

Atheos

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Section I: Introduction

I do not believe in god. The position that I hold on the position and question of religion is one of a minority in today's culture. It is within this work that I hope to provide an accurate and well argued defense to Atheism. I have chosen the title *Atheos* for this work. "Atheos" is Latin for "without god" and it is the origin of the word "Atheism."

It is perhaps first noteworthy that I define the being that I doubt exists. Not only is it noteworthy, but it is absolutely necessary. An Atheist doubts the existence of a god, whereas a Theist acknowledges the existence of a god(s). However, a Pantheist believes in the existence of god, but redefines "god" to the workings of the world and the world itself. To quote the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: "a doctrine that equates God with the forces and laws of the universe."¹ To quote Baruch Spinoza (1632–1667), one of the founding Pantheists: "Whatsoever is, is in God, and without God nothing can be, or be conceived."²

This position of Pantheism is taken insomuch that if one believes that the universe exists, then they believe in god. If god is the Universe, then an Atheist is left to argue against the existence of the Universe, something I do not agree with. Pantheism is the changing merely the definition of a word so commonly associated with a mythical, supernatural being. If someone wanted to say the word "Universe," may they not simply say "Universe" instead of "god?" I think that it is an impractical system in regards to question of the existence of a god society so commonly believes. If there was a Pan-Easter Bunny-ist, they may state, "I believe in the Easter Bunny, because everything is the Easter Bunny and everything exists, therefore so does the Easter Bunny." This does not solve the problem and is actually a rather impractical system when we wish to find answers to questions. If someone wishes to change the definition of a word, that is perfectly fine, but I am dealing with the concept of god which I will shortly define. As my last note on Pantheism, I shall quote Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860), "The chief objection I have to pantheism is that it says nothing. To call the world God is not to explain it; it is only to enrich our language with a superfluous synonym for the word world."³

Over the tides of time and throughout the various philosophical and religious groups, the idea of what exactly god is has been a subject that is constantly evolving and changing. To some it means the Universe, such as demonstrated by the Pantheists, and to others it means a benevolent being who will grant miracles at the notice of a prayer, such as many Christians, Muslims, and Jews. So certainly, I shall define the god in the next paragraph that I am arguing against. It is absolutely imperative that this god is defined, otherwise I shall have nothing concrete to argue

¹ Merriam-Webster Dictionary. By Permission. From *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate, Dictionary, 10th Edition*, 2001 by Merriam-Webster, Incorporated.

² The Ethics, first line of proposition XV of Part I of, by Baruch Spinoza.

³ A Few Words on Pantheism, by Arthur Schopenhauer, 1851.

against. It is this god that I shall attempt to demonstrate does not hold enough proof to deserve belief.

The god I am arguing against is a supernatural being of immense power. It is not necessarily omnipotent, but immensely powerful. Along with the power of this god is an immense amount of knowledge regarding the Universe. This god may or may not perform miracles or answer prayers. He, she, or it is a conscious and animate being. This god is also responsible for creating the Universe. This is what god is: supernatural, immensely powerful, immensely intelligent, conscious, animate, and responsible for creating this Universe.

Within this work, I am going to demonstrate that god does not have enough evidence — or at least enough valid and reliable evidence — to warrant belief in this god. By this, I mean it may be possible that this god exists, but the commonly purported evidence of this god (origins, design, miracles, revelation, etc.) are faulty. A convict who killed an innocent person, for example, may have evidence brought against them that is tampered or planted and even though the evidence is untruthful, it does not mean that the convict did not kill the innocent person. However, it is possible that a convict did not kill this person and that tampered or planted evidence is the only reason that he was convicted. Evidence has consistently shown that it is regularly capable of finding the truth, although it is not absolute. Just as I approach the question of the existence of a god, I am dispelling the evidence for this god that is faulty or unfounded. I am simply dispelling commonly given evidences of god, although not entirely ruling out the existence of god as of yet. I did, however, dedicate one chapter to discussing the possibility of the existence of god.

Furthermore, I shall be arguing against the supernatural outlook on life. I am a Materialist. That is to say that I only believe in the physical material that is the composite of the Universe. Concepts such as gods, spirits, souls, magic, reincarnation, heaven, hell, afterlife, etc., are ones that I doubt. The evidences for the supernatural outlooks on life, such as Theism, Deism, Animism, or what not, are the ones I shall attempt in my ability to debunk. I will not attack any religions in particular, such as Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, or one of the other thousands of religions; and I certainly shall not attack sects, such as Catholicism or Protestantism of Christianity, nor Shingon or Tendai of Buddhism. The intellectual attack I am launching on supernaturalism is to debunk evidences for a god I previously defined. In so doing, I shall also debunk the evidences for other supernatural beings. Whether a Theist believes a mystery to be a miracle, an Animist believes it to be the workings of spirits, or a conjurer believes it to be his very own magic, these are claims of supernaturalism that I shall attempt to debunk the evidence. If one person claims that this Universe is proof of a god, or if another person claims that it is proof of many spirits keeping it working, by disproving any supernatural possibilities, I disprove the concept of a god as well as spirits. When the concept of miracles performed by god is disproven, then certainly there is no weight for the concept of miracles performed by spirits or miracles performed by the magic of a magician.

It is necessary that it be noted that the burden of proof lays on the Theist. When anyone asserts any idea, they are the one responsible for proving said idea, or else it loses intellectual respect. I am not saying that Supernaturalists have not offered evidence in support of Theism, as the point of this work is to criticize the evidence that they have offered thus far. I am simply saying that the burden of proof lays on the one who purports an idea. The Theist, purporting the existence of a god, must then prove the existence of this god with evidence. The same goes with all regards to all fields. If a doctor wishes to make a claim about a medical procedure, a scientist wishes to make a claim about geology, or a historian wish to make a claim about history as we know it,

they must bring with their claims evidence, otherwise their claims carry with them no weight. Similarly, if one were to claim the existence of a god, it is their duty to prove the existence of this god with evidence.

Section II: Titles and Philosophy

The next inquiry of my wholly naturalistic philosophy is “what should I call myself?” As I have stated earlier, I have chosen the title *Atheos* for this work, for the reason that it is the least confusing in regards to the terminology of nonbelievers of god. “*Atheos*” is Latin for “without god” and it is the origin of the word “Atheism.” I have also already stated clearly that I denote myself as an Atheist, but there are many other titles left untaken: Agnostics, Secularists, Freethinkers, Skeptics, Secular Humanists, Humanists, Rationalists, Realists, Naturalists, Materialists, and Epicureans. Amongst these wide variety of titles come many definitions and many meanings. Having used the Latin roots of “Atheism,” I have simplified the terminology to a degree – at least the terminology I use to title myself. I should separate the meanings of these various words so that they make sense and can be used independently.

Perhaps the only error of my selection to be called an Atheist and not one of the other vast array of titles, is that many take it often to imply that I believe god cannot exist. Atheist and Agnostic are the most commonly used names for the nonbelievers of god. I choose to call myself an Atheist because of its Latin roots. The word Agnostic was not invented until the 19th century, whereas the word “Atheist” – or at least “*Atheos*” – has survived millenniums. The term “Agnostic” was coined by Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895). He recounts his coming to Agnosticism...

When I reached intellectual maturity, and began to ask myself whether I was an atheist, a theist, or a pantheist; a materialist or an idealist; a Christian or a freethinker, I found that the more I learned and reflected, the less ready was the answer; until at last I came to the conclusion that I had neither art nor part with any of these denominations, except the last. The one thing in which most of these good people were agreed was the one thing in which I differed from them. They were quite sure that they had attained a certain “gnosis” – had more or less successfully solved the problem of existence; while I was quite sure I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble. And, with Hume and Kant on my side, I could not think myself presumptuous in holding fast by that opinion. [...]

So I took thought, and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of “agnostic”. It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the “gnostic” of Church history, who professed to know so much about the very things of which I was ignorant; and I took the earliest opportunity of parading it at our Society, to show that I, too, had a tail, like the other foxes.⁴

From what he has stated, it would appear that he has concluded that he has no answers. However, this does not solve much. The Theist claims he has the answer of a god whereas the Atheist claims that he has no answer of such. For an Agnostic to claim himself without an answer is no more than to take the Atheist position with a different title. However, Huxley still claims that

⁴ Quoted in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, 1908, edited by James Hastings MA DD

there is more to Agnosticism. He declares basic rational principles when he defines Agnosticism further. To quote him...

Agnosticism, in fact, is not a creed, but a method, the essence of which lies in the rigorous application of a single principle. That principle is of great antiquity; it is as old as Socrates; as old as the writer who said, 'Try all things, hold fast by that which is good'; it is the foundation of the Reformation, which simply illustrated the axiom that every man should be able to give a reason for the faith that is in him, it is the great principle of Descartes; it is the fundamental axiom of modern science. Positively the principle may be expressed: In matters of the intellect, follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration. And negatively: In matters of the intellect, do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable. That I take to be the agnostic faith, which if a man keep whole and undefiled, he shall not be ashamed to look the universe in the face, whatever the future may have in store for him.

The results of the working out of the agnostic principle will vary according to individual knowledge and capacity, and according to the general condition of science. That which is unproved today may be proved, by the help of new discoveries, tomorrow. The only negative fixed points will be those negations which flow from the demonstrable limitation of our faculties. And the only obligation accepted is to have the mind always open to conviction.⁵

From the previous statements, it would appear that Agnosticism is somewhat of an Epistemological system. Epistemology is the study of how we know what we know. In his description of Agnosticism, he declares that it is a method for attaining knowledge, thus allowing it the definition of an epistemological system. With one last note on Agnosticism, Huxley declares...

That it is wrong for a man to say he is certain of the objective truth of a proposition unless he can provide evidence which logically justifies that certainty. This is what agnosticism asserts and in my opinion, is all that is essential to agnosticism.⁶

Agnosticism, however, breaks off into two different branches. There is the *Agnostic Theist* and the *Agnostic Atheist*. An Agnostic Theist believes in the existence of god, but believes that the nature of this god is unknown. Agnostic Theism is in terminological error, just as Pantheism, in that it is based on the word "god" and could be applicable to anything. In this case, it is something unknown but existent. I could say that god exists, but I do not know what god is, yet this still solves nothing. How could one know that something exists, but knows not what it is? It is impossible. However, I take it that the god believed by Agnostic Theists is somewhat related in character to the gods of the currently existing religions: supernatural, powerful, and responsible for creating the Universe. An Agnostic Atheist is what is commonly implied when someone says the word "Agnostic." An Agnostic Atheist asserts that if a god exists, then god is unknowable and beyond knowledge and therefore undeserving of belief.

⁵ Agnosticism, by Thomas Henry Huxley, 1889.

⁶ Agnosticism and Christianity, by Thomas Henry Huxley, 1889.

I find nothing detestable or disagreeable about Agnosticism as implied by Huxley or as commonly used today. It is an institution that is doubtful of a god or any form of supernaturality. Robert Green Ingersoll (1833–1899) is known as the Great Agnostic, and when asked “Then you would not undertake to say what becomes of man after death?” Ingersoll responded...

If I told or pretended to know what becomes of man after death, I would be as dogmatic as are theologians upon this question. The difference between them and me is, I am honest. I admit that I do not know.⁷

Robert Green Ingersoll admitted that he did not know what happens after death. He asserts nothing that he cannot prove. He has no claims, and therefore there is no reason for him to support any statement. As I have discussed Atheism and Agnosticism, and the positions taken by both sides, I can only say that I find no intrinsically valuable line that can be demonstrably drawn between the two. Call me Atheist, call me Agnostic; I only lack belief in the existence of a god. Madalyn Murray O’Hair (1919–1995) has stated, “The agnostic is gutless and prefers to keep one safe foot in the god camp.”⁸ Such a statement speaks volumes of her own tolerance. However, allow me to state that although I am an Atheist and I call myself an Atheist, and I would find nothing disagreeable with someone labeling me an Agnostic. As I have stated, I find no difference between the two terms and would allow myself to be called either. Allow me to restate that I did dedicate one chapter to discussing the possibility of this god or any form of supernaturality. The word “Freethinker” is commonly also attributed to nonbelievers in God. There are Atheists who will not allow themselves to be called Agnostics, and there are Agnostics who will not allow themselves to be called Atheists, but both of them will most often accept the term “Freethinker.”

A Secularist is what many Atheists and Agnostics are. It is someone who wishes for the separation of church and state in civil, educational, and public affairs. The application of the term Secularist would not necessarily separate the believers from the nonbelievers in terms of religion. There are many religious believers who are also Secularists and wish for the separation of church and state. One who wishes government to be mixed with religion is a Theocrat, or a supporter of Theocracy.

Although the word “Skeptic” is commonly applied to those who doubt religion and a god, it is inappropriately applied. A Skeptic may very well be someone who doubts religion, such as David Hume (1711–1776) who was an Atheist and was a Skeptic, but philosophically a Skeptic is someone who belongs to the school of Skepticism, the doctrine that no knowledge can be known. Consequently, a large amount of Sceptics have also been skeptical about Theism and church doctrines. However, there are Sceptics who do believe in the existence of a god.

A Realist is someone who seeks to discover true reality. A Rationalist is similar, in that a Rationalist seeks to understand the true and rational world in purely rationalistic terms. M. D. Aletheia (c. late 1800’s to early 1900’s) wrote *The Rationalist’s Manual* and dictated the path to postmodern Rationalism. To quote him from his book...

The questions which Rationalists fearlessly set themselves to solve are: — Is there any truth in the so-called Christian “revelation” which has for so long a period maintained its hold over the Western world? And, further, has any revelation of a super-

⁷ *The Bible And A Future Life*, interview with Robert Green Ingersoll, *The Post*, Washington, D.C., 1878.

⁸ *Agnostics*, by Madalyn Murray O’Hair.

natural character ever taken place? Or, is the only revelation which possesses any human value the revelation of natural science?

If a revelation had been made to the human race by a divine and almighty being, we should be justified in expecting it to be done in a manner clear, unmistakable, and evident to all, and it would have had an irresistible claim upon our allegiance. But this has not happened. On the contrary: instead of being furnished with proofs, we are enjoined to ask no questions; we are told that doubt is sin, and that we must reduce ourselves to a condition of infantile dependence; we are bidden to accept all the statements which the priestly dispensers of "revelation" choose to dole out to us, however much opposed to reason, nature, and science. When we examine the alleged revelation, we discover that it consists of a series of legends, characterized by a morality which is frequently atrocious, and by absurdities which rank with the tales of the nursery. And we find that the divinity worshiped by the churches is an imaginary figure, a fetish established for the benefit of the clerical caste, and supported by the priesthood for mercantile ends. It is time to cast off the bondage so long imposed upon us, and snap the rod of hell so long held over our heads. We must transfer our allegiance from God to Man. Instead of wasting our time and energy in contemplating and appeasing a fictitious deity, and obeying the selfish motive of desire for future reward, let us dedicate our lives to the interests of the present world, to social cooperation, to the study of natural science, to the explanation of the phenomena that environs us, to the spread of knowledge and happiness.⁹

A Rationalist is perhaps nearly equatable with Atheist or Agnostic. However, I would like to think of Rationalism not entirely as another synonym for Atheism or Agnosticism, but rather the rational approach to the problems and dilemmas that we are faced with. There are Rationalists who are Deists, or other Theists who disbelieve in traditional religion. I am a Rationalist in regards to how I approach the problem of god: there may be the possibility of the existence of a god and I discuss that logically and reasonably. I do not seek special interests, unless truth is a special interest. I will only believe in a god or form of supernaturality on grounds of rational reasoning evidence, and if there is no rational reasoning or evidence I will not believe, which is my current standing.

Secular Humanism and Humanism are also terms commonly applied to Atheists by Atheists themselves. It is a rather fanciful title for "Atheist." However, Humanism itself has various definitions. Warren Allen Smith (20th Century) denotes the common usages of the word "Humanism"...

Humanism is not a basic technical term in philosophy, but it has been applied to various quasi-philosophical literary, political, and ethical movements. Admittedly, Humanism, whether capitalized or uncapitalized, is something of an eight-lettered semanticist's nightmare. Lexicographers associate it with ancient Hellenism. College freshmen sometimes study it as being related to the Matthew Arnoldian concept of culture. Fundamentalist seminarians are told that it represents a dangerous threat to supernaturalism. Existentialists describe their belief in man by it. And the intelligentsia associate it with the secular humanists, or related groups such as scientific

⁹ The Rationalist's Manual, by M. D. Aletheia (WATTS & CO., 17, JOHNSON'S COURT, FLEET ST., 1897).

humanists, religious humanists, naturalistic humanists, humanistic naturalists, and so forth.¹⁰

The commonly asserted definition of a Secular Humanist is an Atheist. There are several reasons why I will not apply this title to myself. It appears to be a fanciful method of language by simply giving the concept of Atheism a more fanciful title. The other error I find in this is that it is often associated with human welfare or the ideals of humans. Such an ideology is dogmatic. Who takes pride in their species? Surely, such an action is as mentally deprived as one who takes pride in their race. Especially as an Atheist, one would be knowledgeable enough to know that men are animals and nothing special from the rest of animal creation; and all the rights and liberties that applicable to men cannot be legitimately divorced from non-human animals. To quote Henry Stephens Salt (1851–1939) “This divorce of ‘humanism’ from humaneness is one of the subtlest dangers by which society is beset; for, if we grant that love needs to be tempered and directed by wisdom, stir more needful is it that wisdom should be informed and vitalized by love.”¹¹

Another stigma associated with the word Humanist is the so-called Humanist Manifesto. The Humanist Manifesto has various versions, changing every two or three decades to suit the times, which is quite reflective of its efficiency. The error of these documents is that they are so often updated and re-updated to suit only the dilemmas of the current time. It has been less than one century and they are already contemplating a third one. There are three basic initiatives upheld in the latest version of the Humanist Manifesto:

- embrace science and technology as tools to help solve the great social problems of the century;
- leave behind the magical thinking and myth making that are substitutes for reliable knowledge and impede human progress;
- recognize that moral principle should serve humanity and should not be based on inherited prescientific concepts that do not apply to a global; transformed future.¹²

So, you see, to be a Humanist or a Secular Humanist is surely more than simply to be an Atheist, Agnostic, Rationalist, or Freethinker. It is to imply the favoring of one’s own species and possibly – in fact, highly likely – a special interest in advancing that species over other species. Along with the special interest of one’s own species comes the adherence to the Humanist Manifesto.

A Naturalist is one who does not believe in supernatural phenomenon. Similarly, the Naturalist’s counterpart who believes in supernatural phenomenon is called a Supernaturalist. A Naturalist agrees with or advocates the doctrine of Naturalism; Naturalism is the institution that all phenomenon can be explained naturally with scientific laws and that to invoke the belief of a god or spirits to explain a phenomenon is improper. Thus, a Naturalist – although not necessarily one who doubts the existence of a god or spirits – disbelieves in the actions of these beings, and thus miracles, revelation, magic, and other supernatural phenomenon are not believed by this individual. A Christian, Muslim, or Jew could not be a Naturalist, at least in the philosophical

¹⁰ Who’s Who In Hell, under “Humanism,” compiled by Warren Allen Smith (Barricade Books, 2000).

¹¹ Animals’ Rights, by Henry S. Salt, Chapter 8, 1894.

¹² Who’s Who In Hell, under “Humanist Manifesto III? Humanist Manifesto 2000?,” compiled by Warren Allen Smith (Barricade Books, 2000). Permission obtained from Warren Allen Smith to quote his book.

sense of the term. A Christian believes that god ascended from heaven in man, while a Muslim believes that the angel Gabriel gave to Muhammad the secrets of the Universe, and while still a Jew believes that god was the being who cursed the world with a global flood. These actions are all forms of supernatural phenomenon governing our natural Universe in some form or another. An Atheist, Agnostic, or Freethinker doubt the existence of a god only. However, there are those who do not believe in a god, but may believe in spirits or forms of supernaturality, such as Jainists and Buddhists. A Deist – one who believes in the existence of god but believes this god has no effect over the Universe – could also be counted as a Naturalist. As a Materialist, I am a Naturalist. I only believe in the existence of the physical material in the Universe. If someone is asked what religion they are, and they respond with “Atheist,” “Agnostic,” or “Freethinker,” there is a high chance that they are also Materialists and Naturalists. It is important to note that there are other meanings for the word “Naturalist” in other fields. A Naturalist could be a student of natural history, or a field biologist. However, when I state the term “Naturalist,” I mean the philosophical term: one who accepts as the laws of science as an explanation to the phenomena of the physical Universe. Perhaps one of the more famous Deists, also a Naturalist, is Thomas Paine (1737–1809), sometimes criticized as the father of Deism. To quote him...

I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

I believe the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy.

[...]

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.¹³

A Materialist is someone who believes in the existence of the physical matter in the Universe. The only thing that exists, believes a Materialist, is the material of the Universe. The term is not to be confused with some Eastern philosophies that are based on gaining material. Some people today who are called “materialistic” are usually called that in the sense that they are greedy. The means that I imply the term Materialism is based on the existence of the physical Universe and nothing else. A Materialist is an Atheist, yes, but an Atheist is not necessarily a Materialist. The members of the Jainist religion, for example, do not believe in a god, but they do believe in various forms of supernaturality. A Materialist will not believe in gods, ghosts, magic, souls, spirits, karma, or any other supernatural concepts. I, for one, am a Materialist as are many proclaimed Atheists today.

The last term is an Epicurean, sometimes spelled “Epicurian.” An Epicurean today is defined as a Hedonist, or one who seeks pleasure, but this is a distortion of what the word Epicurean originally meant. The word comes from the ancient Athenian philosopher Epicurus (341–270 B.C.E.). A follower of Epicurus is not necessarily one who seeks pleasure. The possible reason

¹³ The Age Of Reason, by Thomas Paine, Chapter 1, The Author’s Profession of Faith.

that someone may get this impression is that Epicurus dealt with a theory of happiness or how to obtain happiness, as many philosophers have been known to contemplate. Epicurus did not advocate the outright gaining of pleasure. He taught that men and women should live simply and avoid fame, extreme wealth, and other supposed desirables in reasoning that such items were actually detrimental to happiness. To quote him in regards to religion and the afterlife, "Death is nothing to us; once the body and brain decompose into dust and ashes, there is no feeling or thought, and what has no feeling or thought is nothing to us."¹⁴ In regards to happiness, he has said, "While some safety and security from others might possibly be obtained if you were to amass great wealth and power, safety, security and tranquility would more certainly be yours if you simply lived a quiet and simple life withdrawn from the world."¹⁵ A follower of Epicurean philosophy is not necessarily an Atheist, but someone with a liberal outlook on religion. An Epicurean is not one afraid of any religious afterlife, although not necessarily one who disbelieves in the afterlife. The only thing an Epicurean can be defined as is one who follows the philosophy of Epicurus based on attaining a wholesome happiness through simplistic living without fear or anxiety. Perhaps the most inspiring of all his writings was...

Let no one be slow to seek wisdom when he is young nor weary in the search of it when he has grown old. For no age is too early or too late for the health of the soul. And to say that the season for studying philosophy has not yet come, or that it is past and gone, is like saying that the season for happiness is not yet or that it is now no more. Therefore, both old and young alike ought to seek wisdom, the former in order that, as age comes over him, he may be young in good things because of the grace of what has been, and the latter in order that, while he is young, he may at the same time be old, because he has no fear of the things which are to come. So we must exercise ourselves in the things which bring happiness, since, if that be present, we have everything, and, if that be absent, all our actions are directed towards attaining it.¹⁶

I have, in finality, discussed all the terms that nonbelievers have applied to themselves as well as terms associated with the field of Atheism. An Atheist, Agnostic, and Freethinker are practically the same thing: those who doubt that a god exists. I am still more than just an Atheist, Agnostic, or a Freethinker; I am also a Materialist, as I doubt the existence of any supernatural phenomena. The difference sometimes seen between an Atheist and an Agnostic is how probable one thinks god is. An Atheist may think it is impossible or highly unlikely for a god to exist, whereas an Agnostic may think it is possible for a god to exist much more so, but these are commonly believed stigmas of titles. I have dedicated a chapter to determining the possibility of the existence of a god. To quote Bertrand Russell (1872–1970)...

I never know whether I should say "Agnostic" or whether I should say "Atheist". It is a very difficult question and I daresay that some of you have been troubled by it. As a philosopher, if I were speaking to a purely philosophic audience I should say that I ought to describe myself as an Agnostic, because I do not think that there is a conclusive argument by which one prove that there is not a God.

¹⁴ The Principal Doctrines of Epicurus, by Epicurus, second statement.

¹⁵ The Principal Doctrines of Epicurus, by Epicurus, fourteenth statement.

¹⁶ Letter to Menoeceus, by Epicurus.

On the other hand, if I am to convey the right impression to the ordinary man in the street I think I ought to say that I am an Atheist, because when I say that I cannot prove that there is not a God, I ought to add equally that I cannot prove that there are not the Homeric gods.

None of us would seriously consider the possibility that all the gods of Homer really exist, and yet if you were to set to work to give a logical demonstration that Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, and the rest of them did not exist you would find it an awful job. You could not get such proof.

Therefore, in regard to the Olympic gods, speaking to a purely philosophical audience, I would say that I am an Agnostic. But speaking popularly, I think that all of us would say in regard to those gods that we were Atheists. In regard to the Christian God, I should, I think, take exactly the same line.¹⁷

A Secularist wishes for the separation of church from public affairs; a Skeptic belongs to the philosophical school of Skepticism, thus admitting that no knowledge is true; a Humanist wishes to advance their own species over other species and upholds the values of the Humanist Manifesto; a Secular Humanist is identical to the Humanist, but has a rational, freethinking, or secular background; a Rationalist or Realist is one who approaches the question of god — or any question — with only the sole purpose of attaining truth through rational principles; a Naturalist being one who is occupied with the natural Universe and none other; a Materialist is one who believes only in the existence of the physical Universe and holds no belief in anything supernatural; and an Epicurean is one who wishes to live as the Grecian philosopher Epicurus has taught. These are the titles of the profession of irreligion.

However, there are names applied to nonbelievers which are meant in a quite derogatory remark. Pagan, infidel, heathen, heretic, godless one, idolator, blasphemer, etc., etc.. I think it is unnecessary to describe individually what each of these words mean. Robert Green Ingersoll remarks on his opinions of titles...

Call me infidel, call me atheist, call me what you will, I intend to so treat my children that they can come to my grave and truthfully say, "He who sleeps here never gave us one moment of pain. From his lips, now dust, never came to us an unkind word."¹⁸

Section III: Conclusion

I have made my position on this matter clear: I doubt the existence of a god and other supernatural beings due to insufficient evidence, but I do not entirely rule out the possibility of their existence. This god is defined as a conscious, supernatural being of immense power who is responsible for creating this Universe. My doubt in this god comes from its lack of sufficient evidence. I have given my position a title, while defining the titles of the related positions. I am an Atheist, but would certainly not object to being called an Agnostic or a Freethinker. Furthermore, I am a Materialist and I believe only in the existence of the physical matter that composites

¹⁷ "Am I An Atheist Or An Agnostic?: A Plea For Tolerance In The Face Of New Dogmas", by Bertrand Russell, 1947.

¹⁸ Atheism, by Joseph Lewis, section "Ingersoll's High Ideal."

this Universe. I am also a Naturalist and I hold the laws of science as wholly accountable for all phenomena that occurs within this Universe. When I approach the question of the existence of god, I approach it as a Rationalist and Realist: just as I approach any question, I seek for logical, rational, and reasonable answers.

Chapter 2: The Nature Of Faith

Section I: Introduction

It is important that I make it clear that when I speak of Faith, I speak not of the common definition of it, but I speak of its philosophical roots. Commonly believed is that Faith can be interpreted to be a measure of piety. Someone very Faithful would be very religious and someone slightly Faithful would be slightly religious. That is at least the context it is used commonly by society. However, when I imply the term Faith, I mean the philosophical meaning. Faith is the epistemological belief that we can attain knowledge by believing something without proof. It is this concept that I shall criticize.

Section II: The Fallacy Of Faith

I do not believe in god for the same reason I do not believe in Santa Claus; both mythical beings, one of adulthood and the other of childhood. God is the supreme being who created this Universe and Santa Claus is the being who creates the presents for children and delivers it to their homes on Christmas Eve. Both beings were taught to individuals by their community, or the authorities of their learning environment. With Santa Claus being the ruling power of the North Pole and god being the ruling power of the heavens, it is quite clear that they both are beings that live far away. With the concept of Faith being necessary to believe both; with a child accepting Santa Claus through Faith and an adult accepting god through Faith, it is quite clear that neither Santa Claus nor god have been demonstrated, nor are either demonstrable (I shall address logical and reasonable attempts to prove the existence of god in the following chapters of this work). The similarities between these two mythical beings could go on indefinitely. Both beings are magical and have supernatural powers. Santa Claus works his magic while individuals are asleep and god works his magic when individuals are dead – both beings need a state of unconsciousness in their followers to work. God rewards with heaven and Santa Claus rewards with presents for doing as they request; and God punishes with hell and Santa Claus punishes with no presents. The point has been clearly made: both beings share a near unlimited amount of similarities.

There are certainly apologetics to separate Santa Claus and god. To those who declare that Santa Claus has no evidence whilst god does, I shall address those evidences in later chapters. One may disagree on the first point that I drew: that Santa Claus and god are believed on account of authorities in your early life. Those who disagree with this point may argue by saying that god revealing himself to individuals is the only reason why individuals believe in a god, whereas Santa Claus does not reveal himself to individuals personally. First, this proposition is not backed with any evidence and the seemingly plentiful amount of discrepancies rule it out entirely. If god truly did reveal himself to individuals, then why are there so many people who believe in different types of gods? To quote Mark Twain (1835–1910), “If he is seeking after the Only True Religion,

he found it in one or another of the three thousand that are on the market.”¹ Surely, if a god did truly reveal himself to people, then people would not go to wars battling each other over different gods. Between being forced to choose a religion because of religious intolerance and parental teachings, there is nothing much that chooses one’s religion. Asia is mostly Islamic and Hindu and has remained in such a position for the last thousand years.² Europe is mostly Christian and has remained that way for the last thousand years.³ Religion is a question of geography. If god speaks to everyone individually and reveals himself that way, then missionaries, the prime reason why Christianity has spread across the globe, would be obsolete. Clearly, the religious beliefs of people is based on what their parents and community have taught them.

