



Warfield, B. B. Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851–1921) was born near Lexington, Kentucky. He was graduated from the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) in 1871 and Princeton Theological Seminary in 1876. After studying at the University of Leipzig (1876–1877), he supplied at the First Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, Maryland (1877–1878). He taught at Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Pennsylvania (1878–1887), before being called to teach theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, where he taught from 1887 until his death.

In addition to his biblical and theological writings, Warfield wrote apologetically related books and articles, including *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (1886), *The Gospel of the Incarnation* (1893), *The Lord of Glory* (1907), *Counterfeit Miracles* (1918), *Revelation and Inspiration* (1927), *Christology and Criticism* (1929), and *Studies in Tertullian and Augustine* (1930). His articles with an apologetic theme included “Revelation” in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (1915), “On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race,” and “The Idea of Systematic Theology.”

Warfield’s View of Apologetics. John Calvin and the Scottish Presbyterian Westminster Confession tradition were anchoring theological influences on Warfield. He greatly respected his predecessor at Princeton, Charles Hodge. James McCosh implanted the Scottish realism of Thomas Reid (1710–1796) in Warfield’s thinking. He also was heavily influenced by Augustine and, to a lesser degree, by Thomas Aquinas.

Warfield was preeminently an apologetical theologian. He stressed the need for apologetics and a rational faith founded on evidence.

Definition of Apologetics. Warfield defined apologetics as “the systematically organized vindication of Christianity in all its elements and details, against all opposition . . .” (*Works* , 9:5). “What apologetics undertakes to establish is just this Christianity itself—including all its ‘details’ and involving its ‘essence’—in its unexplicated and uncompressed entirety, as the absolute religion” (*ibid.*, 9).

Relation of Apologetics and Theology. In his “Idea of Systematic Theology” Warfield spelled out the relation of apologetics to theology: “philosophical apologetics is . . . presupposed in and underlies the structure of scientific theology. . . . Apologetical Theology prepares the way for all

theology by establishing its necessary presuppositions without which no theology is possible—the existence and essential nature of God (*see* GOD, NATURE OF), the religious nature of man which enables him to receive a revelation from God, the possibility of a revelation from God, the possibility of a revelation and its actual realization in the Scriptures” (*ibid.*, 9:55, 64). It is “the function of apologetics to investigate, expiate, and establish the grounds on which a theology—a science, or systematized knowledge of God—is possible” (*ibid.*, 9:4).

The Importance of Apologetics. Few apologists have ever envisioned a greater role for apologetics than did Warfield. The 1887 inaugural address of his professorship at Princeton, “The Idea of Systematic Theology Considered as a Science,” emphasized apologetics as “a primary part, . . . a conquering part” in the spread of Christian faith. “It is the distinction of Christianity that it has come into the world clothed with the mission to *reason* its way to dominion. Other religions may appeal to the sword, or seek some other way to propagate themselves. Christianity makes its appeal to right reason, and stands out among all religions, therefore, as distinctively the ‘Apologetic religion.’ It is solely by reasoning that it has come thus far on its way to kingship” (*Selected Shorter Writings* , 2:99–100).

On the relation of apologetics to the Bible he said, “It is easy, of course, to say that a Christian man must take his standpoint not *above* the Scriptures, but *in* the Scriptures. He very certainly must. But surely he must first *have* Scriptures, authenticated to him as such, before he can take his standpoint in them” (*ibid.*, 2:98).

Faith and Reason. Warfield believed that the *indicia* (demonstrations of the Bible’s divine character) work side by side with the Holy Spirit to convince people of the truth of the Bible. Warfield agreed with Calvin that proofs cannot bring people to Christ or even convince them of the divine authority of Scripture. Nonetheless, Warfield believed that the Holy Spirit exercises his convincing power through them.

Contrary to presuppositional apologetics (*see* PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS), there is common ground with unbelievers. “The world of facts is open to all people and all can be convinced of God’s existence and the truth of Scripture through them by the power of reasoning of a redeemed thinker.” In his 1908 article on “Apologetics” he affirmed that faith is a moral act and a gift of God. However, it is also a matter of conviction become confidence. And all forms of conviction must have a reasonable ground. “It is not faith but reason which investigates the nature and validity of this ground. . . . We believe in Christ because it is rational to believe in him, not even though it be irrational” (*Works* , 9:15).

As a Calvinist, Warfield said that mere reasoning cannot make a Christian because of the inability for sinners to come to God under the curse of the fall. The problem is not that faith does not terminate on evidence, but that a dead soul cannot respond to evidence. However, on the other hand, the Holy Spirit does not bring anyone to salvation apart from evidence. The Spirit works to prepare the soul to receive the evidence. Therefore, men and women do not become Christians by apologetics, but apologetics supplies “the systematically organized basis on which the faith of Christian men must rest” (*ibid.*).

To be sure, not every Christian can do apologetics, nor are many even aware of the rational justification of their faith. However, the systematic proof that is implicit in every act of Christian faith is a product of apologetics. It is not necessary for salvation to be conscious of these proofs or to explicitly understand them. Nonetheless, such understanding is necessary for the vindication of faith (ibid., 16).

The Various Steps of Apologetics. As a proponent of classical apologetics (*see* CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS), Warfield believed apologetics could be divided into demonstrations of the being and nature of God (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR), the divine origin and authority of Christianity, and the superiority of Christianity over other systems (ibid., 10). He carved up the field by functions and which arguments meet which opponents in battle:

Philosophical apologetics establishes that God exists as a personal Spirit, as Creator, Preserver, and Governor. Philosophical apologetics tackles antitheistic theories.

Psychological apologetics establishes the religious nature of humankind and the validity of human religious sensitivities. It involves the psychology, philosophy, and phenomena of religion. It faces naturalist attacks from “comparative religion” or “history of religions” movements.

An unnamed form might be called *revelational apologetics* , for it reveals the reality of divine governance of history and the actual relationship in which God stands to his world and the ways he makes himself known.

Historical apologetics presents the case for the divine origin of Christianity as God’s revealed religion. It discusses all the topics that fall under the popular category heading of the “evidences for Christianity.”

Biblical apologetics establishes the trustworthiness of the Bible as a God-revealed document for the redemption of sinners (ibid., 13).

Inspiration of the Bible. Warfield may be best known for his strong defense of the inspiration (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR) and inerrancy (*see* BIBLE, ALLEGED ERRORS IN) of the Bible in the originally written texts or “autographs.” Warfield produced two major works: *Revelation and Inspiration* and *Limited Inspiration [Inerrancy]* and co-authored *Inspiration* with A. A. Hodge.

Legacy. Warfield’s views on apologetics have made a lasting impact on the American scene. The works defending an inspired Scripture had a strong influence on the inerrancy movement many years later among evangelicals known as the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (see Geisler, *Inerrancy*). In general, Warfield is a spiritual ancestor of most classical apologists of the late twentieth century, such leaders as John Gerstner, Kenneth Kantzer, Arthur Lindsley, and R. C. Sproul (see Sproul).

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Wellhausen, Julius. Julius Wellhausen (1844–1918) was a German Bible scholar known as the father of modern biblical criticism (*see* BIBLE CRITICISM). He studied at Göttingen and taught at Göttingen, Greifswald, Halle, Marburg and finally returned to Göttingen as historian, philologist, and master of Hebrew, Aramaic, Syriac, and Arabic.

Wellhausen’s most significant work, which presented a mature development of the historical critical method, was *Introduction to the History of Israel* , 1878, 6th ed., 1905. He also wrote “Israel” in the 9th ed. of *Encyclopedia Britannica* , 1878, and *Die Komposition des Hexateuchs (The Composition of the Hexateuch)*, 1877.

Wellhausen was influenced by W. F. G. Hegel and Wilhelm Vatke, who applied the Hegelian dialectic of historical development to the development of the religion of Israel. From this platform Wellhausen developed the documentary hypothesis.

Documentary Hypothesis. Wellhausen sought to show that the Old Testament as it is possessed by the church is a postexilic product of Judaism with its priestly hierarchy. Religion among the Hebrews has actually developed by a natural evolution, as it had among all other peoples, from fetishism (belief in or worship of objects which are held by superstitious people to possess magical power), to polytheism , to henotheism which is the belief in or worship of one

God without denying the existence of other gods), to ethical monotheism. The last stage was achieved by the writings of the prophets of the eighth century B.C. culminating in the preaching of the Deuteronomists. The final development was the institutionalization of this religion in the legislation of the priestly code and the rewriting of Israel's history in the light of this latest religious perspective (*see* ARCHAEOLOGY, OLD TESTAMENT ; BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR ; OLD TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS ; PENTATEUCH, MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF ; REDACTION CRITICISM, OLD TESTAMENT ; SPINOZA, BENEDICT ; STRAUSS, DAVID).

The result is the famous J-E-P-D theory of the authorship of the Pentateuch. According to this theory, Moses did not write the Pentateuch (Genesis–Deuteronomy), as both Jewish and Christian scholars have held through the centuries. Rather, it was written by a number of persons over a long period. These documents are identified as:

1. the *Jehovist* or *Yahwist* (*J*), ninth century B.C. ;
2. the *Elohists* (*E*), eighth century B.C. ;
3. the *Deuteronomist* (*D*), ca. the time of Josiah, 640–609 B.C. , and
4. the *Priestly* (*P*), ca. fifth century B.C. .

The Pentateuch was a mosaic put together from different authors who can be identified partly by their various uses of *Jehovah* (*Yahweh*), or *Elohim* for God or by references to the work of the priests (*P*) or to laws (*D*).

One or more “redactors” or editor/compiler brought together all of this evolutionary development within the religious history of Israel. Wellhausen assumes that there is a “popular religion” of Israel which must be discovered among the many impositions by later redactors, and when this religion is discovered it reveals its form at each stage in the evolutionary development.

Evaluation. Wellhausen's work is critiqued in the article BIBLE CRITICISM , PENTATEUCH, MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF , J-E-P-D THEORY , and related entries. In general, Wellhausen's thought has guided the work of “negative” historical-critical efforts to undermine the authority of Scripture. The theory is still widely believed, though archaeological and other research has undermined its assumptions.

