

GREAT MINDS

Presented by The Atheist Empire

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Welcome, The Atheist Empire is proud to present Great Minds; a collection of quotes by some of humanities greatest minds concerning religion, spirituality and gods.

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Greatest Quotes

all the best quotes arranged by topic for quick reference

Atheism

"I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours."

-- Stephen Roberts

"Calling Atheism a religion is like calling bald a hair color."

--Don Hirschberg

"An atheist is a man who has no invisible means of support."

-- John Buchan

"No philosophy, no religion, has ever brought so glad a message to the world as this good news of Atheism."

--Annie Wood Besant

Nature of God

"It is said that men may not be the dreams of the Gods, but rather that the Gods are the dreams of men." - Carl Sagan

"It may be that our role on this planet is not to worship God, but to create him." - Arthur C. Clarke

"I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do because I notice it always coincides with their own desires." - Susan B. Anthony

"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 cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?"

- Epicurus

"God is not dead. He is alive and working on a much less ambitious project."

-- graffito

"Don't you know there ain't no devil, it's just god when he's drunk."

-- Tom Waits

You know your god is man-made when he hates all the same people you do.

--[from Usenet]

"If it turns out that there is a God, I don't think that he's evil. But the worst that you can say about him is that basically he's an underachiever." - Woody Allen

Religion

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, & the soul of soulless

conditions. It is the opium of the people." - Karl Marx

"Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people" - Jesse Ventura

"Humanity without religion is like a serial killer without a chainsaw."

-- unknown

"We must respect the other fellow's religion, but only in the sense and to the extent that we respect his theory that his wife is beautiful and his children smart."

-- H. L. Mencken

"Men never commit evil so fully and joyfully as when they do it for religious convictions"

-- Blaise Pascal

Faith

"Faith is believing something you know ain't true." - Mark Twain

"The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason." - Benjamin Franklin

"The church says the earth is flat, but I know that it is round, for I have seen the shadow on the moon, and I have more faith in a shadow than in the church."

--Ferdinand Magellan

Skepticism

"The fact that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one." - George Bernard Shaw

"Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence." - Carl Sagan

"And if there were a God, I think it very unlikely that He would have such an uneasy vanity as to be offended by those who doubt His existence." - Bertrand Russell

Science

"Creationists make it sound like a 'theory' is something you dreamt up after being drunk all night." - Isaac Asimov

"Gods are fragile things; they may be killed by a whiff of science or a dose of common sense."

-- Chapman Cohen

Christianity

"In Christianity neither morality nor religion come into contact with reality at any point." - Friedrich Nietzsche

"Of all religions the Christian is without doubt the one which should inspire tolerance most, although up to now the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men." - Voltaire

"Only Sheep need a shepherd!"

-- unknown

"I still say a church steeple with a lightning rod on top shows a lack of confidence."

-- Doug McLeod

Bible

"It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand." - Mark Twain

"No man ever believes that the Bible means what it says; he is always convinced that it says what he means." - George Bernard Shaw

Christmas

"The good part of Christmas is not always Christian -- it is generally Pagan; that is to say, human, natural."

- Robert G. Ingersoll

Clergy

"The first clergyman was the first rascal who met the first fool" - Voltaire

"Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest"

--Denis Diderot

Children

"Why should I allow that same God to tell me how to raise my kids, who had to drown His own?" - Robert

G. Ingersoll

Philosophy

"Philosophy is questions that may never be answered. Religion is answers that may never be questioned."

-- unknown

"The philosopher has never killed any priests, whereas the priest has killed a great many philosophers."

-- Denis Diderot

Intelligence

"As people become more intelligent they care less for preaches and more for teachers" - Robert G.

Ingersoll

"The world holds two classes of men - intelligent men without religion, and religious men without intelligence."

-- Abu Ala Al-Ma'arri

Founding Fathers (US)

"Question with boldness even the existence of God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear." - Thomas Jefferson

"Religions are all alike - founded upon fables and mythologies." - Thomas Jefferson

"History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government." -

Thomas Jefferson

"In no instance have . . . the churches been guardians of the liberties of the people." - James Madison

"The divinity of Jesus is made a convenient cover for absurdity." - John Adams

"Lighthouses are more helpful than churches." - Benjamin Franklin

Seperation of Church and State

"...the number, the industry, and the morality of the priesthood, and the devotion of the people, have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the church from the State - James Madison

"Every new and successful example, therefore, of a perfect separation between the ecclesiastical and civil matters, is of importance; and I have no doubt that every new example will succeed, as every past one has done, in showing that religion and Government will both exist in greater purity the less they are mixed together" - James Madison

"Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private schools, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and the state forever separated." - Ulysses S. Grant

* also see the Law and Government section for more

Religion in Government

"'In God We Trust.' I don't believe it would sound any better if it were true." - Mark Twain

"the trouble with theocracy is that everyone wants to be Theo."
--James Dunn

"Religion is excellent stuff for keeping common people quiet."
-- Napoleon Bonaparte

GREAT MINDS

complete collection

Thomas Jefferson, (1743-1826) American president, author, scientist, architect, educator, and diplomat. Deist, avid separationist.

