

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics

Norman L. Geisler

©1999 by Norman L. Geisler

Published by Baker Books

a division of Baker Book House Company

P.O. Box 6287, Grand Rapids, MI 49516-6287

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—for example, electronic, photocopy, recording—without prior written permission of the publisher. The only exception is brief quotations in printed reviews.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Geisler, Norman L.

Baker encyclopedia of Christian apologetics / Norman L. Geisler

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-8010-2151-0

1. Apologetics—Encyclopedias. I. Title.

BT1102.G42 1998

239°.03—dc21

98-8735

For information about academic books, resources for Christian leaders, and all new releases available from Baker Book House, visit our web site:

<http://www.bakerbooks.com>

Acknowledgments

I wish to thank those who gave valuable help in the preparation of this manuscript. This includes Larry Blythe, Steve Bright, Mac Craig, Mark Dorsett, Jeff Drauden, Scott Henderson, Holly Hood, Kenny Hood, David Johnson, Eric LaRock, Trevor Mander, Doug Potter, Steve Puryear, Jeff Spencer, and Frank Turek.

I am especially grateful to Joan Cattell for the untold sacrificial hours of her valuable editing of the complete manuscript. Special thanks are also due to my son, David Geisler, who put together the vast bibliography and for my faithful secretary, Laurel Mangel, who carefully typed and proofed it.

Most of all, I would like to thank my devoted wife, Barbara, for her love, support, and sacrifice that made this volume possible.

Abbreviations

ATR Anglican Theological Review

BA The Biblical Archaeologist

BAR Biblical Archaeology Review

Bib. Sac. Bibliotheca Sacra

BJRL Bulletin of the John Rylands Library

Bk. Book

BR Bible Review

ca. circa

CRJ Christian Research Journal

CT Christianity Today

EB Encyclopaedia Biblica

Eng. English

ERE Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics

Fr. French

Gk. Greek

GOTR Greek Orthodox Theological Review

IEJ Israel Exploration Journal

ISBE International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

JAMA Journal of the American Medical Association

JASA Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation

JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society

KJV King James Version

Lat. Latin

LXX Septuagint

NASB New American Standard Bible

NIV New International Version

NKJV New King James Version

NTCERK New Twentieth Century Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge

RSV Revised Standard Version

SE Studia Evangelica

WTJ Westminster Theological Journal

Absolute Truth. *See* TRUTH, NATURE OF .

Absolutes, Moral. *See* MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF .

Accommodation Theory. In apologetics, *accommodation theory* can refer to either of two views, one acceptable and one objectionable to evangelical Christians. It can refer to God’s accommodation of his revelation to our finite circumstances to communicate with us, as in Scripture or the incarnation of Christ (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR ; CALVIN, JOHN ; CHRIST, DEITY OF). Both of these are forms of divine self-limiting accommodation in order to communicate with finite creatures.

Negative critics of the Bible (*see* BIBLE CRITICISM) believe that Jesus accommodated himself to the erroneous views of the Jews of his day in their view of Scripture as inspired and infallible (*see* BIBLE, JESUS’ VIEW OF). Orthodox scholars reject this form of accommodation.

Two Kinds of Accommodation. Legitimate accommodation can be more accurately called “adaptation.” God, because of infinitude, *adapts* himself to our finite understanding in order to reveal himself. However, the God who is truth never accommodates himself to human error. The vital differences are easily seen when these concepts are compared:

Adaptation	Accommodation
Adaptation to finite understanding	Accommodation to finite error
Finitude	Sinfulness
Partial truths	Actual errors
Disclosed truth in human language	Disguised truth in human language
Descension with truth	Compromise with truth
Anthropomorphisms necessary	Myths necessary
God’s nature revealed	God’s activity revealed
What really is	What seems to be

The Bible teaches the transcendence of God. His ways and thoughts are far beyond ours (Isa. 55:9 ; Rom. 11:33). Human beings are infinitesimal in view of God’s infinity. God must “stoop down” in order to speak to us. However, this divine act of adaptation to our finitude never involves accommodation to our error. For God cannot err (Heb. 6:18). God uses anthropomorphisms (a true expression of who God is that is couched in human terms) to speak to

us, but he does not use myths. He sometimes gives us only part of the truth but that partial truth is never error (1 Cor. 13:12). He reveals himself progressively, but never erroneously (*see* PROGRESSIVE REVELATION). He does not always tells us *all* , but all that he tells us is true.

Jesus and Accommodation. It is well known that Jesus expressed a high view of Scripture in the New Testament (*see* BIBLE, JESUS’ VIEW OF). He accepted the divine authority (Matt. 4:4 , 7 , 10), imperishability (Matt. 5:17–18), divine inspiration (Matt. 22:43), unbreakability (John 10:35), supremacy (Matt. 15:3 , 6), inerrancy (Matt. 22:29 ; John 17:17), historical reliability (Matt. 12:40 ; 24:37–38), and scientific accuracy (Matt. 19:4–5). To avoid the conclusion that Jesus was actually affirming all this to be true, some critics insist that he was merely accommodating himself to the accepted Jewish belief of the day without attempting to debunk their views. These erroneous views were a starting point for what he wanted to teach about more important matters of morality and theology.

Accommodation Contrary to Jesus’ Life. Everything that is known about Jesus’ life and teaching reveals that he never accommodated to the false teaching of the day. On the contrary, Jesus rebuked those who accepted Jewish teaching that contradicted the Bible, declaring: “And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? . . . Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition” (Matt. 15:3 , 6b).

Jesus corrected false views about the Bible. For instance, in his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus affirmed emphatically: “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment” (Matt. 5:21–22). This or the similar formula of “It has been said. . . . But I say unto you . . .” is repeated in following verses (cf. Matt. 5:23–43).

He rebuked the famous Jewish teacher Nicodemus: “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things?” (John 3:10). This is far from accommodating his false views. He even rebuked Nicodemus for not understanding empirical things, saying, “I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things?” (John 3:12). Speaking specifically about their erroneous view of Scripture Jesus told the Sadducees bluntly, “You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God” (Matt. 22:29).

Jesus’ denunciations of the Pharisees were scarcely accommodating. “Woe to you, blind guides! . . . Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! . . . You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! . . . You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell?” (Matt. 23:16–33).

Jesus went so far from accommodating to the false beliefs and practices in the temple that “he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple area, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, ‘Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!’ ” (John 2:15–16).

Even Jesus' enemies recognized that he would not compromise. The Pharisees said: "Teacher, we know you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by men, because you pay no attention to who they are" (Matt. 22:16). Nothing in the Gospel record indicates that Jesus accommodated to accepted error on any topic.

Accommodation Contrary to Jesus' Character. From a purely human standpoint, Jesus was known as a man of high moral character. His closest friends found him impeccable (1 John 3:3 ; 4:17 ; 1 Peter 1:19). The crowds were amazed at his teaching "because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matt. 7:29).

Pilate examined Jesus and declared, "I find no basis for a charge against this man" (Luke 23:4). The Roman soldier crucifying Jesus exclaimed, "Surely, this was a righteous man" (Luke 23:47). Even unbelievers have paid high tribute to Christ. Ernest Renan, the French atheist, declared about Jesus: "his perfect idealism is the highest rule of the unblemished and virtuous life" (Renan, 383). Renan also wrote, "Let us place, then, the person of Jesus at the highest summit of human greatness" (ibid., 386) and remains an inexhaustible principle of moral regeneration for humanity" (ibid., 388).

From a biblical point of view, Jesus was the Son of God and as such could not deceive. For God "does not lie" (Titus 1:2). Indeed, "It is impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). His "word is truth" (John 17:17). "Let God be true and every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4). Whatever divine self-limitation is necessary in order to communicate with human beings, there is no error, for God cannot err. It is contrary to his very nature.

An Objection Answered. Admittedly, God adapts to human limitations to communicate with us. Indeed, Jesus, who was God, was also a human being. As a human being he was limited in his knowledge. This is borne out by several passages of Scripture. First, as a child "he grew in wisdom" (Luke 2:52). Even as an adult he had certain limitations on his knowledge. According to Matthew, Jesus did not know what was on the fig tree before he got to it (Matt. 21:19). Jesus said he did not know the time of his second coming: "No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Matt. 24:36 , emphasis added).

However, despite the limitations on Jesus' human knowledge, limits on understanding differ from misunderstanding. The fact that he did not know some things as man does not mean he was wrong in what he did know. It is one thing to say Jesus did not know as a man the J-E-P-D theory of the authorship of the Law. But it is quite another to say Jesus was wrong when he affirmed that David wrote Psalm 110 (Matt. 22:43), that Moses wrote the Law (Luke 24:27 ; John 7:19 , 23), or that Daniel wrote a prophecy (Matt. 24:15 ; see BIBLE, JESUS' VIEW OF). Jesus' limitations on things he did not know as a man did not hinder him from affirming truly the things he did know (see PENTATEUCH, MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF ; PROPHECY, AS PROOF OF THE BIBLE).

What Jesus did know he taught with divine authority. He said to his disciples: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching

them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (Matt. 28:18–20). He taught with emphasis. In the Gospel of John, Jesus said twenty-five times "Truly, truly . . ." (John 3:3 , 5 , 11). Indeed, he claimed his words were on the level of God's, declaring, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away" (Matt. 24:35). What is more, Jesus taught only what the Father told him to teach. He said, "I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me" (John 8:28b). He added, "By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me" (John 5:30). So to charge Jesus with error is to charge God the Father with error, since he spoke only what the Father told him.

Summary. There is no evidence that Jesus ever accommodated himself to human error in anything he taught. Nor is there any indication that his self-limitation in the incarnation resulted in error. He never taught anything in the areas in which the incarnation limited him as a man. And what he did teach, he affirmed with the authority of the Father, having all authority in heaven and earth.

Sources

"Accommodation," *ISBE*

N. L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* , chapter 18

E. Renan, *The Life of Jesus*

J. W. Wenham, *Christ and the Bible*

Acognosticism. Acognosticism should not be confused with *agnosticism* . Agnosticism claims that we cannot *know* God; acognosticism asserts that we cannot *speak meaningfully* (cognitively) about God. The view is also called "non-cognitivism" or "semantical atheism."

The Acognosticism of A. J. Ayer . Following Hume's distinction between definition and empirical statements, A. J. Ayer offered the principle of empirical verifiability. This affirmed that, in order for statements to be meaningful, they must be either analytic (David Hume's [1711–1776]) "relation of ideas" or synthetic (Hume's "matter of fact"); that is, definitional or empirical (Ayer, chap. 1). Definition statements are devoid of content and say nothing about the world; empirical statements have content but tell us nothing about any alleged reality beyond the empirical world. They are only probable in nature and are never philosophically certain (see CERTAINTY/CERTITUDE). Definitional statements are useful in empirical and practical matters but not at all informative about reality in any metaphysical sense.

The Nonsense of God-talk. The result of Ayer's logical positivism is as devastating to theism as is traditional agnosticism. God is unknowable and inexpressible. In fact, the term *God* is meaningless. Hence, even traditional agnosticism is untenable, since the agnostic assumes that it is meaningful to ask the question whether God exists. For Ayer, however, the word *God* or any

ISBE International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

transcendent equivalent, has no meaning. Hence, it is impossible to be an agnostic. The term *God* is neither analytic nor synthetic. It is neither offered by theists as an empty, contentless definition corresponding to nothing in reality, nor is it a term filled with empirical content, since "God" is allegedly a supra-empirical being. Hence, it is literally nonsense to talk about God.

Ayer came to revise his principle of verifiability (see *ibid.*, 10f.). This form admitted the possibility that some empirical experiences are certain, such as those of a single sensory experience, and that there is a third kind of statement with some analytic or definitional verifiability. He did not come to allow for the meaningfulness of God-talk. The verifiable experiences would be neither true nor false nor factual, but simply meaningfully definitional. Ayer acknowledged that an effective elimination of metaphysics needs to be supported by detailed analysis of metaphysical arguments (Ayer, 16). Even a revised principle of empirical verifiability would make it impossible to utter meaningfully true statements about a transempirical reality such as a God. There is no cognitive knowledge of God; we must remain "a-cog-nostic."

Inexpressible or Mystical. Following the lead of Ludwig Wittgenstein's (1889–1951) *Tractatus*, Ayer held that, while God might be experienced, such an experience could never be meaningfully expressed. Wittgenstein believed that "how things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher. God does not reveal himself in the world." For "there are indeed, things that cannot be put in words . . . They are what is mystical," and "what we cannot speak about we must consign to silence." If God could express himself in our words, it would indeed be "a book to explode all books," but such is impossible. Hence, there not only is no propositional revelation, but there is no cognitively transcendent being. Hence, whether one take the more strict logical positivist's principle of verifiability or the broader Wittgensteinian linguistic limitations, God-talk is metaphysically meaningless.

Wittgenstein believed that language games are possible, even religious language games. God-talk can and does occur, but it is not metaphysical; it tells us nothing about the existence and nature of God.

It is disastrous to the theist, whether God cannot be known (as in Immanuel Kant) or whether he cannot be spoken of (as in Ayer). Both traditional agnosticism and contemporary agnosticism leave us in the same dilemma philosophically: There are no bases for truth statements about God.

Unfalsifiability of Religious Beliefs. The other side of the principle of verifiability is that of falsifiability. Taking his cue from John Wisdom's parable of the invisible gardener, Antony Flew posed a challenge to believers as follows: "What would have to have occurred to constitute for you a disproof of the love of, or of the existence of, God?" (Flew, 99). For one cannot allow anything to count for his belief in God unless he is willing to allow something to count against it. Whatever is meaningful is also falsifiable. There is no difference between an invisible, undetectable gardener and no gardener at all. Likewise, a God who does not make a verifiable or falsifiable difference is no God at all. Unless the believer can show how the world would be different if there were no God, conditions in the world cannot be used as evidence. It matters

little whether theism rests on a parable or a myth, the believer has no meaningful or verifiable knowledge of God. This is little or no improvement over Kant's traditional agnosticism.

Evaluation. Like its cousin agnosticism, acognosticism is vulnerable to serious criticism.

Reply to Ayer's Acognosticism. As already noted, the principle of empirical verifiability set forth by Ayer is self-defeating. It is neither purely definition nor strictly fact. Hence, on its own grounds it would fall into the third category of non-sense statements. Ayer recognized this problem and engaged a third category for which he claimed no truth value. Verifiability, he contended, is analytic and definitional, but not arbitrary or true. It is *metacognitive*, that is, beyond verification as true or false. It is simply useful as a guide to meaning. This is an ill-fated move for two reasons. First, it no longer eliminates the possibility of making metaphysical statements. Rather, it admits that one cannot arbitrarily legislate meaning, but must consider the meaning of alleged metaphysical statements. But that means it is possible to make meaningful statements about reality, a denial of complete agnosticism and acognosticism. Second, to restrict what is meaningful is to limit what could be true, since only the meaningful can be true. Hence, the attempt to limit meaning to the definitional or the verifiable is to make a truth claim that must itself be subject to some test. If it cannot be tested, then it is itself unfalsifiable and a meaningless belief by its own standards.

Reply to Wittgensteinian Mysticism. Ludwig Wittgenstein engages in a self-stultifying acognosticism. He attempts to define the limits of language in such a way that it is impossible to speak cognitively about God. God is literally inexpressible. And that whereof one cannot speak, he should not attempt to speak. But Wittgenstein can be no more successful in drawing the lines of linguistic limitation than was Kant in delimiting the realm of phenomena or appearance. The very attempt to deny all expressions about God is an expression about God.

One cannot draw the limits of language and thought without transcending those very limits. It is self-defeating to express the contention that the inexpressible cannot be expressed. In like manner even to think the thought that the unthinkable cannot be thought is self-destructive. Language (thought) and reality cannot be mutually exclusive, for every attempt to completely separate them implies some interaction between them. If the ladder was used to get on top of the house, one cannot stand up there to deny the ability of the ladder to get one there (*see* TRUTH, NATURE OF).

Reply to Flew's Falsifiability. Two things must be said about Flew's principle of falsifiability. First, in the narrow sense of empirical falsifiability, it is too restrictive. Not everything need be empirically falsifiable. Indeed that very principle is not empirically falsifiable. But in the broader sense of testable or arguable, surely the principle is alive and helpful. For unless there are criteria for truth and falsity, then no truth claims can be supported. Everything, including opposing views, could be true.

Second, not everything that is verifiable need be falsifiable in the same manner. As John Hick pointed out, there is an asymmetrical relation between verifiability and falsifiability. One can verify personal immortality by consciously observing his own funeral. But one cannot falsify personal immortality. One who does not survive death is not there to falsify anything. Nor could

another person falsify one's immortality without being omniscient. But if it is necessary to posit an omniscient mind or God, then it would be eminently self-defeating to use falsification to disprove God. So we may conclude that every truth claim must be testable or arguable, but not all truth claims need be falsifiable. A total state of nonexistence of anything would be unfalsifiable, for example, since there would be no one and no way to falsify it. On the other hand, the existence of something is testable by experience or inference.

Sources

A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*

H. Feigl, "Logical Positivism after Thirty-Five Years," *PT*, Winter 1964

A. Flew, "Theology and Falsification," in *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*

N. L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, chapter 1

———, *Philosophy of Religion*

J. Hick, *The Existence of God*

I. Ramsay, *Religious Language*

J. Wisdom, "Gods," A. Flew, ed., *Logic and Language I*

L. Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*

Acts, Historicity of. The date and authenticity of the Acts of the Apostles is crucial to the historicity of early Christianity (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF) and, thus, to apologetics in general (*see* APOLOGETICS, ARGUMENT OF ; NEW TESTAMENT APOLOGETIC CONCERNS).

- If Acts was written before A.D. 70 while the eyewitnesses were still alive (*see* NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS, DATING OF), then it has great historical value in informing us of the earliest Christian beliefs.
- If Acts was written by Luke, the companion of the apostle Paul, it brings us right to the apostolic circle, those who participated in the events reported.
- If Acts was written by A.D. 62 (the traditional date), then it was written by a contemporary of Jesus, who died in 33 (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, DATING OF).
- If Acts is shown to be accurate history, then it brings credibility to its reports about the most basic Christian beliefs of miracles (Acts 2:22 ; *see* MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF ; MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE), the death (Acts 2:23), resurrection (Acts 2:23 , 29–32), and ascension of Christ (Acts 1:9–10).

- If Luke wrote Acts, then his "former treatise" (Acts 1:1), the Gospel of Luke, should be extended the same early date (within the life-time of apostles and eye-witnesses) and credibility.

The Testimony of a Roman Historian. While New Testament scholarship, long dominated by higher criticism (*see* BIBLE CRITICISM) has been skeptical of the historicity of the Gospels and Acts, this has not been true of Roman historians of the same period. Sherwin-White is a case in point (e.g., Sherwin-White).

Another historian added the weight of his scholarship to the question of the historicity of the book of Acts. Colin J. Hemer lists seventeen reasons to accept the traditional early date that would place the research and writing of Acts during the lifetime of many participants. These strongly support the historicity of Acts and, indirectly, the Gospel of Luke (cf. Luke 1:1–4 ; Acts 1:1):

1. There is no mention in Acts of the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, an unlikely omission, given the content, if it had already occurred.
2. There is no hint of the outbreak of the Jewish War in A.D. 66, or of any drastic or specific deterioration of relations between Romans and Jews, which implies it was written before that time.
3. There is no hint of the deterioration of Christian relations with Rome involved in the Neronian persecution of the late 60s.
4. The author betrays no knowledge of Paul's letters. If Acts were written later, why would Luke, who shows himself so careful of incidental detail, not attempt to inform his narrative by relevant sections of the Epistles. The Epistles evidently circulated and must have become available sources. This question is beset with uncertainties, but an early date is suggested by the silence.
5. There is no hint of the death of James at the hands of the Sanhedrin in ca. 62 recorded by Josephus (*Antiquities* 20.9.1.200).
6. The significance of Gallio's judgment in Acts 18:14–17 may be seen as setting a precedent to legitimize Christian teaching under the umbrella of tolerance to Judaism.
7. The prominence and authority of the Sadducees in Acts belongs to the pre-70 era, before the collapse of their political cooperation with Rome.
8. Conversely, the relatively sympathetic attitude in Acts to Pharisees (unlike that in Luke's Gospel) does not fit well in the period of Pharisaic revival after scholars of Jamnia met, ca. 90. As a result of that meeting, a phase of escalated conflict with Christianity was led by the Pharisees.

9. Some have argued that the book antedates the coming of Peter to Rome, and also that it uses language which implies that Peter and John, as well as Paul himself, were still alive.
10. The prominence of “God-fearers” in the synagogues in Acts would seem to point to the pre–Jewish War situation.
11. The insignificant cultural details are difficult to place with precision, but may best represent the cultural milieu of the Julio–Claudian Roman era.
12. Areas of controversy within Acts presuppose the relevance of the Jewish setting during the temple period.
13. Adolf Harnack argued that the prophecy placed in Paul’s mouth at Acts 20:25 (cf. 20:38) may have been contradicted by later events. If so it presumably was penned before those events occurred.
14. Primitive formulation of Christian terminology is used in Acts which fits an early period. Harnack lists christological titles, such as *Insous* and *ho kurios* , that are used freely, whereas *ho Christos* always designates “the Messiah,” rather than a proper name, and *Christos* is otherwise used only in formalized combinations.
15. Rackham draws attention to the optimistic tone of Acts, which would not have been natural after Judaism was destroyed and Christians martyred in the Neronian persecutions of the late 60s. [Hemer, 376–82]
16. The ending of the book of Acts. Luke does not continue Paul’s story at the end of the two years of Acts 28:30 . “The mention of this defined period implies a terminal point, at least impending” (Hemer, 383). He adds, “It may be argued simply that Luke had brought the narrative up to date at the time of writing, the final note being added at the conclusion of the two years” (ibid., 387).
17. The “immediacy” of Acts 27–28 :

