

*Jesus, Hitler  
and the Abolition of God*

Alec Ryrie

And then I think: hooks? Where do they get them? What are they made of? Iron? Where do they forge them? Have they got some kind of factory down there? You know, in the monastery the monks probably believe there's a ceiling in hell, for instance. Now me, I'm ready to believe in hell, only there shouldn't be any ceiling; that would be, as it were, more refined, more enlightened.

Fyodor Karamazov, in Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

# I. Anger

WILLIAM DONALDSON and DONALD ALBERY present

# BEYOND THE FRINGE

ALAN  
BENNETT



PETER  
COOK



JONATHAN  
MILLER



DUDLEY  
MOORE



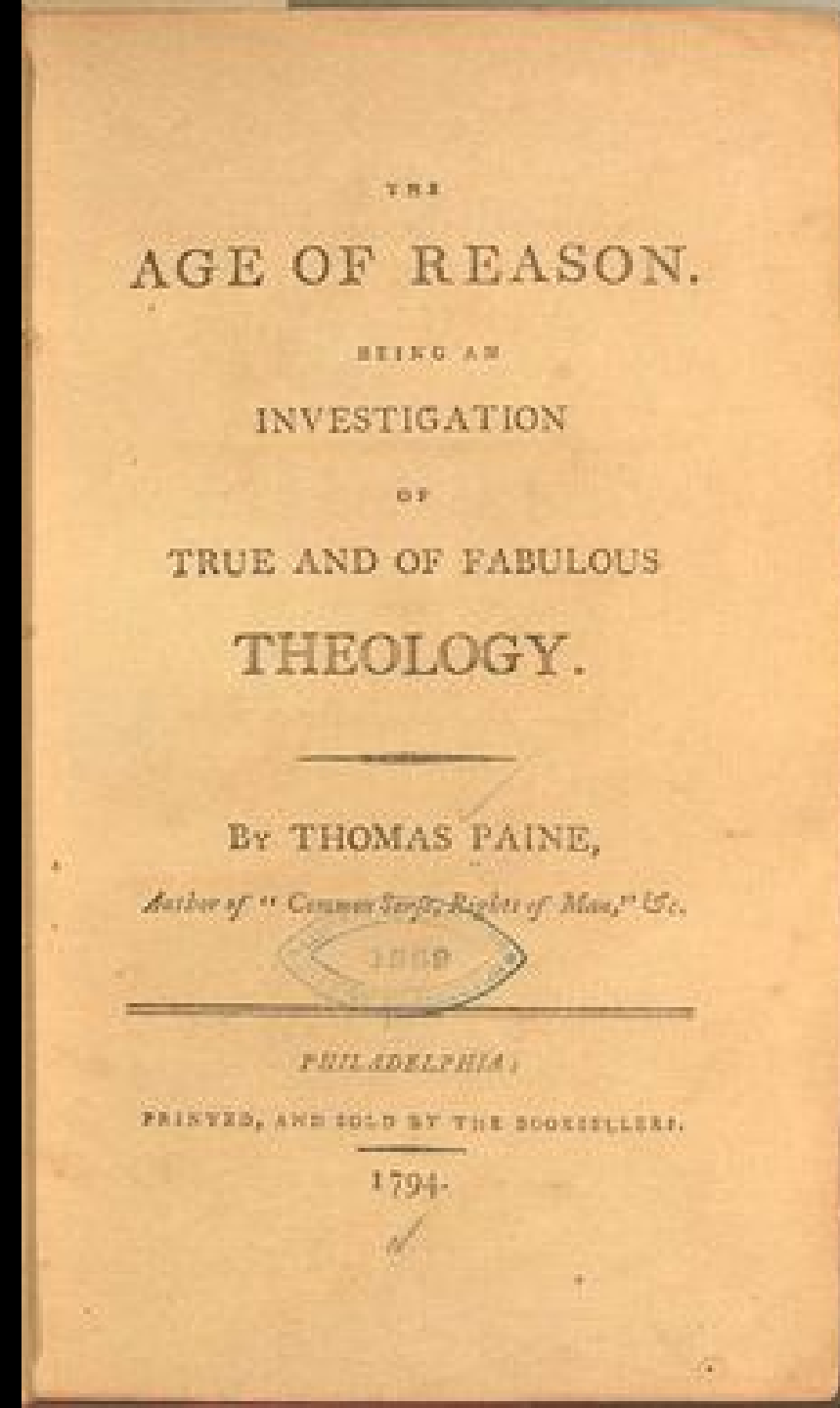




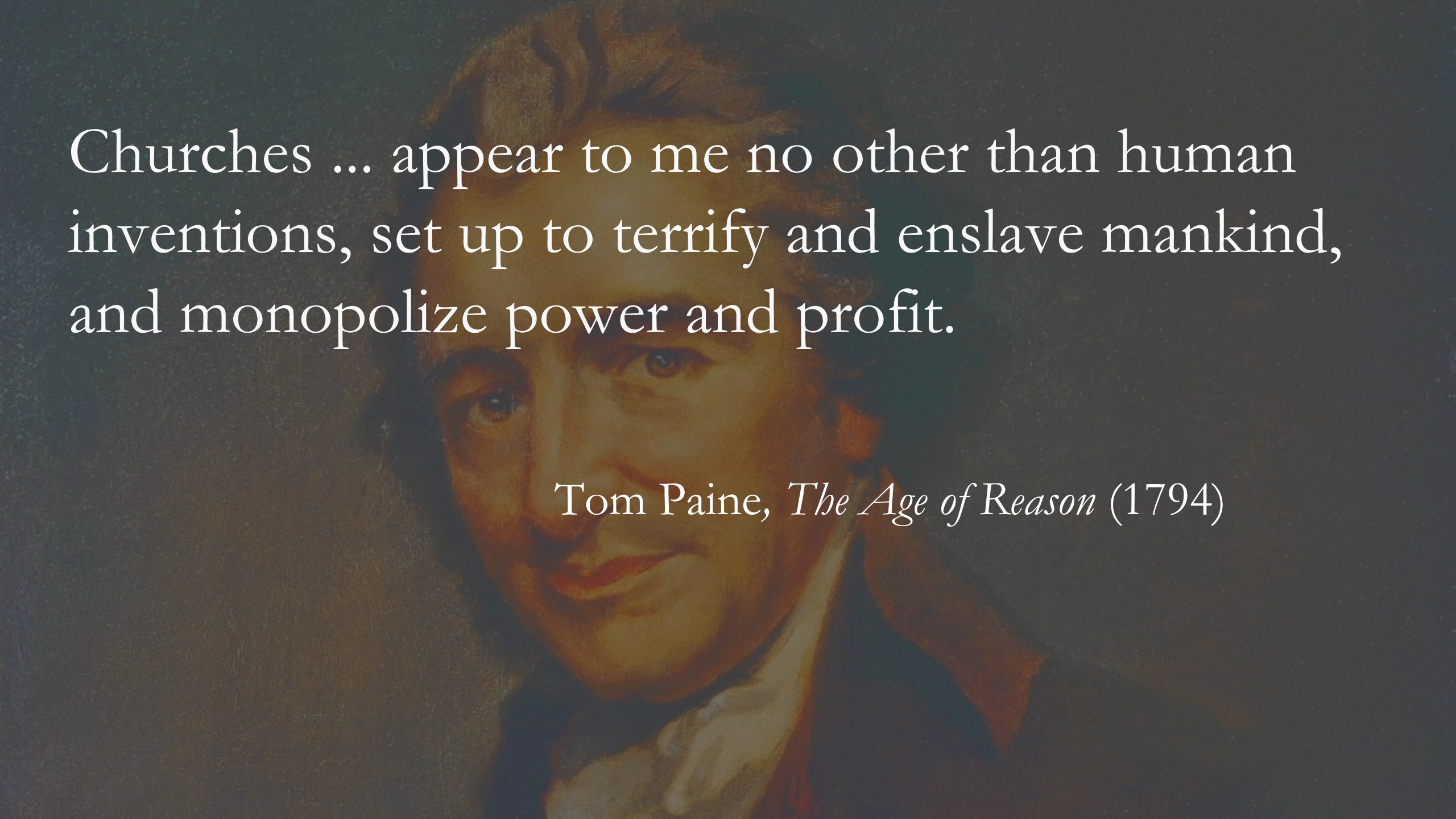




Tom Paine  
(1737-  
1809),  
author of  
*The Age of  
Reason*  
(1794)



