

Atheism, Socialism, Bulverism and Christianity

Religion is the opium of the masses
--Karl Marx

In today's world, despite the demonstrated and time-proven success of Christianity's philosophies, we see atheism, agnosticism and spirituality continue to grow. Many people who declare themselves Christian are really merely monotheists or spiritualists. Socialism has taken over much of the world and is making great inroads in the United States, all the while being the sworn enemy of Christianity.

These attitudes did not come along simply by chance. One can easily see the slow decay of the Christian faith in the U.S. over the last 50 years. It is much like a cancer, slowly killing off its host. So insidious is this process that many Christians are forming cults that undermine the very beliefs they claim to observe.

I want to approach this phenomenon from two angles: one from the atheistic point of view and one from the socialist. I will show how both are based on bankrupt ideas. The basic assumptions made by the philosophers who initially endorsed these ideas have long since been debunked, yet enthusiastic support for them still exists and appears to be gaining strength. This support mainly comes from naive individuals who are attracted to certain ideals of atheism and/or socialism, yet don't care to understand what these philosophies are really about.

Of course, both atheism and socialism are rather broadly defined, so I want to take a quick moment to help the gentle reader understand what I mean when I speak of them. Atheism is a belief that the supernatural (especially deities) does not exist. This is opposed to agnosticism, which does not know if the supernatural exists or not. While there have been those that have denied the existence of gods since the dawn of civilization, it has been characterized by a general indifference to their existence, and therefore more akin to agnosticism. The atheism of today is only a few hundred years old (starting with the Age of Enlightenment), a specific denial of the Jewish/Christian God, and a general denial of any other expression of the supernatural. Science, evolution in particular, is generally what replaced religion for the atheist.

Socialism is likewise a child of the Age of Enlightenment. It believes that some sort of inequality is the problem of civilization and seeks to correct that by controlling production and (as a pragmatic matter) the distribution of resources (which is technically communism, but I'll continue to refer to all variations as socialism). Some types of socialism are contradictory to other forms, and some definitions of socialism are so vague as to be useless. For this paper, I will be speaking of socialism in the common sense, as experienced in national and worldwide politics.

For both atheism and socialism, evolution plays a key role in the philosophies. An over reliance on evolution, along with denying the Christian idea of "human dignity" as coming from God, are the ultimate flaws for these philosophies.

Now, before I go on, I want to point out that some believe that Christianity and socialism are actually compatible, despite the fact that not a single socialist country has ever been tolerant to religion in general, or Christianity in particular. Those who are so misled fail to see that the Christian ideal of one becoming the best one can be is in stark contrast to a system that sees *any* type of inequality as a

problem. Christian equality is spiritual; socialist equality is materialistic. Christians embrace diversity (different but equal); socialists embrace interchangeability (everything is the same for everyone).

A) The Flaw of Materialism:

For if it came to be, something must have existed as a primary substratum from which it should come and which should persist in it; but this is its own special nature, so that it will be before coming to be.

--Aristotle, *Physics* book 1, chapter 9

Materialism is likewise a very broad belief. In its simplest understanding, it says that the universe is made of matter or forms of matter. It is a very old philosophy and goes back at least 4,000 years. I have no interest in discussing the merits of its common applications to science (which are tremendous), but I want to point out a very important assumption that seems to be overlooked by nearly everyone.

The assumption, which we know was held at least as far back as Aristotle, is that matter *always was* and *always will be*: it only changes form. Part of the reason materialism has survived is because it is flexible enough to grow with science. When energy was discovered to be independent yet interchangeable with matter, this statement simply expanded to include it. When the Big Bang Theory was developed in the 1920s, however, the idea of an infinite universe was contradicted. But while classical materialism lost its "eternal" aspect, it proved to be otherwise quite sound. Existing sciences were mostly unaffected by it, and a new branch was created to fill the gap that did exist: cosmology. But to philosophy, evolution in particular, this tiny little detail makes *all* the difference. As such, I habitually differentiate materialism as the philosophy that includes the *eternal* universe, and naturalism as one with a *finite* universe. For this paper (indeed, for all but the most specialized of cases), the two are otherwise so similar as to be considered identical.

B) Evolution Fails for Atheistic Philosophy:

I would say that [Saint] Thomas Aquinas anticipated Occam by a century, and formulated a version of Occam's razor, which is the view that all things being equal, the simpler explanation should be preferred. When Thomas is articulating an objection to God's existence, he uses that. ... What is the answer to this objection? The answer is when you're looking for God, ... you're not looking for one contingent cause among many. You're not looking for something you don't understand now but eventually could, as in the cause of thunder. When you're looking for God, you're looking for the ultimate cause of the very "to be" of the universe. You're not looking for one more (however big it is) contingent cause. What you're looking for is the answer to the question, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" That is not a scientific question. That's a philosophical question, or theological one.

