

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY™

THE GOD

THE

CHRISTIANS SWEAR BY.

BY

G. W. FOOOTE

(Editor of *The Freethinker*).

“I have a hundred times heard him [his father, James Mill] say, that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind had gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this God, and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity.”—JOHN STUART MILL, “Autobiography,” p. 40.

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THE GOD THE CHRISTIANS SWEAR BY.

I.

JOHN STUART MILL, in one of the most incisive passages of his Essay on Liberty, ridiculed the Christian notions of oath-taking, and after stating that in our law courts you must swear by God, he contemptuously added "any God will do." In this country we must have a God, even if, as the Americans say, it is only a little tin Jesus. Sir Henry Drummond Wolff on a memorable occasion emphasised this view. When Mr. Bradlaugh first sought to take his seat in the House of Commons that sapient member of the Fourth Party urged against him that there was a grand difference between the member for Northampton and the other legislators. They all had some deity or other, while Mr. Bradlaugh had no sort of God. We have heard a Christian minister carry this idea out to its logical end, and declare that it is better to worship the wrong God than worship none at all.

Mr. Bradlaugh's offence is that he has no God. He is therefore said to be unfit to sit in Parliament. Want of brains or of honor might be easily overlooked, but want of theology is unpardonable. It is the one sin which can never be forgiven. You may sin against Man with impunity, but you may not sin against the Ghost without being treated as a criminal and an outlaw.

But, after all, Mr. Bradlaugh's *real* offence is that he does not believe in the *Bible* God. That is the deity the House of Commons believes in. Christian and Jew are at one in this. Alderman Fowler and Baron de Worms coincide here, and, as the man in Sheridan's play says of two different characters, "when they do agree their unanimity is wonderful." The God of the New Testament is simply a continuation of the God of the Old. 'Tis the same God washed and shaved, and with his best clothes on, a little more fit for decent society. Why the Jew and the Christian have fallen out so frightfully we cannot understand, except on the principle that family quarrels are always the bitterest.

Mr. Bradlaugh does not believe in the Bible God, and the pious majority of the House of Commons will not let

him swear. Their God, Jesus Christ, said, "Swear not at all," yet they claim a monopoly of swearing, and no doubt many of them do a great deal more of it outside the House than they ever do inside. Christ's command is binding on them, and they break it. It is not binding on Mr. Bradlaugh, and they make him obey it!

As Mr. Bradlaugh's way to his seat is barred in God's name, we have the right to ask what kind of a being he is. What is the character of this God the Christians swear by?

In answering this question we shall go to authentic sources. Fortunately, we have this God's character written by himself, or at his dictation. The Bible contains it, and to that we shall appeal. If we malign or misrepresent him, the fault is his own.

When men describe themselves they never say the worst that can be said. Something is concealed, something toned down, something heightened. Defects are slurred over and virtues brought into strong relief. No doubt gods act in the same way. The Bible God has described himself, and if we find his character bad we may depend upon it that if the whole truth were told it would be worse. Let none of his worshippers, then, quarrel with the result of our examination.

II.

God's original name was Jehovah or Iahveh. He was one of the deities of the early Jews. Natural selection applies to gods as well as animals, and Jehovah beat all his competitors as the fittest to survive. Baal, Moloch, Ashtaroth, and a crowd of other deities, perished in the struggle for existence.

Jehovah never denied the reality of his opponents; on the contrary, he fiercely resented their rivalry. He described himself as a *jealous* god. A husband could not be jealous of his wife unless there were other men to make love to her, and no god could be jealous unless there were other gods bidding for the adoration of his worshippers. Moses styled Jehovah "the lord God of the Hebrews," and Pharoah in speaking to the prophet always refers to him as "your God." And he himself distinctly says, in the twelfth verse of the thirteenth chapter of *Exodus*, "against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment." This clearly implies that they were gods as well as he, although of

inferior power. He was only the strongest member of a large family.

God the Son and God the Holy Ghost did not exist then. Jehovah was too much absorbed in the task of self-preservation to propagate himself. Only when his supremacy was undisputed did he find leisure to branch out in two directions.

