

Reason, Faith, and Revolution – Reflections on the God Debate
by Terry Eagleton.
Yale University Press 2009.

Not so long ago the knights of fundamentalist secularism, Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, were riding high, pricking the bubbles of religious pretension right, left and centre; but more recently, as the debate surrounding religion and the spiritual inclination has become a little bit more measured the voices of others have come to the fore acting as a counterbalance to views that had achieved a great deal of publicity for the secularist cause.

Reason, Faith and Revolution, a book based on the Dwight H. Terry lectures given by Professor Terry Eagleton at Yale University in April 2008, is Eagleton's glorious response to the fulminations of the pair he memorably lumps together as 'Ditchkins' as well as containing his own reflections on religion and the spiritual inclination.

The book is divided into four lectures, entitled The Scum of the Earth, The Revolution Betrayed, Faith and Reason, Culture and Barbarism. Devotees of Terry Eagleton will be unsurprised to find material of the highest quality, the broadest erudition and the sharpest polemic within its 185 pages, some powerful and inspiring ideas and some truly memorable phrases.

Reason, Faith and Revolution is a marvellous addition to the God debate, both balanced and provocative and worthy of careful study. What I would have given to have been in the lecture theatre at Yale when they were delivered to see the audience response!

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh