The Turning of an Atheist

By MARK OPPENHEIMER

Unless you are a professional philosopher or a committed atheist, you probably have not heard of Antony Flew. Eighty-four years old and long retired, Flew lives with his wife in Reading, a medium-size town on the Thames an hour west of London. Over a long career he held appointments at a series of decent regional universities — Aberdeen, Keele, Reading — and earned a strong reputation writing on an unusual range of topics, from Hume to immortality to Darwin. His greatest contribution remains his first, a short paper from 1950 called “Theology and Falsification.” Flew was a precocious 27 when he delivered the paper at a meeting of the Socratic Club, the Oxford salon presided over by C. S. Lewis. Reprinted in dozens of anthologies, “Theology and Falsification” has become a heroic tract for committed atheists. In a masterfully terse thousand words, Flew argues that “God” is too vague a concept to be meaningful. For if God’s greatness entails being invisible, intangible and inscrutable, then he can’t be disproved — but nor can he be proved. Such powerful but simply stated arguments made Flew popular on the campus speaking circuit; videos from debates in the 1970s show a lanky man, his black hair professorially unkempt, vivisecting religious belief with an English public-school accent perfect for the seduction of American ears. Before the current crop of atheist crusader-authors — Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett, Christopher Hitchens — there was Antony Flew.

Flew’s fame is about to spread beyond the atheists and philosophers. HarperOne, an imprint of HarperCollins, has just released “There Is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind,” a book attributed to Flew and a co-author, the Christian apologist Roy Abraham Varghese. “There Is a God” is an intellectual’s bildungsroman written in simple language for a mass audience. It’s the first-person account of a preacher’s son who, away at Methodist boarding school, defied his father to become a teenage atheist, later wrote on atheism at Oxford, spent his life fighting for unbelief and then did an about-face in his old age, embracing the truth of a higher power. The book offers elegant, user-friendly descriptions of the arguments that persuaded Flew, arguments familiar to anyone who has heard evangelical Christians’ “scientific proof” of God. From the “fine tuning” argument that the laws of nature are too perfect to have been accidents to the “intelligent design” argument that human biology cannot be explained by evolution to various computations meant to show that probability favors a divine creator, “There Is a God” is perhaps the handiest primer ever written on the science (many would say pseudoscience) of religious belief.

Flew’s “conversion,” first reported in late 2004, has cast him into culture wars that he contentedly avoided his whole life. Although Flew still rejects Christianity, saying only that he now believes in “an intelligence that explains both its own existence and that of the world,”
evangelicals are understandably excited. For them, Flew has become very useful, very quickly. In late 2006, Flew was among the signers of a letter to Tony Blair asking that intelligent design be included in the British science curriculum. Flew’s fame has reached even to small-town Pennsylvania, where in 2005 Judge John E. Jones cited Flew in his landmark decision prohibiting the teaching of intelligent design in the town of Dover. Referring to a publication of the Dover School Board, Jones wrote that “the newsletter all but admits that I.D. is religious by quoting Anthony [sic] Flew, described as a ‘world famous atheist who now believes in intelligent design.’ ”

But is Flew’s conversion what it seems to be? Depending on whom you ask, Antony Flew is either a true convert whose lifelong intellectual searchings finally brought him to God or a senescent scholar possibly being exploited by his associates. The version you prefer will depend on how you interpret a story that began 20 years ago, when some evangelical Christians found an atheist who, they thought, might be persuaded to join their side. In the intellectual tug of war that ensued, Flew himself — a continent away, his memory failing, without an Internet connection — had no idea how fiercely he was being fought over or how many of his acquaintances were calling or writing him just to shore up their cases. For a time, Flew hardly spoke to the media, leaving evangelicals and atheists to trade interpretations of his rare, oracular pronouncements. Was he now a believer in intelligent design? In Christianity? In some vague, intelligent “life force”? With the publication of his new book, Flew is once again talking, and this summer I traveled to England to speak with him. But as I discovered, a conversation with him confuses more than it clarifies. With his powers in decline, Antony Flew, a man who devoted his life to rational argument, has become a mere symbol, a trophy in a battle fought by people whose agendas he does not fully understand.

