

200 Quotations from ApatheticAgnostic.com Volume 2

"I hate quotations, tell me what you know." Ralph Waldo Emerson.

But some people do like quotations and think they can be useful in succinctly communicating an opinion. This is a selection of quotations published on the Apathetic Agnostic web site.

1. There is only one basic human right, the right to do as you damn well please. And with it comes the only basic human duty, the duty to take the consequences. PJ O'Rourke
2. For those who believe in God, most of the big questions are answered. But for those of us who can't readily accept the God formula, the big answers don't remain stone-written. We adjust to new conditions and discoveries. We are pliable. Love need not be a command or faith a dictum. I am my own God. We are here to unlearn the teachings of the church, state, and our educational system. We are here to drink beer. We are here to kill war. We are here to laugh at the odds and live our lives so well that Death will tremble to take us. Charles Bukowski
3. When you feel that you have right on your side, you can do some pretty horrific things. Brian Flanagan (a former member of the Weather Underground)
4. Religions change; beer and wine remain. Hervey Allen
5. The idea of the sacred is quite simply one of the most conservative notions in any culture, because it seeks to turn other ideas - uncertainty, progress, change - into crimes. Salman Rushdie
6. By such literalism, fundamentalism, religions betrayed the best intentions of their founders. Reducing thought to formula, replacing choice by obedience, these preachers turned the living word into dead law. Ursula K. LeGuin (The Telling)
7. Whenever I hear someone's in touch with God, I head for the exit. Arthur Miller
8. I don't know if God even exists, although I confess I find myself praying in times of great fear, or despair, or astonishment at a display of unexpected beauty. In the absence of conviction, I've come to terms with the fact that uncertainty is an inescapable corollary of life. Jon Krakauer

9. To say that God is an incorporeal substance, is to say in effect there is no God at all. What alleges he against it, but the School-divinity which I have already answered? Scripture he can bring none, because the word incorporeal is not found in Scripture. Thomas Hobbes
10. It is a lie, and I hate your religion. If it is true, I hate your God. Robert Ingersoll
11. We must condemn Christianity, not Christians; strike the church, but spare the heart. Lemuel K. Washburn
12. Marriage ceremony: an incredible metaphysical sham of watching God and the law being dragged into the affairs of your family. O.C. Ogilvie
13. Prayer had always struck me as more or less a glorified attempt at a business transaction. Barbara Kingsolver
14. Any organization could profit from a 10-year-old member with enough strength of character to refuse to swear falsely. New York Times on the Boy Scouts refusing membership to Mark Welsh, who would not sign a religious oath
15. The cardinal doctrine of a fanatic's creed is that his enemies are the enemies of God. Andrew Dickson White
16. Men rarely (if ever) manage to dream up a god superior to themselves. Most gods have the manners and morals of a spoiled child. Robert A. Heinlein
17. It is an old habit with theologians to beat the living with the bones of the dead. Robert G. Ingersoll
18. A myth is a religion in which no one any longer believes. James Feibleman
19. But I was not, to use the theological phrase, receptive. The great obstacle to the influx of grace was my own perfect happiness, and it is well known that God takes no thought for the happy, any more than He does for birds and puppies, perhaps realizing they have no need of Him and mercifully letting them alone. John Glassco
20. Everything is more or less organized matter. To think so is against religion, but I think so just the same. Napoleon Bonaparte
21. The greatest development in modern religion is not a religion at all - it's an attitude best described as "apatheism," Jonathan Rauch
22. Selfishness is not living as one wishes to live, it is asking others to live as one wishes to live. Oscar Wilde
23. Give to every other human being every right that you claim for yourself - that is my doctrine. Thomas Paine
24. There are many who have grave scruples about deceiving but think it as nothing to deceive themselves. Eric Hoffer
25. The fact that a believer is happier than a skeptic is no more to the point than the fact that a drunken man is happier than a sober one. George Bernard Shaw
26. I'm a firm believer in God himself, but that's as far as I can go. I'm not any denomination. I'm not Catholic or Presbyterian or Baptist or Methodist or Jewish or Muslim. I'm none of those things. And I'm sure that's just fine with God. Ray Charles
27. There comes a point when a man must refuse to answer to his leader if he is also to answer to his own conscience. Hartley Shawcross

28. A major function of fundamentalist religion is to bolster deeply insecure and fearful people. This is done by justifying a way of life with all of its defining prejudices. It thereby provides an appropriate and legitimate outlet for one's anger. The authority of an inerrant Bible that can be readily quoted to buttress this point of view becomes an essential ingredient to such a life. When that Bible is challenged, or relativized, the resulting anger proves the point categorically. Bishop John Shelby Spong
29. The greatest good you can do for another is not just to share your riches, but to reveal to him his own. Benjamin Disraeli
30. Many people genuinely do not wish to be saints, and it is probable that some who achieve or aspire to sainthood have never felt much temptation to be human beings. George Orwell
31. Shall I give you my recipe for happiness? I find everything useful and nothing indispensable. I find everything wonderful and nothing miraculous. I reverence the body. I avoid first causes like the plague. Norman Douglas
32. I feel most ministers who claim they've heard God's voice are eating too much pizza before they go to bed at night, and it's really an intestinal disorder, not a revelation. Jerry Falwell
33. Making fun of born-again Christians is like hunting dairy cows with a high-powered rifle and scope. P.J. O'Rourke
34. I have little confidence in any enterprise or business or investment that promises dividends only after the death of the stockholders. Robert G. Ingersoll
35. Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is a ridiculous one. Voltaire
36. It has been fifty and six years since I read the Apocalypse, and I then considered it merely the ravings of a maniac. Thomas Jefferson
37. Religion is a mere question of geography. Edward Gibbon
38. God is the immemorial refuge of the incompetent, the helpless, the miserable. They find not only sanctuary in His arms, but also a kind of superiority, soothing to their macerated egos; He will set them above their betters. H.L. Mencken
39. If you want to save your child from polio, you can pray or you can inoculate. Carl Sagan
40. Once people get hung up on theology, they've lost sanity forever. More people have been killed in the name of Jesus Christ than any other name in the history of the world. Gore Vidal
41. Underlying most arguments against the free market is a lack of belief in freedom itself. Milton Friedman
42. When a well-packaged web of lies has been sold to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic. Dresden James
43. A man's ethical behavior should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death. Albert Einstein

44. There is an idea abroad among moral people that they should make their neighbours good. One person I must make good: myself.
Robert Louis Stevenson
45. One cannot judge the value of an opinion simply by the amount of courage that is required to hold it.
George Orwell
46. I didn't know I had a quarrel with him.
Henry Thoreau on being asked, "Have you made your peace with God?"
47. The great mystery of the world is not the invisible, but the visible.
Oscar Wilde
48. One of the saddest lessons of history is this: If we've been bamboozled long enough, we tend to reject any evidence of the bamboozle. We're no longer interested in finding out the truth. The bamboozle has captured us. It is simply too painful to acknowledge even to ourselves that we've been so credulous.
Carl Sagan
49. This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.
Dalai Lama
50. Common sense is no match for the voice of God. Jon Krakauer
51. When people are free to do as they please, they usually imitate each other.
Eric Hoffer
52. I am an agnostic; I do not pretend to know what many ignorant men are sure of. Clarence Darrow
53. Governments only keep their promises when they are forced to, or when it is to their advantage to do so.
Napoleon Bonaparte
54. Believe nothing, no matter where you read it, or who said it, no matter if I have said it, unless it agrees with your own reason and your own common sense. Buddha
55. Without cultural sanction, most or all our religious beliefs and rituals would fall into the domain of mental disturbance. John F. Schumaker
56. The only interesting answers are those which destroy the questions.
Susan Sontag
57. I don't believe in the afterlife. I don't believe there is a God. The whole thing is accidental. Arthur Miller
58. We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love one another. Jonathan Swift
59. Existence exists - and the act of grasping that statement implies two corollary axioms: that something exists which one perceives and that one exists possessing consciousness, consciousness being the faculty of perceiving that which exists.
Ayn Rand
60. Intelligence is the ultimate aphrodisiac.
Timothy Leary
61. The world is in need of less religion and more common sense. Llewelyn Powys
62. If Jesus Christ were to come today, people would not even crucify him. They would ask him to dinner, and hear what he had to say, and make fun of it.
Thomas Carlyle
63. The art of acting morally is behaving as if everything we do matters.
Gloria Steinem
64. How can the Church be received as a trustworthy guide in the invisible, which falls into so many errors in the visible?
John W. Draper

