

## The afterlife

### 1 The social threat of atheists

John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration* (Hackett, 1983), 51.

“... those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the Being of a God. Promises, Covenants, and Oaths, which are the Bonds of Humane Society, can have no hold upon an Atheist. The taking away of God, tho but even in thought, dissolves all ...”

Hugo Grotius. *The Rights of War and Peace* [1625] (London, 1738), p. 445.

4. It is my Judgment therefore, that those who first<sup>9</sup> attempt to destroy these Notions, ought, on the Account of human Society in general, which they thus, without any just Grounds, injure, <sup>10</sup> to be restrained, as in all well-governed Communities has been usual: It is what we read was practised towards <sup>11</sup> *Diagoras of Melos*, and towards the <sup>12</sup> *Epicureans*, who were expelled and banished all Cities that had any Regularity and good Manners amongst them. *Himerius*, an antient Rhetorician, in his Pleadings against *Epicurus*, <sup>13</sup> *Do you punish me then for my Opinion? No; but for your Impiety: You may propose your Sentiments, but you must not be impious.*

### 2 Hobbes on atheists

“He only is said to reign that governs his subjects by his word and by the promise of rewards to those that obey it, and by threatening with punishment that obey it not. Subjects, therefore, in the kingdom of God are not bodies inanimate, nor creatures irrational (because they understand no precepts as his), nor atheists, nor they that believe not that God has any care of the actions of mankind (because they acknowledge no word for his, nor have hope of his rewards, or fear of his threatenings.)” (*Leviathan* 31.2)