This is what we have called the “immediacy” of the latter chapters of the book, which are marked in a special degree by the apparently unreflective reproduction of insignificant details, a feature which reaches its apogee in the voyage narrative of Acts 27–28 The vivid “immediacy” of this passage in particular may be strongly contrasted with the “indirectness” of the earlier part of Acts, where we assume that Luke relied on sources or the reminiscences of others, and could not control the context of his narrative. [ibid., 388–89]

Other Support for Historicity. The traditional argument for historical veracity based on “undesigned coincidences” is a debatable concept. However, the following may be seen as a more refined development of that approach. The book of Acts contains:

1. *Geographical details* that are assumed to be generally known. It remains difficult to estimate the range of general knowledge that should be expected of an ancient writer or reader.
2. *More specialized details* that are assumed to be widely known: titles of governors, army units, and major routes. This information would have been accessible to those who traveled or were involved in administration, but perhaps not to others.
3. *Local specifics* of routes, boundaries, and titles of city magistrates that are unlikely to have been known except to a writer who had visited the districts.
4. *Correlation of dates* of known kings and governors with the ostensible chronology of the Acts framework.
5. *Details appropriate to the date* of Paul or Luke in the early church, but not appropriate to conditions earlier or later.
6. “*Undesigned coincidences*” or connective details that connect Acts with the Pauline Epistles.
7. *Latent internal correlations* within Acts.
8. *Independently attested details* which agree with the Alexandrian against the Western texts. Since there are differences between textual families, independent corroboration can help determine when changes were imported into the textual tradition of Acts. A secondary reading may refer to conditions of a later period, and so indirectly help discriminate time periods.
9. *Matters of common geographic knowledge* , mentioned perhaps informally or allusively, with an unstudied accuracy which bespeaks familiarity.
10. *Textual stylistic differences* that indicate Luke’s use of different sources.
11. *Peculiarities in the selection of detail* , such as the inclusion of details that are theologically unimportant but that may bear on historical concerns.
12. *Peculiarities in details from “immediacy”* that suggest the author’s reference to recent experience. Such details are not so readily explained as the product of longer-term reflective editing and shaping.
13. *Cultural or idiomatic references* that suggest a first-century atmosphere.
14. *Interrelated complexes* combining two or more kinds of correlation. Such a range of connections makes it possible to accurately reconstruct a fragment of history from the jigsaw of interlocking bits of information.

15. Instances where new discoveries and expanded knowledge shed more light on the background information. These are of use to the commentator, but do not bear significantly on historicity.
16. Precise details which lie within the range of contemporary possibilities, but whose accuracy cannot be verified.

Knowledgeable Author. Some examples of the first three categories illustrate how such connections help place Luke's writing and analyze its accuracy. Acts reflects a thorough understanding of what was generally known in A.D. 60, what might be called specialized knowledge of the world in which Paul and Luke traveled, and accurate knowledge of the locales they visited.

Common Knowledge. The emperor's title "Augustus" is rendered formally *ho Sebastos* in words attributed to a Roman official (Acts 25:21 , 25), whereas "Augustus," as the *name* bestowed on the first emperor, is transliterated *Augoustos* in Luke 2:1 . This distinction may be illustrated *from other texts as well* .

General facts of navigation and a knowledge of the empire's corn supply are part of the narrative of the voyage of an Alexandrian ship to the Italian port of Puteoli. The state system of supply was instituted by Claudius. These are samples of a large body of trivia. Luke appears in general to be careful in his rendering of common places, and numerous small points of terminology could be illustrated from the inscriptions reproduced. Luke thinks it necessary to explain some terms to his reader but not others. Points of Judean topography or Semitic nomenclature are glossed or explained (Acts 1:12 , 19), whereas basic Jewish institutions are not (1:12 ; 2:1 ; 4:1).

Specialized Knowledge. Knowledge of the topography of Jerusalem is shown in 1:12 , 19 , and 3:2 , 11 .

In 4:6 Annas is pictured as continuing to have great prestige and to bear the title high priest after his formal deposition by the Romans and the appointment of Caiaphas (cf. Luke 3:2 ; *Antiquities* 18.2.2.34–35; 20.9.1.198).

Among Roman terms, 12:4 gives detail on the organization of a military guard (cf. Vegetius, *de Re Milit* . 3.8); 13:7 correctly identifies Cyprus as a proconsular (senatorial) province, with the proconsul resident at Paphos.

The part played by Troas in the system of communication is acknowledged in 16:8 (cf. Section C, pp. 112f., 16:11). Amphipolis and Apollonia are known as stations (and presumably overnight stops) on the Egnatian Way from Philippi to Thessalonica, as in 17:1 . Chapters 27–28 contain geographic and navigational details of the voyage to Rome.

These examples illustrate the range of places and contexts in the narrative of which Luke possesses information. The author of Acts was well traveled in the areas mentioned in the narrative or had access to special sources of information.

Specific Local Knowledge. In addition, Luke manifests an incredible array of knowledge of local places, names, conditions, customs, and circumstances that befits an eyewitness contemporary recording the time and events. Acts 13–28 , covering Paul's travels, particularly shows intimate knowledge of local circumstances. The evidence is strongly represented in the "we-passages," when Luke was accompanying Paul, but extends beyond them. In some cases, specific local knowledge must be discounted because evidence is not available. Some scholars also find Luke's remarks occasionally to be at odds with existing knowledge (for example, in the case of Theudas). Numerous things are confirmed by historical and archaeological research.

1. A natural crossing between correctly named ports (13:4–5). Mount Casius, south of Seleucia, stands within sight of Cyprus. The *name* of the proconsul in 13:7 cannot be confirmed, but the *family* of the Sergii Pauli is attested.
2. The proper river port, Perga, for a ship crossing from Cyprus (13:13).
3. The proper location of Lycaonia (14:6).
4. The unusual but correct declension of the name *Lystra* and the correct language spoken in Lystra. Correct identification of the two gods associated with the city, Zeus and Hermes (14:12).
5. The proper port, Attalia, for returning travelers (14:25).
6. The correct route from the Cilician Gates (16:1).
7. The proper form of the name *Troas* (16:8).
8. A conspicuous sailors' landmark at Samothrace (16:11).
9. The proper identification of Philippi as a Roman colony. The right location for the river Gangites near Philippi (16:13).
10. Association of Thyatira with cloth dyeing (16:14). Correct designations of the titles for the colony magistrates (16:20 , 35 , 36 , 38).
11. The proper locations where travelers would spend successive nights on this journey (17:1).
12. The presence of a synagogue in Thessalonica (17:1), and the proper title of *politarch* for the magistrates (17:6).
13. The correct explanation that sea travel is the most convenient way to reach Athens in summer with favoring east winds (17:14).
14. The abundance of images in Athens (17:16), and reference to the synagogue there (17:17).

