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A groundbreaking account of how the Book of Exodus shaped fundamental aspects of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam The Book of Exodus may be the most consequential story ever told. But its spectacular moments of heaven-sent plagues and parting seas overshadow its true significance, says Jan Assmann, a leading historian of ancient religion. The story of Moses guiding the enslaved children of Israel out of captivity to become God's chosen people is the foundation of an entirely new idea of religion, one that lives on today in many of the world's faiths. First introduced in Exodus, new ideas of faith, revelation, and above all covenant trans-

formed basic assumptions about humankind's relationship to the divine and became the bedrock of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

A thorough and hard-hitting critique that is a must read for anyone interested in the interaction between religion and science. It has become the prevalent view among sociologists, historians, and some theistic scientists that religion and science have never been in serious conflict. Some even claim that Christianity was responsible for the development of science. In a sweeping historical survey that begins with ancient Greek science and proceeds through the Renaissance and Enlightenment to contemporary ad-

vances in physics and cosmology, Stenger makes a convincing case that not only is this conclusion false, but Christianity actually held back the progress of science for one thousand years. It is significant, he notes, that the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century occurred only after the revolts against established ecclesiastic authorities in the Renaissance and Reformation opened up new avenues of thought. The author goes on to detail how religion and science are fundamentally incompatible in several areas: the origin of the universe and its physical parameters, the origin of complexity, holism versus reductionism, the nature of mind and consciousness, and the source of morality. In the end, Stenger is most troubled by the negative influence that organized religion often exerts on politics and society. He points out antiscientific attitudes embedded in popular religion that are being used to suppress scientific results on issues of global importance, such as overpopulation and environmental degradation. When religion fosters disrespect for science, it threatens the generations of humanity that will follow ours.

Alister McGrath and Joanna Collicutt McGrath present a reliable assessment of *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, famed atheist and scientist, and the many questions this book raises--including, above all, the relevance of faith and the quest for meaning.

"Like a selfish gene or a parasite, the religion virus catches a free ride in the minds of our species, infecting our history and culture. What *Guns, Germs and Steel* did for anthropology, this book does for faith. It puts the pieces together into a fascinating, coherent model that makes sense! (Dan Barker, President, Freedom From Religion Foundation.) Craig A. James has written an accessible book on evolution and religion that manages to explain memetics

while being both funny and touching. (Wes Unruh, author, *The Art of Memetics*, editor of alteratic.com.) Full of powerful, groundbreaking ideas, packaged in a deceptively simple, easy-reading style. James has created one of those rare books where, every few pages, I find myself thinking, "I need to send a copy of this to so-and-so." This is the most fun I've had reading non-fiction in a long time. (Phil Steele, Editor, *Fragment and The Passion of Ayn Rand's Critics*)"--From Amazon.com.

Ninth Commandment: Thou Shalt Read the Koran
When Caliph Othman, the sole true creator of the Koran, finished setting down the very first compilation of the verses bequeathed by the Prophet, he found himself confronted by an incomprehensible book. In a fully logical way, Othman had classified the various verses he had found chronologically, from oldest to most recent. They were in the exact order in which they had been revealed to Mohammed over the course of his life. Nevertheless, in that order of reading, contradictions in the divine words appeared all too clearly. Allah had commanded one thing, while in later chapters Allah had taken it all back and even said the opposite of what he had ordered at first. A distressing aberration. This first attempt of Othman's at compiling a Koran sounded like the private diary of a lunatic swinging from one contradiction to another, progressively falling into paranoia and schizophrenia. It showed the unstable character of Allah, or rather of Mohammed, who had imposed his will on those around him for more than twenty years in accordance with his mood of the moment. This was a groping, uncertain will. So, Othman decided to mix up all the texts he had in his possession. He put them in order of decreasing length, a trick