But his great adversary existed. The Devil was active from the beginning of the world, and held his own against Jehovah when Baal and all the other gods were demolished. Nay, he more than held his own; he outwitted and worsted his rival; and from the Fall until now he has secured the vast majority of the human beings whom the Lord made expressly for himself. The Devil pursues a Machiavellian policy. He allows God to create things and appropriates them afterwards. God invests all the capital and the Devil takes nearly all the profit.

This does not surprise us when we consider the Lord's ignorance. His knowledge and intelligence are about as small as those of a savage. The only explanation of this is that savages made him thousands of years ago.

While he worked hard at creating the world he quite forgot that the Devil was prowling about. When it was finished he retired to rest and the Devil turned everything upside-down. Why did he go to sleep at all? Or why did he not depute an archangel to watch the world while its boss was napping?

When he made Adam as the flower of creation he pronounced everything *good*, but soon after he found it was not good for man to be alone. Any idiot might have known that. There was poor Adam, monarch of all he surveyed, and king of the dreariest paradise that ever existed. What are all the flowers in the world worth with no lovely flower of womanhood to crown them?

God then made Adam a wife. All the nothing out of which everything was made being used up, some of the manufactured article had to be employed. The Lord could no more make something out of nothing, not even a curate; so Eve was made out of one of Adam's ribs. The first woman was manufactured from a spare rib. Fortunately the Lord did not bungle over this job; but suppose he had forgotten some of his apparatus, and while he was gone for it the dog had carried off that bone!

So far were Adam and Eve from being "good," that God soon after cursed them up and down, and their descendants

were so bad that he resolved to drown them as an old lady does her stock of kittens. What a queer method! Why did he not reform his children? Why not hang a few priests and put a few schoolmasters in their places? The Lord's ways are not our ways, and he does as he likes with his own.

Even then he bungled afresh and perpetrated blunder within blunder. Instead of drowning all and starting with a new stock, he saved eight of the bad old lot. These replenished the world with wretched creatures like themselves, and the people after the Flood were, if anything, worse than those before it. Before Noah died there were not ten righteous men found in one populous city to save it from destruction, and no doubt other cities were very little better.

After the Flood this God promised that he would never again deluge the earth. But the people said "Walker!" and began to build a big tower with its top in heaven, so that if another Flood came they might mount the stairs and step clean on to the golden floor. How high heaven is we cannot say, but no tower could ever near it. When it reached a certain height it would tumble about the builders' ears. But God did not know this any more than they. He thought they might succeed. He knew nothing of gravitation or the principles of architecture. He became alarmed, and instead of leaving them alone until their tower toppled over, he afflicted them with a diversity of speech. One man talked Sanskrit, another Monoglian, another American Indian, another Dutch, and another Double Dutch. The story represents God as ignorant of the simplest laws of nature, and stupid as a hydrocephalic idiot.

III.

The Bible God is infinitely petty. He exhibits all the weakness of a spoilt child or a savage chief. His temper is usually very warm, and in his fits of anger he rages about like a monstrous madman, killing wholesale by flood, famine, earthquake, pestilence and war. Occasionally he relents. But woe unto those who presume on his goodness, and imagine that "his tender mercies are over all his works"! He suddenly rouses himself, and they and their fool's paradise vanish into limbo.

He is constantly changing his mind, and cannot be

depended on for twenty-four hours together. He regrets, repents, wails, and carries on like a big baby whose hopes are disappointed; and when things turn out contrary to his expectations, he never blames his own want of foresight, but damns his own creation for being what he made it.

Let us take an instance. He sent Moses to rescue the Jews from bondage and lead them to the land of promise. But after Moses brought them out of Egypt, the Lord found that they were all unfit to enter Palestine, and he led them a devilish dance up and down the wilderness for forty years, until every soul had perished except Joshua and Caleb. Even Moses was not allowed to cross the river Jordan; and as, although a hundred and twenty years old, he was still strong and hale, the Lord asked him up a mountain, and there killed and buried him.

Another instance. While the Jews were in the desert, wandering about like a blind man in a fifty-acre field, the Lord visited Mount Sinai; and after staying there alone for some time, he invited Moses to come up and spend a few days with him. They had so much to talk about that the interview lasted forty days and nights. During that time the Jews grew impatient. They looked up and could see nothing of Moses or the Lord except a murky cloud, and they naturally concluded that both of them had ended in smoke. Thereupon they desired Aaron to become their leader and to make them a new God. Ever ready to oblige, he accepted the leadership in place of Moses; and for a God instead of Jehovah he made them a golden calf—fit deity for such a multitude of fools.