If one were to say that the same god revealed him to different individuals in different methods or different forms, then my first inquiry is, “why?” Certainly, the religionist may concoct one of many various different answers. They may say god is a particular nature who enjoys playing tricks in his followers, or whatnot, but it seems unreasonable, although possible. I may then point out that the natures of these gods are different. The god of Christianity and the god of Islam are significantly different beings, one defined by the Bible and the other by the Qur’an. They are completely different gods – not different forms of the same god. It could possibly be said that they were the same god in different imagery, but they are completely different gods in nature and in composition. Just as a child could have the same personality as an old man, such a comparison is made between the gods, but such an analogy is flawed, as the gods have completely different personalities. Also, what are we to make of religions with no god, as Buddhism and Jainism? There are Buddhists and Jainists who have religious experiences and claim that they are revealed the true religion by the divine. Not only does it separate the different gods, but the different types of religions. And what are we to make of religions with many gods, as Hinduism and Roman mythology? With completely different religions each giving a completely different, although still supernatural, outlook on the origin and workings of the Universe, it is quite clear that all the religions are not spread, developed, or revealed by the same god. The god(s/lessness) of these religions is vastly different from the other religions, and therefore they are not reconcilable under the same character. Through the countless and plentiful discrepancies, to say that god personally reveals himself to individuals rather than being a product of the environment is an error in the many ways I have thus described. To quote Percival Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822), “If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?”⁴

Another method for comparing Santa Claus and god is in their locations. Santa Claus is placed in the North Pole whereas god is place is in the heavens, both places conveniently located a distance that is extremely far away from us. In fact, I am sure that few people who believe in Santa Claus or god will ever go to the North Pole or to the heavens. The significance of both beings located far away is that it grants them an explanation for not being demonstrable. We may not travel to the North Pole, and surely we may not travel to the heavens. There are certainly methods for getting to these places. One could demonstrate Santa Claus by searching in the arctic North pole and one could demonstrate god by dying and searching for an afterlife. However, both cases are quite ridiculous, and to state that these beings live far away is simple to excuse their

¹ What Great Men Think Of Religion, by Ira D. Cardiff, (Christopher Publishing House, 1945; reprint New York: Arno Press, 1972).

² Encyclopaia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, Ill., Britannica Book of the Year.

³ Encyclopaia Britannica, Inc., Chicago, Ill., Britannica Book of the Year.

⁴ A Letter to Lord Ellenborough, by Percival Bysshe Shelley, 1812.

indemonstrable nature. For example, if I doubt the existence of person X in city Y, I can travel to city Y and visit person X, thus confirming or disconfirming my suspicion. Although Santa Claus is in much closer reach in North Pole and at least we have a general idea of where it is, god is in the heavens — the very place in question — both beings are extremely far away, thus disallowing the possibility of confirming or disconfirming their existence. Santa Claus, however, is at least within a demonstrable grasp and therefore may appear to be a more reasonable concept to believe in than a god.

It is certain that both beings, Santa Claus and god, have magical and supernatural powers. However, some may say that the difference is that Santa Claus has magical powers whereas god has supernatural powers. Although that may be true, it is irrelevant. It is a play on words, as both magical and supernatural are nearly identical concepts. The primary connection between both magical and supernatural that I so clearly wished to show was that they were capable of accomplishing a large amount work with methods that are incapable of usage by the natural beings of this Universe. A normal human cannot fly a normal sleigh and deliver presents to all the Christians in one night just as normal reindeer certainly cannot fly. Similarly, any natural being cannot create universes at the whim of their will. There is certainly proof that what Santa Claus and god do are unnatural actions that break the very laws of physics. Of course this is hypothetically. The gods and supernatural concepts of the various religions are certainly supernatural or magical. The various religions have proven this quite clearly...

[Judaism] Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

[Christianity] Matthew 1:23 “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel”—which means, “God with us.”

[Islam] The Cow, 2.28 How do you deny Allah and you were dead and He gave you life? Again He will cause you to die and again bring you to life, then you shall be brought back to Him.

[Buddhism] Fourth Noble Truth: There is a way to overcoming all suffering.

[Hinduism] Katha Upanishad, Part 1, Chapter 1, Verse 16: There are one hundred and one arteries of the heart, one of which pierces the crown of the head. Going upward by it, a man at death attains immortality. But when his prana passes out by other arteries, going in different directions, then he is reborn in the world.

[Roman Mythology] Prometheus gave fire to man.

Certainly, these verses may appear to any rational man to be completely absurd in the utmost degree! Who can comprehend of a god creating worlds, of a virgin who is pregnant, of someone being resurrected, of escaping all pain and suffering through an 8 step path, of immortality, or of a god who gives fire — a behavior, not an item — to man? I am not attacking the validity of the scripture, but at a closer glance it does look as though religion is a form of lunacy. I am simply trying to demonstrate that the various religions are certainly supernatural or beyond the natural ability of accomplishing their goals. Santa Claus is the same way. To quote a book in regards to the myth of Santa Claus...

Santa Claus is not required to visit all 2,000,000,000 children under the age of eighteen, for he does not (appear to) handle the Muslim, Hindu, Jewish, and Buddhist children on Earth. This reduces his workload to perhaps 15% of the total, or 378,000,000,

which based upon 3.5 children per household averages down to 91,800,000 homes. With thirty-one hours of Christmas to work with, according to John Michael Keller in *Skeptic* (Vol. 2, No. 3), thanks to the different time zones and the rotation of Earth, assuming he travels east to west (which seems logical), this works out to 822.6 visits per second. Assuming one good child in each household, this leaves Santa 1/1000th of a second to park, hop out of the sleigh, jump down the chimney, fill the stockings, distribute the remaining presents under the tree, eat whatever snacks have been left, get back up the chimney, get back into the sleigh, and move on to the next house. This means that Santa's sleigh moves at 650 miles per second, or 3,000 times the speed of sound. On land, conventional reindeer can pull no more than 300 pounds, but, assuming each child gets at least two pounds, the sleigh carries 321,300 tons, not counting the overweight Santa. Instead of only eight or nine reindeer, he needs 214,200 for such a load, which must tote 353,430 tons (or four times the weight of the *Queen Elizabeth*). It follows that 353,430 tons traveling at 650 miles per second will create enormous air resistance. The lead pair of reindeer will absorb 14.3 quintillion joules of energy per second, each. In short, they will burst into flame almost instantaneously, exposing the reindeer behind them and creating deafening sonic booms in their wake. The entire team will be vaporized within 4.26 thousandths of a second, and Santa will be subjected to centrifugal forces 17,500.06 times greater than gravity. Thus, a 250-pound Santa would be pinned to the back of his sleigh by 4,315,015 pounds of force. This, of course, is entirely credible to Christian children, who also believe God is in Heaven and one day if they are good little boys and girls they will be rewarded by seeing Him.⁵

Clearly, both the gods of the various religions and Santa Claus share the same attribute of unnaturally accomplishing their goals, and whether this be called a form of magic or supernaturalism is to argue linguistics; there is no meaningful difference between the two words. I have made this connection quite clear between both: that both beings are either magical or supernatural.

There are others who insist that Santa Claus is a myth that evolved from a Christian who gave presents on Christmas Eve, whilst god did not. Although it would appear that religions are built upon older superstitions of primitive man, with Christianity founded on the premises of Judaism and Buddhism founded on the premises of Hinduism, I will simply state that it is irrelevant. Regardless of whether or not Santa Claus or god came from older myths, to point out the roots of Santa Claus and the roots of god is not to excuse the fact that both beings are accepted on Faith without evidences and the primary reason being that both are beings are believed is because authorities teach them without evidence. Insomuch, the argument to separate Santa Claus and god through explaining their roots is dismissed: there is no relevancy in explaining where the myths of god or Santa Claus came from. At least, there is no relevancy in explaining where the myths came from in attempts to separate god and Santa Claus in efforts to prove that god deserves belief whereas Santa Claus does not.

⁵ Who's Who In Hell, under "SANTA CLAUS," compiled by Warren Allen Smith (Barricade Books, 2000). Permission obtained from Warren Allen Smith to quote his book. Also see *The Physics of Christmas: From the Aerodynamics of Reindeer to the Thermodynamics of Turkey* by Roger Highfield (November, 1999). Also see works by Tom W. Flynn, known as the *Anti-Santa Claus*.

Another similarity that I shown light on to was the fact that both Santa Claus and god will reward if you do as they wish. Santa Claus delivers presents and god brings you to heaven. To quote Thomas Paine in regards to invisible beings that reward or punish, "All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."⁶ Similarly, for not doing what Santa Claus or god wish, you are punished, either with no presents (possibly charcoal in their place, as the myth goes) or hell. What the various religions wish is quite different. Judaism will ask that you follow the Ten Commandments, Christianity will ask that you repent and accept Christ as your savior, and Buddhism will ask that you follow the Eight Fold Path. All these religions wish that you do something different to attain their supernatural effects and all of their followers have often given testimony of their religion's own supernatural effects. Santa Claus, on the other hand, is a being who only wishes that boys and girls be good. Edward Gibbon (1737–1794) puts it quite clearly when he states, "The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful."⁷

Thus far I have neither made attempts to show how Faith in either religion or Santa Claus is flawed. I have only made attempts to show the quite enormous amounts of similarities between both belief structures. I was hoping to show that if the foundation for belief in Santa Claus is unreasonable, thus rendering Santa Claus unreasonable, then if the same foundation is used for belief in god (which I have tried to demonstrate), then it renders god unreasonable.

If Faith is superfluous, since it may demonstrably prove the existence of Santa Claus or god, then what ought we base our knowledge on? Certainly, only the vice of reason may be acceptable in attaining knowledge. Through reason, demonstration, observance, cause and effect, through naturally explainable methods it is by which we can attain true knowledge. Faith is based on one thing: accepting something as truth without any evidence; and it is by this very concept of Faith that children accept the existence of Santa Claus and adults accept the existence of god, both figures with an astoundingly large amount in common. When we negate Faith, we negate all that which is illogical and unsupported, foolish and unreasonable. When we embrace reason, we accept all that is logical and supported, intelligent and reasonable.

By reason, I mean we ought only accept something that is logical, consistent with previous facts, and supported with evidence. When something is logical, it does not contradict itself. To be consistent with previous facts is also necessary. For example, we cannot all of a sudden find out that the first flute was invented 600 A.D.E. when we already know that it was first invented 200 B.C.E.. The flute can only have been first invented in on one date. It is surely possible that we may discover it to have been invented earlier for the first time or possibly later for the first time, but it will be one sole date, not two irreconcilable dates. Such would be a historical inconsistency, as there can only be one date when something was first invented, not two. The third requirement of reasonably accepting something is that it is supported with evidence. Certainly, something can be true without evidence, but reason is an epistemological system. It is an epistemological system insomuch that its chief purpose is to help us attain knowledge accurately with the highest chances. If we accept purported facts that have evidence to back them up rather than accepting any purported facts that are logical yet unsustained with evidence, we are more likely to find truth

⁶ The Age Of Reason, by Thomas Paine, Chapter 1, The Author's Profession of Faith.

⁷ The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, by Edward Gibbon.

and consistently so. Through reason, we have a higher accuracy of attaining truth, an accuracy that is higher than that of Faith.

It is certainly true that evidence is significantly helpful when accurately searching for the truth. If someone is on trial, would it at all be reasonable for the jury to convict them on Faith despite lacking evidence? Quite unreasonable it would be! So it is with god who has been put on trial. Certainly, though, god is not fighting any legal accusation, but he is fighting against those who would doubt his existence and the theologians and apologists across the world are his defense attorneys. Is there any evidence to support this god? There certainly has been evidence brought to the attention of society for god and I shall address that; but for a theologian or apologist to claim that we need no evidence for a god or any form of supernaturality is absolutely ludicrous. A prosecutor or defense attorney certainly would not ask anyone to convict someone on grounds of Faith. When someone is to judge something on truth, it should be through reason, evidence, and logic that they accept something as truth. When scientists search for answers, do they look to Faith or do they look to evidence? Scientists, at least true scientists, certainly do not use Faith as their method for obtaining truth. Charles Darwin (1809–1882) is perhaps one of the most brilliant biologists of the modern era. To quote this ingenious man...

I can indeed hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother, and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine.⁸

Nor must we overlook the probability of the constant inculcation in a belief in God on the minds of children producing so strong and perhaps so inherited effect on their brains not yet fully developed, that it would be as difficult for them to throw off their belief in God, as for a monkey to throw off its instinctive fear and hatred of a snake. I cannot pretend to throw the least light on such abstruse problems. The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us; and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic.⁹

Charles Babbage (1791–1871) was another great thinker in the era of Darwin and is accredited with developing the idea of the modern computer. To quote a passage about Babbage from Darwin's Autobiography...

Another day he [Babbage] told me that he had seen a pump on a road-side in Italy, with a pious inscription on it to the effect that the owner had erected the pump for the love of God and his country, that the tired wayfarer might drink. This led Babbage to examine the pump closely and he soon discovered that every time that a wayfarer pumped some water for himself, he pumped a larger quantity into the owner's house. Babbage then added—"There is only one thing which I hate more than piety, and that is patriotism."¹⁰

⁸ The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, by Charles Darwin, Edited by Nora Barlow, page 87, Section: "Religious Belief" (Norton & Company: New York and London, 1959).

⁹ The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, by Charles Darwin, Edited by Nora Barlow, pages 93–94, Section: "Religious Belief" (Norton & Company: New York and London, 1959).

¹⁰ The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, by Charles Darwin, Edited by Nora Barlow, page 108, Section: "Religious Belief" (Norton & Company: New York and London, 1959).

Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) was another scientist who did not have Faith. To quote him, “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.”¹¹ Thomas Henry Huxley was a Naturalist and scientist, and to quote him, “The deepest sin against the human mind is to believe things without evidence,”¹² and “I have no Faith, very little hope, and as much charity as I can afford.”¹³ Luther Burbank (1849–1926) was a botanist who bred high-yield fruit trees, vegetables, grains, and other crops. To quote him on religious matters, “The idea that a good God would send people to a burning hell is utterly damnable to me—the ravings of insanity, superstition gone to seed! I don’t want to have anything to do with such a God.”¹⁴ If there is a scientist who is close to Darwin’s influence, it is Albert Einstein (1879–1955) who should surely require no introduction. He was the German physicist who invented the Theory of Relativity, and to quote him in regards to religion, “I do not believe in the God of theology who rewards good and punishes evil.”¹⁵ Carl Sagan (1934–1996) is a recent scientist who is very popular and is noted as an explainer of science, and to quote him, “If some good evidence for life after death were announced, I’d be eager to examine it; but it would have to be real scientific data, not mere anecdote... Better the hard truth, I say, than the comforting fantasy.”¹⁶ Isaac Asimov (1920–1992) is another brilliant man who wrote 470 books on quarks, quasars, radiation, relativity, gravity, galaxies, and a vast amount of scientific knowledge. To quote him in regards to religion...

I have never, in all my life, not for one moment, been tempted toward religion of any kind. The fact is that I feel no spiritual void. I have my philosophy of life, which does not include any aspect of the supernatural.¹⁷

Certainly, though, there have been many scientists — although not necessarily many famous ones — who have made prominent discoveries and also had Faith in a god, such as Isaac Newton. A point I was trying to demonstrate however is that no scientist who has made any significant contribution to science has had Faith in his theory. With no Faith-based theory, many scientists found that the scrutiny of logic and reason ought not only apply to science, but religious matters, rendering many of them as Atheists and Agnostics. Darwin did not say that man descended from primates and that this was to be believed on Faith. Magellan did not claim that the world was round and that this was to be believed on Faith. And certainly, Albert Einstein did not purport his Theory of Relativity and declare that it needed to be believed on Faith. Certainly not! Their claims would be Quite atrocious if there was no evidence to support them and they would be dismissed if they claimed that Faith was required for belief in their theories. As rational and logical beings, their theories were based on evidence and logic. When we accept something as fact, it is usually on proven grounds. Scientific truths are based on evidence; historic truths are based on evidence; and mathematical truths are based on evidence; so why are religious truths exempt from this pattern inasmuch that they are not based on — nor are they said to require — evidence?

¹¹ The Great Quotations, by George Seldes, ed., (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1960).

¹² Ibidem

¹³ What Great Men Think Of Religion, by Ira D. Cardiff (Christopher Publishing House, 1945; reprint New York: Arno Press, 1972).

¹⁴ Address to members of the First Congregational Church, San Francisco, January 31, 1926.

¹⁵ Einstein as quoted in a memoir by *Life* editor William Miller, *Life*, May 2, 1955.

¹⁶ The Demon-Haunted World: Science as a Candle in the Dark, by Carl Sagan, page 204 (New York: Random House, 1996).

¹⁷ I. Asimov: A Memoir, (New York: Doubleday, 1994), page 13.

Scientific and historical beliefs vary from religious beliefs. When a scientific belief or a historical belief has the evidence pulled from them, we no longer believe those beliefs. We should, at least, no longer believe those beliefs. However, when a religious belief has its evidence pulled from it, then people still will not pull their belief from such religion (sometimes religious beliefs are formed without any evidence at all, but only on the word of authorities who rely on baseless assertions). I am not saying that it is impossible to pull belief from such doctrines, but only that it rarely occurs when evidence is pulled from religious beliefs. By Faith one may hold onto a religious belief, and it is often by baseless Faith alone that one believes in any religion at all. However, since scientific and historic beliefs stand on the ground of reason, logic, and evidence, they need no Faith. And this is true inasmuch we only believe the truths of science and history because of the evidence and not once because of Faith we may or may not have in those ideas. We believe them, surely, but by no regards are they believed through Faith. Religion is believed by the masses, surely, and it is not by evidence, logic, or reason, but by Faith. To quote Arthur Schopenhauer, “Any dogma, no matter how extravagantly absurd, inculcated in childhood, is sure to retain its hold for life.”¹⁸ Perhaps another impressive quote is by Thomas Edison (1847–1931)...

The great trouble is that the preachers get the children from six to seven years of age, and then it is almost impossible to do anything with them. Incurably religious—that is the best way to describe the mental condition of so many people. Incurably religious.¹⁹

The only conclusion that I can see is that any hypothesis — be it scientific or religious — must be supported with evidence before it is considered a founded theory, and only after enough evidence and proof should it be considered a fact. A scientist must have reasonable grounds to believe theory X. A jury must have reasonable grounds to believe verdict X. And certainly, if a religionist wishes us to believe in his hypothesis with concerns to the realm of supernaturality, he must present reasonable grounds to believe religion X. However, it is by Faith — not reason or logic — that the religionists asserts we should believe in his religion Faith, with concerns to philosophy and truth, is an abstract epistemological theory that has been able to prove nothing factual; it is by Faith that one can accept Santa Claus or god as truths of the Universe. If we are to find truth, then certainly it must be through reason, logic, and evidence. History has shown that it was been consistently through reason that we obtained truth, not through Faith. Science has prevailed over religion in regards to truth and knowledge. However, there are those who wish to defend this atrocious concept of Faith and I shall now address those defenses.

Section III: Arguments For Faith

The primary arguments for Faith are made to demonstrate that everyone — Atheist or Theist — has Faith in something other than a god. These demonstrations are done so to conclude two points: (1) that a Theist is justified in having Faith in god, because everyone else also has Faith,

¹⁸ Views of Religion, by Rufus K. Noyes (Boston, L. K. Washburn, 1906).

¹⁹ Conversation with Joseph Lewis on December 3, 1929, reported in Joseph Lewis, *Atheism and Other Addresses* (reprint New York: Arno Press, 1972).

and (2) Faith is necessary as an everyday function in life, and therefore Faith in a god (somehow) applies to everyone as well.

The first tactic for Faith — since it rather does not really qualify for an argument, in content and purpose — is to mock reason. This can be done in a numerous amount of ways. People could go on indefinitely with of a list of information that cannot be known empirically. One may say, for example, that we may not see the brain in a person's head. Another example is how a blind man cannot see stars. One of the more popular ones among Christians is to demand without expecting an answer, "prove love!" One that is commonly stated is to ask whether you can see the wind or not. Certainly, however, the obscure point they are trying to demonstrate is that knowledge is not all known empirically, and therefore that knowledge cannot be accepted as truth unless by Faith. When I say "empirically," I mean in the sense that something is personally justifiable. Person X, Y, and Z may say that this shoe is brown, but if you can look at the shoe, then you confirm or disconfirm through Empiricism the claim.

When someone tries to assert that we do not know X (love, wind, etc.) to be true and then claims we believe it, there is a discrepancy that it is to be observed. The discrepancy to be observed is that they claim that something is unknowable, or at least unproven, and then they state that we believe in it regardless. Was it by Faith that Biologists claimed that we have a brain in our bodies? Perhaps it was by Faith that scientists tested and measured? Or was it by the whimsical branch of Faith that Magellan concluded that the world was round? The answer to all of these inquiries is: no. The reason why people believe these things is that they seem logical, they are taught by authorities, and they are proven by authorities. However, two statements are delivered: (1) we do not know that X is true, (2) we believe X is true. We may even substitute the word *believe* with the word *know*, as we would take this belief with truth. We are given two irreconcilable sentences: we do not know X is true yet we know X is true. Surely, we may not be able to empirically demonstrate that we have a brain, but we surely can know that we have a think organ that highly resembles a brain, as we surely can think. We may not *see* the wind, but we can feel it. These things we hold to be truths, although they may not be personally demonstrable, are proven and held as scientific facts. To those who doubt these facts, they may challenge them and rewrite the science books if they are successful.

The move by Faith advocates to mock reason and logic is quite a ludicrous action to take. By insulting reason, it accomplishes nothing. It is to say that "reason has proven insane things" or "reason cannot prove these simple things," yet it makes its move further: "Faith is equally foolish to reason, so it is justifiable to be Faithful." Faith, as shown in the previous section, is incapable of demonstrating or observing truth. Reason and logic alone have been capable of finding truth in the fields of science and history. When reason and logic are responsible for finding proof in religion they find none. To demonstrate that reason and logic are incapable of finding truth is to arrive at the conclusion that information is impossible. It is not to conclude that some knowledge may be flawed and therefore we must accept a god or another form of supernatural on grounds of Faith; it is to demonstrate Skepticism, the belief that we cannot know any knowledge at all. Our method for attaining knowledge, it claims, is flawed, and therefore Faith — which appears equally flawed — then attempts to make its case.

In regards to the mocks of knowledge where an insensible person is asked to identify something that their lacking sense can only sense, these arguments require a little bit more of an examination. An example of an argument like this would be to ask if a blind man should not believe in stars or if a deaf man should not believe in music. I offer the counter argument: if a

blind man should believe what he is told about the parts of the Universe he cannot empirically demonstrate, would it be reasonable for him to believe the world was flat simply because he was told so and could not prove otherwise? If a deaf man should believe what he is told about the parts of the Universe he cannot empirically demonstrate, would it be reasonable for him to believe that there was no such thing as sound and that he was not really deficient in any way? No matter what this blind or deaf man may be told, they may or may not be inclined to believe it, and any decision would be equally unfounded. If a blind man should believe what he is told about the parts of the Universe that he cannot personally demonstrate (such would be the sun or colors), would that make it reasonable for him to believe whatever he is told about the Universe? For the empirical point of view, it is impossible for a blind man to know the truth about such matters. For a blind man to believe someone when told the world is flat or to believe another when told the world is round are equally justifiable decisions, as both authorities can hold no weight over the other. One could have pictures of the Earth as a sphere, but it would hold to no avail; what use are pictures to a blind man? Unfortunately, a blind man cannot empirically demonstrate the existence of such things as the stars or colors, nor can a deaf man empirically demonstrate the existence of such things as sound. To this end, their beliefs in such regards cannot stand on solid ground.

The mocking of reason by Faith is an unreasonable position to take. I am debating philosophically and reasonably. As a Rationalist, I wish to be presented with evidence and logic so that men and women may prove their claims about this supposedly existent god or other form of supernaturalism. What am I to make of a debate, if my philosophical adversary's best defense is, "You cannot see the wind."? Is the position of Atheism and reason destroyed with such a statement? I would hardly think so. In fact, the entire move itself to mock reason is ridiculously absurd to the highest degrees. In a scientific debate where scientists were arguing about the possibility of a new sea creature that could be harming the environment, would a similar tactic be reasonable? "We may not see the wind. Therefore, this sea creature must be damaging."? No qualified, respectable, or intelligent scientist would form his arguments in such a manner. By Faith mocking reason it becomes quite unreasonable, illogical, and dogmatic.

Another common approach to proving Faith is to claim that all have Faith. For example, a child has Faith in their parent, a person has Faith in their doctor, a business executive has Faith in his advisors, and so on. Similarly, a Theist will argue that we must have Faith in god through two methods: (a) just as we have Faith in a professional's word about their profession, we must have Faith in a theologian about god, and (b) we must have Faith in the scripture of god, because it commands it. To quote Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274)...

It seems that this doctrine cannot be defended through argument, for Ambrose says, "Away with argument where Faith is sought!" Faith, however, is primarily sought in this doctrine, for as John says, "These things are written in order that you may believe" (Jn. 20:30). Thus sacred doctrine cannot be defended through argument.

[...]

...it must be said that argument from authority is very appropriate to this doctrine, since its premises are derived from revelation. Thus one must believe in the authority of those to whom the revelation was given. Nor does this fact derogate from the worth of this doctrine, for an argument from authority may be the weakest kind

when it is based on human revelation, but it is the strongest kind when based on divine revelation.²⁰

In regards to accepting what a professional tells us on grounds of Faith, it is flawed for several reasons. Accepting what a theologian or apologist tells us in regards to the supernatural comes to several fatal flaws. Firstly, which theologian ought we believe? A Protestant theologian or a Catholic theologian? A Hindu theologian or a Jainist theologian? Certainly, if it is acceptable to have Faith in a Christian theologian in regards to the divinity of Christ, then certainly it must be acceptable to have Faith in a Hindu theologian in regards to the divinity of Vishnu. The error is that it proves too much information, and the information is irreconcilable with the other attained information. A Christian theologian may prove Christ as divine and a Buddhist theologian may prove Buddha divine, but both cannot be the same god in a Monotheistic outlook. Through the same method of Faith, we come at invariably many completely different answers. If we were to search the globe and look for theologians that belong to every religion, then we would end up with thousands of different answers that we make take on Faith. In fact, what qualifies a person as a theological expert? Is it mere belief in such matters? Certainly not. An Atheist could read the Qur'an, the Vedas, or the Bible and come to their own conclusions, possibly strengthening their Atheism. They would be equally qualified to the other theologians of the other various religions. To quote Thomas Paine in regard to Atheists resulting from Christianity...

Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason, and more contradictory in itself, than this thing called Christianity. Too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince, and too inconsistent for practice, it renders the heart torpid, or produces only atheists and fanatics. As an engine of power, it serves the purpose of despotism; and as a means of wealth, the avarice of priests; but so far as respects the good of man in general, it leads to nothing here or hereafter.²¹

An Atheist, however, may be just as qualified as a theologian, or at least could be just as qualified in such matters. This does not make their opinion better, but it only means that they are equally well informed. Ought we accept the word of any theologian of any religion blindly, thus arriving at one of a near infinite amount of possible conclusions, or ought we accept the word of an Atheist in regards to religion blindly? However, we could come to a logical and legitimate conclusion that to accept what a theologian tells us on Faith will result in finding no answers at all. Faith thus proves nothing. We ought to accept what is reasonable and logical.

What, then, do we say in regards to the Faith that we already have in authority figures? Certainly, this must be addressed. Two professionals may argue each other on the validity of their conclusions. Admittedly, evidence is a key part and if a professional can bring forth evidence and explain it legitimately, we may take the evidence which he has brought forward. The other professional may argue against the validity of such evidence. Through this method, different professionals may argue each other and with evidence, reasoning, observation, and demonstration; they may prove their theories.

The second method for demonstrating that we ought have Faith in authority is to claim that the Bible was written "to be believed on Faith," as Aquinas pointed out that the book of John said

²⁰ Summa Theologiae, by Saint Thomas Aquinas, Chapter 8.

²¹ The Age Of Reason, by Thomas Paine, Part II, Chapter II.

similarly. However, the fact that the Bible was written to be believed in no way warrants that we ought to believe it. The Qur'an, Confucian writings, and the Vedas were also all written to be believed. The Qur'an is surely an authority of Islam, the Confucian writings are certainly an authority of Confucianism, and the Vedas are certainly an authority of Hinduism. Why should we not accept them any more than we should accept any other religious scripture? In fact, if the Atheistic books over the century were written to be believed, may we not also believe them? We run into the same flaws as we do when we consider believing theologians due to their authority: they all come to different opinions. Similarly — just as we arrived at how we may take a professional's word (if they argue each other for validity of their claims) — we should believe books and articles based on the reasoning and evidence they produce. Just as I am sure that there are hundreds of books on theology written by many authors, there are also many books written on the topic of Atheism. Evidences by many theologians and religionists over the centuries have been offered as proof of the supernatural elements of their religion. It is within the later part of this work that I argue against their evidences and proofs.

A final attempt to reconcile the Atheist and Theist position that they both take their beliefs on Faith is to say that an Atheist *believes* that god does not exist or is not likely to exist just as a Theist *believes* that god does exist. This is stated insomuch to demonstrate that both an Atheist and a Theist have beliefs and — at least it is insinuated — these beliefs are equal in their validity. Some would say that through reason we know things and through Faith we believe things. However, I would not say that I know anything unless I was absolutely sure of its validity. The difference between the beliefs of one person and the next is that one may be verifiable through logic and reason. Surely, a Theist and an Atheist both have their own beliefs that ought to be respected, but in no way does this insinuate that they are equal in regards to validity. It is through logic and reason that I wish to prove Atheism.