THE STARTLING ARTICLE appeared on Dec. 9, 2004. “A British philosophy professor who has been a leading champion of atheism for more than a half-century has changed his mind,” Richard Ostling of The Associated Press wrote. “He now believes in God — more or less — based on scientific evidence and says so on a video released Thursday. At age 81, after decades of insisting belief is a mistake, Antony Flew has concluded that some sort of intelligence or first cause must have created the universe. A superintelligence is the only good explanation for the origin of life and the complexity of nature, Flew said in a telephone interview from England.”

The “video released Thursday” was “Has Science Discovered God?” a DVD of a May 2004 conversation, held in a television studio at New York University, between Flew and two popular advocates of theism, the Orthodox Jewish physicist Gerald Schroeder and the Christian philosopher John Haldane. There are long stretches of Schroeder, sitting behind what looks like an anchorman’s desk, lecturing an attentive Flew on matters like the unlikelihood that an infinite number of monkeys typing randomly would ever produce a Shakespearean sonnet. (He is rebutting Stephen Hawking, who argues in “A Brief History of Time” that nature, given enough time, can perform the wondrous feats that credulous people attribute to God.) Schroeder also talks about the Cambrian explosion of animal species hundreds of millions of years ago, which he says happened too suddenly to lack some supernatural guidance. Haldane chimes in to argue that certain human capabilities, like language and reproduction, can be explained only by a higher intelligence. Meanwhile, a narrator, talking as photographs of Werner Heisenberg and Albert Einstein appear on screen and Vivaldi plays in the background, says things like, “Many of
the greatest scientists of all time” believed that “the intelligence of the universe, its laws, points to an intelligence that has no limitation.”

When at last Flew speaks, his diction is halting, in stark contrast to Schroeder and Haldane, both younger men, forceful and assured. Under their prodding, Flew concedes that the Big Bang could be described in Genesis; that the complexity of DNA strongly points to an “intelligence”; and that the existence of evil is not an insurmountable problem for the existence of God. In short, Flew retracts decades’ worth of conclusions on which he built his career. At one point, Haldane is noticeably smiling, embarrassed (or pleased) by Flew’s acquiescence. After one brief lecture from Schroeder, arguing that the origin of life can be seen as a form of revelation, Flew says, “I don’t see any way to meet that argument at the moment.”

The last segment of the DVD is a short infomercial for “The Wonder of the World,” a book by Roy Abraham Varghese, who, it happens, helped pay for the DVD’s production, and financed the participants’ trips to New York. Varghese is a 49-year-old American business consultant of Indian ancestry, a practitioner of the Eastern Catholic Syro-Malankara rite and a tireless crusader for (and financial backer of) those who believe that scientific research helps verify the existence of God. Through the Institute for MetaScientific Research, his one-man shop in Dallas, he sponsors conferences and debates, and it was at a Dallas conference in 1985 that Varghese first met Flew.

“I’ve been involved with him for 20 years or more,” Varghese told me in August. Since meeting Flew, Varghese “had him down to Dallas several times,” talked with him often and periodically sent him readings in theism. When Varghese convened the N.Y.U. discussion, he said he hoped that Schroeder and Haldane, both skillful advocates for belief in God, might carry Flew further in the direction Varghese had been leading him. “I knew that he was in that frame of mind — that there was no naturalistic explanation for the world,” Varghese said. “But at that event, he went further, saying the only explanation was that there was a God.”

It was Varghese who sent the DVD to the media, for which he was rewarded, in early December 2004, with articles from the A.P.’s Ostling and from Fox News, ABC News and a host of religious news wires. On Dec. 16, Varghese contributed an op-ed article to The Dallas Morning News that read, “Last week, The Associated Press broke the news that the most famous atheist in the academic world . . . now accepts the existence of God.” Varghese did not mention that the AP “broke” the news thanks to his own press release, which accompanied the DVD (which he helped pay for) of the conversation (which he paid for).

Varghese was not the only Christian to befriend Flew. “We’ve been friends for 22 years,” Gary Habermas told me in late July. Habermas, a professor at Liberty University, founded by Jerry Falwell, met Flew at Varghese’s Dallas confab in 1985; later that year, he invited Flew to Liberty University to debate the Resurrection. “Since then, Tony and I have dialogued five times, three times on the Resurrection,” Habermas said, using Flew’s nickname. “I don’t know how many letters we’ve written back and forth — dozens. I haven’t talked to Tony for about two months now, but we talk every couple months on the phone.” Habermas told me that in his letters, Flew tested shifting reasons for his newfound belief in God, sometimes saying he believed in intelligent design, other times saying only Aristotle’s notion of a “prime mover” was persuasive.
Indeed, Flew has never offered a detailed explanation of what he believes, preferring to use terms like “Aristotelian deist” that connote both an assent to a higher intelligence and a resistance to the idea of a personal god.

As Flew’s profile in the Christian world rose, he was also courted by Biola University, the conservative Christian school outside Los Angeles. On May 11, 2006, Biola awarded Flew the second Phillip E. Johnson Award for Liberty and Truth, named for the author of “Darwin on Trial.” At the Biola ceremony, Flew mocked the revealed religion of his audience and flaunted his allegiance to deism: “The deist god, unlike the god of the Jewish, Christian or, for heaven’s sake, the Islamic revelation, is neither interested in nor concerned about either human beliefs or human behavior,” he told the small crowd. Jim Underdown, who was there reporting for a skeptics’ think tank, said he was surprised that the Christians would want him. But the Christians, it turned out, were not concerned.

THE NARRATIVE TOLD by Flew’s Christian friends — and in some of Flew’s own pronouncements — has a certain coherence. About 20 years ago, they say, intrigued by the science of the Big Bang, Flew began to pay respectful attention to Christian apologists (and to the Jewish Schroeder) who believe that science now supports a sudden creation story that resembles the one in Genesis. These men promised Flew that new scientific research, far from being the enemy of revealed religion, argued for a God. And, in fact, a number of esteemed scientists were, in the mid-80s, talking about their interest in religion.Some, for example, accepted evolution as a fact but asked if it might serve a divine purpose, or they accepted the scientific method but tried to apply it to theological questions. And many of these God-curious scientists, like the mathematician John Barrow, the physicists Paul Davies and John Polkinghorne and the chemist Arthur Peacocke, were English. (Polkinghorne and Peacocke were ordained in the Church of England.) This group has since grown in prominence, and its attempts to create a nexus of science and religion were very influential on the men who, in turn, influenced Flew. Mindful of even greater men, from Newton to Einstein, whose words can be read to endorse the possibility of a divine creator, Flew at last joined their ranks. Flew had always possessed a restless, even eccentric intellect, and this was just another turn in his career, albeit a surprising one.

Or perhaps not so surprising, for Flew never considered himself a dogmatic atheist. Even when he traveled the world arguing against religious belief, he was never an angry polemicist; a preacher’s son, he had none of the bewildered animosity that characterizes many nonbelievers. Always respectful of his opponents, he exhibited an unusual curiosity about their beliefs. Flew’s first book, in 1953, was about the possibility (which he ultimately rejected) of paranormal phenomena like ESP. Flew also had a longstanding affinity for conservative politics — he was an adviser to Margaret Thatcher — that made him unusually approachable for some Christians. In the light of his natal comfort with religious folk and his agreeable politics, Flew’s eventual alliance with Christians doesn’t seem so strange.

But what is a coherent narrative from one perspective is strikingly incomplete from another. For while Habermas and Varghese, Schroeder and Haldane were urging Flew toward theism, an atheist from America was fighting back. They sent Flew articles — and he sent Flew articles. They thought they were winning — but so did he.
Richard Carrier, a 37-year-old doctoral student in ancient history at Columbia, is a type recognizable to anyone who has spent much time at a chess tournament or a sci-fi convention or a skeptics’ conference. He is young, male and brilliant, with an obsessive streak both admirable and a little debilitating. In the time that he hasn’t finished his dissertation, Carrier has self-published a 444-page magnum opus called “Sense and Goodness Without God: A Defense of Metaphysical Naturalism.” (According to its Amazon.com description, the book offers “a complete worldview . . . covering every subject from knowledge to art, from metaphysics to morality, from theology to politics.”) He is a contributor to Skeptical Inquirer magazine and the former editor of the online community Secular Web. And in August 2004 Carrier turned his formidable intellect, and sense of purpose, toward Flew.

Carrier first wrote to Flew in 2001, when an early, unfounded rumor on the Web claimed that Flew had become a believer. This time, however, Carrier was hearing louder rumblings: a positive review that Flew wrote of Varghese’s book promoting theism; kind words Flew supposedly had for Gerald Schroeder; an e-mail message from the Christian apologist William Lane Craig, stating that Flew told a third party that he had seen sound arguments for the existence of God. Carrier did not yet know about the N.Y.U. meeting or the forthcoming DVD, but he already had cause for concern. In a long letter, Carrier asked Flew to confirm or deny what he hoped were calumnies on Flew’s good name, and he provided a Web address for his own article refuting Schroeder.

