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Faith and Reason. The relation of faith to reason is of utmost importance for the thinking believer. The problem of how to combine these aspects of personhood has existed from the earliest apologists. Justin Martyr , Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian all struggled. Augustine made the first serious attempt to relate the two, but the most comprehensive treatment came at the end of the medieval period when Christian intellectualism flowered in the work of Thomas Aquinas.

Relation of Faith to Reason. Aquinas held that faith and reason intertwine. Faith uses reason, and reason cannot succeed in finding truth without faith.

Reason Cannot Produce Faith. Reason accompanies, but does not cause, faith. Faith is *consent without inquiry* in that faith's assent is not caused by investigation. Rather, it is produced by God. Commenting on Ephesians 2:8–9 , Aquinas contended that "free will is inadequate for the act of faith since the contents of faith are above reason. . . . That a man should believe, therefore, cannot occur from himself unless God gives it" (Aquinas, *Ephesians,* 96; unless noted, all citations in this article are from works by Thomas Aquinas). Faith is a gift of God, and no one can believe without it.

Nonetheless, "this does not prevent the understanding of one who believes from having some discursive thought of comparison about those things which he believes" (*On Truth,* 14.A1.2). Such discursive thought, or reasoning from premises to conclusions, is not the *cause* of the assent of faith, but it can and should accompany it (ibid., 14.A1.6). Faith and reason are parallel. One does not cause the other because "faith involves *will* (freedom) and reason doesn't coerce the will" (ibid.). A person is free to dissent, even though there may be convincing reasons to believe.

As a matter of tactical approach in apologetics, if the authority of Scripture is accepted (faith), appeal can be made to it (reason). "Thus, against the Jews we are able to argue by means of the Old Testament, while against heretics we are able to argue by means of the New Testament. But Mohammedans [*see* ISLAM] and the pagans accept neither the one nor the other. . . . We must, therefore, have recourse to the natural reason, to which all men are forced to give their assent" (*Summa Theologica* , 1a.2.2).

However, some Christian truths are attainable by human reason, for example, that God exists and is one. "Such truths about God have been proved demonstratively by the philosophers, guided by the light of the natural reason" (ibid., 1a.3.2)

Three Uses of Reason. Reason or philosophy can be used in three ways, Aquinas says:

1.   It demonstrates the "preambles of faith" (that God exists, that we are his creatures . . .; *see* COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT ; GOD, EVIDENCE FOR).

2.   It analyzes teachings of philosophers in order to reveal corresponding concepts in Christian faith. Aquinas gives the example of Augustine's *On the Trinity* , which draws on philosophy to help explain the Trinity.

3.   It opposes attacks against faith from logic (*Gentiles,* 1.9).

Reason can be used to prove natural theology, which studies the existence and nature of one God. It can be used to *illustrate* supernatural theological concepts, such as the Trinity and the Incarnation (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF). And it can be used to refute false theologies (*De Trinitate,* 2.3). The apologist directs the person to accept two kinds of truth about divine things and to destroy what is contrary to truth. The person is directed to the truths of natural theology by the investigation of the reason and to the truths of supernatural theology by faith.

So to make the first kind of divine truth known, we must proceed through demonstrative arguments. However,

since such arguments are not available for the second kind of divine truth, our intention should not be to convince our adversary by ar guments: It should be to answer his arguments against the truth; for, as we have shown, the natural reason cannot be contrary to the truth of faith. The sole way to overcome an adversary of divine truth is from the authority of Scripture—an authority divinely confirmed by miracles. For that which is above the human reason we believe only because God has revealed it. Nevertheless, there are certainly likely [probable] arguments that should be brought forth in order to make divine truth known. [*Gentiles* , 1.9; *see* MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF]

God's existence is self-evident absolutely (in itself) but not relatively (to us) (ibid., 1.10–11; *see* FIRST PRINCIPLES). Hence, in the final analysis, one must receive *by faith* those things that can be known by reason, as well as those things that lie above reason. Intellectual assent that lacks faith cannot have certitude, for human reason is notoriously suspect when it comes to spiritual matters. Consequently, "it was necessary for divine truth to be delivered by way of faith, being told to them as it were, by God Himself Who cannot lie" (*Summa Theologica,* 2a2ae.1, 5.4).

Divine Authority. Aquinas did not believe that reason provides the basis for believing in God. It can prove *that* God exists, but it cannot convince an unbeliever to believe *in* God.

Reason Prior to Faith. We may believe (assent without reservation) in something that is neither self-evident nor deduced from it by a movement of the will. However, this does not mean that reason plays no prior role to belief. We judge a revelation to be worthy of belief "on the basis of evident signs or something of the sort" (ibid., 2a2ae.1, 4. ad 2).

Reason inquires about what is to be believed before it believes in it. "Faith does not involve a search by natural reason to prove what is believed. But it does involve a form of inquiry unto things by which a person is led to belief, e.g. whether they are spoken by God and confirmed by miracles" (ibid., 2a2ae.2, 1, reply). Demons are not willingly convinced by the evidence that God exists but are intellectually forced by confirming signs to the fact that what the faithful believe is true. Yet they cannot truly be said to *believe* (*On Truth,* 14.9. ad 4).

The Testimony of the Spirit. In order to believe in God one must have the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit (*see* HOLY SPIRIT, ROLE IN APOLOGETICS). For "one who believes does have a sufficient motive for believing, namely the authority of God's teaching, confirmed by miracles, and—what is greater—the inner inspiration [*instinctus*] of God inviting him to believe" (*Summa Theologica,* 2a2ae.6.1). The Holy Spirit uses two causes to stimulate voluntary faith. The persuasion may be from without, for example, a miracle that is witnessed. Or persuasion may be from within. The first cause is never enough for one inwardly to assent to the things of faith. The assent of faith is caused by God as he moves the believer inwardly through grace. Belief is a matter of the will, but the will needs to be prepared by God "to be lifted up to what surpasses nature" (ibid., 2a2ae.2, 9. ad 3).

Reason in Support of Faith. Commenting on the use of *reason* in 1 Peter 3:15 , Aquinas argued that "human reasoning in support of what we believe may stand in a two-fold relation to the will of the believer." First, the unbeliever may not have the will to believe unless moved by human reason. Second, the person with a will ready to believe loves the truth, thinks it out, and takes to heart its evidence. The first, unbelieving will may come to a faith of sorts, but there will be no merit in it, because belief does not extend far beyond sight. The second person also studies the human reasoning, but it is a meritorious work of faith (ibid., 2a2ae.2, 10).

Positive Evidence. Faith is supported by, though not based on, probable evidence. "Those who place their faith in this truth, however, 'for which the human reason offers no experimental evidence,' do not believe foolishly, as though 'following artificial fables' " (2 Peter 1:16). Rather, "It reveals its own presence, as well as the truth of its teaching and inspiration, by fitting arguments; and in order to confirm those truths that exceed natural knowledge, it gives visible manifestations to works that surpass the ability of all nature." The kind of positive evidence that Aquinas used included such things as raising the dead, miracles, and the conversion of the pagan world to Christianity (*On Truth,* 14.A1).

Negative Evidence. The negative evidence encompasses arguments against false religions, including things like their fleshly appeal to carnal pleasures, their teachings that contradict their promises, their many fables and falsities, the lack of miracles to witness to divine inspiration of their holy book (like the *Qur'an*), use of warfare (arms) to spread their message, the fact that wise men did not believe Muhammad, only ignorant, desert wanderers, the fact that there were

no prophets to witness to him, and Muslim perversions of Old and New Testament stories (*Gentiles,* 1.6).

Faith and Fallible Testimony. How can we be sure when the support of our faith rests on many intermediary (fallible) testimonies? Aquinas responds that the intermediaries are above suspicion if they were confirmed by miracles (for example, Mark 16:20). "We believe the successors of the apostles and prophets only in so far as they tell us those things which the apostles and prophets have left in their writings" (*On Truth,* 14.10, ad 11). The Bible alone is the final and in fallible authority for our faith (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR).

Faith and Demonstrative Arguments. Aquinas distinguished between two kinds of rational arguments: demonstrative and persuasive. "Demonstrative, cogent, and intellectually convincing argument cannot lay hold of the truths of faith, though it may neutralize destructive criticism that would render faith untenable." On the other hand, "persuasive reasoning drawn from probabilities . . . does not weaken the merit of faith, for it implies no attempt to convert faith into sight by resolving what is believed into evident first principles" (*De Trinitate,* 2.1, ad 5).

Distinguishing Faith and Reason. Though faith is not separated from reason, Aquinas does formally distinguish between them. He believed they are related, but the relationship does not coerce a person to believe.

Faith in Relation to Reason. Human reason does not force faith. If it did, then faith would not be a free act. What happens is that "the mind of the one believing settles upon the one side of a question not in virtue of his reason but in virtue of his will. Therefore assent is understood in the definition [of faith] as an act of the mind in so far as the mind is brought to its decision by the will" (ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 1, ad 3).

Faith is not unreasonable. Faith is reason with assent. For "to ponder with assent is, then, distinctive of the believer: this is how his act of belief is set off from all other acts of the mind concerned with the true and the false" (*Summa Theologica,* 2a2ae.2, 1, reply). Faith, then, is defined as *"that habit of mind whereby eternal life begins in us and which brings the mind to assent to things that appear not."* Faith differs from science in that the object of faith is unseen. It also differs from doubt, suspicion and opinion in that there is evidence to support faith.

Faith is a free act. Aquinas quotes Augustine with approval that "Faith is a virtue by which things not seen are believed" (ibid., 2a2ae.4, 1, reply). He declares that

to believe is an act of mind assenting to the divine truth by virtue of the command of the will as this is moved by God through grace; in this the act stands under control of free will and is directed toward God. The act of faith is, therefore, meritorious. That is, one is rewarded for believing in what he does not see. There is no merit (reward) in believing what can be seen, since there is no faith involved; it can be seen. The scientist [i.e., philosopher] is impelled to assent by force of a conclusive proof. Thus the assent is not meritorious. [ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 9]

Faith is an act of mind and will. Since belief is an act of the intellect under the impetus of the will, it issues from both mind and will, and both are perfectible by action. "If an act of faith is to be completely good, then, habits must necessarily be present in both mind and will" (ibid., 2a2ae. 4, 2, reply). That is, one cannot be saved without a willingness to do something with faith. Saving faith will produce good works.

Meritorious Nature of Faith. Faith is meritorious, not because one has to work for it, but because it involves the will to believe. It "depends on the will according to its very nature (ibid., ad 5). "For in science and opinion [probable arguments] there is no inclination because of the will, but only because of reason" (ibid., 14.3, reply). But "no act can be meritorious unless it is voluntary, as has been said" (ibid., 14.5, reply).

Aquinas believed that Hebrews 11:1 is a good definition of faith, for it describes not merely what faith *does* but what it *is* . He saw in it the three essentials:

1.   It mentions the will and the object that moves the will as principles on which the nature of faith is based.

2.   In it we can distinguish faith from those things which appear not, as opposed to science and understanding.

3.   The whole definition reduces to the essential phrase, "the substance of things hoped for." (ibid., 14.2)

The formal difference between faith and reason is that one cannot both know and believe the same thing at the same time. For "Whatever things we know with scientific knowledge properly so called we know by reducing them to first principles which are naturally present to the understanding."

Faith and Knowledge about the Same Object. Scientific knowledge culminates in sight of the thing believed, so there is no room for faith. One cannot have faith and scientific knowledge about the same thing (ibid., 14.9, reply). The object of true faith is above senses and understanding. "Consequently, the object of faith is that which is absent from our understanding." As Augustine said, "we believe that which is absent, but we see that which is present" (ibid., 14.9, reply).

This does not mean, of course, that everyone will necessarily believe what I can see without faith (*Summa Theologica,* 2a2ae.1, 5). It does mean that the same person cannot have both faith and proof of the same object. One who sees it, does not believe it by faith on the testimony of others. One who believes it on the testimony of another does not see (know) it personally.

Probable Knowledge and Faith. Likewise, one cannot have "opinion" (probable knowledge) and "science" (certain knowledge) about the same object. As Aquinas notes, "opinion includes a fear that the other part [of the contradiction] is true, and scientific knowledge excludes such fear. However, this fear that the opposite may be true does not apply to matters of faith. For faith brings with it a greater certitude than what can be known by reason" (*On Truth,* 14.9, ad 6).

Creedal Knowledge and Faith. If the existence of God can be proved by reason, and if what is known by reason cannot also be a matter of faith, then why is belief in God proposed in the Creed? Aquinas responds that not all are capable of demonstrating God's existence. "We do not say that the proposition, God is one, in so far as it is proved by demonstration, is an article of faith, but something presupposed before the articles. For the knowledge of faith presupposes natural knowledge, just as grace presupposes nature" (ibid., 14.9, ad 8).

Perfected by Love, Produced by Grace. Reason can go only so far. Faith goes beyond reason and completes it. "Faith does not destroy reason, but goes beyond it and perfects it" (ibid., 14.10, reply, ad 7). "Love is the perfection of faith. Since charity is a perfection of the will, faith is formed by charity" (ibid., ad 1). "It is called form in so far as faith acquires some perfection from charity" (ibid., ad 7). But "the act of faith which precedes charity is an imperfect act awaiting completion from charity" (ibid., 14.A5, reply). So love perfects faith. Since believing depends on the understanding and the will, "such an act cannot be perfect unless the will is made perfect by charity and the understanding by faith. Thus formless faith cannot be a virtue" (ibid., ad 1).

However, "that which faith receives from charity is accidental to faith in its natural constitution, but essential to it with reference to its morality" (ibid., 14.6, reply).

Not only is love necessary to perfect faith, but grace is necessary to produce it. "Now, grace is the first [that is, remote] perfection of the virtues, but charity is their proximate perfection" (ibid., 14.A5, ad 6).

The Limitations of Reason. Aquinas did not believe that human reason was without limitations. In fact he offered many arguments as to why reason is insufficient and revelation is needed.