15. Depiction of philosophical debate in the agora (17:17). Use in 17:18–19 of the correct Athenian slang epithet for Paul, *spermologos* , and the correct name of the court (*areios pagos*); accurate depiction of Athenian character (17:21). Correct identification of altar to “an unknown god” (17:23). Logical reaction of philosophers who denied bodily resurrection. Areopogites the correct title for a member of the court (17:34).
16. Correct identification of the Corinthian synagogue (18:4). Correct designation of Gallio as proconsul (18:12). The *bema* (judgment seat) can still be seen in Corinth’s forum (18:16).
17. The name *Tyrannus* , attested on a first-century inscription (19:9).
18. The cult of Artemis of the Ephesians (19:24 , 27). The cult is well attested, and the Ephesian theater was the city meeting-place (19:29).
19. Correct title *grammateus* for the chief executive magistrate and the proper title of honor, *Neokoros* (19:35). Correct name to identify the goddess (19:37). Correct designation for those holding court (19:38). Use of plural *anthupatoi* in 19:38 is probably a remarkably exact reference to the fact that two men jointly exercised the functions of proconsul at this time.
20. Use of precise ethnic designation *beroiaios* and the ethnic term *Asianos* (20:4).
21. Implied recognition of the strategic importance assigned to Troas (20:7–13).
22. Implication of the danger of the coastal trip in this area that caused Paul to travel by land (20:13). Correct sequence of places visited and correct neuter plural of the city name Patara (21:1).
23. The appropriate route passing across the open sea south of Cyprus favored by persistent northwest winds (21:3). The proper distance between Ptolemais and Caesarea (21:8).
24. Purification rite characteristic of pious Jewish (21:24).
25. Accurate representation of the Jewish law regarding Gentile use of the temple area (21:28).
26. The permanent stationing of a Roman cohort in the Fortress Antonia to suppress disturbances at festival times (21:31). The flight of steps used by guards (21:31 , 35).
27. The two common ways of obtaining Roman citizenship (22:28). The tribune is impressed with Paul’s Roman rather than Tarsian citizenship (22:29).
28. The correct identifications of Ananias as high priest (23:2) and Felix as governor (23:34).
29. Identification of a common stopping point on the road to Caesarea (23:31).
30. Note of the proper jurisdiction of Cilicia (23:34).
31. Explanation of the provincial penal procedure (24:1–9).
32. Agreement with Josephus of the name *Porcius Festus* (24:27).
33. Note of the right of appeal by a Roman citizen (25:11). The legal formula of *de quibus cognoscere volebam* (25:18). The characteristic form of reference to the emperor (25:26).
34. Correct identification of the best shipping lanes at the time (27:4).
35. Use of the commonly joined names of Cilicia and Pamphylia to describe the coast (27:4). Reference to the principal port at which to find a ship sailing to Italy (27:5). Note of the typically slow passage to Cnidus in the face of a northwest wind (27:7). The locations of Fair Havens and neighboring Lasea (27:8) and correct description of Fair Havens as poorly sheltered for wintering (27:12).
36. Description of the tendency in these climes for a south wind to suddenly become a violent northeaster, the *gregale* (27:13). The nature of a square-rigged ship to have no option but be driven before a gale correctly stated (27:15).
37. Precise name and place given for the island of Claudia (27:16). Appropriate sailors’ maneuvers at the time for a storm (27:16–19). The fourteenth night judged by experienced Mediterranean navigators, to be an appropriate time for this journey in a storm (27:27). The proper term for this section of the Adriatic Sea at this time (27:27). The precise term, *bolisantes* , for taking soundings. The position of probable approach of a ship running aground before an easterly wind (27:39).
38. Correct description of the severe liability on guards who permitted a prisoner to escape (27:42).
39. Accurate description of the local people and superstitions of the day (28:4–6).
40. The proper title *protos (tes nesou)* for a man in Publius’s position of leadership on the islands.
41. Correct identification of Rhegium as a refuge to await a southerly wind to carry a ship through the strait (28:13).
42. Appii Forum and Tres Tabernae as stopping-places along the Appian Way (28:15).
43. Common practice of custody with a Roman soldier (28:16) and conditions of imprisonment at one’s own expense (28:30–31).

Conclusion. The historicity of the book of Acts is confirmed by overwhelming evidence. Nothing like this amount of detailed confirmation exists for another book from antiquity. This is not only a direct confirmation of the earliest Christian belief in the death and resurrection of Christ, but also, indirectly, of the Gospel record, since the author of Acts (Luke) also wrote a detailed Gospel. This Gospel directly parallels the other two Synoptic Gospels. The best evidence is that this material was composed by A.D. 60, only twenty-seven years after the death of Jesus. This places the writing during the lifetime of eyewitnesses to the events recorded (cf. Luke 1:1–4). This does not allow time for an alleged mythological development by persons living generations after the events. The Roman historian Herodotus has noted that the writings of Herodotus enable us to determine the rate at which legends develop. He concluded that “the tests suggest that even two generations are too short a span to allow the mythical tendency to prevail over the hard historic core of the oral tradition” (Sherwin-White, 190). Julius Müller (1801–1878) challenged the scholars of his day to produce even one example in which an historical event developed many mythological elements within one generation (Müller, 29). None exist.

Sources

W. L. Craig, *The Son Rises*

J. Müller, *The Theory of Myths, in Its Application to the Gospel History, Examined and Confuted*

C. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, C. H. Gempf, ed.

A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*

Adam, Historicity of. Critical scholars generally consider the first chapters of Genesis to be myth (see ARCHAEOLOGY, OLD TESTAMENT; FLOOD, NOAH’S; MIRACLES, MYTH AND), not history. They point to the poetic nature of the text, the parallel of the early chapters of Genesis to other ancient myths, the alleged contradiction of the text with evolution (see EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL; EVOLUTION HUMAN), and the late date for Adam in the Bible (ca. 4000 B.C.) which is opposed to scientific dating that places the first humans much earlier. All of this they consider as evidence that the story of Adam and Eve is mythical. However, the Bible presents Adam and Eve as literal people, who had real children from whom the rest of the human race descended (cf. Gen. 5:1f.).

Historical Adam and Eve. There is good evidence to believe that Adam and Eve were historical persons. First, Genesis 1–2 presents them as actual persons and even narrates the important events in their lives. Second, they gave birth to literal children who did the same (Genesis 4–5). Third, the same phrase (“this is the history of”), used to record later history in Genesis (for example, 6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19), is used of the creation account (2:4) and of Adam and Eve and their descendants (Gen. 5:1; see PENTATEUCH, MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF). Fourth, later Old Testament chronologies place Adam at the top of the list (Gen. 5:1; 1 Chron. 1:1). Fifth, the New Testament places Adam at the beginning of Jesus’ literal ancestors (Luke 3:38). Sixth, Jesus referred to Adam and Eve as the first literal “male and female,” making their physical union the basis of marriage (Matt. 19:4). Seventh, the book of Romans declares

that literal death was brought into the world by a literal “one man”—Adam (Rom. 5:12, 14). Eighth, the comparison of Adam (the “first Adam”) with Christ (the “last Adam”) in 1 Corinthians 15:45 manifests that Adam was understood as a literal, historical person. Ninth, Paul’s declaration that “Adam was first formed, then Eve” (1 Tim 2:13–14) reveals that he speaks of real persons. Tenth, logically there had to be a first real set of human beings, male and female, or else the race would have had no way to get going. The Bible calls this literal couple “Adam and Eve,” and there is no reason to doubt their real existence.