Section IV: Conclusion

Through the seemingly large list of similarities that can be construed between god and Santa Claus — the primary similarity being that both beings are and have been believed on Faith — we come to the conclusion that Faith, as far as an epistemological construct, is inept. Both Santa Claus and god live far away, threaten and reward us, and both were learned the same method: through authorities. If we wish to know knowledge and truth, it is certainly not by ignoring evidence or accepting something without evidence. It is through reason, logic, and evidence that we can find truth. It was through these principles that we found truth in the scientific, historical, and mathematical fields. It should also be how we look for truth in the theological field. There are arguments for Faith, however. There are those who argue for Faith and declare that knowledge is flawed insomuch that we may not see the wind or microscopic organisms, and that we accept their existence on Faith. However, this is certainly not true, as there are scientists and biologists who have discovered the existence of such invisible things. They offer evidence and proof. Once they hold the evidence and proof, it is now on the Skeptic's hands to debunk the proof to the point where the claim may no longer stand. The point of this argument is trying to demonstrate something that is not empirically true and therefore is not true at all, however not all knowledge must be empirically demonstrated, but at least empirically demonstrable.

There are also those who argue for Faith by declaring that we should accept the word of authority, either the theologian's authority or the scripture's authority. The error with accepting a theologian's word on Faith is that the theologian — unlike the other professions — has no evidence. Other professions offer evidence to their claims. Furthermore, an Atheist can be trained in theology very well and that would qualify them as being equal in the decision to any other theologian. To say that the scripture was written to be believed is equally foolish. Books and writings must have evidence and reasoning to support themselves. I am sure that every non-fictional book was written to be believed, but if we believe them all we will encounter an enormously large amount of contradictions and discrepancies. There are opposing views on all the subjects of non-fictional books, including biology, ecology, and economics, and especially in theology and philosophy. Simply because these books were written "to be believed" in no right grants them a justification for Faith. The last apologetic for Faith is to say that both an Atheist and a Theist believe beliefs and thus they are equaled in legitimacy, but this is not so, as certain beliefs can be justified and proven through reasoning and logic whereas those that cannot be justified or proven through reasoning and logic — those beliefs accepted on Faith — are dogmatic. All apologetics for Faith stumble upon numerous and countless contradictions and errors.

Now that Faith has been debunked, it is absolutely necessary that this epistemological system remains buried. Let Faith rise up no more to make fallacious and unproven claims. If we are to find truth, it must be supported with evidence and logical reasoning. I shall examine and criticize the evidences offered for the existence of a god or supernaturality in the following chapters, dedicating one chapter to the possibility of the existence of god. Now that Faith has been incapable of finding god legitimately, will the evidences and proofs held for the existence of god stand examination?

Chapter 3: Origins

Section I: Introduction

Since the beginning of time when man could question the reality and origin of his environment, he has come to the conclusion in many cases that there is a supernatural being(s) at work. When one asks why they themselves are here and if they have a purpose, they may often come to religious answers. It is here, by examining the origins of us animals — human and non-human, as they are both equally valuable — that we come to a conclusion that involves some supernatural force. “How did I get here? What’s my purpose here?” These are questions asked since the dawn of humanity. Whether a religionist sees design in the Earth or in the stars at night, they see that god was the one who was responsible for the existence of this Universe. And it is this doctrine — that natural phenomenon can satisfactorily be explained with supernatural explanations — that I shall attack.

Section II: The Nature Of Supernatural Explanations For Natural Phenomena

Perhaps in the ancient times it would be considered reasonable to use a spirit or a ghost as an explanation to things. If something uncommon or unknown occurred, perhaps an eclipse or a flood, it may be associated with religion or spiritual things; in fact, it may be claimed to be a derivative from spiritual beings. Similarly, where men and women came from, where the Earth came from, and where the animals and plants came from are questions answered by religion in its own way. It is by lack of knowledge, however, that people everywhere point to religious origins. If one does not know the origin of the language, they may point to a god who delivered or may recall how Adam from the Old Testament is responsible for naming various animals. Surely, myths are simply that: theological speculation which attempts to explain natural phenomena with supernatural explanations. The reason why men and women point to supernatural explanations for the existence of natural phenomena is obvious: they do not know the natural explanation, or are at least currently incapable of knowing the natural explanation due to their current technology and knowledge.

The following is an examination of how various religious books explain the origins and workings of the Universe. They explain how various sciences work, but they do so in a supernatural way. The importance of the Old Testament is significant. It is held as a primary holy book of the Jews, known as the Torah. It is the foundation for the prophecies that Jesus Christ fulfilled in regards to Christianity. And its prophets are considered to be true by the Islamic religion. The Old Testament formed and molded the culture and tradition of the West as it manifested itself into the workings of various religions that many practice today. The Qur’an, however, is a religious book that remains religious only to those who are Islamic (or the Unitarian Universalists

who value every religious book). The Vedas are also important, just like the Old Testament. Like the Old Testament, the Vedas manifested themselves into the various religions of the East. The Vedas are the foundation (along with the Upanishads) of Hinduism. Sidartha Gautama, or Buddha, based his religion Buddhism on the scripture of the Vedas. One last look at religion came from the primitive Greek-Roman mythologies – as the Roman mythology are founded on the Greek mythology – as they try to explain the origins and workings of the Universe.

Old Testament –

Where did light come from? God made it (Genesis 1:3).

Where did the sky come from? God made it (Genesis 1:8).

Where did plants come from? God made them (Genesis 1:12).

Where did the moon, the Sun, and the stars come from? God made them (Genesis 1:16).

Why do we have night and day? God made them (Genesis 1:18).

Where do birds and fish come from? God made them (Genesis 1:21).

Where do mammals come from? God made them (Genesis 1:25).

Where do humans come from? God made them in his own image (Genesis 1:26).

Where did animals get their names? Adam named them (Genesis 2:20).

Where did the female human come from? She came from the rib of man (Genesis 2:22).

Why do women feel pain by giving birth? Eve was punished by god and the punishment just went to all of her children (Genesis 3:16).

Why don't snakes have legs? God punished them by forcing them to crawl on their bellies their whole lives (Genesis 3:4).

Where did the men and women come from who live in tents and raise livestock? They were born from Jabal (Genesis 4:20).

Where did the men and women come from who play the harp and the flute? They were born from Jubal (Genesis 4:21).

Where did the men and women come from who forge metals and make tools? They were born from Tubal-Caine (Genesis 4:22).

Qur'an –

Where did the universe come from? Allah made it (Qur'an 2:29).

Where did man come from? Allah made man (Qur'an 3:59).

Where do darkness and light come from? Allah made them (Qur'an 6:1).

Where did the Sun and the moon come from? Allah made them (Qur'an 10:15, Qur'an 13:2).

Where do thunderbolts come from? Thunderbolts are the result of Allah trying to kill who he pleases (Qur'an 13:13).

Where do clouds and rain come from? Allah sends them (Qur'an 14:32).

Where do cattle come from? Allah created them (Qur'an 16:5).

Where do asses, horses, and mules come from? Allah created them (Qur'an 16:8).

Why do people die? Allah causes people to die (Qur'an 16:70).

Vedas –

Where does fire come from? The god Agni delivers the fire.

Where does weather come from? The god Indra delivers the rains and thunderstorms.

Where do streams come from? The god Indra shattered a mountain, releasing streams.

Where do the Sun and dawn come from? The god Indra gave birth to them.

Where does the air, the forest, and the village come from? They came from the sacrifice of Purusa.

Where do the mantras [Rig Veda] and the songs [Samaveda] come from? They came from the sacrifice of Purusa.

Where do the horses, cows, and sheep come from? They came from the sacrifice of Purusa.

Where does the moon come from? It was born of Purusa's mind.

Where does the Sun come from? It was born of Purusa's eye.

Where do the gods Indra and Agni come from? They are born of Purusa's mouth.

Where does wind [or the god Vayu] come from? It is born of Purusa's breath.

Where do the heavens come from? They arose from Purusa's head.

Where does the Earth come from? It is born of the feet of Purusa.¹

Greek-Roman Mythology —

Why does the Sun go across the sky? The god Apollo pulls it across on his chariot.

Why do plants grow? The god Ceres causes them to grow.

Why are there storms and rain? The god Jupiter causes them.

Where did warriors, poetry, medicine, wisdom, commerce, crafts, and music come from? The god Minerva created and invented them.

Where do the precious metals of gold, silver, and tin come from? The god Pluto put them in the Earth.

Why do people fall in love? The god Cupid is responsible for persons falling in love with each other.

Where does fire come from? The god Prometheus gave it to man.

There may be arguments, however. Some people, the Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Roman and Greek religionists, etc., may argue that these verses have symbolic meaning. However, I am not arguing for the meaning of the verse, nor am I attempting to point out contradictions. I am simply pointing to statements that indicate a sort of supernatural explanation for natural phenomena that we can explain naturally today. The first believers of these religious verses took their meaning as a literal one. They truly believed that when they saw the Sun, it was the eye of Purusa, if they were to mine silver that it was placed there by Pluto, or that the origin of the female is from the rib bone of man. Surely, no educated man can believe these verses. If a man were to walk into a musical instrument shop and state, "I think my daughter is descended from Jubal, and I want to buy her a flute since she will be able to play it," he certainly would not be considered intelligent. If a man were to witness a fire and proclaim, "The workings of this fire are caused by Agni, let us praise him," he would not be considered intelligent either. The capability of playing an instrument certainly does not come from being descended from Jubal because it is from skill, practice, and talent. Fires do not burn because they are willed to burn by Agni because a fire is caused by molecules and atoms vibrating. Intelligent and learned men and women will not consider these supernatural explanations as satisfactory for natural phenomena. In the ancient times, fire was a mystery. By Hinduism it is claimed that it was caused by a god. By Greek-Roman mythology, it is claimed that it was given to man by Prometheus. Other natural phenomenon, such as lightning bolts, are explained by religions, such as when the Qur'an claims that Allah is the cause of the lightning bolts. However, the truth is that lightning bolts are caused

¹ The scripture I received these Vedic answers in is the Rig Veda, translated by Michael Myers. However, I am sure that there are many who will disagree with my interpretation of the Rig Veda. The error is that the contradictions and the discrepancies of this religious book are overflowing. It states clearly that Agni creates fire, but then it later says that Indra creates the fire between two stones. It also states that from the sacrifice of Purusa came air, but then later states that Purusa created air from his nostrils. I interpreted it as best as I could.

by a build up of positive and negative electrons. Science has discovered natural explanations to natural phenomena whereas religion has discovered superfluous and unfounded explanations of the supernatural to explain natural phenomena. I will choose the truth of science over the dogma of religion.

Ignorance breeds religion. When men and women do not know what causes natural phenomena, they claim some sort of supernatural explanation. Although no intelligent man will accept literally the origins of any religious scripture, they may claim that a god is responsible for creating the Universe and our origins. To claim that god created the Universe is just one rung on the ladder lower than to claim that a god creates fire, the animals, and love, all through mythological and supernatural assertions. To claim that a god created the Universe is no explanation, certainly, just as to claim that plants growing is the workings of the god Ceres is no explanation at all. Science has discovered that plants certainly do not grow because of a mythological god. Plants grow because they get energy from the Sun and develop with that energy. Science has proved fruitful in the explanations of the Universe. There is no reason to drop science so that one may embrace unfounded theological speculation, as with theological or mythological speculation and assertion, nothing is learned. "Where did we animals come from? Where did the matter come from? Why are we here?" These are answers that only science is capable of answering. All theological efforts to explain natural existence through supernatural speculation have failed and were entirely based on the guesswork of what primitive man could not explain naturally. To quote Baron D'Holbach (1723–1789), "If the ignorance of nature gave birth to gods, the knowledge of nature is calculated to destroy them."² Arthur Schopenhauer was one person who was well aware of religion being an inefficient toy of cavemen to explain the origin of the Universe. To quote Schopenhauer...

Religions are like glowworms; they shine only when it is dark. A certain amount of general ignorance is the condition of all religions, the element in which alone they can exist. And as soon as astronomy, natural science, geology, history, and knowledge of countries and peoples have spread their light broadcast, and philosophy finally is permitted to say a word, every faith founded on miracles and revelation must disappear.³

One of Robert Green Ingersoll's most popular speeches was *The Ghosts*. In it, he talked of how ghosts and gods were used as explanations to natural phenomenon. The ghosts were used in various fields of knowledge to explain the workings of that field of knowledge. To quote Ingersoll in the speech...

From these ghosts, our fathers received information. They were the schoolmasters of our ancestors. They were the scientists and philosophers, the geologists, legislators, astronomers, physicians, metaphysicians and historians of the past. For ages these ghosts were supposed to be the only source of real knowledge. They inspired men to write books, and the books were considered sacred. If facts were found to be inconsistent with these books, so much the worse for the facts, and especially for

² *The System of Nature*, by Baron D'Holbach, page 49.

³ "Religion — A Dialogue," reprinted in *The Works of Schopenhauer*, edited by Will Durant (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing, 1955), page 485.

their discoverers. It was then, and still is, believed that these books are the basis of the idea of immortality; that to give up these volumes, or rather the idea that they are inspired, is to renounce the idea of immortality.⁴

“Let the ghosts go. We will worship them no more. Let them cover their eyeless sockets with their fleshless hands and fade forever from the imaginations of men.” — Robert Green Ingersoll⁵

Section III: The Design And Creation Of And For God

The origin of the Universe is often attributed to the existence of a god or other supernatural beings. Along with the origin, many purport the design of the Universe is responsible to a deity or other supernatural being. The existence of the Universe is one part attributed to a god and the method of how it exists — its design — is another part attributed to a god. The design and creation of the world are commonly purported reasons to the existence of god. The Deist Ethan Allen (1738–1789) puts it quite eloquently in his book...

We know that earth, water, fire and air, in their various compositions subserve us, and we also know that these elements are devoid of reflection, reason, or design; from whence we may easily infer, that a wise, understanding, and designing being has ordained them to be thus subservient. Could blind chance constitute order and decorum, and consequently a providence? That wisdom, order, and design should be the production of nonentity, or of chaos, confusion, and old night, is too absurd to deserve a serious confutation, for it supposeth that there may be effects without a cause, viz. produced by nonentity, or that chaos and confusion could produce the effects of power, wisdom, and goodness. Such absurdities as these we must assent to, or subscribe to the doctrine of a self-existent and providential being.⁶

Despite the fact that Ethan Allen was in error when he believed that matter was in the composition of earth, water, fire, and air, he makes his point clear: the matter in this Universe exists and for matter to exist, it needs a creator. He then associates design with matter by stating that matter can form wisdom, order, and design. If there was not a god, he states, then there would be nothing but “the production of nonentity, or of chaos, confusion, and old night.” Allow me to simplify the first proof for god: that the existence of matter indicates a creator of it...

Premise One: Everything that exists needs a creator.

Premise Two: Matter exists.

Conclusion: Therefore, god created matter.

On the first premise, it claims that everything that exists needs a creator. If that is true, then what conceivable being could have created god? Certainly, whereas I am left to explain the origin of this tangible and natural Universe, the Theist is left to explain the origin of a god who may create a slew of Universes at the whim of his will! What is more probable? A simple Universe constituted of natural and explainable matter, or an infinitely complex god constituted of supernatural and unexplainable matter? If I were to pick what is more likely to exist, then certainly I

⁴ The Ghosts, by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1877

⁵ Ibidem

⁶ Reason: The Only Oracle Of Man, Chapter 1, Section 2, by Ethan Allen, 1852.

would assume that it is more likely for there to be a natural and explainable Universe than this unexplainable and supernatural god. The error with claiming that god is responsible for creating the Universe is that it creates a larger hole than it intended to fill: in explaining the origin and workings of the Universe, it holds no explanation for itself. To quote Percy Bysshe Shelley, “It is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive of a Being beyond its limits capable of creating.”⁷ I have two questions. First, who created god? Second, why may not this explanation be held to the existence of the Universe?

There will be those who argue that god has always existed for eternity. However, that answers nothing, as I could place the same explanation to the origin and existence of the Universe. The first premise of the creation argument is that everything that exists needs a creator. There may be those testimonies that claim, “I cannot conceive that this world is without a creator or author,” but these bother me little. It is simply a confession of ignorance. If it happens that the world is without a creator or author, would that go so far as to be disregarded by the believer and would they continue to believe in a god despite lack of evidence? Possibly so, but it is all a question of how open minded the individual is. The fact of the matter is, if someone is incapable of believing this Universe exists without a god, then how intelligible would be the idea that this god who is infinitely beyond the Universe can exist without being created? Quite unintelligible.

There is the more common and more popular explanation of god by stating god had created himself. The ancient myth of the Sun god Ra goes to say that Ra was a dung beetle who rolled himself (as dung beetles reproduce by a mother dung beetle rolling her eggs in a dung ball). However, this explanation for a god falls victim to numerous problems. Have you ever witnessed abstruse creatures appearing from nowhere and then after interrogating them, they claimed to have created themselves? I seriously doubt that anyone can lay claim to such phenomenon. To create something is an action and before any action is committed by any entity, this entity must first exist. A god cannot create himself, as to create anything the god must already be in existence, and if the god were to create himself it would mean that he was not in existence to create, and therefore could not create himself. A similar analogy can be brought between a person and their car. If you wish to get to your car, would you drive your car to your car? You could not, as you would not have your car. Before you could drive, you would need to be at your car, and say that you drove to your car would imply that you did not have your car (as you drove to your car), and therefore you could not drive to your car. Similarly, could someone exist to create themselves, by creating themselves? Certainly not.

There is one last argument that claims a god can exist independent of other gods yet a Universe can only exist as dependent upon a god – or that god doesn’t need a creator and the Universe does -, but this is through an illogical course of reasoning. This argument goes so far as to say that god has created the laws of logic and therefore he may break these laws of logic as well. However, I believe this argument is reserved for the mentally inept, as many of the people who purport this argument know nothing on the workings of logic or mechanics in this Universe. At the National Academy of Science, 95% of the biologists, 90% of the scientists, and 85% of the mathematicians do not believe in a personal god that answers prayers.⁸ Assuming that god did create the laws of logic, in no way does this entitle him to break them. Can the man who invented

⁷ Percy Bysshe Shelley, Shelley’s Notes to Queen Mab.

⁸ *Scientific American*, “Scientists and Religion in America,” by Edward J Larson and Larry Witham, September 1999 edition, page 89.

the guillotine go through the process of guillotining and survive? Can the man who invented the gun shoot himself in the head and survive? If not, why may not a god create the laws of logic without thus killing himself in the process? Certainly, a god could not break the laws of logic simply because he is the creator of them. And just what would we hold the creation of these laws to be? Certainly, to create is a naturally action accountable through scientific laws. If god creates these laws of logic, is it not the usage of a law already in effect — the law of creation? Such a law may not exist today, but for a god to create the laws of science and logic is a demonstration of the currently existing laws of science and logic, and therefore it is not necessarily an original creation. The flaw remains, however: a god cannot break the laws of logic simply because he had created them, just as the man who invented the gun may not shoot himself and survive.

One last argument offered for the idea that god existed and the Universe needed a creator is not to claim that god did something special, but to separate god from the Universe. The argument claims that god is supernatural whereas the Universe is natural and this difference is enough for god to need no creator and matter to need a creator. However, the error in this argument should be obvious: it presupposes the nature of the very thing that is in question! I could say, for example, the difference between invisible, pink unicorns (IPUs) and the Earth is that the IPU is magical and therefore could create itself and the Earth. Certainly, there *could* be a god who is supernatural and created the world just like there *could* be an invisible, pink unicorn that is magical and created the world. However, modern science is yet to come across anything that is either supernatural or magical. The difference of one being supernatural and one being natural is certainly no difference at all. A difference, yes, but not a relevant difference, nor even an evidenced or proven difference. There is no proof of a god existing because this god is supernatural. I defined the characteristic of a god in chapter one as being a supernatural being, but being supernatural does not entail in any way the lack of necessity to have a creator. The term 'supernatural' simply indicates being beyond nature.

The existence of the Universe cannot prove the existence of a god, for such a connection would be the beginning of an infinite line of gods, all having created one another. The existence of matter, objects, and atoms is no reason to believe that it had to be created by a god or other form of supernaturality. Theism and supernatural creation, in this matter, are spawned by tradition and ignorance: people are taught to believe in the existence of supernaturality on account of the existence of the natural world, and the ignorance of the natural explanation for the natural world also spurs on religious sentiments. Supernatural phenomenon is yet to be discovered in the Universe, so to claim that god is supernatural and capable of creating himself is too much baseless guesswork. By accepting an unknown, unseen god for the existence of the Universe, then we can rest assured that the true, scientific explanation for the origin of the Universe will remain undiscovered.

The argument from design can come in various forms, but it fails to the same error as does the argument from creation. If existence requires a creator, just like the Universe exists and many purport that god created this Universe, then god himself must have a creator. Similarly, if existence requires a designer, just like the Universe may have a particular design and many purport that god designed this Universe, then god himself must have a designer. Where this design may be found lies within many fields. Some suggest that the way life exists suggests design, but Charles Darwin has refuted that position and reasonably well. To quote him...

The old argument of design in nature, as given by Paley, which formerly seemed to me so conclusive, fails, now that the law of natural selection has been discovered. We can no longer argue that, for instance, the beautiful hinge of a bivalve shell must have been made by an intelligent being, like the hinge of a door by a man. There seems to be no more design in the variability of organic beings and in the action of natural selection, than in the course which the wind blows. Everything in nature is a result of fixed laws.⁹

Everything within the world of life exists through the law of Natural Selection. There is also a Teleological argument. The Teleological argument goes so far as to claim that everything wishes to obtain an end. It also fails the same flaw: those organisms which did not wish to obtain the proper ends, such as food and mating that would progress their species, perished and their genes did not survive their death. If working towards a goal is a sign or proof that there is someone who created you, and god similarly worked toward the goal and end of creating us animals, would that not stand enough as ample evidence of a god having created the god who created us? Surely, it ends up with an endless line of different gods, all responsible for creating each other that goes on indefinitely.

The Analogical argument is another poorly construed argument for proof on the design of the Universe. It goes so far as to claim that man-made items resemble natural items. However, this is just not so. Rocks are formed by volcanoes spewing magma and the lava then hardening. Plants and animals are formed through the processes of Evolution and Natural Selection. The Sun formed by large masses of Hydrogen and Helium atoms being drawn together through the law of universal gravitation and the atoms were placed there through the Big Bang. However, a hammer is formed by a smelter having smelted a hammer, or through a modern assembly line. Books are made by trees being manufactured into paper, then printed on, and finally being glued together. Certainly, there is no correlation between these man-made objects and these naturally-made objects that would prove that there is design in nature that can be attributed to a god or any supernatural being, and even if so, it would lie open the question of who had designed god so capable of designing this Universe.

A final argument of design goes to claim that if the Universe exists because of chance and not divinity, then the Universe could have taken on any form. The Universe, this argument claims, could be one of billions of possibilities. Perhaps instead of the Earth being the 7,926.41 miles (12,756.32 kilometers) in diameter at the Equator that it is today, it may have been 9,000 miles in diameter at the Equator. Perhaps instead of there being 24 hours in a day, there would be 28. These are all possibilities that the Universe could have taken on. This argument furthers itself by stating that simply because a possibility of the nature of the Universe is chosen, because the Universe is the way it is and not one of the billions of other possibilities it is not, there is enough proof for a divine being having intervened and designed it. The Universe could have been one of billions of things and therefore, claims this argument, and since it is one of these things, it is therefore designed. Consider this, however: if it rains, a drop of rain has the probability to land almost anywhere. Since there are so many possibilities as to where it may land, does that

⁹ The Autobiography of Charles Darwin, by Charles Darwin, Edited by Nora Barlow, page 87, Section: "Religious Belief" (Norton & Company: New York and London, 1959).

mean that divine intervention is necessary to direct each drop of water, since it has so many possibilities? It would be quite irrational and credulous to say so.¹⁰

The design and creation arguments fail inasmuch that they firstly claim that everything needs a designer or creator and then purport that god is this designer and creator of the Universe, yet it fails to analyze the error that if the Universe needs a creator, then certainly a god would need a creator or designer. Even if a god or form of supernaturality is responsible for creating or designing this Universe, there is no proof that this god is a conscious or animate being, and there is certainly no proof that this god is still alive today. The animalia of Earth could simply be an experiment by a highly advanced alien race. The error with these arguments that the Universe is proof of god is that they create a larger hole than they were initially trying to fill: if everything existent needs an explanation, and the explanation of an existent Universe is an existent god, then what explanation is there for this existent god? God may become the temporary explanation to, "Who created and designed the Universe?" But then god becomes the item of question of, "Who created and designed god?" God, being infinitely more powerful than this Universe, would also require a grand and magnificent explanation, one that has not yet been provided and one that I am sure will not come about. To claim that lightning is the result of Allah trying to smite his opponents is ignorance. Similarly, to claim that the Universe is the result of god trying to create a world is also ignorance.

Section IV: First Cause

There are arguments that stem from the idea that there must have been a First Cause or a beginning point in time and substance. The supposed First Cause was what started everything. It was the "first domino" in the line of dominoes that is the physical workings of the world. To quote Saint Thomas Aquinas...

The first and more manifest way is the argument from motion. It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality... Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and, consequently, no other mover; seeing that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.¹¹

Here is a more simplified version of the First Cause argument...

Premise 1: Everything is caused by something.

¹⁰ Argument from: *Atheism: The Case Against God*, chapter 10, section III, page 271, by George H. Smith (Prometheus Books, New York: 1989).

¹¹ *Summa Theologica*, by Saint Thomas Aquinas, First Part, Q. 2, A. 3.

Premise 2: There is a First Cause not caused by something.

Conclusion: God is that First Cause.

The error with this should be obvious. The first and second premise so decisively contradict each other that it is a mystery that the First Cause argument was ever given any weight whatsoever. If everything is caused by something (as stated by the first premise), then the “First Cause” must have been caused by something. If not, then the necessity of a First Cause is invalid. Complete contradiction to the point of unbelievable absurdity!

There are, however, a few arguments posed in defense of the First Cause argument. Some say that “every action, except the First Cause” needs a cause. However, the First Cause is based on every action needing a cause. If the First Cause is simply an effect that had no cause, then why should other effects need a cause? The First Cause argument is founded on the basis that everything needs a cause, thus implicating a first one. However, if a First Cause needs nothing to cause it, then certainly, nothing else will be needed to be caused. Things will *just happen* without cause. In a line of a dominoes, for example, one of them may fall without being pushed; therefore there cannot be a first cause, because *every* effect needs a cause.

Things in this world do not move unless given power. Will a train go unless powered with energy? Will a car go unless powered with gas? Things do not simply move without cause. The “First Cause” — also known as “Unmoved Mover” or “Uncaused Cause” — is therefore a breach in the laws of physics. A First Cause would certainly be impossible, thus implicating god as impossible. However, it renders god impossible because god is claimed to be the unmoved mover, or the First Cause. If an effect may occur, it is because it is caused. No effect may occur unless with a cause. A First Cause breaks the foundation that it wishes to be founded on. It is commonly accepted knowledge that every effect has a cause. The First Cause argument accepts this, but then destroys its foundation by claiming that there must be an effect without a cause — a First Cause — and thus contradicts the science of Cause-And-Effect. Even if a god or a form of supernaturality is the effect without a cause — the First Cause — there is still no proof that this god is necessarily conscious or alive at all.

If a First Cause even existed, there is certainly no proof for one god of any religion reflective to be the First Cause. In fact, the First Cause is simply a First Cause and there is no proof if it is conscious, animate, and — if it was alive — if it still is alive. Certainly, the obvious and numerous contradictions of the First Cause and the countless errors, there is certainly no reason to purport that a god exists because of this poorly construed First Cause argument.

Section V: Natural Origins

Where, if not from divine graces, did matter and the universe originate from? Perhaps the first law of Thermodynamics may provide an answer...

First Law Of Thermodynamics: The total energy of a system plus the surroundings is constant.

The first law of Thermodynamics may also be interpreted as, “energy is conserved.” It states that matter cannot be created or destroyed. However, Einstein’s later theory of $E=MC^2$ claimed that matter could be destroyed, but if matter was destroyed it was converted into a proportional amount of energy, which could then be converted back into the same amount of matter. The

basic concept of the first law of Thermodynamics is that matter cannot be created from nothing and matter cannot be destroyed into nothing. From this proven, scientific concept I believe it is reasonable to conclude that matter — the substance of the Universe and the world of nature — has always existed forever and shall continue to exist forever in one of many various forms. My conclusion is based on the fact that we know matter exists today. We also know an attribute of matter: it cannot be created or destroyed. From this conclusion, we know it was not created and we know that it cannot be destroyed. Matter, as we know it, then inherits the nature of being eternal.

The Big Bang Theory is not a theory based on the origin of matter. The Big Bang Theory is based on how matter was spread across the Universe and how particular elements were formed. The question of “Where did matter come from?” is not what the Big Bang Theory attempts to answer (this is a common misconception of the Big Bang Theory). To quote a scientific article by Chris LaRocco and Blair Rothstein in regards to the Big Bang Theory...

About 15 billion years ago a tremendous explosion started the expansion of the universe. This explosion is known as the Big Bang. At the point of this event all of the matter and energy of space was contained at one point. What existed prior to this event is completely unknown and is a matter of pure speculation. This occurrence was not a conventional explosion but rather an event filling all of space with all of the particles of the embryonic universe rushing away from each other. The Big Bang actually consisted of an explosion of space within itself unlike an explosion of a bomb where fragments are thrown outward. The galaxies were not all clumped together, but rather the Big Bang lay the foundations for the universe.

The origin of the Big Bang theory can be credited to Edwin Hubble. Hubble made the observation that the universe is continuously expanding. He discovered that a galaxy’s velocity is proportional to its distance. Galaxies that are twice as far from us move twice as fast. Another consequence is that the universe is expanding in every direction. This observation means that it has taken every galaxy the same amount of time to move from a common starting position to its current position. Just as the Big Bang provided for the foundation of the universe, Hubble’s observations provided for the foundation of the Big Bang theory.

Since the Big Bang, the universe has been continuously expanding and, thus, there has been more and more distance between clusters of galaxies. This phenomenon of galaxies moving farther away from each other is known as the red shift. As light from distant galaxies approach earth there is an increase of space between earth and the galaxy, which leads to wavelengths being stretched.¹²

In regards to how matter has managed to spread itself across the universe, this is all fine and good. However, how exactly did life form? In 1952, Stanley L. Miller and Harold C. Urey, working at the University of Chicago, conducted an experiment that attempted and succeeded to

¹² *The Big Bang: It sure was BIG!!*, by Chris LaRocco and Blair Rothstein. Original Resources: Galaxies and Quasars, by William Kaufmann J. III. San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company, 1979. A Short History of the Universe, by Joseph Silk. New York: Scientific American Library, 1994. When the Clock Struck Zero, by John Taylor. New York: St. Martins Press, 1993. The Birth of the Universe: The Big Bang and After, by Xuan Thuan Trinh. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993. Also, NASA online.

reproduce the elements necessary to create life. The two scientists took a flask and reconstructed the conditions of the early Earth. When they waited a week after having added energy to the flask – which could easily have been produced on Earth through lightning or through the ultraviolet radiation of the sun –, the flask produced organic matter that was the building blocks of life. To quote Professor Fred L. Wilson at the Rochester Institute of Technology...