Five Reasons for Revelation. Following Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, Aquinas set forth five reasons why we must first believe what we may later be able to provide good evidence for (Maimonides, 1.34):

1.   The object of spiritual understanding is deep and subtle, far removed from sense perception.

2.   Human understanding is weak as it fights through these issues.

3.   A number of things are needed for conclusive spiritual proof. It takes time to discern them.

4.   Some people are disinclined to rigorous philosophical investigation.

5.   It is necessary to engage in other occupations besides philosophy and science to provide the necessities of life (*On Truth,* 14.10, reply).

Aquinas said it is clear that, "if it were necessary to use a strict demonstration as the only way to reach a knowledge of the things which we must know about God, very few could ever construct

such a demonstration and even these could do it only after a long time." Elsewhere, Aquinas lists only three basic reasons divine revelation is needed.

1.   Few possess the knowledge of God, some do not have the disposition for philosophical study, and others do not have the time or are indolent.

2.   Time is required to find the truth. This truth is very profound, and there are many things that must be presupposed. During youth the soul is distracted by "the various movements of the passions."

3.   It is difficult to sort out what is false in the intellect. Our judgment is weak in sorting true from false concepts. Even in demonstrated propositions there is a mingling of false.

"That is why it was necessary that the unshakable certitude and pure truth concerning divine things should be presented to men by way of faith" (*Gentiles,* 1.4, 2–5).

The Noetic Effects of Sin. Clearly, the mind falls far short when it comes to the things of God. As examples of weakness Aquinas looked at the philosophers and their errors and contradictions. "To the end, therefore, that a knowledge of God, undoubted and secure, might be present among men, it was necessary that divine things be taught by way of faith, spoken as it were by the Word of God who cannot lie" (ibid., 2a2ae. 2, 4). For "the searching of natural reason does not fill mankind's need to know even those divine realities which reason could prove"(ibid., 2a2ae.2, 4, reply).

As a result of the noetic effects of sin, grace is needed. Aquinas concluded that "If for something to be in our power means that we can do it without the help of grace, then we are bound to many things that are not within our power without healing grace—for example to love God or neighbor." The same is true of belief. But with the help of grace we do have this power (ibid., 2a2ae.2, 6, ad 1).

However, Aquinas did not believe that sin destroyed human rational ability. "Sin cannot destroy man's rationality altogether, for then he would no longer be capable of sin" (ibid., 1a2ae.85, 2).

Things above Reason. Not only is faith necessary because of human depravity, but also because some things simply go beyond the power of reason. That does not mean they are contrary to reason, but that they are not fully comprehensible. "Faith, however, is said to surpass reason, not because there is no act of reason in faith, but because reasoning about faith cannot lead to the sight of those things which are matters of faith" (ibid., 14.A2, ad 9). If one could base faith fully on reason, faith would not be a free act; it would be consent caused by the mind.

At two levels a matter of faith may be "above reason." At its highest level it can be above reason absolutely—if it exceeds the intellectual capacity of the human mind (e.g., the Trinity). It is impossible to have scientific knowledge of this. Believers assent to it only on the testimony of God." Or, it may not absolutely exceed the intellect capacity of all, but is exceedingly difficult to comprehend, and is above the intellectual capacity of some (for example, that God exists without

body). "These we may have scientific proofs of and, if not, we may believe them" (*On Truth,* 14.9, reply).

We must have faith when the light of grace is stronger than the light of nature. For "although the divinely infused light is more powerful than natural light, in our present state we do not share it perfectly, but imperfectly." Therefore, "because of this defective participation, through that infused light itself we are not brought to the vision of those things for the knowledge of which it was given us. But we will have it in heaven when we share that light perfectly and in the light of God we will see light" (*Gentiles* , 14.8, ad 2).

Faith, then, surpasses reason. For "some truths about God exceed all the ability of the human reason. Such is the truth that God is triune" (ibid., 1.3). The ineffable essence of God cannot be known by human reason. The reason for this is that the mind depends on the senses. "Now, sensible things cannot lead the human intellect to the point of seeing in them the nature of the divine substance; for sensible things are effects that fall short of the power of their cause" (ibid., 1.3, 3).

Just because we have no reasons for things that go beyond reason does not mean they are not rational. Every belief that is not self-evident can be defended as necessary. We may not know the argument, but it exists. It at least is known to God "and to the blessed who have vision and not faith about these things" (*De Trinitate,* 1.1.4; *On Truth,* 14.9, ad 1). While human reason cannot attain to the things of faith, it is the preface to them. While "philosophical truths cannot be opposed to truths of faith, they fall short indeed, yet they also admit common analogies; and some moreover are foreshadowing, for nature is the preface of grace" (*De Trinitate,* 2.3).

"Although the truth of the Christian faith which we have discussed surpasses the capacity of the reason, nevertheless that truth that the human reason is naturally endowed to know cannot be opposed to the truth of the Christian faith" (*Gentiles,* 1.7, [1]).

Summary. Aquinas's view of the relation of faith and reason blends positive elements of presuppositionalism and evidentialism, of rationalism (*see* DESCARTES, RENE ; LEIBNIZ , GOTTFRIED) and fideism. Aquinas stresses the need for reason before, during, and after beliefs are acquired. Even the mysteries of faith are not irrational.

On the other hand, Aquinas does not believe that reason alone can bring anyone to faith. Salvation is accomplished only by the grace of God. Faith can never be *based on* reason. At best it can only be *supported by* reason. Thus, reason and evidence never coerce faith. There is always room for unbelievers not to believe *in* God, even though a believer can construct a valid proof *that* God exists. Reason can be used to demonstrate that God exists, but it can never in itself persuade someone to believe in God. Only God can do this, working in and through their free choice.

These distinctions of Aquinas are eminently relevant to the discussion between rationalists and fideists or between evidentialists and presuppositionalists. With regard to belief that God exists, Aquinas sides with the rationalists and evidentialists. But with respect to belief in God, he

agrees with fideists (*see* Fideism) and presuppositionalists (*see* Apologetics, Presuppositional).

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Falsification, Principle of. *See* Flew, Antony ; Verification Strategies .

Feuerbach, Ludwig. German atheist Ludwig Feuerbach (1804–1872) was born in Landshut, Bavaria, and educated in Heidelberg and in Berlin under G. W. F. Hegel . He received his doctorate at Ërlangen in 1828 (White, 190). In 1830 he published an anonymous work, *Gedanken uber Tod und Unsterblichkeit* , that interpreted Christianity as an egoistic and inhumane religion. When its authorship was discovered, he was dismissed from the faculty.

Feuerbach was influenced by, and wrote a biography on, Pierre Bayle (1838). His most influential work was *The Essence of Christianity* (1841), though he also penned *The Philosophy of the Future* (1843) and *The Essence of Religion* (1851) and *Theogonie* (1857).

The Nature of Religion. Feuerbach was influenced by Hegel's dialectic, and he influenced Karl Marx as well as Sigmund Freud . Feuerbach's materialism reacted to Hegel's idealism. In reli gion Feuerbach was influenced by David Strauss ' view that religion tells us more about the inner life of individuals than about the object of worship (White, 191).

His chief aim: "To change the friends of God into friends of man, believers into thinkers, worshipers into workers, candidates for the other world into students of this world, Christians, who on their own confession are half animal and half angel, into men—whole men" (*Essence of Christianity,* xi).

Basis of Religion: Self-Consciousness. According to Feuerbach, only a human being (not animals) has self-consciousness. Religion is an expression of that consciousness, under the guise of consciousness of God. "In the object which he contemplates, therefore, man becomes acquainted with himself"(*Essence of Christianity,* 5). But consciousness, as such, is unlimited, so, humankind must be unlimited. And consciousness is objectification. Hence, God is nothing but an objectification of the human species.

God a Projection of Human Imagination. Feuerbach believed that religion is only the dream of the human mind. He offered several arguments supporting his hypothesis that God is nothing more than a self-projection of human consciousness.

Argument from human personality. The first is from the basic elements of human personality: reason, will, and affection. Reason, will, and affection each exists for its own sake. For "to will, to love, to think, are the highest powers, are the absolute nature of man as man, and the basis of his existence" (*Essence of Christianity,* 3). But whatever exists for its own sake is God. Thus, by very nature, the person is God.

Argument from the nature of understanding. One cannot understand something without having its nature, since only like knows like. For "the measure of the nature is also the measure of the understanding." That is, it takes one to know one. But humans understand the divine. Therefore, humanity must be the divine. In Feuerbach's words, "so far as nature reaches, so far reaches thy unlimited self-consciousness, so far art thou God" (*Essence of Christianity,* 8).

Argument from the limits of one's nature. A human being can go no farther than his or her nature; one cannot get outside of self. But a person can feel (be aware of) the infinite. For, "every being is in and by itself infinite—has its God, its highest conceivable being, in itself" (*Essence of Christianity,* 7). If this is so, then human beings are infinite by nature. The infinite you feel is the infinity of yourself.

Argument from the history of religion. Feuerbach believed that historically attributes were given to God because in human reasoning those attributes were thought to be divine. They were not considered to be divine because they were given to God. This being the case, it follows that what we call "the divine" or "God" is nothing more than human characteristics that have been attributed to God.

"The object of any subject is nothing else than the subject's own nature taken objectively. Such are man's thoughts and dispositions, such is his God." Hence, "Consciousness of God is self-consciousness, knowledge of God is self-knowledge. By his God thou knowest the man, and by the man his God; the two are identical" (*Essence of Christianity,* 12).

Necessity of Religion. In spite of his pessimistic conclusions, Feuerbach believed religion to be essential. The reason is that human beings, by their very nature, must objectify; they cannot avoid doing so. And God, Feuerbach affirmed, is that objectification. However, ignorance of the fact that the object of one's objectification is really oneself is essential to religion. The child must first see herself under the form of another (the father) before she can come to see herself as herself. If this were not true in religious projections, it would be idolatry, viz., the worship of oneself. So, it is necessary to believe this projection of one's own nature is really God, even though it is not.

Progress in human understanding would not be possible without this projection. The human being grows in self-understanding as former deities become idols. Hence, the ideal course of religion is for individuals to learn to attribute more to themselves and less to God.

The attributes of God are really what people believe about themselves. God's aseity or self-existence is a desire to avoid temporality by positing an absolute beginning. The perfection of God is the human moral nature taken for absolute being. The personality of God is the effort to show that personality is the highest form of being. The providence of God is really the desire for importance. Prayer expresses the desire for self-communication. The result of a belief in miracles is the desire for immediate satisfaction of wishes without tiresome waiting.

The Irony of Religion. There is a basic irony in this process which may be seen in comparing beliefs to the body's circulatory system. Religion is a *systole action* , like the arteries, wherein people project their best on God. Goodness is transported away from the personhood like oxygen-rich blood from the heart. Without this feeling of goodness, the individual is left sinful. That sets up the diastole action, like the veins, whereby goodness is carried back to the heart in the form of grace. We send all our human goodness "upstairs" and call it God. Then feeling depraved, we call upon the God we create to send back our goodness as grace.

Feuerbach concludes, therefore, that:

1. Religion is a projection of human imagina tion in the act of self-consciousness.

2. God is the best that one unwittingly sees in oneself.

3. Religion is a necessary dialectic of development for human progress.

4. Religion enables indirect and involuntary self-discovery.

Feuerbach's Influence. The influence of Feuerbach on modern thought has been considerable. There was a direct and immediate impact on Karl Marx, and through him on the world communism movement. Marx and Friedrich Engels incorporated Feuerbach's arguments against God and religion into their dialectical materialism, criticizing Feuerbach for his lack of political involvement. Engels boasted that with one blow to pulverize religion, communism would place materialism back on the throne (Marx, 224).

Feuerbach also had a considerable impact on the formation of modern a-theistic existentialism through Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre . The father of neoorthodox theology, Karl Barth, pays tribute to Feuerbach (*see* BARTH, KARL). All in all, Feuerbach is one of the most significant and engaging atheists of modern times, anticipating even the work of Sigmund Freud.

Evaluation. Atheism as a worldview is evaluated in other articles, but a few comments are in order on Feuerbach's unique analysis of religion.

Some Positive Contributions. Even atheists have insights into the nature of reality. Among Feuerbach's:

He saw the centrality of the question of God. Although his love affair with the divine was an unhappy one, Feuerbach identified God as the central question: "All my writings have had, strictly speaking, one purpose, one intention, one theme. This is nothing less than religion and theology and whatever is connected with them" (*Essence of Christianity,* x).

He exposed human-centered religion. Barth pointed out in the "Introductory Essay" to a reprint of *Essence of Christianity* that Feuerbach correctly analyzed any humanity-centered form of religion, including those springing from the father of modern liberalism, Friedrich Schleiermacher. Barth observed, "Can we deny that Feuerbach himself, like a not very cunning, but slightly keen-eyed spy, lets out the esoteric secret of this whole priesthood. . . . Theology has long since become anthropology" (Barth, xxi). Once modern theology gave up the starting point of divine revelation, then human beings created God in their own image. Modern liberal theology became anthropology.

He called negative religious language useless. Feuerbach rightly said, "Only where man loses his taste for religion, and thus religion itself becomes insipid existence—does the existence of God become an insipid existence—an existence without qualities" (*Essence of Christianity,* 15). Purely negative religious language—where we can only know what God is not—is useless and inadequate. We cannot know God is not "that" unless we know what the "that" is (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF).

He correctly critiqued other-worldly religions. Feuerbach's condemnation of religious other-worldliness is more often accurate than most religious people admit. Some forms of Christianity tend to be more heavenly minded than earthly good. It is possible to get so caught up in the sweet-by-and-by that one forgets the wretched here-and-now. Not all believers are thinkers (*Essence of Christianity,* xi).

He exposed narcissism in much of religious experience. Feuerbach's thesis is not wrong; it is simply overextended. Many religions do make their god in human image, creating a god who is tame and harmless—one they can handle. Such a god may be whatever they demand, but such a god is not the infinite, sovereign God of the Bible (*see* GOD, NATURE OF).