The Collapse of the J-E-P-D Theory. Deuteronomy provides one example of arguments refuting the theories first developed by Wellhausen: Textually, Deuteronomy claims that “these are the words of Moses (1:1 ; 4:44 ; 29:1). To deny this is to claim the book of the law is a total fraud. Joshua, Moses' immediate successor, attributed the book of Deuteronomy to Moses (Josh. 1:7), as does the rest of the Old Testament (Judg. 3:4 ; 1 Kings 2:3 ; 2 Kings 14:6 ; Ezra 3:2 ; Neh. 1:7 ; Ps. 103:7 ; Dan. 9:11 ; Mal. 4:4). Deuteronomy is the book of the Law most quoted in the New Testament, with attribution to Moses (Acts 3:22 ; Rom. 10:19 ; 1 Cor. 9:9). Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:13 , 16 in resisting the Devil (Matt. 4:7 , 10), and he also directly attributed it to the hand of Moses (Mark 7:10 ; Luke 20:28).

Geographical and historical details of the book display a firsthand acquaintance with sites Moses would have known; its covenantal forms also place it at the period of Moses (Kline, all).

Apparent references within the book to a later period are easily explained. Deuteronomy 34 , with its description of Moses' death, was probably written by his successor Joshua, in accordance with the custom of the day.

Moses and the Entire Pentateuch. The evidence that Moses wrote Deuteronomy destroys the J-E-P-D theory as such. Variations of the theory still deny Moses is the author of all five books.

Four of the five books (excepting Genesis) claim to be written by Moses (see Exod. 24:4 ; Levit. 1:1 ; 4:1 ; 5:14 ; Numbers 1:1 ; 33:2 , and as noted above in Deuteronomy. The lack of a direct claim in Genesis is understandable since the events occurred before Moses' birth. In this book, Moses apparently acted something as an editor and compiler himself, basing his work on records preserved from the patriarchs. This is indicated by the frequent formula “this is the history of” (as in 5:1 ; 10:1 , and 25:19). There is considerable evidence that Moses composed what we know as Genesis:

1. Moses had access to the family histories which traced their ancestry to Abraham and the beginning. As leader Moses was familiar with God's promises to give them Palestine (Gen. 12:1–3 ; 13:15–1 ; 15:18–21 ; 17:8 ; 26:3) after delivering them from Egypt (46:3–4 ; cf. Exod. 2:24).
2. Citations of Genesis identify it as part of the “law of Moses” (Luke 24:44 ; cf. 2 Chron. 25:4). These are found in Moses' own Deuteronomy 1:8 ; 2 Kings 13:23 ; 1 Chronicles 1 , and Matt. 19:8 . It is lumped with the other four as books of Moses in Luke 24:27 , 44 .
3. From earliest times, Jewish teaching has attributed Genesis to Moses. References are found throughout the Jewish Talmud and in other Jewish writers, such as Philo and Josephus.
4. Exodus through Deuteronomy are incomplete without the background of Genesis. Together they form a narrative unit.

With the possible exception of some parenthetical explanatory material and updating of place names that changed, the language and culture of the entire Pentateuch reflects that of Moses' day (*see* ALBRIGHT, WILLIAM F.).

Other evidence against Wellhausen's hypothesis. Virtually the whole corpus of archaeological evidence has tended to prove Wellhausen's evolutionary theory wrong. Most significant is the earliest findings at Ebla, Syria. The Ebla tablets confirm monotheism extremely early, as opposed to Wellhausen's supposition that it was a late evolutionary development from earlier polytheism and henotheism.

Sources

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Wells, G. A. Modern scholars have denied that Jesus did and said the things attributed to him by the Gospels (*see* BIBLE CRITICISM ; JESUS SEMINAR). Few, however, have joined with G. A. Wells in denying that the man Jesus of Nazareth ever existed. It is, perhaps, the curious nature of his ideas that has earned him some interest in theological circles. Wells believes that, if Jesus did exist, he was an obscure person whose story became patterned after mystery religions (*see* MITHRAISM) and Jewish wisdom literature.

In his books, *Did Jesus Exist?* and *The Historical Evidence for Jesus*, Wells sees four stages in the development of the early ideas about Christ:

- Stage one—Paul's Epistles, written by 60. This "Jesus" was viewed as a supernatural being who spent a brief but obscure time on earth, perhaps centuries earlier (*Did Jesus Exist?* chap. 5).
- Stage two—non-Pauline canonical Epistles, completed in the 70s. Jesus is now said to have lived on earth recently.

- Stage three—the Pastoral Epistles and Ignatius, ca. 80s. Jesus is linked with historical figures such as Pilate and is said to have died at the hands of the romans.
- Stage four—the Gospels (ca. 90, Mark to ca. 120, John). The Gospels are more or less fabricated. They were accepted by the early church uncritically, since they did not conflict with established beliefs (see Habermas, chap. 2).

In view of these stages, Wells believes that historical facts about Jesus came late. He contends that Paul was uninterested in historical details, only a divine Christ. Jesus' concept of wisdom, plus mystery religions, influenced the early picture. Early Christianity began without any contact with a historical Jesus. Thus, nothing can be known about such a man, since there is no firsthand information. The Gospels simply guessed about Jesus' life, accepting what fit with their general views. If Jesus existed, he was probably an obscure peasant.

Difficulties with Wells's Thesis. Problems with this type of argument are covered in articles on the historicity of the New Testament and Jesus. See, in particular, ACTS, HISTORICITY OF ; ARCHAEOLOGY, NEW TESTAMENT ; BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR ; CHRIST, UNIQUENESS OF ; CHRIST OF FAITH VS. JESUS OF HISTORY ; JESUS, NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES ; JESUS SEMINAR ; NEW TESTAMENT, DATING THE ; NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF , and SON OF MAN, JESUS AS .

The first problem is that Wells, with most other critics, accepts Paul's basic writings as in circulation by 60. But this damages his thesis. Even in these books, written while eyewitnesses were still alive, there is ample evidence of historical interest. Paul speaks of Jesus' virgin birth (Gal. 4:4), sinless life (2 Cor. 5:21), death on the cross (1 Cor. 15:3 ; Gal. 3:13), resurrection (1 Cor. 15:4 , 12–20), and postresurrection appearances (1 Cor. 15:3–8). He appealed to the fact that literally hundreds of eyewitnesses could verify his words. Paul also gives historical details about Jesus' immediate followers, the apostles (1 Cor. 15:5–8 ; Gal. 1:18–19 ; 2).

Another pillar of Wells's argument crumbles in his dating of the Gospels. Even some critical scholars place Mark at 65 and Matthew and Luke prior to 90. As noted in the article NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF , that is about as late as is reasonable, given the evidence. Actual dates may be quite a bit earlier. Certainly the dating cannot fit the "stage four" scenario. Paleographers speak for most legitimate recent scholarship when he concludes that "every book of the New Testament was written by a baptized Jew between the forties and the eighties of the first century A.D. (very probably sometime between 50 and 75 A.D. ." ("Toward a More Conservative View," 359). Carl Hemer provides powerful evidence that Acts was written between 60–62. Luke was written before Acts (see Acts 1:1), placing it no later than 62 (*see* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF). Rather than being later additions as Wells suggests, the interwoven detail and accuracy of the historical data—especially in Luke and Acts strongly present an early date.

Finally, the John Rylands papyri fragment (*see* NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS) is good evidence that John was written before the end of the first century. The possibility of New Testament fragments from the mid-first-century at Qumran, if substantiated, will definitively put to rest any talk of late Gospels.

Christianity and Mystery Religions. Contrary to Wells, accounts of Christ's life was not based on the mystery religions (*see* MITHRAISM). According to a contemporary account by Paul (1 Corinthians 15), the Gospels were based on eyewitness testimony. In view of this, Wolfhart Pannenberg concludes, "Under such circumstances it is an idle venture to make parallels in the history of religions responsible for the *emergence* of the primitive Christian message about Jesus' resurrection" (Pannenberg, 91).

Christianity was monotheistic, and the mystery religions by nature were polytheistic (*see* POLYTHEISM). The gods of the mystery religions were not incarnated as human beings (see John 1:1 , 14). The stories of gods coming back from the dead are not resurrections in the Christian sense, but rather examples of reincarnation (*see* MITHRAISM).

And the final, fatal flaw is that these stories postdate the time of Christ and the Gospels (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, DATING OF).

Historical Methodology. Wells's contention that the Gospels were guesswork or fabrications about Jesus is without foundation. It is based on the disproven assumption that they were late books, and it neglects the overlap in Paul's writings and the presence of eyewitnesses who could set the record straight. Also, the Gospels and Paul present the same basic picture of Jesus.

If the same criteria are applied to the life of Christ as are generally used to evaluate ancient writings, the historicity of Jesus must be accepted. Evaluated by these standards, critical historian Michael Grant noted, "we can no more reject Jesus' existence than we can reject the existence of a mass of pagan personages whose reality as historical figures is never questioned" (Grant, 199–200).

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Wells, H. G.

Life and Works. Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) was a scientific humanist who affirmed a new religious faith, a faith in man. He was an admirer of Auguste Comte and Herbert Spencer. Wells was an English journalist, secondary-level science teacher, and co-author with Julian Huxley of a popularized work, the *Science of Life* .

He "grew up in Victorian England; but he reacted violently, even as a child, against the evangelical faith of his mother" Indeed, "He especially despised the doctrine of the Trinity " (Glover, 121). Nonetheless, Wells' writings reflect many Christian truths, including that of original sin seen in his belief in the "persistent wickedness" of human beings.

H. G. Wells wrote a series of science romances and other works including *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Food of the Gods* (1904), *First and Last Things* (1908), *God The Invisible King* (1917), *The Secret Places of the Heart* (1922), *The Fate of Man* (1939), *You Can't Be Too Careful* (1941), *New World Order* (194?), and *Mind at the End of Its Tether* (194?).

Wells' Views. There are many words that describe the beliefs of Wells: evolutionism, antipessimism, mysticism , dualism , finite godism, agnosticism and even fideism were all embraced by Wells. What is consistent throughout his work is humanistic evolutionism (*see* HUMANISM, SECULAR).

