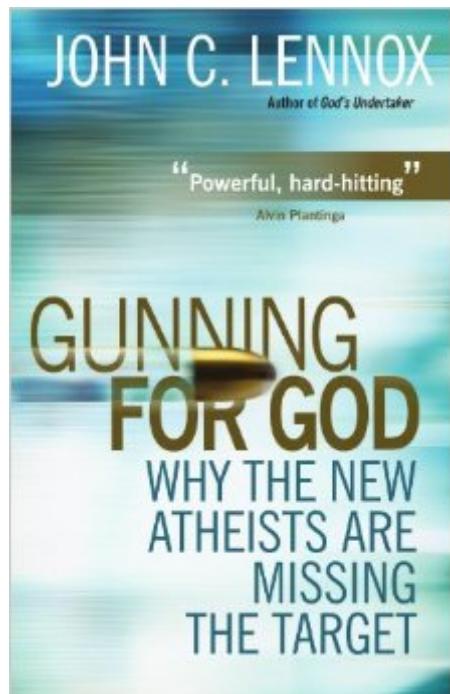


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Gunning For God: Why The New Atheists Are Missing The Target



Synopsis

New ideas about the nature of God and Christianity that will give Dawkins' best friends and worst enemies alike some stimulating food for thought. Tackling Hawking, Dawkins, Dennett, Hitchens, and a newcomer in the field—the French philosopher Michel Onfray—John Lennox points out some of the most glaring fallacies in the New Atheist approach in this insightful book. Since the twin towers crashed to the ground on September 11, there has been no end to attacks on religion. Claims abound that religion is dangerous, that it kills, and that it poisons everything. And if religion is the problem with the world, say the New Atheists, the answer is simple—get rid of it. Of course, things aren't quite so straightforward. Arguing that the New Atheists' irrational and unscientific methodology leaves them guilty of the very obstinate foolishness they criticize in dogmatic religious folks, this erudite and wide-ranging guide to religion in the modern age packs some debilitating punches and scores big for religious rationalism.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The best praise that I could give to *Gunning for God: A Critique of the New Atheism*, is that it would be difficult even for its staunchest critic not to admit that it lands some pretty accurate blows. Lennox confines his focus in the book to a few central distortions of the science and religion debate, not attempting in this book alone to provide either a comprehensive defence of theism or a comprehensive refutation of New Atheism. Lennox begins by arguing that science is compatible with faith, and indeed that science provides evidence for theistic belief. He then addresses several popular misconceptions of the history of the relationship between science and faith, and between

faith and violence. Lennox considers possible links between atheism and violence, before concluding that both worldviews are sufficient soil, capable of sowing the seeds of hatred. The author next presents Hume's 'is-ought' problem, applied to materialistic morality. If the universe is only composed of matter, as the popular argument goes, then all we can say about anything, is that it 'is.' We cannot derive morality, which relies on 'oughts' out of what simply 'is.' If the universe just 'is,' morality needs redefining. Lennox then defends the biblical God against two charges, 1. that His behaviour in the Old Testament is tyrannical, and, 2. that the biblical picture of Jesus dying for our sins as a substitute, is immoral. He argues that miracles are not ruled out by the laws of nature, and that belief in such events is not necessarily evidence of insanity.

This book addresses a particular subset of Atheists--the self-styled New Atheists such as Dawkins, Harris, Hitchens, and Hawking. Lennon, an Oxford Mathematician, is generally quite methodical in his critique of the New Atheism, though it would be a mistake to conclude that he does not play to win. He points out that what makes the New Atheists new is not their arguments, but rather their aggression which he points out in Hitchens' statement "Religion poisons everything." In other words, the New Atheists are not content to deny the existence of God; rather, they intend to demonstrate that religion is not only a force for evil, but is the primary source of evil in the world. Lennox sets a foundation for the discussion by shooting down some popular--and childish--misconceptions about how theists approach science and reason. He then goes on to address the idea that religion is poisonous, demonstrating that this generalisation steps well beyond the limits of the reasonable. He then turns the tables by asking the question "Is Atheism poisonous?" A brief discussion of Hitler, Stalin, and Lenin is followed by an attempt to demonstrate the dogmatic fundamentalism of the New Atheism, for instance quoting Sam Harris: "Some propositions are so dangerous that it may even be ethical to kill people for believing them." He goes on to address the issue of morality, the nature of God, and miracles. Lennox closes the book with a chapter on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead asking questions about history that no reasonable person can ignore and that the New Atheists can't answer. THE UPSFirst, this book is well written, logically sound, and profoundly credible.

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