Problems with Feuerbach's View. Its central thesis is self-defeating. The basic premise of Feuerbach's view is self-defeating. He contends that "God is nothing but a projection of human imagination." But all "nothing-but" statements presuppose "more-than" knowledge. How could he know that God was "nothing but" unless he knew "more than" that himself. In short, the central statement of Feuerbach's system self-destructs because it implies more knowledge than it allows.

Maybe atheism is a projection. Feuerbach does not seriously consider that his own view may be a projection of his own imagination. Maybe Feuerbach is simply imagining that there is no God. Perhaps, as Freud, Feuerbach is engaged in creating a view of God in his own image. His atheism could just as easily be an illusion—something that results from his own wishes—as the

theism he rejects. Self-projection explains atheism as well, if not better, than it does theism. So, maybe we didn't create the Father; maybe atheism killed him.

He never proves infinite consciousness. Many arguments Feuerbach offers for atheism beg the question; they presuppose what is to be proven. He never really proves that human consciousness is infinite; he simply assumes it. Of course, if our consciousness is really infinite, then we are God. But this is clearly not the case, since our consciousness is changing and limited, while God is unchanging and unlimited.

One does not have to be one to know one. Another fallacious assumption is that one has to be identical to any object that is known. But he never proves this premise, and it is not the case. Like can know like. Knowledge can be by analogy (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF). We do not have to be a tree to know a tree, but only to take on its like ness in our mind. Likewise, we do not have to be God to know God. We simply have to be like God. Similarity is enough for knowledge; identity of subject and object is not necessary.

Such a belief would destroy human progress. Feuerbach held that positing a God who does not really exist is essential to human self-development. But one who accepts Feuerbach's analysis no longer believes self-projections are God. Then, according to Feuerbach's argument, human progress will stop. If ignorance of the fact that we are God is essential to human progress, then once one becomes a Feuerbachian, the gig is up and progress is impossible.

Feuerbach's materialism was inconsistent. Although Feuerbach loathed his mentor Hegel, he never overcame the hangover of idealism. Nor did he rid himself of the nagging question of God. For someone who believes in basic materialism, this stress on consciousness is eminently unfitting. Engels noted that Feuerbach "stopped halfway; the lower half of him was materialist, the upper half idealist" (cited in White, 192).

This analysis of religious experience is shallow. Barth identified Feuerbach's problem as "shallowness." He wrote, "Feuerbach was a 'true child of his century,' a 'non-knower of death,' and a 'mis-knower of evil.' In fact, anyone who knew that we men are evil from head to foot and anyone who reflects that we must die, would recognize it to be the most illusory or all illusions to suppose that the essence of God is the essence of man" (Barth, xxviii).

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Fideism. Religious fideism argues matters of faith and religious belief are not supported by reason. Religion is a matter of faith and cannot be argued by reason. One must simply believe. Faith, not reason, is what God requires (Heb. 11:6). Fideists are skeptical with regard to the nature of evidence as applied to belief. They believe no evidence or argument applies to belief in God. God is not reached by reason, but only by faith. Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth are examples of fideists.

In epistemology, fideists are generally coherentists. They definitely reject classical foundationalism or any belief in self-evident first principles. Some presuppositionalists (*see* APOLOGETICS, PRESUPPOSITIONAL) are classed as fideists, though many believe in some form of argument to support their belief in God.

Response to Fideism. Even from a biblical point of view, God calls us to use reason (Isa. 1:18 ; Matt. 22:36–37 ; 1 Peter 3:15). God is a rational being and created us as rational beings. God would not insult the reason he gave us by asking us to ignore it in such important matters as our beliefs about him.

Fideism also is self-defeating, using reason to say we should not use reason in matters of religion. If one has no reason for not using reason, then the position is indefensible. There is no reason why one should accept fideism.

To claim reason is just optional for a fideist will not suffice. For either the fideist offers some criteria for when we should be reasonable and when we should not, or else the decision is simply arbitrary. If there are rational criteria for when we should be rational, there is a rational basis for using reason, and fideism is falsified. Reason is not the kind of thing in which a rational creature chooses to participate. By virtue of being rational by nature, one must be part of rational discourse. And rational discourse demands that one follow the laws of reason (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES ; LOGIC). One such principle is that one should have a sufficient reason for beliefs. But if one must have sufficient reason, then fideism is wrong, since it claims that one need not have a sufficient reason for belief (*see* FAITH AND REASON).

Fideists often confuse belief *in* with belief *that* . While what they claim about faith appropriately applies to belief *in* God, it does not apply to belief *that* God exists. One must have evidence *that* there is a floor in an elevator. Otherwise it is foolish to leap into it in the dark. Likewise, it is foolish to leap in the dark with an act of faith in God, unless we have evidence that he is there.

There are good reasons for belief that God exists, such as the cosmological argument, the teleological argument, and the moral argument. Further, there is good evidence to believe that miracles have occurred, including Christ's death and victory over death for us (*see* RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR).

Finite Godism. Theism believes an infinite God is both beyond and in the world. Finite godism, by contrast, posits a god who is only finite. Polytheism claims there are many such gods, but finite godists believe there is only one God.

Ancient Greek versions of a limited God included Plato's (428–348 B.C .) philosophy (see Plato, 17–92). But in the modern Western world, most finite god views arise out of a theistic back ground. Generally speaking, many finite godists come to that conclusion because they cannot reconcile their theistic tradition with the pervasive presence of evil (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF).

Typology of Finite Godism. There are many different possibilities for a finite god position, not all of which have well-known representatives. Most finite godists hold that God is personal, though some, including Henry Wieman, posit an impersonal Being (Wieman, 6–8, 54–62). The limitations on this God could be internal, as John Stuart Mill believed, or external to the world, as Plato believed. The limitations could be in his goodness but not his power (a minority view), or in his power but not his goodness, as in Edgar Brightman (see Brightman) and Peter Bertocci. Or, God could be limited in both power and goodness (Mill's view).

A finite god can have either one or two poles. For coverage of bipolar finite godism, see the article PANENTHEISM . Monopolar examples are discussed here. Although many finite godists believe god to be transcendent (beyond the universe), some have a finite god who is immanent (within the universe). Henri Bergson, an example of the latter view, holds that God is the Vital Force that drives the process of evolution onward (see Bergson, chap. 3).

Tenets of Finite Godism. Finite godists tend to disagree among themselves about God and the world. While this article stresses points in common, some differences will be noted.

View of God. The most fundamental characteristic of the finite god view is that this god is limited in his very nature. Some say he is limited in power and not goodness; few, if any, claim he is limited in goodness. Some claim God is limited in both power and goodness. Almost all agree that God is not infinite in power.

Properly speaking, a finite-god view holds that God is intrinsically limited in his nature. Although Plato seemed to hold that God is not intrinsically limited in his nature, most believe that the eternal world (which God did not create) places limits on God's ability to act within it (*see* DUALISM). If God did not create the world and does not sustain its existence, then he is not able to do just anything with it; for example, he cannot destroy it.

View of Evil. In contrast to pantheists, finite godists affirm that evil is real. In fact, the presence and power of evil limits God. Evil is both physical and moral. Physical evil is not

always possible to avoid, but we can do something about moral evil. Cooperating with God's efforts for good, even going beyond them if necessary, is part of our moral duty in the world.

There are various explanations for the origin of evil. *Dualists* (*see* DUALISM) say it was always there in some form. Others attribute much of it to human free choices. But all agree there is no guarantee that evil will ever be totally destroyed. If God were all powerful, then he would destroy evil. But since evil is not destroyed, there must not be an all-powerful God. The argument goes like this:

1. If God were all powerful, he could destroy evil.

2. If God were all good, he would destroy evil.

3. But evil has not been destroyed.

4. Therefore, there cannot be an all-powerful, all-good God.

View of Creation. Finite godism has no uniform stand on creation. Those who come out of the dualistic Greek tradition, following Plato, hold to creation *ex materia* , that is, out of preexisting eternal matter (*see* CREATION, VIEWS OF). God did not bring the world into existence; he merely *shaped* the matter that was already there. In view of this, one limitation on God's power is external. Thus, there is something about the extent and nature of matter over which even God has no ultimate control. He simply has to work with the world and do the best he can under the limitations it places on his creative powers.

An alternative view is that God brought the universe into existence *ex nihilo* , out of nothing. In this case, God is limited by his own nature, not by something "out there" with which he has to cope and over which he has no final word.

All finite godists agree that creation was not *ex Deo* (out of God). This is not a pantheistic position, though God is limited in or by creation.

View of the World. Few statements regarding the world unite finite godists. All agree that the world exists and runs by natural laws. Beyond this there is no unanimity about whether it always existed and/or always will exist. The only other widely held view among finite godists is that the physical universe is not eternal or unlimited in energy. The universe is subject to the law of entropy (*see* THERMODYNAMICS, LAWS OF) and is running down.

View of Miracles. Most finite godists reject miracles. Some admit that supernatural interventions are possible in principle but deny they happen in practice. In this respect finite godism is similar to deism, which claims a supernatural Creator but disclaims any supernatural acts in the creation. However, deism is properly distinguished from finite godism in that the deistic God has no intrinsic limits on his power. Both views see miracles as a violation of natural law. And since they place a high emphasis on the regularity and uniformity of the world, they do not wish to concede that miracles interrupt it (*see* MIRACLE ; MIRACLES, ARGUMENTS AGAINST).

View of Human Beings. Ultimately humanity is created by God. However, since Darwin, finite godists have been convinced that God used a natural evolutionary process. As noted, some finite godists even equate God with the evolutionary force in nature.

Most finite godists admit humans have a soul, and some believe persons are immortal. All reject a purely materialistic (*see* MATERIALISM) view of humanity, but not all are sure there is life after death.

View of Ethics. Few finite godists believe in ethical absolutes. Since God is not unchangeable, it follows that no value based in him would be immutable either. Many, however, believe that values are objective and enduring. Some even hold certain values are unconditional. However, for the most part, since God has revealed any unequivocal ethical norms, persons are left to decide for themselves the right course of action in each situation. The general guidance in these decisions is provided in different ways by different views.

View of History. Regarding the movement of history and humanity, some are more optimistic than others. Some point to a steady evolutionary progress of the universe as the hope for final victory. Most are less assured that good will vanquish all evil. All admit it is possible there will be no final victory at all. It is even conceivable that evil may overcome good, though most finite godists find this possibility intuitively repugnant. Nevertheless, since God is limited and (at best) is struggling with evil himself, there is no assurance. The struggle may simply go on endlessly.

Evaluation. Finite godism contains significant insights into reality. However, as a system it has serious problems.

Positive Contributions. Evil is treated realistically. Unlike such worldviews as pantheism , finite godism cannot be blamed for attempting to avoid the reality of evil. It is in facing the problem squarely that most finite godists have come to their position.

The exercise of divine power is limited. Whatever can be said about the meaning of the word *omnipotent* , it cannot mean that God can literally do anything. Finite godists are right to point out that God is limited in his use of power. For example, God cannot use his power (limited or unlimited) to create and destroy the same thing at the same time. God cannot make square circles. God cannot give creatures free choice and at the same time force them to act contrary to their choices.

Likewise, finite godism points to a real problem in many theistic views of evil. The position recognizes that "the best possible world" may not actually be possible. Just because we can *conceive* of our present universe with less or no evil, does not mean that God can *achieve* such a universe. A world of free creatures, whether freely created by God or not, does place some limitations on the use of God's power (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF).

There is a need to struggle against evil. Another value that emerges from most forms of finite godism is an antidote for fatalism. The outcome of the struggle of good and evil does in a real sense depend on man. Our efforts can make a difference. Complete determinism is fatal to

the needed motivation to fight evil. Finite godists cannot be charged with a passive resignation to the inevitable. Their view calls for real involvement by persons to overcome evil.

Problems with the View. In spite of its many positive insights into the nature of things, finite godism as a system is fatally flawed.

Its view of God is inadequate. Philosophically, the concept of a finite god is contrary to the principle of causality, which affirms that every finite being needs a cause. A finite god is only a large creature, and all creatures need a Creator. A finite being is a contingent being, not a Necessary Being, which *cannot not* exist. A contingent being *can be nonexistent* . But whatever could not exist depends for its existence on what cannot not exist, a Necessary Being.

Further, those who believe God is limited in perfection as well as power do not identify what is really God, at least not God in an ultimate sense. For one could measure God's imperfection only by an ultimate standard (see Lewis, 45–46). But the ultimate standard of perfection is by definition God. So an imperfect finite god would be something less than the ultimate God. Actually, there seems to be no way to posit a finitely good god without having an infinitely good God as a standard by which to measure.

Anything incompletely good is not worthy of worship. Worship means to attribute ultimate worth to something or someone. But why should one attribute absolute worth to what is not absolutely worthy? Every finite thing is a creature, and worship of the creature, rather than the Creator, is idolatry. Or to borrow Paul *Tillich's terms, an ultimate commitment should not be given to anything less than an Ultimate. But a partially good being is not an ultimate Good. Why, then, should anyone worship a finite god?

I ts view of evil is inadequate. The problem of evil does not eliminate God. In fact, we cannot even know there are ultimate injustices in the world unless we have some ultimate standard of justice, God, beyond the world. Conversely, only an all-powerful God can defeat evil, and only an all-good God desires to defeat evil. Hence, if evil will ever be defeated, then there must be an all-powerful, all-good God. A finite god will not suffice for the task.

Furthermore, there is an alternative in the argument for a finite god. Remember that the argument goes:

1.   If God were all-powerful, he could destroy evil.

2.   If God were all-good, he would destroy evil.

3.   But evil is not destroyed.

4.   Therefore, there cannot be an all-powerful, all-good God.

A theistic worldview, need only change the third premise:

3.   But evil is not *yet* destroyed.

The word *yet* immediately opens up the possibility that evil will yet be destroyed (i.e., defeated) in the future. And the finite godist who insists this will never happen is presuming to know more than a finite creature is able to know.