"Question with boldness even the existence of God; because, if there be one, he must more approve of the homage of reason than that of blindfolded fear."

"I do not find in orthodox Christianity one redeeming feature."

"Religions are all alike - founded upon fables and mythologies."

"To talk of immaterial existences is to talk of nothings. To say that the human soul, angels, God, are immaterial, is to say they are nothings, or that there is no God, no angels, no soul. I cannot reason otherwise: but I believe I am supported in my creed of materialism by Locke, Tracy, and Stewart. At what age of the Christian church this heresy of immaterialism, this masked atheism, crept in, I do not know. But a heresy it certainly is. Jesus told us indeed that 'God is a spirit,' but he has not defined what a spirit is, nor said that it is not matter. And the ancient fathers generally, if not universally, held it to be matter: light and thin indeed, an ethereal gas; but still matter." [letter to John Adams, August 15, 1820]

"Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burned, tortured, fined, and imprisoned, yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half of the world fools and the other half hypocrites." [Notes on Virginia]

"History, I believe, furnishes no example of a priest-ridden people maintaining a free civil government. This marks the lowest grade of ignorance of which their civil as well as religious leaders will always avail themselves for their own purposes" [Letter to von Humboldt, 1813].

"The day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as His father, in the womb of a virgin will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter." [Letter to John Adams, April 11, 1823]

"In every country and in every age, the priest has been hostile to liberty. He is always in alliance with the despot, abetting his abuses in return for protection to his own" [Letter to H. Spafford, 1814].

James Madison, (1751-1836) American president and political theorist. Popularly known as the "Father of the Constitution." More than any other framer he is responsible for the content and form of the First Amendment.

also see 'First Amendment' section of the 'Law & Government' section

"During almost fifteen centuries has the legal establishment of Christianity been on trial. What has been its fruits? More or less, in all places, pride and indolence in the clergy; ignorance and servility in the laity; in both, superstition, bigotry, and persecution."

"In no instance have . . . the churches been guardians of the liberties of the people."

"Religious bondage shackles and debilitates the mind and unfits it for every noble enterprise." [April 1, 1774]

"...the number, the industry, and the morality of the priesthood, and the devotion of the people, have been manifestly increased by the total separation of the church from the State [Letter to Robert Walsh, Mar. 2, 1819]

"Every new and successful example, therefore, of a perfect separation between the ecclesiastical and civil matters, is of importance; and I have no doubt that every new example will succeed, as every past one has done, in showing that religion and Government will both exist in greater purity the less they are mixed together" [Letter to Edward Livingston, July 10, 1822].

John Adams 1735-1826, 2d President of the United States

"This would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it." [in a letter to Thomas Jefferson]

The divinity of Jesus is made a convenient cover for absurdity.

The government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion.

Let the human mind loose. It must be loose. It will be loose. Superstition and dogmatism cannot confine it.

But how has it happened that millions of fables, tales, legends, have been blended with both Jewish and Christian revelation that have made them the most bloody religion that ever existed.

Have you considered that system of holy lies and pious frauds that has raged and triumphed for 1500 years.

The question before the human race is, whether the God of nature shall govern the world by his own laws, or whether priests and kings shall rule it by fictitious miracles.

Charles Robert Darwin, English naturalist (1809-1882).

From the age of forty he was, to use his own words, a complete disbeliever in Christianity. He professed himself an Agnostic, regarding the problem of the universe as beyond our solution, "For myself," he wrote, "I do not believe in any revelation. As for a future life, every man must judge for himself between conflicting vague probabilities.

Abraham Lincoln, American president (1809-1865).

In 2000 Years of Disbelief by James A. Haught, Lincoln is mentioned on pages 125 through 127. From the material presented it would seem that Lincoln as a young man was an avid anti-Christian and most likely an atheist. In his later years, he came to believe in God, but still was anti-religious in the sense that he rejected organized religion. Some selections from Haught:

John T. Stuart, Lincoln's first law partner: "He was an avowed and open infidel, and sometimes bordered on Atheism...He went further against Christian beliefs and doctrines and principles than any man I ever heard."

Joseph Lewis quoting Lincoln in a 1924 speech in New York: "The Bible is not my book nor Christianity my profession. I could never give assent to the long, complicated statements of Christian dogma."

Lincoln in a letter to Judge J.S. Wakefield, after the death of Willie Lincoln: "My earlier views of the unsoundness of the Christian scheme of salvation and the human origin of the scriptures have become clearer and stronger with advancing years, and I see no reason for thinking I shall ever change them."

