

To read the abbreviated JOY! Magazine version, with pictures, click [here](#).

Humanist and atheist, Bertrand Russell, wrote in *Why I am Not a Christian*: "Man is the product of ... accidental connections of atoms ... no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thoughts and feeling can preserve an individual life beyond the grave, and ... all the labour of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system. The whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruin. All these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy that rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths,□

only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair can the souls' habitation henceforth be safely built."

Russell maintained that man is an accident of the cosmos, formed by chance and chaos, directionless in life, and in the end, nothing but food for worms. Russell maintained that religion is simply a crutch for weak people, who cannot bear to face up to reality.

Is Religion a Crutch?

Some religions may be a crutch. Certainly atheism is a crutch. However Christianity is no crutch and many Christians throughout history could hardly be classified as weaklings.

In some of the worst of circumstances Christianity has produced the greatest courage, the greatest achievements, progress, prosperity and freedoms ever known.

Not for Weaklings

The Apostles were not weaklings who avoided reality. They knew all about reality. James was beheaded by King Herod. Andrew was crucified in Greece. Philip died as a martyr. Nathaniel was flayed alive and beheaded in Asia. Thomas was axed to death in India. Matthew was burned to death while preaching the Gospel in Ethiopia. Peter was crucified upside down in Rome.

When Ignatius of Antioch was sentenced to death by the emperor Trajan, he responded: "I

thank Thee O Lord that Thou hast vouchsafed thus to honour me. I am God's grain, to be ground between the teeth of wild beasts, so that I may become a holy loaf for the Lord."

When Cyprian of Carthage was sentenced to be beheaded he exclaimed: *"Thanks be to God!"*

The Courage of Polycarp

When Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna, was arrested and brought before the Roman consul, he was told: "Pity your grey hairs, old man, just burn some incense before the emperor and you can go free."

Polycarp responded: *"If you think for a moment that I would do that, then you pretend not to know who I am. Hear it plainly, I am a Christian!"*

"Then do this, old man, just curse Christ, and I will set you free."

Polycarp responded: *"86 Years I have served my Christ, and He has never done me any wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?"*

"I have wild beasts" threatened the pro-consul.

"Bring them" Polycarp replied. *"I would change my mind if it meant going from the worse to the better, but not from the right to the wrong."*

"If you despise the wild beasts I will have you burned," warned the consul.

"You threaten me with a fire that burns for but an hour, and then is extinguished. But you know nothing of the fire of eternal judgment which will never be extinguished. Bring what you will."

As Polycarp was led into the arena he was heard to pray: *"Lord God, Father of our Blessed Saviour, I thank Thee that I have been deemed worthy to ... die for Thee and Thy cause."*

Steadfast unto Death

Perpetua was a Christian noblewoman living in Carthage in North Africa. In AD 202 when Perpetua was a 22 year old mother she was arrested for being a Christian. When her pagan father visited and pleaded with her to deny that she was a Christian, Perpetua responded that it was impossible that she be: *"called anything other than what I am, a Christian."* When the governor ordered Perpetua to worship the emperor her response was decisive: *"I will not!"*

"Are you a Christian then?"

"Yes I am!" Perpetua's determined response brought immediate condemnation. She was condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts and to die in the arena. Perpetua and her fellow Christians entered the stadium singing Psalms in such a joyful demeanour, that the crowd demanded that they be scourged first. This was done.

As the mob screamed abuse, Perpetua was heard to say clearly: *"You have condemned us, but God will condemn you."*

Perpetua encouraged the other Christians: *" You must all standfast in the Faith and not be weakened by what we have gone through."*

Witnesses in the stands described Perpetua in the arena as: *"Young and beautiful", "A pure and modest Christian lady", "with shining countenance and calm step, as the beloved of God, as a bride of Christ, putting down everyone's stare by her own intense gaze."*

Her bold testimony: *"I am a Christian and cannot deny Christ"* was repeated throughout the empire. Her example of Christian resolve and courage, choosing to suffer and die with a clear conscience rather than deny her Saviour, inspired generations of Roman Christians to stand firm in the face of relentless persecution. In time even the emperor was converted to Christianity.

The Blood of the Martyrs

As Tertullian famously declared: "*The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church.*" **□ When Professor Jan Hus of Prague was condemned to death for his Reformation work he declared:□**
***"I am willing, patiently and publically, to endure this dreadful, shameful and cruel death for the sake of the Gospel and the preaching of God's Word."*□**
He died, being burned at the stake, singing praises to God.

A Daughter of the Reformation

Anne Askew was a young Protestant woman who was persecuted for her Protestant Faith. When she was found to have acquired a copy of the English Bible, she was arrested for: "*Sedition.*"□ When challenged Anne confessed that she was no longer a Romanist, but□
"a daughter of the Reformation"
. Despite being tortured, and stretched on the rack, she steadfastly refused to forsake her Protestant convictions:□
"God is a Spirit, not a wafer cake. He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Not by the impious superstitious homage paid to a wafer converted, by popish jugglery, into a god."

That very day the church council condemned Anne Askew to be burned to death at the stake. Despite intense sufferings, all of the cruelties of her enemies failed to change the patient sweetness of Anne's Christian demeanor. On the day of her execution Anne went to her death with *"an angel's countenance and a smiling face."* Even when offered one last chance of a pardon if she would renounce the doctrines of the Reformation and embrace Catholicism, she boldly refused: *"I believe all those Scriptures to be true which He hath confirmed with His most precious Blood."*

All who witnessed the martyrdom of Anne Askew were impressed and inspired by the courage of this beautiful woman who gladly gave her life as one of the truest and purest witnesses of the Gospel of the Christian Church.

