of Galileo's astronomical observations that supported Copernicus' theory. Galileo protested; 'In questions of science the authority of a thousand is not worth the reasoning of a single individual.' Galileo further asserted, 'To command the professors of astronomy to confute their own observations is to command them not to see what they do see and not to understand what they do understand.' The Inquisition threatened Galileo with the kind of fate which befell Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), who, because of his alleged heresy of pantheism, was imprisoned for eight years, tortured and eventually burned to death.

The case of Galileo, according to Jonathan Miller, began a conflict between religion and science and, like many other non-Christians before him, Miller claims that the persecution of Galileo exemplifies a blinkered dogmatic opposition to scientific progress on the part of the Church. But he fails to

point out that Galileo, like Copernicus, was a Roman Catholic. Cardinal Roberto Bellarmine (1542-1621), who conveyed the views of the Vatican to Galileo, said that he could teach Copernicus' theory as a hypothesis and Pope Urban VIII (1568-1644), who condemned Galileo in 1633, had, when he was Cardinal Maffeo Barberini, republished Copernicus' book in 1620, although he did not agree with it. Jesuits were involved in various kinds of research in mathematics and science. Ten Christian scholars in the late sixteenth century and many more in the seventeenth century argued for the truth of Copernicus' heliocentric theory, as did the Rev. John Wilkins (1614-1672), the Master of Wadham College in Oxford and later the Bishop of Chester, in England. It is a gross misrepresentation of history to suppose that the restrictions placed on Galileo demonstrate that all churchmen opposed scientific advance.

With the Reformation led by Luther, Zwingli and Calvin Christianity fragmented. They opposed the radical reformation led by the Anabaptists, who were unjustifiably called atheists. For Jonathan Miller the divisive nature of religion is exemplified by the Anglican theologian Richard Hooker (1554-1600), who said, 'With our contentions their irreligious humour is much strengthened. Nothing pleaseth them better than these manifold oppositions upon the matter of religion.' And, for Miller, the cruel nature of religion was manifest in the burning to death in 1579 of Matthew Hammond on the orders of the Bishop of Norwich for saying, 'Christ is not God, not the Saviour of the world, but a mere man, a sinful man, and an abominable idol. All who worship him are abominable idolaters and Christ did not rise again from death to life, nor did he ascend to heaven.'

Next, Jonathan Miller interviews the Cambridge historian of science Simon Schaffer, who notes that in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, rather paradoxically, those who sought to refute atheism denied that it actually existed. For instance, in a *Dissertation on the Extreme Folly and Danger of Infidelity* (1725) Thomas Curtis wrote, '... 'tis very questionable whether there ever was any such Monster in Nature as a serious, close-thinking, or speculative *Atheist*: who liv'd and died so, in the clear Exercise of his Reason and Senses.' In 1771 under the article on 'Atheism' the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* stated, 'Many people have pretended to atheism, or have been reckoned atheists by the world, but it is just a question whether any man seriously adopted such a principle.' Likewise *The London Magazine* of 1774 said, 'An atheist is, I think, impossible. Most who will be thought atheists are so out of indolence, because they will not get themselves time to reason.' So 'atheist' is a label that most freethinkers tried to avoid in order to escape from public accusation up to the end of the 18th century and beyond.

At this point in the programme the idiosyncratic Roman Catholic theologian Pierre Charron (1541-1603) is quoted to show that religious belief is opposed to natural reason. Charron wrote in a book on wisdom, 'All religions have this in common, that they are an outrage to common sense, for they are pieced together out of a variety of elements, some of which seem so unworthy, sordid, and at odds with man's reason that any strong and vigorous intelligence laughs at them.' But this certainly was not the view of other Roman Catholic theologians at the time and Charron's book was banned, a fact that Miller fails to note. In general, Roman

Catholic theologians, and many Protestants, have argued that there is a rational basis to belief in a creator God.

### Freethinkers in the Enlightenment

In the second television programme *A Brief History of Disbelief* Jonathan Miller refers to a group of thinkers known as the deists who affected the upper classes in relatively tolerant England in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The founder of this school of thought was Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1583-1648), who wrote, 'There is a supreme being. This sovereign power is to be worshipped. Common consent ordains this, though men differ as to the means. And this has always been believed, that all vices and crimes should be expiated and effaced by repentance.' The deists affirmed belief in one God who would reward the virtuous and punish evildoers after death. They viewed the universe as an intricate machine that God had created and, as it conformed to his ideal plans, it had no need of divine intervention. Thus they tended to deny or give little place to the Trinity, the Incarnation of God in Christ and the need for miracles.

From there Jonathan Miller proceeds to describe the ideas of the materialist philosopher Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who opposed conventional religion as the history of sectarianism shows its dangers. Hobbes regarded all reality as material and he denied the traditional doctrine of the immateriality of the soul. Although he himself affirmed the reality of God as the Prime Mover and the resurrection of the body, his writings provided sources for later atheists. The classical Christian scholar Richard Bentley (1662-1742) countered deism and attacked the views of Hobbes: 'Not one English infidel in a hundred is any other than a Hobbeist, which I know to be rank atheism.' He also wrote, 'No atheist as such can be a true friend, an affectionate relation, or a loyal subject.' The philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), a progenitor of the Enlightenment, declared, 'Promises, covenants and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist.' In 1677 Parliament made atheism and blasphemy capital offences. The Blasphemy Act of 1697 condemned polytheists, lapsed Christians, and those who denied the doctrine of the Trinity or the divine authority of the Bible. In that year a twenty-year old student was hanged in Edinburgh for blasphemy. Jonathan Miller does not hide his contempt when he calls those who framed these acts 'stupid sods and horrible people'.