On Sept. 3, in his small, sufficiently legible hand, Flew replied. (Carrier posted short excerpts from Flew’s letters online, but he has sent me computer scans of the entire correspondence.)

“Thank you for your letter, which reached me today,” Flew wrote. “I have for a long time been inclined to believe in an Aristotelian God who (or which) does not intervene in the Universe. . . . I am still thinking about the implications of, in particular, Schroeder’s books,” which Varghese had sent him. “If I ever become competent to read anything off the Internet . . . I will be eager to read your objections to Schroeder. I have met him, and I was much impressed.”

Carrier was not satisfied. He replied immediately, helpfully enclosing “a lot of reading material for your benefit,” including his Web article on Schroeder, a more scholarly article that he wrote for the journal Biology & Philosophy and — the pièce de抵抗 — a four-page questionnaire for Flew to fill out. The questions ranged from the relevant, if barbed (“Should we believe claims open to scientific evaluation that are not accepted by the vast majority of the scientific community?”) to the invasive and rather trivial (“Have you attended Quaker meetings, and is there anything about Quaker religious doctrine that you find attractive?”).

On Oct. 19, Flew sent back the completed questionnaire. In his answers, he wrote that he agreed with Schroeder that Genesis anticipated later scientific findings, but he retained his distaste for the Old Testament God, who makes “threats of eternal torture.” That God should not, Flew wrote, be confused with the “noninterfering God of the people called Deists — such as Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin.”

Carrier replied with a letter of 2,000 words that moves from solicitousness (“I am writing this time to convey the concern of myself and numerous colleagues”) to brute candor (“There is
absolutely no scientific basis for your position”) to self-regard (“I have also enclosed an excerpt from my forthcoming book summarizing the current science on this subject”). Above all, though, the tone is one of exasperation. Flew, he sees, has been taken to dinner by the theists, has been fed questionable science and swallowed it with pleasure. Carrier is fighting a rear-guard action, via snail mail, from a continent away.

“But to understand this,” Carrier pleads, “you must examine the most current science on this subject, not what theists tell you and not what scientists were saying 20 years ago. Everything has changed. Don’t you agree it is your intellectual responsibility to get up to date on this, before making any decisions regarding what to believe? It worries us that you may be shirking this responsibility.”

Amazingly, this epistolary pummeling worked. When Flew wrote back on Dec. 24, two weeks after the Associated Press story, he had changed his mind. “I simply but apparently mistakenly believed that Schroeder — a man whom I was told had taught at M.I.T. and was now working at the Weizmann Institute in Jerusalem — would be up to date. Clearly he was not.” As if in payment for Carrier’s multiple enclosures, Flew sent an enclosure of his own: an order form for an anti-European Union book called “England Our England.”

Further letters brought further backpedaling. In his letter of Jan. 2, 2005, Flew says that if the “so confident, atheist polemicist Richard Dawkins” tells him that Schroeder is wrong, he will admit that Schroeder is wrong. But he assumes that Dawkins accepts Schroeder’s arguments, since Dawkins “made no reference to your article.” It’s truly odd: Flew says he believes that since Dawkins failed to cite the graduate student Richard Carrier attacking Schroeder, then Schroeder’s scholarship is likely sound. In other words, if Flew was misled, he can blame Dawkins, who holds an Oxford professorship in the “public understanding of science” yet failed to inform his public that Schroeder was a crank. Nonetheless, Flew promises Carrier, he is prepared to reject Schroeder. Flew once believed that Genesis might be scientifically accurate, but “as it is not, that’s that. I am rather sorry.”

Flew’s second thoughts did not stop at Schroeder. At about the same time, according to Paul Kurtz, whose freethinking Prometheus Books published several of Flew’s works, Flew expressed doubts about Roy Varghese. “He’s told us that he’s sorry that he trusted Roy,” Kurtz told me. “He placed his confidence in him, thought he was a leading scientist.” Flew’s misgivings also prompted him to revise an essay that he was writing for Kurtz, an introduction to Prometheus’s new 2005 edition of his 1966 book “God and Philosophy.” In an early draft of the introduction, which Flew shared with Carrier, and Carrier with me, Flew identifies himself as a deist, but in the published version, that passage has been deleted. In his letter to Carrier of Feb. 13, 2005, Flew gives the American credit for stopping him at the brink of belief: “Thanks above all to your advice, I have been able to stop the press at Prometheus, and they will be incorporating a radically rewritten new Introduction.”