As a young man Lincoln apparently wrote a manuscript that he planned to publish, which vehemently argued against the divine origin of the Bible and the Christian scheme of salvation. Samuel Hill, a friend and mentor, convinced him to drop it, considering the disastrous consequences it would have on his political career.

William H Herndon, a former law partner, wrote a biography on Lincoln titled: "The true story of a great life". In it Herndon discusses Lincoln's religious views extensively.

Gordon Leidner has collected some quotations from Lincoln's later years in which he invokes God, and he makes the argument that Lincoln became a sincere believer. It seems to me he did come to believe in God, but he never accepted organized Christianity.

"You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool

all of the people all of the time."

Karl Marx, German political philosopher and economist (1818-1883).

"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, & the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people."

Samuel Clemens "Mark Twain", American author and humorist (1835-1910).

"Faith is believing something you know ain't true."

"'In God We Trust.' I don't believe it would sound any better if it were true."

"It ain't the parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me, it is the parts that I do understand."

"Religion consists in a set of things which the average man thinks he believes and wishes he was certain of."

"There is no other life; life itself is only a vision and a dream for nothing exists but space and you. If there was an all-powerful God, he would have made all good, and no bad." [Mark Twain in Eruption]

"Our Bible reveals to us the character of our god with minute and remorseless exactness... It is perhaps the most damnatory biography that exists in print anywhere. It makes Nero an angel of light and leading by contrast" [Reflections on Religion, 1906]

"O Lord our God, help us tear their soldiers to bloody shreds with our shells; help us to cover their smiling fields with the pale forms of their patriot dead; help us to drown the thunder of the guns with the shrieks of their wounded, writhing in pain; help us to lay waste their humble homes with a hurricane of fire; help us to wring the hearts of their unoffending widows with unavailing grief; help us to turn them out roofless with their little children to wander unfriended the wastes of their desolated land in rags and hunger and thirst, sports of the sun flames of summer and the icy winds of winter, broken in spirit, worn with travail, imploring Thee for the refuge of the grave and denied it..." ["The War Prayer"]

"[The Bible is] a mass of fables and traditions, mere mythology." ["Mark Twain and the Bible"]

"Man is a marvelous curiosity ... he thinks he is the Creator's pet ... he even believes the Creator loves him; has a passion for him; sits up nights to admire him; yes and watch over him and keep him out of trouble. He prays to him and thinks He listens. Isn't it a quaint idea." [Letters from the Earth]

"If there is a God, he is a malign thug."

Mr. Clemens was once asked whether he feared death. He said that he did not, in view of the fact that he had been dead for billions and billions of years before he was born, and had not suffered the slightest inconvenience from it.

"[The Bible] has noble poetry in it... and some good morals and a wealth of obscenity, and upwards of a thousand lies."

Thomas Edison, American inventor (1847-1931).

"I have never seen the slightest scientific proof of the religious ideas of heaven and hell, of future life for individuals, or of a personal God."

"I do not believe that any type of religion should ever be introduced into the public schools of the United States."

"So far as religion of the day is concerned, it is a damned fake... Religion is all bunk."

Sigmund Freud, Austrian physician and pioneer psychoanalyst (1856-1939).

"It would be very nice if there were a God who created the world and was a benevolent providence, and if there were a moral order in the universe and an after-life; but it is a very striking fact that all this is exactly as we are bound to wish it to be."

"In the long run, nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction religion offers to both is palpable."

"The whole thing is so patently infantile, so foreign to reality, that to anyone with a friendly attitude to humanity it is painful to think that the great majority of mortals will never be able to rise above this view of life."

Freud certainly regarded belief in God as an illusion that mature men and women should lay aside. The idea of God was not a lie but a device of the unconscious which needed to be decoded by psychology. A personal god was nothing more than an exalted father-figure: desire for such a deity sprang from infantile yearnings for a powerful, protective father, for justice and fairness and for life to go on forever. God is simply a projection of these desires, feared and worshipped by human beings out of an abiding sense of helplessness. Religion belonged to the infancy of the human race; it had been a necessary stage in the transition from childhood to maturity. It had promoted ethical values which were essential to society. Now that humanity had come of age, however, it should be left behind. [A History of God]

George Bernard Shaw, Irish-born English playwright (1856-1950).

"The fact that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one."

"No man ever believes that the Bible means what it says; he is always convinced that it says what he means."

Frank Lloyd Wright, American architect (1869-1959).

"I believe in God, only I spell it Nature."

Albert Einstein, German born American theoretical physicist (1879-1955).