H. C. Urey felt life started in Atmosphere I. In 1952, Stanley Lloyd Miller, then a graduate student in Urey's laboratories, circulated water, plus ammonia, methane and hydrogen, past an electric discharge (to simulate the ultraviolet radiation of the sun). At the end of a week, he analyzed his solution by paper chromatography and found that, in addition to the simple substances without nitrogen atoms, he also had glycine and alanine, the two simplest of the amino acids, plus some indication of one or two more complicated ones.

Miller's experiment was significant in several ways. In the first place, these compounds had formed quickly and in surprisingly large quantities. One-sixth of the methane with which he had started had gone into the formation of more complex organic compounds; yet the experiment had only been in operation for a week.

Then, too, the kind of organic molecules formed in Miller's experiments were just those present in living tissue. The path taken by the simple molecules, as they grew more complex, seemed pointed directly toward life. This pointing-toward-life continued consistently in later, more elaborate experiments. At no time were molecules formed in significant quantity that seem to point in an unfamiliar nonlife direction.¹³

How, though, did complex matter form into cells? Professor Wilson goes on to state proof that complex matter can form into cells.

Of course, the step from a living molecule to the kind of life we know today is still an enormous one. Except for the viruses, all life is organized into cells; and a cell, however small it may seem by human standards, is enormously complex in its chemical structure and interrelationships. How did that start?

The question of the origin of cells was illuminated by the researches of the American biochemist Sidney Walter Fox. It seemed to him that early Earth must have been quite hot, and that the energy of heat alone could be sufficient to form complex compounds out of simple ones. In 1958, to test this theory, Fox heated a mixture of amino acids and found they formed long chains that resembled those in protein molecules. These proteinoids were digested by enzymes that digested ordinary proteins, and could be used as food by bacteria.

Most startling of all, when Fox dissolved the proteinoids in hot water and let the solution cool, he found they would cling together in little microspheres about the size of small bacteria. These microspheres were not alive by the usual standards but behaved as cells do, in some respects at least (they are surrounded by a kind of membrane, for instance). By adding certain chemicals to the solution, Fox could make

¹³ The History of Science, 17. ("Biology and the Origin of Life"), section: "Chemical Evolution," by Professor Fred L. Wilson at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

the microspheres swell or shrink, much as ordinary cells do. They can produce buds, which sometimes seem to grow larger and then break off. Microspheres can separate, divide in two, or cling together in chains.¹⁴

If animals — human and non-human — are not originated from a god's will, then where did we animals come from? I believe that the origins of cows, dogs, cats, humans, and other animals may be explained scientifically. The origin of these animals can be explained through Evolution. There are a few individuals who disbelieve in Evolution. There are Creationists who believe that the Bible should be interpreted literally as I described in section II of this chapter. I shall quote authoritative references in regards to the Evolution Theory. It is imperative to note that Evolution is based on Survival of the Fittest, or Natural Selection. To quote Charles Darwin...

Can it, then, be thought improbable, seeing that variations useful to man have undoubtedly occurred, that other variations useful in some way to each being in the great and complex battle of life, should occur in the course of many successive generations? If such do occur, can we doubt (remembering that many more individuals are born than can possibly survive) that individuals having any advantage, however slight, over others, would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind? On the other hand, we may feel sure that any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed. This preservation of favourable individual differences and variations, and the destruction of those which are injurious, I have called Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest. Variations neither useful nor injurious would not be affected by natural selection, and would be left either a fluctuating element, as perhaps we see in certain polymorphic species, or would ultimately become fixed, owing to the nature of the organism and the nature of the conditions.¹⁵

The point of Natural Selection that Charles Darwin was trying to make plainly clear was that organisms that have advantages fit to their environment will most likely live longer than the organisms lacking those advantages. Similarly, organisms with disadvantages of their environment will most likely live shorter than the organisms who are not disadvantaged. From the analysis of the longevity of life based on advantages and disadvantages of the body, it is conclusive that if the probability of mating and how many offspring one has is based on time, then those who live longer will have more offspring; thus meaning that the newer generation will be outfitted with those advantageous characteristics. The more offspring, the more they will live and the longer they will survive, until there are battles over resources and then organisms will fight each other for these resources. Through this process of Natural Selection, of the fit surviving over the unfit, we come to Evolution, which is the history of the process of Natural Selection.

However, as one species or race changes to become fit to its environment, it may take on entirely new characteristics. If an environment, for example, has a food source located deep inside the trunks of trees, then the birds that have long, tough beaks will survive as they can dig deep into trees and get food; whereas the birds that have short, weak beaks will be unable to get the food and they will die and be unable to reproduce. (In fact, Charles Darwin made similar notes

¹⁴ The History of Science, 17. ("Biology and the Origin of Life"), section: "The First Cells," by Professor Fred L. Wilson at the Rochester Institute of Technology.

¹⁵ The Origin of the Species through Natural Selection, chapter 4, first paragraph, by Charles Robert Darwin.

on the variations of birds when he traveled to the Galapagos Islands.) As organisms evolve and change over the millenniums, sometimes an organ of their previous species will be left intact and untouched. These organs and biological tissues are known as vestiges, sometimes called rudimentary conditions, rudimentary organs, or vestigial organs. For example, if there is a bird that flies in the air and eats flying beetles and the food source of the beetles becomes extinct, then the birds will need to find a new method of getting a food source. They will *evolve*. If this bird starts eating fish in shallow streams and through Natural Selection gains a better beak for catching fish, then that would be an example of Evolution. However, if the bird retained its wings – which it would have no use for since its prey before flew in the air whereas now it swims in the water – then the wings could count as a vestige, or a vestigial organ. There is, however, the possibility that the wings would aid in escaping predators, but I am excluding that possibility for the sake of establishing an example. To quote Charles Robert Darwin, “Organs or parts in this strange condition, bearing the plain stamp of inutility, are extremely common, or even general, throughout nature. It would be impossible to name one of the higher animals in which some part or other is not in a rudimentary condition.”¹⁶ In regards to these vestigial organs, he has also noted some of their existence...

In the mammalia, for instance, the males possess rudimentary mammae; in snakes one lobe of the lungs is rudimentary; in birds the “bastardwing” may safely be considered as a rudimentary digit, and in some species the whole wing is so far rudimentary that it cannot be used for flight. What can be more curious than the presence of teeth in foetal whales, which when grown up have not a tooth in their heads; or the teeth, which never cut through the gums, in the upper jaws of unborn calves?¹⁷

The book *On the Origin of the Species through Natural Selection* (1859) by Charles Darwin was full of an endless amount of evidence in regards to proof of Evolution. This proof can certainly be found in the amount of vestiges found in nature. To quote Darwin...

Rudimentary organs plainly declare their origin and meaning in various ways. There are beetles belonging to closely allied species, or even to the same identical species, which have either full-sized and perfect wings, or mere rudiments of membrane, which not rarely lie under wing-covers firmly soldered together; and in these cases it is impossible to doubt, that the rudiments represent wings. Rudimentary organs sometimes retain their potentiality: this occasionally occurs with the mammae of male mammals, which have been known to become well developed and to secrete milk. So again in the udders in the genus *Bos*, there are normally four developed and two rudimentary teats; but the latter in our domestic cows sometimes become well developed and yield milk. In regard to plants the petals are sometimes rudimentary, and sometimes well-developed in the individuals of the same species. In certain plants having separated sexes Kolreuter found that by crossing a species, in which the male flowers included a rudiment of a pistil, with an hermaphrodite species, having of course a well-developed pistil, the rudiment in the hybrid offspring was much

¹⁶ *The Origin of the Species through Natural Selection*, chapter 14, section: “Rudimentary, Atrophied, and Aborted Organs”, first paragraph, by Charles Robert Darwin.

¹⁷ *Ibidem*

increased in size; and this clearly shows that the rudimentary and perfect pistils are essentially alike in nature. An animal may possess various parts in a perfect state, and yet they may in one sense be rudimentary, for they are useless: thus the tadpole of the common salamander or water-newt, as Mr. G. H. Lewes remarks, “has gills, and passes its existence in the water; but the *Salamandra atra*, which lives high up among the mountains, brings forth its young full-formed. This animal never lives in the water. Yet if we open a gravid female, we find tadpoles inside her with exquisitely feathered gills; and when placed in water they swim about like the tadpoles of the water-newt. Obviously this aquatic organisation has no reference to the future life of the animal, nor has it any adaptation to its embryonic condition; it has solely reference to ancestral adaptations, it repeats a phase in the development of its progenitors.”¹⁸

Some may argue, however, that we as humans have no true rights over animals now. Instead of being god’s chosen beings — us having been made in his image — we are now animals equal to other animals. They may even argue further that humans are equal to plants, but I hardly find this acceptable: a dividing line between animals and plants is that animals are sentient beings capable of feeling suffering and joy, desire and pain. A religionist may argue that it was the fact that humans are spiritual and other animals are not that separates us, but clearly this is more of a reason why non-human animals are more advanced in this area. There will be those who claim that it since there is no god, that all animalia are equal. However, I shall answer: it is correct that all animalia ought to have equal consideration of their rights; regardless if a god does exist or not.

Matter has always existed, as far as science can tell us. The placement, location, and future destination of this matter can be known through the Big Bang Theory with its many evidences. The rising of life can be detected and known through the many experiments conducted by scientists, such as Urey, Miller, and Fox. The origin of organic matter used by life was existent on Earth in its beginning phases and this has been proven. The development of complex material to life occurred through extreme heat which causes this organic matter to bind together, almost forming cells. This life divides, reproduces, reacts to their environment, obtains energy and uses energy, and is composed of a cell or cells. The life forms evolve and adapt to their environment through Natural Selection and mutations which give them advantageous benefits (while those who have disadvantageous traits died and did not reproduce). Through the lines of rudimentary and vestigial organs, we can trace the line from where animals have come from; we have evolved from these lower life forms. Through these clear demonstrations, it is obvious that we can only know truth through science and not religion. Our origins were discovered by a scientific laboratory, not a religious church, mosque, or temple.

Section VI: Conclusion

We — as animals, not humans, nor as whites or blacks, or males or females, but as animals — must conclude that these divine methods for explaining our origins are completely inadequate.

¹⁸ The Origin of the Species through Natural Selection, chapter 14, section: “Rudimentary, Atrophied, and Aborted Organs”, second paragraph, by Charles Robert Darwin.

When early man decided that woman came from his rib bone, that light and darkness were formed by Allah, that fire is the result of the god Agni, or that the god Apollo is responsible for pulling the Sun across the sky, these men were dogmatic and could not explain the natural world with natural explanations. Man was incapable of explaining natural phenomena then through natural explanations, and therefore explained it through supernatural explanations. Certainly, however, today we may explain the origin and the scientific workings of the Universe through natural methods and there is no need for a god or a supernatural entity whatsoever. Science has been conclusive and provable in demonstrating the origin and distribution of matter, as well as the origin and distribution of life. John Burroughs (1837–1921) puts it quite clearly when he states, “If we take science as our sole guide, if we accept and hold fast that alone which is verifiable, the old theology must go.”¹⁹ Another impressive quote by Burroughs is the following, “Science has done more for the development of Western civilization in 100 years than Christianity did in 1,800 years.”²⁰ Robert Green Ingersoll speaks with triumph and glory when he addresses the Brooklyn ministers!

Only a few years ago science was superstition’s hired man. The scientific men apologized for every fact they happened to find. With hat in hand they begged pardon of the parson for finding a fossil, and asked the forgiveness of God for making any discovery in nature. At that time every scientific discovery was something to be pardoned. Moses was authority in geology, and Joshua was considered the first astronomer of the world. Now everything has changed, and everybody knows it except the clergy. Now religion is taking off its hat to science. Religion is finding out new meanings for old texts. We are told that God spoke in the language of the common people; that he was not teaching any science; that he allowed his children not only to remain in error, but kept them there. It is now admitted that the Bible is no authority on any question of natural fact; it is inspired only in morality, in a spiritual way. All, except the Brooklyn ministers, see that the Bible has ceased to be regarded as authority. Nobody appeals to a passage to settle a dispute of fact. The most intellectual men of the world laugh at the idea of inspiration. Men of the greatest reputations hold all supernaturalism in contempt. Millions of people are reading the opinions of men who combat and deny the foundation of orthodox Christianity. Humboldt stands higher than all the apostles. Darwin has done more to change human thought than all the priests who have existed. Where there was one infidel twenty-five years ago, there are one hundred now. I can remember when I would be the only infidel in the town. Now I meet them thick as autumn leaves; they are everywhere. In all the professions, trades, and employments, the orthodox creeds are despised. They are not simply disbelieved; they are execrated. They are regarded, not with indifference, but with passionate hatred. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of mechanics in this country abhor orthodox Christianity. Millions of educated men hold in immeasurable contempt the doctrine of eternal punishment. The doctrine of atonement is regarded as absurd by millions. So with the dogma of imputed guilt, vicarious virtue, and vicarious vice.

[...]

¹⁹ The Light of Day, by John Burroughs, 1900.

²⁰ Ibidem

I see that the Rev. Dr. Eddy advises ministers not to answer the arguments of infidels in the pulpit, and gives this wonderful reason: That the hearers will get more doubts from the answer than from reading the original arguments. So the Rev. Dr. Hawkins admits that he cannot defend Christianity from infidel attacks without creating more infidelity. So the Rev. Dr. Haynes admits that he cannot answer the theories of Robertson Smith in popular addresses. The only minister who feels absolutely safe on this subject, so far as his congregation is concerned, seems to be the Rev. Joseph Pullman. He declares that the young people in his church don't know enough to have intelligent doubts, and that the old people are substantially in the same condition. Mr. Pullman feels that he is behind a breastwork so strong that other defence is unnecessary. So the Rev. Mr. Foote thinks that infidelity should never be refuted in the pulpit. I admit that it never has been successfully done, but I did not suppose so many ministers admitted the impossibility. Mr. Foote is opposed to all public discussion. Dr. Wells tells us that scientific atheism should be ignored; that it should not be spoken of in the pulpit. The Rev. Dr. Van Dyke has the same feeling of security enjoyed by Dr. Pullman, and he declares that the great majority of the Christian people of to-day know nothing about current infidel theories. His idea is to let them remain in ignorance; that it would be dangerous for the Christian minister even to state the position of the infidel; that, after stating it, he might not, even with the help of God, successfully combat the theory. These ministers do not agree. Dr. Carpenter accounts for infidelity by nicotine in the blood. It is all smoke, He thinks the blood of the human family has deteriorated. He thinks that the church is safe because the Christians read. He differs with his brothers Pullman and Van Dyke. So the Rev. George E. Reed believes that infidelity should be discussed in the pulpit. He has more confidence in his general and in the weapons of his warfare than some of his brethren. His confidence may arise from the fact that he has never had a discussion. The Rev. Dr. McClelland thinks the remedy is to stick by the catechism; that there is not now enough of authority; not enough of the brute force; thinks that the family, the church, and the state ought to use the rod; that the rod is the salvation of the world; that the rod is a divine institution; that fathers ought to have it for their children; that mothers ought to use it.

[...]

This is a part of the religion of universal love. The man who cannot raise children without whipping them ought not to have them. The man who would mar the flesh of a boy or girl is unfit to have the control of a human being. The father who keeps a rod in his house keeps a relic of barbarism in his heart. There is nothing reformatory in punishment; nothing reformatory in fear. Kindness, guided by intelligence, is the only reforming force. An appeal to brute force is an abandonment of love and reason, and puts father and child upon a savage equality; the savageness in the heart of the father prompting the use of the rod or club, produces a like savageness in the victim. The old idea that a child's spirit must be broken is infamous. All this is passing away, however, with orthodox Christianity. That children are treated better than formerly shows conclusively the increase of what is called infidelity. Infidelity has always been a protest against tyranny in the state, against intolerance in the church, against barbarism in the

*family. It has always been an appeal for light, for justice, for universal kindness and tenderness.*²¹

In regards to the scientific evidence I gave to Natural Origins, it is best to note that I gave only an iota of all the science in the field of cosmology, Evolution, and the other various fields of information. I only gave what was necessary. Had I listed every available evidence in regards to Evolution, it would take up hundreds of endless pages. However, to those who are genuinely interested in Evolution, I have provided a suggested reading list at the end of this chapter.

The concept of design and creation through a god or supernatural entity is ridiculous and unfounded. They are first based on the necessity of being created or designed, but then claim that god is uncreated or undesigned. Contradictions galore rest within the theology that claims a god is known by the existence of matter, or the design of that matter. The First Cause argument fails from the same error. It is firstly based on the necessity of causes and effects claiming that every effect has a cause, but a First Cause does not. It creates contradictions and discrepancies that are irreconcilable with rational reasoning and logic.

There is no reason to assume that there are supernatural causes to natural events, and certainly no reason to assume we exist because a supernatural deity created us. We can explain our own origins naturally and logically. To invoke a god is to invoke superstition, and superstition certainly holds no truth or validity. As a scientist, a philosopher, and an animal who agrees with logic and reason, I find no reason whatsoever to claim god is responsible for the existence of this Universe. It is dogmatic to make such assertions of a god.

*“Give me the storm and tempest of thought and action, rather than the dead calm of ignorance and faith!” — Robert Green Ingersoll*²²

Suggested Reading For Evolution

On the Origin of the Species through Natural Selection, by Charles Darwin.

The Descent of Man, by Charles Darwin.

One Long Argument: Charles Darwin and the Genesis of Modern Evolutionary Thought, by Ernst Mayr.

Charles Darwin: A New Life, by John Bowlby.

The Darwin Reader (2nd. Edition), by Mark Ridley, Ed.

Darwin, Adrian Desmond and James Moore.

Evolution: The History of an Idea, by Peter J. Bowler

On the Law that has Regulated the Introduction of New Species, by Alfred Wallace Russel.

²¹ The Brooklyn Divines, by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1883.

²² The Gods, by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1872.

Chapter 4: Miracles, Revelation, and Prophecy

Section I: Introduction

The divine intervention of a god or supernaturality that may be viewed through miracles, revelation, or prophecy, is the reason why many people personally believe in a god. It is through seeing something that appears to be unexplainable through nature that many people conclude that god – or another form of supernaturality – is responsible for things that are not “naturally possible.” When a person sees these inexplicable phenomena, much of the time they can only conclude that they do not know the answer. Much of the other time, they conclude that it was divine intervention. Something may be so awesome and infinite, they claim, it must have been caused by a god or spirits. In this chapter, I will not analyze each, individually proclaimed miracle. I shall analyze and criticize the concept of miracles and divine intervention. A miracle is an act of god or spirits intervening with the natural world. Revelation is an act of god or supernaturality where a truth is revealed or confirmed. And a prophecy is a promise of a god or supernaturality that is fulfilled. Revelation by a god or a form of supernaturality is a miracle of sorts, so that is how I shall deal with revelation: by refuting the concept of miracles. It is these concepts – miracles, revelation, and prophecies – that I shall attack.

In the previous chapter, I discussed origins and the theories – both natural and supernatural – which attempt to explain the existence of beings in this Universe. The flaw with a supernatural explanation is that it is based upon ignorance, the lack of understanding of the mechanics of the Universe. The most primal form of this ignorance is a miracle: to claim that a simple (and most likely naturally explainable) happening was due to the intervention of the omnipotent.

Section II: The Nature Of Miracles In Regards To The Natural Universe

When something happens that is inexplicable, it is through science and not theology that we ought to try to explain this phenomenon. Just as to claim that plants grow because the god Ceres causes them to grow or to claim that this Universe originated from a god is ignorance, to claim that something unexplainable is divine just to explain it is also ignorance. We can understand as logical and reasonable beings that the laws of nature govern the cause and effect relationships of matter. If one were to witness a rainbow and then to claim that it was a miracle, it would be out of the ignorance of the witness, not out of the validity of the miracle. Rainbows are scientifically caused by chemical reactions. The true cause can be known scientifically. To claim that a miracle is responsible for an action is to be ignorant. It is obvious, then, that to claim a miracle is to admit ignorance the natural laws that govern the Universe. To quote Percy Bysshe Shelley, “Every time

we say that God is the author of some phenomenon, that signifies that we are ignorant of how such a phenomenon is caused by the forces of nature.”¹

There are those who will claim that prayer has power to cause miracles. The error with prayer is that it only *appears* to work although it has no real power. For example, if I pray that the Sun comes up tomorrow, the way it has for the past thousand years every day, and the Sun does come up, does that mean that the prayer is responsible for the Sun coming up? Certainly not. The Earth revolves around the Sun due to gravitational pull; thus what would appear as the Sun coming up. It is through science that we have identified gravity and the laws of nature. These laws of nature are what cause the bodies in this Universe to move and it governs their paths. If I pray for the Earth to revolve around the Sun, it is done in vain. Once again, scientific law is capable of explaining natural phenomena whereas theological speculation leaves us with no answers. Furthermore, if I prayed for the Sun not to come up tomorrow, would it cease to come up? I seriously doubt this possibility. A prayer may *appear* to work when someone prays for something natural to happen – like the Sun coming up in the morning -, yet a prayer fails when we pray for something unnatural to happen – like the Sun not coming up in the morning. Robert Green Ingersoll gives us some light on the nature of miracles and how they can be counted as valid. To quote Ingersoll...

When I say I want a miracle, I mean by that, I want a good one. All the miracles recorded in the New Testament could have been simulated. A fellow could have: pretended to be dead or blind, or dumb, or deaf, I want to see a good miracle. I want to see a man with one leg, and then I want to see the other leg grow out.²

I am sure that many people pray for certain things to happen that they get: a friend to get healthy from an ailment, or for some self benefiting request. I am certain that there are these situations where a person prays for something and gets it. However, the qualm that I have with these prayers being proof of a god or any form of supernaturality is that the prayer was in no way related to the supposed effect. A prayer absolutely has no effect on the rotation of the planets. If I pray for a planet to change its orbit or to explode, my prayer is not fulfilled. However, if a planet does change its orbit or explodes, or if anything happens to a planet's condition, it can certainly be explained through the natural laws of science. If it is 2:00 PM and I pray for it to be 8:00 PM later tonight, and time does go through its natural occurrence of passing, would that mean that the prayer is responsible for time passing? Certainly not, as the laws of science and physics are perfectly capable for explaining the natural phenomena of the Universe. To claim that things happen on divine account is to be arrogant. Similarly, if someone prays for their family member to get healthy from ailment – and the family member does get healthy from ailment -, it is rather due to a doctor's skill or a medicine's efficiency. It is through science and medical knowledge that patients recover. It is certainly not through miracles or theological speculation. In ancient times, all ailments were said to be of demons and mythological beasts. Also, our primitive ancestors also believed that these ailments were cured through a sort of divinity. To quote Ethan Allen...

Nothing is more evident to the understanding part of mankind, than that in those parts of the world where learning and science has prevailed, miracles have ceased;

¹ Percy Bysshe Shelley, Shelley's Notes to Queen Mab.

² *The Dispatch*, Pittsburgh, article: "Miracles and Immortality;" an interview with Robert Green Ingersoll, Pa. December 11, 1880.

but in such parts of it as are barbarous and ignorant, miracles are still in vogue; which is of itself a strong presumption that in the infancy of letters, learning and science, or in the world's non-age, those who confided in miracles, as a proof of the divine mission of the first promulgators of revelation, were imposed upon by fictitious appearances instead of miracles.³

If a miracle was capable of causing unnatural phenomena or of ceasing a natural phenomena — two things which are identical — then I may be inclined to believe a miracle. When I state “causing unnatural phenomena,” I mean causing something unprovoked. For example, in a row of dominoes, each domino moves because it was pushed. No domino will ever move without being provoked, or pushed. One may say that wind can cause the domino to fall over, but this is simply a different form of provocation, but still a form of provocation. If a domino falls over without being provoked to fall over, then this is an unnatural phenomena. If a domino is pushed sufficiently and does not fall over, then this is the ceasing of a natural phenomenon. If a miracle were capable of doing these things — of breaking the very laws of science — then I may be more inclined to believe in their existence. The error with the concept of miracles, at its primal core, is that a miracle is defined as breaking the laws of physics and logic through divine methods. If it is true that miracles are defined as breaking the laws of physics and science, then all miracles by their own definition are breaches in the natural laws of science and therefore are rendered foolish and should not be believed, unless one is akin to believing that a breach in the natural laws of science is acceptable. The Universe is governed by natural laws of science. The divine powers of whatever religion have no affect on our daily affairs. To believe that god may be responsible for the Sun coming up, for someone getting healthy from a disease, or from one of any other so-called miraculous events, is ignorance.

There are many arguments, however, for defending the concept of miracles. In regards to the breach of natural laws of science by god's or spirits' miracles, such as a domino falling over without being pushed or a domino not falling after being sufficiently pushed, one may say that god himself moved the domino. Nothing happens without a cause, this argument would agree, but the cause of miracles would be god physically causing it to happen; a rock would move, for example, because god moved it physically, just as a man could. Certainly, this explanation of the problem may appear appealing at first. It explains that rather than a miracle being an obscure calling or command of supernaturality, it explains that a miracle is the actual physical movement of a god. However, this position runs into problems. How does a supernatural being — composed of nothing except supernatural parts — move a natural object? All natural objects are measurable in their weight and mass. If something were to knock down a pole, for instance, what knocked it down could be measured as a natural object. For example, if it was a car, we could measure the speed it was going at and the size of the car; and cars certainly are not supernatural objects. If it was the wind, we could measure the speed of the wind; and wind is certainly not a supernatural object. However, if god is responsible for knocking down a pole, there is no way to observe this god committing such an act and there certainly is no way in which its actions are measurable. Until god is actually seen committing these miracles, or measured in some sort of way, then we have no reason at all to believe that this god is physically causing these miracles. It is absurd.

One may argue, in finality, that god does not answer all of our prayers for particular reasons. This seems ludicrous in its highest estimates. The Christian god, for example, could be held re-

³ Reason: The Only Oracle of Man, chapter VI, section III, by Ethan Allen, 1854.

sponsible by several thousand people for saving their lives, possibly from illness or a accidents. These Christians may believe that god saved them at one point or another. In what degree of righteousness, however, can god save one Christians from cancer yet allow millions of children to starve in foreign nations every day from malnutrition? How could this Christian god save one life yet condemn the rest of lower animal creation because they are born with four legs instead of two, just as the Christian god permitted slavery of the races?⁴ Perhaps the Christian god — or any god who poses as “benevolent” or “loving of its creation” — is so revolting and vile in nature that his regard for heathens is so less than his regard for his followers that he will allow heathens to die brutal deaths. In no respect do I mean to convict the Christian god alone of iniquity. Why is Allah so content to get his followers a closer parking space to a store when these countless famines across the planet rage with unending anguish? Why is Yahweh undisturbed to get his followers good luck at gambling when plagues continue to infect and kill thousands? If the miracles of these gods are true, then there would be no evil whatsoever in this world. There could be a tyrannical god who causes miracles only for his favorite subjects, but certainly not a benevolent god. Any argument that comes forward presenting that evil is necessary, a blessing in disguise, or some other theological dogma, cuts itself at its premises, as if there is no evil in the world, then certainly, there is no need for miracles.

Of course, the concept of gods giving miracles to only their followers and allowing infidels to die unaided only renders these gods as vile, disgusting, and completely unworthy of worship. There is no such thing as a benevolent god who leaves the infidels unaided. There may be a tyrannical god, but certainly no benevolent god. However, if there is a tyrannical god, then I would certainly see no reason why this god would perform any miracles at all. Certainly, however, there was a time when man was not advanced and a time when he needed miracles to explain why people got sick or got better and to explain why the planets moved. They were miracles, divine interventions, acts of gods. Clearly, this lack of science and acceptance of divinity is a clear sign that ignorance breeds religion, and nothing else.

There are those who propagate the concept of prophecies. They will claim that religious scripture has indicated that a particular event will happen and then they will claim that the particular event has happened. The first error I encounter with these prophecies is that they are quite vague to the point where they are unrecognizable. For example, a prophecy may be fulfilled when a war happens or a region officially becomes a nation. For a prophet to make a prophecy and then the prophecy occurs, both the prophecy of an event and the prophesied event are unrelated. Just as someone may pray for their family to get better from an ailment and their family does improve in health, it is no proof of a miracle, because improving in health is a natural and completely normal event. Also, it would also be natural and normal for a patient to die from an ailment. A miracle cannot be ascribed to a dead patient, certainly, as it is a negative thing when miracles are supposed to be positive. By what regards may one apply a miracle to a living and surviving patient, when both events are completely and equally natural? If a prophecy claims that a war happens, and a war does happen, both are completely unrelated phenomena. Wars happen because of affairs in politics and the will of the people of various nations. As time passes many

⁴ The Bible, both the Old and New Testament fully permit the usage of slavery. In the Old Testament, Exodus 21:20–21 “If a man beats his male or female slave with a rod and the slave dies as a direct result, he must be punished, but he is not to be punished if the slave gets up after a day or two, since the slave is his property.” In the New Testament, Ephesians 6:5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.

things will come to happen: famine, plague, war, political change, etc.. However, these things have natural causes. Just as a rainbow happens because of scientifically plausible explanations, a war or political affairs happen because of the cause and effect of the various institutions of government. For a prophecy to claim that a war will happen in the century is equivalent to a meteorologist saying that a rainy day will happen eventually in the month. The only difference between a meteorologist and a prophet is that meteorologists have a higher rate of accuracy. One could claim that, “One day it will rain, and this is a prophecy of Allah,” just as much as one could claim that, “One day it will thunder, and this is a prophecy of Vishnu.” Both are equally fraudulent prophecies, as they are based on natural phenomena, much in the way that miracles are.

