

Atheism?

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"It has been very well said, that if triangles were to make to themselves gods, they would give them three sides. My dear Usbek, when I behold men, mere crawlers on this atom, the earth, which is but a point in the universe, proposing themselves as exact models for Providence, I know not how to harmonise such extravagance with such littleness."

--Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, *"Persian Letters"*, 1714, transl. John Davidson

? This entry is titled Atheism, and will be a good place for quotations on the subject of unbelief. It will also be a good place to mention that [*that*](#) paradox has not been traced to any extant Epicurean text.

Locke, John; [Letter](#) Concerning Toleration; 1689: "Lastly, those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of a God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all; besides also, those that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion, can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a toleration." Edited (transl. from Latin?) Mario Montuori

Montaigne, Michel de; [Apology](#) for Raymond Sebond: 1588: "Atheism being a proposition as unnatural as monstrous, difficult also and hard to establish in the human understanding, how arrogant soever, there are men enough seen, out of vanity and pride, to be the authors of extraordinary and reforming opinions, and outwardly to affect the profession of them; who, if they are such fools, have, nevertheless, not the power to plant them in their own conscience." Transl. Charles Cotton

Mill, John Stuart, *Autobiography*: 1818: "As it was, his aversion to religion, in the sense usually attached to the term, was of the same kind with that of Lucretius: he regarded it with the feelings due not to a mere mental delusion, but to a great moral evil. He looked upon it as the greatest enemy of morality: first, by setting up fictitious excellences—belief in creeds, devotional feelings, and ceremonies, not connected with the good of human-kind—and causing these to be accepted as substitutes for genuine virtues: but above all, by radically vitiating the standard of morals; making it consist in doing the will of a being, on whom it lavishes indeed all the phrases of adulation, but whom in sober truth it depicts as eminently hateful."

-The Autobiography of John Stuart Mill, on his Father