Reacting to his early pessimism, Wells wrote: "I dismiss the idea that life is chaotic because it leaves my life ineffectual, and I cannot contemplate an ineffectual life patiently." Further, "I assert . . . that I am important in a scheme, that we are all important in a scheme. . . . What the scheme as a whole is I do not know; with my limited mind I cannot know. There I become a Mystic." He adds, "And this unfounded and arbitrary declaration of the ultimate righteousness and significance of things I call the Act of Faith. It is my fundamental religious confession. It is a voluntary and deliberate determination to believe, it is a choice made" (*First and Last Things*, 66–67).

In 1917, he professed to have found salvation from the purposelessness of life described in a book entitled *God the Invisible King*. William Archer charged that here Wells saw himself as the apostle of a new religious faith (Archer, 32).

God was finite and had come into existence in time but outside space. God was the personal Captain of Mankind who grows as mankind grows. Nonetheless, God was not the collective Mind of mankind but a being with a character of his own.

God's Enemy was Nature or, more specifically, Death. Thus God's aim was to overcome death. God stands over the Veiled Being or Life Force which is "Nature red in tooth and claw."

In the end Wells turned pessimistic (*Mind at the End of Its Tether*). He despairs that man will be able to adapt and fears he will go the way of the dinosaur. Nevertheless, he believes evolution will go on through some other organism.

Evaluation. For an evaluation of Wells' views, see the articles mentioned above under "Wells' Views."

Sources

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Whateley, Richard. Richard Whateley (1786–1863) was an English logician and theologian and archbishop of Dublin (1831–1863). His book *Logic* (1826) set forth the essence of his understanding of the use of reason. He left behind his own memoir, which was published posthumously by his daughter, *Life and Correspondence . . .* (1866). Whateley also edited William Paley's *Evidences and Moral Philosophy*. But his most enduring legacy from an apologetics standpoint is *Historic Doubts Relative to Napoleon Bonaparte* (1819). In this short work he satirized skepticism by reducing to the absurd the logic used to deny the authenticity of the Bible.

Using the still-living historical figure Napoleon I (1769–1821) as an example, Whateley applied David Hume's (1711–1776) principles of skepticism. He said it was no wonder the public was still occupied with recounting the exploits of Napoleon, given their extraordinary character. But no one seemed to be asking the crucial question of whether Napoleon even existed. Whateley noted that the unquestioned is not necessary unquestionable. People admit hastily what they are accustomed to take for granted. Hume had pointed out the readiness with which people believe on slight evidence the stories that please their imagination.

Upon examining the evidence, Whateley concludes that, aside from the rare first-hand witness, the newspaper had become the authority for truth. But using Hume's three principles of credibility (see NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF), the authority of the newspaper fails on all points. Hume asked of witnesses:

1. whether they have the means of gaining correct information.
2. whether they are interested in concealing truth or propagating falsehood.
3. whether they agree in their testimony.

"It appears then that those on whose testimony the existence and actions of Bonaparte are generally believed, fail in all the most essential points on which the credibility of witnesses depends; first, we have no assurance that they have access to correct information; second, they

have an apparent interest in propagating falsehood; and, thirdly, they palpably contradict each other in the most important points" (266). Whateley challenges the free thinker to weigh all the evidence, "and if he then finds it amounts to anything more than a probability," Whateley said he would congratulate him for his easy faith (271).

Whateley insists that the story becomes even more doubtful when it partakes of the extraordinary. Tracing the incredible nature of Napoleon's military exploits, Whateley asked whether anyone would believe this, yet not believe in miracles. For it seemed to him that Napoleon had violated the laws of nature (274). Hence, every skeptic who follows his own principles should reject such stories about Napoleon as highly improbable.

In addressing the question of motive, Whateley pointed out that, while the story about Napoleon *may* be true, a more ingenious one could not have been fabricated for the amusement of the British people. He speculates, as well, on how the name *Napoleon Bonaparte* could have mistakenly arisen, as had others in history. He called free thinkers to listen to no testimony that runs contrary to their experience but to follow their principles consistently. "If, after all that has been said, they cannot bring themselves to doubt the existence of Napoleon Bonaparte, they must at least acknowledge that they do not apply to that question the same plan of reasoning which they have made use of in others" (290).

Whether any skeptics announced their doubt about Napoleon, a few of the more open minded should have been encouraged to check their biases regarding biblical accounts of miracles in general, and the New Testament's record of Jesus in particular.

Sources

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Whitehead, Alfred North. Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) is the father of the contemporary worldview known as panentheism (not to be confused with pantheism), or Process Theology. He was born on the Isle of Thanet, the son of an Anglican minister. He attended Sherborne public school in Dorset, learning classics, history, and mathematics. He attended Trinity College, Cambridge, on a mathematics scholarship (1880–84) and was awarded a fellowship at Trinity in 1884.

The first period of writing (1898–1910) was focused on the philosophy of mathematics. He produced *A Treatise on Universal Algebra* (1898) and *Principia Mathematica* (with Bertrand Russell, 1910–13).

The second period of writing (1910–24) concentrated on the philosophy of science. While teaching at the University of London (1910–14) he wrote *Introduction to Mathematics* (1911).

Later, at Imperial College of Science and Technology (1914–24) he produced "Space, Time, and Relativity" (1915), *The Organization of Thought* (1917), *An Enquiry Concerning the*

Principles of Natural Knowledge (1919), *The Concept of Nature* (1920), and *The Principle of Relativity* (1922).

A third period of writing (1924–47) stressed the philosophy of history and reality as well as cosmology and metaphysics. The transitional period (1925–27) brought forth *Science and the Modern World* (1925), *Religion in the Making* (1926), and *Symbolism, Its Meaning and Effect* (1927). His mature works in this field came from 1927 to 1947 and produced the epic *Process and Reality* (1929), *Adventures of Ideas* (1933), *Modes of Thought* (1938), and *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (1947).

Religion in the Making. Whitehead's understanding of religion is a landmark in modern thought. His understanding of dogma or propositional religious statements, if valid, would negate the orthodox Christian belief in an inspired and infallible Scripture (see BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). Whitehead's complex thought is sometimes called *process theology*, since its bottom-line reality is that all things are in process of becoming, including God.

Definition of Religion. Religion is defined as "A system of general truths which have the effect of transforming character when they are sincerely held and vividly apprehended." Religion emerged in *ritual*—habitual performances of acts irrelevant to physical preservation. It then manifested itself in *emotion*—definite types of expressing one's religious feelings, following ritual. Belief (*myth*) followed, giving definite explanations for the ritual. Finally came *rationalization*, the organization and clarification of beliefs and application to conduct. As rituals encouraged emotions (cf. holy-day and holiday), so myths begot thought.

Religion and Dogma. Religious experiences relate to dogma in that dogmas are attempts at precise formulations of religious experience. Rational religions have expressed their experience in three main concepts, first, the value of the individual, second, the value of diverse individuals for each other, and third, the value of the objective world for the existence of a community of individuals. "Religion is world-loyalty," though it begins with consciousness of value within the individual.

According to Whitehead, rational religion is an attempt to find a permanent, intelligible interpretation of experience. Buddhism and Christianity differ in that the latter is metaphysics seeking a religion, whereas the latter is religion seeking a metaphysics. In Buddhism (see ZEN BUDDHISM), evil is necessary, but in Christianity it is only contingent. While Buddhists seek relief from the world, Christians seek to change the world. Buddha gave doctrine to enlighten, but Christ gave his life to save. Buddhism begins from general principles, but Christianity begins with facts and generalizes on them.

Metaphysics. According to Whitehead, both *process* and *permanence* interplay as aspects of reality. Permanence is a *potential element* of reality. Temporal (time) permanence is found in eternal objects. Nontemporal permanence is found in God (or at least in God's primordial nature, as noted below).

A bit of reality is the *actual element* or entity. Being is the potential for becoming. This is the *principle of relativity*. How a thing becomes is what a thing is. This is the *principle of progress*.

Actual entities are real occasions, events, or drops of experience. As in Plato's *Sophist*, they are becoming but never really finish the journey. With each passing moment of process, old dies and new is born. They pass from subjectivity to objectivity (immortality). This they do by final causality—namely, by their subjective aim. Once they are objectified, then they can act by efficient causality on others from past to present.

So how does one move along this pole-to-pole progression, objectifying and becoming? It is a mental process of seizing and incorporating into self an apprehension of the surrounding world. Actually it goes beyond "apprehending" or "comprehending" knowledge to uniting with the world being apprehended, so Whitehead dusts off the seldom-used term *prehension*.

Prehension is a process of feeling, so it goes beyond objective handling of objective realities. It absorbs what is prehended into the unity and satisfaction of the actual entity that is prehending. There are two kinds of prehension, negative or exclusive and positive or inclusive. There are three factors of prehension:

1. the occasion of experience (the subject, actual entity);
2. the data prehended (the object prehended);
3. the subjective form (how the datum is prehended).

All actual entities are bipolar by nature. The *conceptual pole* (potential aspect) is simple and can be negatively prehended in total. What is conceptual or potential is not now. The *physical pole* (actual aspect) is complex and can be prehended partly negatively and partly positively. It is some things; it is not other things. The ontological principle is that the only real causes of anything come from the physical pole. Only actual entities become real causes, final facts.

View of God. The God Options. Whitehead's view of God is bipolar. His actual pole is the universe, the cosmos. This pole is in constant change as God prehends more experiences or entities. God's potential pole is beyond the actual world. It is the infinite world of eternal and unchanging potential.

It may be helpful to see how Whitehead contrasted his view of God to other conceptions:

1. The Eastern Asiatic concept of an impersonal order to which the world conforms. This order is the self-ordering of the world; it is not the world obeying an imposed rule.
2. The Semitic concept of a definite personal, individual entity, whose existence is the one ultimate metaphysical fact. God is absolute and underived. This God decreed and ordered the derivative existence we call the actual world.
3. The pantheistic concept has connections to the Semitic concept, except that the actual world is a *phase* within the complete fact of the being of God. The complete fact is the ultimate individual entity of God. The actual world, conceived apart from God, is unreal. Its only reality is God's reality. The actual world is real only to the extent that it is a

partial description of what God is. But in itself it is merely a certain mutuality of “appearance.” This appearance is a phase of the being of God. This is the extreme doctrine of monism as held by Parmenides and Shankara (see HINDUISM, VEDANTA) in India (*Religion in the Making* , 66, 67).