Even if a prophecy, revelation, or miracle were indeed proof of a god or supernatural being, by what means can we interpret them? If a miraculous event explainable by no other way than a miracle happens, how shall we interpret it? One may say that it is the god Zeus who is responsible for it. Another may say that it is the god Ra who is responsible for it. And another may say that it is the god Christ who is responsible for it. The fact of the matter is that we cannot point to any one religion or another for a miracle. In fact, one could create a religion based on natural phenomena. If one were to claim, “When you see a river flow, it is a result of invisible, pink unicorns,” it would be equal to someone claiming, “When my daughter recovered from cancer, it was the result of god’s good graces and his miracles.” Both statements are based on ignorance; a river flowing, a patient improving, or any other natural phenomena is completely explainable through natural and scientific terms. There is no necessity to invoke dogmatic, theological speculation to the realm of knowledge — it simply distorts reality. We may explain the physical world naturally. Miracles, revelation, and prophesy do nothing to prove god or any other form of supernaturality, as all phenomena in the tangible Universe is explainable through scientific methods. I now end this section with a quote by Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)...

If this superstitious fear of spirits were taken away, and with it prognostics from dreams, false prophecies, and many other things depending thereon, by which crafty ambitious persons abuse the simple people, men would be much more fitted than they are for civil obedience.⁵

Section III: The Miracle Of God

Many will purport that it is absolutely necessary that a god or some form of supernaturality exists on account of miracles and prophecy. However, from the inconsistency of a god to cause miracles for a rare select and allow other dire situations to go unaided with no miracle, it would appear that god is simply an unconscious, erratic form of supernaturality that is governed by chaos. For a god to heal a child who has cancer yet let millions of children starve in foreign lands is certainly not a consistent, nor even a benevolent god.

The error with claiming the necessity of a god to explain miracles falls to the same scrutiny that claiming the necessity of a god to explain the natural Universe: both end up creating a larger hole than they were attempting to fill. For example, does it not seem miraculous that there is a god or form of supernaturality that may alter the physical Universe? Would it not seem as though

⁵ Leviathan, by Thomas Hobbes, the First Part (“Of Man”), chapter 2 (“Of Imagination”), 1651.

the existence of this god is based on a miracle of perhaps a higher god? The error is that to claim that miracles and prophecies exist because of a god or form of supernaturality is that god must have also been created by a miracle, and that cause of the miracle must have also been created by a miracle, ad infinitum. It creates an endless line of gods, each having miracled the other into existence. Thus, in conclusion, we are given a lengthy line of gods all having created each other.

Section IV: Conclusion

Miracles are ignorance of nature and the laws of the physical Universe. To claim that a rainbow is a miracle is ignorance of the chemical reactions that take place to cause the rainbow. Furthermore, for a god to break the laws of physics by causing a miracle is absolutely impossible regardless of the apologetics that attempt to excuse god. Prophecies are no mere mystical thing. To claim that something as vague as a nation forming or a war waging is equal to claiming that it will rain one day eventually. Rain, just like wars and politics, is a common thing and if given the proper amount of time, you will have a war, political upheaval, or rain. Prophecy, miracles, and revelation are based on misconstruing the natural laws of nature so that they appear to be what they are not. The concept of divine intervention is based on the ignorance of the mind.

Chapter 5: Religious Experience

Section I: Introduction

There are religious experiences that people will claim that a god(s) or some form of supernaturalism is responsible for. A religious experience can qualify as simply a wholesome contentment inhibited in a religionist or it may qualify as a major phenomena to religionists that has a sort of universality. I regard that there are two closely related aspects to religious experiences: mislead ignorance through emotions and mislead ignorance through improper sensory. On the first account — mislead ignorance through emotions — it is when a religionist may feel a leap of happiness and automatically attributes it to a god or a supernatural force and possibly when this religionist has something negative happen to them, they may attribute it to a devil or negative, supernatural force. This type of religious experience I regard as ignorance. On the second account — mislead ignorance through improper sensory — I find it somewhat more excusable. When someone has the second type of religious experience it is instigated through the mind and this phenomena is observed in scientific laboratories.

Section II: The Nature Of Religious Experience

If someone has a religious experience and they live in North America or Europe, it is called being Born Again and it is linked with the Christian religion. If someone has a religious experience and they live in southern Asia, it is called Nirvana and it is linked with the Buddhist religion. If someone has a religious experience and they live in Asia, it is called Enlightenment and it is linked with the Hindu religion. If someone has a religious experience and they live in Asia, it may also be called Satori and is linked with the Zen Buddhist religion. If someone has a religious experience and they live in eastern Asia, it may be called Wu Wei and is linked with Taoism. If someone has a religious experience and they could live anywhere, it is called Nirvakalpa Samadhi and is linked with Yoga. If someone is born in China, they will not have any religious experience at all, as China is officially an Atheist nation.

As it is obvious, the validity of religious experiences suffers from the fact that the religious experience of any one religion is not universal. If, however, the same religious experience was felt by everyone, then it would hold more weight; but the fact of the matter is that these religious experiences vary significantly. The significance is based no the conclusions of these various religious experiences. There is a sort of universality in these religious experiences in that they can be conducted universally to a degree. Surely, there is no problem with the religious experience itself, but almost everyone who has a religious experience goes beyond what they know — the religious experience — and claim that it is directly from a god of some sort. A religious experience is proof of itself and nothing else. It cannot be used to validate the existence of a god or any other form of supernaturalism.

I am sure that there is some rational reasoning in these purported religious experiences. When something dramatic or drastic happens to someone, they may claim that there was supernatural intervention of some sort. Some had claimed that the Great Fire of London of February 2nd, 1666 was the cause of Thomas Hobbes – one of the great infidels – living there. There are certainly many situations where people may be filled with so much love or so much passion that they conclude there is a god or supernatural being of some sort; and that this supernatural being is influencing their lives. The only qualm that I hold against these religious experiences is that people are so ignorant that they must uphold a divine presence as an explanation for their highly emotional experience. Many Atheists certainly do have highly emotional experiences and these emotional experiences can be explained naturally; no Atheist has concluded that their emotional experiences are caused by gods or spirits. Sigmund Freud was a psychiatrist and the developer of psychoanalysis, and he knew quite clearly that emotions were not from a god or any spirits. He explained that they were caused by the brain and not by spirits. To explain a natural phenomenon with a supernatural entity is ignorance. The highly emotional experiences and why they happen can be fully explained through psychological studies, which are a completely natural field of knowledge. There is no reason to presuppose that an entity exists in the realm of supernaturality for something that is natural and explainable.

There are NDEs (Near Death Experiences) and OBEs (Out of Body Experiences) which are also more full-proof evidence, as they can be experienced by everyone and everywhere under the proper circumstances. However, NDEs and OBEs can be reproduced with proper drugs and other effects. These two experiences take place when a person is close to death. Whenever someone is close to death, they will have an NDE or OBE. Scientists have traced the feeling to chemicals released in the brain. A researcher named Dr. Karl Jansen did experiments regarding the NDE. To quote the well respected scientific report...

The intravenous administration of 50 – 100 mg of ketamine can reproduce all of the features which have commonly been associated with NDE's. Intramuscular administration also results in NDE's, but events evolve at a slower pace and are longer lasting (Domino et al., 1965; Rumpf, 1969; Collier, 1972; Siegel, 1978, 1980, 1981; Stafford, 1977; Lilly, 1978; Grinspoon and Bakalar, 1981; White, 1982; Ghoniem et al., 1985; Sputz, 1989; Jansen, 1989a,b, 1990b, 1993, 1995, 1996).

Mounting evidence suggests that the reproduction/induction of NDE's by ketamine is not simply an interesting coincidence. Exciting new discoveries include the major binding site for ketamine on brain cells, known as the phencyclidine (PCP) binding site of the NMDA receptor (Thomson et al., 1985), the importance of NMDA receptors in the cerebral cortex, particularly in the temporal and frontal lobes, and the key role of these sites in cognitive processing, memory, and perception. NMDA receptors play an important role in epilepsy, psychoses (Jansen and Faull, 1991), and in producing the cell death which results from a lack of oxygen, a lack of blood, and from epileptic fits (excitotoxicity). This form of brain cell damage can be prevented by administration of ketamine. Other key discoveries include that of chemicals in the brain called 'endopsychosins' which bind to the same site as ketamine, and the role of ions such as magnesium and zinc at this site (Anis et al., 1983; Quirion et al., 1984; Simon et al., 1984; Benveniste et al., 1984; Ben-Ari, 1985; Thomson, 1986; Coan and Collingridge, 1987; Collingridge, 1987; Contreras et al., 1987; Cotman and Monohan,

1987; Rothman et al., 1987; Mody et al., 1987; Nowak et al., 1984; Quirion et al., 1987; Westbrook and Mayer, 1987; Sonders et al., 1988; Barnes, 1988; Choi, 1988; Monaghan et al., 1989; Jansen et al., 1989a,b,c, 1990a,b,c, 1991a,b,c, 1993, 1995, 1996).¹

In Philadelphia, a researcher discovered areas of the brain that become activate during meditation; other doctors in universities in San Diego and North Carolina studied how epilepsy and hallucinogenic drugs are capable of producing religious epiphanies; still, another neuroscientist in Canada fits people with magnetic helmets that produce spiritual experiences. All around the world, scientists, neuroscientists, and biologists are working together to understand what causes religious experiences. Powerful brain imaging technology has revealed what mystics call Nirvana and what Christians call being Born Again. It has been well accepted within many parts of the scientific community that religion is simply a component of the mind without an objective ground.²

Ingersoll also noted the origin and belief in immortality and religion in the natural mind. The belief in immortality, he thought, would last forever. To quote the great romanticist...

The idea of immortality, that like a sea has ebbd and flowd in the human heart, with its countless waves of hope and fear, beating against the shores and rocks of time and fate, was not born of any book, nor of any creed, nor of any religion. It was born of human affection, and it will continue to ebb and flow beneath the mists and clouds of doubt and darkness as long as love kisses the lips of death. It is the rainbow – Hope shining upon the tears of grief.³

There are those who believe that since we are biologically programmed to “seek a god or spirituality” that it is proof of a god or supernaturality in itself. It goes so far as to say that since the mind has capability of religiousness in the area of NDEs and OBEs, it is proof of “design” that god has implemented in us, but this is not so. An NDE or OBE is proof of itself and nothing else. When someone goes as far as to explain an NDE or OBE supernaturally, they are dogmatic. However, when someone goes as far as to explain an NDE or OBE as a chemical or hormonal reaction within the mind, they are legitimately reasonable. The origin of these NDEs and OBEs can be explained legitimately. They are chemical and hormonal reactions. Why would we have those reactions in the mind? Perhaps, they have an evolutionary purpose. If someone nearly died, but survived, then an NDE that granted them hope and happiness would certainly spur on their survival spirit. However, if someone nearly died, but survived without an NDE, they would most likely suffer from depression without an NDE to keep them optimistic. There is no proof, nor any reason, to believe that these NDE or OBE-causing chemicals are the result from divine design.

There are also those who argue that we *feel* god, just as we *feel* many other things which are not tangible. For example, we *feel* love and conscience. We know these things exist. Similarly,

¹ Jansen, K. L. R. (1996) *Using ketamine to induce the near -death experience: mechanism of action and therapeutic potential*. Yearbook for Ethnomedicine and the Study of Consciousness (Jahrbuch furr Ethnomedizin und Bewubtseinsforschung) Issue 4, 1995 (Ed.s C. Ratsch; J. R. Baker); VWB, Berlin, pp55-81. Karl Jansen has a book out available at maps.org or: www.maps.org. It's entitled Ketamine: Dreams and Realities. Permission obtained to quote Jansen's research.

² “Tracing the Synapses of Our Spirituality,” by Shankar Vedantam, in *The Washington Post*, Sunday, June 17, 2001.

³ *The Ghosts*, by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1877.

one may argue that through *feeling* god, we know that a god exists. This line of argument is flawed, however. We certainly may feel love and conscience, but they are axiomatic and proof of themselves. When we feel guilt from conscience, we simply know that we feel guilt from conscience. We do not extend our claims to say, “I feel guilt from conscience, therefore there must be a supernatural being in this Universe.” Similarly, a religious experience is simply proof of itself, as well. Just as love and the conscience are feelings limited to the mind, so are religious experiences.

There are claims by many men and women that they have seen and talked with god in dreams and visions. The error with this is that dreams are just that: dreams. If someone claims that they spoke with god in a dream, how do we know that this person did not just dream that they spoke with god? After all, dreams present illusory images. If we dream that we are talking to a king, it is no reason to presume that we actually talked to a king. Similarly, if we dream that we are talking to a god, it is no reason to presume that we actually talked to a god. One may, of course, argue that all dreams — be they talking with god or a king — are a gift from god and therefore hold some sort of divinity in them. The error with this, however, is that dreams being divine does not validate them any more. If a dream with a god is divine then certainly a dream with a king is divine, but one is no more truthful than the other. Also, the assertion that dreams or divine certainly lacks in evidence.

If a person claims that there is an invisible being telling them to do things, then there is only one of two possible explanations: the person is insane or religious. Both qualities are separated by a slight line.

Section III: Conclusion

A person may feel happy and content without assuming god is responsible for these emotions. Furthermore, the explanations for being Born Again, Nirvana, Wu Wei, or other religious experiences can be explained through science. Gods were created by the minds of religionists, and religionists were not created by a god(s). Religious explanations also suffer from variety. Depending upon where someone is born, they will either experience being Born Again, Nirvana, Enlightenment, or Nirvakalpa Samadhi. Of course, there are Atheists and people born in these Atheist nations who do not experience any religious experience, or at least do not conclude that a god or another form of supernaturality is responsible for it. I ask not people to deny these “religious experiences” or “spiritual happiness,” but I ask them to deny the fact that they are caused by religious or spiritual causes.

Chapter 6: Benefit of Belief

Section I: Introduction

There are some who claim that there is a benefit from belief. They argue that, although there may not be supportive evidence to religion, that we ought to believe in a god(s) or a form of supernaturality for beneficial reasons. Some argue that we ought to believe in a god or a form of supernaturality because of the possibility of hell. Even for the mere possibility of a hell where we could die and burn eternally, we are told to believe in a god so that we will avoid hell. There are also those who believe that the emotional height of faith outweighs the emotional height of reason, regardless if the spiritual position is flawed by lacking evidence and proof. It is these positions that I will argue against.

Section II: The Doctrine Of Hell

Hell is a concept used by religionists, apologists, theologians, rabbis, shamen, priests, ministers, reverends, spiritual advisors, and other religious-oriented profession trades that wish to abuse their followers. To threaten with hell is perhaps one of the most sadistic things done to man. It is the imaginary place owned by the imaginary friend of certain individuals who may be labeled *religious*. I certainly do not believe in any hell whatsoever, and I am certainly not afraid of going to someone else's imaginary place when I die. The men who provoke thought and belief in hell are sadistic men. To quote Thomas Paine, "Belief in a cruel God makes a cruel man."¹

Charles H. Spurgeon was a Christian who advocated belief in hell and a vivid belief in hell. To quote him...

When thou diest thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be hell for it; but at the Day of Judgment thy body will join thy soul and thou wilt have twin hells; thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fierce fire, exactly like that we have on earth, thy body will be, asbestos-like, forever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on; every nerve a string on which the devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament.²

Other religionists agreed with the position taken by Spurgeon. To quote Spurgeon again...

The world will probably be converted into a great lake or liquid globe of fire, in which the wicked shall be overwhelmed, which shall always be in tempest, in which they shall be tossed to and fro, having no rest day nor night ... their heads, their eyes, their

¹ The Great Quotations, by George Seldes, ed. (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1960).

² Charles H. Spurgeon quoted in The Esoteric Tradition by G. de Purucker, chapter 17 ("Heavens and Hells"), in the footnote.

tongues, their hands, their feet, their loins and their vitals shall for ever be full of a glowing, melting fire, fierce enough to melt the very rocks and elements; also they shall eternally be full of the most quick and lively sense to feel the torments; not for one minute, nor for one day, nor for one age, nor two ages, nor for ten thousand millions of ages, one after another, but for ever and ever.³

Father Furniss was an English Catholic who wrote children's books. The purpose of these books was to teach children what would happen to them in hell if they were bad children. To quote one of his children's books...

The fourth dungeon is the boiling kettle. Listen: there is a sound like that of a kettle boiling. The blood is boiling in the scalded brains of that boy; the brain is boiling and bubbling in his head; the marrow is boiling in his bones. The fifth dungeon is the red-hot oven, in which is a little child. Hear how it screams to come out; see how it turns and twists itself about in the fire; it beats its head against the roof of the oven; it stamps its feet upon the floor of the oven.⁴

The love, compassion, and warmth are shown vividly in the words of this English priest. To quote him again...

His eyes are burning like two burning coals. Two long flames come out of his ears...Sometimes he opens his mouth, and breath of blazing fire rolls out. But listen! There is a sound just like that of a kettle boiling. But is it really a kettle boiling? No. Then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalding veins of that boy. The brain is broiling and bubbling in his head. The marrow is broiling in his bones. Ask him why he is thus tormented. His answer is that when he was alive, he blood boiled to do very wicked things.⁵

This English, Catholic reverend was full of piety for his god. To quote his children's story one last time...

See! on the middle of that red-hot floor stands a girl; she looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare. She has neither shoes nor stockings. She says, 'I have been standing on this red hot floor for years ... Day and night ... Look at my burnt and bleeding feet. Let me go off this burning floor for one moment, only for one single short moment.'⁶

Father Arnall was another Christian preacher who felt compelled to add to the currently existing volumes on hell. To quote him...

³ Charles H. Spurgeon quoted in *The Esoteric Tradition* by G. de Purucker, chapter seventeen ("Heavens and Hells"), in the footnote.

⁴ Charles H. Spurgeon quoted in *The Esoteric Tradition* by G. de Purucker, chapter seventeen ("Heavens and Hells"), in the footnote. Also as quoted in *Atheism: The Case Against God*, by George H. Smith, 1979 Prometheus Books, chapter 12, section I, page 300. Original Resource: *The Sight of Hell*, by Reverend J. Furniss.

⁵ As quoted in *Atheism: The Case Against God*, by George H. Smith, 1979 Prometheus Books, chapter 12, section I, pages 299–300. Original Resource: *The Sight of Hell*, by Reverend J. Furniss.

⁶ *The Sight of Hell*, by Reverend J. Furniss.

The torment of fire is the greatest torment to which the tyrant has ever subjected his fellow creatures...But our earthly fire was created by God for the benefit of man...whereas the fire of hell is of another quality and was created by God to torture and punish the unrepentant sinner... Moreover, our earthly fire destroys at the same time as it burns so that the more intense it is the shorter its duration: but the fire of hell has this property that it preserves that which it burns and though it rages with incredible intensity, it rages forever... And this terrible fire will not afflict the bodies of the damned only from without but each lost soul will be a hell unto itself, the boundless fire raging in its very vitals. O, how terrible is the lot of these wretched beings! The blood seethes and boils in the veins, the brains are boiling in the skull, the heart in the breast glowing and bursting, the bowels a redhot mass of burning pulp, the tender eyes flaming like molten balls... It is a fire which proceeds directly from God, working not of its own activity but as an instrument of divine vengeance...Every sense of the flesh is tortured and every faculty of the soul therewith: the eyes with impenetrable utter darkness, the nose with noisome odours, the ears with yells and howls and execrations, the taste with foul matter, leprous corruption, nameless suffocating filth, the touch with redhot goads and spikes, with cruel tongues of flame. And through the several torments of the senses the immortal soul is tortured eternally in its very essence amid the leagues upon leagues of glowing fires kindled in the abyss by the offended majesty of the Omnipotent God and fanned into everlasting and increasing fury by the breath of the anger of the Godhead.⁷

He felt that it was important to note all the pains and tortures of hell. Continuing his consistently brutal doctrine, he notes on the duration of hell...

Last and crowning torture of all the tortures of that awful place is the eternity of hell. Eternity! O, dread and dire word. Eternity! What mind of man can understand it? And remember, it is an eternity of pain. Even though the pains of hell were not so terrible as they are, yet they would become infinite, as they are destined to last for ever. But while they are everlasting they are at the same time, as you know, intolerably intense, unbearably extensive. To bear even the sting of an insect for all eternity would be a dreadful torment. What must it be, then, to bear the manifold tortures of hell for ever? For ever! For all eternity! Not for a year or for an age but for ever. Try to imagine the awful meaning of this. You have often seen the sand on the seashore. How fine are its tiny grains! And how many of those tiny little grains go to make up the small handful which a child grasps in its play. Now imagine a mountain of that sand, a million miles high, reaching from the earth to the farthest heavens, and a million miles broad, extending to remotest space, and a million miles in thickness; and imagine such an enormous mass of countless particles of sand multiplied as often as there are leaves in the forest, drops of water in the mighty ocean, feathers on birds, scales on fish, hairs on animals, atoms in the vast expanse of the air: and imagine that at the end of every million years a little bird came to that mountain and carried away in its beak a tiny grain of that sand. How many millions upon millions of centuries would pass before that bird had carried away even a square foot of that

⁷ A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, by James Joyce, Chapter 3.

mountain, how many eons upon eons of ages before it had carried away all? Yet at the end of that immense stretch of time not even one instant of eternity could be said to have ended. At the end of all those billions and trillions of years eternity would have scarcely begun. And if that mountain rose again after it had been all carried away, and if the bird came again and carried it all away again grain by grain, and if it so rose and sank as many times as there are stars in the sky, atoms in the air, drops of water in the sea, leaves on the trees, feathers upon birds, scales upon fish, hairs upon animals, at the end of all those innumerable risings and sinkings of that immeasurably vast mountain not one single instant of eternity could be said to have ended; even then, at the end of such a period, after that eon of time the mere thought of which makes our very brain reel dizzily, eternity would scarcely have begun.⁸

Jack T. Chick is an American Evangelist. He writes small tracts, or comic books, known as Chick Tracts. The propaganda utilized by him is to sell these Chick Tracts to consumers and then the consumers distribute them to public places, such as dentist offices, phone booths, and other places that are frequented often. To quote one of his pamphlets...

Here is just some of what the Bible says about this horrible place.

HELL IS:

- A lake of fire..... Rev. 20:15
- A bottomless pit..... Rev. 20:1
- A horrible tempest..... Ps. 11:6
- A devouring fire..... Isa. 33:14
- A place of sorrows..... Ps. 18:5
- A place of weeping.... Mt. 8:12
- A furnace of fire.... Mt. 13:41-42
- A place of torments.... La. 16:23
- Where they wail..... Mt. 13:42
- Where God is cursed Rev. 16:11
- Where there's no rest ... Rev. 14:11
- A place of outer darkness..... Mt. 25:30
- Where they scream for mercy..... Lu. 16:24
- Where they can never repent Mt. 12:32
- A place of everlasting punishment Mt. 25:46
- Where they gnaw their tongues Rev. 16:10
- Where they feel the wrath of God Rev. 14:10
- A place of everlasting destruction 2 Thes. 1:9

⁸ Ibidem

- A place for the devil and his angels Mt. 25:41
- Where the fire never goes out Mk. 9:48
- A place of everlasting burnings ... Isa. 33:14
- Where they don't want their loved ones to come Lu. 16.28⁹

Certainly, this list of what hell is appears impressive. It is completely resourced with scripture. However, although it is purely meant to give a meaning insight to what the Bible claims hell is, it is riddled with contradictions. How can hell have a flame (Isa. 33:14) if it is a bottomless pit (Rev. 20:1)? How can hell be a place where they wail (Mt. 13:42) when the people there have no tongues to wail with (Rev. 16:10)? However, the seemingly obvious and large amount of contradictions between what hell is certainly is not what I am trying to demonstrate. I am trying to demonstrate the vindictiveness of the concept of hell, and the cruelty manifested in it.

The Christian religion is not the only one guilty of instilling fear and terror instead of love and compassion. The Islamic religion is equally disgusting. To quote the Qur'an in regards to treatment of non-believers...

Qur'an 4:144

Believers, do not choose the unbelievers rather than the faithful as your friends. Would you give Allah a clear proof against yourselves?

Qur'an 5:51

Believers, take neither Jews nor Christians for your friends. They are friends with one another. Whoever of you seeks their friendship shall become one of their number. Allah does not guide the wrong-doers.

Qur'an 5:57

Believers, do not seek the friendship of the infidels and those who were given the Book before you, who have made your religion a jest and a pastime...

Qur'an 5:64

The Jews say: 'God's hand is chained.' May their own hands be chained! May they be cursed for what they say!...

Qur'an 8:12

Remember Thy Lord inspired the angels (with the message): "I am with you: give firmness to the believers, I will instill terror into the hearts of the unbelievers, Smite ye above their necks and smite all their finger tips of them."

Qur'an 9:5

"Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolators wherever ye find them, and take them (captive), and besiege them and prepare for them each ambush. But if they repent and establish worship and pay the poor-due, then leave their way free. Lo! Allah is Forgiving, Merciful."

Qur'an 9:29

⁹ No Fear?, by Jack T. Chick, page 14.

Fight those who believe not in Allah nor the Last day, nor hold the forbidden which hath been forbidden by Allah and his messenger, nor acknowledge the Religion of Truth from among the People of the Book, until they pay the Jiziyah with willing submission. And feel themselves subdued.

Qur'an 9:30

The Jews call 'Uzayr-a son of God', and the Christians call 'Christ the Son Of God'. That is a saying from their mouth; (In this) they but intimate what the unbelievers of old used to say. Allah's curse be on them: how they are decluded away from the Truth."

Qur'an 13:13

..He hurls his thunderbolts at whom he pleases Yet the unbelievers wrangle about Allah..

Qur'an 47:4

When you meet the unbelievers in the Jihad strike off their heads and, when you have laid them low, bind your captives firmly. Then grant them their freedom or take ransom from them, until War shall lay down her burdens.

The Qur'an also duly notes on what kind of hell their compassionate, "merciful, forgiving" god sends people to. In the eyes of this Atheist, I find the Islamic god — Allah — to be vile and revolting. To quote the Qur'an...

Qur'an 2:39

Those who reject faith shall be the companions of the Fire.

Qur'an 2:89-90

The curse of Allah is on the unbelievers... humiliating is the punishment.

Qur'an 5:10

As for those who disbelieve and deny Our revelations, they are the heirs of Hell.

Qur'an 5:33-34

The only reward of those who make war upon Allah and His messenger and strive after corruption in the land will be that they will be killed or crucified, or have their hands and feet and alternate sides cut off, or will be expelled out of the land. Such will be their degradation in the world, and in the Hereafter theirs will be an awful doom; Save those who repent before ye overpower them. For know that Allah is Forgiving, merciful.

Qur'an 9:73

Prophet, make war on the unbelievers and the hypocrites and deal rigorously with them. Hell shall be their Home: an evil fate.

Qur'an 18:28-30

For the wrongdoers We have prepared a fire which will encompass them like the walls of a pavilion. When they cry out for help they shall be showered with water

as hot as molten brass, which will scald their faces. Evil shall be their drink, dismal their resting-place.

Qur'an 21:96–21:101

..The unbelievers shall stare in amazement, crying: 'Woe to us! Of this we have been heedless. We have done wrong.' You and your idols shall be the fuel of Hell; therein you shall all go down.

Qur'an 22:19–22:23

Garments of fire have been prepared for the unbelievers. Scalding water shall be poured upon their heads, melting their skins and that which is in their bellies. They shall be lashed rods of iron. Whenever, in their anguish, they try to escape from Hell, back they shall be dragged, and will be told: 'Taste the torment of the Conflagration!'

Qur'an 33:7–12

...But for the unbelievers He has prepared a woeful punishment...

Qur'an 40:67–40:73

Do you not see how those who dispute the revelation of God turn away from the right path? Those who have denied the Book and the message We sent through Our apostles shall realize the truth hereafter: when, with chains and shackles round their necks, they shall be dragged through scalding water and then burnt in the fire of Hell.

Qur'an 43:74

..The unbelievers shall endure forever the torment of Hell. The punishment will never be lightened, and they shall be speechless with despair. We do not wrong, themselves.

Qur'an 44:40–49

..The fruit of the Zaqqum tree shall be the unbelievers' fruit. Like dregs of oil, like scalding water, it shall simmer in his belly. A voice will cry: 'Seize him and drag him into the depths of Hell. Then pour out scalding water over his head, saying: "Taste this, illustrious and honourable man! This is the punishment which you have doubted."

Qur'an 55:41–52

..That is the Hell which the unbelievers deny. They shall wander between fire and water fiercely seething. Which of your Lord's blessing would you deny?

Qur'an 56:52–56

Ye shall surely taste of the tree Zaqqum. Then will ye fill your insides therewith, and drink boiling water on top of it. Indeed ye shall drink like diseased camels raging with thirst. Such will be their entertainment on the day of Requit!

Qur'an 58:5

Those who resist Allah and his messenger will be humbled to dust.

Qur'an 69:30–37

We shall say: ‘Lay hold of him and bind him. Burn him in the fire of Hell, then fasten him with a chain seventy cubits long. For he did not believe Allah the tremendous, and urged not on the feeding of the wretched. Today he shall be friendless here; filth shall be his food, the filth which sinners eat...

Qur’an 70:15–16

The fire of Hell will pluck out his being right to the skull..

Qur’an 70:39

We have created the unbelievers out of base matters.

Qur’an 73:12

We have in store for the unbelievers heavy fetters and a blazing fire, choking food and harrowing torment: on the day when the earth shall quiver with all its mountains, and the mountains crumble into heaps of shifting sand.

Qur’an 76:1–5

For the unbelievers We have prepared chains and fetters and a blazing Fire...

Qur’an 77:20–77:50

Woe on that day to the disbelievers! Begone to the Hell which you deny! Depart into the shadow that will rise high in three columns, giving neither shade nor shelter from the flames, and throwing up sparks as huge as towers, as bright as yellow camels...Eat and enjoy yourselves awhile. You are wicked men...”

Qur’an 98:1–8

The unbelievers among the People of the Book and the pagans shall burn for ever in the fire of Hell. They are the vilest of all creatures.

To quote another reliable source in regards to the various hells of the various religions...