--Bishop Barron, *Answering the Atheists*

Evolution is science's answer to any type of change. In a nutshell, random combinations of events eventually produce a superior product that is better able to function in the environment it finds itself in, giving it an edge against its less superior ancestors, and therefore becoming more prevalent in the environment. Scientists like to apply this concept to development of life, the formation of solar

systems, the creation of galaxies and (with current thinking) even the birth of the universes (*Do Black Holes Create Universes* by PBS Space Time on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rFgpKlcpzNM&t=486s>)! And it's not just science proper that uses it. Just about any field that uses the scientific method does so as well.

But evolution requires time for an action to take place against a probability for certain events to happen. That is where a finite time line for the universe begins to call into question the assumptions modern atheism and socialism rely on. When the universe was believed to be infinitely old, there was no need to question the likelihood that just the right combination and quantities of various atoms could collect to produce a habitable planet with a life-giving sun. Granted, the question of why, over infinite time, the universe didn't just collapse in on itself was conveniently ignored, but this concern is no longer relevant with contemporary science. With an eternity for the mixture to be just right (and an assumption that something keeps stirring the atoms up so they *can* constantly make new molecules), it was not a question of *if*, but instead of *where* and *how often*.

Another issue came up as the principles of scientific thought became formalized: an infinite universe having a point of creation is difficult to conceive. This is where Christianity originally came into conflict with science in a meaningful way. Using Occam's Razor, it was simpler to believe that God was either non-existent or was not involved, rather than to try to understand how the universe could be both created and infinitely old. It was Aristotle's philosophy (**Topic A**) that created this point of contention in the 13th Century when his lost work *Physics* was found.

But with the discovery of a finite universe, both these arguments fall apart. The first one, the ability for the universe to be "just right" by chance, is being seriously questioned by cosmologists today (per the PBS video). The more they learn, the less cosmologists feel the universe itself could simply just develop like it did. Even less likely is the possibility that a life-giving planet like Earth could exist. I would refer the gentle reader to Lee Strobel's book, *The Case for the Creator*, for more on this.

The second one, Occam's Razor, has shifted to the Jewish/Christian God as the simpler solution to creation now that an eternal universe is gone. Whether modern scientists are conscious of this philosophical shift or not, they *are* scrambling to bring the "infinite" back into the equation as the PBS video shows. And science is not doing very well. Science can only come up with more and more complex explanations for the universe being like it is, causing Occam's Razor to favor Christianity more and more. The PBS video freely admits that such hypotheses are difficult to test (a necessity for a theory to be called scientific), and the one hypothesis they identified in the video that *could* be tested failed! Being unable to test, science has reached a point it cannot cross without becoming a non-science.

Make no mistake, the scientific foundation for atheism has been shattered.

C) The Birth of Modern Atheism:

The lady doth protest too much, methinks
--William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

With only three exceptions, all of the great Fathers of Atheism lived in a time before the discovery of the Big Bang. Sigmund Freud (who has been largely discredited in the profession he helped make popular) died shortly after the hypothesis was made. The other two founders were French contemporaries Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, who both lived through World War II. The Big

Bang Theory was not widely accepted until the 1960s (when galaxies were shown to be moving away from each other), after Camus died and Sartre had focused more on Eastern European politics than philosophy. Atheistic philosophy pretty much died when the birth of the universe was widely accepted. But while the philosophy of atheism has died, atheism itself hasn't.

What most atheists today do not understand is just how respectful nearly all the founding Fathers of Atheism were of Christianity. I do not mean that they were not hostile, as they certainly were. But they approached their attacks on Christianity like a sports coach preparing for a tough game. They took an honest look at the Church and its teachings, and carefully considered their own ideas. Their philosophies, looking through the theory of evolution, almost invariably looked at religion not as an abomination, but as a necessary step in the development of mankind. While this is a simplified view, one could say the evolution they saw was paganism -> ancient philosophy -> Christianity -> science. The *moral lessons* that came out of Christianity were valid, and Christianity was a necessary step to get to produce these lessons for the "enlightened" stage of science to evaluate. The animosity atheists felt towards Christianity at the time was not in its morality, but in the Church refusing to step aside to let the new era of science take over (which is not true, but is beyond the scope of this paper). Sartre and Camus, perhaps because of what they witnessed in the war, admitted that God was a "necessary absurdity" for mankind. In other words, while they did not believe in God themselves, they still believed that the common man needed to.