"It was, of course, a lie what you read about my religious convictions, a lie which is being systematically repeated. I do not believe in a personal God and I have never denied this but have expressed it clearly. If something is in me which can be called religious then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our science can reveal it." [From a letter Einstein wrote in English, dated 24 March 1954. It is included in *Albert Einstein: The Human Side*, edited by Helen Dukas and Banesh Hoffman, published by Princeton University Press.

If this being is omnipotent, then every occurrence, including every human action, every human thought, and every human feeling and aspiration is also His work; how is it possible to think of holding men responsible for their deeds and thoughts before such an almighty Being? In giving out punishment and rewards He would to a certain extent be passing judgment on Himself. How can this be combined with the goodness and righteousness ascribed to Him? [Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1950), p. 27.]

During the youthful period of mankind's spiritual evolution, human fantasy created gods in man's own image who, by the operations of their will were supposed to determine, or at any rate influence, the phenomenal world... The idea of God in the religions taught at present is a sublimation of that old conception of the gods. Its anthropomorphic character is shown, for instance, by the fact that men appeal to the Divine Being in prayers and plead for the fulfillment of their wishes... In their struggle for the ethical good, teachers of religion must have the stature to give up the doctrine of a personal God, that is, give up

that source of fear and hope which in the past placed such vast power in the hands of priests. [Albert Einstein, reported in *Science, Philosophy and Religion: A Symposium*, edited by L. Bryson and L. Finkelstein. Quoted in: *2000 Years of Disbelief*. by James Haught]

"Thus I came...to a deep religiosity, which, however, reached an abrupt end at the age of 12. Through the reading of popular scientific books I soon reached a conviction that much in the stories of the Bible could not be true....Suspicion against every kind of authority grew out of this experience...an attitude which has never left me." [The Quotable Einstein]

Ernest Hemingway, American author (1899-1961).

"All thinking men are atheists." [A Farewell to Arms]

On page 144 of Paul Johnson's book *Intellectuals*, it states that despite being raised in a strict Congregationalist household, Ernest "did not only not believe in God but regarded organized religion as a menace to human happiness", "seems to have been devoid of the religious spirit", and "ceased to practise religion at the earliest possible moment."

Isaac Asimov, Russian-born American author (1920-1992).

"I am an atheist, out and out. It took me a long time to say it. I've been an atheist for years and years, but somehow I felt it was intellectually unrespectable to say that one is an atheist, because it assumed knowledge that one didn't have. Somehow it was better to say one was a humanist or agnostic. I don't have the evidence to prove that God doesn't exist, but I so strongly suspect that he doesn't that I don't want to waste my time."

"Creationists make it sound like a 'theory' is something you dreamt up after being drunk all night."

Gene Roddenberry, Creator of *Star Trek* (1921-1991).

"I condemn false prophets, I condemn the effort to take away the power of rational decision, to drain people of their free will--and a hell of a lot of money in the bargain. Religions vary in their degree of idiocy, but I reject them all. For most people, religion is nothing more than a substitute for a malfunctioning brain."

"We must question the story logic of having an all-knowing all-powerful God, who creates faulty Humans, and then blames them for his own mistakes."

Carl Sagan, American astronomer and author (1934-1997).

Here is an article, "In the Valley of the Shadow" from the March 10, 1996 issue of *Parade Magazine*.

In a March 1996 profile by Jim Dawson in the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, Sagan talked about his then-new book *The Demon Haunted World* and was asked about his personal spiritual views.

"My view is that if there is no evidence for it, then forget about it," he said. "An agnostic is somebody who doesn't believe in something until there is evidence for it, so I'm agnostic."

When asked how he would explain a "genuine mystical experience," Sagan responded: "Your question presupposes the existence of a genuine mystical experience and I'm not sure what that is. People have vivid hallucinations. How do you distinguish between altered states of consciousness? "If someone who has had an experience that tells us something about the universe that we didn't know and that later turns out to be true, then we'd have to say, 'My goodness.' " But that, he said, "would have to be more than the anecdotal reports that typically are used to support religious experiences."

"It is said that men may not be the dreams of the Gods, but rather that the Gods are the dreams of men."

"Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence."

Galileo Galilei

"Philosophy itself cannot but benefit from our disputes, for if our conceptions prove true, new achievements will be made; if false, their refutation will further confirm the original doctrines." (as quoted in *Galileo at Work : His Scientific Biography*, p. 108)

"I do not think it is necessary to believe that the same God who has given us our senses, reason, and intelligence wished us to abandon their use, giving us by some other means the information that we could gain through them." (ibid., p. 226)

"I truly believe the book of philosophy to be that which stands perpetually open before our eyes, though since it is written in characters different from those of our alphabet it cannot be read by everyone." (ibid., p. 412)

"The hypothesis is pretty; its only fault is that it is neither demonstrated nor demonstrable. Who does not see that this is purely arbitrary fiction that puts nothingness as existing and proposes nothing more than simple noncontradiction?" (ibid., p. 169)

(Galileo was here referring to the philosophers of the time who refused to give up the idea that the moon's surface was smooth so they said that although it appeared to have mountains and craters, it was really encased in smooth transparent crystal--obviously his statement can apply to a whole host of ideas that people create in order to hang on to tradition rather than grasp reality)

"...nothing physical which sense-experience sets before our eyes, or which necessary demonstrations prove to us, ought to be called into question (much less condemned) upon the testimony of biblical passages." (as quoted in Blind Watchers of the Sky, p. 101)

Jesse "the body" Ventura, American politician, Navy seal and Professional wrestler.

"Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people who need strength in numbers. It tells people to go out and stick their noses in other people's business." [Quoted from an interview with Playboy magazine.]

Arthur C. Clarke, Author

"It may be that our role on this planet is not to worship God, but to create him." Quoted from Clarke's autobiography.

In an April 1, 1997 profile in the New York Times Clarke speaks about his new book 3001, the latest and perhaps final in the series of books beginning with 2001: In the world of 3001 Clarke envisions for the story, the writer of the piece, John F. Burns, says: "Perhaps most controversially, religions of all kinds have fallen under a strict taboo, with the citizenry looking back on the religious beliefs and practices of earlier ages as products of ignorance that caused untold strife and bloodshed. But the concept of a God, known by the Latin word Deus, survives, a legacy of man's continuing wonder at the universe. "In this, Clarke is giving vent to one of the few things that seem to ruffle his equable nature. 'Religion is a byproduct of fear,' he says. 'For much of human history, it may have been a necessary evil, but why was it more evil than necessary? Isn't killing people in the name of God a pretty good definition of insanity?'" "

Stephen Hawking, Theoretical Physicist

Although he speaks of "God" in the metaphorical sense of some creative force, he has stated that he is an atheist.

At a physicist's conference Hawking was attending after his book A Brief History of Time was published, a reporter approached him to ask if he did in fact believe in God, given the "mind of God" reference near the end of the book. Hawking responded quickly (suggesting his answer was pre-prepared) "I do not believe in a personal God."

Stephen King, Author

"The beauty of religious mania is that it has the power to explain everything. Once God (or Satan) is accepted as the first cause of everything which happens in the mortal world, nothing is left to chance...logic can be happily tossed out the window."

Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher

"In Christianity neither morality nor religion come into contact with reality at any point."

"I call Christianity the one great curse, the one great intrinsic depravity, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are venomous enough, or secret, subterranean and small enough - I call it the one immortal blemish upon the human race."

"Which is it, is man one of God's blunders or is God one of man's?"

Woody Allen, Director/Actor/Writer

"If only God would give me some clear sign! Like making a large deposit in my name at a Swiss Bank."

["Selections from the Allen Notebooks," in New Yorker (5 Nov. 1973)]

"Not only is God dead, but just try to find a plumber on weekends." In his autobiographical movie, Stardust Memories, Allen's character is called an atheist. He responds "To you, I'm an atheist. To God, I'm the loyal opposition."

"As the poet said, "Only God can make a tree" -- probably because it's so hard to figure out how to get the bark on."

"How can I believe in God when just last week I got my tongue caught in the roller of an electric typewriter?"

"If it turns out that there is a God, I don't think that he's evil. But the worst that you can say about him is that basically he's an underachiever."

"I do not believe in an afterlife, although I am bringing a change of underwear."

"The chief problem about death, incidentally, is the fear that there may be no afterlife -- a depressing thought, particularly for those who have bothered to shave. Also, there is the fear that there is an afterlife but no one will know where it's being held." ["The Early Essays," Without Feathers (1976)]

"I do occasionally envy the person who is religious naturally, without being brainwashed into it or suckered into it by all the organized hustles." [Rolling Stone magazine, 1987]

Susan B. Anthony, (1820-1906), American feminist leader and suffragist.

"The religious persecution of the ages has been done under what was claimed to be the command of God." [Rufus K. Noyes, Views of Religion, quoted from James A. Haught, ed., 2000 Years of Disbelief]

"I distrust those people who know so well what God wants them to do because I notice it always coincides with their own desires."

"What you should say to outsiders is that a Christian has neither more nor less rights in our Association than an atheist. When our platform becomes too narrow for people of all creeds and of no creeds, I myself shall not stand upon it."

[Susan B. Anthony: A Biography, by Kathleen Barry, New York University Press, 1988, p.310]

Benjamin Franklin, (1706-1790), American public official, writer, scientist, and printer who played a major part in the American Revolution.

"The way to see by faith is to shut the eye of reason."

[Poor Richard's Almanack, 1758]

"Lighthouses are more helpful than churches."