Flew sent three further letters to Carrier. In the first, dated Feb. 19, he again thanks Carrier for his help with the introduction, then adds, “I am since yesterday resolved to make no more statements about religion for publication.” And in the last, on June 22, Flew retracts, rather poignantly, praise he had offered for one of Gary Habermas’s books: “The statement which I
most regret making during the last few months was the one about Habermas’s book on the alleged resurrection of Jesus bar Joseph. I completely forgot Hume’s to my mind decisive argument against all evidence for the miraculous. A sign of physical decline.”

**TWO YEARS LATER.** Flew’s doubts have disappeared, and the philosopher has a reinvigorated faith in his theistic friends. In his new book, he freely cites Schroeder, Haldane and Varghese. And the author who two years ago was forgetting his Hume is, in the forthcoming volume, deeply read in many philosophers — John Leslie, John Foster, Thomas Tracy, Brian Leftow — rarely if ever mentioned in his letters, articles or books. It’s as if he’s a new man.

In August, I visited Flew in Reading. His house, sparsely furnished, sits on a small plot on a busy street, hard against its neighbors. It could belong to a retired government clerk or to a career military man who at last has resettled in the mother country. Inside, it seems very English, with the worn, muted colors of a BBC production from the 1970s. The house may lack an Internet connection, but it does have one very friendly cat, who sat beside me on the sofa. I visited on two consecutive days, and each day Annis, Flew’s wife of 55 years, served me a glass of water and left me in the sitting room to ask her husband a series of tough, indeed rather cruel, questions.

In “There Is a God,” Flew quotes extensively from a conversation he had with Leftow, a professor at Oxford. So I asked Flew, “Do you know Brian Leftow?”

“No,” he said. “I don’t think I do.”

“Do you know the work of the philosopher John Leslie?” Leslie is discussed extensively in the book.

Flew paused, seeming unsure. “I think he’s quite good.” But he said he did not remember the specifics of Leslie’s work.

“Have you ever run across the philosopher Paul Davies?” In his book, Flew calls Paul Davies “arguably the most influential contemporary expositor of modern science.”

“I’m afraid this is a spectacle of my not remembering!”

He said this with a laugh. When we began the interview, he warned me, with merry self-deprecation, that he suffers from “nominal aphasia,” or the inability to reproduce names. But he forgot more than names. He didn’t remember talking with Paul Kurtz about his introduction to “God and Philosophy” just two years ago. There were words in his book, like “abiogenesis,” that now he could not define. When I asked about Gary Habermas, who told me that he and Flew had been friends for 22 years and exchanged “dozens” of letters, Flew said, “He and I met at a debate, I think.” I pointed out to him that in his earlier philosophical work he argued that the mere concept of God was incoherent, so if he was now a theist, he must reject huge chunks of his old philosophy. “Yes, maybe there’s a major inconsistency there,” he said, seeming grateful for my insight. And he seemed generally uninterested in the content of his book — he spent far more time talking about the dangers of unchecked Muslim immigration and his embrace of the anti-E.U. United Kingdom Independence Party.
As he himself conceded, he had not written his book.

“This is really Roy’s doing,” he said, before I had even figured out a polite way to ask. “He showed it to me, and I said O.K. I’m too old for this kind of work!”

When I asked Varghese, he freely admitted that the book was his idea and that he had done all the original writing for it. But he made the book sound like more of a joint effort — slightly more, anyway. “There was stuff he had written before, and some of that was adapted to this,” Varghese said. “There is stuff he’d written to me in correspondence, and I organized a lot of it. And I had interviews with him. So those three elements went into it. Oh, and I exposed him to certain authors and got his views on them. We pulled it together. And then to make it more reader-friendly, HarperCollins had a more popular author go through it.”

So even the ghostwriter had a ghostwriter: Bob Hostetler, an evangelical pastor and author from Ohio, rewrote many passages, especially in the section that narrates Flew’s childhood. With three authors, how much Flew was left in the book? “He went through everything, was happy with everything,” Varghese said.

Cynthia DiTiberio, the editor who acquired “There Is a God” for HarperOne, told me that Hostetler’s work was limited; she called him “an extensive copy editor.” “He did the kind of thing I would have done if I had the time,” DiTiberio said, “but editors don’t get any editing done in the office; we have to do that in our own time.”