that allowed him to tone down somewhat the incomprehensibility emerging from contradictory verses. The Koran was born. To muddy the waters a little more around this literary poison, and to fool history, Othman also mingled episodes from Mohammed's life with others in verses historically distant from them. He mixed the Sage of Mecca together with the Murderer of Medina, going from cock to bull in just a few lines. Do not copy this asinine behavior! Read the Koran to grasp the full extent of Othman's trickery and that of his guru Mohammed. Doing that, you will grasp how men and women, normal human beings like you and like me, can turn into inhuman monsters, suicide bombers loving death more than life through their sick love for their Prophet, just as the S.S. did for Hitler. If Europeans had taken the trouble to read Mein Kampf, instead of listening to Nazi propaganda claiming the Führer did not want war, Hitler would never have been able to exterminate the Jews by invading democratic nations. They would have mobilized to neutralize the German eagle before it took flight and put into action the murderous aims divulged in the book. Similarly, rather than listen to Islamic propaganda claiming that Mohammed was a peaceful Prophet of a religion of peace, if people even glimpsed into the Koran, they would have never allowed this warmongering sect to sneak into their democratic lives under the pretext of freedom of religion. Humankind had not wished to see the truth written in letters of blood in these two literary toxins revealing their murderous futures. In cowardly fashion, people allowed the Germans to sell their souls to Satan. Now history was repeating itself and they were letting Moslems sell their souls to a heavenly Allah, but really to an earthly murderer called Mohammed, who was nothing else but the Devil. Of the two peoples

that fell into the clutches of ideological obscurantism, one had woken with a start to find a gun in its hand as it stood on blood-soaked ground. The other was continuing to live a religious nightmare that may well lead all of us not to Paradise, but toward an awful doom. The end of humanity. Extract from the novel "The Sage of Mecca" by Thomas Anderson.

The "brilliantly realized" (The New York Times Book Review) breakthrough novel from visionary author Neal Stephenson, a modern classic that predicted the metaverse and inspired generations of Silicon Valley innovators Hiro lives in a Los Angeles where franchises line the freeway as far as the eye can see. The only relief from the sea of logos is within the autonomous city-states, where law-abiding citizens don't dare leave their mansions. Hiro delivers pizza to the mansions for a living, defending his pies from marauders when necessary with a matched set of samurai swords. His home is a shared 20 X 30 U-Stor-It. He spends most of his time goggled in to the Metaverse, where his avatar is legendary. But in the club known as The Black Sun, his fellow hackers are being felled by a weird new drug called Snow Crash that reduces them to nothing more than a jittering cloud of bad digital karma (and IRL, a vegetative state). Investigating the Infocalypse leads Hiro all the way back to the beginning of language itself, with roots in an ancient Sumerian priesthood. He'll be joined by Y.T., a fearless teenaged skateboard courier. Together, they must race to stop a shadowy virtual villain hell-bent on world domination.

Why did America do so badly? When the COVID-19 crisis reached America, the US had more resources and expertise at its disposal to confront the threat than any nation on the planet, and yet the

American response was homicidally inefficient. Why? In this book, I argue that the root of the problem is America's religiosity. A crisis that only science could meet threatened to expose the impotence of religious claims, and religious leaders and institutions went on the attack. Any hope of a rational, scientifically informed response was crippled by a presidential administration elected by religious zealots, staffed by religious zealots, and beholden to religious zealots. But their malfeasance was not limited to the political arena. From churches ignoring state lockdowns, to televangelists declaring the disease miraculously eradicated, to pastors suing their governors for enforcing public safety measures, religion was at the forefront of virtually every misguided step towards catastrophe that the nation took. When science eventually solves this problem, religions will be quick to thank their gods for the scientist's labor and forgive themselves their trespasses. We cannot afford to give them such easy absolution. Their disastrous contributions to our national pandemic response are a potent reminder that a nation in the twenty-first century can ill afford to let anyone compete with science in the realm of truth.

The New York Times bestseller - a "crystal-clear, constantly engaging" (Jared Diamond) exploration of the role that religious belief plays in our lives and our interactions. For all the thousands of books that have been written about religion, few until this one have attempted to examine it scientifically: to ask why—and how—it has shaped so many lives so strongly. Is religion a product of blind evolutionary instinct or rational choice? Is it truly the best way to live a moral life? Ranging through biology, history, and psychology, Daniel C. Dennett charts religion's evolution from "wild" folk belief to "domesticated" dogma. Not an antireli-

gious screed but an unblinking look beneath the veil of orthodoxy, *Breaking the Spell* will be read and debated by believers and skeptics alike.

Alister E. McGrath is one of the world's leading theologians, with a doctorate in the sciences. Richard Dawkins is one of the best-selling popular science writers, with outspoken and controversial views on religion. This fascinating and provoking work is the first book-length response to Dawkins' ideas, and offers an ideal introduction to the topical issues of science and religion. Addresses fundamental questions about Dawkins' approach to science and religion: Is the gene actually selfish? Is the blind watchmaker a suitable analogy? Are there other ways of looking at things? Tackles Dawkins' hostile and controversial views on religion, and examines the religious implications of his scientific ideas, making for a fascinating and provoking debate. Written in a very engaging and accessible style, ideal to those approaching scientific and religious issues for the first time. Alister McGrath is uniquely qualified to write this book. He is one of the world's best known and most respected theologians, with a strong research background in molecular biophysics. A superb book by one of the world's leading theologians, which will attract wide interest in the growing popular science market, similar to Susan Blackmore's *The Meme Machine* (1999).

Europe's "Black Death" contributed to the rise of nation states, mercantile economies, and even the Reformation. Will the AIDS epidemic have similar dramatic effects on the social and political landscape of the twenty-first century? This readable volume looks at the impact of AIDS since its emergence and suggests its

effects in the next decade, when a million or more Americans will likely die of the disease. The Social Impact of AIDS in the United States addresses some of the most sensitive and controversial issues in the public debate over AIDS. This landmark book explores how AIDS has affected fundamental policies and practices in our major institutions, examining: How America's major religious organizations have dealt with sometimes conflicting values: the imperative of care for the sick versus traditional views of homosexuality and drug use. Hotly debated public health measures, such as HIV antibody testing and screening, tracing of sexual contacts, and quarantine. The potential risk of HIV infection to and from health care workers. How AIDS activists have brought about major change in the way new drugs are brought to the marketplace. The impact of AIDS on community-based organizations, from volunteers caring for individuals to the highly political ACT-UP organization. Coping with HIV infection in prisons. Two case studies shed light on HIV and the family relationship. One reports on some efforts to gain legal recognition for nonmarital relationships, and the other examines foster care programs for newborns with the HIV virus. A case study of New York City details how selected institutions interact to give what may be a picture of AIDS in the future. This clear and comprehensive presentation will be of interest to anyone concerned about AIDS and its impact on the country: health professionals, sociologists, psychologists, advocates for at-risk populations, and interested individuals. Examines how the belief in gods has lead to cooperation and sometimes conflict between groups. The author also looks at how some cooperative societies have developed without belief in gods.

From any non-Christian point of view, the gospel does not make sense. Grace doesn't make sense. Grace doesn't add up. Why would Jesus come to be one of us, to pay a debt He did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay? Why would He do that? Free? No strings? What was in it for Him? Since the church first began, Christians have had trouble accepting God's grace. We have substituted holiness, discipleship, order, regulation, and a long list of things to avoid in place of God's free gift. The result is a "Bad News Religion" that drains the joy and life out of believers. Bad News Religion is a convicting, liberating exploration of how we, in the name of religion, have shifted the focus from the work of God to our ability to become worthy of salvation. The result is bondage and defeat. The key to success in the Christian life is not what we do, but who we know. Knowing God and knowing the fullness of His grace is a liberating experience. Most of us don't realize how we have robbed ourselves of experiencing the richness of God's grace.