Whitehead rejects these views. Christianity is a form of the “Semitic” view, though Christian doctrine has attempted to add some immanence to the utterly transcendent simple Semitic Being. It is the radical transcendence (otherness) of the Semitic God to which Whitehead objects. He also rejects the all-sufficiency of this conception of God., “There is no entity, not even God, ‘which requires nothing but itself in order to exist’ ” (ibid., 71).

The Existence and Nature of God. Following Immanuel Kant, Whitehead rejects the ontological argument as invalid. The cosmological argument can get us only so far as to postulate a God immanent in the world. Whitehead opts for an “aesthetic argument” from the order of the world. God is posited to account for the creative order in world process.

That is, God is dependent on the world, and the world is dependent on God. Apart from God, there would be no actual world. Apart from the dynamic creativity of the actual world, there would be “no rational explanation of the ideal vision which constitutes God.”

In his actual pole, God is finite and limited. “To be an actual thing is to be limited.” God cannot be infinite in his actual pole or he would be all things that actually are—evil as well as good (ibid., 144).

Note that this argument is interacting primarily with, and recasting the pantheistic worldview. Pantheism is denied, for its being is too immanent, yet it is the alternative that Whitehead’s thought takes most seriously. To reduce God to an impersonal Force, as the Asiatic concept does, is to demean God’s religious significance. God is personal, intimately related to the world. But likewise rejected is a transcendent God who is independent and self-existent. God is either finite, or he is the universe, including its evil (see EVIL, PROBLEM OF). God is not *beyond* the world nor is he *identical* with it. God is *in* the world. “God is that function in the world by reason of which our purposes are directed to ends which in our own consciousness are impartial as to our own interests. Further, God is the actual realization (in the world) of the ideal world. ‘The kingdom of heaven is God’ ” (ibid., 148, 151).

There is a God in the world, because “The order of the world is no accident. There is nothing actual which could be actual without some measure of order. . . . this creativity and these forms are together impotent to achieve actuality apart from the completed ideal harmony, which is God” (ibid., 115). God functions as the ground for creativity necessary for the attainment of value in the world. “God, as conditioning the creativity with his harmony of apprehension, issues into the mental creature as moral judgment according to a perfection of ideals.” Thus, “the purpose of God in the attainment of value is in a sense a creative purpose. Apart from God, the remaining formative elements would fail in their functions” (ibid., 110, 114).

According to Whitehead, God has both a *primordial nature* and a *consequent nature* . The latter is the being which is being continually enriched by God prehends. Whitehead also calls it God’s *superject nature* .

The primordial nature of God was to be the orderer of eternal objects. Eternal objects are pure potentials which, like Gottfried Leibniz ’s monads, cannot relate themselves. The ontological principle demands that there be an actual entity behind them, since only actual entities are real causes.

God also is the orderer of actual entities. It is necessary for God to have a consequent nature. All actual entities are bipolar. The physical pole is needed to realize the vision of the conceptual pole. Also, the primordial nature relates only to eternal objects. And the principle of relativity demands that something relate to actual entities. Without God the actual world would fall into chaos.

The superject nature of God is merely the consequent nature as enriched by God’s prehensions and as available for prehension by other actual entities—a never-ending process. Evil is incompatibility. What is evil does not fit into a given order of the world process. Creativity is the principle of conjunction and continuity that fills in the gaps between the atoms, that grounds the world process, that makes manyness into oneness. It is the “substance” of which all actual entities (even God) are the “accidents.”

View of the World. God and the world are not actually different. God is the order (and value) in the actual world. The world is God’s consequent nature. It is the sum total of all actual entities (events) as ordered by God. But the world is in process. It is constantly changing. Hence, God in his consequent nature is constantly in flux.

Creation. The universe is eternal. God does not create eternal objects. He is dependent on them as they are on him. Thus, God “is not *before* all creation, but *with* all creation” (ibid., 392, 521). He does not bring the universe into existence; he directs its progress.

As another process theologian put it, creation from nothing is too coercive. The temptation is great to interpret God’s role by means of coercive power. “If the entire created order is dependent for its existence upon his will, then it must be subject to his full control. . . . Insofar as God controls the world, he is responsible for evil: directly in terms of the natural order, and indirectly in the case of man” (Ford, 201).

God is more of a cosmic persuader who lures the actual out of potential by final causality the way one is drawn by an object of their love.

In one sense the origin or “creation” of the universe is *ex materia* (out of preexisting matter). But the eternal “stuff” is not material but the realm of eternal forms or potentials which are there available for God to order and to urge into the world process as various aspects of actual entities. But since the realm of eternal objects is God’s primordial nature, the movement of creation is also *ex deo* , that is, out of God’s potential pole into his actual pole (the world). Reality moves

from the unconscious to the conscious, from potential to actual, from abstract to concrete, from forms to facts.

What prompts this movement? What actualizes it? The answer is *creativity*. “ ‘Creativity’ is the principle of *novelty*. ” Creativity introduces novelty into the actual world. “The ‘creative advance’ is the application of this ultimate principle of creativity to each novel situation which it originates.” Even God is grounded in creativity. “Every actual entity, including God, is a creature transcended by the creativity which it qualifies.” Hence, “all actual entities share with God this character of self-causation” (*Process and Reality* , 31, 32, 135, 339).

There is a self-caused movement in God from his potential pole to his actual pole. God is a self-caused ‘being’ who is constantly becoming. Thus the process of creation is an eternal ongoing process of God’s self-realization.

The World. The world is pluralistic (*see* PLURALISM). As a whole it is God’s “body.” It is made up of many “actual entities,” what Whitehead calls “final facts,” “drops of experience,” or “actual occasions” (*Primordial Nature of God* , 95). The world is an atomistic series of events (*see* ATOMISM).

A process metaphysics of the world abandons the concept of actual entities that are the unchanging subjects of change. All things are rather constantly perishing and being reborn as different things. The idea that “no one crosses the same river twice” is extended to the person doing the crossing, as well as the water flowing in the stream. No thinker thinks twice. No subject experiences twice. There are no unchanging beings (*ibid.*, 43, 122). There is no concrete being, all is becoming. “It belongs to the nature of every ‘being’ that it is a potential for every becoming. There is a becoming of continuity, but no continuity of becoming” (*ibid.*, 53, 71).

Despite the atomic distinctness and continual change in the universe, there is order. This order is given by God. In his primordial nature God gives order to all eternal objects (forms) and the “consequent nature” of “God is the physical prehension by God of the actualities of the evolving universe” (*ibid.*, 134).

Evil. God’s self-realization is never perfect, nor is it totally incomplete. The actual world is neither purely orderly, nor purely chaotic. The immanence of an ordering God makes pure chaos impossible (*ibid.*, 169). God is doing all he can to achieve the most possible out of every moment in world history. “The image under which this operative growth of God’s nature is best conceived, is that of a tender care that nothing be lost” (*ibid.*, 525). Evil can be defined as whatever is incompatible with these divine efforts at any given moment. Since God does not force the world, but only persuades it, he cannot destroy evil. He must simply work with it and do the best he can to overcome it (*see* FINITE GODISM ; KUSHNER, HAROLD). “[The theory of] divine persuasion responds to the problem of evil radically, simply denying that God exercises full control over the world. Plato sought to express this by saying that God does the best job he can in trying to persuade a recalcitrant matter to receive the impress of the divine forms” (Ford, 202).

What a finite God cannot persuade to fit into the overall unity of the actual world is evil. Evil is incompatibility. It is incongruence. Evil is like the left-over pieces of glass that did not fit into the stain glass window. Only this “picture” or order changes every split second. What does not fit one moment may fit later. Evil, then, must be conceived of as relative.

Human Beings. The human is a personal being with a free will. Each person has “subjective aims,” for which ends are purposed and final causality is achieved. God gives overall aim—the initial direction, but where the creature goes from there is his or her own responsibility (Ford, 202–3).

In the mind-body relationship described by Whitehead, the living body is a coordination of actual occasions. Each person (God included) is a society of actual entities that constantly change. There is no changeless, enduring “I.” An individual’s unity is not found in any unchanging essence or being. It is self-caused becoming. Whitehead wrote:

I find myself as essentially a unity of emotions, enjoyments, hopes, fears, regrets, valuations of alternatives, decisions—all of them subjective reactions to the environment as active in my nature. My unity—which is Descartes’ “*I am*”—is my process of shaping this welter of material into a consistent pattern of feelings. I shape the activities of the environment into a new creation, which is myself at this moment; and yet, as being myself, it is a continuation of the antecedent world. [*Modes of Thought* , 228]

A person’s identity is produced moment by moment within the community of actual events. As in the broader world, there is no continuity in becoming; there is only this becoming in continuity (*Religion in the Making* , 112).

Personal immortality was not an essential part of Whitehead’s view. He saw no scientific evidence for it, but neither did he oppose it. He simply noted that at present it is generally held that a purely spiritual being is necessarily immortal. His doctrine is entirely neutral on the question of immortality, or on the existence of purely spiritual beings other than God (*ibid.*, 107–8).

Ethics and Values. In this ever-changing kaleidoscope, there is no absolute evil, so there are no absolute values (*see* MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF). Value is changing and subjective. “There are many species of subjective forms, such as emotions, valuations, purposes, aversions, aversions, consciousness, etc.” (*Process and Reality* , 35). God is the measure of all value, but God is no more stable than is anything else. Nothing is not changing.

On the other hand, value is specific and concrete. God wants to attain value, and the search is creative. “The actual world is the outcome of the aesthetic order [of value], and the aesthetic is derived from the immanence of God” (*Religion in the Making* , 97, 100–1). The problem with the theistic Christian ethic is that it looks to an end of the world—definite goals and an absolute way to go. Christians give free rein “to their absolute ethical intuitions respecting ideal possibilities without a thought of the preservation of society” (*Adventures of Ideas* , 16).