Some finite godists even admit this point. Bertocci, for example, said there is evil "whose destructive effect, *so far as we know,* is greater than any good which may come from it." But that is precisely the problem: How can a finite man know far enough into the future to say nothing will be done to ultimately defeat evil and bring in a greater good? However improbable it may seem, the future can bring good news.

Furthermore, if there is an all-powerful and all-good God, this automatically guarantees that evil *will* be defeated in the future. The reasoning is:

1. An all good God has the desire to defeat evil.

2. An all powerful God has the ability to defeat evil.

3. But evil is not yet defeated.

4. Therefore, evil will be defeated in the future.

Put in this form, the question would not be whether evil is compatible with an infinite God; it certainly seems to be. In fact, if an infinite God exists, then it is a guarantee that evil will be defeated, since such a God would have both the desire and the power to do it. Thus it appears that finite godism has not successfully eliminated an infinite God by way of evil.

Another problem for modern forms of finite godism is that, if God is not completely good, then what is the standard for measuring his goodness? We cannot measure him by the standard of his own nature, for that he measures up to perfectly. But if we measure God by some absolute moral law beyond God, then the Legislator of this absolute law would be God. For laws come from law-givers, and moral prescriptions come from moral prescribers (*see* MORAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD). If so, would not absolutely perfect moral laws come from an absolutely perfect Moral Law-giver? If a finite god falls short of an absolute standard of goodness, then he is not God. The absolute moral Being *beyond him* would be God.

Perhaps this is why most finite godists desire to limit only God's power and not his goodness. But to an outsider this looks like an arbitrary judgment and wishful thinking. Further, how can God be an infinitely good Being when he is only a finite being? How can one be more of anything than he has the capacity to be? How can the attributes of God be extended farther than his actual nature allows? Can one's knowledge, for example, be extended farther than the brain allows?

Finite godism claims God cannot destroy all evil. Some say this is because of an intrinsic limit in his nature. Others claim it is because of an extrinsic limitation on him. But the only extrinsic limitation which the Creator could not destroy would be an eternal uncreated and Necessary Being. For a created or contingent being could be destroyed by an uncreated or

Necessary Being. But if there is an eternal, uncreated, and Necessary Being beyond God, then it is the Creator, and the "finite god" turns out only to be a limited creation. If, on the other hand, the being outside God is only created and contingent, yet God is uncreated and necessary, God could destroy it. But if he can create and destroy anything, why not admit he is all powerful?

This is the dilemma: If God can destroy all else in the universe besides himself, then he is all-powerful. If there is some other indestructible being outside God, then he is not an all-powerful God; this other being can resist his power. But in either case the finite god view would seem to be wrong, for there would be an all-powerful Being who could destroy the finite god.

Finite godists admit there is no guarantee good will ultimately triumph over evil. If so, those who work for good may work for naught. Of course, in the everyday course of events our efforts are frustrated. However, a religious commitment is not an everyday commitment; it is an ultimate commitment. Can a finite god, who cannot guarantee victory, even if we put our all into it, really inspire an ultimate commitment? How many people will really make an ultimate commitment to work for what they have no assurance will ultimately win? We can be inspired to confess courageously "I would rather lose in a battle that is ultimately going to win, than to win in a battle that will ultimately lose."

Other Inadequate Views. In addition to their flawed views of God and evil, finite godists fail to adequately defend their views of annihilationism and antisupernaturalism (*see* MIRACLES, ARGUMENTS AGAINST).

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Firmament. *See* SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE .

First Principles. First principles are the foundation of knowledge. Without them nothing could be known (*see* FOUNDATIONALISM). Even coherentism uses the first principle of noncontradiction to test the coherence of its system. Realism affirms that first principles apply to the real world. First principles undeniably apply to reality. The very denial that first principles apply to reality uses first principles in the denial.

Principles of Reality. Without basic first principles of reality, nothing can be known. Everything we know about reality is known by them. Twelve basic first principles can be set forth.

1. Being Is (B is) = *The Principle of Existence* .

2. Being Is Being (B is B) = *The Principle of Identity* .

3. Being Is Not Nonbeing (B is Not Non-B) = *The Principle of Noncontradiction.*

4. Either Being or Nonbeing (Either B or Non-B) = *The Principle of the Excluded Middle.*

5. Nonbeing Cannot Cause Being (Non-B > B) = *The Principle of Causality.*

6. Contingent Being Cannot Cause Contingent Being (Bc > Bc) = *The Principle of Contingency* (or Dependency).

7. Only Necessary Being Can Cause a Contingent Being (Bn → Bc) = *The Positive Principle of Modality.*

8. Necessary Being Cannot Cause a Necessary Being (Bn > Bn) = *The Negative Principle of Modality.*

9. Every Contingent Being Is Caused by a Necessary Being (Bn → Bc) = *The Principle of Existential Causality.*

10. Necessary Being exists = *Principle of Existential Necessity* (Bn exists).

11. Contingent being exists = *Principle of Existential Contingency* (Bc exists).

12. Necessary Being is similar to similar contingent being(s) it causes = *Principle of Analogy* (Bn — similar → Bc).

For a realist, being is the basis of knowing. The rationalist Rene Descartes said, "I think, therefore, I am." But for a realist such as Thomas Aquinas, "I am, therefore, I think." For one could not think unless he existed. Existence is fundamental to everything. Being is the basis for everything. Everything is (or, has) being. Hence, there is no disjunction between the rational and the real. Thought cannot be separated from things or knowing from being.

Undeniability. First principles are undeniable or reducible to the undeniable. They are either self-evident or reducible to the self-evident. And self-evident principles are either true by their nature or undeniable because the predicate is reducible to the subject. That the predicate is reducible to the subject means that one cannot deny the principle without using it. For example, the principle of noncontradiction cannot be denied without using it in the very denial. The statement: "Opposites cannot be true" assumes that the opposite of that statement cannot be true.

Not all skeptics or agnostics (*see* AGNOSTICISM) are willing to grant that the principle of causality, which is crucial in all cosmological arguments for God, is an undeniable first principle. Indeed, not every skeptic is willing to admit that something exists (the principle of existence). Thus, it is necessary to comment on their undeniability.

1. *The principle of existence* . Something exists. For example, I exist. This is undeniable, for I would have to exist in order to deny my existence. In the very attempt to explicitly deny my existence I implicitly affirm it.

2. *The principle of identity* . A thing must be identical to itself. If it were not, then it would not be itself.

With these and other principles, it is important to note the difference between *unsayable* and *undeniable* . I can say or write the words, "I do not exist." However, when I said it I implicitly affirmed that I do exist. The affirmation that I do not exist is actually unaffirmable. I must actually exist in order to grammatically say I do not exist.

Some contemporary nominalists suggest that this is a quirk of language. They insist that such statements as "I cannot speak a word in English" are only self-defeating because one is speaking in English. One could use French and avoid the difficulty. They add that one can make a metastatement in even the same language that avoids this difficulty. That is, they posit a class of statements about statements (called metastatements) which they claim are not statements about the real world. These metastatements are supposedly exempt from being self-defeating. Thus, one who says, "No statements about God are descriptive," is supposedly not making a descriptive statement about God, but rather about the statements that can be made of God.

It is true that a statement in French saying that one cannot speak in English is not self-defeating. However, a statement in French affirming that one cannot speak a word in French is self-defeating.

The metastatement maneuver does not avoid the trap of self-destruction. For statements about statements that affirm something about reality are indirectly statements about reality. For example, if one says, "I am not making a statement about reality when I say that statements cannot be made about reality" he *is* making a statement about reality. It is the most radical kind of statement that can be made about reality, since it prohibits all other statements about reality. Thus, the statement "Something exists" cannot be denied without implicitly affirming that something does exist (e.g., the maker of that statement).

3. *The principle of noncontradiction*. Being cannot be nonbeing, for they are direct opposites. And opposites cannot be the same. For the one who affirms that "opposites can both be true" does not hold that the opposite of this statement is true.

4. *The principle of the excluded middle*. Since being and nonbeing are opposites (i.e., contradictory), and opposites cannot be the same, nothing can hide in the "cracks" between being and nonbeing. The only choices are being and nonbeing.

Any attempt to deny that all meaningful statements must be noncontradictory, by its very nature as a meaningful statement, must be noncontradictory. Likewise, any attempt to deny the law of noncontradiction applies to reality is itself a noncontradictory statement about reality—which is self-defeating. So, like other first principles, the law of noncontradiction is undeniable.

Two challenges to this conclusion have been offered, one philosophical and one scientific. The philosophical objection charges that this argument begs the question, using the law of noncontradiction to prove the law of noncontradiction. It says in effect that it is contradictory to deny the principle of noncontradiction. But the law of noncontradiction is not used as the *basis* of the argument. It is merely used in the *process* of giving an indirect argument for the validity of the law of noncontradiction. Just as the statement "I can speak a word in English" uses English in the *process* of demonstrating that I can speak a word in English, even so the law of noncontradiction is used in the process of showing the validity of the law of noncontradiction. But it is not the basis for the argument.

The direct basis for the law of noncontradiction is its self-evident nature, whereby the predicate is reducible to the subject. And the indirect proof is shown by the fact that any attempt to deny it implies it. That is, it is a necessary condition for all rational thought.

A second objection to the law of noncontradiction comes from science. Niels Bohr's principle of complementarity is used to show that subatomic reality is contradictory. For according to this principle there are contradictory ways to describe the same reality, such as, light is both particles and waves. However, this is a misunderstanding of the principle of complementarity. As Werner Heisenberg noted, these are "two complementary descriptions of the same reality . . . these descriptions can only be partially true: there must be limitations to the use of the particle concept as well as of the wave concept, else once could not avoid contradictions." Thus "if one takes into account those limitations which can be expressed by uncertainty relations, the contradictions disappear" (Heisenberg, 43).

The objection that Heisenberg's principle of uncertainty or unpredictability is contrary to the principle of causality is unfounded. At best, it does not show that events have no cause, but only that they are unpredictable as presently perceived with available technology. For a complete discussion see INDETERMINACY, PRINCIPLE OF.

5. *The principle of causality*. Only being can cause being. Nothing does not exist, and only what exists can cause existence, since the very concept of "cause" implies an existing thing that has the power to effect another. From absolutely nothing comes absolutely nothing.

The statement "Nonbeing cannot produce being" is undeniable. The very concept of "produce" or "cause" implies something exists to cause or produce the being produced. To deny that relationship of cause to effect is to say, "Nothing is something" and "Nonbeing is being," which is nonsense.

This should be distinguished from David Hume 's point that it is not absurd for nothing to be *followed by* something. Hume himself accepts, that something is always *caused by* something. And theists accept Hume's point that, as a matter of sequence, there was no world and then there was a world, which is nothing followed by something. There is no inherent contradiction in saying nothing can be followed by something. That doesnchange the fact that nothing can cause absolutely nothing.

Another way to understand why nonbeing cannot cause being is by noting that everything that "comes to be" must have a cause. If it came to be it is not a Necessary Being, which by its nature must always be. So what comes to be is, by definition, a contingent being, a being that is capable of existing or not existing. For every contingent thing that comes to be there must be some efficient action that causes it to pass from a state of potentiality (potency) to a state of actuality (act). For, Aquinas noted, no potency for being can actualize itself. To actualize itself it must be in a state of actuality, and before it is actualized it must be in a state of potentiality. But it cannot be both at the same time (a violation of the principle of noncontradiction). Hence, one cannot deny the principle of causality without violating the principle of noncontradiction.

6. *The principle of contingency (or dependency)*. If something cannot be caused by nothing (5), neither can anything be caused by *what could be nothing* , namely, a contingent being. For what could be nothing does not account for its own existence. And what cannot account for even its own existence cannot account for the existence of another. Since it is contingent or dependent for its own being, it cannot be that on which something else depends for its being. Hence, one contingent being cannot cause another contingent being.

7. *The positive principle of modality*. Absolutely nothing cannot cause something (5). Neither can one contingent kind (mode) of being cause another contingent being (6). So, if anything comes to be, it must be caused by a Necessary Being.

8. *The negative principle of modality*. A Necessary Being is by definition a mode (kind) of being that cannot not be. That is, by its very mode (modality), it must be. It cannot come to be or cease to be. But to be caused means to come to be. Hence, a Necessary Being cannot be caused. For what comes to be is not necessary.

9. *The principle of existential causality*. All contingent beings need a cause. For a contingent being is something that is but could not be. But since it has the possibility not to exist, then it does not account for its own existence. That is, in itself there is no basis explaining why it exists rather than does not exist. It literally has nothing (nonbeing) to ground it. But nonbeing cannot ground or cause anything (5). Only something can produce something.

10. Necessary Being exists = *Principle of Existential Necessity* (Bn exists).

The Principle of Existential Necessity follows from two other Principles: the Principle of Existence (no. 1) and the Principle of Causality (no. 5).

Since something undeniably exists (no. 1), either it is (a) all contingent or (b) all necessary or (c) some is necessary and some is contingent. But both (b) and (c) acknowledge a Necessary Being, and (a) is logically impossible, being contrary to the self-evident principle no. 5. For if all being(s) is (are) contingent, then it is possible for all being(s) not to exist. That is, a state of total nothingness is possible. But something now undeniably exists (e.g., I do), as was demonstrated in premise no. 1. And nothing cannot cause something (no. 5). Therefore, it is not possible (i.e., it is impossible) for there to have been a state of total nothingness. But if it is impossible for nothing to exist (since something does exist), then something necessarily exists (i.e., a Necessary Being does exist).

To put it another way, if something exists and if nothing *cannot* cause something, then it follows that something *must* exist necessarily. For if something did not necessarily exist, then nothing would have caused the something that does exist. Since it is *impossible* for nothing to cause something, then it is *necessary* for something to always have been.