But I think the wisest of the Fathers of Atheism was Friedrich Nietzsche, who lived one generation before Sartre and Camus. Unlike most of his peers, who optimistically thought the teachings of Christ could be carried on by man without the "chains" of religion, Nietzsche saw that the "discovery" of atheism meant that life was now pointless. He was greatly grieved that man only had nihilism left to him (and then he debunked nihilism as well, so perhaps he wasn't so wise after all).

Contemporary atheists fail to understand what their faith is really about. It is not about a "war" on religion, but rather a struggle to move past it. By declaring war on Christianity, contemporary atheists are simultaneously denying the morality of Christianity. So by great irony, modern atheists are destroying the evolutionary benefits the Fathers of Atheism assumed were necessary for a post-religious world. Rather than use the morality of Jesus to bring a better life to the world that the Church supposedly held back, morality is rapidly decaying and the world is slipping into a new dark age. We are not progressing past religion; we are regressing to our most primitive selves.

D) Socialism:

In practice, socialism didn't work. But socialism could never have worked, because it is based on false premises about human psychology and society, and gross ignorance of human economy.
--David Horowitz

Like philosophy, evolution was applied to economics and politics. To Karl Marx and other economic humanitarians, subsistence economies gave way to slavery, and slavery gave birth to and served capitalism. But just as the philosophy of atheism freed the world from the "slavery" of the Church (people would be nice to each other now because they were "enlightened," not because of fear for their "imaginary souls"), so too would economics have to evolve into something more humanitarian. The capitalistic form of slavery, it was believed, would evolve into a benign socialism where people worked for the common good instead of a capitalist slave master. The socialist answer to human laziness was that the workers, being "freed" of "oppression," would happily work towards the

"common good." This, of course, is irrevocably opposed to the Christian idea of man's sinful nature. Atheism and socialism would and must go hand in hand.

E) Bulverism:

You only think that way because you are a ...
--nearly everyone you know, and possibly yourself

Bulverism was a term coined by C.S. Lewis for the silliness that characterizes the conclusions of the "great" Fathers of Atheism (and, by extension, socialists and any other "enlightened" philosophers). This silliness should have been obvious to those who really considered the matter of free will even before the Big Bang Theory, but they denied free will existed (which will be talked about in the next paragraph). Some Christians actually did indeed think along this line in defense of religion before science began to support Intelligent Design (consider the works of George Berkeley, George MacDonald and G.K. Chesterton). Bulverism is a variation of the genesis fallacy, and it assumes something is right or wrong based solely on what someone identifies themselves as. Certainly what one identifies as is important, but it is wrong to never look beyond this.

To understand the source of the silliness, one must note that evolution, being an irresistible force of nature, ultimately excludes free will. Therefore, one cannot apply evolution to things subject to human influence without denying free will. This includes human behavior, morality, economics, politics and more. A denial of free will (known as determinism) is essentially at the heart of all the philosophies of the later Fathers of Atheism. Sigmund Freud would say that a young man is attracted to an older woman *because* his mother died when he was a child. Karl Marx would say a factory owner despises a union *because* he is a capitalist. This goes on today. I've been told I'm a Christian *because* I am a "cradle Catholic." A black man is poor *because* of the racism of whites.

There are several major flaws with this outlook. The most obvious is that it can be turned back on the user. A woman only marries *because* she is incapable of supporting herself. Workers only want a union *because* they are lazy. One only becomes an atheist *because* they are individualists (those having a "what can I get out of life" attitude). A black man is only poor *because* he has a criminal record. As can be seen, Bulverism is essentially name-calling and serves no useful purpose. Indeed, it is an actual logic fallacy known as *ad hominem*, which means to attack a person rather than their argument.

Another problem is that no real information is given in the exchange. At best, it grossly oversimplifies complex issues. What interests exist between the couple? Does the factory owner treat employees respectfully without a union, and does the union truly represent the employees' best interests? What about my crisis of faith and ultimate return to Catholicism? What opportunities were available to the black man and how did he respond to them?

Thirdly, Bulverism ultimately means nothing even if the allegation is true. It doesn't matter if a man grew up without a mother; what matters is if he has a healthy relationship with the woman he's married to. It doesn't matter if a factory has a union or not; it's how employees are treated. It doesn't matter why I'm a Catholic; it's whether or not God really does exist and if Catholicism represents the best truth of God's existence. It doesn't matter how much money a black man has; it's about his quality of life.