For Whitehead, good and evil “solely concern inter-relations within the real world. The real world is good when it is beautiful” (ibid., 269). Goodness always comes in comparative degrees, just as things are more or less beautiful. But nothing is either most beautiful or most perfect. “Morality consists in the aim at the ideal. . . . Thus stagnation is the deadly foe of morality” (ibid., 269–70). There is at best, for both God and human beings, only a relative achievement of more good.

History and Destiny. There is an ongoing evolutionary (*see* EVOLUTION, COSMIC ; EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL) process. God is achieving more and more value. It is being stored in his consequent nature, which, as enriched, is called God’s “superject nature.” However, “neither God, nor the world, reaches static completion” (ibid., 135, 529). Evil is recalcitrant, and no final victory over it is possible. Hence, Whitehead concludes, “In our cosmological construction we are, therefore left with the final opposites, joy and sorrow, good and evil, disjunction and conjunction—that is to say, the many in one—flux and permanence, greatness and triviality, freedom and necessity, God and the World” (ibid., 518).

Since God is neither omniscient nor omnipotent, even God does not know how the world process will eventuate (*see* GOD, NATURE OF). For “during that process God, as it were, has to wait with bated breath until the decision is made, not simply to find out what the decision was, but perhaps even to have the situation clarified by virtue of the decision of that concrete occasion” (Loomer, 365).

Evaluation. The complexity and vastness of Whitehead’s thought makes it difficult to offer a comprehensive evaluation of his ideas in a short space. Much of this is evaluated elsewhere. His underlying epistemology of relative truth and morality is covered in TRUTH, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF ; MORALITY, NATURE OF). On the process view of God and reality, see PANENTHEISM . The process concept of evil is exposed in EVIL, PROBLEM OF .

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William of Ockham. Modern skepticism (*see* AGNOSTICISM) did not begin with David Hume . It began in the late Middle Ages with William of Ockham (1285–1349). Ockham was the younger contemporary of Duns Scotus (1266–1308) and Thomas Aquinas (1224–1274). He

stood at the end of the middle ages, and contributed to the rise of the modern age. Whereas skepticism flowered in David Hume (1711–1776), its roots were in William of Ockham.

Ockham’s thought had a significant influence on the radical empiricism and skepticism of Hume, the ethical situationalism of Joseph Fletcher (*see* MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF), the idealism of George Berkeley (1685–1753), the antitransubstantiation of Martin Luther (1483–1546), as well as ethical voluntarism, nominalism, and the univocity of religious language (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF).

Epistemological Skepticism. His skepticism was manifest on three levels: epistemological, methodological, and apologetic. In his epistemology he was a nominalist and a skeptical empiricist.

Ockham distrusted the senses. He stressed intuition. He held that essences or universals were mental abstractions that were based in real things (*see* REALISM). But Ockham believed that an essence was merely a mental construct with no root in reality. Such things as human nature were not real. Only individual humans exist.

Nominalism has serious implications when applied to the fall of humanity and its redemption. How can a sinful being inherit a single nature if there is no such thing as a nature? How can Christ assume human nature and die for all people, unless there is a human nature? How can one hold an orthodox belief in the Trinity, which affirms that God is three persons in one essence if there are no essences?

Ockham argued that since God was omnipotent that he could do anything. He could create the idea of a tree in our mind, even without the presence of a tree (*see* GOD, NATURE OF). This, of course, undercut trust in the process of “knowing” something. One could “know” something to be true that did not really exist. Could not God create the idea of a world in our minds when there was no world? To apply Ockham to a later skeptic, could not the “demon” conceived by René Descartes (1596–1650) deceive us into believing a nonexistent world existed?

Even without malevolent deception, why could not a benevolent God create impressions he desired without there being any external object corresponding to them?

Methodological Skepticism. Ockham also posited the principle of economy of causes, known as *Ockham’s razor* . This tool also proved useful to later skeptics, with its principle of simplicity or economy of causes. Although Ockham’s statement was “Do not multiply causes without necessity,” this has been popularized (corrupted) into the idea, “The simplest cause is the best explanation,” or “The fewer the truer.” This leads to “The fewest the truest.” When this is combined with the principle of omnipotence, the consequences can be devastating. For example, God could create the impression there is a physical world when there is none. This simpler explanation would, then, be the true one. This, indeed, is the conclusion at which Bishop Berkeley later arrived.

Apologetic Skepticism. Ockham was not a skeptic about the existence of God. He was a theist. However, his skepticism undermined the apologetic defense of theism. His objections to

the cosmological argument anticipated Hume and Immanuel Kant. Ockham raised at least three questions about the cosmological argument (Ockham, 129ff; *see* GOD, OBJECTIONS TO ARGUMENTS FOR).

The Possibility of an Infinite Series. Ockham denied that an essentially related infinite regress of causes was impossible (*see* KALAM COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS). Since essentially related causes (for example, father begetting son) need not be simultaneous, they could be originating causes and not conserving causes. The father is not the continued cause of the son's existence. Only if this simultaneity of the here-and-now conserving cause is added to the concept of an essentially related series of causes, argued Ockham, is an infinite regress impossible.

It is contradictory to affirm that there is no First Cause for what is right now being conserved in existence. So the cosmological argument is valid in reference to what now exists, but not for any original creation.

Knowledge of Efficient Causes. Anticipating Hume, Ockham based knowledge of efficient causes on experience (*see* CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF). Causality is defined as "that whose existence or presence is followed by something" (Maurer, 270). The distinction anticipates Hume's criticism that there is no basis in experience for making a necessary connection between cause and effect. But the inescapability of the conclusion of the cosmological argument depends on the necessity of the connection between cause and effect. Ockham thus placed his razor on the central cord binding the cosmological argument.

Inability to Prove One God. Ockham also held that one could not prove in an absolute sense the existence of only one God (*see* THEISM ; GOD, NATURE OF). Only if the unity of God is taken to mean "the most perfect Being that actually exists" can it be said that the unity of God has been proven. If, however, as Christian theists insist, the unity of God refers to the "most perfect" Being possible, then the unity of God cannot be proven. The proposition "God exists." is not a self-evident proposition. Many doubt it, and a self-evident proposition cannot be doubted. Nor is the absolute unity of God known through other propositions, which can also be doubted, nor by experience, for experience can provide one only with the actual, not with the possible.

Therefore, there is no way to demonstrate that God is absolutely one.

Univocal Religious Language. In one area Ockham held the line against skepticism. He spoke strongly against any equivocal or analogical concepts as applied to God. Ockham argues convincingly that no concept can have a totally different or equivocal meaning as applied to God. For if it did, then we would have no idea what it meant. Likewise, an analogical concept must have an element of sameness, otherwise it would be totally different. This element of sameness is really univocal. Hence, without univocal concepts we can know nothing about God.

While the point is well taken when speaking about univocal concepts, Ockham seemed not to understand the need for analogical predication, such as was posited by Aquinas. That is, we must define terms used of God and creatures in the same way, but they are applied in a different way. God is infinitely good, while creatures can strive only for finite goodness. Goodness cannot be

applied univocally or in entirely the same way to the infinite and the finite (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF).

Evaluation. Ockham's epistemological skepticism is discussed in the articles CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF ; FIRST PRINCIPLES ; HUME, DAVID , and REALISM . Apologetic skepticism is treated in COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT ; GOD, OBJECTIONS TO PROOFS FOR ; HUME, DAVID , and KANT, IMMANUEL .

As for Ockham's methodological skepticism, even granting his premises, "Ockham's Razor" does not work in discussions of God, since it presupposes the existence of an omnipotent God as a premise. Even granting that God *could* create ideas in us without external objects does not mean God *would* do this. The theistic God of Ockham is not only all-powerful but also all-good. And an omnibenevolent God will not deceive (*see* ESSENTIALISM, DIVINE). Ockham's skepticism does not work without the questionable principle of parsimony. But how can one prove that the positing the fewest causes possible is the way to determine what is true. This is not a first principle. At best, it is only a general guide in scientific matters. It is no universal rule in metaphysical issues.

Why assume an external world is redundant? God may have very good purposes for it. Using Ockham's own Razor, it can be viewed as a simpler explanation that an objectively real world is sending impressions to every one than that God must create impressions in every human being individually. Ockham's explanation that God could be directly creating ideas of an external world in every human being is *Deus ex Machina* (the God-out-of-the-machine). It invokes the supernatural to save its conclusion from collapse. God must pop out of the machine and save it. Again, it is simpler in this case to take the natural explanation than to invoke a supernatural one.

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Witnesses, Hume's Criteria for. David Hume (1711–1776), is the skeptic exemplar for modern times (*see* AGNOSTICISM). He outlines the basic criteria that he believed necessary for testing the credibility of witnesses. In his own words: "We entertain suspicion concerning any matter of

fact when the witnesses contradict each other, when they are but few or of a doubtful character, when they have an interest in what they affirm, when they deliver their testimony with hesitation, or with too violent asseverations [declarations]" (Hume, 120).

These concerns can be framed as four questions:

1. Do the witnesses contradict each other?
2. Are there a sufficient number of witnesses?
3. Were the witnesses truthful?
4. Were they nonprejudicial?

Hume's tests can be readily applied to the New Testament witnesses for the resurrection of Christ.

No Contradiction of Witnesses. The evidence is that the testimony of the witnesses does not contradict (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF). Each New Testament writer tells a crucial and overlapping part of the whole story.

- Christ was crucified [around A.D. 30] under Pontius Pilate in Jerusalem.
- He claimed to be the Son of God and offered miracles in support of his claim.
- He was crucified, confirmed to be dead and buried, and yet three days later the tomb was empty (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF).
- Jesus physically appeared to a number of groups of people over the next weeks, in the same nail-scarred body that had died.
- He proved his physical reality to them so convincingly that these skeptical men boldly preached the Resurrection a little over a month later in the same city, whereupon thousands of Jews were converted to Christianity.

There are minor discrepancies in the Gospel accounts. One account (Matt. 28:5) says there was one angel at the tomb; John says there were two angels (John 20:12). Such conflicts are not contradictions in that they are not irreconcilable. Matthew does not say there was *only* one angel there; that would be a contradiction. We are uncertain of whether the two texts are speaking of the same moments (*see* BIBLE, ALLEGED ERRORS IN). Also, minor differences in testimony are not what Hume had in mind in his first rule. One would not expect authentic, independent witnesses to give identical testimony. If they did we might discount their testimony, assuming they were in collusion.

Number of Witnesses. There are twenty-seven books in the New Testament written by about nine different persons, all eyewitnesses or contemporaries of the events they recorded.

When threatened by the authorities the apostles said, "We cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). Peter claimed to be a witness of Jesus (1 Peter 5:1). In 2 Peter 1:16 he wrote, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty" (KJV). The author of the Fourth Gospel said, "And he that saw [it] bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe" (John 19:35 KJV). He adds, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24 KJV). Indeed, John claimed about Christ: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you . . ." (1 John 1:1 , 3 KJV). And Luke said, "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word"(Luke 1:1–2 KJV).

Six witnesses are crucial to the topic of New Testament miracles (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, and 1 Corinthians). These six books by five writers bear witness to the miracle of the resurrection. Even critical scholars now acknowledge that these books were written before A.D. 70, while contemporaries of Christ remained alive. There is little argument that 1 Corinthians was written by the apostle Paul around A.D. 55 or 56, only about two decades after the death of Christ. This is a powerful witness to the reality of the miracle of the resurrection. It is a very early document. It is written by an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (1 Cor. 15:8 ; cf. Acts 9). Paul refers to more than 500 who had seen and heard the resurrected Christ directly (1 Cor. 15:6). Fourth). At the time, most of these witnesses were alive, available for cross-examination (*see* RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR).

Truthfulness. Few challenge the fact that the New Testament provides a high standard for morality, particularly in Jesus' emphasis on love (Matt. 5–7 ; 22:36–37). His apostles repeated this teaching in their writings (for example, Romans 13 ; 1 Corinthians 13 ; Galatians 5). They lived, and even died for what they taught about Christ (2 Tim. 4:6–8 ; 2 Peter 1:14), an unmistakable sign of their sincerity.

In addition to teaching that truth is a divine imperative (Rom. 12:9), it is evident that the New Testament writers were scrupulous about truth in their writings. Peter declared, "We did not follow cunningly devised fables" (2 Peter 1:16). The Apostle Paul insisted, "Do not lie one to another" (Col. 3:9). The New Testament writers were honest men, willing to die for the truth of what they had written. Further, where the New Testament writers' statements overlap with the discovery of historians and archaeologists, they have proven to be accurate (*see* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF ; ARCHAEOLOGY, NEW TESTAMENT). Archaeologist Nelson Glueck concludes, "It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible" (Glueck, 31). There is no proof that the New Testament writers ever lied in their writings or deliberately falsified the facts. As Harvard legal

expert Simon Greenleaf concluded, their testimony shows absolutely no sign of perjury (see Greenleaf).

Finally, the New Testament record has received strong and significant support from historians of this Roman period. Noted Roman historian Sherwin-White chided scholars for not recognizing the historical value of the New Testament documents compared to the sources of Roman history (Sherwin-White, 188–91). Another noted historian of the period, Colin Hemer, presented strong evidence that supports the historical nature of the Book of Acts and its Lucan authorship (by A.D. 62) placing it “unequivocally in the lifetime of many eyewitnesses and surviving contemporaries of Jesus, Peter, and Paul, as prospective readers who could object to the presence of material falsification” (Hemer, 409–10).

Unprejudiced Witnesses. Nor were witnesses of the miracles of Christ, particularly his resurrection, predisposed to believe the events to which they gave testimony.

The apostles themselves disbelieved the first reports that Christ had risen from the dead (see RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR). The story of the women “seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them” (Luke 24:11). Even when some of the disciples saw Christ themselves they were “slow of heart to believe” (Luke 24:25). When Jesus appeared to ten apostles and showed them his crucifixion scars, “they still did not believe for joy, and marveled” (Luke 24:41). Thomas protested that he would not believe unless he could put his finger in the scars in Jesus’ hand (John 20:25).

Jesus also appeared to unbelievers, at least his unbelieving half-brother, James (John 7:5; 1 Cor. 15:7), and the greatest unbeliever of the day—Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9).

Witnesses to the resurrection had nothing to gain personally from their testimony. They were persecuted and threatened with death for their stand (cf. Acts 4, 5, 8). As a matter of fact, most of the apostles were martyred. Certainly, it would have been much more profitable to deny the resurrection.

To discount their testimonies of those who believed in the resurrected Christ is like discounting an eye-witness of a murder because he actually saw it occur. The prejudice in this case is not with the witnesses but with those who reject their testimony.

Finally, to reject a witness simply because they have some kind of bias is groundless. Everyone has a bias or set of beliefs. No one’s testimony could be accepted on anything if every bias were a disqualification. Doctors are biased in favor of a patient’s survival. Yet they can still be trusted to give an objective analysis of the patient’s condition. Richard Whately argued satirically that we cannot believe the military exploits about Napoleon, since the British practically demonized him and the French virtually worshiped him. But in fact people do not discard their testimony since they have a bias. Rather, they examine carefully their testimony in order to determine the facts.

Conclusion. Hume was one of the great skeptics of modern times. He devised criteria by which he believed one could eliminate all belief in miracles. However, when his criteria are

applied to witnesses to the resurrection of Christ they pass as credible. This confirms the Christian contention that the New Testament witnesses were reliable and, therefore, that the New Testament accurately reports what Jesus said and did (see NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF).

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Wittgenstein, Ludwig. Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) was the son of a wealthy Viennese steel magnate. His father was a Jewish Protestant. His mother was Roman Catholic, and Ludwig was baptized a Catholic. He studied engineering in Berlin and Manchester, England. He also studied at Cambridge under Bertrand Russell. Wittgenstein wrote what became an influential work in philosophy, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921, Eng., 1961) while in an internment camp as a captured prisoner of war. Wittgenstein believed he had solved all the problems of philosophy with *Tractatus*, so he retired from the field to teach school. He also gave away his inherited fortune. In the late 1920s, Wittgenstein met frequently with the Vienna circle of logical positivists (see LOGICAL POSITIVISM), including A. J. Ayer. He taught at Cambridge until 1947 and then took a job as a hospital porter. In 1948 he went into seclusion and soon learned he had cancer.

In addition to *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein’s works included *Notebooks: 1914–1916* (1914–16, Eng. 1961), *Prototractatus* (1914–18, 1971), *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief* (1930–38, 1966); *The Blue and Brown Books* (1933–35, 1958), *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1937–44, 1956), *Zettel* (1945–48, 1966), *On Certainty* (1949–, 1969), and *Philosophical Investigations* (part 1, 1945; part 2, 1947–49, Eng. 1953).

Wittgenstein also continued to do research as an engineer and patented several inventions, including a jet reaction propeller for aircraft.

Three influences stand out among several on his philosophical thinking, Immanuel Kant, Arthur Schopenhauer, and Bertrand Russell. Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoyevsky guided his lifestyle, and Augustine and Søren Kierkegaard were his favorite authors in religion.

Philosophical Thought. Wittgenstein knew two great periods of work. The early period was expressed by *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Wittgenstein himself said the point of the book was ethical. In the preface he explained that he hoped to set limits on the expression of thoughts. There can be no limits on thought, he declared. "We should have to be able to think what cannot be thought." However, to set limits on language is to differentiate between meaningful ideas and nonsense. "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence," he said. That reflected his own work on the book. He said, "My work consists of two parts: The one presented here plus all that I have not written and it is precisely this second part that is the important one."

The project in *Tractatus* is Kantian. The method is that of logical atomism in that Wittgenstein assumes there is a convergence between language and reality. Language mirrors the world. This convergence has serious implications for ethics and philosophy in his thinking. All that can be expressed in language are propositions of natural science (*Tractatus*, 6.42). No transcendental propositions about ethics, aesthetics, or God can be expressed.

The second period of Wittgenstein's work was expressed in *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein presents and then tries to refute statements of Augustine on the "picture theory of meaning" as the essence of human language. He regards as an oversimplification the ideas that the function of language is to state facts and that all words are names, referring to something. He strikes down as mistaken Augustine's idea that meaning is taught by examples in definition. Example definitions can be variously interpreted (*ibid.*, 1.1:28). The statement of Augustine that the meaning of a name is the object that the name denotes he regarded as absurd.

He also rejected the ideas that meaning is a matter of producing mental images, that one clarifies propositions by analyzing them, and that words have a determinate sense. He rejected both univocal and analogical language (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF). On the positive side, Wittgenstein was a strong proponent of conventionalism.

The central point is that religious language is meaningless. It belongs to the realm of the inexpressible because there is an unbridgeable gulf between fact and value. As discussed in the article on analogy, this view is that all "God-talk" is nonsense. That does not mean that the person cannot feel or know anything about God. It is clear from *Notebooks* that there is a feeling of dependence and a belief in God because "the facts of the world are not the end of the matter." But what Wittgenstein knows he cannot really talk about. Such things are outside the limits of language, and ultimately thought.

Because the higher and transcendent are inexpressible is not to say they are totally incommunicable. They can be shown if not said. An apparent contradiction in *Tractatus* is that although propositions about language are employed they are not propositions of natural science. By Wittgenstein's own reasoning they must be nonsense. He acknowledges this, saying that they can only serve as elucidations—an example of showing and saying (6:45).

In *Investigations*, Wittgenstein does not directly speak about religious discourse, but he seems to assume that prayer and theology are meaningful linguistic activities. Praying in particular is mentioned as a language game. Since stating facts is only one of many linguistic activities, there is no *a priori* bar against the meaningfulness of religious language. Since

language games have intrinsic criteria of meaning, and religious language is a language game, it must be judged by its own standards and not by standards imposed upon it. This is a form of fideism.