At this point Jonathan Miller introduces the scientific revolution established by the theory of gravitation of Isaac Newton (1642-1727). Newton's theory was promoted by the Rev. Samuel Clarke (1673-1716), who gave the Boyle Lectures in 1704 under the title *A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God, More Particularly in Answer to Mr Hobbes, Spinoza and Their Followers*. Clarke argued that astronomy and biology evidence intelligent design of the universe. Arising from research in anatomy he wrote, 'The late discoveries in anatomy and physic, the circulation of the blood and the exact structure of the heart and the brain, bear the sensible marks of conscious contrivance.' Without giving any supporting argument, but presumably because of his faith in the Darwinian theory of evolution, Jonathan Miller rejects this kind of apologetics but here he does allow that the common

picture that religion was often opposed to modern science is wrong.

Jonathan Miller mentions various deists such as Matthew Tindal (1655-1733), John Toland (1670-1722) and Anthony Collins (1676-1729). But he does not mention the influential rebuttal of deism produced by Joseph Butler (1692-1752), later the Bishop of Durham, under the title *Analogy of Religion* (1736). So effective was it that it has been seen by the church historian Skevington Wood as paving the way for the subsequent evangelical awakening under leaders such as George Whitefield (1714-1770), John Wesley (1703-1791) and John Newton (1725-1807). Miller ignores the charitable works, social care schemes and political reforms of successive generations of evangelical Christians, as the social value of Christian belief is not within his purview.

### The Scepticism of David Hume

Jonathan Miller launches into a paean of praise regarding 'one giant, the most significant philosopher in the English language to have expressed these deist notions, the great Scottish philosopher David Hume [1711-1776], clearly and unarguably the most vividly elegant and eloquent philosopher of them all'. In support of this adulation Miller quotes Hume's friend, the economist Adam Smith (1723-1790), who said of him, 'I have always considered David Hume as approaching as nearly to the idea of a perfectly wise and virtuous man as perhaps the nature of human frailty will allow.' It seems strange to regard Hume as a deist as he has gone down in history as the prime philosophical sceptic and agnostic of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Hume denied that we could have knowledge of the existence of God or the human soul or self, and, moreover, that, as we can know directly only our sensations and nothing else, we cannot know with certainty external reality nor the objective reality of natural causation. At the end of his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* Hume says that theological books should be burned for they 'contain nothing but sophistry and illusion'. Jonathan Miller quotes Hume as saying: 'Generally speaking, errors in religion are dangerous; those in philosophy are only ridiculous.' In his *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* Hume subjected religious belief to 'devastating criticism'. In this work Hume writes, 'His [God's] power we allow infinite: Whatever he wills is executed: But neither man nor any other animal are happy: Therefore he does not will their happiness . . . Epicurus's old questions are yet unanswered. Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? then is he impotent. Is he able, but not willing? then is he malevolent. Is he both able and willing? whence then is evil?' Hume added sarcastically, 'No-one, I am confident, will mistake my intentions. No-one has a deeper sense of religion, or pays more profound admiration to the Supreme Being.'

Although Miller does not enlarge on it, there is no doubt that the philosophy of David Hume has been very influential and his teachings are studied by every university philosophy student, not because they are generally accepted today but because their refutation has initiated substantial developments in philosophy. Hume's scepticism awoke the great philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) from his 'dogmatic slumbers' and he developed his own highly original under-

standing of the nature of human cognition and scientific understanding as expressed in his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781). But Kant did not hold the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, although he did allow that the autonomy of morality leads us to presuppose that there is an otherwise unknowable God who is the source of morality. Apart from this, he held, we must be agnostic regarding anything that transcends our experience of the natural world. Because of his great genius Kant contributed indirectly but substantially to the growth of agnosticism and unbelief in western culture.

Another type of refutation of Hume's scepticism and agnosticism was produced by Thomas Reid (1710-1796), a clergyman of the Church of Scotland who became the professor of philosophy at the University of Aberdeen and then at Glasgow. He held that Hume had overlooked the underlying beliefs and dispositions that are necessary for life and experience to be meaningful at all. In his own day Reid was regarded as being successful in countering Hume's agnosticism and scepticism and his philosophy was adopted by evangelical theologians such as Charles Finney (1792-1875), Charles Hodge (1797-1878) and Benjamin Warfield (1851-1922). But Kant misunderstood Reid and gave him a bad write-up. As a result he was largely ignored by secular philosophers throughout much of the twentieth century, but recent work has indicated just how significant his philosophy was, as Colin Brown notes, as 'a penetrating reply to scepticism' (*Christianity and Western Thought*, Vol. 1, Apollon, 1990, p. 267).