Using logic, common sense, philosophy, ethics, history, and science, the author rebuts every argument that claims to "prove" the existence of God. IS THERE REALLY A GOD? OR DOES GOD EXIST ONLY IN OUR HEADS? IS THE BIBLE TRULY GOD'S WORD? OR IS IT A JUMBLE OF FANCIFUL MYTHS? Atheist Universe details why God is unnecessary to explain the universe's diversity, organization and beauty. Using simple, straightforward logic, this book rebuts every argument that claims to "prove" God's existence. A comprehensive primer for countering today's religious dogma, Atheist Universe addresses all the historical and scientific questions, including: •What is atheism, and why is it so misunders-

tood? •If God is a myth, then how did the universe appear? •Without God, is there an objective “right” and “wrong”? •What is the meaning of life without God? •Is there evidence of Jesus’s miracles and resurrection? •Can atheists explain “near death” experiences and medical miracles? •Can science and the Bible realistically be reconciled? •What is the behind-the-scenes relationship between politics and religion? “An admirable work.” —Richard Dawkins “David’s work will be very useful for anyone combating harmful religious beliefs. Honest, frank, and right to the point!”—Albert Ellis, Ph.D., father of modern psychotherapy, author of *A Guide to Rational Living*

This book uses evolutionary psychology as a lens to explain religious violence and oppression. The author, a clinical psychologist, examines religious scriptures, rituals, and canon law, highlighting the many ways in which our evolutionary legacy has shaped the development of religion and continues to profoundly influence its expression. The book focuses on the image of God as the dominant male in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This traditional God concept is seen as a reflection of the “dominant ape” paradigm so evident in the hierarchical social structures of primates, with whom we have a strong genetic connection. The author describes the main features of male-dominated primate social hierarchies—specifically, the role of the alpha male as the protector of the group; his sexual dominance and use of violence and oppression to attain food, females, and territory; in-group altruism vs. out-group hostility (us vs. them); and displays of dominance and submission to establish roles within the social hierarchy. The parallels between these features of primate society and human religious rituals and concepts make it clear that religion, especially

its oppressive and violent tendencies, is rooted in the deep evolutionary past. This incisive analysis goes a long way toward explaining the historic and ongoing violence committed in the name of religion.

Why do some beliefs become extinct while others adapt and flourish? James shows us how genetic evolution and cultural evolution, though operating at different rates, are one and the same. Recent science has gone a long way toward explaining the origin of religious belief in evolutionary terms, but Craig James has cracked open the mystery of its tenacity. Religion does not exist for us, it exists for its own sake. Like a selfish gene or a parasite, the religion virus catches a free ride in the minds of our species, infecting our history and culture.

A cranky, atheistic philosophy professor loves to shred the faith of incoming freshmen. He is chosen by a group of scientists to create a philosophy for a computer-generated world exactly like ours. Much to his frustration every model he introduces—from Darwinism, to Existentialism, to Relativism, to Buddhism—fails. The only way to preserve the computer world is to introduce laws from outside their system through a Law Giver. Of course this goes against everything he's ever believed, and he hates it. But even that doesn't completely work because the citizens of that world become legalists and completely miss the spirit behind the Law. The only way to save them is to create a computer character like himself to personally live and explain it. He does. So now there are two of him—the one in our world and the one in the computer world. Unfortunately a rival has introduced a virus into the computer world. Things grow worse until our computer-world professor sees the only way to save his world is to personally ab-

sorb the virus and the penalty for breaking the Law. Of course, it's clear to all, including our real-world professor, that this act of selfless love has become a reenactment of the Gospel. It is the only possible choice to save their computer world and, as he finally understands, our own.

How belief in a loving and sovereign God helps us to make sense of and cope with the coronavirus outbreak. We are living through a unique, era-defining period. Many of our old certainties have gone, whatever our view of the world and whatever our beliefs. The coronavirus pandemic and its effects are perplexing and unsettling for all of us. How do we begin to think it through and cope with it? In this short yet profound book, Oxford mathematics professor John Lennox examines the coronavirus in light of various belief systems and shows how the Christian worldview not only helps us to make sense of it, but also offers us a sure and certain hope to cling to.