In *Lectures and Conversations*, Wittgenstein portrays religious language as possibly being meaningful (as a language game). But it is clear that he remains an agnostic. He rejects any cognitive knowledge in religious language. For example, it is legitimate to utter a belief in a last judgment. But no one could say whether the belief is possibly true or false (58). Such beliefs are purely a matter of blind faith (*see* FIDEISM). There is no evidence for them. He would not, however, ridicule those who claim to base their beliefs on evidence, for example, historical apologetics.

"It has been said that Christianity rests on an historical basis. It has been said a thousand times by intelligent people that indubitability is not enough in this case, even if there is as much evidence as for Napoleon (*see* WHATELY, RICHARD). Because the indubitability wouldn't be enough to make me change my whole life" (57).

Religious beliefs help orient our lives, but they do not inform us about reality. Wittgenstein believes we are locked in a linguistic bubble. Religious language is fine as a language game, but it tells us nothing about God or ultimate reality.

Evaluation. Unlike the logical positivists (*see* AYER, A. J.), Wittgenstein did not utterly deny the meaningfulness of religious language. It remained a legitimate form of language and was based in a meaningful experience. Also, Wittgenstein did not join the Vienna Circle in affirming empirical verifiability. They insisted that only empty tautologies (*see* TAUTOLOGY), which are true by definition or know through the senses, could be meaningful. Wittgenstein rejected this form of positivism, realizing that meaning should be listened to, not legislated.

Therefore, he did not embrace atheism. He was a fideistic theist. He read both the New Testament and Søren Kierkegaard. He acknowledged the validity of prayer and belief in last things. He even recognized that religious language has value. Though it was not descriptive to him, it did aid the religious life in a practical way. It was a meaningful expression of religious experience and helped one live.

Wittgenstein was the archenemy of the Platonic (*see* PLATO) view that there is a one-to-one univocal correspondence between our ideas and those of God. This Augustinian view he rejected outright. There is no correspondence between our thought and God's (*see* TRUTH, NATURE OF).

However, his view is open to serious criticism. All forms of fideism are untenable. If one takes his writings as a rational justification of the nonrational fideistic faith, they are self-defeating. If he offers no rational justification for his beliefs, they are simply unproven propositions that no reasonable person should accept.

He also follows Kant into a false dichotomy between fact and value. They saw the two in totally separate domains. But this is not the case. Human beings combine both. One cannot attack human facticity (the physical presence of the body) without attacking the value of life and

personhood. One cannot separate rape or genocide from the value of the object that is at the center of those actions. In theology, the fact of the death of Christ cannot be separated from its redemptive value.

Wittgenstein believed we are locked inside a language that tells us nothing about the realm of value beyond language itself. This is self-defeating. Any attempt to forbid statements about the mystical realm beyond language transgresses that prohibition. Like Kant's agnosticism, one cannot know that he cannot know, and he cannot say that he cannot say. In claiming that the mystical cannot be spoken, one speaks about it.

Among Wittgenstein's legacies, none is more deadly than the conventionalist view of meaning. All meaning cannot be relative. If it were the statement "All meaning is relative," would be meaningless. Like other attempts to deny objective meaning, Wittgenstein had to assume the objective meaning of his statements (*see* CONVENTIONALISM).

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World Religions and Christianity. Orthodox Christianity claims to be the true religion. So does Islam and other religions. Even Hinduism and Buddhism (*see* ZEN BUDDHISM), in spite of their eclectic veneer, claim to be true. Since there are mutually exclusive truth claims among these religions, it is obvious that they cannot all be correct. For example, some religions are monotheistic, such as, traditional Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Others are pantheistic, such as, Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, and Christian Science. Paganism, Neopaganism, and Mormonism are polytheistic (*see* POLYTHEISM). These have incompatible views of God. In the final analysis, only one can be true, and the others must be false.

Uniqueness of Christianity. The uniqueness of Christianity is found in its singular claims about God, Christ, the Bible, and the way of salvation. While there are other monotheistic religions, Christianity claims to have the true view of God—Trinitarianism (*see* TRINITY).

A Unique View of God. No other religion in human history is explicitly trinitarian. Plato had a triad in ultimate reality of the Good, the Demiurgos, and the World Soul (see Plato). But the

Good was neither personal nor God. The World Soul was not personal. The three did not share one nature. Neoplatonism had a One, a Nous, and a World Soul (see Plotinus). But this series of emanations is not three distinct persons in one essence. Neither the One nor the World Soul is personal. The One has no essence or being. Only in the Christian Trinity is there one God in essence who is expressed eternally in three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Matt. 28:18).

Christians claim that this view of God is the true view of God and that there is no other God (1 Cor. 8:4 , 6). Other views are either false views of the true God (as Judaism) or false gods (as in Hinduism). The Islamic view of God is false because it insists that there is only one person in the godhead.

The Jewish (i.e., Old Testament) view of God is of the true God, but it is incomplete. It rightly insisted that there is only one God (Exod. 20:2–3 ; Deut. 6:4). The Old Testament allowed for a plurality within the unity of God (Ps. 110:1) and sometimes spoke of God's Son (Prov. 30:4). Once all three members of the Trinity are mentioned in one passage (Isa. 63:7–10). But the Old Testament never explicitly delineates the members of the Trinity as three persons in One God. The Old Testament Jewish God is the true God revealed explicitly in his unity. It is revelation in progress. The God represented in all other religions is false. These gods are incompatible with the Bible's view of God. It is the exclusivity of Christianity that this view alone is true.

A Unique View of Christ. No other world religion believes that Christ is the unique Son of God, God himself manifested in human flesh (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF). Orthodox Christianity alone confesses that Jesus is fully God and fully human, two natures in one person. Other religions pay homage to Christ. But none considers him to be God incarnate. To Buddhism and Hinduism he is a Guru showing a path to ultimate reality (Brahman). Islam acknowledges him as one of several prophets (*see* MUHAMMAD, ALLEGED DIVINE CALL OF). To Hinduism the incarnation is really a reincarnation) of Krishna. But there are significant differences between Krishna and Christ. Krishna is only a temporary incarnation. He is not an incarnation of a monotheistic God but of a pantheistic God. There is no real comparison between the Christian concept of Christ and that of any other religion. Some religious movements and cults have adopted a view of Christ's deity. But each has added its own unorthodox beliefs to destroy the truth claims made in Scripture. One form of Buddhism even has Buddha dying for our sins. But this is far from Christianity and is foreign even to the nature of indigenous Buddhism (*see* CHRIST, UNIQUENESS OF).

Speaking of the mystery religions, British scholar Norman Anderson explains,

The basic difference between Christianity and the mysteries is the historic basis of the one and the mythological character of the others. The deities of the mysteries were no more than "nebulous figures of an imaginary past," while the Christ whom the apostolic *kerygma* proclaimed had lived and died only a few years before the first New Testament documents were written. Even when the apostle Paul wrote his first letter to the Corinthians the majority of some five hundred witnesses to the resurrection were still alive. [Anderson, 52–53]

A Unique View of the Written Word of God. Most religions have holy or wisdom books, including all the major world religions. Judaism has the Torah, Islam the *Qur'an*, and Hinduism the *Bhagavad-gita*. In comparison with these and other writings, the Christian Bible is unique.

- Only the Bible claims to come by the unique process of divine inspiration (*see* BIBLE, INSPIRATION OF). The *Qur'an* claims to have come by verbal dictation from the angel Gabriel to Muhammad.
- Only the Bible has supernatural predictive prophecy (*see* PROPHECY, AS PROOF OF THE BIBLE). Other religions claim predictive prophecy but fail to provide examples of clear predictions hundreds of years in advance that have been literally fulfilled, such as the Bible has. Muslims, for example, claim that Muhammad made predictions in the *Qur'an*. But upon closer examination they fail to measure up to their billing (*see* MUHAMMAD, ALLEGED MIRACLES OF ; QUR'AN, ALLEGED DIVINE ORIGIN OF).
- Only the Bible has been supernaturally confirmed (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR ; CHRIST, DEITY OF). For only the Bible was written by men of God who were confirmed by special acts of God (cf. Exod. 4:1f. ; Heb. 2:3–4) to be telling the truth about God (*see* MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF ; MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE).

Uniqueness of the Way of Salvation. While some other religions (e.g., “Caf” School of Bhakti Hinduism) employ grace (see Otto), Christianity is unique in its plan of salvation:

- It declares humankind sinful and alienated from a holy God (Gen. 6:5 ; Psalm 14. ; Eccles. 7:28 ; Luke 13:3 ; Rom. 3:23).
- It insists that no amount of good works can get a human being into heaven (Isa. 64:6 ; Rom. 4:5 ; Eph. 2:8–9 ; Titus 3:5–7).
- It declares that there is only one way to God—through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for our sins (John 10:1, 9 ; 14:6 ; 1 Cor. 15:1–6). One must believe from his heart and confess with his mouth to be saved (Rom. 10:9). There is no other way. Jesus said, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No-one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 ; cf. John 10:1 ; Acts 4:12).

Salvation and Other Religions. Christianity, therefore, admits salvation through no other cult or religion. For Christ is not considered to be the Son of God who died for our sins and rose again in any non-Christian religion (*see* RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR).

It is important not to draw false implications from this exclusivity:

It does not follow that God does not love the unbelievers in the world. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). Paul said that God wants all to know the truth (1 Tim. 2:4).

It does not follow that God did not provide salvation for all. John informs us that Christ is the atoning sacrifice for both our sins and “the sins of the whole world” (1 John 2:2). Christ died not only for the elect but for all the “ungodly” (Rom. 5:6). He even died for those who “deny” him (2 Peter 2:1).

It does not follow that only a few select nations will be evangelized. John declared: “After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands” (Rev. 7:9).

It does not follow that no salvation is available to those who have never heard of Christ (Acts 10:35 ; Heb. 11:6 ; *see* “HEATHEN,” SALVATION OF). Anyone anywhere who seeks God will find him. Peter insisted that God “accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right” (Acts 10:35). The writer of Hebrews says “he rewards those who earnestly seek him” (Heb. 11:6).