When God observed the disgraceful antics of his "holy people," his "special people, above all people on the face of the earth," who had stripped stark naked and were dancing like calves before the calf, he became greatly enraged. "Now Moses," said he, "just you get out of the way, for I mean mischief. I'll kill every one of the blackguards, and start a fresh people." But Moses, who had a calmer head, smoothed down his ruffled feathers. "Come now," said he, "don't act in a hurry; think over it a bit; just remember that you are bound by an oath to these scurvy Jews; and then think what the Egyptians will say and how they'll laugh at you." Then the Lord cooled down, and said he was sorry he forgot himself.

Sometimes his pettiness is more funny still. While Moses was journeying from his father-in-law's to Egypt to

execute God's commission, he stayed one night at a wayside inn; and the Lord put up at the same hotel. At any rate he "met" Moses there, and strangely enough tried to kill him. Imagine an all-wise God seeking to kill a man for obeying his commands, and imagine an all-powerful God trying to do it without success! Moses does not appear to have committed any offence. The probability is that the Lord had a fit of the blues that night, and, like human beings in that state, he turned against his best friend.

On another occasion the Lord played Balaam a similar trick. When the messengers of Barak came asking him to come and curse the Jews, the prophet wisely asked the Lord what he should do. The Lord said "Don't go," and Balaam stopped at home. The messengers came a second time: then the Lord said "Go," and Balaam went. But he did not reflect that a god who had changed his mind once might change it twice; and that is exactly what the Lord did. He posted an angel in Balaam's path to slay him for doing as God commanded; and poor Balaam would inevitably have perished had it not been for the providential interference of his jackass.

God's treatment of Pharaoh and the Egyptians was no less singular. He sent Moses to bring the Jews out, and incited Pharaoh to keep them in. The king and the prophet had ten tugs of war; it was pull Moses, pull Pharaoh; and each time the poor Egyptians suffered. At the end God joined in and pulled Pharaoh clean over. If the game had ended there we might enjoy the fun, for it is indifferent to mankind whether kings or priests come to grief when they quarrel. But it did not end there. The first-born of every family in Egypt was slain by this divine butcher; and after that he completed his "plaguings" by drowning Pharaoh and all the Egyptian hosts in the Red Sea.

Nor was this God over clean. His necromancers, Moses and Aaron, turned all the water of Egypt into blood, but the magicians of Egypt beat them by turning all the *rest* into blood. Then the Lord exerted his omnipotence to defeat them. His two necromancers turned all the dust of Egypt into lice. That settled it. "This," said they, "is the finger of God." When they saw the lice they knew the Lord was shaking himself.

Neither was God over truthful. He told an untruth to Adam and Eve, which the Devil corrected. He falsified many of his promises. The men and women he most favored

were notorious deceivers. He hated open Esau and loved lying Jacob. He more than winked at the guile of his servants. He sanctioned the treachery of Jael, who invited a hunted man into her tent and basely killed him while he slept. He even kept lying spirits in heaven to go forth and prophesy falsely so that people might be lured to ruin; and there is a fine instance of this in the last chapter of the first Book of Kings. No doubt the stock of liars is still kept up, for any number of rogues, thieves and murderers have gone to glory since then.

IV.

Jehovah never had the faintest idea of justice until the Jews had sufficiently progressed to give him lessons in that virtue; and he heartily detested every sign of mental freedom. He was so "jealous" that he visited the sins of the fathers upon the children of those who neglected him for three or four generations. According to the thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, he commanded his "holy people" to stone to death any person who broached new ideas on the subject of religion, even though the heretic were bound to them by the dearest ties of friendship or blood. The twenty-eighth chapter of the same Book contains a list of the curses he would inflict on them if they "went after other gods." It is one of the most terrible denunciations in all literature, and any god ought to be ashamed of himself for using such frightful threats. A man who indulged in such language in the streets would be "run in" as a public nuisance, and sent to an asylum or a jail.