HELL ACCORDING TO *LA CIVILTA CATTOLICA*

God does not inflict pain “through angels or demons as is illustrated in many paintings or is read in the Divine Comedy,” according to a Jesuit magazine in Rome, *La Civiltà Cattolica* (July 1999). It “is not a ‘place’ but a ‘state,’ a person’s ‘state of being,’ in which a person suffers from the deprivation of God. Hell’s new makeover was supported by Pope John Paul II, who soon thereafter told visiting pilgrims that “more than a physical place, hell is the state of those who freely and definitely separate themselves from God who, the source of all life and joy.” In other words, the Pope said, it is not a loving God who sends people to hell, but individuals who consign themselves to hell through unrepentant sin. That hell is real is true, the Pope appeared to be saying, but his interpretation differs greatly from that of philosophic naturalists. For the Pope, both hell and Hell are still real. Meanwhile, the Rev. R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, disagreed with the Pope’s stand, insisting that Hell is “A very real place of very real torment.” In the Middle Ages, Jewish descriptions of hell include all sorts of terrible torments like boiling rivers.

HELL, BAPTIST

Hell, for most Southern Baptists, is the place of punishment described in the Bible: outer darkness, fire, torment, isolation.

HELL, BUDDHIST

The Buddhist Hell, according to some of the varied Buddhist leaders, consists of eight hot and cold places, each hell associated with a particular type of suffering. The tortures that are described develop compassion for the beings there and also create an incentive not to engage in the nonvirtuous behavior described.

[...]

HELL, MUSLIM

The Muslim Hell is described as a fire having seven levels, the lowest of which crackles and roars with fierce boiling water, scorching wind, and wailing, wretched souls.

[...]

HELL, ROMAN CATHOLIC

Hell, according to the Roman Catholic theology, is a condition of self-chosen, permanent alienation from God, who bestows all “blessings.”¹⁰

In the older days, humans were very afraid of the possibility of hell. They feared eternal torment. They were fed these concepts of hell, eternal punishment, eternal burning, and these primitive humans were incapable of thinking otherwise. Men and women would fear through their whole lives, contemplating if what they were doing was the right thing and if it wasn't, they would be fearing hell. Hell, a concept so vividly described by these dogmatic and harmful religionists as well as so forcefully rammed down the throats of those who do not know any better, is a destructive concept indeed. So vividly preached by high ranking religionists, so firmly believed by the common, and so frequently and ardently dispelled by infidels; these are all things that the doctrine of hell are. It is with liberating words and beautiful language that the infidels have debunked the concept of hell, freeing and unleashing the minds of many from this horrible god who will torture you for eternity if you do not worship him.

To quote Epictetus (50–135 BCE) “Where are you going? It cannot be a place of suffering; there is no hell.”¹¹ Many of the ancient philosophers fought against the concept of hell as they believed that it brought immense amounts of pain to people. It was vividly believed by the ancient Grecians who were fed religious lies and threaten with hell. Epicurus was one man who stood out among the rest when he fought against hell and he did so ardently. To quote him...

...Men, believing in myths, will always fear something terrible, everlasting punishment as certain or probable... Men base all these fears not on mature opinions, but on irrational fancies, so that they are more disturbed by fear of the unknown than by facing facts. Peace of mind lies in being delivered from all these fears.¹²

¹⁰ Who's Who In Hell, pages 497–498, compiled by Warren Allen Smith (Barricade Books, 2000). Permission obtained from Warren Allen Smith to quote his book.

¹¹ Views of Religion, by Rufus K. Noyes (Boston, L. K. Washburn, 1906).

¹² The Best of Humanism, by Rev. Roger E. Greeley, ed. (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1988).

It was obvious in all the works of Epicurus that he was a crusader for peace of mind, happiness, and clear thinking. A lover of life and his fellow brethren, he wished to liberate their minds from dogmatic superstition of hell. To quote him from his Principal Doctrines with his views on this subject...

Death is nothing to us; once the body and brain decompose into dust and ashes, there is no feeling or thought, and what has no feeling or thought is nothing to us.¹³

If the things which bring pleasure to licentious men and women freed them from troubled minds, that is, if such a life freed them from the fear of God, the fear of death and the fear of pain, and if those things further taught them how to rationally manage their desires, we would find no wrong with these men and women; they would have reached the height of pleasure and would be free of all bodily and mental pain, which is the beginning and the end of all evil.¹⁴

If there were no natural limit to pleasure, it would take an eternity to satisfy the infinite number of desires and wants that one could imagine and dream up. The mind, however, is able to discover the natural limit and height of pleasure; it is also capable of freeing us from all fears of any life after death so that we do not need, want nor fear eternity. Therefore, even if the time has come for us to depart from life, we can approach our final rest with the absolute confidence that we have enjoyed all of the pleasure that it was possible to enjoy.¹⁵

Democritus (460–370 B.C.E.) was another who fought against the doctrine of hell. Democritus was a member of the Garden, an Epicurean “church” and is held as the original father of the Atomic Theory. To quote him, “People who do not understand that death is nothing waste their lives in fear because of the many superstitions about life after death.”¹⁶ Diogenes of Oenoanda (412–323 B.C.E.?) was another Epicurean who fought against this despicable doctrine of hell. To quote him, “These are the root of all evil: fear of god, of death, of pain, and desire which goes beyond what nature requires for a happy life.”¹⁷ Lucretius (99–55 BCE) was an Epicurean poet who lived in Rome while it was still a succeeding empire. To quote him...

There is no murky pit of hell awaiting anyone... Mind cannot arise alone without body, or apart from sinews and blood... You must admit, therefore, that when the body has perished, there is an end also of the spirit diffused through it. It is surely crazy to couple a mortal object with an eternal...¹⁸

¹³ Principal Doctrines, by Epicurus, statement #2, translated in Contemporary Renderings by Ken Mylott, Epicurean guru.

¹⁴ Principal Doctrines, by Epicurus, statement #10, translated in Contemporary Renderings by Ken Mylott, Epicurean guru.

¹⁵ Principal Doctrines, by Epicurus, statement #20, translated in Contemporary Renderings by Ken Mylott, Epicurean guru.

¹⁶ Ethical Maxims by Democritus and Diogenes, statement #30 of Democritus, translated in Contemporary Renderings by Ken Mylott, Epicurean guru.

¹⁷ Ethical Maxims by Democritus and Diogenes, statement #3 of Diogenes, translated in Contemporary Renderings by Ken Mylott, Epicurean guru.

¹⁸ The Best of Humanism, by Rev. Roger E. Greeley, ed. (Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1988).

Lucretius was a beautifully-written poet whose words would comfort mind and soothe the senses. In his lengthy and beautifully written *De Rerum Natura* (“On the Nature of Things”), he has said...

Now come: that thou mayst able be to know
That minds and the light souls of all that live
Have mortal birth and death, I will go on
Verses to build meet for thy rule of life,
Sought after long, discovered with sweet toil.
But under one name I'd have thee yoke them both;
And when, for instance, I shall speak of soul,
Teaching the same to be but mortal, think
Thereby I'm speaking also of the mind-
Since both are one, a substance interjoined.¹⁹

From the ancient philosophers and thinkers, from whom developed the word “philosophia,” we come now to the modern day infidels and heretics who have attacked the doctrine of hell. David Hume was among them. To quote him, “Why, then, eternal punishment for the temporary offenses of so frail a creature as man?”²⁰ Robert Green Ingersoll is perhaps the greatest Agnostic who has ever lived – given the name the Great Agnostic -, whose words are comparably the most beautiful constructed. It was Ingersoll whose sole purpose was to eradicate belief in a hell. To quote him...

Who can estimate the misery that has been caused by this infamous doctrine of eternal punishment? Think of the lives it has blighted-of the tears it has caused-of the agony it has produced. Think of the millions who have been driven to insanity by this most terrible of dogmas. This doctrine renders God the basest and most cruel being in the universe... There is nothing more degrading than to worship such a god.²¹

Eternal punishment is eternal revenge, and can be inflicted only by an eternal monster... Infinite punishment is infinite cruelty, endless injustice, immortal meanness. To worship an eternal jailer hardens, debases, and pollutes even the vilest soul.²²

The idea of hell was born of ignorance, brutality, fear, cowardice, and revenge. This idea testifies that our remote ancestors were the lowest of beasts.²³

The doctrine of eternal punishment is in perfect harmony with the savagery of the men who made the orthodox creeds. It is in harmony with torture, with flaying alive

¹⁹ *De Rerum Natura*, by Lucretius, book III, section “The Soul Is Mortal,” first paragraph.

²⁰ *Views of Religion*, by Rufus K. Noyes (Boston, L. K. Washburn, 1906).

²¹ *Heretics and Heresies*, by Robert Green Ingersoll.

²² *Origin of God and the Devil*, by Robert Green Ingersoll.

²³ *Ibidem*

and with burnings. The men who burned their fellow-men for a moment, believed that God would burn his enemies forever.²⁴

Ingersoll freed the minds of men from this vindictive doctrine of hell. To quote Elbert Hubbard (1856–1915), “Christianity supplies a Hell for the people who disagree with you, and a Heaven for your friends.”²⁵ Certainly the pain and suffering of hell — simply the concept of it — is of vindictiveness and suffering. In this one life that we have, we may be fed the lies of the clergy, and the most greatest lie of them all — the one that has caused more suffering than any other — is the lie of a hell. To quote Henry Louis Mencken (1880–1956), “I believe that religion, generally speaking, has been a curse to mankind.”²⁶

The numerous arguments that come from the divine defenders all fail, however, when they try to defend the doctrine of hell. It is not so much the doctrine of eternal punishment alone that needs defense (although evidence would help bolster belief in it), but the arguments attempt to reconcile a benevolent creator with eternal torment. There is no method for this reconciliation of hell and a benevolent god. A benevolent god would not send people to a hell for eternity. Such a concept is absurd. One may argue that a good god sends bad people to hell, just like a good cop sends bad people to jail, but a jail’s purpose is not — or at least should not be — a form of punishment, but a form of protection of the public; the jail is used to keep harmful criminals from endangering the lives of law-abiding citizens. If a god is protecting good people by sending bad people to hell, I find this also ridiculous. Could not a god keep order and peace in a heaven with all souls coexisting? A god certainly could, otherwise he is no god; and even if a god could not keep bad people from acting bad in heaven, he could at least not make hell such a torturous and vindictive place. A good person would not torture, burn, or bake alive any conscious being.²⁷ If an individual would find it amusing to torture, burn, and bake alive a sentient being, then this individual is horrible, vile, revolting, and disturbed. If to torture one sentient being makes you horrible, vile, revolting, and disturbed, what should the verdict be of a god if he tortures, burns, and bakes billions of sentient beings for eternity in hell when their only crimes may be minimal or lack of belief? Only a rational man can give a rational answer: a cruel, torturous, and vindictive god who is beyond belief logically in regards to his compassion. I am not speaking of an evil god imprisoning people for eternity with ultimate torments; I am speaking of those who think god can be compassionate and can still punish people for eternity with torturous punishments. I can conceive of no being so utterly horrible, nor of any being so incomprehensibly destructive and evil. To quote Mikhail Bakunin (1814–1876), the famous Anarchist, “Even if God existed it would be necessary to abolish him!”²⁸

There are some who believe that a benevolent god exists and also that this god created a hell full of tortures. However, their belief may stem from the concept that god does not send man

²⁴ Crumbling Creeds, by Robert Green Ingersoll.

²⁵ The Note Book, by Elbert Hubbard, 1927.

²⁶ New York Times Magazine, September 11, 1955.

²⁷ Thus raises the question: what of a vivisectionist, or practitioner of vivisection? Vivisection is an experiment on an animal, causing distress and suffering. Does a man learn anything — except how to be inhumane — by being inhumane to animals? Does society become anything less than revoltingly brutal when it consents to gross inhumanities? Do politicians and leaders become anything that is noble and virtuous by completely disregarding the interests of lower animals, when lower animals can feel as much suffering as any human?

²⁸ Who’s Who In Hell, page 70, compiled by Warren Allen Smith (Barricade Books, 2000). Permission obtained from Warren Allen Smith to quote his book. The phrase can also be heard in the KMFDM song, “Stray Bullet” (3rd minute, 12th second) which appeared on the CD “Symbols.” Original Resource: God and State, by Mikhail Bakunin.

to hell, but gives man a “choice.” Whatever this concept of “choice” means, I am left in the dark. Perhaps it’s some form of the dogmatic concept of Free Will, the doctrine that we animals may break the laws of physics to do our bidding. Of course, the issue at question is not between Determinism or Free Will, but whether this concept of choice still allows a benevolent god; and it certainly does not. If a god is responsible for creating everything, such as defined in chapter 1, then certainly, this created the possibility of going to hell and — if this god knew a large amount of data (if not all data) as a god would — then this god would know that by creating the possibility of hell, he is solely responsible for everyone who goes to hell. If god created man with a “choice” that inevitably leads to hell, then that god is responsible. The error with claiming that man sends himself to hell is that hypothetically, god created man. If a god is held responsible for creating everything in the known, natural Universe, which he is, then this god is responsible for all the happenings in this Universe. To claim that a man sends himself to hell is ludicrous, as that man’s actions are governed his own design which is directly due to a god, be there one.

There are then those who claim that a hell and a god exist, but they say that a god isn’t benevolent at all; he is a cruel, vindictive, and torturous being. They agree that a god created a hell to torture us for infinity and that he is truly a vindictive and cruel being. Suffering and pain are caused by god and nobody else. That is what one selection of religionists claim, and I cannot argue with them. However, I am simply attempting to find if a hell and a god are reconcilable, and two concepts are reconcilable if a cruel god is at work. There are also those who claim a god exists and is benevolent, but a hell full of tortures does not exist. Some state a hell exists in one of various forms, sometimes being a separation from god. Many people believe that a god exists, but they do not believe in a hell that is full of tortures. Although the majority believe in a god, not everyone believes in a place of eternal torment.

In this section, my aim was to show the history of the doctrine of hell. In this history we see the religious scripture of many religions advocate a form of eternal torment and punishment. With the religious scripture, we see the theologians, priests, and spiritual men advocating a form of eternal torment to minor crimes and nonbelievers. Alongside this line of history, we see mind liberationists such as Epicurus and Ingersoll fighting this revolting and vile doctrine of eternal punishment. The doctrine of hell is founded on scripture, but bolstered and emphasized through the words of their religious leaders. The importance of this is to examine exactly what a hell is before we are threatened to believe in a hell through some sort of possibility of a god existing. The doctrine of hell, it should be noted, is not prevalent within all religions. Now that I have made clear what hell stands for, I shall continue to examine how this ties in with a possible benefit from belief.

Section III: The Psychology Of Religion And Benefit Of Belief

Does the fact that you will not live forever in a heaven put a damper on your afternoon? I can understand why a deconverted Theist may find it to be depressing that they will not have eternal life as their religion has promised them. This is a perfectly normal emotion. The religionist was promised something that was long awaited for and possibly well prepared for. For this religionist to all of a sudden find out that their waiting and preparation was all useless is a detrimentally harmful psychological experience. However, I contend that the long term benefits of mental lib-

eration far outweigh the benefits of religious dogma. It is by the sword of truth that we are to succeed.

The concept of immortality is perhaps the only happy concept that may be retrieved from the wreckage of religion. Ingersoll thought that immortality was “born of human affection” and was based on love. However, Epicurus stated the following in regards to immortality...

An immortal life would not provide an opportunity for any more pleasure than this mortal life does. A rational understanding of happiness makes clear the fact that the height of pleasure is attainable here and now, in this life, and it cannot be surpassed, even if one could live forever.²⁹

I think the point that Epicurus was trying to demonstrate is that happiness should not be something measured in amounts, but something that ought to be continuous in our life as it changes frequently. I would think, however, that if someone can get more pleasure from more time, thus meaning more opportunities to exploit pleasure for one’s self, then I would disagree with Epicurus. However, his opinion in regards to immortality measured against happiness are important, as it is the opinion of a nonbeliever in regards to immortality. Clarence Darrow, however, took a more aggressive position than Ingersoll towards the concept of immortality. To quote him...

Upon what evidence, then, are we asked to believe in immortality? There is no evidence. One is told to rely on faith, and no doubt this serves the purpose so long as one can believe blindly whatever he is told.³⁰

The origin of the absurd idea of immortal life is easy to discover; it is kept alive by hope and fear, by childish faith, and by cowardice.³¹

I would not say that the belief in immortality is better than non-belief in immortality; however, the question of what is beneficial or not has nothing to do with actual truth. I am not bothered by the fact that my consciousness will cease at death, nor am I particularly afraid of ceasing to exist entirely at death (although the form death may take may definitely be scary). I see no reason for there to be an immortality, both in evidence and meaning. There is no necessity for a future life. I know and understand that I am alive today and that I ought to make the best of life for myself and the Earth’s other creatures in this life; I understand that there is no future life, and thus no necessity to prepare for a future existence beyond death; and I understand that one day I shall die and cease to be conscious eternally. From dust I came and to dust I shall return. To quote Susan Ertz (1894–1985), “Millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon.”³² Perhaps the best person who captured my view of immortality was that of Thomas Alva Edison (1847–1931). To quote him...

I cannot believe in the immortality of the soul... No, all this talk of an existence for us, as individuals, beyond the grave is wrong. It is born of our tenacity of life-our

²⁹ Principal Doctrines, by Epicurus, statement #19, translated in Contemporary Renderings by Ken Mylott, Epicurean guru.

³⁰ Why I Am An Agnostic And Other Essays, by Clarence Seward Darrow, page 24.

³¹ The Great Quotations, by George Seldes, ed., (New York: Lyle Stuart, 1960).

³² Who’s Who In Hell, page 566, compiled by Warren Allen Smith (Barricade Books, 2000). I have also found the phrase by Susan Ertz to be very popular and repeated often without reference. Permission obtained from Warren Allen Smith to quote his book.

desire to go on living-our dread of coming to an end as individuals. I do not dread it, though. Personally, I cannot see any use of a future life.³³

Perhaps another valuable quote in regards to the benefit from believe is from George Bernard Shaw (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 as sober one. The happiness of credulity is a cheap and dangerous quality.³⁴

Unlike the possibility of immortality being warm and soothing to the mind, the rest of religion can be regarded as painful, harmful, and full of suffering. There is nothing more detrimental to the happiness and mental health of sentient beings than religion. Happiness, in the form of food, sex, self esteem, and the other necessities of a happy life according to psychology, are taken away from the follower of religion. It is by following and believing the scripture of religion that a person can be torn apart inside.

Perhaps a great thing in the lives of all men and women is sex. Physical intimacy and sexual gratification are perfectly normal and desired things. I can see no reason why they would be considered evil, unless I was religious. In regards to sexual morality, I believe that it should not be considered anything in particular. As long as none are harmed, I feel that sexually we should be unlimited. However, all world religions are bent on restrictions, and especially so in regards to sexuality. Catholic priests, as well as many Christian church officials including monks, nuns, bishops, and higher authorities, must be completely celibate; the sexuality of these men and women is dead. Homosexuality is considered immoral and evil in the Old and New Testament. The verses that condemn Homosexuality are Genesis 13:13, Genesis 18:20, Genesis 19:1–29, Leviticus 18:22–23, Leviticus 20:13, Deuteronomy 23:17–18, 1 Kings 14:22–24, Isaiah 3:9, Luke 17:25–32, Romans 1:24–32, 1 Corinthians 6:9, 1 Timothy 1:9–10, 2 Peter 2:6–9, and Jude 1:7–8. Divorce is forbidden in Mark 10:7–9. Also, to think of sexual desire is immoral and evil; Matthew 5:27–28 “whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” The same verse is also seen in Nehemiah 12:17–28. Lust, or sexual activity or thoughts, is one of the Seven Sins of Catholicism. Once during their lifetime, every Muslim must go to the holy city of Meccah and on this voyage they may not have sex (Qur’an 2:197). In the Qur’an, careless sex is considered immoral (Qur’an 4:24). The Qur’an 17:32 says, “And go not nigh to fornication; surely it is an indecency and an evil way.” In the Qur’an 60:12, it compares careless sex with blasphemy, stealing, killing your children, and disobeying goodness. The Fourth Noble Truth of Buddhism includes restraining from sex. Sexuality is a sacred wrong as a rule of the Pancha Shila (Buddhist rules that apply to Buddhist monks and nuns). A Buddhist monk or nun must be completely celibate. Hinduism does not allow its followers to be sexual active or promiscuous in any way. In fact, according to Hinduism, you may not even think of sex or talk about it. Nor can you do anything that is arousing.

Another important thing for life — along with sex — is food and eating. To keep a fully nourished mind that is rational and logical, one must consume enough fruits, vegetables, and grains to

³³ Interview in the *New York Times*, October 2, 1910, section 5, page 1.

³⁴ Quoted by Julian Hukley in *Religion without Revelation* (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), page 12.

keep them healthy. A healthy body will spur on a healthy mentality. Whereas the Judaic, Christian, and Islamic religions allow the consumption of flesh — something I would disagree with — religions in general are known to limit food intake. There are certain religious ethics that regard consuming particular flesh as evil and other religious ethics that regard consuming flesh on particular dates as evil, however, I disagree with any action that causes suffering to a sentient animal. In Catholicism, Gluttony, or eating too much food, is a sin. The fact that you cannot indulge in food is ludicrous. In Islam, In the Qur'an 5:62, it says, "And you will see many of them striving with one another to hasten in sin and exceeding the limits, and their eating of what is unlawfully acquired; certainly evil is that which they do." Also, in the Qur'an 2:183, it says, "O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil)." Again, in the Qur'an 9:112, it says, "They who turn (to Allah), who serve (Him), who praise (Him), who fast, who bow down, who prostrate themselves, who enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and who keep the limits of Allah; and give good news to the believers." The Qur'an also suggests fasting in the Qur'an 33:35, Qur'an 5:89, Qur'an 2:185, and Qur'an 58:4. Ramadan is the sacred month of Islam. For the month of December, Muslims cannot eat any food during the day. They may only eat food during the night when the Sun has set. If you are a Buddhist monk or nun, the one of the rules of the Pancha Shila is that you must only have one meal a day — a practice that is horribly detrimental to your health.

Pleasure is a general concept accursed by religion in whole. In Buddhism, the one of the rules of the Pancha Shila is to avoid "substances which blur the consciousness." Alcohol and drugs are thus unethical. If you are a Buddhist monk or nun, the one of the rules of the Pancha Shila is that you avoid entertainment. Also, if you are a monk or nun, another rule of the Pancha Shila is that you must use a simple bed and a simple seat. Another largely effecting rule of the Pancha Shila is that Buddhist monks and nuns are not allowed to handle money. There are 227 rules for Buddhist monks and 311 rules for Buddhist nuns. Sloth, or resting luxuriously, is one of the Seven Sins of Catholicism. In regards to the joys that the Christian life brings, Robert Green Ingersoll has said...

Nothing can be more repulsive than an orthodox life — than one who lives in exact accordance with the creed. It is hard to conceive of a more terrible character than John Calvin. It is somewhat difficult to understand the Puritans, who made themselves unhappy by way of recreation, and who seemed to enjoy themselves when admitting their utter worthlessness and in telling God how richly they deserved to be eternally damned. They loved to pluck from the tree of life every bud, every blossom, every leaf. The bare branches, naked to the wrath of God, excited their admiration. They wondered how birds could sing, and the existence of the rainbow led them to suspect the seriousness of the Deity. How can there be any joy if man believes that he acts and lives under an infinite responsibility, when the only business of this life is to avoid the horrors of the next? Why should the lips of men feel the ripple of laughter if there is a bare possibility that the creed of Christendom is true?³⁵

Robert Green Ingersoll has spoken many words in many speeches and lectures. He was most noted for excellent speeches that held the ears of his listeners tightly. Still in regards to the happiness provided by Christianity, Ingersoll has said...

³⁵ Criticism of Robert Elsmere, by Robert Green Ingersoll.

And if there is to be an acknowledgment of God in the Constitution, the question naturally arises as to which God is to have this honor. Shall we select the God of the Catholics — he who has established an infallible church presided over by an infallible pope, and who is delighted with certain ceremonies and placated by prayers uttered in exceedingly common Latin? Is it the God of the Presbyterian with the Five Points of Calvinism, who is ingenious enough to harmonize necessity and responsibility, and who in some way justifies himself for damning most of his own children? Is it the God of the Puritan, the enemy of joy — of the Baptist, who is great enough to govern the universe, and small enough to allow the destiny of a soul to depend on whether the body it inhabited was immersed or sprinkled? What God is it proposed to put in the Constitution? Is it the God of the Old Testament, who was a believer in slavery and who justified polygamy? If slavery was right then, it is right now; and if Jehovah was right then, the Mormons are right now. Are we to have the God who issued a commandment against all art — who was the enemy of investigation and of free speech? Is it the God who commanded the husband to stone his wife to death because she differed with him on the subject of religion? Are we to have a God who will re-enact the Mosaic code and punish hundreds of offences with death?³⁶

John Calvin (1509–1564) was the founder of Calvinism and today it is commonly associated with Presbyterianism. In Geneva, a Swiss city, Calvin took control of the city and instituted his own ordinances. To quote the ordinances of the city by Calvin himself...

Blasphemy.

Whoever shall have blasphemed, swearing by the body or by the blood of our Lord, or in similar manner, he shall be made to kiss the earth for the first offence ; for the second to pay 5 sous, and for the third 6 sous, and for the last offence be put in the pillory for one hour.

Drunkenness.

1. That no one shall invite another to drink under penalty of 3 sous.
2. That taverns shall be closed during the sermon, under penalty that the tavern-keeper shall pay 3 sous, and whoever may be found therein shall pay the same amount.
3. If anyone be found intoxicated he shall pay for the first offence 3 sous and shall be remanded to the consistory ; for the second offence he shall be held to pay the sum of 6 sous, and for the third 10 sous and be put in prison.
4. That no one shall make roiaumes [Referring to ordinances regulating the holding of religious services] under penalty of 10 sous.

Songs and Dances.

If anyone sings immoral, dissolute or outrageous songs, or dance the virollet or other dance, he shall be put in prison for three days and then sent to the consistory.

[...]

³⁶ God In The Constitution, by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1890.

Games.

That no one shall play at any dissolute game or at any game whatsoever it may be, neither for gold nor silver nor for any excessive stake, upon penalty of 5 sous and forfeiture of stake played for.³⁷

Games, dancing, music, and other joys — especially blasphemy — are completely taken from the hearts of men and women from this city! Once it may have been a city full of joy and laughter, but it was silenced and thoroughly so by the foolish and vindictively cruel theologian named John Calvin. The notoriety of Calvin has not slipped by Robert Green Ingersoll. To quote Ingersoll...

Calvin founded a little theocracy, modeled after the Old Testament, and succeeded in erecting the most detestable government that ever existed, except the one from which it was copied.

[...]

Calvin was of a pallid, bloodless complexion, thin, sickly, irritable, gloomy, impatient, egotistic, tyrannical, heartless, and infamous. He was a strange compound of revengeful morality, malicious forgiveness, ferocious charity, egotistic humility, and a kind of hellish justice. In other words, he was as near like the God of the Old Testament as his health permitted.³⁸

Along with food, sex, and entertainment, self esteem is a very important thing to have. One must feel good about themselves. If someone is told that they are imperfect or horrible in nature, they will not feel well about themselves; and feeling happy about yourself and your accomplishments — a pride of sort — is necessary for a happy life. The concept of sin goes as far as to claim that all are sinners who deserve hell. In Mark 2:17, Jesus is reported to having said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” In Numbers 5:6–7, it says, “Say to the Israelites: ‘When a man or woman wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the LORD, that person is guilty and must confess the sin he has committed. He must make full restitution for his wrong, add one fifth to it and give it all to the person he has wronged.’” In the New Testament, the concept of sin is used to condemn or apply 275 times³⁹ and in the Old Testament, the concept of sin is used to condemn or apply 716

³⁷ Ordinances For The Regulation of the Churches Dependent Upon the Seigniorship of Geneva (1547), by John Calvin, in *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History* George L. Burns, ed., 6 vols., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania History Department, 1898–1912) vol. 1, no., pp. 2–5.

³⁸ *Heretics And Heresies*, by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1874.

³⁹ ...

Matthew (15): 1:21, 3:6, 9:2, 9:5, 9:6, 9:10, 9:11, 9:13, 11:19, 12:31, 18:15, 18:21, 26:28, 26:45, 27:4.

Mark (13): 1:4, 1:5, 2:5, 2:7, 2:9, 2:10, 2:15, 2:16 (twice), 2:17, 3:28, 3:29, 8:38, 14:41.

Luke (33): 1:77, 3:3, 5:8, 5:20, 5:21, 5:23, 5:24, 5:30, 5:32, 6:32, 6:33, 6:34 (twice), 7:34, 7:37, 7:39, 7:47, 7:48, 7:49, 11:4, 13:2, 15:1, 15:2, 15:7, 15:10, 15:18, 15:21, 17:3, 17:4, 18:13, 19:7, 24:7, 24:47.

John (28): 1:29, 5:14, 8:7, 8:11, 8:21, 8:24 (twice), 8:34 (twice), 8:46, 9:2, 9:3, 9:16, 9:24, 9:25, 9:31, 9:34, 9:41 (twice), 15:22 (twice), 15:24, 16:8, 16:9, 19:11, 20:23 (thrice).

Acts (8): 2:38, 3:9, 5:31, 7:60, 10:43, 13:38, 22:16, 26:18.