I then asked DiTiberio if it was ethical to publish a book under Flew’s name that cites sources Flew doesn’t know well enough to discuss. “I see your struggle and confusion,” she said, but she maintained that the book is an accurate presentation of Flew’s views. “I don’t think Tony would have allowed us to put in anything he was not comfortable with or familiar with,” she said. “I mean, it is hard to tell at this point how much is him getting older. In my communications with him, there are times you have to say things a couple times. I’m not sure what that is. I wish I could tell you more. . . We were hindered by the fact that he is older, but it would do the world a disservice not to have the book out there, regardless of how it was made.”

MANY AUTHORS DON'T WRITE their own books. Some don’t even read them: sports fans will remember when the basketball player Charles Barkley complained that he was misquoted in his own autobiography. It could be that two years ago, when Varghese started writing Flew’s book, Flew was a fuller partner in the process than he remembers (the section on Flew’s childhood could hardly have been written without his cooperation). And perhaps he was recently reading those philosophers whose names he now does not recognize. Two years ago, he might have had a fruitful conversation with Brian Leftow, a man he does not remember. Two years ago, he and Gary Habermas might indeed have been good friends.

But it seems somewhat more likely that Flew, having been intellectually chaperoned by Roy Varghese for 20 years, simply trusted him to write something responsible. Varghese had done him so many kindesses. He introduced Flew to Gerald Schroeder and John Haldane, and, I learned, he flew to England to chauffeur Flew to meetings with Leftow and the Christian philosopher Richard Swinburne (although when Leftow and Swinburne appear in the book, the
conversations are described as if Varghese were not present). Varghese also gave Flew adventures, jetting him to Dallas and New York, putting him in a DVD documentary, getting his name in the papers. If at times Flew could be persuaded, by a letter or a phone call from an American atheist, that Varghese and his crew were not the eminent authorities on science they made themselves out to be, he was always happy to change his mind back. These Christians were kind and attentive, and they always seemed to have the latest research.

To believe that Flew has been exploited is not to conclude that his exploiters acted with malice. If Flew in his dotage was a bit gullible, Varghese had a gullibility of his own. An autodidact with no academic credentials, Varghese was clearly thrilled to be taken seriously by an Oxford-trained philosopher; it may never have occurred to him that so educated a mind could be in decline. Habermas, too, speaks of Flew with a genuine reverence and seems proud of the friendship.

Intellectuals, even more than the rest of us, like to believe that they reach conclusions solely through study and reflection. But like the rest of us, they sometimes choose their opinions to suit their friends rather than the other way around. Which means that Flew is likely to remain a theist, for just as the Christians drew him close, the atheists gave him up for lost. “He once was a great philosopher,” Richard Dawkins, the Oxford biologist and author of “The God Delusion,” told a Virginia audience last year. “It’s very sad.” Paul Kurtz of Prometheus Books says he thinks Flew is being exploited. “They’re misusing him,” Kurtz says, referring to the Christians. “They’re worried about atheists, and they’re trying to find an atheist to be on their side.”

They found one, and with less difficulty than atheists would have guessed. From the start, the believers’ affection for Antony Flew was not unrequited. When Flew met Christians who claimed to have new, scientific proof of the existence of God, he quickly became again the young graduate student who embarked on a study of the paranormal when all his colleagues were committed to strict rationalism. He may, too, have connected with the child who was raised in his parents’ warm, faithful Methodism. Flew’s colleagues will wonder how he could sign a petition to the prime minister in favor of intelligent design, but it becomes more understandable if the signatory never hated religious belief the way many philosophers do and if he never hated religious people in the least. At a time when belief in God is more polarizing than it has been in years, when all believers are being blamed for religion’s worst excesses, Antony Flew has quietly switched sides, just following the evidence as it has been explained to him, blissfully unaware of what others have at stake.

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On Sunday November 4, 2007, The New York Times Weekend Magazine featured an article, The Turning of an Atheist, written by Mark Oppenheimer. It describes the conversion of arch-atheist, philosopher, Antony Flew into a believer. In the article I am cited 21 times by name as the arch-offender in the abominable act. Flew had authored an article in the mid-1950's, "Theology and Falsification" and presented this thesis at the Socratic Club of Oxford University, presided over by none less than C. S. Lewis. Many felt it was a brilliant and invincible proof for a godless world. Over the