Let it not be said that the Lord has improved in this respect. There is just as vicious language to be found in the New Testament. Saint Paul told the new elect to "hold no fellowship with unbelievers;" Saint John consigns all sceptics to the "lake which burneth with brimstone and fire;" and the statement of Jesus, in the last chapter of Mark, that those who believed and were baptised should be saved, while those who believed and were not should be damned, shows that in the eyes of God heresy is the one sin which can never be forgiven. It is worthy of notice, too, that the deity of the New Testament is really more cruel to sceptics than the deity of the Old Testament. God the Father had them killed in this world, and there was an end to their punishment; but God the Son prolongs their

misery after death, and burns them for ever and ever in hell.

In return for the undivided worship of his chosen people, God promised, and in some cases gave them, many advantages at the expense of their neighbors. He told them to "borrow" of the Egyptians without the remotest intention of ever paying them back. He forbade them to practise usury with each other, but permitted them to practise it to any extent with the "stranger," so that no alien should be able to say to them "I was a stranger and ye took me not in." He told them that they should lend unto many nations, but never borrow, and that he would "make them the head, and not the tail." He depopulated whole districts for them to inhabit, and carried out the process in the most hellish manner, sparing neither age nor sex. And all this was done solely through his good pleasure, and not because the Jews were any better than the populations who were exterminated; for we are expressly told that they did "more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel." Moral obligations do not concern him. He claims the potter's right over the clay, and smashes one vessel and preserves another, without any respect to their merits. He "hath made all things for himself; yea even the wicked for the day of evil." The saint who goes to heaven and the sinner who goes to hell are both "elected" by his grace; and the latter has no more right to complain than the dying pauper who, when he resented the statement that he was going to hell, was told that he ought to be thankful there was a hell to go to.

V.

God's savagery is a fruitful theme. Look at the story of the Fall. He places a damnation-trap in Paradise and curses the first couple for falling into it. How could he expect them to refrain from the one thing forbidden? The tabooed fruit hung temptingly before their eyes every minute. Is it any wonder they yielded? The least inquisitive woman in the universe would have had her teeth in one of those apples in less than ten minutes. But God was so angered by their offence that he not only cursed them, but all their posterity, and even the ground under their feet. He must have been an awful sight in his passion, and it is surprising that he did not go off in a fit of apoplexy.

God curses the unborn for a paltry "sin" committed

long before they were thought of! What would be thought of a legislator who proposed that the relatives of all murderers should be hung, and the relatives of all thieves imprisoned? We should judge him to be bad or mad. Yet this is what God did, does, and will do; God who should be infinitely wiser than the wisest man and infinitely better than the best.

Look at the story of the Flood. God drowned all the people in the world, except eight, for being what he made them; and in his wrath he spared not the lower animals who had no share in man's transgression. He looked down on the mountains filled with his fugitive children. He saw them climb the rocky heights to escape from the devouring waves. He heard their cries of agony as they were overtaken. He beheld the mother and babe drop together in the raging flood. He witnessed the death-struggle of the last strong man who scaled the highest peak and was washed off into the universal grave. And when the waters subsided, he saw the earth a vast charnel-house, and the herbless fields covered with the bones of a slaughtered world.

If it be a virtue to emulate God, the greatest villains in history deserve the most reverence, and instead of hanging murderers we should maintain them in luxury during their lives, and erect monuments to their memory when they are dead.

Look at the Jewish wars. Read the twentieth chapter of Deuteronomy, and ask whether any devil could have given viler advice. Let God's words stand in all their hideous nakedness:—

“When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace, and open unto thee, then it shall be that all the people that is found therein shall be tributaries unto thee, and they shall serve thee. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it. And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands, thou shalt *smite every male* thereof with the edge of the sword. But *the women*, and the little ones, and the cattle, and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, *shalt thou take unto thyself*; and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities which are very far off from thee, which are not of the cities of these nations. But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth.*”

What awful maxims of desolation, straight from the heart of cruelty and lust! The loving mother holds aloft her babe, shrieking for mercy, and the flashing sword of Jehovah's bandits cleaves them dead together. The men fight, and can die exclaiming that all is lost save honor. But the flying maidens cannot even say that. They are handed over by God's command as victims to lust. One-half go to the soldiers and the other to the congregation, after a few have been reserved for Jehovah himself. Thirty-two thousand Midianitish virgins were treated in this way, of whom "the Lord's tribute was thirty and two."