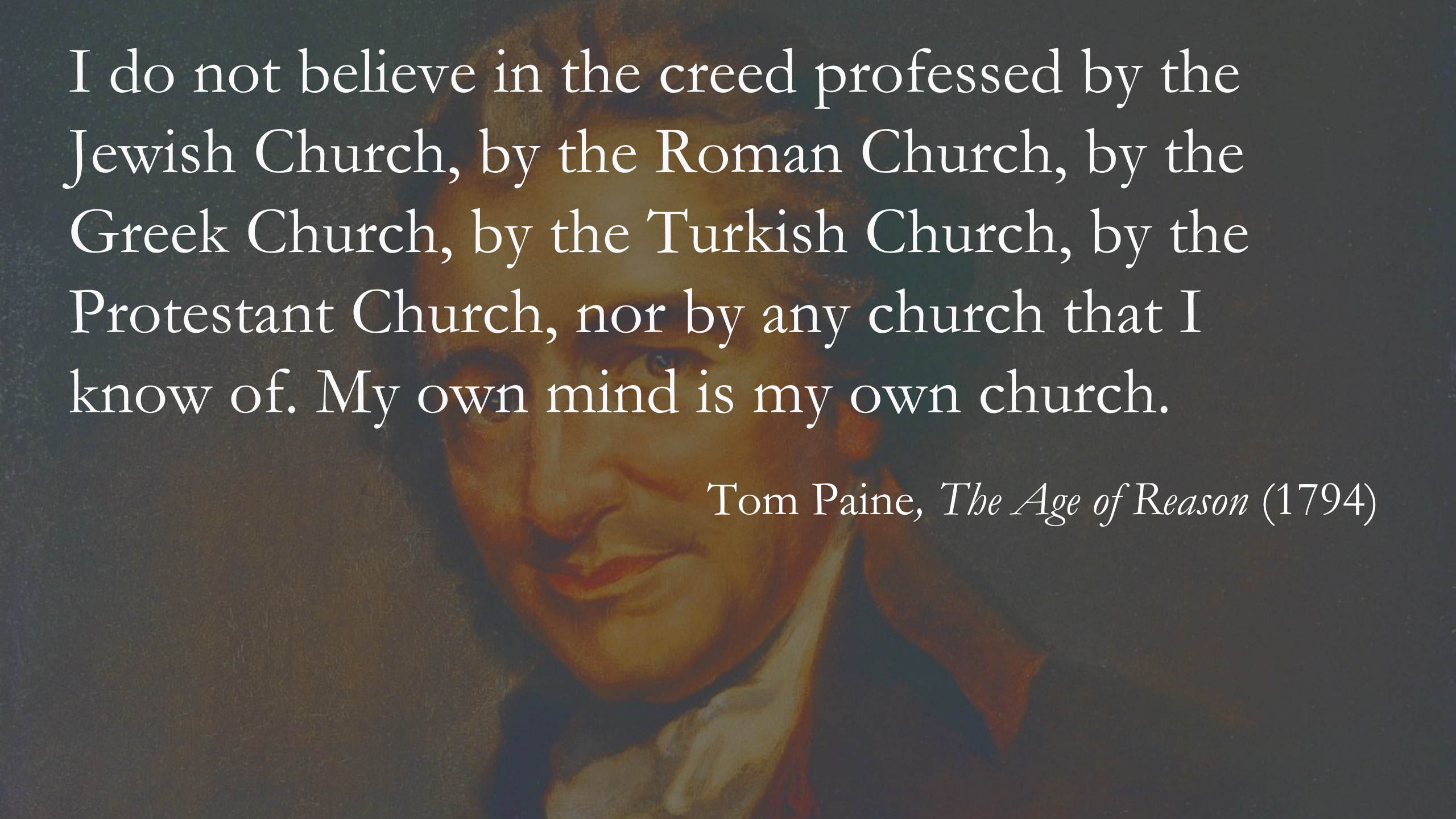


A portrait of Tom Paine, a man with light brown hair, looking slightly to the left with a faint smile. He is wearing a white cravat and a dark coat. The background is dark and textured.

Churches ... appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.

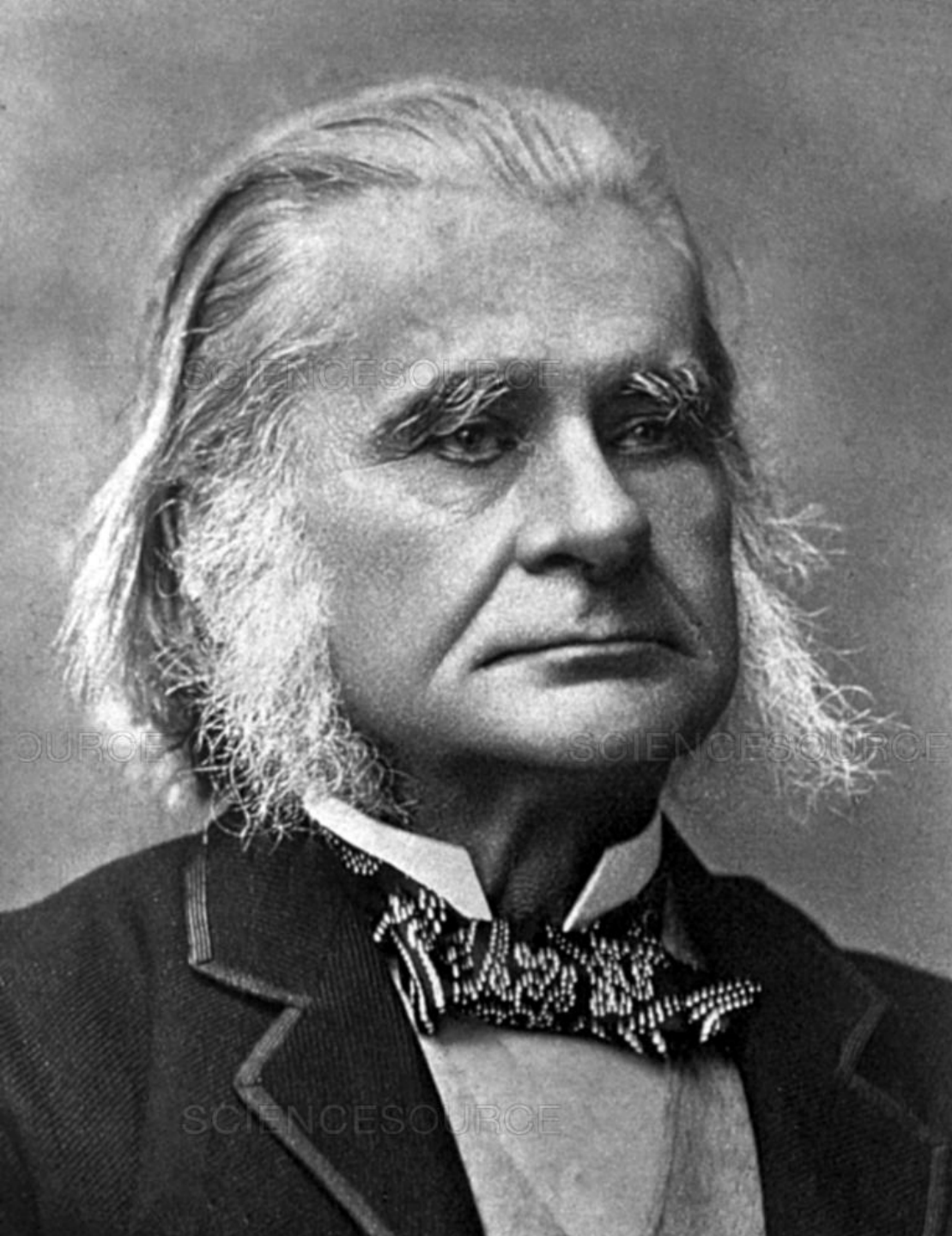
Tom Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794)



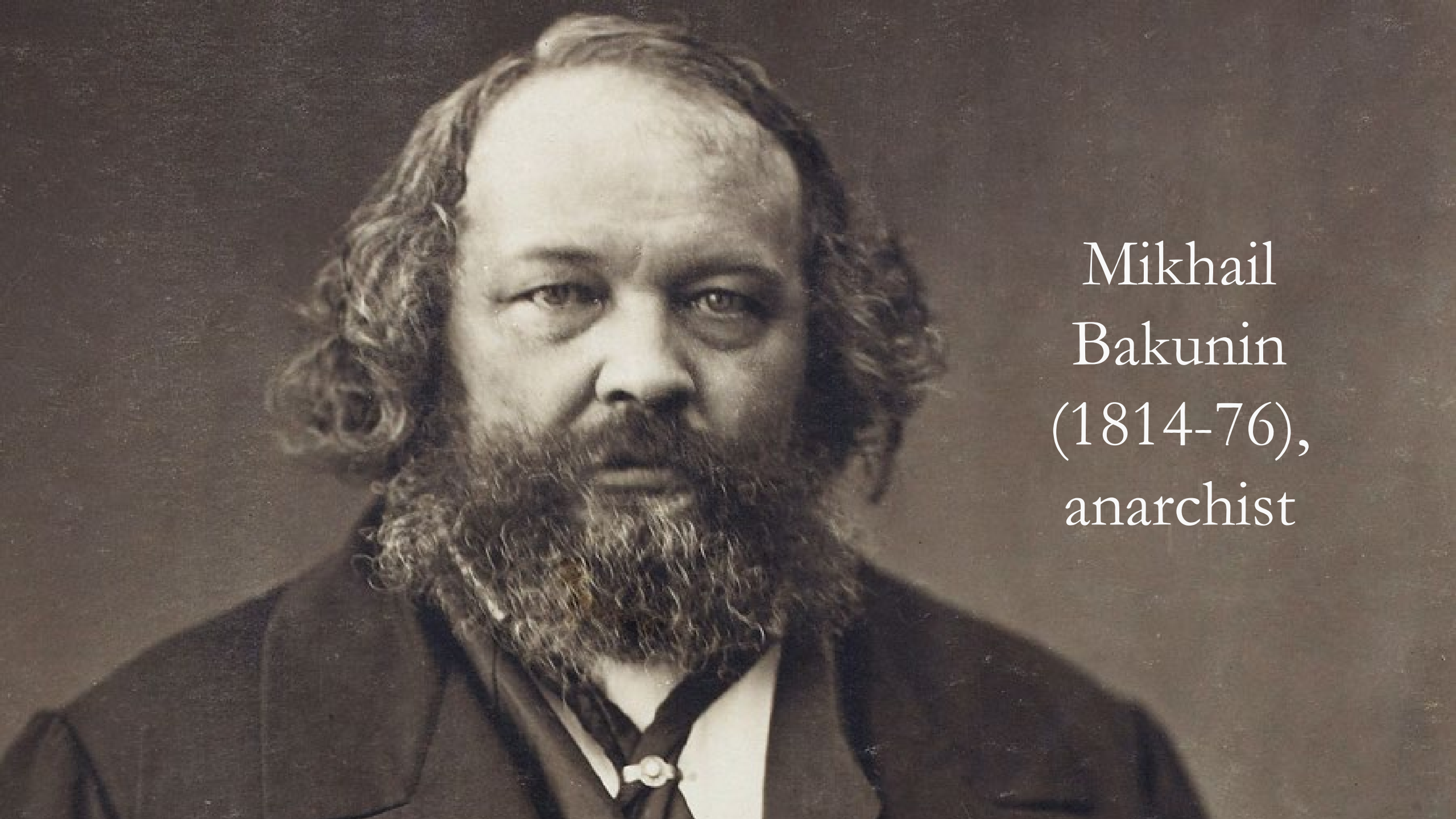
A portrait of Tom Paine, a man with a white cravat and a dark coat, looking slightly to the right. The portrait is overlaid with text.