All have the light of creation (Rom. 1:19) and conscience (Rom. 2:12–15), which is sufficient for condemnation but not salvation. There are many ways by which God could get the gospel to those who will to be saved. The normal way is through a missionary (Rom. 10:14–15). But God can save through his word (Heb. 4:12) which he can convey through a vision, a dream, a voice from heaven, or an angel (Rev. 14:6). God is not limited in the ways in which he can get the saving message to those who seek him (cf. Heb. 1:1). But if men turn from the light they have, God is not responsible to give more light (John 3:19).

Truth and Other Religions. Many Christians are willing to accept that there is truth or value in other religions (*see* TRUTH, NATURE OF). All humanity receives general revelation (Psalm 19 ; Acts 17 ; Rom. 1:19–29 ; 2:12–15). God has revealed truth to them, so it is no surprise that their beliefs express both good and truth.

There is, however, an important difference between truth as Christians hold it and truth as embraced by non-Christians. The Christian system is a system of truth with some error in it. All non-Christian religions are systems of error with some truths (*see* PLURALISM). The only system of truth is the Christian system. Since Christians are finite, our understanding of this system of truth will have some error in it. This is why we must continue to grow in the truth (2 Peter 3:18), knowing that now we understand imperfectly (1 Cor 13:9, 12). By contrast, no non-Christian system is true as a system, although there are truths within the system. However, the system itself obscures and taints these truths so that even they are distorted. And no non-Christian system provides the light of salvation.

Some Objections Answered. The unique claims of Christianity are offensive to the unbelieving mind. “The message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor 1:18). Nonetheless, the offended critic deserves an answer (Col. 4:5–6 ; 1 Pet. 3:15).

The Charge of Narrowness and Exclusivity. It is objected that Christianity is narrow and exclusivistic. Nothing sounds worse to the contemporary mind than narrow-mindedness. But this argument is more emotional than rational:

Only one worldview can be true. If the various worldviews have mutually exclusive truth claims, only one can be true (see PLURALISM). A true system of thought must be comprehensive of thought and life. It must possess consistency and coherence in its overall claims. But most important, the system must correspond to reality, past, present, and future, natural and supernatural. And all major systems of thought contain key truth claims which are contrary to those of all other systems. Either Christianity teaches true precepts about the Trinity , the deity of Christ (see CHRIST, DEITY OF), and the one way of salvation, or else another system is true, and Christianity is false.

Truth by nature is narrow. It is narrow to claim that $3 + 3 = 6$ is the only answer, but every other answer is wrong. The unbeliever's viewpoint is just as narrow. The claim "Christianity is true and all non-Christian systems are false" is no more narrow than to claim "Hinduism is true and all non-Hindu systems are false." No truth claim is all-inclusive.

This does not mean that minor truths within opposing systems of thought cannot both be true. Non-Christians hold that murder is wrong and that the earth is spherical. But only Christians (and Judaism from which it emerged) believe that the world was created *ex nihilo* by a triune God. Christians and non-Christians can believe that Jesus was a good man. But only Christians believe that he was the God-man. So while here can be agreement between truths, there is no agreement on the major truths unique to the Christian system.

All religions claim to have the truth. As noted, the claim to unique truth is shared by every religious system that makes truth claims. This is true even of "broad," "eclectic" religions. Hindus claim that it is true that "There are many ways to God." This appears open-minded, but it is just as narrow as the Christian claim. It excludes all opposing views.

The Charge of Injustice. Is it unfair and unjust to claim that there is salvation in no other religion? This objection is without merit for reasons detailed in the article HEATHEN, SALVATION OF . It suffices to mention that God had provided salvation for everyone (John 3:16 ; 1 John 2:2). Everyone who really wants it will get it (Acts 10:35 ; Heb. 11:6).

Conclusion. Any truth claim is exclusive. A system that is all-inclusive makes no truth claim. And every proposition that affirms something denies something else by logical implication. Statements such as, "God is all" are opposed by statements such as, "God is not all." They cannot both be true. All truth claims exclude their contradictory. Indeed, all religions claim to have *the truth* —even if that truth is that they believe other non-contradictory religious systems are true also. But if two or more religions embrace the same truths, then they are really one. And that one basic religious system behind them claims to be the true religion to the exclusion of all opposed religious systems. So, Christianity's claim to be the true religion is no more narrow than the claim of any other religion (see PLURALISM, RELIGIOUS).

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Worldview. A *worldview* is how one views or interprets reality. The German word is *Weltanschauung* , meaning a "world and life view," or "a paradigm." It is the framework through which or by which one makes sense of the data of life. A worldview makes a world of difference in one's view of God, origins, evil, human nature, values, and destiny.

There are seven major worldviews. Each is unique. With one exception, pantheism / polytheism , no one can consistently believe in more than one worldview, because the central premises are mutually exclusive (see TRUTH, NATURE OF ; PLURALISM, RELIGIOUS ; WORLD RELIGIONS, CHRISTIANITY AND). Logically, only one worldview can be true. The seven major worldviews are theism, deism, atheism, pantheism, panentheism, finite godism, and polytheism.

Looking Through the Views. *Theism.* An infinite, personal God exists beyond and in the universe. Theism says that the physical universe is not all there is. There is an infinite, personal God beyond the universe who created it, sustains it, and who acts within it in a supernatural way. He is transcendentally "out there" and immanently "in here." This is the view represented by traditional Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

Deism. God is beyond the universe, but not in it. Deism is theism minus miracles. It says God is transcendent over the universe but not immanent in it, certainly not supernaturally. It holds a naturalistic view of the operation of the world. In common with theism, it believes the originator of the world is a Creator. God made the world but does not work with it. He wound up creation and lets it run on its own. In contrast to pantheism, which negates God's transcendence in favor of his immanence, deism negates God's immanence in favor of his transcendence. Deists have included Francois-Marie Voltaire , Thomas Jefferson , and Thomas Paine .

Atheism. No God exists beyond or in the universe. Atheism claims that the physical universe is all there is. No God exists anywhere, either in the universe or beyond it. The universe or cosmos is all there is and all there will be. All is matter. It is self-sustaining. A few of the more famous atheists were Karl Marx , Friedrich Nietzsche , and Jean-Paul Sartre .

Pantheism. God is the All/Universe . For a pantheist, there is no transcendent Creator beyond the universe. Creator and creation are two ways of denoting one reality. God is the universe or All, and the universe is God. There is ultimately one reality, not many different ones. All is mind. Pantheism is represented by certain forms of Hinduism, Zen Buddhism, and Christian Science.

Pantheism. God is in the universe, as a mind is in a body. The universe is God's "body." It is his actual pole. But there is another "pole" to God other than the physical universe. He has infinite potential to become. This view is represented by Alfred North Whitehead , Charles Hartshorne , and Shubert Ogden.

Finite Godism. A finite God exists beyond and in the universe. Finite godism is like theism, only the god beyond the universe and active in it is limited in nature and power. Like deists, finite godists generally accept creation but deny miraculous intervention. Often God's inability to overcome evil is given as a reason for believing God is limited in power. John Stuart Mill , William James , and Peter Bertocci hold this worldview.

Polytheism . Many gods exist beyond the world and in it. Polytheism is the belief in many finite gods, who influence the world. They deny any infinite God stands beyond the world. They hold that the gods are active, often believing that each has its own domain. When one finite god is considered chief over others, the religion is called henotheism. Chief representatives of polytheism include the ancient Greeks, Mormons, and neopagans (for example, wiccans).

Importance of a Worldview. Worldviews influence personal meaning and values, the way people act and think. The most important question a worldview answers is "Where did we come from?" The answer to this question is crucial to how other questions are answered. Theism declares that God created us. Creation was from nothing, *ex nihilo* . Atheism believes we evolved by chance. Atheism holds to creation out of matter, *ex materia* . Pantheism holds that we emanated from God like rays from the sun or sparks from a fire. Creation is out of God himself, *ex Deo* (see CREATION, VIEWS OF). The others play on some form of these understandings, with nuances of difference.

That understanding would influence a person's view of death, for example. A theist believes in personal immortality; an atheist generally does not. For the theist, death is a beginning, for the atheist an ending of existence. For the pantheist, death is the cessation of one life and the beginning of another, leading toward ultimate merging with God.

Theists believe we were created by God with the purpose to eternally fellowship with and worship him. Pantheists believe we will eventually lose all individual identity in God. Atheists generally see immortality only as the ongoing of the species. We live on in memories (for awhile) and in the influence we have on future generations.

Obviously, what one believes about the future will influence how he or she lives now. In classical theism, "We only come this way once" (cf. Heb. 9:27), so life takes on a certain sobriety and urgency it would not have for one who believes in reincarnation . The urgency there is to deal with bad *karma* so the next life will be a step up. But there are always more chances in future lives to try, try again. For the atheist, the old beer commercial said it well: We have to "grab the gusto, because we only go around once."

A virtuous act is given different meanings by various worldviews. A theist views an act of compassion as an absolute obligation imposed by God (see MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF), which has intrinsic value regardless of the consequences. An atheist views virtue as a self-imposed obligation that the human race has placed upon its members. An act has no intrinsic value apart from that assigned to it by society.

There is also a gulf between worldviews with regard to the nature of values. For a theist, God has endowed certain things, human life for example, with ultimate value. It is sacred because God made it in his image. So there are divine obligations to respect life and absolute prohibitions against murder. For an atheist, life has the value the human race and its various societies have assigned to it. It is relatively valuable, as compared with other things. Usually an atheist believes an act is good if it brings good results and evil if it does not. A Christian believes that certain acts are good, whatever their results.

The differences in worldviews can be summarized in the accompanying chart. In some cases the words represent only the dominant or characteristic form of the view, not that of everyone who accepts the system.

Summary. Reality is either the universe only, God only, or the universe and God(s). If the universe is all that exists then atheism is right. If God is all that exists then pantheism is right. If God and the universe exists then either there is one God or many gods. If there are many gods, polytheism is right. If there is only one God then this God is either finite or infinite. If there is one finite god then finite godism is correct. If this finite god has two poles (one beyond and one in the world), then pantheism is right. If there is one infinite God then either there is intervention of this God in the universe or there is not. If there is intervention, then theism is true. If there is not, then deism is true.

Sources

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