Objections to Historicity. *The Poetic Nature of Genesis 1.* Despite the common assumption to the contrary and the beautiful language of Genesis 1 and 2, the creation record is not poetry. Although there is possible parallelism of ideas between the first three and last three days, this is not in the typical form of Hebrew poetry, which involves couplets in parallel form. A comparison with the Psalms or Proverbs readily shows the difference. Genesis 2 has no poetical parallelism at all. Rather, the creation account is like any other historical narrative in the Old Testament. The account is introduced like other historical accounts in Genesis with the phrase, “This is the history of . . .” (Gen. 2:4; 5:1). Jesus and New Testament writers refer to the creation events as historical (cf. Matt. 19:4; Rom. 5:14; 1 Cor. 15:45; 1 Tim. 2:13–14). The Ebla tablets have added an early nonbiblical witness of a monotheistic *ex nihilo* creation (see CREATION, VIEWS OF).

Contradiction with Evolution. The Genesis creation account contradicts macro-evolution. Genesis speaks of the creation of Adam from the dust of the ground, not his evolution from other animals (Gen. 2:7). It speaks of direct immediate creation at God’s command, not long natural processes (cf. Gen. 1:1, 3, 6, 9, 21, 27). Eve was created from Adam; she did not evolve separately. Adam was an intelligent being who could speak a language, study and name animals, and engage in life-sustaining activity. He was not an ignorant half-ape (see EVOLUTION, THEISTIC).

However, granted that the Genesis record conflicts with macro-evolution, it begs the question to affirm Genesis is wrong and evolution is right. In fact, there is substantial scientific evidence to critique macro-evolution on its own merits. See articles under Evolution.

The Late-Date Objection. The traditional biblical date for the creation of Adam (ca. 4000 B.C.) is much too late to fit the fossil evidence for early human beings, which ranges from tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of years. The early date for humankind is based on scientific dating and analysis of bone fragments.

However, there are false or challengeable assumptions in this objection. First, it is assumed that one can simply add all the genealogical records of Genesis 5 and 11 and arrive at an approximate date of 4000 B.C. for Adam’s creation. But this is based on the false assumption that there are no gaps in these tables, which there are (see GENEALOGIES, OPEN OR CLOSED).

This objection also assumes that the dating method for early human-like fossil finds is accurate. Yet these dating methods are subject to many variables including the change in atmospheric conditions, contamination of the sample, and changes of rates of decay (see SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE AND SCIENTIFIC DATING).

It assumes that early human-like fossil finds were really human beings created in the image of God. But this is a questionable assumption. Many of these finds are so fragmentary that reconstruction is highly speculative. The so-called “Nebraska Man” was actually an extinct pig’s tooth! Identification had been based on a tooth. “Piltdown Man” was a fraud. Identifying a creature from bones, especially bone fragments, is extremely speculative.

There may have been human-like creatures that were morphologically similar to human beings but were not created in the image of God. Bone structure cannot prove there was an immortal soul made in God’s image inside the body. Evidence for simple tool making proves nothing. Animals (apes, seals, and birds) are known to use simple tools.

This objection also assumes that the “days” of Genesis were twenty-four-hour solar days. This is not certain, since *day* in Genesis is used of all six days (cf. Gen. 2:4). And “day seven,” on which God rested, is still going on, thousands of years later (cf. Heb. 4:4–6; see GENESIS, DAYS OF).

It is impossible to affirm that Genesis is not historical. In fact, given the unproven assumptions, the history of misinterpretation of early fossils, and the mistaken assumption that there are no gaps in the biblical genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11, the arguments against the historicity of Adam and Eve fail.

Sources

G. L. Archer, Jr., *An Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties*

A. Custance, *Genesis and Early Man*

N. L. Geisler and T. Howe, *When Critics Ask*

R. C. Newman, *Genesis and the Origin of the Earth*

B. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*

Age of Accountability. See INFANTS, SALVATION OF .

Age of the Earth. See GENEALOGIES, OPEN OR CLOSED .

Agnosticism. *Agnosticism* comes from two Greek words (*a* , “no”; *gnosis* , “knowledge”). The term *agnosticism* was coined by T. H. Huxley. It literally means “no-knowledge,” the opposite of a Gnostic (Huxley, vol. 5; see GnosticisM). Thus, an agnostic is someone who claims not to know. As applied to knowledge of God, there are two basic kinds of agnostics, those who claim that the existence and nature of God are not known, and those who hold God to be unknowable (see ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF ; GOD, EVIDENCE FOR). Since the first type does not eliminate all religious knowledge, attention here will center on the second.

Over 100 years before Huxley (1825–1895), the writings of David Hume (1711–1776) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) laid down the philosophical basis of agnosticism. Much of modern philosophy takes for granted the general validity of the types of arguments they set forth.

Skepticism of Hume. Even Kant was a rationalist (see RATIONALISM) until he was “awakened from his dogmatic slumbers” by reading Hume. Technically Hume’s views are skeptical but they serve agnostic aims. Hume’s reasoning is based in his claim that there are only two kinds of meaningful statements.

“If we take into our hands any volume, of divinity or school metaphysics for instance, does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence? No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion” (*Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*).

Any statement that is neither purely a relation of ideas (definitional or mathematical) on the one hand or a matter of fact (empirical or factual) on the other is meaningless. Of course all statements about God fall outside these categories, hence knowledge of God becomes impossible (see ACOGNOSTICISM).

Empirical Atomism. Furthermore, all sensations are experienced as “entirely loose and separate.” Causal connections are made by the mind only after one has observed a constant conjunction of things in experience. All one really experiences is a series of unconnected and separate sensations. Indeed, there is no direct knowledge even of one’s “self,” for all we know of ourselves is a disconnected bundle of sense impressions. It does make sense to speak of connections made only in the mind *a priori* or independent of experience. Hence, from experience there are no known and certainly no necessary connections. All matters of experience imply a possible contrary state of affairs.

Causality Based on Custom. According to Hume “all reasoning concerning matters of fact seems to be founded on the relation of *cause and effect* By means of that relation alone can we go beyond the evidence of our memory and senses” (Hume IV, 2; see CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF ; FIRST PRINCIPLES). And knowledge of the relation of cause and effect is not *a priori* but arises entirely from experience. There is always the possibility of the *post hoc* fallacy—namely, that things happen after other events (even regularly) but are not really caused by them. For example, the sun rises regularly *after* the rooster crows but certainly not *because* the rooster crows. One can never know causal connections. And without a knowledge of the Cause of this world, for example, one is left in agnosticism about such a supposed God.

Knowledge by Analogy. Even if one grants that every event has a cause, we cannot be sure what the cause is like. Hence, in his famous *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* , Hume contends that the cause of the universe may be (1) different from human intelligence since human inventions differ from those of nature; (2) finite, since the effect is finite and one only need infer a cause adequate for the effect; (3) imperfect, since there are imperfections in nature; (4) multiple, for the creation of the world looks more like a long-range trial and error product of many cooperating deities; (5) male and female, since this is how humans generate; and (6)

anthropomorphic, with hands, nose, eyes, and other body parts such as his creatures have. Hence, analogy leaves us in skepticism about the nature of any supposed Cause of the world.

Agnosticism of Kant. The writings of Hume had a profound influence on the thinking of Kant. Before reading them, Kant held a form of rationalism in the tradition of Gottfried Leibniz (1646–1716). Leibniz, and Christian Freiherr von Wolff (1679–1754) following him, believed reality was rationally knowable and that theism was demonstrable. It was the pen of Kant that put an abrupt end to this sort of thinking in the philosophical world.