I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish Church, by the Roman Church, by the Greek Church, by the Turkish Church, by the Protestant Church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

Tom Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794)



Thomas Huxley (1825-95),  
'Darwin's bulldog' and  
father of 'agnosticism'



Mikhail  
Bakunin  
(1814-76),  
anarchist

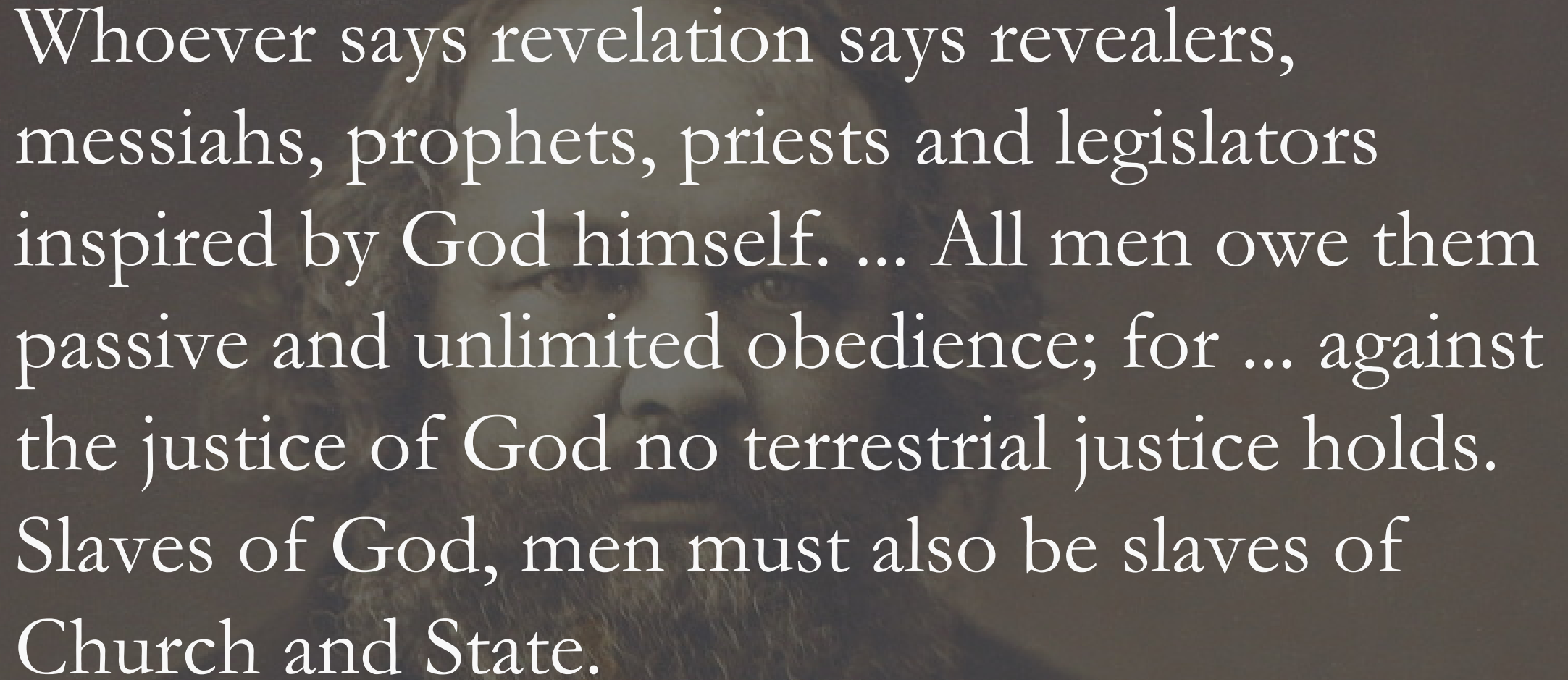


A portrait of Mikhail Bakunin, a man with a full, dark, curly beard and mustache, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark tie. The portrait is slightly faded and serves as the background for the text.

The very nature and essence of every religious system ... is *the impoverishment, enslavement and annihilation of humanity for the benefit of divinity.*

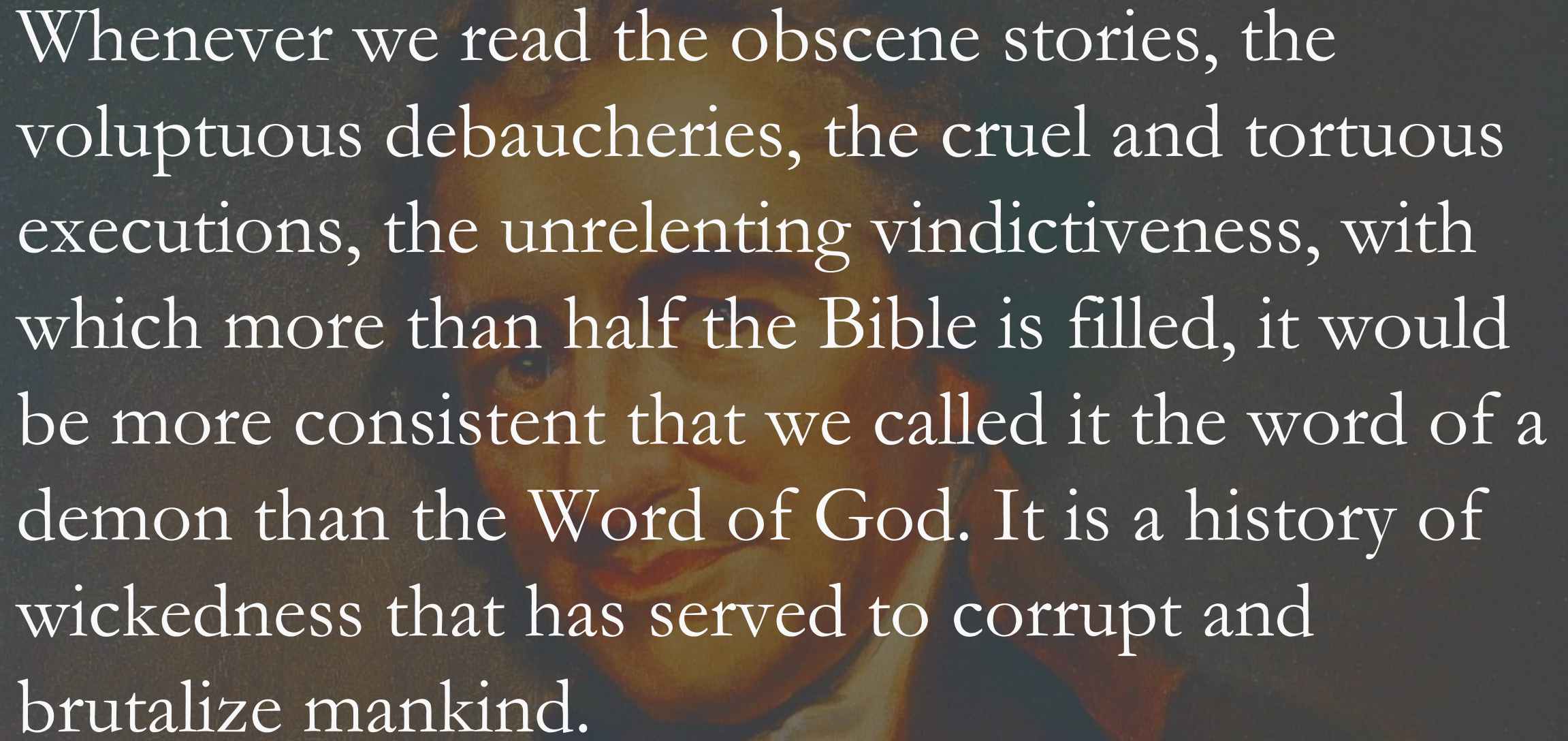
Mikhail Bakunin, 'God and the State' (1871)



A faded, sepia-toned portrait of Mikhail Bakunin serves as the background for the text. He is shown from the chest up, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark cravat. He has a full, dark beard and mustache, and his hair is dark and slightly wavy. His expression is serious and contemplative, looking slightly to the right of the viewer.