Why are all the major religions consumed with sex? What makes sex so important, whether Buddhism or Islam, Christianity or Mormonism? What is the impact of religion on human sexuality? This book explores this and more. It ventures into territory that has never been examined. You will be surprised at how much religion has influenced your sexuality, who you marry, the pleasure you get or don't get from sex, and what you can do about it.

"...and then Noah loaded the dinosaurs onto the ark." Assertions like these seem comical until you realize that many Christian parents aren't kidding when they teach them to their children as facts. Every day, impressionable young minds are conditioned to blindly accept wild biblical tales of floating zoos, talking shrub-

bery, 900-year-old humans, the undead, curses, levitation, demon/human hybrids and men who obtain super-human strength from the length of their hair. Allegiance to these teachings is expected, often demanded. Curiosity is muted. Doubt is frowned upon as a sin. And for those who dare to raise a dissenting hand, the threat of Hell looms ominously. A former religious radio host raised in the cradle of Christianity, Seth Andrews battled his own doubts for many years. His attempts to reconcile faith and the facts led him to a conclusion previously unthinkable, and this once-true believer ultimately became the founder of one of the most popular atheist communities on the internet.

Describes how baseball appreciation can lead to a transcendental experience that borders on the spiritual and discusses the shared connection between the sport and religion and the path to enlightenment.

The New York Times bestselling memoir about identity, love and understanding. Now a major motion picture starring Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, and Lucas Hedges, directed by Joel Edgerton. "Every sentence of the story will stir your soul" (O Magazine). The son of a Baptist pastor and deeply embedded in church life in small town Arkansas, as a young man Garrard Conley was terrified and conflicted about his sexuality. When Garrard was a nineteen-year-old college student, he was outed to his parents, and was forced to make a life-changing decision: either agree to attend a church-supported conversion therapy program that promised to "cure" him of homosexuality; or risk losing family, friends, and the God he had prayed to every day of his life. Through an institutionalized Twelve-Step Program heavy on Bible

study, he was supposed to emerge heterosexual, ex-gay, cleansed of impure urges and stronger in his faith in God for his brush with sin. Instead, even when faced with a harrowing and brutal journey, Garrard found the strength and understanding to break out in search of his true self and forgiveness. By confronting his buried past and the burden of a life lived in shadow, Garrard traces the complex relationships among family, faith, and community. At times heart-breaking, at times triumphant, *Boy Erased* is a testament to love that survives despite all odds.

Should we believe in God? In this brisk introduction to modern atheism, one of the world's greatest science writers tells us why we shouldn't. Richard Dawkins was fifteen when he stopped believing in God. Deeply impressed by the beauty and complexity of living things, he'd felt certain they must have had a designer. Learning about evolution changed his mind. Now one of the world's best and bestselling science communicators, Dawkins has given readers, young and old, the same opportunity to rethink the big questions. In twelve fiercely funny, mind-expanding chapters, Dawkins explains how the natural world arose without a designer—the improbability and beauty of the “bottom-up programming” that engineers an embryo or a flock of starlings—and challenges head-on some of the most basic assumptions made by the world's religions: Do you believe in God? Which one? Is the Bible a “Good Book”? Is adhering to a religion necessary, or even likely, to make people good to one another? Dissecting everything from Abraham's abuse of Isaac to the construction of a snowflake, *Outgrowing God* is a concise, provocative guide to thinking for yourself. Praise for *Outgrowing God* “My son came home from his first day in the sixth grade with arms outstretched

plaintively demanding to know: ‘Have you ever heard of Jesus?’ We burst out laughing. Maybe not our finest parenting moment, given that he was genuinely distraught. He felt that he had woken up one day to a world in which his peers were expressing beliefs he found frighteningly unreasonable. He began devouring books like *The God Delusion*, books that helped him formulate his own arguments and helped him stand his ground. Dawkins's new book is special in the terrain of atheists' pleas for humanism and rationalism precisely since it speaks to those most vulnerable to the coercive tactics of religion. As Dawkins himself says in the dedication, this book is for ‘all young people when they're old enough to decide for themselves.’ It is also, I must add, for their parents.”—Janna Levin, author of *Black Hole Blues* “When someone is considering atheism I tell them to read the Bible first and then Dawkins. *Outgrowing God*—second only to the Bible!”—Penn Jillette, author of *God, No!*