The Impossibility of Knowing Reality. Kant granted to the rational tradition of Leibniz a rational, *a priori* dimension to knowledge, namely, the form of all knowledge is independent of experience. On the other hand, Kant agreed with Hume and the empiricists that the content of all knowledge came via the senses. The “stuff” of knowledge is provided by the senses but the structure of knowledge is attained eventually in the mind. This creative synthesis solved the problem of rationalism and empiricism. However, the unhappy result of this synthesis is agnosticism, for if one cannot know anything until after it is structured by sensation (time and space) and the categories of understanding (such as unity and causality), then there is no way to get outside one’s own being and know what it really was before he so formed it. That is, one can know what something is to him but never what it is in itself. Only the phenomenal, but not the noumenal, can be known. We must remain agnostic about reality. We know only that it is there but can never know what it is (Kant, 173f.).

The Antinomies of Human Reason. Not only is there an unbridgeable gulf between knowing and being, between the categories of our understanding and the nature of reality, but inevitable contradictions also result once we begin to trespass the boundary line (Kant, 393f.). For example, there is the antinomy of causality. If everything has a cause, then there cannot be a beginning cause and the causal series must stretch back infinitely. But it is impossible that the series be both infinite and also have a beginning. Such is the impossible paradox resulting from the application of the category of causality to reality.

These arguments do not exhaust the agnostic’s arsenal, but they do lie at the heart of the contention that God cannot be known. However, even some who are unwilling to admit to the validity of these arguments opt for a more subtle agnosticism. Such is the case with the school of thought called logical positivism.

Logical Positivism. Logical positivism or logical empiricism is a philosophy of logic and language that seeks to describe all reality in terms of the senses or experience. Its foundational ideas were developed by the nineteenth-century philosopher Auguste Comte (1798–1857). Its theological implications were described by A. J. Ayer (1910–1989) in his principle of empirical verifiability. Ayer alleged that human beings cannot analyze or define the infinite God, so it is impossible to speak more than gibberish about God. The idea of knowing or speaking of a noumenal being is preposterous. One may not even use the term *God*. Hence, even traditional agnosticism is untenable. The agnostic asks the question of whether God exists. For the positivist, even the question is meaningless. Hence, it is impossible to be an agnostic.

Oddly, Ayer’s agnosticism does not automatically negate the possibility of religious experience, as does agnosticism. Someone might experience God, but such a touching of infinitude could never be meaningfully expressed, so it is worthless to anyone except the recipient of its wonder. The logical positivist Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889–1951) was perhaps more consistent in placing a deist type of restriction on positivistic thought (*see* DEISM). If it is meaningless for us to speak of a God or even to use the term, then any infinite being would have the same problem regarding the physical. Wittgenstein denied that God could be concerned about, or revelatory within, the world. Between the noumenal and phenomenal spheres there can be only silence. In summary, for religious noncognitivists Ayer and Wittgenstein, metaphysical agnosticism is the net result of language analysis (*see* ANALOGY, PRINCIPLE OF).

Unfalsifiability. Antony Flew develops an agnostic philosophy by taking another angle on the limitations of language and awareness of the divine. There may or may not be a God; one cannot prove either thesis empirically. Therefore, one may not legitimately believe either thesis. To be verifiable, an argument must be falsifiable. God must be shown, one way or the other, to make a difference. Unless the theist can answer the challenge head-on, it would appear that he must have what R. M. Hare called a “blik” (Flew, 100). That is to say, he has an unfalsifiable belief in God despite all facts or states of affairs.

Logic of Agnosticism. There are two forms of agnosticism: The weak form simply holds that God is unknown. This of course leaves the door open that one may know God and indeed that some possibly do know God. As such, this agnosticism does not threaten Christian theism. The stronger form of agnosticism is mutually exclusive with Christianity. It claims that God is unknowable, that God cannot be known.

Another distinction must be made: There is unlimited and limited agnosticism. The former claims that God and all reality is completely unknowable. The latter claims only that God is partially unknowable because of the limitations of human finitude and sinfulness. The latter form of agnosticism may be granted by Christians as both possible and desirable.

This leaves three basic alternatives with respect to knowledge about God.

1. We can know nothing about God; he is unknowable.
2. We can know everything about God; he can be exhaustively known.
3. We can know something, but not everything; God is partially knowable.

The first position is agnosticism; the second, dogmatism, and the last, realism. The dogmatic position is untenable. One would have to be infinite in order to know an infinite being exhaustively. Few if any informed theists have seriously held this kind of dogmatism.

However, theists (*see* THEISM) sometimes argue as though partial agnosticism is also wrong. The form this argument takes is that agnosticism is wrong simply because one cannot know something is unknowable about reality without having knowledge about that something. But this is faulty reasoning. There is no contradiction in saying, “I know enough about reality to

affirm that there are some things about reality that I cannot know.” For example, we can know enough about observation and reporting techniques to say that it is impossible for us to know the exact population of the world at a given instant (unknowability in practice). Likewise, one may know enough about the nature of finitude to say that it is impossible for finite beings to know exhaustively an infinite being. Thus, the Christian holds a controversy only against the complete agnostic who rules out in theory and practice all knowledge of God.

Self-defeating Agnosticism. Complete agnosticism reduces to the self-destructing (*see SELF-REFUTING STATEMENTS*) assertion that “one knows enough about reality to affirm that nothing can be known about reality” (*see LOGIC*). This statement is self-falsifying. One who knows something about reality cannot affirm in the same breath that all of reality is unknowable. And one who knows nothing whatsoever about reality has no basis for making a statement about reality. It will not suffice to say that knowledge of reality can only be purely and completely negative, that is, knowledge can only say what reality is not. For every negative presupposes a positive; one cannot meaningfully affirm that something is not and be totally devoid of a knowledge of the “something.” It follows that total agnosticism is self-defeating. It assumes knowledge of reality in order to deny all knowledge of reality.

Some have attempted to avoid this critique by forming their skepticism as a question: “What do I know about reality?” However, this merely delays the dilemma. Both agnostic and Christian should ask this question, but the answer separates the agnostic from the realist. “I can know something about God” differs significantly from “I can know nothing about God.” Once the answer is given in the latter form, a self-defeating assertion has been unavoidably made.

Neither will it help to take the mutist alternative by saying nothing. Thoughts can be as self-stultifying as assertions. The mutist cannot even think he or she knows absolutely nothing about reality without implying knowledge about reality.

Someone may be willing to grant that knowledge about finite reality is possible but not knowledge about infinite reality, the sort of knowledge at issue in Christian theism. If so, the position is no longer complete agnosticism, for it holds that something can be known about reality. This leaves the door open to discuss whether this reality is finite or infinite, personal or impersonal. Such discussion ventures beyond the question of agnosticism to debate finite godism and theism.

Kant's Self-defeating Agnosticism. Kant's argument that the categories of thought (such as unity and causality) do not apply to reality is just as unsuccessful. Unless categories of reality corresponded to categories of the mind, no statements can be made about reality, including the statement Kant made. Unless the real world were intelligible, no statement about it would apply. A preformation of the mind to reality is necessary whether one says anything about it—positive or negative. Otherwise, we think of an unthinkable reality.

The argument may be pressed that the agnostic need not be making any statement at all about reality but simply defining the limits of what we can know. Even this approach is self-defeating, however. To say that one cannot know any more than the limits of the phenomena or appearance is to draw a line in the sand while straddling it. To set such firm limits is to surpass them. It is not

possible to contend that appearance ends here and reality begins there unless one can see at least some distance on the other side. How can one know the difference between appearance and reality who has not seen enough of appearance and reality to make the comparison?