11. Contingent being exists = *Principle of Existential Contingency* (Bc exists).

Not everything that exists is necessary. For change is real, that is, at least some being(s) really change. And a Necessary Being cannot change in its being. (This does not mean there can be no change in external relations with another being. It simply means there can be no internal change in its being. When a person changes in relation to a pillar, the pillar does not change.) For its being is necessary, and what is necessary in its being cannot be other than it is in its being. And all change in being involves becoming something else in its being.

But it is evident that I change in my being. I change from not being to being. By "I" is meant the self-conscious individual being I call myself. (This is not to claim that all the parts or elements of my being are not eternal. There are good reasons to believe they are not because usable energy is running down and cannot be eternal [*see* THERMODYNAMICS, LAWS OF], but this is not the point here.) This "I" or unifying center of consciousness around which these elemental parts of matter come and go, is not eternal. This is clear for many reasons.

First, my consciousness changes. Even those who claim they are eternal and necessary (namely, that they are a Necessary Being, God) were not always conscious of being God. Somewhere along the line they change from not being conscious they were God to being conscious they were God. But a Necessary Being cannot change. Hence, I am not a Necessary Being. Rather, I am a contingent being. Therefore, at least one contingent being exists. Everything is not necessary.

Further, there are other ways to know one is contingent. The fact that we reason to conclusions reveals that our knowledge is not eternal and necessary. We come to know (i.e., change from a state of not knowing to a state of knowing). But no necessary being can come to know anything. It either eternally and necessarily knows everything it knows, or else it knows nothing. If it is a knowing kind of being, then it necessarily knows, since it is a necessary kind of being. And a being can only know in accordance with the kind of being it is. A contingent or finite being must know contingently, and a Necessary Being must know necessarily. But I do not know all that I can know eternally and necessarily. Therefore, I am a contingent kind of being.

12. *The principle of analogy* **.** Since nonbeing cannot produce being (5), only being can produce being. But a contingent being cannot produce another contingent being (6). And a necessary being cannot produce another necessary being (8). So only Necessary Being can cause or produce only a contingent being. For to "cause" or "produce" being means to bring something into being. Something that comes into being, has being. A cause cannot bring nonbeing into being, since being is not nonbeing (4). The fact that Being produces being implies that there is an analogy (similarity) between the cause of being and the being it causes (8). But a contingent being is both similar and different from a Necessary Being. It is similar in that both have being. It is different in that one is necessary and the other is contingent. But whatever is both similar and different is analogous. Hence, there is an analogy between Necessary Being and the being it produces.

Two things, then, are entailed in the principle that Necessary Being causes being: First, the effect must resemble the cause, since both are being. The cause of being cannot produce what it does not possess. Second, while the effect must resemble its cause in its being (i.e., its actuality), it must also be different from it in its potentiality. For the cause (a Necessary Being), by its very nature, has no potential not to be. But the effect (a contingent being) by its very nature has the potential not to be. Hence, a contingent being must be different from its Cause. Since, the Cause of contingent beings must be both like and different from its effect, it is only similar. Hence, there is an analogical likeness between the Cause of a contingent being and the contingent being it causes to exist.

Demonstrating God's Existence. Given these principles of being, one can know many things about reality; they relate *thought* and *thing* . *Knowing* is based in *being* . By these principles, one can even prove the existence of God (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR) as follows:

1. Something exists (e.g., I do) (no. 1).

2. I am a contingent being (no. 11).

3. Nothing cannot cause something (no. 5).

4. Only a Necessary Being can cause a contingent being (no. 7).

5. Therefore, I am caused to exist by a Necessary Being (follows from nos. 1–4).

6. But I am a personal, rational, and moral kind of being (since I engage in these kinds of activities).

7. Therefore, this Necessary Being must be a personal, rational, and moral kind of being, since I am similar to him by the Principle of Analogy (no. 12).

8. But a Necessary Being cannot be contingent (i.e., not-necessary) in its being which would be a contradiction (no. 3).

9. Therefore, this Necessary Being is personal, rational, and moral in a necessary way, not in a contingent way.

10. This Necessary Being is also eternal, uncaused, unchanging, unlimited, and one, since a Necessary Being cannot come to be, be caused by another, undergo change, be limited by any possibility of what it could be (a Necessary Being has no possibility to be other than it is), or to be more than one Being (since there cannot be two infinite beings).

11. Therefore, one necessary, eternal, uncaused, unlimited (= infinite), rational, personal, and moral being exists.

12. Such a Being is appropriately called "God" in the theistic sense, because he possesses all the essential characteristics of a theistic God.

13. Therefore, the theistic God exists.

Conclusion. First principles are indispensable to all knowledge. And first principles of being are a necessary prerequisite for all knowledge of being. These first principles are undeniable or reducible to the undeniable. For the very attempt to deny them affirms them. By them not only is reality known, but the existence of God can be demonstrated.

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Flavius Josephus. Josephus (ca. A.D. 37–ca. 100) was a Pharisee of the priestly line and a Jewish historian. In addition to his autobiography he wrote two major works, *Jewish Wars* (77–78) and *Antiquities of the Jews* (ca. 94). He also wrote a minor work, *Against Apion*.

Josephus confirmed in general outline, and often in great detail, the historicity of the Old Testament and some of the New Testament (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES). Although Josephus's work is slanted so as not to offend the Romans, it has great apologetic

value for Christianity—a religion also not in Roman favor. Josephus was highly appreciated and greatly used by the early church fathers in support of Christianity.

Testimony to the Canon. Josephus supports the Protestant view of the canon of the Old Testament against the Roman Catholic view, which venerates the Old Testament Apocrypha (*see* APOCRYPHA, OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS). He even lists the names of the books, which are identical with the thirty-nine books of the Protestant Old Testament. He groups the thirty-nine into twenty-two volumes to correspond with the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet:

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have], but only twenty-two books, which contain the records of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his laws. . . . The prophets, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in thirteen books. The remaining four books contain hymns to God, and precepts for the conduct of human life. [*Against Apion* 1.8]

Another point of apologetic interest is Josephus's reference to Daniel the prophet as a sixth-century B.C. writer (*Antiquities* , 10–12). This confirms the supernatural nature of Daniel's amazing predictions about the course of history after his time (*see* PROPHECY AS PROOF OF THE BIBLE). Unlike the later Talmud, Josephus obvi ously lists Daniel among the prophets, since it is not in Moses or the "hymns to God" section, which would include Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon. This helps confirm the early date of Daniel.

Testimony to the New Testament. Josephus referred to Jesus as the brother of James who was martyred. He wrote: "Festus was now dead, and Albius was but upon the raid; so he assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, [or some of his companions], and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned" (*Antiquities* 20.9.1). This passage both verifies the existence of Christ by a non-Christian first-century writer and to what the central claim about him was by his immediate followers—that he was the Messiah.

Josephus also confirmed the existence and martyrdom of John the Baptist, the herald of Jesus: "Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and very justly, as a punishment of what he did against John, who was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism" (*Antiquities* 18.5.2). This reference confirms the existence, name, mission, and martyrdom of John the Baptist, just as the New Testament presents him.

In a disputed text, Josephus gives a brief description of Jesus and his mission:

Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works,—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was

[the] Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him. For he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day. [*Antiquities* 18.3.3]

This passage was cited by Eusebius in its present form (*Ecclesiastical History* 1.11) and the manuscript evidence favors it. Yet it is widely considered to be an interpolation, since it is unlikely that Josephus, a Jew, would affirm that Jesus was the Messiah and had been proven so by fulfilled prophecy, miraculous deeds, and the resurrection from the dead. Even "Origin says that Josephus did not believe Jesus to be the Messiah, nor proclaim him as such" (*Contra Celsus* 2.47; 2.13; Bruce, 108). F. F. Bruce suggests that the phrase "if indeed we should call him a man" may indicate that the text is authentic but that Josephus is writing with tongue in cheek in sarcastic reference to Christian belief that Jesus is the Son of God (Bruce, 109).

Other scholars have suggested amending the text in ways that preserve its authenticity without the implication that Josephus personally accepted that Christ was the Messiah (see Bruce, 110–11). It may be that a tenth-century Arabic text (see McDowell, 85) reflects the original intent:

> At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and [he] was known to be virtuous. Many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive; accordingly, he was perhaps the messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.

In this form it does not affirm that Josephus believed in the resurrection but only that his disciples "reported" it. This would at least reflect an honest report of what his immediate disciples believed. Bruce observes that there is good reason for believing that Josephus did refer to Jesus, bearing witness to his date, reputation, family connections to James, crucifixion under Pilate at the instigation of the Jewish leaders, messianic claim, founding of the church, and the conviction among his followers of the resurrection.

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Flew, Antony. Antony Flew (b. 1923) is a prominent British atheist who lectured in philosophy at major British Universities and was professor of philosophy at the University of Keele. He has written or edited numerous books and scholarly journal articles and is well known for his works in philosophical theology. Among his most forceful work is the article "Miracles" in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* and his books *New Essays in Philosophical Theology* and *The Resurrection Debate* .

The Falsifiability of God. Unless some criteria exists by which one could know if something is false, asserts Flew, one cannot know it is true. If the theistic utterance, "God exists" is an assertion, "it will necessarily be equivalent to a denial of the negative of that assertion." However, "if there is nothing which a putative assertion denies then there is nothing which it asserts either; and so it is not really an assertion" (*New Essays* , 98). As this argument applies to God, Flew is saying that, unless a theist can specify conditions by which it could be proven that God does not exist, there are no conditions by which to prove that God does exist. Some event or series of events would have to be conceived which could prove that there is no God.

Other than accepting Flew's premise and admitting that no religious claim is falsifiable (*see* Acognosticism ; Fideism), there are two broad responses to Flew. First, one can reject the principle of falsifiability. Second, one can take up Flew's challenge and state conditions by which the existence of God could be falsified (*see* Ayer, A. J .).

Rejecting Flew's Principle of Falsification. The principle of falsifiability is itself not falsifiable. There are no conditions under which one could know that this principle is false. Also, other things besides the existence of God are not falsifiable. For example, one's personal immortality can be verified if there is consciousness after death. But it cannot be falsified, since if we are annihilated at death we will not be able to falsify the claim of immortality .

Accepting Flew's Principle of Falsification. The other response is to take Flew's bull by the horns and point out that falsification is possible in one of three ways, one past, one present, and one future.

Historical falsification. The resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day can be falsified (*see* Resurrection, Evidence for). All that ever needed to happen was to produce the body of Jesus or proof of a conspiracy to dispose of the body. Or one could find eyewitness testimony that Jesus remained in the grave longer than three days. The apostle Paul recognized this when he said, "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God that he raised Christ from the dead. . . . And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also

who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost" (1 Cor. 15:14–18). If the resurrection can be disproven, Christianity—and Christianity's God—are false.

Falsification now. Since the apologetic evidence for the truth of Christianity is based on past events, there is no direct way to test them in the present. One can only use evidence from the past that remains in the present to argue for or against the truth of past events. Since Christianity depends on the truth of the premise "God exists (now)," this is a falsifiable premise. A theist might be willing to give up belief in God if the nontheist can present a valid disproof for the existence of God. Such disproofs have been tried, and all fail (*see* GOD, ALLEGED DISPROOFS OF). That means that falsification did not succeed, not that could not succeed in principle, if in fact no God existed.

Eschatological falsification. Eschatological falsification of some things, such as immortality, is impossible. However, many religious beliefs could be falsified. The statement "I will go to a place of bliss at death" is falsified if one remains conscious after death and goes to a place of suffering. Likewise, reincarnation can be falsified, if one dies with "bad karma" but is not reincarnated. It is more difficult to falsify the existence of God, even if one lives forever. God could choose to hide forever from view, but this is unlikely.

However it is approached, Flew's principle of falsification is far from a convincing blow to the truth of theism or of Christianity. The theist can offer many ways in which core beliefs can be falsified in principle, if not in practice.

Divine Omnipotence, Freedom, and Evil. Flew posed a difficult dilemma for theism in his article on "Divine Omnipotence and Human Freedom" (Flew, *New Essays,* chapter 8). He acknowledges the theists claim that even an omnipotent Being cannot do what is contradictory. But he challenges the view of many theists that it is contradictory to create a world where no free creature will ever do evil.

Flew insists that "omnipotence might have, could without contradiction be said to have, created people who would always as a matter of fact freely have chosen to do the right thing" (p. 152). And in response to the theist's claim that God could not have created higher-order goods without allowing lower-order goods, Flew argues that "Omnipotence could have created creatures who he could have been sure *would* respond to the appropriate challenge by a willing exercise of fortitude; without these creatures having to acquire this character by any actual exercise of fortitude" (p. 155).

Flew's arguments evoked the famous "free-will" response of Alvin Plantinga who argued that as long as one free creature chooses evil God cannot stop it without fettering their freedom—in which case they are not really free. Others note that what is logically possible is not necessarily actually achievable (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF). So while it is logically possible that no one would ever do evil, it is not actually achievable as long as someone freely chooses to do evil.

Miracles and Christian Apologetics. Flew alleges the unhistoricity of miracles (*see* MIRACLE ; MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF ; MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE), as well as their incredibility and their unidentifiability.

Flew's argument that miracles are unhistorical rests on the assumption that miracles are unrepeatable. Therefore they fail the test of credibility. Flew's argument follows the form developed by David Hume. As Flew sees Hume's argument it runs something like this:

1. Every miracle is a violation of a law of nature.

2. The evidence against any violation of nature is the strongest possible evidence.

3. Therefore, the evidence against miracles is the strongest possible evidence.

Flew says that Hume was primarily concerned with the question of evidence. The problem was how the occurrence of a miracle could be proved, rather than whether such events ever occurred. However, "our sole ground for characterizing the reported occurrence as miraculous is at the same time a sufficient reason for calling it physically impossible." But why is this so? Flew responds that the critical historian, confronted with a story of a miracle, dismisses it. That is begging the question. On what grounds are miracles dismissed? "To justify his procedure he will have to appeal to precisely the principle which Hume advanced: the 'absolute impossibility or miraculous nature' of the events attested." This must be done to the satisfaction of reasonable people. So Flew believes that, even though miracles are not logically impossible, they are scientifically impossible. "It is only and precisely by presuming that the laws that hold today held in the past . . . that we can rationally interpret the detritus (fragments) of the past as evidence and from it construct our account of what actually happened ("Miracles").