An essential feature of religious experience across many cultures is the intuitive feeling of God's presence. More than any rituals or doctrines, it is this experience that anchors religious faith, yet it has been largely ignored in the scientific literature on religion. Starting with a vivid narrative account of the life-threatening hike that triggered his own mystical experience, biologist John Wathey takes the reader on a scientific journey to find the sources of religious feeling and the illusion of God's presence. His book delves into the biological origins of this compelling feeling, attributing it to innate neural circuitry that evolved to promote the mother-child bond. Dr. Wathey, a veteran neuroscientist, argues that evolution has programmed the infant brain to expect the presence of a loving being who responds to the child's needs. As the infant grows

into adulthood, this innate feeling is eventually transferred to the realm of religion, where it is reactivated through the symbols, imagery, and rituals of worship. The author interprets our various conceptions of God in biological terms as illusory supernormal stimuli that fill an emotional and cognitive vacuum left over from infancy. These insights shed new light on some of the most vexing puzzles of religion, like the popular belief in a god who is judgmental and punishing, yet also unconditionally loving; the extraordinary tenacity of faith; the greater religiosity of women relative to men; religious obsessions with sex; the mysterious compulsion to pray; the seemingly irrepressible feminine attributes of God, even in traditionally patriarchal religions; and the strange allure of cults. Finally, Dr. Wathey considers the hypothesis that religion evolved to foster reproductive success, arguing that, in an age of potentially ruinous overpopulation, magical thinking has become a luxury we can no longer afford, one that distracts us from urgent threats to our planet. Deeply researched yet elegantly written in a jargon-free and accessible style, this book presents a compelling interpretation of the evolutionary origins of spirituality and religion.

"Science can't explain the complexity and order of life; God must have designed it to be this way." "God's existence is proven by scripture." "There's no evidence that God doesn't exist." "God has helped me so much. How could none of it be true?" "Atheism has killed more people than religion, so it must be wrong!" How many times have you heard arguments like these for why God exists? *Why There Is No God: Simple Responses to 20 Common Arguments for the Existence of God* provides simple, easy-to-understand counterpoints to the most popular arguments made for the

existence of God. Each chapter presents a concise explanation of the argument, followed by a response illustrating the problems and fallacies inherent in it. Whether you're an atheist, a believer or undecided, this book offers a solid foundation for building your own inquiry about the concept of God.

Based on original reporting from West Africa and the United States, and the poet's experiences as a doctor and journalist, *If God Is A Virus* charts the course of the largest and deadliest Ebola epidemic in history, telling the stories of Ebola survivors, outbreak responders, journalists and the virus itself. Documentary poems explore which human lives are valued, how editorial decisions are weighed, what role the aid industrial complex plays in crises, and how medical myths and rumor can travel faster than microbes. These poems also give voice to the virus. Eight percent of the human genome is inherited from viruses and the human placenta would not exist without a gene descended from a virus. *If God Is A Virus* reimagines viruses as givers of life and even authors of a viral-human self-help book.

Religion & beliefs.

This interdisciplinary volume explores how two domains of human experience and action—religion and technology—are implicated in one another. Combining rich historical and ethnographic detail with extended theoretical reflection, *Deus in Machina* challenges longstanding assumptions about religion and/as technology and outlines new directions of inquiry at the crossroads of religious studies, science and technology studies, communication studies, history, anthropology, and philosophy.