Confronting Reality

Similarly, Lady Jane Grey refused to forsake her faith and was beheaded by her cousin—*Bloody Mary*. None of these Christians could have been classified as weaklings. Their faith was hardly any crutch to avoid reality. Millions of Christians, over virtually 20 centuries, have endured false testimonies, unjust arrests, summary trials, floggings, beatings, imprisonment, stonings, burnings, crucifixions and beheadings for refusing to deny their Faith. One can hardly accuse people like Dr. David Livingstone (who courageously pioneered missions, walking across the continent of Africa, confronting slave traders and setting captives free) of being "a weakling", nor can one suggest that his faith was "a crutch"!

Escape from Reality

However, it is in fact the atheists who are seeking to escape from reality. Atheism is actually a crutch for the immoral. Bertrand Russell lived an absolutely outrageously immoral life. His scandalous immorality and serial adulteries make it quite clear that he chose to create an alternate 'reality' in order to stifle his conscience.

Intelligent Design

The reality is that all of nature evidences intelligent design. That this world was created is a manifest fact. As the great philosopher Emmanuel Kant observed: life without an afterlife would be like a marathon race with no finish line. Without eternity, life would be an absurd and meaningless joke. William Shakespeare put it eloquently:—*"A tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."*

Ethics and Eternity

Kant reasoned that ethics proves a Creator. Everyone realises that right and wrong exist. We all have an innate sense of what is right, just and fair. Without ethics, life would become meaningless and chaotic. Ethics ultimately depend on justice. Because it is quite obvious that in this present world evil people often prosper and the good often suffer, there must be a life beyond death. For justice to be dispensed in the afterlife, it must be

ruled over by a great and perfect Judge. For this justice to be effective, the eternal Judge must know all the facts, circumstances and motives of everyone. He must be all powerful in order to enforce His justice. Without all of this, life is meaningless, a cruel joke.

How any religion, or philosophy, views the afterlife (or lack of an afterlife) has a profound effect on how life is lived on this planet. If the Atheist believes that: *"You came from nothing, you are going nowhere, life is meaningless"*, this will affect all of his decisions, including ethical choices.

Atheism is a Crutch

Swearing is the crutch of conversational cripples. Immorality is the crutch of spiritual cripples. Atheism is the crutch developed by those who seek an alternative reality to avoid the hard facts of Creation, the depravity of man, the Holiness of God, the immortality of the soul, the demands of God's Law, the Day of Judgment and the fact that we are accountable to a Just and Holy Creator.

What is your Purpose?

In a recent research survey of 18 to 25 year olds, 81% said that getting rich was their most important, or second most important, life goal. 51% said being famous was their first or second most important life goal. 30% said their goal was to help people who needed help, and 10% to become more spiritual. So plainly, fortune and fame are what most young people are living for. Yet how many famous and wealthy people have committed suicide? Wealth and fame can never satisfy our deepest needs.

Slavery to Sin

We have a sin problem and there are serious consequences to sin. *"For the wages of sin is death."*

Romans 6:23. When many people clamour for the freedom to do whatever they want, with whoever they want, whenever they want, and wherever they want, the result is moral chaos. Although they claim to be free, in reality

those who indulge the sinful nature are slaves to sin. Sin is actually the root cause of much skepticism. Julian Huxley, famous as Darwin's bulldog, the one who made Darwinian evolutionism famous, was interviewed on television. He was asked why evolution was accepted so quickly. The answer of Julian Huxley was:□

"The reason why we accepted Darwinism, even without proof, is because we didn't want God to interfere with our sexual mores."

Here is an uncharacteristically honest answer from a leading evolutionist. Huxley never mentioned anything resembling scientific evidence, but merely that the idea of God interfered with sinful choices! Either the Bible will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from the Bible.

Evolution is science fiction. It is a fairy tale for grown ups. Once upon a time there was nothing. And then there was something. And that something became everything!

From goo to the zoo to you! From mud to monkeys to man!

If you are sick you need a physician. If you are ignorant you need a teacher. If you are spiritually lost you need the Saviour.

Jesus Christ came to set the captives free. ***"You will know the truth and the truth will set you free."***
John 8:32

Throw Away your Crutch
Reject the rotten crutch of evolutionism and atheism. Face the facts of the real world. A strong Gospel makes a strong people. The Reformation produced generations of courageous and principled people who changed history. Strong doctrine puts backbone into us. The Reformation Faith puts backbones of steel and Puritan devotion inspires fire in our souls.

Take Up the Cross

Reject the rotten crutch of atheism and evolutionary make-belief. Face the facts of the real world. God is Holy, man is depraved. There is a Day of Judgment and we all have an appointment with Almighty God. Each one of us will have to give an account for everything we do in this life. What you sow is what you will reap.

Throw away the crooked crutch of the world and take up your Cross. Deny yourself, forsake worldliness. Don't follow the crowd on the broad way. Turn away from what is popular and easy. Choose the steep high road of the Will of God. Take up the sword of the Spirit and fight the good fight of Faith.

"Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." ¹ Matthew 10:28

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The above article has been adapted from the book [Answering Skeptics](#) by Peter Hammond.
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are available from Christian Liberty Books, PO Box 358, Howard Place 7450, Cape Town, South Africa, tel: 021-689-7478, fax: 0861-551-7490, email:

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