65. Faith in a holy cause is to a considerable extent a substitute for the lost faith in ourselves. Eric Hoffer
66. God is dead: but considering the state Man is in, there will perhaps be caves, for ages yet, in which his shadow will be shown. Friedrich Nietzsche
67. I have found that 90 per cent of religious beliefs are based on madness. Khudair Meeri
68. It is wonderful how much time good people spend fighting the devil. If they would only expend the same amount of energy loving their fellow men, the devil would die in his own tracks of ennui. Helen Keller
69. Religion is not just incongruent with morality, but in essential ways incompatible with it. Christopher Hitchens.
70. Ethics is in origin the art of recommending to others the sacrifices required for co-operation with oneself. Bertrand Russell
71. We are punished by our sins, not for them. Elbert Hubbard
72. The difficult part in an argument is not to defend one's opinion, but rather to know it. Andre Maurois
73. One has to do good for it to exist in the world. Maria von Ebner-Eisenbach
74. People who rely most on God rely least on themselves. Lemuel K. Washburn,
75. Mystical explanations are considered deep. The truth is that they are not even superficial. Friedrich Nietzsche
76. There are two things in the world that can never get together - religion and common sense. George W. Foote
77. God created sex. Priests created marriage. Voltaire
78. Devout believers are safeguarded in a high degree against the risk of certain neurotic illnesses; their acceptance of the universal neurosis spares them the task of constructing a personal one. , Sigmund Freud
79. A state of skepticism and suspense may amuse a few inquisitive minds. But the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude that, if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision. Edward Gibbon,
80. You never see animals going through the absurd and often horrible fooleries of magic and religion. Only man behaves with such gratuitous folly. It is the price he has to pay for being intelligent but not, as yet, quite intelligent enough. Aldous Huxley
81. A mystic is a person who is puzzled before the obvious but who understands the nonexistent. Elbert Hubbard
82. It is best to read the weather forecast before praying for rain. Mark Twain
83. If we must play the theological game, let us never forget that it is a game. Religion, it seems to me, can survive only as a consciously accepted system of make believe. Aldous Huxley
84. Man is a Religious Animal. He is the only Religious Animal. He is the only animal that has the True Religion - several of them. He is the only animal that loves his neighbor as himself and cuts his throat if his theology isn't straight. He has made a graveyard of the globe in trying his honest best to smooth his brother's path to happiness and heaven. Mark Twain

85. Some things have to be believed to be seen. Ralph Hodgson
86. Be not misled by reports or tradition or common opinion. Be not misled by proficiency in the scriptures, nor by speculation and conclusions, nor by attractive theories and favorite ideas, nor by impressions of personal merits (of the teacher) and not by the authority of some master. But rather, Kalamas, when you discern yourselves: these things are unprofitable, these things are blameworthy, these things are censured by the wise; these things, when performed and undertaken are conducive to misfortune and sorrow, indeed do you then reject them.... And when you discern yourselves: these things are profitable, these things are not blameworthy, these things are praised by the wise; these things, when performed and undertaken are conducive to good fortune and happiness, indeed do you then accept them. Buddha
87. God is a concept by which we measure our pain. John Lennon
88. No creed can be stretched to the size of truth; no church can be made as large as man. Lemuel K. Washburn
89. I see these two legendary men [Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson] as symbolic of the American dream. Their position atop a vast religious/cable television/Bad Hair empire shows the entire world that America truly is the Land of Opportunity®, where Narrow-Minded, Really Dumb Guys can, and regularly do, get to the top. Ron Barber
90. A religion can no more afford to degrade its Devil than to degrade its God. Havelock Ellis
91. Faith is never identical with piety. Karl Barth
92. I have repeatedly stressed that the selfish impulses of man constitute a much less historic danger than his integrative tendencies. To put it in the simplest way: the individual who indulges in an excess of aggressive self-assertiveness incurs the penalties of society - he outlaws himself, he contracts out of the hierarchy. The true believer, on the other hand, becomes more closely knit into it; he enters the womb of his church, or party, or whatever the social holon to which he surrenders his identity. Arthur Koestler
93. Would you sing 'Krishna bless America' or pledge allegiance to 'One nation under Allah'? If not, would that make you unpatriotic? Chris Lee
94. If all the evidence put forward for the authenticity of religious teachings originates in the past, it is natural to look round and see whether the present, about which it is easier to form judgements, may not also be able to furnish evidence of the sort. If by this means we could succeed in clearing even a single portion of the religious system from doubt, the whole of it would gain enormously in credibility. Sigmund Freud
95. Religion is the highest vanity. Friedrich Hebbel
96. Religion consists in a set of things which the average man thinks he believes and wishes he was certain of. Mark Twain
97. Religion has caused more harm than any other idea since the beginning of time. There's nothing good I can say about it. People use it as a crutch. Larry Flynt