Dr. Darrel Ray, psychologist and lifelong student of religion, dis-

cusses religious infection from the inside out. How does guilt play into religious infection? Why is sexual control so important to so many religions? What causes the anxiety and neuroticism around death and dying? How does religion inject itself into so many areas of life, culture, and politics? The author explores this and much more in his book *The God Virus: How Religion Infects Our Lives and Culture*. This second-generation book takes the reader several steps beyond previous offerings and into the realm of the personal and emotional mechanisms that affect anyone who lives in a culture steeped in religion. Examples are used that anyone can relate to and the author gives real-world guidance in how to deal with and respond to people who are religious in our families, and among our friends and coworkers.

When Jesus said, "Suffer the children," faith healing is not what he had in mind

A non-religious, humanist reference draws on secular literature and philosophy from both Western and Eastern traditions to consider such topics as the origins of the world, how to relate to others, and how to appreciate life.

In this groundbreaking volume, J. Anderson Thomson, Jr., MD, with Clare Aukofer, offers a succinct yet comprehensive study of how and why the human mind generates religious belief. Dr. Thomson, a highly respected practicing psychiatrist with credentials in forensic psychiatry and evolutionary psychology, methodically investigates the components and causes of religious belief in the same way any scientist would investigate the movement of astronomical bodies or the evolution of life over time—that is, as a purely natural phenomenon. Providing compelling evidence

from psychology, the cognitive neurosciences, and related fields, he, with Ms. Aukofer, presents an easily accessible and exceptionally convincing case that god(s) were created by man—not vice versa. With this slim volume, Dr. Thomson establishes himself as a must-read thinker and leading voice on the primacy of reason and science over superstition and religion.

The connection between popular culture and religion is an enduring part of American life. With seventy-five percent new content, the third edition of this multifaceted and popular collection has been revised and updated throughout to provide greater religious diversity in its topics and address critical developments in the study of religion and popular culture. Ideal for classroom use, this expanded volume gives increased attention to the implications of digital culture and the increasingly interactive quality of popular culture provides a framework to help students understand and appreciate the work in diverse fields, methods, and perspectives contains an updated introduction, discussion questions, and other instructional tools

Why bother with the interpretive categories of biblical faith when in fact our energy and interest are focused on more immediate matters? The answer is simple and obvious. We linger because, in the midst of our immediate preoccupation with our felt jeopardy and our hope for relief, our imagination does indeed range beyond the immediate to larger, deeper wonderments. Our free-ranging imagination is not finally or fully contained in the immediacy of our stress, anxiety, and jeopardy. Beyond these demanding immediacies, we have a deep sense that our life is not fully contained in the cause-and-effect reasoning of the Enlightenment

that seeks to explain and control. There is more than that and other than that to our life in God's world!

A New York Times bestselling historian of early Christianity takes on two of the most gripping questions of human existence: where did the ideas of heaven and hell come from and why do they endure? What happens when we die? A recent Pew Research poll showed that 72% of Americans believe in a literal heaven and 58% believe in a literal hell. Most people who hold these beliefs are Christian and assume they are the age-old teachings of the Bible. But eternal rewards and punishments are found nowhere in the Old Testament and are not what Jesus or his disciples taught. So where did these ideas come from? In this "eloquent understanding of how death is viewed through many spiritual traditions" (Publishers Weekly, starred review), Bart Ehrman recounts the long history of the afterlife, ranging from The Epic of Gilgamesh up to the writings of Augustine, focusing especially on the teachings of Jesus and his early followers. He discusses ancient guided tours of heaven and hell, in which a living person observes the sublime blessings of heaven for those who are saved and the horrifying torments of hell for those who are damned. Some of these accounts take the form of near death experiences, the oldest on record, with intriguing similarities to those reported today. One of Ehrman's startling conclusions is that there never was a single Greek, Jewish, or Christian understanding of the afterlife, but numerous competing views. Moreover, these views did not come from nowhere; they were intimately connected with the social, cultural, and historical worlds out of which they emerged. Only later, in the early Christian centuries, did they develop into notions of eternal bliss or damnation widely accepted today. In this "ele-

gant history" (The New Yorker), Ehrman helps us reflect on where our ideas of the afterlife come from. With his "richly layered-narrative" (The Boston Globe) he assures us that even if there may be something to hope for when we die, there certainly is nothing to fear.