"He (the Rev. Mr. Whitefield) used, indeed, sometimes to pray for my conversion, but never had the satisfaction of believing that his prayers were heard." [Franklin's Autobiography]

"In the affairs of the world, men are saved, not by faith, but by the want of it."

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), American writer

"The pioneers and missionaries of religion have been the real cause of more trouble and war than all other classes of mankind." [Ira D. Cardiff, What Great Men Think of Religion, quoted from James A. Haught, ed., 2000 Years of Disbelief]

"No man who ever lived knows any more about the hereafter ... than you and I; and all religion ... is simply evolved out of chicanery, fear, greed, imagination and poetry." [Rufus K. Noyes, Views of Religion, quoted from James A. Haught, ed., 2000 Years of Disbelief]

Voltaire [François Marie Arouet] (1694-1778), French philosopher and writer whose works epitomize the Age of Enlightenment.

"Of all religions the Christian is without doubt the one which should inspire tolerance most, although up to now the Christians have been the most intolerant of all men." [Harry Elmer Barnes, An Intellectual and Cultural History of the Western World (1937) p. 766, quoted from Albert J. Menendez and Edd Doerr, The Great Quotations on Religious Freedom]

"Christianity is the most ridiculous, the most absurd and bloody religion that has ever infected the world." [James A. Haught in "Honest Minds, Past and Present" Talks for History of Freethought conference Sept. 20-21, 1997, Cincinnati, Ohio]

"If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him."

[Letters vol. xcvi (1769), quoted from Jonathon Green, The Cassell Dictionary of Cynical Quotations]

"A clergyman is one who feels himself called upon to live without working at the expense of the rascals who work to live." [Jonathon Green, The Cassell Dictionary of Cynical Quotations]

"The first clergyman was the first rascal who met the first fool"

Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), Greek philosopher

"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 cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?"

Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899), Well known post civil war American political speechmaker and Secular-Humanist. Among his admirers were president James Garfield, poet Walt Whitman, General Ulysses S. Grant, industrialist-philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, inventor Thomas Edison, and Mark Twain.
more

"The good part of Christmas is not always Christian -- it is generally Pagan; that is to say, human, natural."

"Christianity did not come with tidings of great joy, but with a message of eternal grief. It came with the threat of everlasting torture on its lips. It meant war on earth and perdition hereafter." - A CHRISTMAS SERMON. 1891

"Secularism is a religion, a religion that is understood. It has no mysteries, no mumblings, no priests, no ceremonies, no falsehoods, no miracles, and no persecutions. It considers the lilies of the field, and takes thought for the morrow. It says to the whole world, Work that you may eat, drink, and be clothed; work that you may enjoy; work that you may not want; work that you may give and never need." - SECULARISM

"One of the foundation stones of our faith is the Old Testament. If that book is not true, if its authors were unaided men, if it contains blunders and falsehoods, then that stone crumbles to dust...The Old Testament must be thrown aside. It is no longer a foundation. It has crumbled." - The Foundations of Faith

"An honest god is the noblest work of man. ... God has always resembled his creators. He hated and loved what they hated and loved and he was invariably found on the side of those in power. ... Most of the gods were pleased with sacrifice, and the smell of innocent blood has ever been considered a divine perfume"

"As people become more intelligent they care less for preaches and more for teachers"

"Why should I allow that same God to tell me how to raise my kids, who had to drown His own?"

Bertrand Russell (b.1872 - d.1970), British philosopher, logician, essayist, and social critic, best known for his work in mathematical logic and analytic philosophy and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950. His essays include, "Am I an Agnostic or an Atheist?" and "Why I am not a Christian" Writings

"Religion is based, I think, primarily and mainly upon fear. It is partly the terror of the unknown and partly, as I have said, the wish to feel that you have a kind of elder brother who will stand by you in all your troubles and disputes. Fear is the basis of the whole thing -- fear of the mysterious, fear of defeat, fear of death. Fear is the parent of cruelty, and therefore it is no wonder if cruelty and religion have gone hand in hand." - Why I Am Not A Christian

"And if there were a God, I think it very unlikely that He would have such an uneasy vanity as to be offended by those who doubt His existence." - What is an Agnostic?

"So far as I can remember, there is not one word in the Gospels in praise of intelligence."

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Irish author and Playwright

"When I think of all the harm the Bible has done, I despair of ever writing anything equal to it."

Ulysses S. Grant (1822 – 1885) A graduate from West Point, Commanding General of the Northern Army in the Civil War and US President.

More Great Quotes

"Leave the matter of religion to the family altar, the church, and the private schools, supported entirely by private contributions. Keep the church and the state forever separated."

"I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours."

-- Stephen Roberts

"Philosophy is questions that may never be answered. Religion is answers that may never be questioned."

-- unknown

"Only Sheep need a shepherd!"

-- unknown

"God is not dead. He is alive and working on a much less ambitious project."