98. "Ours is a Christian army;" so he said
A regiment of bangomen who led.
"And ours a Christian navy," added he
Who sailed a thunder-junk upon the sea.
Better they know than men unwarlike do
What is an army, and navy too.
Pray God there may be sent them by-and-by
The knowledge what a Christian is, and why
For somewhat lamely the conception runs
of a brass-buttoned Jesus firing guns.
- "Arma Virumque" by Ambrose Bierce
99. Suppose, however, that God did give
this law to the Jews, and did tell them
that whenever a man preached a
heresy, or proposed to worship any
other God that they should kill him; and
suppose that afterward this same God
took upon himself flesh, and came to
this very chosen people and taught a
different religion, and that thereupon
the Jews crucified him; I ask you, did he
not reap exactly what he had sown?
What right would this god have to
complain of a crucifixion suffered in
accordance with his own command?
Robert G. Ingersoll
100. Whatever sympathy I feel towards
religions, whatever admiration for some
of their adherents, whatever historical
or biological necessity I see in them,
whatever metaphorical truth, I cannot
accept them as credible explanations of
reality; and they are incredible to me in
proportion to the degree that they
require my belief in positive human
attributes and intervenient powers in
their divinities. John Fowles
101. Pray: To ask the laws of the universe
to be annulled on behalf of a single
petitioner confessedly unworthy.
Ambrose Bierce
102. There is only one religion, though
there are a hundred versions of it.
George Bernard Shaw
103. No, our science is no illusion. But an
illusion it would be to suppose that
what science cannot give us we can get
elsewhere. Sigmund Freud
104. And that inverted Bowl we call The Sky,
Whereunder crawling coop't we live and die,
Lift not thy hands to It for help
Rolls impotently on as Thou or I.
The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam,
translated by Edward Fitzgerald
105. There is only one Education, and it has
only one goal: the freedom of the mind.
Anything that needs an adjective, be it
civics education, or socialist education,
or Christian education, or whatever-
you-like education, is not education,
and it has some different goal. The very
existence of modified "educations" is
testimony to the fact that their
proponents cannot bring about what
they want in a mind that is free. An
"education" that cannot do its work in a
free mind, and so must "teach" by
homily and precept in the service of
these feelings and attitudes and beliefs
rather than those, is pure and
unmistakable tyranny. Richard Mitchell
106. Nature has no principles. She
furnishes us with no reason to believe
that human life is to be respected.
Nature, in her indifference, makes no
distinction between good and evil.
Anatole France
107. No man ever yet tore down his altar
and found a God behind it.
Lemuel K. Washburn