But the biggest problem with Bulverism is that it only discusses the *symptoms*, never the *causes*.

Instead, the observer is left to assume that certain types of people are inherently evil while everyone else is inherently good but oppressed. This causes division and radicalization.

F) Sin and Human Dignity:

Jesus replied, "The first is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

--Mark 12:29-31

To a Christian, the ultimate cause of *all* problems is sin. This does not preclude practical approaches to addressing real world problems, but it does clarify the difference between a cause and a symptom. Furthermore, as can be seen from Mark's gospel, respecting human dignity is the second greatest commandment of all, and the greatest commandment concerning non-heavenly matters.

Human dignity is a foreign concept to atheistic philosophies, which are based on evolution. Evolution is about survival of the best suited, not about protection of the weak. No philosopher before Jesus addressed human dignity (at least not as an inalienable right), and no philosopher since Jesus has ever attempted to justify human dignity outside the context of God. Classical atheists simply assumed altruism to be part of man's evolution (which, remember, they acknowledged Christianity was a necessary part of). Admittedly, Immanuel Kant came up with the concept of "a person is an end in himself," which, when used in the context he intended, mirrors the Christian idea of human dignity quite well. But the problem is that, without God, what one considers a "person" becomes subjective, and Kant's success in the matter is easily perverted.

The only two Fathers of Atheism (Camus and Sartre) to see this assumption put to the test, when atheistic countries came into existence, both agreed that God was a "necessary absurdity" to ensure "human dignity" remained in the increasingly hostile world (technically Freud saw the test as well, but he died so shortly after the communists consolidated power in Russia that he had no chance to witness its consequences). In a sad case of irony, Sartre gave up work on his atheist philosophies to make time to criticize the socialist experiments on how they treated their citizens, and eventually became a Messianic Jew shortly before his death.

Certainly, poverty is a magnet for all crimes against human dignity: lack of security (i.e., high crime), hunger, little or no education, etc. But poverty *itself* is not a human dignity issue. There were, and still are, lots of poor people who had, and still have, a good quality of life. By coming together, they manage to provide mutual security, share necessities between themselves, and teach what is needed to be productive members of their society. In contrast, "high society" comes with its own predators (especially for the naive), it can often be characterized as people viciously competing against each other for only minor gains in status, and often comes with a massive, unforgivable student loan.

It's not that I don't believe that social programs designed to reduce crime, improve diets and teach are pointless; it's just that they are incomplete by themselves. Simply providing a police force, rationing food and building schools does not guarantee a good quality of life. It's this "build and forget" mentality that leads to police brutality, food distribution problems, and scandals in schools.

To really improve another's life, one *must* start with human dignity. Saint Teresa of Calcutta did

not banish demons, perform miracle cures or build universities. She simply let the dying know that their life had mattered. Yet, of all the monumentally influential people of the 20th Century (Henry Ford, Duke Ferdinand, Hitler, Stalin, Roosevelt, Churchill, Reagan, Mao Tse-Tung, Pope John Paul II, Gandhi, Dr. King Jr, Einstein, and Oppenheimer, just to name a few), could any of them have claimed to be both more influential (in a positive way) and non-controversial than her?

Conclusion: We live in a world where science is finding rapidly increasing evidence of a "designed" universe, and it is having a harder and harder time finding ways of explaining our existence that doesn't include God. Yet many atheists are under the gravely mistaken impression that science has somehow "debunked" God. Revolutionaries and politicians alike are seeking socialistic solutions to all problems, real and imagined. Yet not one purely socialist government in the world has done anything remotely beneficial for the people they control. Rather than embrace, much less build on, Christian morals, they have devolved into the "might makes right" mentality that Christianity once overcame. So why are these ideas still so popular despite the evidence to the contrary?

Few atheists or socialists really understand what their own views are based on. They are zealots, not philosophers. If a legitimate philosophy for atheism is to be had, then the new philosophers need to stand up, recognize the weakness of their current position and find a new foundation to build on. They need to recognize the very real problem cosmology has in explaining creation without becoming a religion (or at least a non-science) itself. If they truly hope to create a better world than what they leave behind, then they have to give up the notion that morality is evolutionary, and develop a system that can justify human dignity as a legitimate concept without needing God to shore it up.

The empirical results of 100 years of atheistic socialism (and the two are inseparable) have, without exception, borne witness that human dignity without God is impossible. Until such a time that this changes (which I doubt ever will), Christians should not be cowed by the "science" of atheism, nor duped by the false social justice of socialism, but instead promote the faith boldly.

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