-- graffito (1975), quoted from Jonathon Green, The Cassell Dictionary of Cynical Quotations

"Appraise the Lord: Tax church property."

-- bumper sticker

"Humanity without religion is like a serial killer without a chainsaw."

-- unknown

"Calling Atheism a religion is like calling bald a hair color."

--Don Hirschberg

"Men will never be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest"

--Denis Diderot

"The philosopher has never killed any priests, whereas the priest has killed a great many philosophers."

-- Denis Diderot

"the trouble with theocracy is that everyone wants to be Theo."

--James Dunn

"Religion is excellent stuff for keeping common people quiet."

--Napoleon Bonaparte, French emperor (1769-1821).

"The church says the earth is flat, but I know that it is round, for I have seen the shadow on the moon, and I

have more faith in a shadow than in the church."

--Ferdinand Magellan, (1480–1521), Portuguese navigator: discoverer of the Straits of Magellan 1520 and the Philippines 1521.

"Clearly the person who accepts the Church as an infallible guide will believe whatever the Church teaches."

-- Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) Roman Catholic philosopher

"Don't you know there ain't no devil, it's just god when he's drunk."

-- Tom Waits

"An atheist is a man who has no invisible means of support."

-- John Buchan

"The atheist does not say 'there is no God,' but he says 'I know not what you mean by God; I am without idea of God'; the word 'God' is to me a sound conveying no clear or distinct affirmation. ... The Bible God I deny; the Christian God I disbelieve in; but I am not rash enough to say there is no God as long as you tell me you are unprepared to define God to me."

-- Charles Bradlaugh, 'Plea for Atheism'

Eskimo: "If I did not know about God and sin, would I go to hell?"

Priest: "No, not if you did not know."

Eskimo: "Then why did you tell me?"

-- Annie Dillard, 'Pilgrim at Tinker Creek'

"I give money for church organs in the hope the organ music will distract the congregation's attention from the rest of the service."

-- Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919)

"Gods always behave like the people who created them"

-- Zora Neale Hurston

"Gods are fragile things; they may be killed by a whiff of science or a dose of common sense."

-- Chapman Cohen

"Pray: To ask the laws of the universe to be annulled on behalf of a single petitioner confessedly unworthy."

-- Ambrose Bierce

"I still say a church steeple with a lightning rod on top shows a lack of confidence."

-- Doug McLeod

"We must respect the other fellow's religion, but only in the sense and to the extent that we respect his theory that his wife is beautiful and his children smart."

-- H. L. Mencken

"Men never commit evil so fully and joyfully as when they do it for religious convictions"

-- Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)

"Man has never been the same since God died. He has taken it very hard."

-- unknown

"The world holds two classes of men - intelligent men without religion, and religious men without intelligence."

-- Abu Ala Al-Ma'arri (???? - 1059)

"No philosophy, no religion, has ever brought so glad a message to the world as this good news of Atheism."

--Annie Wood Besant (1847-1933)

"Hey, let's get serious... God knows what he's doin' He wrote this book here And the book says: "He made us all to be just like Him," So... If we're dumb... Then God is dumb... (And maybe even a little ugly on the side)

- Frank Zappa

"God created man in his own image. And man, being a gentleman, returned the favor."

-- Rousseau

You know your god is man-made when he hates all the same people you do.

--[from Usenet]

SIMPSONS QUOTES

"I've always wondered if there was a god. And now I know there is -- and it's me." - Homer Simpson

"Dear Lord: The gods have been good to me. For the first time in my life, everything is absolutely perfect just the way it is. So here's the deal: You freeze everything the way it is, and I won't ask for anything more. If that is OK, please give me absolutely no sign. OK, deal. In gratitude, I present you this offering of cookies and milk. If you want me to eat them for you, give me no sign. Thy will be done." - Homer Simpson

"Good drink... good meat... good God, let's eat!" - Homer Simpson

Stealing? How could you?! Haven't you learned anything from that guy who gives those sermons at church? Captain what's-his-name? We live in a society of laws. Why do you think I took you to all those Police Academy movies? For fun? Well, I didn't hear anybody laughin', did you?"

- Homer Simpson

"I'm normally not a praying man, but if you're up there, please save me Superman!"

- Homer Simpson

"Come on Milhouse, there's no such thing as a soul! It's just something they made up to scare kids, like the Boogie Man or Michael Jackson."

- Bart Simpson

"I remember another gentle visitor from the heavens, he came in peace and then died, only to come back to life, and his name was E.T., the extra terrestrial. I loved that little guy."

- Reverend Lovejoy

"Once something has been approved by the Government, It's no longer immoral."

- Reverend Lovejoy

"And as we pass the collection plate, please give as if the person next to you was watching."

- Reverend Lovejoy

Lovejoy: "Get a divorce."