108. Give the church a place in the Constitution, let her touch once more the sword of power, and the priceless fruit of all ages will turn to ashes on the lips of men. Robert G. Ingersoll
109. It appears to me (whether rightly or wrongly) that direct arguments against Christianity and theism produce hardly any effect on the public; and freedom of thought is best promoted by the gradual illumination of men's minds which follows from the advance of science. Charles Darwin
110. The trouble with the world is that the stupid are cocksure, and the intelligent are full of doubt. Bertrand Russell
111. I thank God I was raised Catholic, so sex will always be dirty. John Waters
112. Faith, as such, is extremely detrimental to human life: it is the negation of reason. But you must remember that religion is an early form of philosophy, that the first attempts to explain the universe, to give a coherent frame of reference to man's life and a code of moral values, were made by religion, before men graduated or developed enough to have philosophy. And, as philosophies, some religions have very valuable moral points. They may have a good influence or proper principles to inculcate, but in a very contradictory context and, on a very - how should I say it - dangerous or malevolent base: on the ground of faith. Ayn Rand
113. This is terrible! Holy wars! Killing! They're just using religion as an excuse to be extremely crappy to each other. Dave Lister (Red Dwarf)
114. Religion closes off the central questions of existence by attempting to dissuade us from further enquiry by asserting that we cannot ever hope to comprehend. We are, religion asserts, simply too puny. Through fear of being shown to be vacuous, religion denies the awesome power of human comprehension. It seeks to thwart, by encouraging awe in things unseen, the disclosure of the emptiness of faith. Religion, in contrast to science, deploys the repugnant view that the world is too big for our understanding. Science, in contrast to religion, opens up the great questions of being to rational discussion, to discussion with the prospect of resolution and elucidation. Science, above all, respects the power of the human intellect. Science is the apotheosis of the intellect and the consummation of the Renaissance. Science respects more deeply the potential of humanity than religion ever can. P.W. Atkins
115. Operationally, God is beginning to resemble not a ruler but the last fading smile of a cosmic Cheshire cat. Julian Huxley
116. The observances of the church concerning feasts and fasts are tolerably well-kept, since the rich keep the feasts and the poor keep the fasts. Sydney Smith
117. For the church to say that abortion is not acceptable for a Catholic is fine. To say directly or indirectly that on something that is a church teaching that you must also vote according to that - that's not acceptable in a country based on the First Amendment. Senator Patrick Leahy

118. The Three in One, the One in Three?
Not so! To my own Gods I go. It may be
they shall give me greater ease than
your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.
Rudyard Kipling
119. At the heart of pseudoscience (and
some religion also, New Age and Old) is
the idea that wishing makes it so. How
satisfying it would be, as in folklore and
children's stories, to fulfill our heart's
desire by wishing. How seductive this
notion is, especially when compared
with the hard work and good luck
usually required to achieve our hopes.
Carl Sagan
120. I am too much of a skeptic to deny the
possibility of anything.
Thomas Henry Huxley
121. Supposing you got a crate of oranges
that you opened, and you found all the
top layer of oranges bad, you would not
argue, 'The underneath ones must be
good, so as to redress the balance'; You
would say, 'Probably the whole lot is a
bad consignment'; and that is really
what a scientific person would say
about the universe. Bertrand Russell
122. Religion supports nobody. It has to be
supported. It produces no wheat, no
corn; it ploughs no land; it fells no
forests. It is a perpetual mendicant. It
lives on the labors of others, and then
has the arrogance to pretend that it
supports the giver. Robert G. Ingersoll
123. Religion often gets credit for curing
rascals when old age is the real
medicine. Austin O'Malley
124. If I were asked for a one-sentence
soundbite on religion, I would say I was
against it. Salman Rushdie
125. If there were no ministers and no
priests, how long would there be any
churches? Lemuel K. Washburn
126. We have thousands of religions with
10,000 answers and none of them
completely agreeable. Ray Bradbury
127. God is a child who amuses himself,
going from laughing to crying for no
reason, each day reinventing the world
to the chagrin of hair-splitters, pedants,
and preachers, who try to teach God his
job as Creator. Elie Faure
128. Dateline Phnom Penh - 26 November
1994. A Texas evangelist fled Cambodia
on Saturday after a mob, angry over his
failure to perform faith-healing
miracles, rioted outside his hotel. Only
the arrival of 20 armed police on Friday
night kept the crowd from storming the
luxury Hotel Cambodiana, where the
Rev. Mike Evans and his entourage
were staying after arriving for a
scheduled five-day visit here
Wednesday. The preacher's appearance
had been heralded on radio and
television stations. "Blind eyes will
open, the paralyzed will walk,"
promised the promotional
announcements. Thousands of
Cambodians, including sick, blind and
paralyzed people from remote areas,
came to the capital to attend his
meetings. Associated Press
129. Religion is a means of exploitation
employed by the strong against the
weak; religion is a cloak of ambition,
injustice and vice. Georges Bizet
130. All religions are founded on the fear of
the many and the cleverness of the few.
Stendhal