### Unbelief in the Enlightenment

At the end of the second programme Jonathan Miller notes that the religious environment in Britain in the later eighteenth century inhibited deism and scepticism. But these were gaining ground amongst freethinkers in France, such as the sceptical thinker Pierre Bayle (1647-1706), the Humean philosopher Etienne Condillac (1715-1780), the deist turned atheist Denis Diderot (1713-1784) and the materialist Julien La Mettrie (1709-1751). On 18th August 1770 the public executioner in France tore seven books to pieces to express the state's condemnation of them. Three had been published under a pseudonym but were written by Baron Paul-Henri d'Holbach (1723-1789), whom Jonathan Miller identifies as the first unequivocal philosophical atheist. D'Holbach held regular meetings in his salon in Paris for freethinkers such as Diderot, the deist philosopher Voltaire (pen-name of Francois-Marie Arouet, 1694-1778), the American diplomat and scientist Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), the writer Horace Walpole (1717-1797), the actor David Garrick (1717-1779), and the author of *Tristram Shandy* Laurence Sterne (1713-1768). David Hume and Adam Smith were also amongst his guests.

D'Holbach's book, *The System of Nature* (1770), came to be regarded as 'the atheist's Bible'. D'Holbach wrote, 'If we go back to the beginning we shall find that ignorance and fear created the gods, that fancy, enthusiasm or deceit adorned them, and that custom, respect and tyranny support them, in order to make the blindness of men serve their own interests. If the ignorance of nature gave birth to gods, the

knowledge of nature is calculated to destroy them.' He added, 'It is only by dispelling the clouds and phantoms of religion that we shall discover truth, reason and morality.' Along with Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) these thinkers inspired those who initiated the French Revolution in 1789. What Jonathan Miller does not say is that this revolution descended in 1793 into the Reign of Terror under Maximilien Robespierre (1758-1794), who was guillotined himself when overthrown. But Jonathan Miller ends the second programme by commenting that in the early nineteenth century atheism was associated with political groups advocating violent revolutions.

### The Attacks of Tom Paine

The first part of the third programme is devoted to Thomas Paine (1737-1809), whom Jonathan Miller describes as 'one of the most influential thinkers that England ever produced'. This self-taught radical political theorist emigrated to America in 1774 and wrote the pamphlet *Common Sense* (1776), of which half a million copies were sold, to promote the American Revolution against British rule. Paine returned to England in 1787 and wrote *The Rights of Man* (published in two parts in 1791-2) to promote liberal democracy and to support the French Revolution. This provoked the British Government to pass a law against seditious publications and Paine fled to France. In recognition of his support for the Revolution Paine was elected to the French National Convention. In 1794-95 Paine published in two parts *The Age of Reason* in which he attacked Christianity. Paine wrote, 'Of all the tyrannies that afflict mankind, tyranny in religion is the worst. Every other species of tyranny is limited to the world we live in, but this attempts to stride beyond the grave and seeks to pursue us into eternity.' He continued, 'All churches, whether Jewish, Christian or Muslim, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind and to monopolise power and profit.' Paine continued his attack on revealed religion: 'It is from the Bible that man has learned cruelty, rapine and murder, for the belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man, and the Bible is a history of wickedness and has served to corrupt and brutalise mankind.' Hence Paine claimed, 'The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries that have afflicted the human race have had their origin in this thing called religion.'

During the Terror Paine was imprisoned in Paris in 1793 for opposing the execution of Louis XVI and condemned to be guillotined. As usual, on the evening before executions a prison guard placed numbers on the doors of those prisoners due to be guillotined the next day. But when the jailer placed Paine's number on his prison door the night before his execution, he accidentally placed it on the inside of the door so that Paine was not taken away the next day with those due to be guillotined. After this Paine returned to the United States but he was largely ignored and died in obscurity. However, Andrew Jackson, the President of the United States from 1829-1837, said, 'Thomas Paine needs no monument made with hands. He has erected a monument in the hearts of all lovers of liberty.' Jonathan Miller omits to say that Paine wrote *The Age of Reason* to promote a deistic religion

based on reason and nature, partly because he was opposed to the atheism held by some of the extreme French revolutionaries. Moreover, when he returned to America he maintained that his escape from execution was an act of God's providence, a belief in divine intervention not consistent with his deism. Paine also believed in a future heaven for the virtuous, a hell for the wicked, and annihilation at death for the morally indifferent. But Paine's influence is undeniable. One and a half million copies of *The Rights of Man* were sold.

## Poets and Writers

Jonathan Miller's history of atheism moves on to the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822), who was sent down from Oxford in 1811 for writing a pamphlet entitled *The Necessity of Atheism*. In it Shelley wrote concerning God: 'If he is infinitely good, what reason should we have to fear him? If he is infinitely wise, why should we have doubts concerning our future? If he knows all, why warn him of our needs and fatigue him with our prayers? If he is everywhere, why erect temples to him?' Shelley continued, 'All religions are founded solely on authority. All the religions of the world forbid examination and do not want one to reason. Authority wants one to believe in God. Thus God is himself founded only on the authority of a few men, who pretend to know him and come in his name and announce him on earth. A God made by man undoubtedly has need of man to make himself known to man.' Already in 1810 Shelley had written, 'I burn with impatience for the moment of Christianity's dissolution. There is a great and spiritual force to put in its place. Poetry is something divine. It is the centre and circumference of all knowledge.' Poetry elevates the human spirit and can bestow immortality on the poet.