O English maidens, with heaven's own azure in your sweet eyes, and hearts as soft as its fleecy clouds, look out from the shelter of your homes on this ghastly scene! Imagine the brave men who have perished in defending hearth and home your own fathers and brothers; imagine the bloody corpses slain amid cries for mercy those of your mothers and your baby brothers and sisters, whose prattling presence was as dancing sunshine in the house; imagine yourselves those sweet girls fleeing from worse than death; and then think whether this Bible God deserves your worship and your love.

We need not wonder, after reading these maxims of inspired war, why David showed his repentance for adultery with Bathsheba by fighting the Ammonites, and putting his prisoners "under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron," and making them "pass through the brick-kiln;" or why God took the kingdom from Saul for sparing Agag after utterly destroying his subjects.

Look at God's favorites. We judge men by the company they keep, and the same rule should apply to gods.

Abraham—the father of the faithful—who was selected from all the world's inhabitants to be the founder of God's chosen nation, did only one good deed in his whole life. He rescued his nephew Lot from captivity, and we will give him the credit of it, although his defeat of five mighty kings with a mere handful of servants is an achievement which can hardly be credited without a great deal of faith. Abraham was an incorrigible liar. He twice passed his wife off as his sister, not to save her honor, but to save his own skin; and on each occasion God punished not the liar, but the persons who were simple enough to believe him. He turned his own son and the lad's mother out into the wide world to live or die, with no sustenance except a little

dry bread and cold water. He consented to offer up another son as a burnt offering to God. True, he was arrested at the critical moment. But in estimating character, intention is everything. These two occasions show that he was a murderer at heart. Abraham was therefore a liar, a coward, and a murderer.

Isaac was a true chip of the old block. He also was a constitutional liar; like his father he passed his wife off as his sister, and for the same paltry reason. Besides this he had only one peculiarity. He was very fond of venison, and liked it so well that, objecting to die on an empty stomach, he laid in a good supply before giving up the ghost.

Jacob was one of the meanest blackguards that ever lived. He is the father of the great race of Jeremy Diddlers. He diddled everybody he met—including God himself—with the single exception of his uncle Laban, who diddled *him*. He took advantage of his brother's hunger to bargain away his birthright. He cozened his blind father, and cheated his brother out of the old man's blessing. He ran away like a coward to avoid Esau's vengeance. He wrestled with an angel all night for his blessing, and probably wouldn't have let him go then if he wore clothes and had any small change in his pockets. He bargained with God for unlimited capital, without any security, on condition of paying ten per cent. of the profits. He married both his uncle's daughters, got possession of all his sheep and cattle worth having, and finally left the old man without even a god to worship. On his way home he sent forward a large present to mollify Esau, who was coming out to meet him. But this noble fellow put it by, said he had enough, fell on his brother's neck, wept, and forgave him all. Yet God says, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated."

David, the man "after God's own heart," lied, deceived, robbed, murdered, committed adultery, and died with counsels of blood on his lips. This savage warrior was "after God's own heart." What a remarkably black heart it must be!

VI.

THE treatment of women has often been declared a fair test of civilisation. If God treats them worse than the most advanced nations of to-day would tolerate he is far

less civilised than his own creatures. We shall find that his sexual views are almost beneath contempt. Women are the greatest supporters of the clergy, yet the Bible God outrages their holiest instincts in nearly every part of his sacred word.

He so planned creation that the human race had to be propagated through incest in the first generation. Why did he not create two couples instead of one, so that their children might have intermarried without violating decency? Throughout the Old Testament woman is never regarded as possessing any rights; she is treated simply as a chattel. The Decalogue classes the wife with the ox and the ass as things belonging to the husband, which his neighbours are not to covet. God empowered the Jewish father to sell his daughter as a concubine, and sanctioned wholesale rape on the women who were "spoil" of war. He allowed the males of his chosen people to take wives for a month on trial. He never said anything against infidelity on the part of the husband, but he appointed a "jealousy" trial for suspected wives so utterly revolting, as well as absurd, that no preacher dares read it to his congregation. His favorites from Abraham to Solomon were all polygamists. God never inculcated monogamy, the marriage of one man with one woman; and no one, in the whole of the Bible, is forbidden to have more than one wife except Bishops and Deacons. The Bible God clearly sanctions polygamy, which desecrates our noblest feelings, turns love into lust, and destroys the very idea of home.