131. A sober, devout man will interpret 'God's will' soberly and devoutly. A fanatic, with bloodshot mind, will interpret 'God's will' fanatically. Men of extreme, illogical views will interpret 'God's will' in eccentric fashion. Kindly, charitable, generous men will interpret 'God's will' according to their character.
E. Haldeman-Julius
132. Anything beyond the limits and grasp of the human mind is either illusion or futility; and because your god having to be one or the other of the two, in the first instance I should be mad to believe in him, and in the second a fool.
Marquis de Sade
133. As set forth by theologians, the idea of "God" is an argument that assumes its own conclusions, and proves nothing.
Johann Most
134. When no one had answers they created God. Now we have most of them, and one day we will have all of them, rendering God useless.
Anonymous
135. The greatest threat presented by modern religion is the archaic morals system that an insidious minority of Christians including the Radical Right, Christian Coalition, the RIAA along with many other influences and organizations wish to incorporate into our secular law! W.J. Wallace Jr.
136. The chief characteristic of the religion of science is that it works. Isaac Asimov
137. When politics and religion are intermingled, a people is suffused with a sense of invulnerability, and gathering speed in their forward charge, they fail to see the cliff ahead of them.
Frank Herbert, (Dune)
138. Since the masses of the people are inconsistent, full of unruly desires, passionate, and reckless of consequences, they must be filled with fears to keep them in order. The ancients did well, therefore, to invent gods, and the belief in punishment after death. Polybius
139. I believe in God, only I spell it Nature.
Frank Lloyd Wright
140. I don't believe in god because I don't believe in Mother Goose.
Clarence Darrow
141. The churches must learn humility as well as teach it. George Bernard Shaw
142. Strange as it may seem, no amount of learning can cure stupidity and formal education positively reinforces it.
Stephen Vizinczey
143. Truth is a shining goddess, always veiled, always distant, never wholly approachable, but worthy of all the devotion of which the human spirit is capable. Bertrand Russell
144. It is a wry commentary on the value-system in the United States that one speaks there of "teacher training" and "driver education." Peter Hilton
145. People make the mistake of talking about 'natural laws.' There are no natural laws. There are only temporary habits of nature.
Alfred North Whitehead.
146. Never accept ultimatums, conventional wisdom, or absolutes.
Christopher Reeve
147. The evidence of history confirms and demonstrates that the status of women is inseparably tied to the status of a nation. Qasim Amin

148. At 18, our convictions are hills from which we look; at 45 they are caves in which we hide. F. Scott Fitzgerald
149. If this supposedly omniscient and perfect god really has a plan, why do people insist on praying to him to change the plan? John Tyrrell
150. Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does. Jean-Paul Sartre
151. There are more hypocrites in church than anyplace else. Loretta Lynn
152. Our ideas are only intellectual instruments which we use to break into phenomena; we must change them when they have served their purpose, as we change a blunt lancet we have used long enough. Claude Bernard
153. After a few days in hospital, I was thinking, Oh, gee - I raised in a church, Protestant upbringing which I'd rejected as an adult - I'm lying in bed thinking, Hmmm, maybe I ought to pray. They always say there are no atheists in a foxhole... and I thought, Here I am in a pretty good-sized foxhole... and I thought Naahhh. I wouldn't respect any God who would listen to me after I'd rejected him so vociferously. Chuck Close
154. All religion, my friend, is simply evolved out of fraud, fear, greed, imagination, and poetry. Edgar Allen Poe
155. Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. Jiddu Krishnamurti
156. All great truths begin as blasphemies. George Bernard Shaw
157. As soon as you are willing to discard observational data because it conflicts with religion, you are giving up any hope of ever really understanding the universe. As soon as you pick religion as the touchstone of reality, then we have to start discussing how one can demonstrate the correctness of one religion over another when different religions disagree. Wilson Heydt
158. When a man really believes that it is necessary to do a certain thing to be happy forever, or that a certain belief is necessary to ensure eternal joy, there is in that man no spirit of concession. He divides the whole world into saints and sinners, into believers and unbelievers, into God's sheep and Devil's goats, into people who will be glorified and people who are damned. Robert Ingersoll
159. After the survivor of the Spanish conquest has told his life's story he is convicted by the Inquisition: He posted no brief in defense or mitigation of his offenses, and when he was most solemnly advised by the Court President of the dire consequences he faced if found guilty, Juan Damasceno volunteered only one comment: "It will mean I do not go to the Christian heaven?" He was told that that would indeed be the worst of his punishments: that he would most assuredly not go to Heaven. At which, his smile sent a thrill of horror through every soul of the Court. Gary Jennings, (Aztec)