To the charge that this uniformitarianism is irrationally dogmatic, Flew answers with what is at the heart of his amplification of Hume's argument. As Hume insisted, "the possibility of miracles is a matter of evidence and not of dogmatism. Further, reports of alleged occurrences of the miraculous are necessarily singular, particular, and in the past tense." Propositions of this sort cannot be tested directly. Repeatable propositions, therefore, have greater logical credibility (ibid.). This argument may be stated:

1. Miracles, by nature, are particular and unrepeatable.

2. Natural events are by nature general and repeatable.

3. In practice, the evidence for the general and repeatable is always greater than that for the particular and unrepeatable.

4. Therefore, in practice, the evidence will always be greater against miracles than for them.

From this statement it is clear that Flew regards generality and repeatability to be establishing factors for credibility.

Repeatability and Falsifiability. Most modern naturalists, such as Flew, accept some unrepeatable singularities, for example, at the formation of the universe (*see* BIG BANG THEORY). And nearly all scientists believe that the process of the origin of life has never been repeated. If

Flew's argument is applied consistently, it is wrong for scientists to believe in any such singularity. Flew's argument would eliminate some basic naturalist's beliefs.

Flew's view also is subject to the very criticism Flew makes of theists, for it is not an unfalsifiable position (see above). No matter what state of affairs occurs, even a resurrection, Flew (contrary even to Hume's claims) would be obliged to deny that it was a miracle. And no event in the world would falsify naturalism. For the deck is stacked, so that the evidence always weighs more heavily for antisupernaturalism than against it. Neither would it help for Flew to claim that naturalism is falsifiable in principle, if never in practice. Then, to be fair, he would have to allow theists the same prerogative. If supernaturalism can never be established in practice, neither can naturalism. It is always possible for the theist to claim of every alleged natural event that "God is the ultimate cause." The theist may insist that all "natural" events (i.e., naturally repeatable ones) are the way God normally operates and that "miraculous" events are the way he works on occasion. By Flew's own grounds, there is no way, in practice, to falsify theistic belief.

One may object to Flew's assumption that the repeatable always evidentially outweighs the unrepeatable. If this were so, then, as Richard Whately pointed out, one could not believe in the historicity of any singular events from the past. If repeatability in practice is the true test of superior evidence, one should not believe that observed births or deaths occurred, for neither is repeatable in practice. The science of geology should be eliminated.

Scientists do not reject singularities out of hand, observes physicist professor Stanley Jaki. "Luckily for science, scientists relatively rarely brush aside reports about a really *new* case with the remark: 'It cannot be really different from the thousand other cases we have already investigated.' The brave reply of the young assistant, 'But, Sir, what if this is the thousand and first case?' which . . . is precisely the rejoinder that is to be offered in connection with facts that fall under suspicion because of their miraculous character" (Jaki, 100). So, if the naturalist pushes arguments far enough to eliminate miracles, the grounds for many other beliefs are eliminated by implication. Qualifications to include natural and scientific data reopen the door to miracles.

Identifiability. Flew's second argument is not ontological but epistemological. Miracles are not rejected because they are known not to have occurred. They are rejected because they are not or cannot be known to have occurred. Flew's argument goes beyond mere identifiability. If successful it would show that miracles have no apologetic value.

Flew claims to be willing to allow for the possibility of miracles in principle (*see* SPINOZA, BENEDICT). In practice, he argues, there is a serious, even insurmountable, problem in being unable to identify miracles. The argument may be summarized:

1. A miracle must be identifiable or distinguishable before it can be known to have occurred.

2. Miracles may only be identified in terms of nature or in terms of the supernatural.

3. To identify it by reference to the supernatural (as an act of God) begs the question.

4. To identify it in reference to natural terms takes away the necessary supernatural dimension.

5. Therefore, miracles cannot be known to have occurred, since they cannot be identified.

Flew insists against Augustine (*City of God* 21.8), that if a miracle is merely "a portent [which] is not contrary to nature, but contrary to our knowledge of nature," then it really has no value as proof of the supernatural. It merely shows the relative knowledge of a generation. Whereas Augustine's notion of a miracle would assure the dependence of creation on God, it would do so only at the cost of subverting the apologetic value of all miracles (Flew, 348). If a miracle is not beyond the power of nature, but only beyond our *knowledge* of nature, then a miracle is nothing but a natural event. We could not know that a miracle really occurred; only that it seemed to. To truly be miraculous, a miracle must be independent of nature, but a miracle cannot be identified except as it relates to nature. There is no natural way to identify a miracle, unless it is known to be a miracle on some independent grounds. It must be considered simply an odd or inconsistent event that a broader scientific law could explain.

From this, Flew argues that no alleged miraculous event can be used to prove a religious system is true. We cannot argue that God exists because an event is an act of God. Unless there is already a God who acts, there cannot be an act of God. To argue from act of God to supernatural system begs the question. We must identify the event as supernatural from a strictly naturalistic perspective. But this is impossible, since an unusual event in the natural realm is, from a naturalistic perspective, strictly a natural perspective.

Miracles, therefore, have no apologetic value.

The heart of Flew's argument is now in focus (ibid., 348–49). Miracles are not identifiable because there is no way to define them without begging the question:

1. A miracle must be identifiable before it can be identified.

2. A miracle is identified in one of two ways (a.) an unusual event in nature, or (b.) an exception to nature.

3. An unusual event in nature is simply a natural event, not a miracle.

4. An exception to nature cannot be known from within nature alone.

5. Therefore, a miracle is not identifiable and cannot be used to prove anything.

It would seem that Flew has made a penetrating point. His first premise is solid. We must know what we are looking for before we can know we have found it. We cannot discover what cannot be defined. But to define miracles in terms of natural events is to reduce them to natural

events. To define them in terms of a supernatural cause is to suppose that God exists, a circular argument.

Presupposing God's Existence. One way to reply to Flew is to claim that naturalists as well as supernaturalists are arguing in a circle. Antisupernatural arguments presuppose naturalism. Thus, some theists simply claim that it is necessary to argue in a circle. All reason is circular (Van Til, 118), for all thought ultimately is grounded in faith (*see* FIDEISM).

If a supernaturalist chooses this route the grounds (or lack of grounds) seem just as good as those of the antisupernaturalist. Naturalists who attempt to rule out miracles on the basis of a faith commitment to naturalism are in no position to forbid theists from simply believing that God exists and, hence, that miracles are identifiable. Once naturalists are granted the privilege of a mere belief basis for naturalism, with no rational or scientific proof, alternate worldviews must be allowed the same opportunity.

Evidence for God's Existence. Another avenue of approach is open, however: Theists may offer rational justification for belief in God. If successful, then they can define (show the identifiability of) miracles in terms of the supernatural realm they have *reason* to think exists. This is precisely what the cosmological argument and the teleological argument do. To the extent that one can give a rational argument for God's existence, Flew's criticism is circumvented.

Summary. Two themes of Flew are a serious threat to Christian apologetics: (1) His argument that belief in God is not falsifiable, and (2) his view that miracles are not identifiable. There are ways to meet the challenge of verifiability. Christianity can be verified from events in the past, present, and future. A more serious matter is the attack on miracles. Even though Flew does not claim that this argument eliminates the possibility of miracles, it would, if successful, seriously cripple Christian apologetics (*see* CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS ; HISTORICAL APOLOGETICS). If miracles cannot be identified as supernatural events, they have no apologetic value. A mere unusual event within nature has no evidential value to prove anything beyond the existence of nature.

However, as shown above, classical apologists can evade this problem by either presupposing the existence of a supernatural realm (i.e., God) or by offering evidence for his existence. As long as there is a God who can act, special acts of God (miracles) are possible and identifiable. The only way to disprove this possibility is to disprove the possibility of God's existence. Such efforts are doomed to failure and are usually self-refuting (*see* GOD, ALLEGED DISPROOFS OF).

Historical apologists do not have this option, since they believe that the whole case for Christianity, including the existence of God, can be made from historical evidence alone. Against this view, Flew makes a telling point.

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Flood, Noah's. The record of Noah's flood in Genesis 6–9 has raised serious questions in the minds of Bible critics, among them:

How could this small ark hold hundreds of thousands of species?

How could a wooden ship stay afloat in such a violent storm?

How could Noah's family and the animals survive so long in the ark?

Species Saved. The first problem deals with how such a small ark could hold all the animal species on earth. The consensus of ancient historians and archaeologists is that a cubit was about eighteen inches long. Translating the Bible's dimensions according to an eighteen-inch cubit, Noah's ark was only forty-five feet high, seventy-five feet wide, and four hundred and fifty feet long (Gen. 6:15). Noah was told to take two of every kind of unclean animal and seven of every kind of clean animal (6:19 ; 7:2). But scientists count between one-half billion and more than 1 billion animal species.

A Localized Disaster? One possible explanation is that the flood was local in geographic scope. Noah in that case would only have to repopulate the local area and have animals to eat and sacrifice.

As evidence that the flood was not universal, it is noted that the same "universal" language of Genesis 6 through 9 is used elsewhere when something less than the whole world is meant. The people on the Day of Pentecost were said to be "from every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5) yet the nations listed are restricted to the Roman world. Paul said in Colossians 1:23 that "this is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to *every creature under heaven* ." Paul's itinerary in Acts 13 to 28 shows that he went only to the Mediterranean area.

Also, the silt deposits a flood like Noah's would have left are found only in the Mesopotamian Valley, not over the entire world. There is not enough water in the world to cover the highest mountains (7:20). Some mountains are several miles high. Waters that high would have caused problems with the rotation of the earth. The mountains in the Mesopotamian area are not nearly so high.

Finally, the size of the ark would restrict the number of species. Those from a localized region would have been more manageably housed.

A Universal Flood? Other Old Testament scholars believe there is evidence of a universal flood. The language of Genesis is more intense than that of the references noted. God's commands to take animals of every kind would not have been required if only the life in a limited geographical area was to be destroyed. Animals could have migrated in to repopulate the region. And Genesis 10:32 declares that the whole world was populated after the flood from the eight who were saved. This would not have been true if those outside the local area had not drowned. Peter refers to the salvation of only eight (1 Peter 3:20).

The silt deposits in the Mesopotamian Valley were from a local flood(s), not the universal floods. The silt layers throughout the world are open to interpretation, including the possibility of a world catastrophe. There are also signs of dramatic changes in the position of earth's land masses. The mountains could have taken new, far higher, shapes because of the unparalleled forces at work during the flood.

The Ark Was Large Enough. But assuming the flood was universal, the question remains as to how Noah could get all those animals in the ark. Engineers, computer programmers, and wildlife experts have all taken a look at the problem, and their consensus is that the ark was sufficient to the task.

The ark was actually a huge structure—the size of a modern ocean liner, with three levels of deck (Gen. 6:13), which tripled its space to over 1.5 million cubic feet. This equals 569 railroad box cars.

Second, the modern concept of "species" is not the same as a "kind" in the Bible. But even if it were, there are probably only some 72,000 different kinds of land animals which the ark would have needed to contain. Since the average size of land animals is smaller than a cat, less than half of the ark would be needed to store 150,000 animals—more than there probably were. Insects take only a very small space. The sea animals stayed in the sea, and many species could have survived in egg form. There would have been plenty of room left over for eight people and food storage.

Third, Noah could have taken younger or smaller varieties of some larger animals. Given all these factors, there was plenty of room for all the animals, food for the trip, and the eight humans aboard.

Wooden Ship in a Violent Storm. The ark was made of wood and carried a heavy load of cargo. It is argued that the violent waves of a worldwide flood surely would have broken it into pieces (cf. Gen. 7:4 , 11).

The ark was made of a strong and flexible material (gopher wood). Gopher wood "gives" without breaking. The heavy load gave the ark stability. Also, naval architects report that a long box-shaped, floating boxcar, such as the ark, is the most stable kind of craft in turbulent waters. One former naval architect concluded: "Noah's Ark was extremely stable, more stable in fact, than modern shipping" (see Collins, 86). Indeed, modern ocean liners follow the same basic proportions. However, their stability is lessened by the need to slice through the water with as little drag as possible. There is no reason Noah's ark could not have survived a gigantic, even worldwide, flood. Modern stability tests have shown that such a vessel could take up to 200-foot-high waves and could tip as much as 90 degrees and still right itself.

Survival Inside the Ark. How could all these animals and humans last over one year cooped up in this ark?

There is some question as to just how long the flood lasted. Genesis 7:24 ; 8:3 speaks of the flood waters lasting for 150 days. But other verses seem to say it was only forty days (Gen. 7:4 , 12 , 17). And one verse indicates that it was over a year. These numbers refer to different things. Forty days is how long it *"rained"* (7:12), and 150 days speaks of how long the flood *"waters prevailed"* (8:3 ; cf. 7:24). After this it was not until the fifth month after the rain began that the ark rested on Mount Ararat (8:4). About eleven months after the rain began the waters dried up (8:13). And exactly one year and ten days after the flood began, Noah and his family emerged on dry ground (8:14).

Another answer is that living things can do almost anything they must to survive, as long as they have enough food and water. Many of the animals may have gone into hibernation or semihibernation. And Noah had plenty of room for food on the inside and abundant water on the outside to draw on.

For notes on how nonbiblical flood reports and legends from the ancient world relate to the Bible's account, see ARCHAEOLOGY, OLD TESTAMENT ; EBLA TABLETS .

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Foundationalism. *Foundationalism* is the theory of knowledge (*see* EPISTEMOLOGY) that affirms the need for certain foundational principles (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES) as the basis of all thought. By contrast, Coherentism claims that no such principles are needed but that ideas simply need to cohere like a web in a consistent way, without any ultimate foundational principles.