Miller does not enlarge on the influence of nineteenth century poets and novelists on the growth of anti-Christian thought amongst the educated elite. They thought that their literature would help inspire the creation of a humane society. The romantic poets sought for an aesthetic inspiration in other than a personal God. For William Wordsworth (1770-1850) this was experienced in mystical union with a pantheistic power manifest in nature; for William Blake (1757-1827) it was found in mystical visions; for Shelley it was produced by the creative power of the human imagination; for John Keats (1795-1821) it was apprehended in the beauty of natural forms; for Lord Byron (George Gordon, 1788-1824) poetic inspiration derived from uninhibited sensual experiences. Even though he professed to being a Christian, Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) found inspiration in taking opium. As the nineteenth century progressed literary culture was increasingly dislocated from Christian beliefs. The renowned novelist George Eliot (pen-name of Mary Evans, 1819-1880) gave up the evangelical faith of her youth and translated David Strauss's notoriously antisupernatural *Life of Jesus* (published 1846) and Ludwig Feuerbach's atheistic *Essence of Christianity* (published 1854) into English. She confessed that 'dissecting the beautiful story of the Crucifixion' made her ill. In his poem *In Memoriam* (1850) Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809-1892) expressed doubts about traditional Christian beliefs. In the poem *Dover*

*Beach* (1867) Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) envisages the 'sea of faith', amidst the uncertainties of modern life, receding from the shores of humanity, who should instead find faith in their relationships: 'Ah, love, let us be true to one another!' And so on through various writers to the explicit atheism of the poet Algernon Swinburne (1837-1909), who characterised God as 'the supreme evil', and Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), who had once professed Christian belief but in a poem of around 1909 imagined himself attending God's funeral.

These developments in English literature were paralleled by the writings of philosophers such as the atheists William Godwin (1756-1836), a former nonconformist minister who became the mentor of Shelley, and George Lewes (1817-1878), the partner of Mary Evans, and the agnostics Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who was born into a nonconformist family, and Leslie Stephen (1832-1904), another former clergyman and a son of a member of the Clapham sect. The renowned philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was commonly regarded as an atheist. He said that it was impossible for a thoughtful person to ascribe 'absolute perfection to the author and ruler of so clumsily made and capriciously governed a creation as this planet'. But he apparently toyed with the idea of a finite deity, a view that was not published until after his death. Jonathan Miller describes how the republican Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) insisted that, after his death, his medical colleagues should dissect his body to show his adherence to materialism and his rejection of the Christian doctrine of the resurrection of the body. For Bentham a moral basis for society could be found in his ethical theory of utilitarianism, namely, that only those actions should be undertaken that maximise human happiness and minimise human pain. For utilitarians religious belief is irrelevant to ethical choices.

## Political Radicals

Jonathan Miller describes the notorious 'Peterloo' massacre of 16th August 1819, when 60,000 people gathered in St Peter's Square in Manchester to hear speakers calling for land reform and democracy, at a time when only 3% of the population could vote. The demonstration was peaceful but the magistrates panicked and called in the local cavalry, who charged the crowd. Eleven people were killed and four hundred were injured. One witness of the Peterloo massacre was an atheist called Richard Carlile (1790-1843), who distributed Thomas Paine's books and published a radical, atheistic newspaper called *The Republican*. For this he was imprisoned for three years on a charge of blasphemous and seditious libel. Such dissent at this time led to 150 radicals being imprisoned for a total of 200 years. Miller comments, 'This Peterloo massacre revealed the extent to which the English authorities were prepared to go to defend a *status quo* that itself depended on the support of the Christian establishment.' This rather sweeping judgment ignores the contemporary reform work of the Anglican evangelicals, such as John Venn, Charles Simeon, Henry Thornton, Granville Sharp, Zachary Macaulay, Hannah More and William Wilberforce, all of whom belonged to the so-called Clapham sect, and that of other Christians such as Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer.

Jonathan Miller continues the story of the growth of atheism by talking about the leader of scepticism, George Holyoake (1817-1906), who published a journal called *The Reasoner*, which sold 5,000 copies each week. He coined the word 'secularism', envisaging by it a society based on reason and the findings of science. Holyoake was the last person in England to be imprisoned for atheism, in 1842 for six months, for a speech which included the line: 'For myself, I flee the Bible as a viper, and I revolt at the touch of a Christian'. By the mid-nineteenth century there were forty secular societies in Britain. One of the founders of the National Secular Society in 1866 was the atheist Charles Bradlaugh (1833-1891), who edited the *National Reformer*, which was prosecuted for blasphemy. Bradlaugh was elected to Parliament in 1880 but was temporarily imprisoned for refusing to swear on the Bible his oath of allegiance. He was not permitted to take his seat until 1886.

### Charles Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Jonathan Miller describes the furore caused by the publication in 1859 of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. Although his wife was deeply religious, Charles Darwin (1809-1882) lost his faith, partly due to the tragic death of his beloved daughter Annie. He wrote, 'I cannot persuade myself a beneficent and omnipotent God would have created the *ichneumoni* [wasp larvae] with the express intention of their feeding within the bodies of caterpillars or that God would have decided that a cat should play with mice.' At the 1860 meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, in Oxford on 30th June, the great British scientist and agnostic Thomas Huxley (1825-1895) defended Darwin's theory of evolution. The meeting began with a lengthy discourse by Professor John Draper (1811-1882) of New York University on the extension of Darwin's theory of evolution to the history of society. In the subsequent discussion Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873), the Bishop of Oxford, was invited to give his views on Darwin's theory of evolution. Jonathan Miller finds the challenge thrown down to Huxley by Wilberforce characteristic of the pathetic response of the church to evolution: 'Is it on his grandmother's or on his grandfather's side that he claims descent from a monkey?' After two hours of boring speeches Wilberforce was trying to lighten the atmosphere with some misplaced humour. Huxley replied, 'If . . . the question is put to me, would I rather have a miserable ape for a grandfather or a man highly endowed by nature and possessed of great means of influence, and yet who employs these faculties and that influence for the mere purpose of introducing ridicule into a grave scientific discussion – I unhesitatingly affirm my preference for the ape.' Huxley subsequently claimed that he had turned the tables and publicly humiliated Wilberforce. But the botanist Joseph Hooker (1817-1911) wrote to Darwin immediately after the event and claimed that, whereas Huxley had failed to carry the crowd of over seven hundred, he, Hooker, had managed to do this. Later legend held that this debate supremely exemplifies the victory of enlightened science over the reactionary forces of blinkered dogmatic religion and this seems to be the way Miller sees it. He claims that the established church