The New Testament God is little better. He had no conception of true marriage. It never occurred to him that love differed from lust. Jesus frowned on all sexual relations. He even advised men to make themselves eunuchs, and we might think that he carried out his doctrine if he had not been followed about by so many females. He taught that in heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, which may be a consolation to timid husbands who fear what might happen there with a fellow like David prowling about.

Saint Paul, who was inspired by God, recommended celibacy, which means the suicide of the race. He lived single himself (the dry old crust!) and thought that the best state for everybody. But if they could not live single without fornication, he advised them to marry. This is holy Paul's doctrine, and he was called by God to preach.

He places the union of men and women on exactly the same ground as the coupling of beasts.

The Bible God emphasises the inferiority of women. The first woman brought evil into the world. That would never have been stated if men had not written the whole of the Bible from beginning to end. God tells us how long the patriarchs lived, but he does not consider women of sufficient importance to chronicle their ages. Nearly all the Old Testament women are wicked. In the New Testament, women are told to obey their lords and masters, and not to open their mouths while away from home, but to wait until they get their husbands by the fireside and then meekly ask whatever they want to know. Women are to obey men as men obey God. More false and ignoble doctrines were never penned. Let husband and wife walk side by side, not as master and slave, but as equals, and let the hateful word "obedience" be banished from the vocabulary of love.

The Bible God sanctions slavery, the right to property in human flesh and blood, the most horrid institution that ever disgraced and cursed the earth. Abraham was a slaveholder, and so were all the heroes of Israel. God told his people to make slaves of their captives, and he laid down laws as to their treatment. Saint Paul sent a runaway slave back to his master. "Servants, obey your masters," means literally "slaves obey your owners." God never said a word against slavery from Genesis to Revelation. Yet he had many opportunities. Why did he not waste less time over laws of priestly millinery, and devote more to the teaching of moral truth? Why did he not declare that all men should be free and that no man should enslave his brother? Why did he leave it for the infidels of France to invent that word of fire, "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," which sums up the aspirations of humanity, and flames like a beacon over the stormy path of progress?

We have already said that Jehovah was only one of an ancient multitude of Gods. We now repeat that he was never the infinite spirit of the universe, but a local, visible deity of one little nation. He walked about in the Garden of Eden "in the cool of the day," or, according to the learned Lightfoot, about "four o'clock in the afternoon." Cain fled "from his presence" into the land of Nod, so-called perhaps because he was not wide awake in that locality. Jonah tried to do the same thing but failed, be-

cause the Lord sent a storm after him, and had him thrown overboard and swallowed by a whale, before he could reach Tarshish which was outside his "beat." God wrote ten commandments on two tables of stone with his own finger. Probably it had a long sharp nail like a Chinese ascetic's. A finger is inconceivable without a hand, a hand implies an arm, an arm a body, and thus God becomes a magnified man. In keeping with this view, we read that God showed Moses his "hinder parts," a rather undignified and ludicrous exhibition. We also learn that the Lord frequently visited people he liked. On one occasion he looked in on Abraham, who said "Stop to dinner," and God accepted the invitation. Anyone who wants a copy of the bill of fare on that occasion will find it in the eighteenth chapter of *Genesis*. After dinner the Lord was so good-humored that he promised Abraham, who was a hundred years old, a son by his wife, who was ninety. Sarah knew better; she treated it as a joke; and being in a secluded part of the tent she laughed to herself. God, however, overheard her, and asked why she laughed. Sarah, being afraid, answered "I did not laugh." And the Lord replied "But you did laugh." Just imagine a conversation like that going on between Sarah and God Almighty in Abraham's back kitchen!

In the New Testament, God is still visible. Jesus Christ was God, and he walked and talked for about thirty-seven years. And after rising from the grave he visibly ascended into heaven with some fish and honeycomb just eaten on his stomach!

This petty God of a petty nation, this Jehovah of the Jews, has become God the Father of Christianity. The deity of Christendom was worshipped three thousand years ago in the form of a bull. That idol was real, but all the rest is fancy. The Bible God is a superstitious dream which will vanish into oblivion like the myriad imaginings of unbridled ignorance. He is a last shadow of the night fleeing before the mighty dawn of a new day.