Argument for Foundationalism. Foundationalists argue that no knowledge, not even about ideas that cohere, would be possible unless there were first principles such as the law of noncontradiction. These principles make it possible to know if ideas are consistent and noncontradictory. They point out that no web hangs in mid air; it must be anchored somewhere. C. S. Lewis observed,

As such, these first principles of Practical Reason are fundamental to all knowledge and argument. To deny them is to deny knowledge itself; it is no use trying to see through first principles. If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To "see through" all things is the same as not to see. [Lewis, 87]

The basic foundationalist argument is that there must be a basis for all truth claims and that an infinite regress never (*see* INFINITE SERIES) provides a foundation; it only delays providing one forever. Hence, ultimately there must be some first principles on which all knowledge rests. Everything not evident in itself must be made evident in terms of something that is. So, ultimately there must be some self-evident principles in terms of which everything else can be made evident.

It is unreasonable to try to get behind them. Hence, one cannot have an "open mind" about whether they are true. One cannot even have a mind without them.

Foundational Principles. Classical foundationalists generally agree that the basic laws of logic are foundational principles. These include the law of noncontradiction—that a proposition cannot be both true and false at the same time and in the same sense. Likewise, the kindred principles of the excluded middle (either something is true or false, but not both) and identity (what is true is true and what is false is false) are foundational principles.

In metaphysics traditional foundationalists offer principles, such as: "Being is being"; "Nonbeing is not being," and "Something either is being or nonbeing."

Ethical first principles include: "Good should be sought," "Evil should be avoided," and "Either a thing is good or evil."

Criticisms. The most significant criticisms of foundationalism are:

There Is No Agreement on First Principles. Not everyone agrees on which principles are to be included in the foundational principles. In response, foundationalists point out that failure to get universal agreement on the number of foundational principles does not mean there are none, any more than failure to agree on how many ethical principles there are means there is no ultimate basis for right and wrong (*see* MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF), or that failure to agree on how many scientific laws there are means there are none.

There Is No Basis for First Principles. But if everything needs a basis, why not seek a basis for the so-called foundational principles. What is the foundation of foundationalism?

Foundationalists do not argue that every statement needs a basis. They believe that only statements that are not self-evident need a foundation. They hold that statements that are not evident in themselves must be evident in terms of something else that is self-evident. Once one arrives at the self-evident, it need not be evident in terms of anything else (*see* REALISM).

What Is Self-evident? Some object that there is no sure way to know what is self-evident. Not everything said to be self-evident to foundationalists is self-evident to others.

To this criticism foundationalists point out that a self-evident truth is one whose predicate is reducible to its subject, either directly or indirectly. Hence, all one needs to do is analyze it clearly to find out if this is so. For example, it is self-evident that "Being exists," since whatever "exists" has "being." Likewise, it is self-evident that "Every effect has a cause," since an "effect" means that which is "caused." Further, simply because some things are not evident to everyone does not mean they are not self-evident in themselves. The reason a self-evident truth may not be evident to someone could be because the person has not analyzed it carefully. But their failure in no way invalidates the self-evident nature of the first principle.

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Frazer, James. James Frazer (1854–1941) was born in Glasgow and educated at Larchfield Academy, Helensburg; Glasgow University, and Cambridge University. From 1907 to 1919 he was professor of social anthropology at the University of Liverpool. Frazer was instrumental in

starting *The Cambridge Review* (1879). He delivered the first of his Gifford Lectures in 1911 on "Belief in Immortality and the Worship of the Dead." Between 1890 and 1912 he produced his monumental work, *The Golden Bough* . This and the three-volume *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* (1918) were produced in abridged editions in 1922 and 1923, respectively. Frazer also wrote *The Worship of Nature* (1926) and *The Fear of the Dead in Primitive Religion* (1933–34).

The Golden Bough gives an evolutionary twist to the history of religions. Frazer proposed that religions evolved from magic through animism and polytheism to henotheism and finally to monotheism . He alleged that Christianity copied pagan myths. In spite of its selective and anecdotal use of sources that were outdated by subsequent research, the ideas of the book are still widely believed.

Evaluation. Frazer's evolution of religion thesis is without foundation for reasons discussed in detail elsewhere. See the articles MIRACLES, MYTH AND ; MITHRAISM ; MYTHOLOGY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT ; and RESURRECTION CLAIMS IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS . Key reasons include:

Pagan myths most frequently cited as the models for the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ actually appeared later than did the Gospels (see Yamauchi). Therefore, the Christian writers could not have copied these stories.

There are significant differences in pagan and Christian versions. For example, pagans did not believe in the resurrection (*see* RESURRECTION, PHYSICAL NATURE OF) of the physical body that died, but in reincarnation of the soul into another body. Pagan stories were all about polytheistic (*see* POLYTHEISM) gods, not about a monotheistic (*see* THEISM) deity.

There is good evidence that monotheism was the primitive religion of the earliest known peoples, particularly in the Fertile Crescent, not animism and polytheism (*see* MONOTHEISM, PRIMITIVE). The oldest records from both Ebla (*see* EBLA TABLETS) and the Old Testament books about the earliest times, Genesis and Job, speak of monotheism. Anthropologist W. Schmidt proposes an interpretation of the data that monotheism is the most primitive view of God. Animism, polytheism, and henotheism are seen as later corruption (*Origin and Growth* ; *Primitive Revelation*). William F. Albright comments, "There can no longer be any doubt that Fr. Schmidt has successfully disproved the simple evolutionary progression . . . fetishism— polytheism—monotheism, or Tylor's animism—polytheism—monotheism. . . . The simple fact is that religious phenomena are so complex in origin and so fluid in nature that over-simplification is more misleading in the field of religion than perhaps anywhere else" (Albright, 171).

Even in the existing so-called "primitive religions" there is a widespread concept of a high god or sky god whom scholars believe closely connects with primitive monotheism. John Mbiti has described 300 traditional religions. Yet "in all these societies, without a single exception, people have a notion of God as the Supreme Being (see Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*). Albright likewise acknowledges that the "high gods may be all-powerful and they may be credited with creation of the world; they are generally cosmic deities who often, perhaps usually,

reside in heaven" (Albright, 170). This clearly runs counter to the animistic and polytheistic conceptions of deity.

Study of Frazer and his critics shows fairly conclusively that Frazer's thesis was not motivated by the facts, but by his evolutionary view of religion (*see* DARWIN, CHARLES). This he simply presupposed. His contribution was an ingenious presentation of existing knowledge within a particular framework.

The evolutionary view of religion was itself late, only gaining popularity in the wake of the biological evolution (*see* EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL ; MISSING LINKS) theory popularized by Charles Darwin in *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *Descent of Man* (1871). Frazer's evolutionary idea is based on several unproved assumptions. It assumes biological evolution to be fact, though it lacks support. It also assumes biological evolution describes events at the social and religious levels, which does not follow in any case.

Even Theodore Gaster's revision of Frazer's book states: "[The revision] eliminates, for example, Frazer's lengthy discussion of the relation between magic and Religion, because the view which is there expressed that the two things stand in genealogical succession . . . has now been shown to be a mere product of late nineteenth-century evolutionism, without adequate basis" (Frazer, *The New Golden Bough,* 1959, xv–xvi).

Frazer's theory also is based on an unsubstantiated antisupernaturalism (*see* MIRACLES, ARGUMENTS AGAINST). The Bible teaches that God revealed himself specifically to certain people and generally to all humankind through creation and the moral order (cf. Psalm 19 ; Rom. 1:18–20 ; 2:14–15). The evolutionary view makes monotheism a product of human development. God was first seen as something in nature and then as something beyond nature. He does not reveal himself to people.

In addition to these factors, it has been shown that pagan myths post-date the Christian record of the birth, death, and resurrection. Ronald Nash observes that the chronology is all wrong if pagan religions influenced Christian myth-makers. All of the sources that tell about these pagan myths are very late (Nash, 193). Christians could hardly have been the ones influenced. If anything, pagan religions borrowed from Christianity (*see* DIVINE BIRTH STORIES ; MITHRAISM ; MYTHOLOGY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT ; RESURRECTION CLAIMS IN NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS).

Significant differences between pagan and Christian versions also preclude a Christian dependence. Nash lists six differences between the death of Jesus and pagan god-death accounts: (1) No pagan deities died in the place of someone else, as did Jesus. (2) Only Jesus died to pay for sins. (3) Jesus died once for all, while Pagan deities died and came to life with the annual cycles of nature. (4) The death of Jesus was an event attested to in history; the pagan deities' stories were only mythical. (5) Jesus died voluntarily. (6) The death of Jesus was a triumph, not a defeat (Nash, 171–72). Likewise, the resurrection, the Christian concepts of new birth and redemption, and the sacraments all differ significantly from pagan religious beliefs and practices (Nash).

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Free Will. Conceptions of the nature of human choice fall within three categories: determinism, indeterminism (*see* INDETERMINACY, PRINCIPLE OF), and self-determinism. A determinist looks to actions caused by another, an indeterminist to uncaused actions, and a self-determinist to self-caused actions.

Determinism. For a full discussion and the arguments for and against this viewpoint, see DETERMINISM . There are two basic kinds of deter minism: naturalistic and theistic. Naturalistic determinism is most readily identified with behavioral psychologist B. F. Skinner. Skinner held that all human behavior is determined by genetic and behavioral factors. Humans simply act according to what has been programmed into them.

All who accept strong forms of Calvinistic theology hold to some degree of theistic determinism. Jonathan Edwards related all actions ultimately to God as First Cause. "Free choice" for Edwards is doing what one desires, and God is the Author of the heart's desires. God is sovereign, in control of all and so ultimately the cause of all. Fallen humanity is totally without

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freedom of the affections, so they can do whatever they want, but what they want will forever be in the control of their corrupt, world-directed heart. God's grace controls actions as God controls desires and their attendant thoughts and actions.

Response to Determinism. Nondeterminists respond that a self-caused action is not impossible, and all actions need not be attributed to the First Cause (God). Some actions can be caused by human beings to whom God gave free moral agency. Free choice is not, as Edwards contends, doing what one *desires* (with God giving the desires). Rather, it is doing what one *decides,* which is not always the same thing. One need not reject God's sovereign control to deny determinism. God can control by omniscience as well as by causal power.

Two forms of determinism may be distinguished, hard and soft. A *hard determinist* believes all acts are caused by God, that God is the only efficient Cause. A *soft determinist* holds that God as the Primary Cause is compatible with human free choice as the secondary Cause.

Indeterminism. According to the indeterminist, few if any human actions are caused. Events and action are contingent and spontaneous. Charles Pierce and William James were indeterminists.

Arguments for Indeterminism. The arguments for indeterminism follow the nature of free actions. Since they follow no determinate pattern, it is concluded that they are indeterminate. Some contemporary indeterminists appeal to Werner Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy (*see* INDETERMINACY, PRINCIPLE OF) to support their position (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES). According to this principle, events in the subatomic realm (like the specific course of a given particle) are completely unpredictable.

According to the argument from the unpredictability of free acts, an act must be predictable in order to be determinate. But free acts are not predictable. Hence, they are indeterminate.

Critique of Indeterminacy. All forms of indeterminism fall shipwreck on the principle of causality, which asserts that all events have a cause (*see* CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF). But indeterminacy asserts that free choices are uncaused events.

Indeterminism makes the world irrational and science impossible. It is contrary to reason to affirm that things happen willy nilly without a cause. Hence, indeterminacy reduces to irrationalism. Both operation and origin sciences are dependent on the principle of causality. Simply because a free act is not caused by another does not mean that it is uncaused. It could be self-caused.

Use of Heisenberg's principle is misapplied, since it does not deal with the *causality* of an event but with *unpredictability.*

Indeterminism robs humans of their moral responsibility, since they are not the cause of these actions. If they are not, why should they be blamed for evil actions? Indeterminism, at least on a cosmic scale, is unacceptable from a biblical perspective, since God is causally related to the world as both originator (Genesis 1) and sustainer of all things (Col. 1:15–16).

Self-Determinism. According to this view, a person's moral acts are not caused by another or uncaused, but are caused by oneself. It is important to know at the outset precisely what is meant by self-determinism or free choice. Negatively, it means that a moral action is not uncaused or caused by another. It is neither indeterminate nor determined by another. Positively, it is morally self-determined, an act freely chosen, without compulsion, in which one could have done otherwise. Several arguments support this position.

Arguments for Self-determinism. Either moral actions are uncaused, caused by another, or caused by oneself. However, no action can be uncaused, since this violates the fundamental rational principle that every event has a cause. Neither can a person's actions be caused by others, for in that case they would not be *personal* actions. Further, if one's acts are caused by another, then how can he or she be held responsible for them? Both Augustine (in *On Free Will* and *On Grace and Free Will*) and Thomas Aquinas were self-determinists, as are moderate Calvinists and Arminians.

The denial that some actions can be free is self-defeating. A complete determinist insists that both determinists and nondeterminists are determined to believe what they believe. However, determinists believe self-determinists are wrong and ought to change their view. But "ought to change" implies freedom to change, which is contrary to determinism. If God is the cause of all human actions, then human beings are not morally responsible. And it makes no sense to praise human beings for doing good, nor to blame them for doing evil.

A dimension of this controversy has to do with how the "self" is viewed. By "self" the self-determinist believes there is an "I" (subject) that is more than the object. That is, my subjectivity transcends my objectivity. I cannot put all that I am under a microscope to analyze as an object. There is more to "me" than objectivity. This "I" that transcends being objectified is free. The scientist who attempts to study personal self always transcends the experiment. The scientist is always on the outside looking in. In fact, "I" am free to reject "me." It is not determined by objectivity, not subject to being locked into scientific analysis. As such, the "I" is free.

Objections to Self-determinism. Free will rules out sovereignty. If human beings are free, are they outside God's sovereignty? Either God determines all, or else he is not sovereign. And if he determines all, then there are no self-determined acts.