Whoever says revelation says revealers,  
messiahs, prophets, priests and legislators  
inspired by God himself. ... All men owe them  
passive and unlimited obedience; for ... against  
the justice of God no terrestrial justice holds.  
Slaves of God, men must also be slaves of  
Church and State.

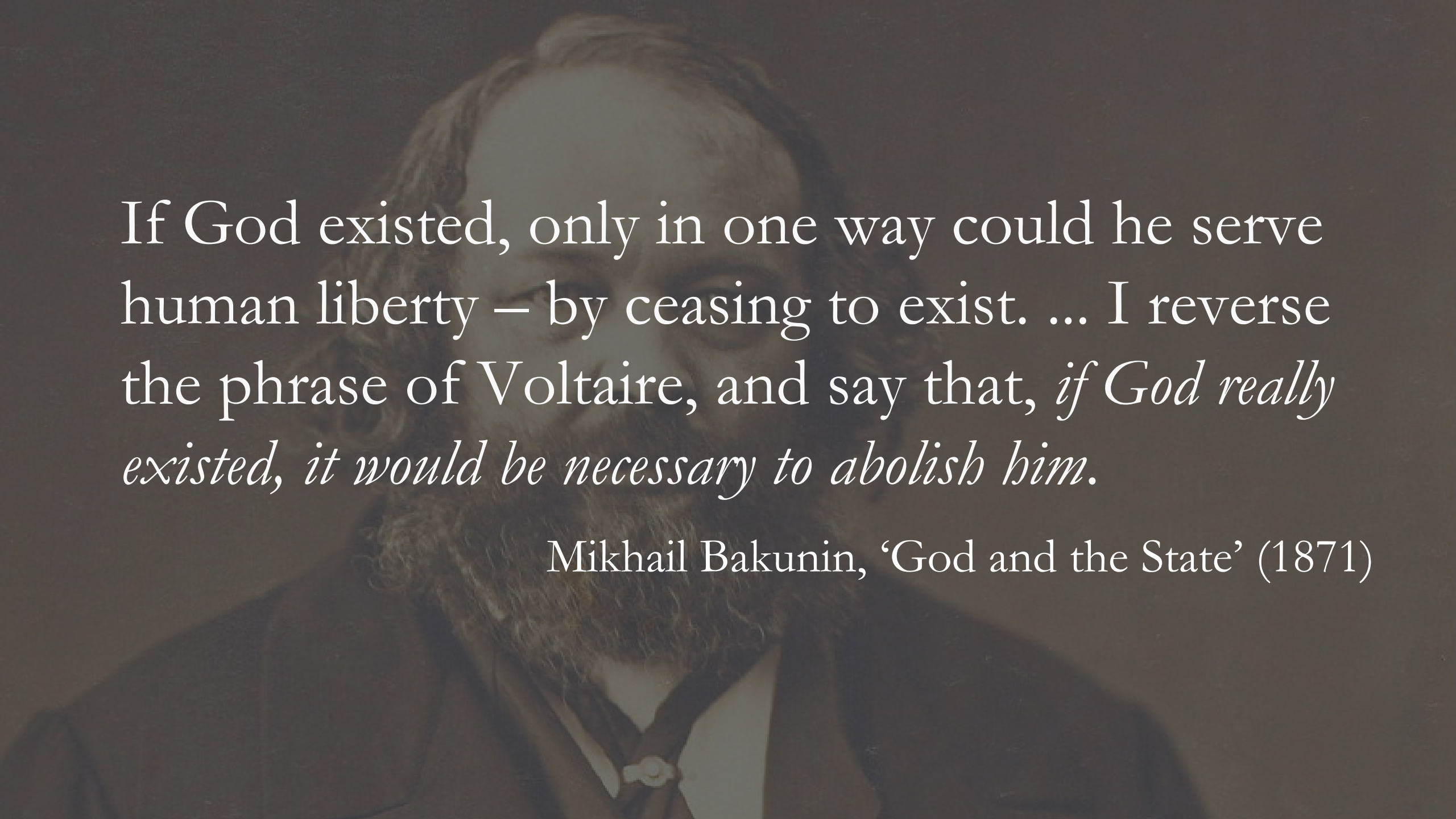
Mikhail Bakunin, 'God and the State' (1871)



Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and tortuous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon than the Word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind.

Tom Paine, *The Age of Reason* (1794)



A faded, sepia-toned portrait of Mikhail Bakunin serves as the background for the text. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a dark suit jacket over a white shirt and a dark cravat. He has a full, dark beard and mustache, and his hair is dark and slightly wavy. His expression is serious, and he is looking slightly to the right of the viewer.

If God existed, only in one way could he serve human liberty – by ceasing to exist. ... I reverse the phrase of Voltaire, and say that, *if God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him.*

Mikhail Bakunin, 'God and the State' (1871)

## II. Anxiety



I think, all my life I've believed, and then I die, and suddenly there's nothing. ... What, what will give me back my faith? ... How can it be proved, how can one be convinced? Oh, miserable me! ... I'm the only one who can't bear it. It's devastating, devastating!

Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

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THE RELIGIOUS  
ROOTS OF UNBELIEF  
FROM LUTHER TO MARX

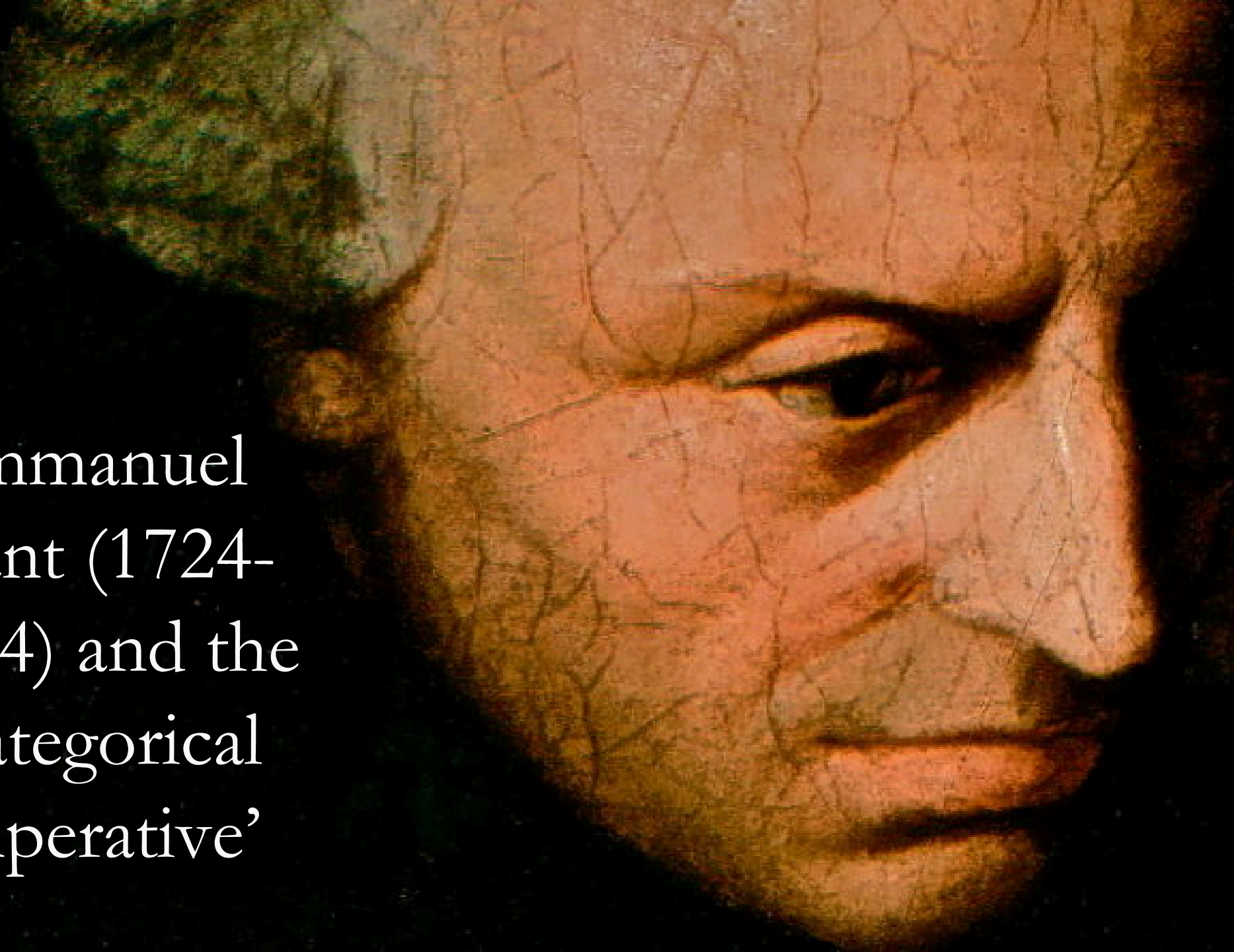
# *The* SOUL *of* DOUBT

DOMINIC ERDOZAIN

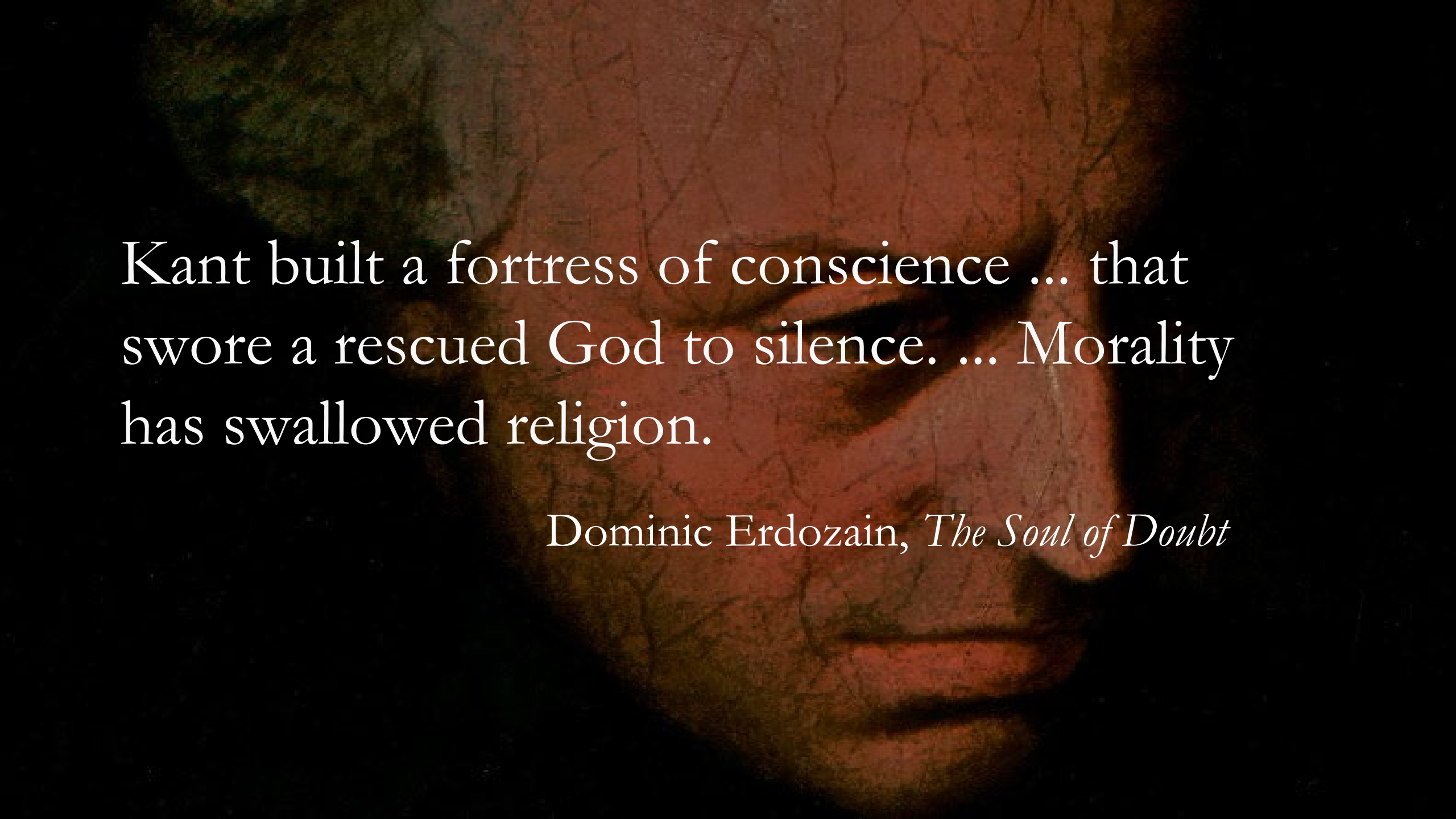
The universal theologian, that is, the true philosopher, sees that it is contradictory for nature to act on particular or single views.

Voltaire, *Dictionnaire Philosophique* (1764)

Immanuel  
Kant (1724-  
1804) and the  
'categorical  
imperative'







Kant built a fortress of conscience ... that  
swore a rescued God to silence. ... Morality  
has swallowed religion.

Dominic Erdozain, *The Soul of Doubt*

If the suffering of children goes to make up the sum of suffering needed to buy truth, then I assert beforehand that the whole of truth is not worth such a price.

Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

Imagine that you yourself are building the edifice of human destiny with the object of making people happy in the finale, of giving them peace and rest at last, but for that you must inevitably, and unavoidably torture just one tiny creature, that same child who was beating her chest with her little fist, and raise your edifice on the foundation of her unrequited tears – would you agree to be the architect on such conditions?

Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

It is not that I don't accept God, Alyosha, I just most respectfully return him the ticket.

Ivan Karamazov, in Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880)

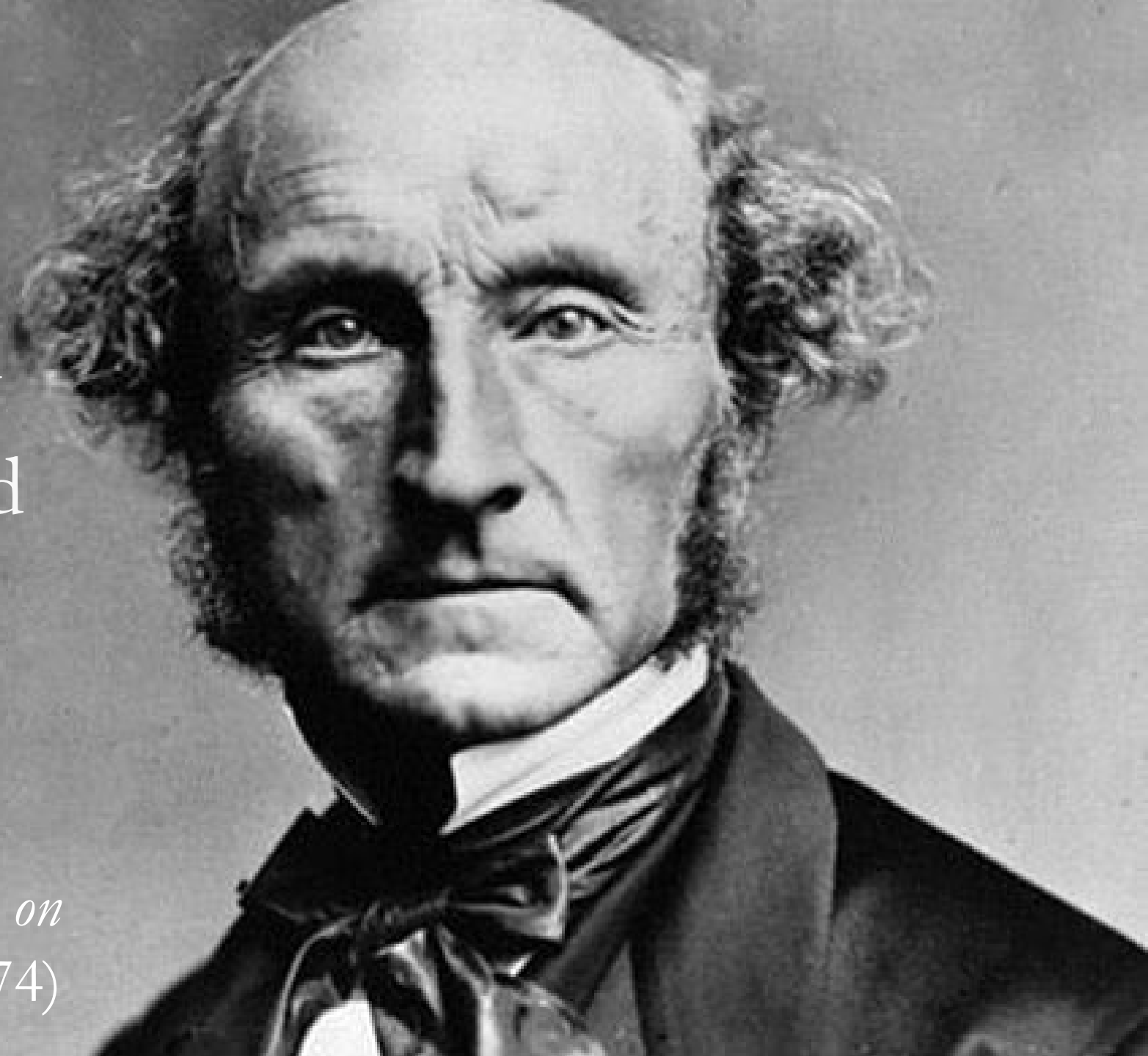
# Sceptics for Jesus

- Spinoza ...
- ... Voltaire ...
- ... Jefferson ...
- ... Paine ...
- ... even John Stuart Mill