Romans (59): 2:12 (twice), 3:7, 3:9, 3:20, 3:23, 3:25, 4:7, 4:8, 5:8, 5:12 (twice), 5:13 (twice), 5:14, 5:16, 5:19, 5:20, 5:21, 6:1, 6:2, 6:6 (twice), 6:7, 6:10, 6:11, 6:12, 6:13, 6:14, 6:15, 6:16, 6:17, 6:18, 6:20, 6:22, 6:23, 7:5, 7:7 (twice), 7:8 (twice), 7:9, 7:11, 7:13 (4x), 7:14, 7:16, 7:17, 7:20, 7:23, 7:25, 8:2, 8:3 (thrice), 8:10, 11:27, 14:23.

times⁴⁰, and in the Bible as a whole it nearly amounts to 1,000 applications and condemnations! In Qur'an 12:91, it is claimed that man is a sinner and in Qur'an 12:92, it claims that only Allah can forgive sins. In the Qur'an 20:73, it says, "Surely we believe in our Lord that He may forgive

1 Corinthians (12): 6:18 (twice), 7:28 (twice), 7:36, 8:12 (twice), 15:3, 15:17, 15:34, 15:56 (twice).
 2 Corinthians (6): 5:21 (twice), 11:7, 11:29, 12:21, 13:2.
 Galatians (5): 1:4, 2:15, 2:17 (twice), 3:22.
 Ephesians (2): 2:1, 4:26.
 Colossians (1): 1:14.
 1 Thessalonian (1): 2:16.
 1 Timothy (8): 1:9, 1:15, 5:20 (twice), 5:22 (twice), 5:24 (twice).
 2 Timothy (1): 3:6.
 Titus (1): 3:11.
 Hebrews (31): 1:3, 2:17, 3:13, 3:17, 4:15, 5:1, 5:3, 7:26, 7:27 (twice), 8:12, 9:7, 9:26, 9:28 (twice), 10:2, 10:3, 10:4, 10:6, 10:8, 10:11, 10:12, 10:17, 10:18, 10:26 (twice), 11:25, 12:1, 12:3, 12:4, 13:11.
 James (9): 1:15 (twice), 2:9, 4:8, 4:17, 5:15, 5:16, 5:20 (twice).
 1 Peter (8): 2:20, 2:22, 2:24 (twice), 3:18, 4:1, 4:8, 4:18.
 2 Peter (3): 1:9, 2:4, 2:14.
 1 John (27): 1:7, 1:8, 1:9 (twice), 1:10, 2:1 (twice), 2:2, 2:12, 3:4 (twice), 3:5 (twice), 3:6 (twice), 3:8 (twice), 3:9 (twice), 4:10, 5:16 (thrice), 5:17 (twice), 5:18. Jude (1): 1:15.
 The Revelation (3): 1:5, 18:4, 18:5.
 Matthew (15) + Mark (13) + Luke (33) + John (28) + Acts (8) + Romans (59) + 1 Corinthians (12) + 2 Corinthians (6) + Galatians (5) + Ephesians (2) + Colossians (1) + 1 Thessalonian (1) + 1 Timothy (8) + 2 Timothy (1) + Titus (1) + Hebrews (31) + James (9) + 1 Peter (8) + 2 Peter (3) + 1 John (27) + Jude (1) + The Revelation (3) = 275
 15 + 13 + 33 + 28 + 8 + 59 + 12 + 6 + 5 + 2 + 1 + 1 + 8 + 1 + 1 + 31 + 9 + 8 + 3 + 27 + 1 + 3 = 275

⁴⁰ ...
 Genesis (10): 4:7, 13:13, 15:16, 18:20, 20:6, 31:36, 39:9, 42:22, 50:17 (twice).
 Exodus (22): 9:27, 9:34, 10:16, 10:17, 16:1, 17:1, 20:5, 20:20, 23:33, 29:14, 29:36, 30:10, 32:21, 32:30 (twice), 32:31, 32:32, 32:33, 32:34, 34:7 (twice), 34:9.
 Leviticus (100): 4:2, 4:3 (thrice), 4:8, 4:13, 4:14 (twice), 4:20, 4:21, 4:22, 4:23, 4:24, 4:25, 4:26, 4:27, 4:28 (twice), 4:29, 4:31, 4:32, 4:33, 4:34, 4:35, 5:1, 5:6 (thrice), 5:7 (twice), 5:8, 5:9 (twice), 5:10, 5:11 (thrice), 5:12, 5:13, 5:15, 5:17, 6:2, 6:3, 6:4, 6:17, 6:25, 6:30, 7:7, 7:37, 8:2, 8:14, 9:2, 9:3, 9:7, 9:8, 9:10, 9:15 (twice), 9:22, 10:16, 10:17, 10:19 (twice), 12:6, 12:8, 14:13 (twice), 14:19, 14:22, 14:31, 15:15, 15:30, 16:3, 16:5, 16:6, 16:9, 16:11 (twice), 16:15, 16:16, 16:21, 16:22, 16:25, 16:27, 16:30, 16:34, 18:25, 19:22 (twice), 23:19, 26:18, 26:21, 26:24, 26:28, 26:39 (twice), 26:40 (twice), 26:41, 26:43.
 Numbers (60): 5:7, 5:31, 6:11 (twice), 6:14, 6:16, 7:16, 7:22, 7:28, 7:34, 7:40, 7:46, 7:52, 7:58, 7:64, 7:70, 7:76, 7:82, 7:87, 8:8, 8:12, 9:13, 12:11, 14:18 (twice), 14:19, 14:34, 14:40, 15:24, 15:25, 15:27 (twice), 15:28, 15:29, 15:30, 16:22, 16:26, 16:38, 18:9, 18:22, 19:9, 21:7, 22:34, 27:3, 28:15, 28:22, 29:5, 29:11 (twice), 29:16, 29:19, 29:22, 29:25, 29:28, 29:31, 29:34, 29:38, 32:14, 32:23 (twice).
 Deuteronomy (13): 1:41, 5:9, 9:16, 9:18, 9:21, 9:27, 15:9, 20:18, 22:26, 23:21, 24:4, 24:15, 24:16.
 Joshua (6): 7:11, 7:20, 22:17 (twice), 22:20, 24:19.
 Judges (2) 10:10, 10:15.
 1 Samuel (16): 2:17, 2:25 (twice), 3:13, 7:6, 12:10, 12:19, 12:23, 14:33, 14:34, 14:38, 15:23, 15:24, 15:25, 15:30, 26:21.
 2 Samuel (6): 12:13 (twice), 19:20, 22:24, 24:10, 24:17.
 1 Kings (28): 8:33, 8:34, 8:35 (twice), 8:36, 8:46 (twice), 8:47, 8:50, 12:30, 13:34, 14:16, 14:22, 15:3, 15:26, 15:30, 15:34, 16:2 (twice), 16:13, 16:19 (twice), 16:25, 16:26, 16:31, 17:18, 21:22, 22:52.
 2 Kings (23): 3:3, 10:19, 10:29, 10:31, 12:16, 13:2, 13:6, 13:11, 14:6, 14:24, 15:9, 15:18, 15:24, 15:28, 17:7, 17:21, 17:22, 21:11 (twice), 21:16, 21:17, 23:15, 24:3.
 1 Chronicles (2): 21:8, 21:17.
 2 Chronicles (20): 6:24, 6:25, 6:26 (twice), 6:27, 6:36 (twice), 6:37, 6:39, 7:14, 19:10 (twice), 25:4, 28:10, 28:13, 29:21, 29:23, 29:24 (twice), 33:19.
 Ezra (6): 6:17, 8:35, 9:6, 9:7, 9:13, 10:13.
 Nehemiah (9): 1:6, 4:5, 6:13, 9:2, 9:29, 9:37, 10:33, 13:26 (twice).
 Job (30): 1:5, 1:22, 2:10, 7:20, 7:21, 8:4 (twice), 10:6, 10:14, 11:6, 11:14, 13:23 (twice), 13:26, 14:16, 14:17, 15:5, 22:5, 24:19, 31:11, 31:28, 31:30, 31:33, 33:9, 33:27, 34:37, 35:3, 35:6 (twice), 36:9.

us our sins and the magic to which you compelled us; and Allah is better and more abiding.” In the Qur’an, the concept of sin is used to apply or condemn 60 times⁴¹.

Perhaps one of the most observed characteristics of religion is the preaching of humility, or the lack of taking pride in one’s accomplishments and being simple, not outstanding. Jesus asked us to humble ourselves, in Luke 14:11, “For every one who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Pride is one of the Seven Sins of Catholicism, so nobody may be proud. Envy is another one of the Seven Sins of Catholicism, so no one may be envious. Greed is yet another one of the Seven Sins of Catholicism, so no one may be greedy. I do not regard envy or greed as sins myself, but I think they are largely natural emotions that happen to us as animals. Islam claims that the angels and heavenly beings do not show pride in the Qur’an 16:49, as it says, “And whatever creature that is in the heavens and that is in the earth makes obeisance to Allah (only), and the angels (too) and they do not show pride.” Those who turn away from Allah of Islam are full of pride in the Qur’an 63:5, “And when it is said to them: Come, the Apostle of Allah will ask forgiveness for you, they turn back their heads and you may see them turning away while they are big with pride.” Islam says that those who are patient and pray – basic traits of a good Muslim – are humble in the Qur’an 2:45, “And seek assistance through

Psalms (58): 1:1, 1:5, 4:4, 5:10, 17:3, 18:23, 19:13, 25:7, 25:8, 25:18, 26:9, 32:1, 32:2, 32:5 (twice), 36:1, 36:2, 36:4, 37:38, 38:3, 38:5, 38:18, 39:1, 39:11, 40:6, 40:12, 41:4, 51:2, 51:3, 51:4, 51:5 (twice), 51:9, 51:13, 59:3, 59:12, 65:3, 66:18, 68:21, 78:17, 78:32, 79:8, 79:9, 85:2, 89:32, 90:8, 94:23, 103:3, 103:10, 104:35, 106:6, 106:43, 109:14, 109:15, 119:11, 119:113, 130:3, 130:8.

Proverbs (22): 1:10, 1:16, 5:22, 10:19, 11:31, 12:13, 13:6, 13:21, 13:22, 14:9, 14:21, 14:34, 16:6, 17:19, 20:9, 21:4, 23:17, 24:9, 28:13, 29:6, 29:16, 29:22.

Ecclesiastes (6): 2:26, 5:6, 7:20, 7:26, 9:2, 9:18.

Isaiah (40): 1:4, 1:18, 1:28, 3:9, 5:18, 6:7, 13:9, 13:11, 14:21, 22:14, 26:21, 27:9, 30:1 (twice), 30:13, 31:7, 33:14, 33:24, 38:17, 40:2 (twice), 42:24, 43:24, 43:25, 43:27, 44:22, 50:1, 53:12, 57:17, 58:1, 59:2, 59:7, 59:12, 59:20, 64:5, 64:6, 64:7, 64:9, 65:7 (twice).

Jeremiah (36): 2:13, 2:35, 3:25, 5:25, 8:14, 9:3, 9:5, 9:7, 11:10, 13:22, 14:7 (twice), 14:10, 14:20, 15:13, 16:10, 16:17, 16:18, 17:1, 17:3, 18:23, 30:14, 30:15, 31:30, 31:34, 32:18, 32:35, 33:8 (twice), 36:3, 40:3, 44:23, 50:7, 50:14, 50:20, 51:6.

Lamentations (11): 1:5, 1:8, 1:14, 1:22, 2:14, 3:39, 3:42, 4:13, 4:22, 5:7, 5:16.

Ezekiel (68): 3:18, 3:19, 3:20, 3:21 (twice), 4:4 (twice), 4:5 (twice), 4:6, 4:17, 7:13, 7:16, 7:19, 9:9, 14:11, 14:13, 16:49, 16:51, 16:52, 18:4, 18:14, 18:17 (twice), 18:18, 18:20, 18:21, 18:24 (twice), 18:26, 18:30, 21:24, 23:49, 24:23, 28:16, 28:18, 29:16, 32:27, 33:6, 33:8, 33:9, 33:10, 33:12, 33:14, 33:16, 36:31, 36:33, 37:23, 39:23, 40:39, 42:13, 43:10, 43:19, 43:21, 43:22, 43:25, 44:10, 44:12 (twice), 44:27, 44:29, 45:17, 45:19, 45:20, 45:22, 45:23, 45:25, 46:20.

Daniel (10): 4:27, 9:5, 9:8, 9:11, 9:13, 9:15, 9:16, 9:20 (twice), 9:24.

Hosea (19): 4:7, 4:8, 5:5, 7:1, 7:2, 8:11 (twice), 8:13, 9:7, 9:9, 9:15, 10:8, 10:9, 10:10, 12:8, 13:2, 13:12, 14:1, 14:2.

Amos (15): 1:3, 1:6, 1:9, 1:11, 1:13, 2:1, 2:4, 2:6, 3:2, 3:14, 4:4 (twice), 5:12, 9:8, 9:10.

Micah (8): 1:5, 1:13, 3:8, 6:7, 6:13, 7:9, 7:18, 7:19.

Zephaniah (1): 1:17.

Zechariah (3): 3:4, 3:9, 13:1.

Malachi (1): 2:6.

Genesis (10) + Exodus (22) + Leviticus (100) + Numbers (60) + Deuteronomy (13) + Joshua (6) + 1 Samuel (16) + 2 Samuel (6) + 2 Kings (23) + 1 Chronicles (2) + 2 Chronicles (20) + Ezra (6) + Nehemiah (9) + Job (30) + Psalms (58) + Proverbs (22) + Ecclesiastes (6) + Isaiah (40) + Jeremiah (36) + Lamentations (11) + Ezekiel (68) + Daniel (10) + Hosea (19) + Amos (15) + Micah (8) + Zephaniah (1) + Zechariah (3) + Malachi (1) = 716

10 + 22 + 100 + 60 + 13 + 6 + 16 + 6 + 23 + 2 + 20 + 6 + 9 + 30 + 58 + 22 + 6 + 9 + 58 + 22 + 6 + 40 + 36 + 11 + 68 + 10 + 19 + 15 + 8 + 1 + 3 + 1 = 716

⁴¹ ...

Qur’an – 2:81, 2:173, 2:181, 2:206, 2:219 (twice), 2:276, 2:283, 3:178, 4:31 (twice), 4:48, 4:50, 4:107, 4:111, 4:112 twice, 5:2, 5:3, 5:29 twice, 5:62, 5:63, 5:106, 5:107, 6:120 twice, 7:33, 12:91, 12:97, 20:73, 24:11, 24:29, 24:58, 24:60, 24:61, 25:31, 25:68, 26:222, 29:40, 33:58, 40:21, 42:37, 44:44, 45:7, 49:12, 52:23, 53:32, 55:39, 56:25, 58:8, 67:11, 68:12, 69:9, 76:24, 81:9, 83:12, 91:14, and 96:16.

patience and prayer, and most surely it is a hard thing except for the humble ones.” Humble Muslims are rewarded in the Qur’an 11:23, “Surely (as to) those who believe and do good and humble themselves to their Lord, these are the dwellers of the garden, in it they will abide.” Islam claims that the believers who are humble will succeed in the Qur’an 21:1–2, it says, “Successful indeed are the believers, who are humble in their prayers.” The followers of Islam are humble according to the Qur’an 25:63, as it says, “And the servants of the Beneficent God are they who walk on the earth in humbleness, and when the ignorant address them, they say: Peace.” Perhaps the most long winded passage of the Qur’an that commands humbleness is the Qur’an 33:35...

Surely the men who submit and the women who submit, and the believing men and the believing women, and the obeying men and the obeying women, and the truthful men and the truthful women, and the patient men and the patient women and the humble men and the humble women, and the almsgiving men and the almsgiving women, and the fasting men and the fasting women, and the men who guard their private parts and the women who guard, and the men who remember Allah much and the women who remember— Allah has prepared for them forgiveness and a mighty reward.

In Islam, you must pray in the direction of Mecca five times a day. When praying, a Muslim is in “submission mode;” They are bowing down. Not only can this be seen as degrading, but it is also done five times in a single day. To quote Arthur Schopenhauer...

Man excels all the animals even in his ability to be trained. Muslims are trained to turn their faces toward Mecca five times a day and pray; they do so steadfastly. Christians are trained to cross themselves on certain occasions, to genuflect, etc.; while religion in general constitutes the real masterpiece on the art of training, namely the training of the mental capacities—which, as is well known, cannot be started too early. There is no absurdity so palpable that one could not fix it firmly in the head of every man on earth, provided one began to imprint it before his sixth year by ceaselessly rehearsing it before him with solemn earnestness.⁴²

In Buddhism, the first Noble Truth proclaims that all life is suffering and pain. The Eight-Fold Path continues yet to say that, in the Seventh Path step, wanting or trying to accomplish anything is also wrong. If you are a Buddhist monk or nun, the eighth rule of the Pancha Shila is that you must not take pride. You cannot be proud of what you have done, who you are, or what you are aspiring for. Hinduism also believes its followers should be humble. They should not try to gain too many material goods. A general humbleness is required by Hinduism. It does not want followers to be extreme extravagant or trying too hard.

To quote Jesus Christ, Mark 9:43–48...

“...if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off; it is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out; it is better for you

⁴² Essays and Aphorisms, by Arthur Schopenhauer (Baltimore: Pungein Classics, 1970), page 177.

to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched.”

In Matthew 5:39–41, Jesus is reported as saying...

“Do not resist one who is evil. But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also; and if any one would sue you and take your coat, let him have your cloak as well; and if any one forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.”

Many Buddhist ministries practice self discipline. In such cases, you are watched over by a master and you must stay awake for long, long hours. If you fall asleep, you are beaten with a stick; or if you move just a little bit, in some instances, you are also beaten with a stick. The belief structure of Hinduism is founded on castes, or different social structures. When someone is in a caste, it is either the lowest — or the poorest —, the medium, the higher, and the highest. The chances of being born into a particular caste system, through reincarnation, is by how good you were in the previous life. Thus, to get to a better caste in your next life, you must live your life by good morals in this life. In the ancient times, members of the lower castes had to let members of the higher castes can harm the lower castes and abuse their right to liberty.

On top of the vigorously described concepts of hell, a nonbeliever is then faced with various other things to be afraid of. The Qur’an mentions and threatens with hell 96 different times.⁴³ I Corinthians 2:14 of the Bible states, “The unspiritual man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.” In John 14:12–14, “Jesus said, ‘...he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I go to the Father. Whatever you ask in my name, I will do it... if you ask anything in my name, I will do it.’” Matthew 17:20 says, “... if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move hence to yonder place,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you.” To quote John 3:36, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him.” Paul struck a man blind for opposing Christianity in Acts 13:8–11. Paul wrote that “he who has doubts is condemned” in Romans 14:23. In Hebrews 10:28–31, “A man who has violated the law of Moses dies without mercy at the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the man who has spurned the Son of God... and outraged the Spirit of Grace?... It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” Jesus Christ threatens us, in Luke 6:25, “Woe to you that laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.” In Amos 3:6, “Does evil befall a city unless the Lord has done it.” In the entire book of The Cow of the Qur’an of Islam, nonbelievers are heavily described as villains and they are discriminated against; they are sinners and worthy of no kindness. In the Qur’an 3:12, it says, “Say to those who disbelieve: You shall be vanquished, and driven together to hell; and evil is the resting- place.” In regards to the infidels, in the Qur’an 3:197, it says, “A brief enjoyment! then

⁴³ ...

Qur’an — 2:206, 3:12, 3:162, 3:197, 4:55, 4:93, 4:97, 4:115, 4:121, 4:140, 4:169, 7:18, 7:14, 7:179, 8:16, 8:36, 8:37, 9:35, 9:49, 9:63, 9:68, 9:73, 9:81, 9:95, 9:109, 11:119, 13:18, 14:16, 14:29, 15:43, 16:29, 17:8, 17:18, 17:39, 17:63, 17:97, 18:100, 18:102, 18:106, 19:68, 19:86, 20:74, 21:29, 21:98, 23:103, 25:65, 26:91, 29:54, 29:68, 32:13, 35:34, 36:63, 37:23, 37:64, 37:68, 37:163, 38:56, 38:85, 39:32, 39:60, 39:71, 39:72, 40:7, 40:49, 40:60, 40:76, 43:74, 44:47, 44:56, 45:10, 48:6, 50:24, 50:30, 52:13, 54:48, 55:43, 56:94, 57:19, 58:8, 66:9, 67:6, 72:15, 72:23, 74:26, 74:27, 74:35, 74:42, 78:21, 79:36, 79:39, 81:12, 85:10, 89:23, 98:6, and 102:6.

their abode is hell, and evil is the resting-place.” In the Qur’an 17:39, it says, “This is of what your Lord has revealed to you of wisdom, and do not associate any other god with Allah lest you should be thrown into hell, blamed, cast away.” The Qur’an 36:63 puts it quite bluntly when it says, “This is the hell with which you were threatened.” It goes on in the Qur’an 63:64 (the very next verse) to say, “Enter into it [hell] this day because you disbelieved.” The Four Noble Truths of Buddhism threaten you; believe and practice Buddhism to escape suffering. In these verses, *believers are rewarded and non-believers are punished either in the physical world or in a life hereafter.*

The fact of the matter is that religion founded on deprivation. It deprives the body of food through religious fasting and other dogmatic policies. Furthermore, it limits the amount of entertainment as well as happiness that anyone can have. The highest joy — sex — is also significantly limited on many levels. On top of this limit of joys, the followers of these religions are told that they are sinners, when sin is defined as something considerably horrible and vile; they are told that they are horrible and vile. They are told not to be proud and to be completely humble. On top of these concepts, the religionists are then threatened with a hell that they shall suffer eternally if they do not do as their religion wishes and they will suffer greatly on earth also if they do not believe. A person with a low self-esteem who believes that they are worth little and follows all these pleasure-depriving mandates from heaven will unarguably find security and joy in a slave-master relationship, easily provided for by any of the world’s major religions.⁴⁴

Section IV: Pascal’s Wager

The actual Pascal’s Wager is actually three components, but what is actually referred to as Pascal’s Wager today is a “bet” on god. It was a theological device invented by Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), who was also a mathematician. The reasoning he provides is that if god exists and we believe, we gain heaven. However, if god exists and we disbelieve, we lose and go to hell. If god doesn’t exist, then it doesn’t matter what we believe as we all return back to dust. To quote Pascal himself...

Let us weight the gain and the loss in wagering that God is. Let us estimate the two choices. If you gain, you gain all; if you lose you lose nothing. Wager then without hesitation that He is.⁴⁵

Pascal’s Wager can be simplified, however...

If You Believe...

If God Exists — Go To Heaven

If God Doesn’t Exist — Go To Hell

If You Do Not Believe...

If God Exists — Go To Hell

If God Doesn’t Exist — Lose Nothing

⁴⁴ A similar, albeit somewhat different, observation is also made here: *Atheism: The Case Against God*, chapter 12, section II, page 308, by George H. Smith (Prometheus Books, New York: 1989).

⁴⁵ Blaise Pascal, “The Wager,” *Philosophy of Religion*, ed. Louis P. Pojman (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1987), page 383.

It may seem somewhat reasonable at first, however, it must be noted that it does not even prove the existence of god. Even if it is logical, it only proves that we ought to believe in a god. The error with Pascal's Wager should be seemingly obvious. How do we know which god to believe in? After all, if someone is a Christian and Islam happens to be the correct religion, then the Christian and Materialists both will burn together in the hell of Islam. What of Buddhism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, and the other mythological religions that threaten suffering? We ought to take those into consideration as well. In fact, I may even devise my own religion of an invisible, pink unicorn that threatens you to believe in it and just because it *could* exist, we *ought* to believe in it.

One may argue that there is only one god who would allow all believers in to heaven while sending all Atheists, Agnostics, and Freethinkers to hell. However, even this assumes too much. Just like there *could* be a god who would send all believers to heaven, there *could* be a god who would send all believers to hell and would send all nonbelievers to heaven as a sick joke. God may punish believers and reward non-believers; it is simply a possibility, just as a god could punish non-believers and reward believers. I am not saying it is true, nor am I outrightly saying that it is false; I am simply stating that it is *possible*. One may argue then that it does not make sense that a god would punish believers or reward non-believers. However, in the realm of the argument of Pascal's Wager, making sense is not the highest issue. We are simply dealing with *possibilities*. If someone's intellect is so insecure that it may be scared to believe in god, simply because of the possibility of a god who rewards in heaven to his followers, then someone of an equally insecure intellect can be frightened into not believing in god, simply because of the possibility of a god who rewards in hell to his followers. Both scenarios, being equally possible, end up using the same reasoning, but concluding to completely different conclusions, thus making the reasoning invalid. Even so, I will not worry about a god who would punish believers or nonbelievers based on beliefs. If god was so tyrannical that he would punish someone because of what they believed, then I may believe in him if proof is brought to light, but surely, I shall never serve such a god.

Also, simply consider what *is* lost in the wager. After all, if you spend your entire life preparing for the afterlife, only to find out that there is no afterlife, then your life that exists here and now is forever lost. That is not to say that one's entire life is wasted because they had some sort of supernatural religion, but certainly, if god does not exist and time is used to prepare for the afterlife – such as church, prayer, fasting, and other religious oddities – then every ounce of effort and every second of time used is lost completely. With a more liberal outlook on religion, every second is not based on thinking of a god. However, every second with praise or fear of god in your mind, every penny used to erect a church or temple, and every ounce of compassion and love delivered to a god could have been used by us animals in love, affection, and compassionate treatment of each other. Not only is some of your life wasted when in preparation for the after life, but consider the large amount of self abuse, self deprivation, restrictions, and limits put upon pleasures and joys by religion. Consider the overwhelmingly large amount of guilt that is required to believe any religion in particular, as well as the tremendous amount of humility required. On top of that, we are bombarded with the constant threats of hell and eternal torment by theologians and priests. I, for one, certainly cannot believe one word of any religion.

Section V: Conclusion

In regards to a benefit from belief, we are first threatened with hell. This concept of hell is vividly described by the Bible, the Qur'an, and the other religious texts of the various religions. Hell certainly is a painful experience; torturous, unrelenting, painful, full of anguish, and absolutely horrid. The image of these hells of the various religions is reinforced by the numerous theologians and priests, including Father Furniss who wrote children's books about hell, Charles Spurgeon who described hell as every organ in your body on fire, and Father Arnall who spoke so lengthily on the torments and duration of hell. The concept of hell does not go by without being attacked by humanitarians. It was the life purpose of Ingersoll to remove that foul doctrine from the minds of men. And even thousands of years earlier in Ancient Greece, it was the purpose of Epicurus to help men lead happy and healthy lives through not fearing god, hell, or an afterlife. With the doctrine of hell, men and women are told much religious dogma in regards to morality. Sex, food, and entertainment are largely restricted among the world religions; this is all a supposed type of "morality." Furthermore, men and women are told not to be proud, to be humble, and that they are sinners; sin, being defined as a horrible and vile trait, destroys the self esteem of those who are condemned as sinners. The conjunction of deprivation of happiness from earthly joys and lack of self esteem mold a perfect follower of the generic religion: an unhappy and miserable individual. In a last attempt to prove that we ought to believe in a god despite lack of proof, we are presented with the morbid Pascal's Wager. It claims that we ought to believe in a god because of the mere possibility of god and that we will be rewarded if we do so if a god does exist. However, Pascal ruled out the possibility of the other religions' gods and he also ruled out the possibility of a god who would punish believers, all things equally possible. From my conclusions and rigorous research in regards to the benefits of religion, I am unsatisfied in religion and can only conclude that it has does a massive amount of harm and nothing at all from religion is a benefit.

"When a man is freed of religion, he has a better chance to live a normal and wholesome life." — Sigmund Freud (1856–1939)⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Quoted by Carole Gray, designer of the 1992 Atheist Desk Calendar and the 1993 and 1994 Women of Freethought Calendars, Columbus Ohio.

Chapter 7: Possibility of Existence

Section I: Introduction

Through the length of this work, I have only examined the evidences for a god or a form of supernaturality. I criticized the claim that we may know a god or a form of supernaturality — or anything, for that matter — through the concept of Faith. Some claimed that the Universe is itself proof of a creator, and I criticized that claim. Other refutations include the argument from religious experience; however, the argument from religious experience failed in that religious experiences can be reproduced without supernaturality through drugs, hypnosis, and other methods. The argument from miracles, prophecy, and revelation was much in error just as the argument of design and creation: they are based on the ignorance of the workings of the natural world. I have only refuted these evidences for a god or a form of supernaturality. If someone claimed that they believed in the existence of a god or a form of supernaturality through a particular reason, and I answered why such a particular reason was insufficient, then it would be reasonable to drop belief in said form of supernaturality. However, even so, I have not yet answered the possibility of the existence of a god or supernaturality; I have only discredited the most commonly used reasons for the existence of a form of supernaturality. The only reason that we rely on proof and evidence is that proof and evidence have consistently been the best method for accurately finding the truth. It is certainly possible that a person could murder the a person without any evidence being left behind at all and a jury could find them innocent, even though they did kill that person. The same is with our situation: even though there is no valid evidence for a form of supernaturality, just what is the possibility of the existence of a form of supernaturality? Some will claim that this is the difference between an Atheist and an Agnostic, one completely ruling out the possibility of a god whereas the other accepts some sort of possibility of a god; however, already examined both terms of Atheist and Agnostic and find no intrinsic difference. It is this idea — the possibility of existence — that I shall now examine.

Section II: Epistemological Inferences

Epistemology, the study of how we know what we know, is absolutely important to the question of knowing whether a god could exist or not. Well, if we are not allowed to use Faith as a form of Epistemology — in that Faith can justify Santa Claus equally to justifying a god, as well as inconsistencies by using Faith compared to the natural Universe — then what would be a good method for attaining knowledge? I think that using the concept of reason, instead of Faith, to gain knowledge is much more accurate. To gain knowledge, we must base a belief on evidence, make sure that the belief is not contradictory, and make sure that it does not contradict previously confirmed beliefs. Beliefs that do not meet any or all of these specifications cannot sincerely be labeled as adequate knowledge.

If knowledge and reason can justify a belief in degrees through these three points (evidence, consistency, and not contradicting previous facts), then is there any possibility to know if it is *impossible* for a being to exist? Impossible, in the sense that I use it, means that there is absolutely no way that something could exist or could have happened. There certainly is a way for determining if something is impossible. The laws of Logic dictate what form truth may take. If something does not abide by these laws of Logic, then it cannot exist. The first of the three laws of Logic is the Law of Identity. The law states...

1. The Law of Identity: For things, the law asserts that “A is A,” or “anything is itself.” For propositions: “If a proposition is true, then it is true.”¹

The Law of Identity states that something is itself and nothing else. It may appear to be common sense to most, but it is imperative that the laws of Logic be identified, as they are important to our understanding of the natural Universe. An example of this law in usage would be to state, “A car is a car; a car is not a dog.” The second law of the three laws of Logic is the Law of Excluded Middle. The law states...

2. The Law of Excluded Middle: For Things: “Anything is either A or not-A.” For propositions: “A proposition, such as P, is either true or false.”²

The Law of Excluded Middle states that there is no middle ground between possibilities. Someone either exists or they do not exist. Someone is either running or they are not running. A house is either green or it is not green. These are things that the Law of Excluded Middle is imperative on. The third and last law of the three laws of Logic is the Law of Contradiction...