was appalled at Darwin's theory of evolution and he calls their leaders 'ignorant and stupid fundamentalists'.

Jonathan Miller ignores the fact that Wilberforce was the Vice-President of the British Association in 1860 and he produced his critique of Darwinism as a scientist rather than as a theologian. He had already written a forty-page review of *The Origin of Species* for the July 1860 edition of the *Quarterly Review* and exposed some of its weaknesses. He made clear that his objections were entirely based on scientific considerations and explicitly said that scientific findings should not be rejected because of some alleged disparity with divine revelation. Darwin himself acknowledged that his review was perceptive: 'It picks out with skill all the most conjectural parts, and brings forward well all the difficulties.' Miller seems not to know that some clergy such as Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) and Frederick Temple (1821-1902), the Chaplain to the Queen, headmaster of Rugby and the future Archbishop of Canterbury, were not opposed to Darwin's theory as such. On the Sunday after the debate Temple preached the official sermon and appeared to have accepted Darwin's theory of evolution. The Cambridge New Testament scholars F.J.A. Hort (1828-1892) and B.F. Westcott (1825-1901), Professor of Divinity and later Bishop of Durham, accepted the validity of Darwinian evolution within a theistic framework.

Scientists at the time were divided. Three learned evangelical Christians, the botanist Asa Gray (1810-1888), professor of natural history at Harvard University, the geologist James Dana (1813-1895), professor of natural history at Yale University, and the minister and geologist George Wright (1838-1921), were supportive of the theory of evolution as interpreted within a theistic world-view. The anatomist Richard Owen (1804-1892) and the physicists William Thomson (Lord Kelvin, 1824-1907), James Clerk Maxwell (1831-1879) and George Stokes (1819-1903) were opposed to Darwin's theory based on natural selection. It is evident that the disputes over Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* cannot be represented as a battle between science and religion. However, Miller does note that the Rev. Adam Sedgwick (1785-1873), the professor of geology at Cambridge University, protested to Darwin in a letter of 24th November 1859: 'There is a metaphysical part of nature. A man who denies this may sink the human race into a lower grade of degeneration than any into which it has fallen since written records began.' Prophetic words indeed in view of subsequent twentieth century history, although Jonathan Miller does not acknowledge them as such.

Surprisingly, Jonathan Miller makes no reference to the wide influence of the agnostic English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), who sought to apply the theory of evolution to all areas of life. Through his lecture tours in Britain and America Spencer popularised Darwin's theory of evolution, contributing substantially to its popular acceptance. As we have seen the nineteenth century saw substantial loss of religious faith amongst the cultured elite. This sea change in orientation can be ascribed to the burgeoning biblical criticism which cast doubt on the historicity of the Bible, to a moral protest against the genocide of the Canaanites ascribed to the Israelite deity in the Old Testament, to a moral revulsion over the traditional doctrine of hell, to a revolt against the established Church of England seen to be allied to

oppressive and unjust government, to the alleged discoveries of science supposed to be in conflict with the Book of Genesis and to the non-Christian views of writers, thinkers and radical reformers.

### Freud and Marx

It is surprising that there is no reference in the third programme to the atheist German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), who influenced Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Feuerbach held that God is actually a projection of human ideals and needs. His influence was so great that 20,000 people attended his funeral. Jonathan Miller briefly refers to the German atheistic philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), who famously declared, 'God is dead', before moving on to the psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud sought to explain belief in God as a projection of a father-complex, what Jonathan Miller calls 'the most systematic attempt to represent faith as fundamental to early human development'. In *The Future of an Illusion* (1927) Freud wrote, 'The rest of our enquiry is made easier because this God-Creator is openly called "Father". The psychoanalysis of individual human beings teaches us that the God of each of them is nothing other than an exalted father.' Religion, then, is the product of a subconscious wish-fulfilment. Freud goes on, 'Religious teachings are neurotic relics. The time has probably come for replacing them with the results of the rational operation of the intellect.' But Freud's naturalistic explanation of religion is based on generalising to all mankind from his limited experience of neurotic patients. Freud makes the common mistake of turning his science into an ideology and then supposing that it can be still called scientific. In any case God may use subconscious factors to help people find him. But we have to say that Freudianism no longer enjoys the vogue that it once had and many psychologists such as Professor H.J. Eysenck of London University have condemned it as downright wrong.