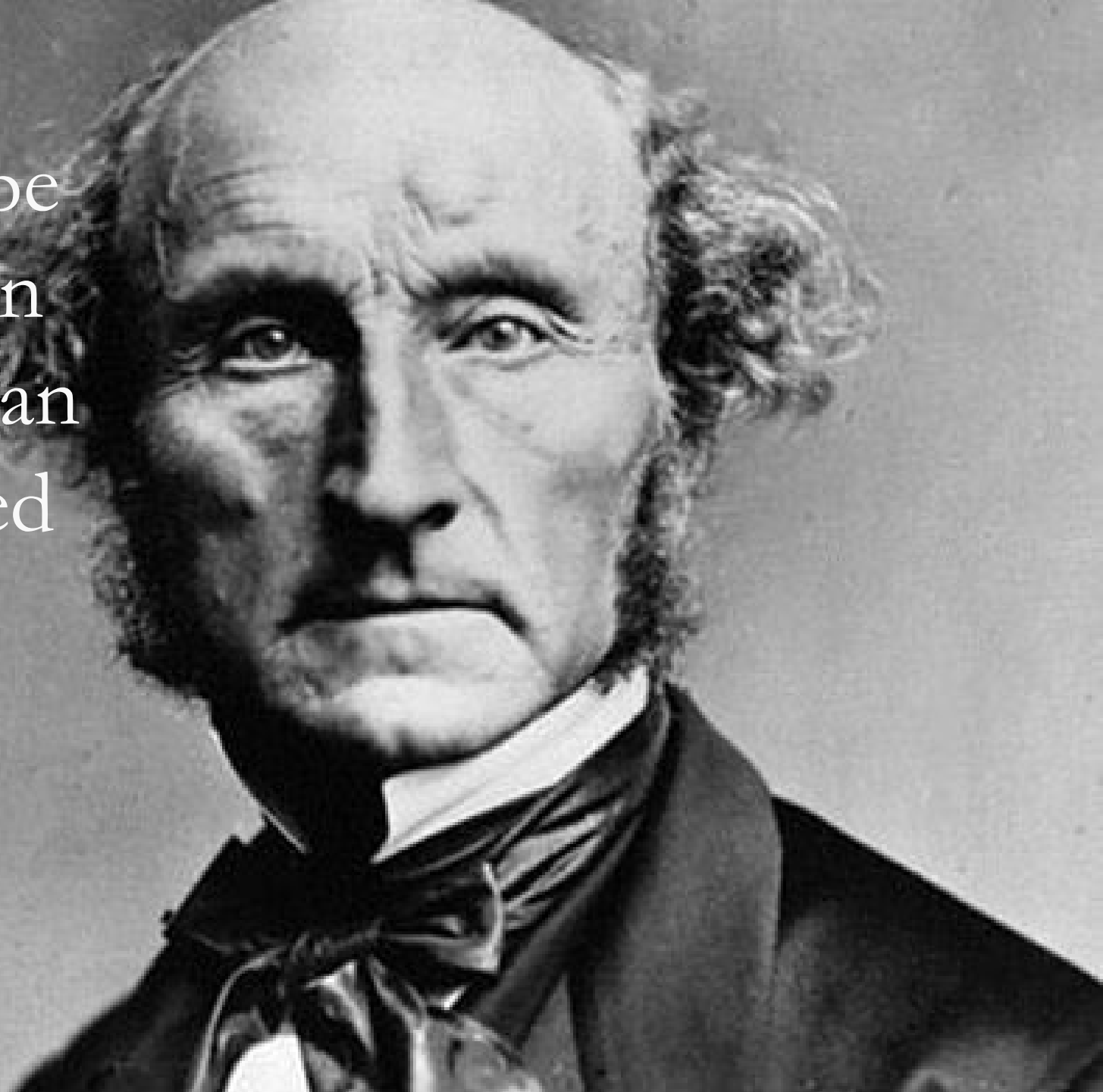
The authentic  
sayings of Jesus of  
Nazareth ... are  
surely in ... harmony  
with the intellect and  
feelings of every  
good man or  
woman.

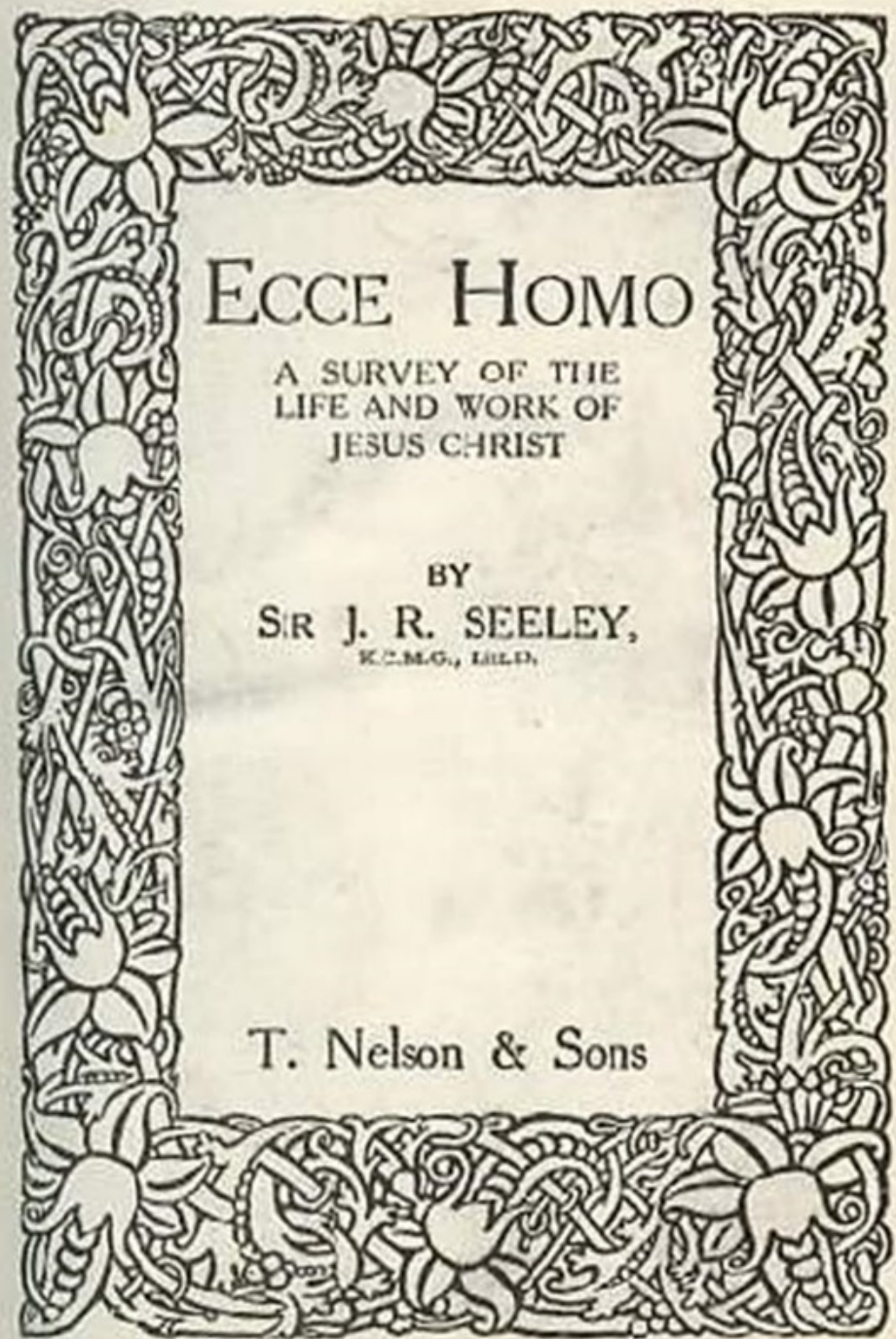
John Stuart Mill, *Essays on  
Religion* (1874)



That they should be forgotten, or cease to be operative on the human conscience, while human beings remain cultivated or civilized, may be pronounced, once for all, impossible.