3. The Law of Contradiction: For things: “Nothing can be both A and not-A.” For propositions: “A proposition, P, cannot be both true and false.”³

The Law of Contradiction is sometimes referred to as the Law of Non-Contradiction. An example of a contradiction would be a *live corpse*. The contradiction is that a corpse is not live and something that is live is not a corpse. One may argue quickly that this is a form of semantics, or arguing words, but it is not so. Instead of saying “live corpse,” I could say “something that is alive, but is not alive.” I am arguing concept, not words. These things — these contradictions — are simply impossible. Other examples of contradictions may be a married bachelor, a square circle, or a false truth. The Law of Identity, the Law of Excluded Middle, and the Law of Contradiction or the three laws of Logic and can be used to rule out or rule in possibilities.

In regards to the existence of a god or any other form of supernaturality, it all depends on definitions. In chapter one, I defined god as a supernatural being of immense power who is responsible for creating this Universe. However, there are other definitions. This leads us to one of the most highly debated part of the god-question: linguistics. Many people will argue what words mean and others will argue for particular attributes of god. The Pantheists believe that god is all and the Christians believe that god is Jesus Christ as prophesied by the Old Testament. The Muslims believe that god is Allah as revealed through the Qur’an and the Jainists do not believe

¹ Logic: An Introduction, by Lionel Ruby (Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1950), page 262.

² Ibidem.

³ Ibidem.

in a god at all; the Jainists believe in various forms of supernaturality. It is all based on what we define a god as and it is necessary for us to accurately examine these definitions. The primary religions in the West, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, are all based on lengthy works. Christianity is based on the Old Testament and the New Testament. Judaism is based on the Old Testament. And Islam is based on the Old Testament and the Qur'an. All volumes being exceedingly large, I would assume that to find contradictions between the obscure and profane verses would not be at all a difficult job. However, there are Open Theists who do not believe any religious scripture but only believe in a type of a god.

Many of the liberal theologians define god as love, affection, or compassion, not as any physical being. Although this makes any Atheist frustrated by trying to debate a Theist, it is not necessarily a flaw. If one defines god as love or affection, then it may suffer from the Law of Identity. Love is love and god is god; love being associated as an animal emotion and god being associated as a supernatural being. "Love" is usually attributed with characteristics of compassion and affection whereas a "god" is usually attributed to some sort of mystical, supernatural being. The argument from there on delves into definitions of words to fit whatever religion. It is good, though, in my opinion that many liberal theologians have a loving deity rather than the cruel one portrayed in the Bible. To quote Thomas Paine...

Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the Word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it, as I detest everything that is cruel.⁴

Lev Nik Tolstoy (1828–1910) is known as perhaps the most notable author of the 1800's. Although he was an author, he also did much political and philosophical work. He wrote *My Confession* and *Critique of Dogmatic Theology*; in both works he criticized currently standing religious dogmas. He criticized the priests and aristocracy, as well as their inaction to the current problems plaguing Russia. He is also held as the father of Christian Anarchism, a concept based on acting like Christ and resisting oppressive government. In his book *Where Love Is God Is*, there is a story of "Martin the Cobbler;" it is about a cobbler who encounters various persons as well as dilemmas within his village and discovers that god is within all of them. Although not anything important in the context of today, it was significantly different from the other theologians' depictions of the cruel, brutal, and damning god of the Bible. In fact, it was his opinion of religion and what god is that was the cause of him for getting excommunicated. The decree that they excommunicated him with stated...

... He [Tolstoy] denies the living and personal God glorified in the Holy Trinity, Creator and Providence of the universe; he refutes Our Lord Jesus Christ, God made Man, Redeemer and Savior of the world, who suffered for us and for our salvation, and who has been raised from the dead; he refutes the Immaculate Conception of the human manifestation of Christ the Lord, and the virginity, before and after the

⁴ The Age of Reason, by Thomas Paine, chapter VII, part 1.

Nativity, of Mary, Mother of God, most pure and eternally virgin; he does not believe in the life hereafter or in judgment after death; he refutes all the Mysteries of the Church and their beneficial effect; and, flaunting the most sacred articles of faith of the Orthodox community, he has not feared to mock the greatest of all mysteries: the Holy Eucharist...⁵

Tolstoy, however, was a compassionate and warm being. In a book by Henry Stephens Salt, Salt notes on some recent news about Tolstoy..

The representative of an English paper lately had a drive with Count Tolstoy On his remarking that he had no whip, the Count gave him a glance “almost of scorn,” and said, “I talk to my horses; I do not beat them.” That this story should have gone round of the press, as a sort of marvelous legend of a second St. Francis, is a striking comment on the existing state of affairs.⁶

Robert Green Ingersoll, the Great Agnostic that was around at the same time as Tolstoy, also noted on the character of Tolstoy To quote him...

COUNT TOLSTOY is a man of genius. He is acquainted with Russian life from the highest to the lowest — that is to say, from the worst to the best. He knows the vices of the rich and the virtues of the poor. He is a Christian, a real believer in the Old and New Testaments, an honest follower of the Peasant of Palestine. He denounces luxury and ease, art and music; he regards a flower with suspicion, believing that beneath every blossom lies a coiled serpent. He agrees with Lazarus and denounces Dives and the tax- gatherers. He is opposed, not only to doctors of divinity, but of medicine.

From the Mount of Olives he surveys the world.

He is not a Christian like the Pope in the Vatican, or a cardinal in a palace, or a bishop with revenues and retainers, or a millionaire who hires preachers to point out the wickedness of the poor, or the director of a museum who closes the doors on Sunday. He is a Christian something like Christ.⁷

The words of Lev Tolstoy tell his story better than those who talk of him. To quote Tolstoy..

Freethinkers are those who are willing to use their minds without prejudice and without fearing to understand things that clash with their own customs, privileges, or beliefs. This state of mind is not common, but it is essential for right thinking; where it is absent, discussion is apt to become worse than useless.⁸

And...

⁵ As quoted in 2000 Years of Disbelief, by James A. Haught. Originally from the decree of anathema from the patriarchs of the Holy Synod.

⁶ Animals' Rights, by Henry Stephens Salt, chapter II, in the footnote.

⁷ Tolstoy And “The Kruetzer Sonata,” by Robert Green Ingersoll, 1890.

⁸ War and Peace, by Lev Tolstoy, 1862.

The Christian churches and Christianity have nothing in common save in name: they are utterly hostile opposites. The churches are arrogance, violence, usurpation, rigidity, death; Christianity is humility, penitence, submissiveness, progress, life.⁹

Lev Tolstoy was not bent on instilling the fear of hell onto people and his compassion for animals was endless, as he did not eat them. I am simply giving a bit of history on a particular manifestation of the concept that “god is love.” There are certainly many other depictions of what exactly god is, some ranging from a cruel and vindictive being as Paine stated and some loving and warm and many liberal theologians believe. If god is simply defined as love and nothing else, then I certainly believe in the existence of it.

Some define god as omnipotent or capable of doing anything. This definition is flawed right from the beginning. If god may be able to do anything, can he make a rock so heavy that he cannot pick it up? If he can, then he is limited in some way. If he can't, then he is still limited in some way. This question can also be rephrased. Can god make a picture so small that he cannot see it? Can god make a whisper so soft that even he cannot hear it? These are all things that if god cannot do, then he is not omnipotent, and if god can do them, then he cannot exist, as he breaks the laws of Logic. There are arguments that defend the omnipotence of this god. One argument claims that while god is omnipotent, he may switch from the position of being able to pick up the rock and then not being able to pick up the rock, thus fulfilling the question “Can god make a rock so heavy that he cannot pick it up and still be omnipotent?” However, if someone can pick up a rock, then they can. If they cannot, then they cannot. That is the Law of Excluded Middle. You either are, or you are not. There is not “switching,” and even if “switching” was a justifiable method for excusing god from the question, may god make a rock so heavy that he cannot pick it up and still be omnipotent without “switching?” Even beyond that, can god make a married bachelor, a live corpse, a false truth? In fact, I could simply ask if god could break one of the laws of Logic and if he could not, then he is not omnipotent, and if he could, then he's not real. This is the reason why I did not define god as omnipotent. The obvious contradictions flowing from that one description are countless. There are those who may argue that the god does not want to break the laws of Logic, but this is not a question of desire, but of capability. It would work wonders for the modern theological movement if they did not define god as omnipotent, but simply as *immensely powerful*.

Another thing to contemplate in regards to the possibility of a god, is whether or not this god is defined is a benevolent or kind being. If this god is benevolent or loving, then certain things must be taken into account, such as the condition of the world being full of many evils and the blatant failure of this god to answer prayers. One could claim that there is a god and a devil of equal power that are fighting against each other, thus the result of lacking prevention of evil and the lack of answering prayers. Or, perhaps, there is a god who cares not at all about the workings of us animals on this planet and will not interfere for any reason. These are all things that we must take into consideration when we are defining this god and then weighing whether or not it is possible for it to exist. Surely, there is no evidence for a supernatural being or any particular form of supernaturality. However, in regards to the laws of Logic, if a concept — supernatural or not — breaks any of the laws of Logic, it cannot possibly exist in the realm of reality. To argue that anything could exist that breaks the laws of Logic is to leave the question of “Does a god exist?”

⁹ The Kingdom of God Is within You, by Lev Tolstoy, 1893.

and to argue epistemology, or how we can know knowledge. The only way that an omnipotent god could exist is by someone legitimately arguing against the laws of Logic as a proper and accurate form of epistemology.

Section III: A Guiding Rule

Now that the foundation for the prospects of the possibility impossibility of a god have been laid down, just how possible is it for a god to exist? Considering that the concept of a god or a form of supernaturality follow all the laws of Logic required, it is possible that this god could exist. How probable exactly is the possibility of a god existing?

God, considering he follows the three laws of Logic, could exist. He could exist just as much as a planet in space that reads "GOD." This is possible, as planets are cut and formed by asteroids and meteors in space that creates line on the surface of the planet. The lines much of the time may be nonsensical and will just appear to be lines. However, possibly the lines may be formed randomly and create a letter or a word. It is possible, however unlikely; it is to be noted that it is possible. It is simply possible that these things could exist. That is the guiding rule. Possible, yet unlikely. It is certainly possible that there may be advanced extraterrestrial races outside of our galaxy that could appear as gods, if we defined "god" as an immensely powerful being, but in no way would they be supernatural, or beyond nature. There is certainly no proof of a god as of yet, if the traditional religious description of a god is how we define god, so it would be reasonable not to believe in this god until proof is brought. Surely, we would not believe anything until there was a reason to believe in it. In regards to the supernatural, I see no reason at all to believe in it, and all the evidences brought forward for supernaturality are invalid. Yet, even though we do not hold belief in the existence of a logically consistent god, it does not mean that it is impossible for this god not to exist (as long as the concept of this god follows all the laws of Logic as they stand).

Similarly, in regards to immortality, there is no reason to assume that we will live forever. When we drop a book and it falls to the ground, do we – our ought we – assume that it slips into and out of another dimension? Certainly not, although it is simply possible for it to do so without notice. Furthermore, when someone dies and falls to the ground, should we assume that this person has left the physical world and has entered eternal heaven or eternal damnation? It would not be reasonable to assume as such. It is possible that a book could slip into and out of another dimension when dropped, just as an animal's "soul" could slip into heaven or hell at the moment of its death. However, it is unlikely and certainly unproven. There is also the dilemma that neuro-science has identified consciousness being processed by the brain. When an animal dies, its bodily functions of consciousness, respiration, digestion, and other functions of the body will cease. The consciousness, the true part of who we as animals are, ends. Until a religion can explain how the consciousness is truly dead at the death of the body and how there may be an afterlife, I can be rest assured that there is no such thing as an afterlife. I believe in life before death and life after birth, and nothing else.

Section IV: God – The Idea

It is certainly important to note on the only existence of god. God exists, yes, but only as an idea. Some may argue that by talking about a god, I therefore confirm the existence of a god. However, this is not so. I could talk and discuss the concepts of Santa Claus perfectly well without confirming his existence. This argument stems from the philosophy of Ontology, or the belief that to define something is to prove something. This, however, is certainly not so, and well demonstrated by the Santa Claus example. However, it is good to note that god exists and no more than an idea. He exists just as Communism, Nationalism, and Democracy exist, as they are simply ideas.

Section V: Conclusion

In regards to the possibility of the existence of a god, it is based primarily on the definition that we apply to this god. The definition of this god must not be inconsistent with the laws of Logic or reality. A benevolent god, for example, would not allow evil to exist and therefore cannot possibly exist. The definition of a god must not break any of the laws of Logic discussed. The Law of Identity, the Law of Excluded Middle, and the Law of Contradiction make up the laws of Logic. Some redefine god to entirely unconventional standards, such as Pantheism which claims that god is everything and such as the religion of liberal theologians, which is based on god being a loving being. Some even take it even further to claim that god is simply love, and to believe in the mental emotion of love is to believe in god. The possibility of the existence of a god is based primarily on the definition that we apply to this god. The definition of omnipotence creates contradiction, and therefore no being can be omnipotent. To argue that a god – or that any being, supernatural or natural – can be in contradiction of terms is to argue a point of Epistemology. The guiding rule to the possibility of god is clear – it is certainly possible for a sort of traditional god to exist, but it is possible for anything obscure exist, as long as it coincides with the laws of Logic. There *could* be a planet that reads “GOD” on its surface just like there *could* be a god. However, through this work I have analyzed and criticized all of the evidences for this god, rendering the concept of supernaturalism as undeserving of belief, although in this chapter concluding that this god may possibly exist. Immortality through consciousness is flawed, as consciousness is produced through the brain and when the brain is dead, there is no consciousness. Unless science is flawed in this area of consciousness and how it is produced, then we see no reason to believe that there is a life after death. There is life after birth and life before death; nothing else. Finally, god does exist as an idea, but no more than the idea of Socialism, Hinduism, or Monarchy. They are all ideas, similar to the idea of god, and they are no more proven, tangible objects than god or supernaturalism is.

Chapter 8: Work Synopsis and Ending

Section I: Introduction

Through this work I have first debunked the concept of Faith to the best of my ability, making way for the concept of Reason. Then I systematically examined the most commonly purported evidences of god and supernaturality: origins, religious experiences, miracles, and benefit from belief. Then in the previous chapter I examined the possibility of the existence of a god or any form of supernaturality. Now, in the last chapter, I shall write a work synopsis of the previous chapters.

Section II: Work Synopsis

In chapter 1, I made an introduction to the concept of Atheism. Atheism was defined as the nonbelief, not exactly the confirmation of the nonexistence, but the nonbelief of a god. I am more than an Atheist, however; I am also a Materialist, as I believe that in no supernatural being. Therefore, I lack belief in gods, heaven, hell, ghosts, or other forms of supernaturality. It was also necessary in this chapter to identify that the burden of proof for the existence of a god or a supernatural being lies with the person who claims the existence of this supernatural being. The evidence given by the religionist was what I criticized in the following chapters. Also in chapter 1, I discussed the various philosophies and titles that are associated with Atheism and nonbelief of supernaturality. A Secularist is one who believes that the church and the state ought to be separated; a Skeptic is one who believes in Skepticism, the belief that no knowledge can be absolute; a Secular Humanist is a fanciful title for Atheist and is synonymous with Humanist, a person who believes their species is supreme, much like a White Supremacist believes their race is supreme; a Rationalist is someone who approaches the question of supernaturality with rational principles in mind, often coming to the conclusion of Atheism or Agnosticism; a Realist is one who seeks out the truth of reality; a Naturalist is one who believes that the natural laws of science are all that are necessary for explaining the phenomena that happens in the Universe, as well as the origins of the Universe; a Materialist is someone who believes in the materialistic Universe and nothing else; and an Epicurean is one who believes in the philosophy of Epicurus, which was based on living a simple life to attain happiness, without fear of a god or afterlife. I am an Atheist, a Secularist, a Rationalist, a Naturalist, and a Materialist. To me, there is no meaningful difference between an Atheist, an Agnostic, and a Freethinker. Many will proclaim that the difference between an Atheist and an Agnostic is how possible they believe god is. An Atheist will think god is less possible whereas an Agnostic will think that a god is more possible. However, in the previous chapter I dealt with the possibility of the existence of a god, so where I stand should be clear. Whether I deserve the title of Atheist or Agnostic, I cannot say, as I can clearly see no meaningful difference between the two.

In chapter 2, I examined the nature of Faith. Faith is the foundation for most of the religious belief by the masses. Faith, in the sense that I used it, was not simple devotion to a god as many presume it to be, but believing something without proof. I rigorously attacked this principle of Faith. First, I compared god to Santa Claus, two beings which are accepted on Faith. The similarities go on: they both live far away, both are indemonstrable, both were learned through the community and authority figures, both have magical or supernatural powers, and both reward with heaven or presents and punish with hell or no presents. The first difference that is claimed to separate Santa Claus and god is that god reveals himself personally to persons who believe in him whereas Santa Claus does not, but this argument is tipped over on account that many people believe in different types of gods who are in no way the same god. One may argue that the difference between Santa Claus and god is that Santa Claus is magical whereas god is simply supernatural, but both words cannot be meaningfully separated, as both god and Santa Claus do things through unnatural methods which could be called *magical* or *supernatural*. Santa Claus must make 822 visits per second on Christmas Eve whereas the gods and ghosts of different religions are responsible for the creation and sometimes the maintenance of the Universe. Clearly, both beings are supernatural or magical; choose whichever word you wish as there is no meaningful separation. One final means for separation of Santa Claus and god is that Santa Claus evolved from a myth whereas god did not. Although I did not delve into the Sun religions that contributed to the development of the Western religions, I simply noted that it did not matter if Santa Claus came from a myth or not and that it only mattered that he was equaled in justification for belief as is god, not where the myth of Santa Claus developed from. To this point, I had not proven that Faith was incorrect in attaining knowledge; I had only compared Faith in Santa Claus to Faith in a god or ghost. However, I debunked the concept of Faith by showing that just as a scientist needs evidence for claims and a jury needs evidence to convict, reason is a necessity to truth and should not be expelled from examining the concept of a god or any other supernatural dogma; for a religion, or anything else, to be true, it must have evidence and it must be logical and reasonable. All of the major scientists, as well, such as Charles Darwin, Charles Babbage, Albert Einstein, Thomas Henry Huxley, Luther Burbank, Carl Sagan, Isaac Asimov, and others, were nonbelievers of conventional religion. I also pointed out how scientific and historical beliefs are different from religious beliefs in that scientific and historical beliefs are dropped when the evidence is pulled, yet religious beliefs are still tenaciously held in spite of lacking evidence. There are, however, two primary arguments for Faith. The first is simply to attack Reason and knowledge, by claiming that since certain things may not be empirically demonstrable, such as the existence of microscopic bacteria, that we believe in them by Faith. This is incorrect, however, as these things that are not empirically demonstrable can be demonstrated by someone or by anyone, and even if not empirically demonstrated, it does not mean something is absolutely correct. The second argument is based on stating that we accept authorities on Faith and that we should accept a theologian's authority on Faith. However, this is also flawed as an Atheist can have a thorough knowledge of theology and still qualify as an authority on theology without believing in it. Through this entire chapter, I attempted to debunk the concept of Faith to make way for the rest of the work which would examine the various evidences for a form of supernaturality.

In chapter 3, I examined the claim that our origins are from some sort of divine being and that a god created or designed the Universe. First, I examined the concept of placing supernatural explanations for natural phenomena. The Muslims explain lightning by stating Allah is trying to kill whom he wishes, the Christians and Jews explain the origin of woman by claiming that

woman came from the rib bone of man, the Hindus and Buddhists explain the origin of fire by claiming that the god Agni creates it, and the Roman Religionists explain the origin of the metals in the Earth by stating that the god Pluto places them there. These supernatural explanations for natural phenomenon are based on ignorance and nothing else; these things claimed by religion to explain the origin and workings of the natural Universe are false. Then I argued that god simply cannot explain the origin of the world, as who created this god? If everything that exists needs an explanation, and god exists, then what can explain the origin of a god? The concept of a god ends up creating a larger hole than it was trying to fill by leaving more to be explained than it explained. There are those who claim that god always existed, but then that needlessly assumes the existence of god when we could ascribe the same explanation to the origin of the Universe: it always existed. Many claim that god created himself, but this falls into error, as no one may create themselves. Before anyone can do anything, they must exist, and if you do not exist you cannot create, and then you certainly cannot create yourself. For example, if you wanted to get to your car, you couldn't drive your car there. There are those who claim that this god can break the laws of logic, but they fall into error by the fact that simply because the man who invented the guillotine invented the guillotine, it does not mean he can survive it, and the majority of people who understand the workings of logic and the Universe do not hold belief in Theism. Finally, some claim that god is supernatural and the Universe is natural, and that is the difference – and that is why god needs no creator -, but this argument assumes the existence of the very thing it is trying to prove! The argument of design falls to the same errors: if everything that has design requires a designer, then who designed god? Also, the design of life on Earth is explained by Darwin's theory of Natural Selection. The Analogical Argument of Design claims that since the Universe could have taken one of billions of forms, that it requires a design, but then every rain drop should then require a designer, as it could have fallen in one of billions of locations. The First Cause Argument claims that everything requires a cause, just like a row of dominoes and then claims that god was the First Cause of everything, but this falls victim to contradiction: if everything requires a cause, then god himself must have had a cause as well. In section V I explained the scientific proofs and evidences for the origins of ourselves as we appear today. Matter has always existed, as concluded from the First Law of Thermodynamics; it stated that matter cannot be created or destroyed. The Big Bang theory states how matter spread across the universe, not how it came into being. In regards to the origin of organic material, Stanley L. Miller and Harold C. Urey, in 1952, conducted an experiment that reproduced the early conditions of Earth and after inserting heat into the experiment, they had organic matter in a week. Sidney Walter Fox furthered the findings of Miller and Urey by heating up the organic matter intensely, thus producing matter that acted much like bacteria: eating, moving, and reproducing. Charles Darwin introduced the concept of Natural Selection. Through the existence of vestigial organs – or rudimentary organs – Darwin was able to prove the existence and process of Natural Selection in the natural world. Through this chapter I attacked the long-held concept that this Universe was created and worked by supernatural beings, this old dogma that once was selectively held by primitive beings and not rational beings.

In chapter 4, I examined claims of religious experience. The argument from religious experience is plagued with the fact that there are many different religions experiences due to various regions and religions: North American or European Christians experience being Born Again, southern Asian Buddhists experience Nirvana, Asian Hindus experience Enlightenment, Asian Zen Buddhists experience Satori, eastern Asian Taoists experience Wu Wei, and global Yogis

experience Nirvakalpa Samadhi. However, if someone is born in China, they are likely to experience no religious experience because China is officially an Atheist nation. These are all religious experiences for different gods and different religions. The fact that some religionists are happy and they purport that god is responsible for the happiness proves nothing; Atheists world wide are happy and whole without a god. The Near-Death Experience (NDE) or Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) can be reproduced with Ketamine as shown in a study by Dr. Karl Jansen. Also in *The Washington Post*, an article titled “Tracing the Synapses of Our Spirituality” discussed the recent advances in neurology. It traced work by many scientists who were capable of creating an NDE or OBE through magnetized helmets, hallucinogenic drugs, epilepsy, and meditation. One may argue that this is proof that a god designed us because it is a religious experience within us, but this is flawed because it only proves that we get religious experiences through chemicals and hormones. One may argue that a conscience is felt just as much as a religious experience, but the conscience is proof of itself, whereas someone experiencing a religious experience goes further to claim that because it exists, so does a god; it purports more than one who feels their conscience. One may also claim that they spoke with a god in a dream, but they cannot know if they spoke with god in a dream or that they dreamt that they spoke with a god.

In chapter 5, I examined the claims of miracles, prophecy, and revelation. In chapter 3, I examined the proclaimed divine origins, finding them based on arrogance. A Christian or Jew may believe that woman came from the rib bone of man, but this is based on ignorance of how life evolved. Similarly, when someone proclaims a miracle that has happened in reality and nature, it is based on ignorance of the natural workings of reality and nature. Praying for a miracle is flawed, as things happen naturally. To pray for the Sun come up — and the Sun comes up — does not prove that the Sun comes up because of prayer, but it came up because of the natural workings of the Universe. To pray for the Sun not to come up — and the Sun comes up anyway — proves that prayers are not fulfilled. If a prayer appears to be have been fulfilled, it is based on the natural workings of the Universe. To say that something odd that appears to be a miracle is caused, it is no proof of a god, just as someone could say that rain is caused by invisible, pink unicorns, but it does not prove their existence. Certainly not! One may argue that god physically causes miracles, but god is not a natural or measurable being; he is a supernatural being, and therefore cannot be held responsible in any way in the physical, natural Universe. One may argue that god does not answer all prayers, but this may be so, but then this god is not benevolent and attempts to prove the existence of a god that doesn't make miracles through miracles is absurd. A prophecy proves nothing. To say that a war will happen within a century — wars being something common in Western civilization — does not prove that it was a prophecy, any more than to say that in a month it will rain. The difference between a prophet and a meteorologist is that the meteorologist is at least more accurate. Miracles cannot be interpreted properly, as well. If someone may say that a miraculous event is proof of god simply because it happened, what of another person saying that a river flowing is proof of an invisible, pink unicorn? A river flowing is a naturally explainable event, just as any purported miracle is. However, it is based on ignorance that people accept particular events as miracles. It is the ignorance of the natural laws of science. Finally, the concept of a god certainly does not solve the unexplained events that happen on earth by making up miracles; after all, what can explain the existence of a god, except that this god was too a miracle? If that is so, then we run into the same problems as we did when we say that god created the Universe: who created god? Who *miracled into existence* god? The concept of miracles certainly cannot prove the existence of a god or any form of supernaturality.

In chapter 6, I examined claims that it was simply better to believe in the existence of god rather than not believe in the existence of god. First, I thoroughly examined the history of the doctrine of hell. Charles H. Spurgeon, Father Furniss, Father Arnall, and Jack T. Chick are preachers and writers who have recreated the concepts of hell in their own words to instill fear in their fellow men. The Bible, the Qur'an, the Roman religion myths, the Buddhist writings, and the other various religious authorities usually believe in a hell of a sort, as demonstrated in their scripture. Fighters for Freethought have always fought the intolerable doctrine of eternal punishment. Thomas Paine, Epictetus, Democritus, Diogenes of Oenoanda, Lucretius, David Hume, and Henry Louis Mencken were some of the nonbelievers who have mocked the doctrine of hell. It was the sole purpose, however, of Ingersoll and Epicurus to remove the doctrine of eternal punishment from the minds of men. Some argue that god sends bad souls to hell just like a good police officer sends criminals to jail, but the sole purpose of a jail is to protect the public, whereas the sole purpose of hell is to torture beings. Some claim that man sends himself to hell, which is just ludicrous, considering that god is responsible for creating man and therefore is entirely responsible for all the actions of man. Some claimed that hell exists but god is cruel and others claim that hell doesn't exist while a benevolent god does — these views are acceptable as they are logically consistent. Furthermore, we are told that it is to secure mental happiness if one believes in a religion, but I find this highly doubtful. Although I did conclude that immortality may be the only joyful concept of religion, the rest appeared to be sadistic and unkind. In regards to immortality, I stated that I understood I would die one day and cease to be conscious, and I also stated that I was not afraid of this nor depressed by it. Religion limits sex in many cases in all religions. Also, all religions seem to limit food intake and pleasure in general. Ingersoll noted many, many times on how religions always end up being vindictive methods of self-abuse. John Calvin was a theologian and a mayor of Geneva, a Swiss town. In the town, he banned drunkenness, songs, dances, and games, as well as my most favored form of entertainment: blasphemy. Self esteem is the next thing religion attacks, by claiming that you should not be proud, that you should be humble, and that you are a sinner. Religions also end up practicing self-abuse physically: Buddhists train themselves to keep perfectly still under the threat of being struck by a master and Christianity preaches self-castration and to take abuse or *turn the other cheek*. Also, in all religions universally, it is obviously apparent that scripture backs up the doctrine that believers are rewarded and non-believers are punished. All this concludes out to the fact that a believer with a low self esteem will enjoy the slave-master relationship provided by all the major religions. The next ploy of the benefit of belief is Pascal's Wager, which states it is better to believe simply because of the chance of a god who rewards with heaven. However, this is in error, as a god could exist that would reward Atheists with heaven, as this is purely based on what *could* be and not what *is*. Also, Pascal's Wager seems not to consider the amount that is lost — the emotional abuse of religion — and the life that is wasted by basing your life on an unfounded lie. If your whole life is based on preparing for a lie, then your whole life is wasted.

In chapter 7, I examined the possibility of the existence of god rather than arguing against some sort of proof for the existence of god. If a god exists, it is based purely on how we decide to define god. A god could exist, as long as this god is defined in such a way that it does not conflict with the three laws of Logic: the Law of Identity, the law of Excluded Middle, and the Law of Contradiction. Some define god as love, such as those who developed their concept of a god from the roots of Tolstoi's god of love (although Tolstoy *did* believe in an external being rather than just love as god). It is imperative to take note as to why god does not answer prayers or why the

world is in a bad condition if one chooses to define god as a benevolent being. Furthermore, a god could exist, but it is simply *possible*, but not definitive. This is just how it may be likely that god is impossible, however, it is good to note that a god could exist, just like a planet could say “GOD” in its surface, a god *could* exist. Finally, it is imperative to note that god does exist, but purely as an idea.

Section III: A Few Remaining Words

Atheism and nonbelief of the gods is everywhere. It has been in the mind of Giordano Bruno who was burned for his refusal to worship Christianity. It was in the heart of Ingersoll as he fought to remove the foul doctrine of eternal punishment from the minds of men. It has existed in the character of Joseph McCabe who has written over 250 books on Atheism. It has echoed in the caves of time, bouncing off the walls indefinitely and held in the minds of the infinite Free-thinkers; and it shall continue to exist and to prosper as long as someone continues to question what they are told of the indemonstrable. The winds of Atheism carry with it the incomparable view of truth and the absolute bliss of knowledge. Atheism may not confirm love or justice, unless it is the love of the natural and the justice of truth. The lack of belief in gods guarantees the most immortal truth: we are not immortal; this life is our only life, all that we can make of it is the highest of our possible accomplishments, and all that we may dream in this life is all that we may dream at all. This knowledge of Atheism — a confirmation of truth and value — is priceless.

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