Next, reference is made in the third television programme to the founder of communism, the atheist Karl Marx (1818-1883), who wrote, '*Religious* distress is at the same time an *expression* of real distress and a *protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the *opium* of the people. The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its conditions is the *demand to give up the condition that needs illusions*.' Jonathan Miller comments how Lenin's politically programmed atheism resulted in the Soviet Union with its gross illusion of a free society: 'The paradox is that a revolution, which was designed to usher in a new golden era for humanity, tormented, tortured, imprisoned and annihilated even more victims than Christianity at its most oppressive.' Thereafter communistic atheism was a stained ideology, stained, we might add, with the blood of at least eighty million victims. Whereas Marx may have highlighted certain truths about social forces within society, his deterministic ideology has very few adherents today.

### Modern Atheism

At the end of the twentieth century, after numberless natural and man-made catastrophes, Miller notes, faith in a benevolent God has been undermined. The mass media and the images of television news have contributed to the spread of atheism. For Jonathan Miller the issues concerning belief and unbelief are no longer worth considering. This viewpoint is reinforced by the British philosopher Colin McGinn. He points out that no-one today would argue that the Greek gods do not exist. Whereas arguments for atheism used to be of value because they exposed the harmful nature of belief in God, now we should consider that we live in a post-theistic and post-atheistic society, having arrived at "a healthy state of mind where you have put all that behind you." The ideal society is one in which the question of religion is no longer considered.

So Jonathan Miller declares that today millions are atheists, although religious fanatics can still be found like Christian creationists and Muslim suicide bombers. He notes how in the past atheism was associated with a lack of seriousness about life, but he retorts, 'I find this somewhat impudent.' If he is asked about his own death, he says he thinks about dying but he does not think about an afterlife, for there is none. By way of illustration he interviews an elderly lady with a terminal disease, who says that she has no regret about not being religious. This lady says that she does wish, when dying, to think of herself as a young girl and all she wished to be. Of this hope she says, 'I'm looking forward to it but I don't know if I should find it.'

In his final comments, Jonathan Miller notes that most live in a secular world in which arguments for the existence of God have evaporated. The notion of the intelligent design of living creatures by God was, he says, annihilated by Darwin. Intelligence is a biological phenomenon and the result of natural selection. The nature of consciousness remains an impenetrable mystery but it is no more than the operation of the brain. Now science can provide the means of security against threats to humanity and the church is not needed for this. So Jonathan Miller confidently asserts, 'It is self-evidently true that there is no God.' He continues, 'There is a history of atrocity committed in the name of religion and an equally long history of heroic opposition.' As he sees it, the West is threatened with a politically dangerous form of religious revival in the United States and 'swarms of lethal mutants' from Islam. We are now beset with 'an uncouth cabal of short-sighted Christian fundamentalists in the White House in morbid alliance with Israel', which inevitably provokes Islamic terrorism. In view of these threats Jonathan Miller maintains, 'I think that it is increasingly important for those of us who don't believe to establish an eloquent and, in all probability, a completely ineffectual resistance.' Hardly ineffectual, as atheism has been propagated aggressively by influential philosophers such as Bertrand Russell, A.J. Ayer and Antony Flew and renowned scientists such as the physicist Steven Weinberg, the chemist Peter Atkins and the biologist Richard Dawkins. In January of this year Dawkins presented two programmes on Channel 4 attacking, in similar vein to Jonathan Miller, all forms of religious belief for its dogmatism, divisiveness and cruelties under the title *Root of All Evil?* In general, Christians can agree that



belief in God has no significant place in education, outside of religious studies, nor in public life. Whereas the majority of the British population profess to believe in some kind of divinity or transcendent power, most are practical atheists who give no consideration whatever to what may be the will of God for their lives.

### Philosophical Responses to Atheism

How might Christians respond to atheism? How should Christians share their faith with atheists? One is up against the problem of getting a hearing of what one would like to say. Many atheists see the church as a reactionary institution of a bygone era. Many have been inoculated against Christianity by childhood experiences of a wishy-washy version of Christianity, by the way it was presented in religious studies lessons at school, by formal lifeless religious services in church, or by the unkind behaviour of Christians they have known. But beyond this there is the endemic resistance in the heart of man to the truth of God, as Paul makes clear when he says that unbelievers suppress this (Romans 1:18-21). Clearly, prayer is needed for relatives and friends who are atheists, that God might open the door of opportunity so that one can witness to them in a way they can appreciate. Then wisdom, sensitivity, tact and the willingness to lose an argument must be part of one's approach. One needs to have a respect for sincerely held views we might disagree with, a sensitivity to the adverse experiences that might have contributed to a person's unbelief, and the avoidance of an arrogance that belittles the atheist or his arguments. Let us remember that some of the greatest minds of modern times have been atheists.

We must allow that arguments for the existence of God may cut little ice in the first instance. We might want to say that the universe must have had a Creator. The immediate likely response might be, then who made God? If we then try to say that God is eternal and so this question is meaningless, the atheist can retort that he doesn't have to say where the universe has come from. It may have always existed. We might point out that scientists today say that our universe was generated in the Big Bang just under fourteen billion years ago, but the atheist may reply that some cosmologists say that our universe was produced from a collision of other universes, it being proposed that there are an innumerable number of universes, an idea labelled a 'multiverse'. In any case, the standard cosmological arguments for the existence of God from causation and dependency observed in the natural world are logical failures, for 'cause' or 'dependence' take on radically different meanings in the course of the arguments, when we conclude that God is the First Cause or God is the self-existent Being upon which all else depends. For now they in effect mean 'creation out of nothing' and the atheist will claim that this concept is something which is incomprehensible and meaningless.