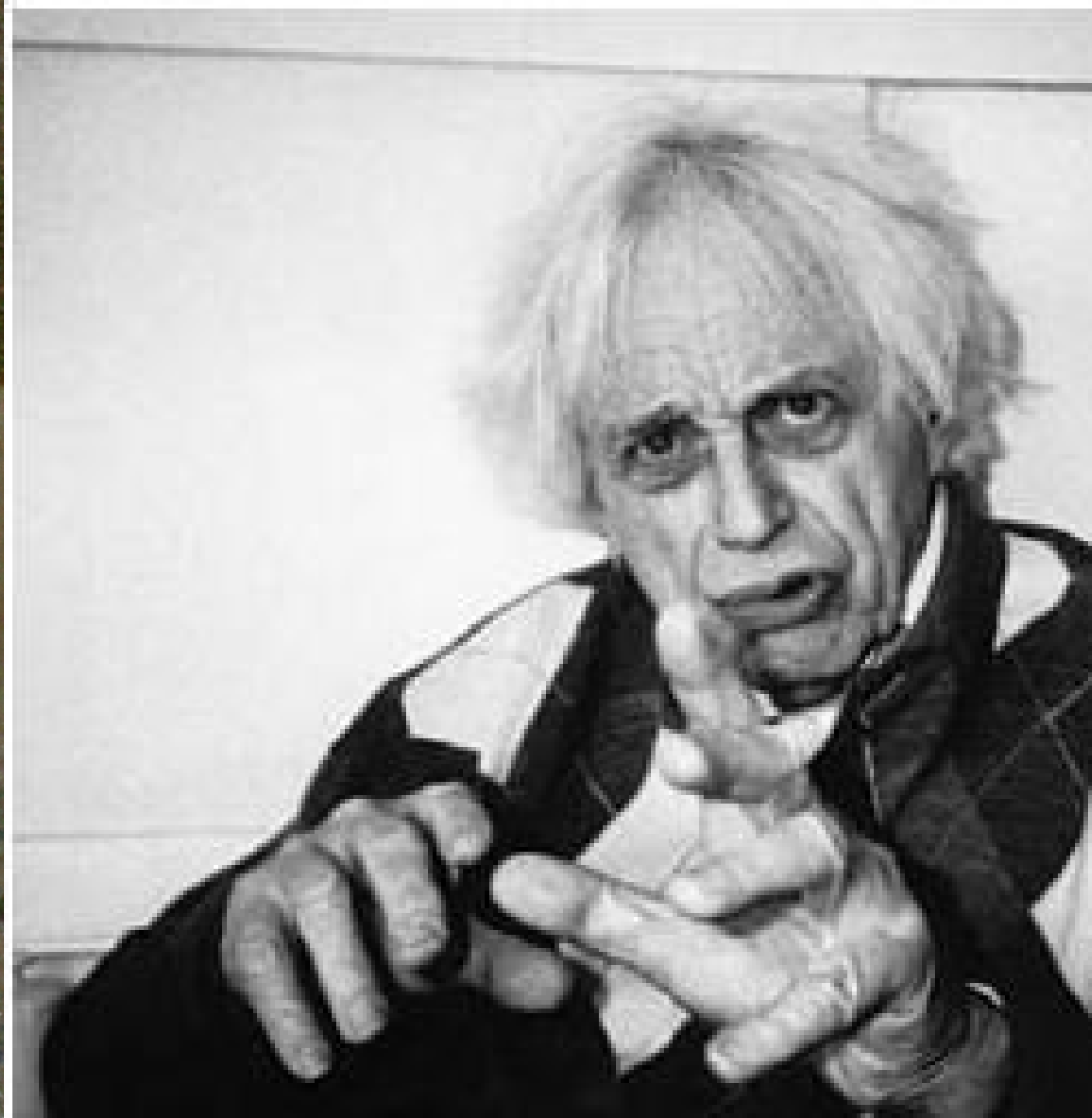
John Stuart Mill, *Essays on Religion* (1874)





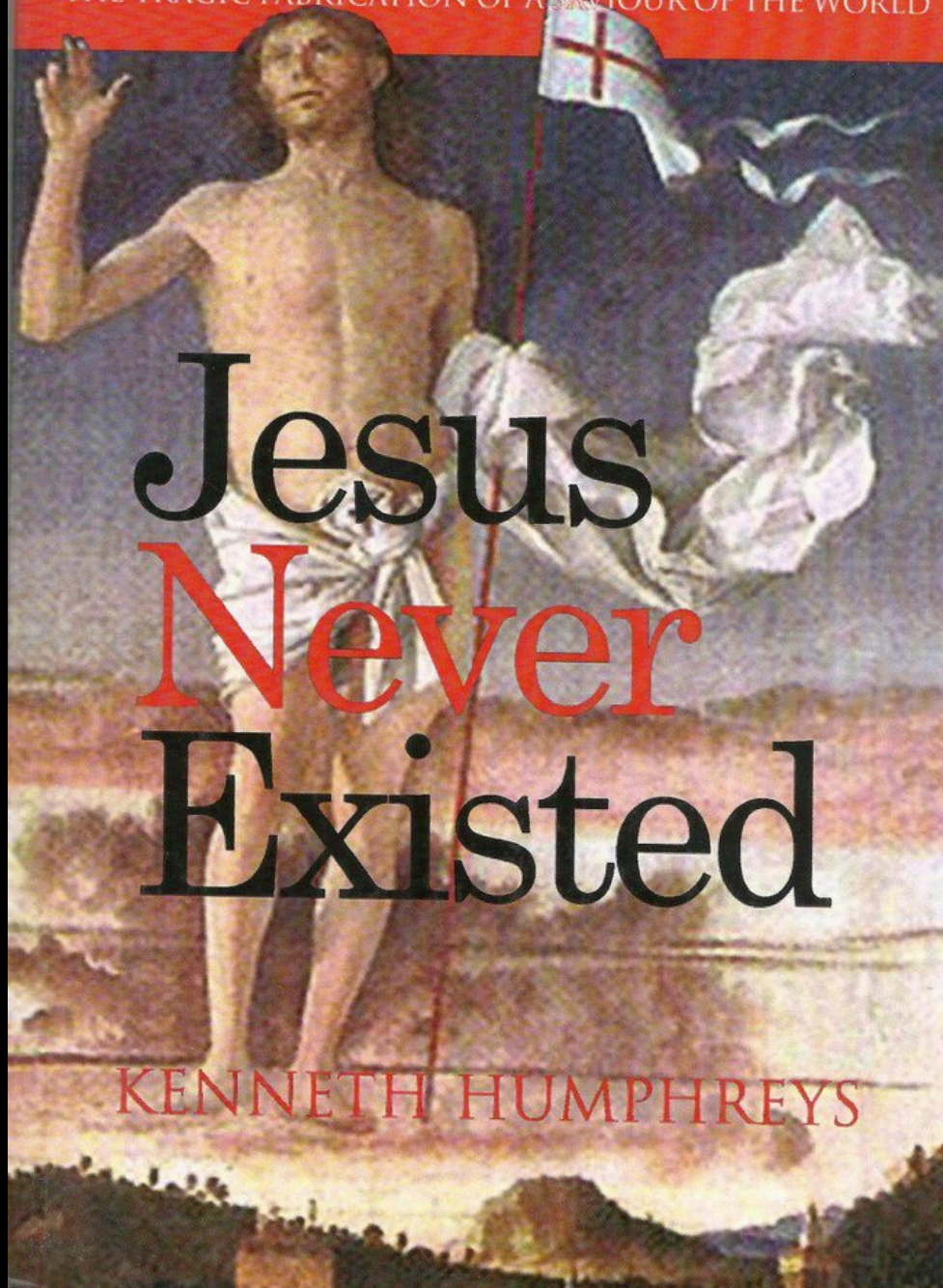
John Seeley, *Ecce Homo*  
(1865), first of a spree of  
Victorian 'lives' of Jesus







THE TRAGIC FABRICATION OF A SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD



# Jesus Never Existed

KENNETH HUMPHREYS



# CAESAR'S MESSIAH

THE ROMAN CONSPIRACY  
TO INVENT JESUS

JOSEPH ATWILL



PHILIP

PULLMAN

THE GOOD MAN

JESUS 

AND THE

SCOUNDREL

 CHRIST

Religion has become part of the ethos of American life to such a degree that overt anti-religion is all but inconceivable.

Will Herberg, *Protestant – Catholic – Jew* (1955)

# What has *not* caused modern secularisation?

- ‘A direct frontal assault on religion’
- Fresh intellectual breakthrough



# BECOMING ATHEIST

Humanism and the Secular West

Callum G. Brown

BLOOMSBURY



Without exception ... they were 'humanists' before they discovered the term. Humanism was neither a philosophy nor an ideology that they had learned or read about and then adopted. There was no act of conversion, no training or induction. ... A humanist condition precedes being a self-conscious humanist.

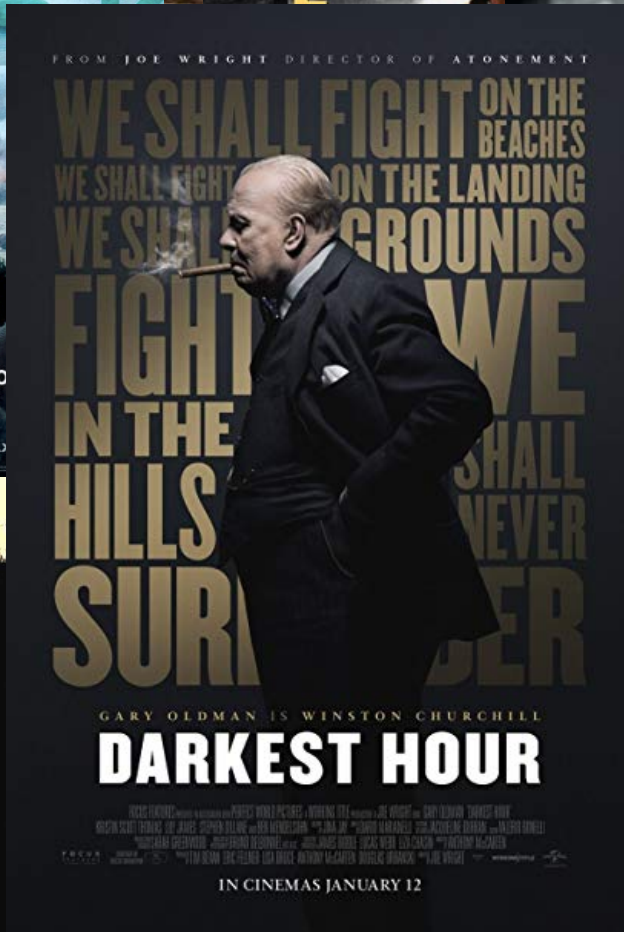
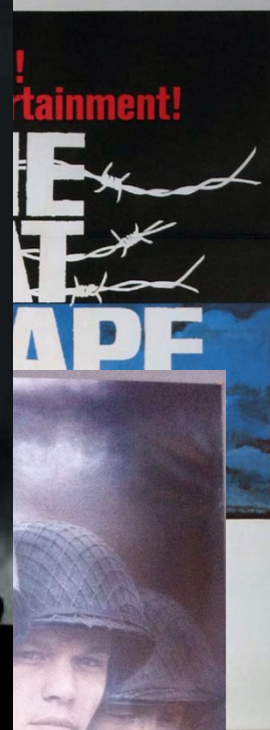
Callum Brown, *Becoming Atheist* (2017)

Further research may come to discern more of the detail of the humanist condition – ideas of goodness, fulfilment or tolerance coming from within human experience, not from authority, supernaturalism or prefigured cultural discourses. Reason alone may construct humanism.