160. Religion is unusual among divisive labels in being spectacularly unnecessary. If religious beliefs had any evidence going for them, we might have to respect them in spite of their concomitant unpleasantness. But there is no such evidence. To label people as death-deserving enemies because of disagreements about real world politics is bad enough. To do the same for disagreements about a delusional world inhabited by archangels, demons and imaginary friends is ludicrously tragic.
Richard Dawkins
161. Living in fear is not living at all.
Christopher Reeve
162. If you talk to God, you're praying. If God talks back, it's schizophrenia.
Phil Spector
163. Scepticism is the first step toward truth. Denis Diderot
164. Man is a credulous animal, and must believe something; in the absence of good grounds for belief, he will be satisfied with bad ones.
Bertrand Russell
165. Of all tyrannies a tyranny exercised for the good of its victims may be the most oppressive. It may be better to live under robber barons than under omnipotent moral busybodies. The robber baron's cruelty may sometimes sleep, his cupidity may at some point be satiated; but those who torment us for our own good will torment us without end for they do so with the approval of their own conscience. C.S. Lewis
166. Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia.
Charles Schultz
167. Whatever a man prays for, he prays for a miracle. Every prayer reduces itself to this: "Great God, grant that twice two be not four. Ivan Turgenev
168. For ages, a deadly conflict has been waged between a few brave men and women of thought and genius upon the one side, and the great ignorant religious mass on the other. This is the war between Science and Faith. The few have appealed to reason, to honor, to law, to freedom, to the known, and to happiness here in this world. The many have appealed to prejudice, to fear, to miracle, to slavery, to the unknown, and to misery hereafter. The few have said, "Think!" The many have said, "Believe!"
Robert G. Ingersoll
169. History shows that there is nothing so easy to enslave and nothing so hard to emancipate as ignorance, hence it becomes the double enemy of civilization. By its servility it is the prey of tyranny, and by its credulity it is the foe of enlightenment.
Lemuel K. Washburn
170. Sunday school: a prison in which children do penance for the evil conscience of their parents.
H.L. Mencken
171. Apart from moral conduct, all that man thinks himself able to do in order to become acceptable to God is mere superstition and religious folly.
Immanuel Kant
172. Seek only the truth; seek not "The Truth." John Tyrrell
173. We must be greater than God, for we have to undo His injustice. Jules Renard
174. I don't know why it is that the religious never ascribe common sense to God.
Somerset Maugham