Sometimes the argument from design, known as the teleological argument, has been persuasive, particularly with scientists and engineers who would maintain that the complexity of living creatures or the immense capacities of the human brain cannot have arisen by chance and their origination is not adequately explained by natural selection. The

teleological argument has been extended in recent years by what is known as the anthropic cosmological principle, which says that an ordered universe in which carbon-based life could arise on a planet required the 'fine-tuning' of physical constants (e.g., the charge on an electron, the strength of gravity, etc.) at the initiation of the Big Bang, otherwise the universe and life as we know it would be impossible. For instance, if the relationship between the energy in the Big Bang and the gravitational force had been different by one part in  $10^{60}$  (i.e., one followed by 60 zeros) then stars could never have existed. There are many other instances of this apparent 'fine-tuning' of physical constants that had to occur for the possibility of us being here. For example, if the internal energy levels in the fusion of atomic nuclei in collapsing stars were different by 1% in the formation of carbon, then most carbon atoms would fuse with helium atoms to form oxygen and the carbon-based life of our planet would be impossible. The physicist Sir Fred Hoyle, who discovered this, said, 'Nothing has shaken my atheism as much as this discovery.' Numerous other examples could be given. The mass of a proton needs to be about 1840 times the mass of an electron for chemical reactions to occur and this is indeed the case. It is these considerations that have made the physicist Paul Davies sympathetic to belief in a divine designer and led recently to the conversion of the life-long atheist philosopher Antony Flew to the belief that there must be such a God. Recently Rodney Holder has provided an extended defence of theism based on the anthropic cosmological principle in his *God, the Multiverse, and Everything: Modern Cosmology and the Argument from Design* (Ashgate, 2004).

The moral argument for God's existence says that the intrinsic authority of moral standards, that some things are right and other things are wrong even if no-one agreed about them, can be explained only if we presuppose that there is a God who is the source of such moral standards. This argument has carried some weight with philosophers such as H.P. Owen of London University and influenced the former atheist C.S. Lewis (1898-1963). The standard objection, as advocated by Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), is to ask whether something is right because God wills it, which then makes what is good arbitrary, or is something right because it is so intrinsically, which then makes God subject to a standard of goodness higher than himself. The Christian can reply that what God says is right is so because it conforms with God's own good nature. But generally unbelievers will hold that it is the wellbeing of society that determines what is good and we have no need to invoke the idea of a God as the source of moral values.

We could reply that if the atheist wants to maintain that it is culture that determines moral values, then the ownership of slaves is right in a slave-owning society. Further, if the atheist maintains that moral values are the product of natural factors, e.g., genes, history, psychological forces, social interactions, etc., then his own moral theory must be the product of such natural factors. But if that is true, then it is not an objective assessment of a characteristic of culture but a product of cultural conditioning. In that case it cannot be said whether it is true or false. However, the concept of moral responsibility implies a standard of behaviour and the capacity of rational choices such that proper behaviour is



achievable. People intuitively feel that they are able to make objective moral judgments that are not the mere result of cultural conditioning. An atheist will protest if a culturally accepted injustice is perpetrated on him. The moral atheist inconsistently seeks to uphold moral values in, what is for him, a valueless world.

Many philosophers hold to atheism or agnosticism on the grounds that there is no empirical evidence for the validity of religious faith. This was expressed in an extreme form in the book *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936) by the logical positivist A.J. Ayer (1910-1989), who held that putative statements about external reality are meaningful only if they can, in principle, be verified or falsified empirically. Religious claims cannot be so verified and are not so much wrong as meaningless. The claim that God created the world has no more sense in it than claiming that fairies make the flowers grow. But Ayer's verification principle is neither a self-evident truism nor can it be justified empirically. It is thus self-refuting, as Ayer himself subsequently admitted. He was never able to formulate a satisfactory version. This criterion is far too narrow. For example, gravity, radio waves and subatomic particles are not directly observable, but their existence is inferred from other events that are apprehended in terms of theories about them. Likewise, the existence of God might be inferred from unexpected events, e.g., a sudden change from sickness to health. Moreover, personal relationships in friendship and marriage imply a trust that cannot be conclusively verified. Likewise, faith in a loving God could arise from certain experiences that appeared to manifest his benevolence when combined with an inner conviction or religious experience that is not of one's own making.

It is not the case that the basis of Christianity is devoid of empirical confirmation. The risen Christ was visible and tangible (see Luke 24:37-39). The verification of the Christian faith can be found in the *combination* of the following seven components: (1) The biblical revelatory experiences which included empirically observable supernatural acts such as the miracles and the resurrection of Christ. (2) Satisfactory grounds for holding that reliable witnesses reported these events which were recorded in the New Testament. (3) The adequate availability of early manuscripts of the New Testament that proves that we have a very close approximation to the original autographs. (4) The clear correspondence between references to historical events, persons and places in the New Testament and those provided by contemporary Jewish, Greek and Roman authors. (5) The reasons for holding that the Christian world-view is a more coherent and satisfying interpretation of reality than its rivals. (6) The life-transforming experience of the living Christ and the ongoing experience of the worship of God. (7) The transformation of both the moral standards and the conduct of the believer's life.