Callum Brown, *Becoming Atheist* (2017)











*'Nazis ... I hate these guys.'*







J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
THE  
FELLOWSHIP  
OF THE RING



J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
GEORGE ALLEN  
AND UNWIN

J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
THE  
TWO  
TOWERS

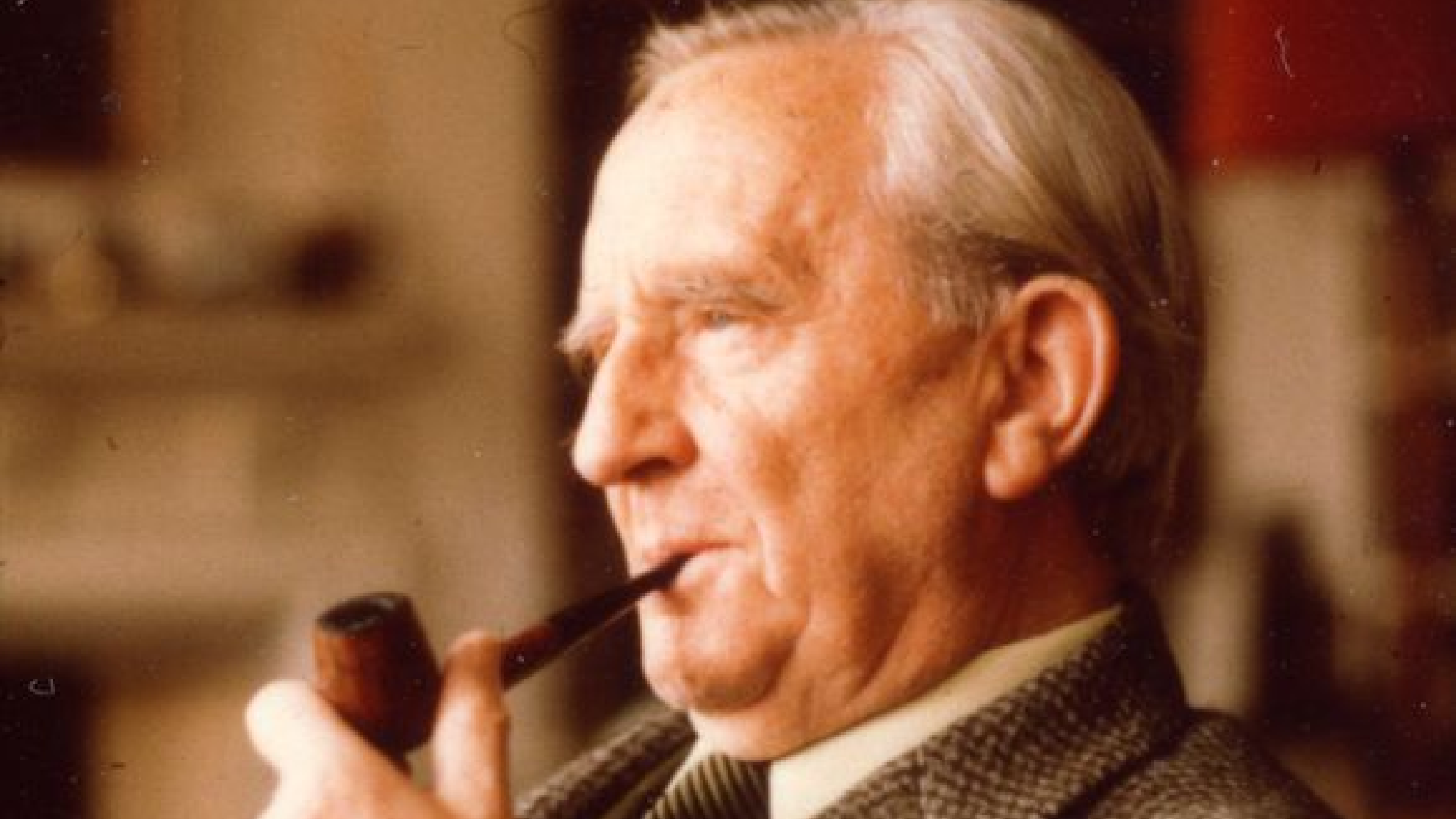


J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
GEORGE ALLEN  
AND UNWIN

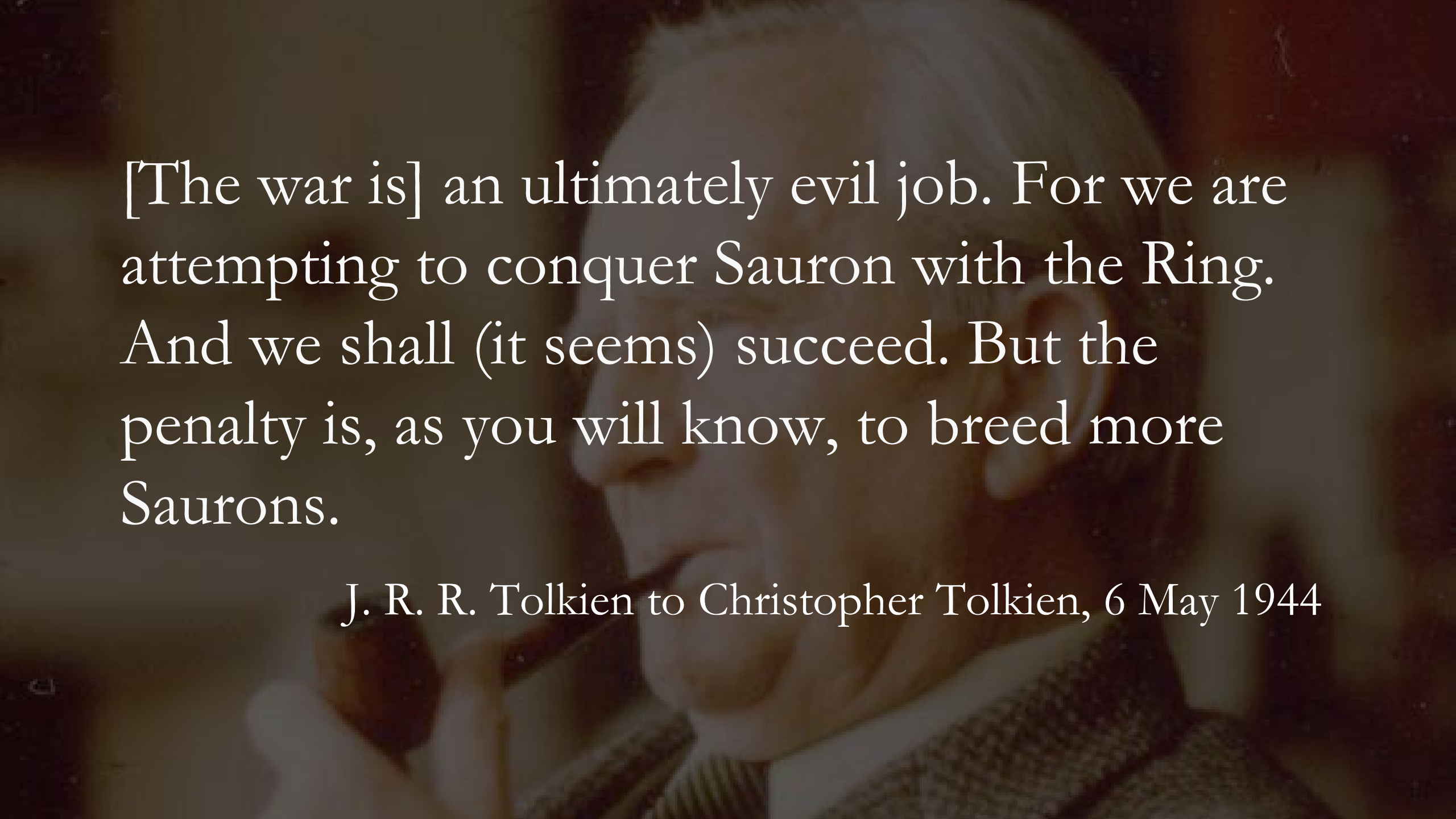
J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
THE  
RETURN OF  
THE KING



J. R. R. TOLKIEN  
GEORGE ALLEN  
AND UNWIN







[The war is] an ultimately evil job. For we are attempting to conquer Sauron with the Ring. And we shall (it seems) succeed. But the penalty is, as you will know, to breed more Saurons.

J. R. R. Tolkien to Christopher Tolkien, 6 May 1944









# Two conclusions

- Humanism is not a passing aberration ...
- ... but nor is it a stable new reality

*Jesus, Hitler  
and the Abolition of God*

Alec Ryrie