175. In an early class, one of the students asked me if I believed in God. I replied, 'I don't think so.' And then proceeded to wail on the theme, using material from this column of some weeks ago, in which I observed the perpetuation of insanity on this planet through the mediums of Arabs-vs-Jews, Catholics-vs-Protestants, Southern Baptists-vs-Everyone. I said I felt if 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he them,' then we were God. And when Man in his most creative, his most loving, his most gentle and most human, then he is most God-like. The student said he would pray for my immortal soul. He also asked for my address, so he could send me some literature on the subject of God. I thanked him politely and told him I'd gotten all the literature I could handle on the subject from a certain Thomas Aquinas. Harlan Ellison
176. [The] men of the technostructure are the new and universal priesthood. Their religion is business success; their test of virtue is growth and profit. Their bible is the computer printout; their communion bench is the committee room. J.K. Galbraith
177. Woe to him who would ascribe to something like reason to Chance and make a religion of surrendering to it. Johann von Goethe
178. From silly devotions and from sour-faced saints, good Lord, deliver us. Saint Theresa of Avila
179. The pursuit of happiness belongs to us, but we must climb around or over the church to get to it. Heywood Broun
180. I'm completely in favor of the separation of Church and State. My idea is that these two institutions screw us up enough on their own, so both of them together is certain death. George Carlin
181. Reputation is what you are in the limelight; character is what you are in the dark. Many a man's reputation and character would not recognize each other if they met. J Tudor Rees
182. There is a disposition on the part of institutions of whatever sort - governmental, health, educational, ecclesiastical - to devote much of their energy, not to original purposes, but to self-perpetuation and self-aggrandizement. Antonio Gualtieri
183. When we make mistakes they call it evil. When God makes mistakes they call it Nature! Jack Nicholson (The Witches of Eastwick)
184. Invisible Pink Unicorns are beings of awesome mystical power. We know this because they manage to be invisible and pink at the same time. Like all religions, the Faith of the Invisible Pink Unicorns is based upon both logic and faith. We have faith that they are pink; we logically know that they are invisible because we can't see them. Steve Eley
185. The greatest step forward in human evolution was made when society began to help the weak and the poor instead of oppressing and despising them. Maria Montessori
186. It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age; but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door, and this dragon is religion. Bertrand Russell

187. It will not do to investigate the subject of religion too closely, as it is apt to lead to infidelity. Abraham Lincoln
188. The world is my country, all mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion. Thomas Paine
189. The only way they'll ever get me into church will be feet first.
Dwight D Eisenhower
190. "Believing" cannot tip the scales in making a historical judgment about whether something really happened. I can choose to believe that George Washington threw a silver dollar across the Rappahannock, but my believing that he did it has nothing to do with whether or not he really did it. So also with the story of Jesus walking on the water: believing that he did it has nothing to do with whether he really did do it. "Belief" cannot be the basis for historical conclusion; it has no direct relevance. Marcus J. Borg
191. One should not go into church if one wants to breathe pure air.
Friedrich Nietzsche
192. We are told in the Pentateuch, that god, the father of us all, gave thousands of maidens, after having killed their fathers, their mothers, and their brothers, to satisfy the brutal lusts of savage men. If there be a god, I pray him to write in his book, opposite my name, that I denied this lie for him.
Robert G. Ingersoll
193. Preachers in pulpits talked about what a great message is in the book. No matter what you do, somebody always imputes meaning into your books.
Theodore Seuss Geisel (Dr. Seuss)
194. The Bible has lost every major battle it has ever fought. The Bible was quoted to defend slavery and the bible lost. The Bible was quoted to keep women silent, and the Bible lost. And the Bible is being quoted to deny homosexuals their equal rights, and the Bible will lose.
Bishop John Shelby Spong.
195. People do not like to think. If one thinks, one must reach conclusions. Conclusions are not always pleasant.
Helen Keller
196. The Cross is a gibbet - rather an odd thing to make use of as a talisman against bad luck, if that is how we regard it. Or is it, instead, a cynical reminder that Virtue usually gets pilloried whenever it makes one of its occasional appearances in this world?
Denis Johnston
197. Reason commands us much more imperiously than a master. If we disobey a master we are unhappy, but if we defy reason we are fools.
Blaise Pascal
198. The good, say the mystics of spirit, is God, a being whose only definition is that he is beyond man's power to conceive - a definition that invalidates man's consciousness and nullifies his concepts of existence.... Man's mind, say the mystics of spirit, must be subordinated to the will of God.... Man's standard of value, say the mystics of spirit, is the pleasure of God, whose standards are beyond man's power of comprehension and must be accepted on faith.... The purpose of man's life...is to become an abject zombie who serves a purpose he does not know, for reasons he is not to question. Ayn Rand

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199. Men willingly believe what they wish.

Julius Caesar

200. I believe that all roads lead to the same place - and that is wherever all roads lead to. Willie Nelson