It is sufficient to note that God sovereignly delegated free choice to some of his creatures. There was no necessity for him to do so; he exercised his free will. So human freedom is a sovereignly given power to make moral choices. Only absolute freedom would be contrary to God's absolute sovereignty. But human freedom is a limited freedom. Humans are not free to become God themselves. A contingent being cannot become a Necessary Being. For a Necessary Being cannot come to be. It must always be what it is.

Free will is contrary to grace . It is objected that either free, good acts spring from God's grace, or else from our own initiative. But if the latter, they are not the result of God's grace (Eph. 2:8–9). However, this does not necessarily follow. Free will itself is a gracious gift. Further, special grace is not forced coercively onto the person. Rather, grace works persuasively. The hard determinist's position confuses the nature of faith. The ability of a person to receive

God's gracious gift of salvation is not the same as working for it. To think so is to give credit for the gift to the receiver, rather than to the Giver.

A self-caused act is logically impossible. It is objected that self-determinism means to cause oneself, which is impossible. Someone cannot be prior to oneself, which is what a self-caused act entails. This objection misunderstands determinism, which does not mean that one *causes himself to exist* , but rather *causes something else to happen* . A self-determined act is one determined by oneself, not another.

Self-determinism is contrary to causality. If all acts need a cause, then so do acts of the will, which are not caused by the self but by something else. If everything needs a cause, so do the persons performing the actions (*see* CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF).

There is no violation of the actual principle of causality in the exercise of free actions. The principle does not claim that every *thing* (being) needs a cause. Finite things need a cause. God is uncaused (*see* GOD, NATURE OF). The person performing free actions is caused by God. The *power* of freedom is caused by God, but the *exercise* of freedom is caused by the person. The self is the first-cause of personal actions. The principle of causality is not violated because every finite thing and every action has a cause.

Self-determinism is contrary to predestination. Others object that self-determinism is contrary to God's predestination. But self-determinists respond that God can predetermine in several ways. He can determine (1) contrary to free choice (forcing the person to do what he or she does not choose to do); (2) based on free choices already made (waiting to see what the person will do); and (3) knowing omnisciently what the person will do "in accordance with his foreknowledge" (1 Peter 1:2). "Those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son" (Rom. 8:29). Either positions 2 or 3 are consistent with self-determinism. Both insist that God can determine the future by free choice, since he omnisciently knows *for sure* how they will *freely* act. So, it is *determined* from the standpoint of God's infallible knowledge but *free* from the vantage point of human choice.

Connected with the argument from strong determinism is that, while Adam had free choice (Rom. 5:12), fallen human beings are in bondage to sin and not free to respond to God. But this view is contrary to both God's consistent call on people to repent (Luke 13:3 ; Acts 2:38) and believe (e.g., John 3:16 ; 3:36 ; Acts 16:31), as well as to direct statements that even unbelievers have the ability to respond to God's grace (Matt. 23:37 ; John 7:17 ; Rom. 7:18 ; 1 Cor. 9:17 ; Philem. 14 ; 1 Peter 5:2).

This argument continues that if humans have the ability to respond, then salvation is not of grace (Eph. 2:8–9) but by human effort. However, this is a confusion about the nature of faith. The ability of a person to receive God's gracious *gift* of salvation is not the same as *working* for it. To think so is to give credit for the gift to the receiver rather than to the Giver who graciously gave it.

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Freud was born in 1856 in Freiberg, Moravia. When he was three years old his family moved to Vienna where he later attended university and studied medicine. He married Martha Bernays, who bore him six children.

In addition to his works on psychology, Freud was preoccupied with religion. He wrote *Totem and Taboo* and *Moses and Monotheism* , but his most influential in undermining belief in God was the 1927 work, *The Future of an Illusion* .

View of Religion. Although an atheist, Freud found some positive features in religion. He acknowledged that (1) there is definitely some truth in religion; (2) in fact, some religion may all be true, and it cannot be definitely disproved. (3) It would be of greatest significance if it were true. (4) There is a feeling of dependence from which religion arose that is shared by all. (5) Religion has provided great comfort for people, and (6) such goals of religion as brotherhood and easing suffering are good and right. (7) Historically, it has been the most important and influential part of culture. Freud even admitted that his position against religion might be entirely unjustified, but he held it strongly, nonetheless.

Despite these benefits, Freud believed that religion must be rejected as authoritarian in form, unnecessary, and inadequate. He suspected that it was founded in an illusory desire for wish-fulfillment. Religion is something we wish to be true but have no basis for trust beyond our wish. In psychoanalytic terms, God is a childhood neurosis we never outgrew, the result of a desire for a kind of heavenly security blanket. That we wish for a pot of gold at the end of a rainbow does not mean there is one. The desire for a Father to comfort us through the woes of life is just as illusory.

Freud believed religion to be harmful because:

1. It arises from the desire or wish for a Cosmic Comforter.

2. It originated during a primitive (ignorant) period of human development.

3. It drains energy from the drive to solve the world's problems.

4. It is selfish and impatient, wanting immediate, immortal reward upon death.

5. It may contribute to the passionate, irrational nature, because of early religion indoctrination and repression of sexual development.

6. It keeps people in a perpetual state of childhood and immaturity.

7. Its adherents are closed-minded; they do not willingly give it up under any circumstances.

8. It is not needed; humanity now has science to control the world and, with resignation, can live with the rest.

9. It has not brought personal and social satisfaction in thousands of years of effort.

10.   It has a specious and inauthentic basis: It is alleged to be true since: (a) our primal ancestors believed it; (b) miraculous proofs have been handed down from antiquity, and it is impious to question their authenticity.

Inadequate Justifications for Religion. If one purified religion of all its contradictions, it should still be rejected because it is a wish-fulfillment. Why should we believe this one absurdity and not others? One should not simply behave "as if it were true," contrary to our sense of reality.

Spiritism and trances do not justify religion. These experiences prove only subjective mental states of the persons who have them. Religion should not be accepted by virtue of it being an ancestral belief. Our ancestor were ignorant of many things.

Nor should one accept religion by virtue of the feeling of dependence that lies inside all human beings (*see* SCHLEIERMACHER, FRIEDRICH). To dwell on this feeling alone is irreligious;

it is what is done in response to this feeling of dependence that constitutes religion. Religion should not be accepted as a necessary moral restraint. A rational basis is better and is applicable to all people, not just to the religious.

Holding God to be indefinable and indescribable is inadequate. This unknowable God is of no interest to human beings.

Response to Objections. To the objection that "reason and science are too slow in providing needed comfort and answers," Freud replied that reason persists and is better in the long run. Freud admitted that there is no guarantee of reward in reason and science. Such a guarantee is sought by selfishness. Reason is less selfish than religion. He also admitted that his own view might be an illusion. He responded that the weakness of his view does not prove religion is right. If faith in reason is also intolerant and dogmatic, at least reason can be given up and no penalty for disbelief. Religion cannot.

To the charge that rejection is dangerous to the institution and work of religion, Freud comments that the truly religious person will not be moved by his view.

Are human beings too passionate to be ruled by reason? How does society know whether they are, for it has never been tried? "Moral chaos will result without religion." Not so, Freud claims. For reason is a better basis for morals. It also is untrue that we are helpless without religion, for we have science and the ability to resign ourselves to the handling of our own problems.

In general the argument to which Freud responded was that, truth or not, human beings cannot do without religious consolation. Not surprisingly, Freud insists that eventually, people must grow up.

Evaluation. It is noteworthy that Freud is not against religion, but against dogmatic, authoritarian religiosity. He admits that even the dogmatic type may be true and he may be wrong; he tends to relate most to the sort of dependence that Schleiermacher calls religion. Freud agrees with Schleiermacher that religion may be true and necessary.

These admissions make Freud's blanket rejection of religion seem prejudiced, unreasonable, and even cruel. In effect, he feigns not to care that religious tenets may be true, have altruistic goals, give comfort, and are the most significant and influential part of human culture.

The Dynamics of Religion. The assumption that the desire for satisfaction is wrong is as clearly unfounded as to say that the desire for food and water would be wrong. Freud assumes that all religion involves is a desire for comfort. But some religious obligations are not comfortable. One does them out of a sense of duty to God and others. Certainly, those who are persecuted and martyred do not find comfort.

The cultural ignorance of our ancestors does not automatically disqualify their religious judgment, any more than the lack of formal training means someone cannot have wisdom. In

fact, the opposite may be true if education has a hidden agenda of instilling prejudice. One can be educated by secularist culture away from a thoughtful consideration of religious matters.

Rather than draining energy from caring about the world, religion historically has stimulated the highest help to it. Another great psychologist, William James , showed that saints are strong, not weak. His classic *Varieties of Religious Experiences* found that those who are in touch with a higher world often have greater motivation to change this world. On the other hand, it is not selfish to desire justice or to receive a reward. What is wrong with desiring what is right? If the right is not done in this life, why not desire it in the next, assuming there is a rational hope that the next world exists? By the same token, why not reward good and punish evil? Experience teaches that this is a valuable way to learn what is worthwhile.

Regarding human passions, experience shows that true religion does not contribute to uncontrolled passion, except when religious passions are manipulated to serve an inappropriate national or racial purpose. Otherwise, religion represses and controls the human passions. Religion is a fire that motivates morality, a catalyst for commitment to values. It is the driving force behind the control of passion.

Since humans never outgrow their dependence on the Universe or All, why reject it as invalid? It is not a weakness to say that we are always dependent beings. It means we are constituted so as creatures who need to receive from the hand of the Creator. To assume that admitting a real need is a sign of psychological weakness is like saying hunger and thirst are neuroses. Everyone also has a basic need for commitment, or what Paul *Tillich called an "ultimate commitment." Freud admitted that his commitment was to the god, Reason (Logos). The question isn't whether one has an ultimate commitment but whether what he is committed to is really ultimate. Contrary to Freud, religion is needed. Human beings will never be able to control everything nor be content alone. Augustine was right when he said the soul is restless until it finds its rest in God. Even the modern existential atheists (*see* CAMUS, ALBERT ; SARTRE, JEAN-PAUL) acknowledged their need for God (*see* GOD, NEED FOR).

The failure of many to use religion properly does not invalidate it, any more than committing adultery disproves the value of marriage. The value of religion is seen better by those who accept it than those who reject it. This is seen in Freud's rejection of the Bible as unhistorical without checking the authenticity of the biblical documents. Freud's rejection of it was neither based on reason nor evidence. To borrow his own argument, Freud rejected the Bible based on his own wish, without rational evidence. Freud gives no attention to the rational or experiential arguments for the existence of God (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR). He simply wishes them away.

A brief response is in order to what Freud claimed were inadequate justifications of religion. Freud is correct that wish-fulfillment, belief in the face of absurdity, belief contrary to reality, subjective mental states, and ancestral beliefs are inadequate bases for belief. Religion should not be accepted simply because it is consistent, and certainly not because it is absurd. A completely indefinable God is of little interest to man.

Freud defines religion differently than does Schleiermacher and so his rejection of absolute dependence is poorly argued. Morality need not be based solely on reason or on religious authority; it may be based on the reasonable acceptance of an ultimate authority.

Will Reason Replace Religion? Freud affirms that he is unwilling to give up science, yet he claims this is no illusion. If so, then a believer's unwillingness to give up God should not be considered an illusion either. Contrary to Freud's claim, if atheism is true then it is both dangerous and destructive of religion. For belief in God is absolutely foundational to most forms of religion. Further, Freud has an unrealistic view of human nature. Another unbeliever, Thomas Hobbes, is closer to the truth. Neither science nor resignation adequately replaces religion, as is evidenced by the existential despair of people without God. And reason is an incomplete basis for morality. We need a God to explain why there are universal reasons for doing certain things. Likewise, individual maturity and cosmic dependence are not incompatible. One can have a strong character and yet be totally dependent on God. Compare Moses, Elijah, Joan of Arc, and Oliver Cromwell.

A Response to Freud's Claim That Religion Is an Illusion. It is difficult to put Freud's position into any kind of argument that has premises to challenge. Perhaps the following is what is meant:

1. An illusion is something based only in wish, not in reality.

2. The belief in God has the characteristics of an illusion.

3. Therefore, belief in God is a wish not based in reality.

Of course, in this form the minor premise can be challenged easily. Not all who believe in God do so simply because they wish for a Cosmic Comforter. Some find God because they thirst for reality. Many find God because they are interested in truth, not simply because they are concerned about feeling good.

Further, there are many discomforting dimensions to the Christian belief in God. God is not only a Father who provides; he is also a Judge who punishes. Christians believe in hell, and yet no one really wishes this to be true.

Freud may have it backwards. Maybe our images of earthly fathers are patterned after God, rather than the reverse. Maybe this is because God has created us in his image, rather than the reverse. Perhaps the Christian's belief in God is not based on the desire to *create* a Father. Rather, maybe the atheist's belief that there is no God is based on the desire to *kill* the Father. After all, the Bible declares that rebellious human desires repress the truth about God (Rom. 1:18) because people choose to live a lifestyle contrary to his character (cf. Psalm 14).

The mere human desire for God is not the only basis for believing that God exists. There are good reasons for believing that God exists (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR). Freud's argument would, at best, only apply to those who had no other basis than their own wish that God exists. What is more, God may exist even if many (or all) people have the wrong reason for believing/wishing

that he does. Just because one wishes to win the lottery does not mean that will happen. Some do win it. Just because many wish for a better way of life does not mean it is unobtainable. Many do obtain it.

Further, Freud confuses *wish* and *need* . What if, as even many atheists admit, there is a *real need* for God in the human heart. Children want candy, but they need food. If the desire for God is a need, not merely a want, then Freud's analysis of religious experience is inadequate.

It may be that Freud's belief that there is no God is itself an illusion. If one does not wish to obey God, it is much easier to believe that no God exists. Indeed, for one living in sin and rebellion against God, it is very comforting to believe that neither he nor hell exists (Ps. 14:1 ; Rom. 1:18f .).

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