The New York Times writes, "Pickover contemplates realms beyond our known reality." From one of the most original voices in imaginative nonfiction comes a stunning novel of speculation on the afterlife, immortality, and the existence of the human soul. "The Heaven Virus" is inspired by virtual universes making headlines today and offers readers a glimpse of ultimate spiritual technologies for the 22nd century and a mystic encounter in an age of electronic gods. "The Heaven Virus" blends humor, psychedelia, and hope in a meditation on the outer limits of our culture, evolutionary destiny, and inner space. This novel will draw readers who have wondered about their own passage from this existence into the world to come. Cliff Pickover is the author of forty books on science, mathematics, art, religion. He received his Ph.D. from Yale University. His website, Pickover.com, has received several million visits.

Christopher Hitchens, described in the London Observer as "one of the most prolific, as well as brilliant, journalists of our time" takes on his biggest subject yet—the increasingly dangerous role of religion in the world. In the tradition of Bertrand Russell's *Why I Am Not a Christian* and Sam Harris's recent bestseller, *The End Of Faith*, Christopher Hitchens makes the ultimate case against religion. With a close and erudite reading of the major religious texts, he documents the ways in which religion is a man-made wish, a cause of dangerous sexual repression, and a distortion of

our origins in the cosmos. With eloquent clarity, Hitchens frames the argument for a more secular life based on science and reason, in which hell is replaced by the Hubble Telescope's awesome view of the universe, and Moses and the burning bush give way to the beauty and symmetry of the double helix.

A sweeping exploration of religion and the history of human violence—from the New York Times bestselling author of *The History of God* • “Elegant and powerful.... Both erudite and accurate, dazzling in its breadth of knowledge and historical detail.” —*The Washington Post* In these times of rising geopolitical chaos, the need for mutual understanding between cultures has never been more urgent. Religious differences are seen as fuel for violence and warfare. In these pages, one of our greatest writers on religion, Karen Armstrong, amasses a sweeping history of humankind to explore the perceived connection between war and the world's great creeds—and to issue a passionate defense of the peaceful nature of faith. With unprecedented scope, Armstrong looks at the whole history of each tradition—not only Christianity and Islam, but also Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Judaism. Religions, in their earliest days, endowed every aspect of life with meaning, and warfare became bound up with observances of the sacred. Modernity has ushered in an epoch of spectacular violence, although, as Armstrong shows, little of it can be ascribed directly to religion. Nevertheless, she

shows us how and in what measure religions came to absorb modern belligerence—and what hope there might be for peace among believers of different faiths in our time.

Within this volume H. G. Wells explores not the idea of religion, but the idea of a deity. He presets his own belief in a finite God - an attack on doctrinal Christianity that supports the idea of an infinite force. "God, the Invisible King" sets forth clearly and exactly H. G. Wells' personal religious beliefs, making it a must-read for fans of his work and highly recommended for those with an interest in Christianity. Contents include: "The Cosmogony Of Modern Religion", "Heresies; Or The Things That God Is Not", "The Likeness Of God", "The Religion Of Atheists", "The Invisible King", "Modern Ideas Of Sin And Damnation", and "The Idea Of A Church". Herbert George Wells (1866 - 1946) was a prolific English writer who wrote in a variety of genres, including the novel, politics, history, and social commentary. Today, he is perhaps best remembered for his contributions to the science fiction genre thanks to such novels as "The Time Machine" (1895), "The Invisible Man" (1897), and "The War of the Worlds" (1898). Although never a winner, Wells was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature a total of four times. Many vintage books such as this are becoming increasingly scarce and expensive. We are republishing this book now in an affordable, modern, high-quality edition complete with a specially commissioned new biography of the author. First published in 1917.