Marge: "But isn't that a sin?"

Lovejoy: "Marge, just about everything is a sin. Y'ever sat down and read this thing? Technically, we're not

allowed to go to the bathroom."

"This so-called new religion is nothing but a pack of weird rituals and chants designed to take away the money of fools. Now let us say the lord's prayer 40 times, but first let's pass the collection plate."

- Rev. Lovejoy

"Science is like a blabbermouth who ruins a movie by telling you how it ends! Well I say there are some things we don't want to know! Important things!"

- Ned Flanders

"I put out these milk and cookies as a sacrifice. If Thou wishest me to eat them, please give me a sign by doing absolutely nothing. MMMMmmmm..."

- Homer Simpson

"If the Bible has taught us nothing else, and it hasn't, it's that girls should stick to GIRLS sports, such as hot oil wrestling, foxy boxing, and such and such."

- Homer Simpson

Not So Great Minds

Rev. Pat Robertson

"Satan is a tool of God's love in the sense that he forces us to see God's loving patience."

[Pat Robertson, Answers to 200 of Life's most Probing Questions, Bantom Books, 1984]

"If you go all the way back to the days just following creation, men lived nine hundred years or more."

[Pat Robertson, Answers to 200 of Life's most Probing Questions, Bantom Books, 1984]

"There will never be world peace until God's house and God's people are given their rightful place of leadership at the top of the world. How can there be peace when drunkards, drug dealers, communists, atheists, New Age worshipers of Satan, secular humanists, oppressive dictators, greedy moneychangers, revolutionary assassins, adulterers, and homosexuals are on top?"

[Pat Robertson, The New World Order, p. 227, Word Publishing, 1991]

"Feminism encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians."

[Pat Robertson]

"Many of those people involved with Adolph Hitler were Satanists, many of them were homosexuals--the two things seem to go together."

[Pat Robertson, "The 700 Club," 1/21/93, ADL report on Religious Right, page 131]

The Constitution of the United States, for instance, is a marvelous document for self-government by the Christian people. But the minute you turn the document into the hands of non-Christian people and atheistic people they can use it to destroy the very foundation of our society. And that's what's been happening.

[Pat Robertson, The 700 Club television program, December 30, 1981]

"God is going to judge the entertainment industry."

[Rev. Pat Robertson, Re: the fire that devastated Universal Studios. Note: the good Rev. was strangely silent when fire destroyed his radio station, WNTR]

Rev. Jerry Falwell

AIDS is the wrath of a just God against homosexuals. To oppose it would be like an Israelite jumping in the Red Sea to save one of Pharaoh's chariotters.

The idea that religion and politics don't mix was invented by the Devil to keep Christians from running their own country. Sermon, July 4, 1976
[Jerry Falwell]

The ACLU's got to take a lot of blame for this.

[Rev. Jerry Falwell, on attacks of Tuesday, September 11, 2001, to which Rev. Pat Robertson again agreed, quoted from AANEWS #958 by American Atheists (September 14, 2001)]

The ACLU is to Christians what the American Nazi party is to Jews.
[Jerry Falwell]

US PRESADENTS

"The Bible is the authoritative Word of God and contains all truth."
[Pres. Bill Clinton, at a prayer breakfast]

No, I don't know that atheists should be considered as citizens, nor should they be considered as patriots. This is one nation under God.
[George Bush, President of the United States in response to a reporters question]

Other

"It is a just retribution for improper sexual misconduct"
[Mother Teresa, on AIDS]

"Evolution is a bankrupt speculative philosophy, not a scientific fact. Only a spiritually bankrupt society could ever believe it. ... Only atheists could accept this Satanic theory."
[Rev. Jimmy Swaggart]

"To assert that the earth revolves around the sun is as erroneous as to claim that Jesus was not born of a virgin."
[Cardinal Bellarmine, 1615, during the trial of Galileo]

I can't understand how all this can have happened, it's enough to make one lose one's faith in God!
[Eva Braun during the last days with Hitler]

Murderers

I talk to my only friend Jesus our "LORD"! I know "JESUS" understands my terrible desires and ect. I have tords little boys! And the main reason I murdered them little "BOYS", is because our society is so "AGAINST" the fact of "CHILDREN-DOING-SEX" together or with anybody! I believe children should be "ABLE" to do sex! And I can "ARGUE" that all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court! "SEX" is a great "GIFT" that Jesus gave us all!!!!

[Freddy Goode, serial killer, in a letter to one of his lawyers- misspellings, his]

My children, Michael and Alex, are with our Heavenly Father now, and I know that they will never be hurt again. As a mom, that means more than words could ever say. . . My children deserve to have the best, and now they will. . . I have put my total faith in God, and he will take care of me.

[Susan Smith, who drowned her two children, in her confession letter, Nov. 1994]