### Person-Oriented Responses to Atheism

Perhaps the best way of getting an atheist's attention is to share some aspect of our lives or viewpoint that has been influenced by our Christianity and then to speak about how God has affected our lives. We may then perhaps meet with disparaging words or looks as many informed atheists think

that religious belief is to be associated with an immature outlook on life. But then we can perhaps comment on how little is known about many aspects of reality, such as unidentifiable 'dark matter' that binds the galaxies together or the nature of human consciousness, and go on to say that any claim to know that a God has never revealed himself to some human beings requires one to be virtually omniscient. The atheist may reply that he can just as much deny that God exists as he can deny that gremlins or ghosts exist. But we can persist that we are talking not about gremlins or ghosts but about the infinite Creator of all reality. Moreover, we can hold that millions of Christians can say that they have personally experienced God and that has had a profound effect on their lives and behaviour. This is likely to get the response, What about the Muslims, the Hindus, the Sikhs, etc., who say that God has revealed himself to them? All these conflicting claims to revelations show their implausibility. But we can persist in claiming that it is a logical possibility that, even if some revelation claims are false, at least one claim could be true, at which point we can begin to talk about Jesus as the Word of God, God's message to man. Thereafter we can talk about historicity of Jesus, the historical reliability of the New Testament written when the events it records were still in living memory, and the reasons for holding that Jesus' resurrection was observed by reliable witnesses who never expected it. We can emphasize the amazing uniqueness of Christianity: the only religion in which God becomes man and dies a terrible death in order to give men and women everlasting life. One atheist I knew, a brilliant mathematician, came to realize that, if there really is a God, then all his intellectual objections to belief in him were miniscule compared with God's infinite reality. From then on he was willing to learn about the basis of the Christian faith and two years later became a born-again Christian.

Undoubtedly at some stage in our discussion the problem of evil will be thrown at us: how can there be an all-loving, all-powerful God when there is so much terrible suffering in the world? Our first response can be to emphasise how in the cross of Jesus God entered into and experienced for himself the worst of human suffering for himself. And he did this to deliver those who believe in him from alienation from God, from hostility towards others, and from a failure to gain true fulfilment in our lives. Moreover, God is actually limiting the suffering in the world by changing human hearts and by acting providentially in the world's affairs through education, medicine, aid agencies and those politicians seeking peace and justice. If the atheist requires a good God to deal with the evil in the world, we can retort, 'Let him begin with you and change your heart to be like Christ's by the power of his indwelling Holy Spirit.' We can point out that much human behaviour is not what God intended it to be because of man's disobedience to his revealed will. God cannot logically grant man a freewill and then intervene every time a truly free man chooses to think, say or do what is contrary to God's will, a response commonly known as the freewill defence of God.

At this point we are likely to be challenged by the problem of natural evils: the diseases, famines, floods and earthquakes that afflict humanity. We can reply that the natural order requires things to be possible threats: water is essential for life but can drown; fire is often necessary for warmth but can burn. We can further say that this world is infected

by human sin and is fallen. It is not the world that God wishes it to be. Chaos and disorder afflict it. Furthermore, this world is not an end in itself but a pathway to an ideal world where death, mourning, crying and pain will be no more (Revelation 21:1). We can admit that we, like Job, cannot have an answer for all the particular cases of suffering. But we can say that the revelation of God in Jesus can be so assured to our hearts by the Holy Spirit that we affirm, with Paul, 'In all things God works for the good of those who love him' (Romans 8:28). We can point out that some great minds in the past such as C.S. Lewis and Austin Farrer (1904-1968) have grappled with the problem of evil in their books, the former in *The Problem of Pain* (Geoffrey Bles, 1940) and the latter in *Love Almighty and Ills Unlimited* (Collins, 1962). More recently, amongst others, John Wenham has written *The Enigma of Evil: Can We Believe in the Goodness of God?* (Eagle, 1994) and Hugh Silvester *Arguing with God: A Christian Examination of the Problem of Evil* (IVP, 1971). Getting an atheist to read such a book may help him to appreciate the depth and significance of informed Christian thinking and the profundity of Scripture.

Finally, we can note how atheism originated in post-Reformation Europe as an offshoot of Enlightenment deism, grew in the nineteenth century amongst thinkers, scientists, writers and urban masses, and came to dominate the culture of the twentieth century in both east and west. The seedbed of atheism was laid in the desacralising of nature by Protestantism and the beginnings of modern science. Atheism grew because of the priority given to reason over faith in the Enlightenment, because of its political ideals of democracy and human rights, because of its opposition to the authority of established churches allied to reactionary regimes, and because of the advance of science such that atheists could

envisage that man would establish his own utopias. But in the aftermath of the collapse of the Soviet Union Marxist atheism has largely lost its appeal. The rise of new age beliefs and practices and the widespread acceptance of the validity of spirituality has led many to feel that man is more than Jonathan Miller's description of him in a recent television programme, namely, that we are 'bags of food and faeces'. The growth of evangelical 'fundamentalism' in America and the resurgence of Islamic religion are recognized by atheists themselves as threats to their own ideology, which they maintain is based on science and enlightened values. It remains to be seen whether evangelical Christianity can so defend the historicity of the New Testament, so demonstrate the validity of the Christian world-view in comparison with its rivals, so show that the Christian faith is the proper partner of science, and so convince many of the reality of the experience of God, that it can regain the pre-eminence it once had in western culture. The battle with atheism is not over.

### Further Reading

- David Berman, *A History of Atheism in Britain from Hobbes to Russell* (Croom Helm, 1988).  
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 Gregory A. Boyd, Edward K. Boyd, *Letters from a Skeptic* (Kingsway, 1994).  
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