Another self-defeating dimension is implied within Kant's admission *that* he knows that the noumena is there but not *what* it is. Is it possible to know that something is without knowing something about what it is? Can pure “that-ness” be known? Does not all knowledge imply some knowledge of characteristics? Even a strange creature one had never seen before could not be observed to exist unless it had some recognizable characteristics as size, color, or movement. Even something invisible must leave some effect or trace in order to be observed. One need not know the origin or function of a thing or phenomenon. But it has been observed or the observer could not know that it is. It is not possible to affirm *that* something is without simultaneously declaring something about *what* it is. Even to describe it as the “in-itself” or the “real” is to say something. Further, Kant acknowledged the noumenal to be the unknowable “source” of the appearance we are receiving. All of this is informative about the real; there is a real, in-itself source of impressions. This is something less than complete agnosticism.

Other Forms of Skepticism. Hume's Skepticism. The overall skeptical attempt to suspend all judgment about reality is self-defeating, since it implies a judgment about reality. How else could one know that suspending all judgment about reality is the wisest course, unless he knows indeed that reality is unknowable? Skepticism implies agnosticism; as shown above, agnosticism implies knowledge about reality. Unlimited skepticism that commends the suspension of all judgments about reality implies a most sweeping judgment about the knowability of reality. Why discourage all truth attempts, unless one knows in advance that they are futile? And how can one be in possession of this advance information without already knowing something about reality?

Hume's contention that all meaningful statements are either a relation of ideas or else about matters of fact breaks its own rules. The statement fits neither category. Hence, on its own grounds it would be meaningless. It could not be purely a relation of ideas, for in that case it would not be informative about reality, as it purports to be. It is not purely a matter-of-fact statement since it claims to cover more than empirical matters. In short, Hume's distinction is the basis for Ayer's empirical verifiability principle, and the verifiability principle is itself not empirically verifiable (*see AYER, A. J.*).

Hume's radical empirical atomism that all events are “entirely loose and separate” and that even the self is only a bundle of sense impressions is unfeasible. If everything were unconnected, there would be no way of even making that particular statement, since some unity and connection are implied in the affirmation that everything is disconnected. To affirm “I am nothing but the impressions about myself” is self-defeating, for there is always the assumed unity of the “I (self)” making the assertion. But one cannot assume a unified self in order to deny it.

For replies to agnosticism, Wittgenstein's mystic form of it, and Flew's principle of falsifiability, *see ACOGNOSTICISM* .

Some Specific Agnostic Claims. Hume denied the traditional uses of both causality and analogy as means of knowing the theistic God. Causality is based on custom and analogy would lead to either a finite, human god or to a God totally different than the alleged analog.

The Justification of Causality. Hume never denied the principle of causality. He admitted it would be absurd to maintain that things arise without a cause (Hume, I.187). What he did attempt was to deny that there is any philosophical way of *establishing* the principle of causality. If the causal principle is not a mere analytic relation of ideas, but is belief based on customary conjunction of matter-of-fact events, then there is no necessity in it. One cannot use it with philosophical justification. But we have already seen that dividing all content statements into these two classes is self-defeating. Hence, it is possible that the causal principle is both contentful and necessary.

The very denial of causal necessity implies a causal necessity. Unless there is a necessary ground (or cause) for the denial, then the denial does not necessarily stand. And if there is a necessary ground or cause for the denial, then the denial is self-defeating; in that event it is using a necessary causal connection to deny that there are necessary causal connections.

Some have attempted to avoid this objection by limiting necessity to the reality of logic and propositions but denying that necessity applies to reality. This does not succeed; in order for this statement to exclude necessity from the realm of reality, it must be a necessary statement about reality. It must claim that it is necessarily true about reality that no necessary statements can be made about reality. This actually does what it claims cannot be done.

A Foundation for Analogy. Likewise, Hume cannot deny all similarity between the world and God, for this would imply that the creation must be totally dissimilar from the Creator. It would mean that effects must be entirely different from their cause. This statement too is self-destructive; unless there is some knowledge of the cause, there can be no basis for denying all similarity between cause and its effect. Even a negative comparison implies positive knowledge of the terms being compared. Hence, either there is no basis for the affirmation that God must be totally dissimilar, or else there can be some knowledge of God in terms of our experience, in which case God is not necessarily totally dissimilar to what we know in our experience.

One should be cautioned here about overdrawing the conclusion of these arguments. Once it has been shown that total agnosticism is self-defeating, it does not *ipso facto* follow that God exists or that one has knowledge of God. These arguments show only that, if there is a God, one cannot maintain that he *cannot* be known. From this it follows only that God *can* be known, not that we *do* know anything about God. The disproof of agnosticism is not thereby the proof of realism or theism. Agnosticism only destroys itself and makes it *possible* to build Christian theism. The positive case for Christian knowledge of God must then be built (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR).

Kant's Antinomies. In each of Kant's alleged antinomies there is a fallacy. One does not end in inevitable contradictions by speaking about reality in terms of the necessary conditions of human thought. For instance, it is a mistake to view everything as needing a cause, for in this case there would be an infinity of causes, and even God would need a cause. Only limited,

changing, contingent things need causes. Once one arrives at an unlimited, unchanging, Necessary Being, there no longer is a need for a cause. The finite must be caused, but the infinite being would be uncaused. Kant's other antinomies are likewise invalid (*see* KANT, IMMANUEL).

Conclusion. There are two kinds of agnosticism: limited and unlimited. The former is compatible with Christian claims of finite knowledge of an infinite God. Unlimited agnosticism, however, is self-destructive; it implies knowledge about reality in order to deny the possibility of any knowledge of reality. Both skepticism and noncognitivism (agnosticism) are reducible to agnosticism. Unless it is impossible to know the real, it is unnecessary to disclaim the possibility of all cognitive knowledge of it or to dissuade men from making any judgments about it.

Unlimited agnosticism is a subtle form of dogmatism. In completely disclaiming the possibility of all knowledge of the real, it stands at the opposite pole from the position that claims all knowledge about reality. Either extreme is dogmatic. Both are *must* positions regarding knowledge as opposed to the position that we *can* or *do* know something about reality. And there is simply no process short of omniscience by which one can make such sweeping and categorical statements. Agnosticism is negative dogmatism, and every negative presupposes a positive. Hence, total agnosticism is not only self-defeating; it is self-deifying. Only an omniscient mind could be totally agnostic, and finite men confessedly do not possess omniscience. Hence, the door remains open for some knowledge of reality. Reality is not unknowable.

Sources

J. Collins, *God in Modern Philosophy* , chapters 4 and 6

A. Flew, "Theology and Falsification," A. Flew, et al., eds., *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*

R. Flint, *Agnosticism*

R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *God: His Existence and His Nature*

S. Hackett, *The Resurrection of Theism* . Part 1

D. Hume, "A Letter from a Gentleman to his Friend in Edinburgh," in E. C. Mossner, et al., eds., *The Letters of David Hume*

———, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*

———, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

T. H. Huxley, *Collected Essays* , Vol. 5

I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*

L. Stephen, *An Agnostic's Apology*

Albright, William F. William Foxwell Albright (1891–1971) was called the dean of American biblical archaeologists. Born in Chili to Methodist missionaries, he received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1916. Among major works are *From Stone Age to Christianity*, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, *The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible*, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, *The Excavation at Tell Beit Mirsim*, and *Archaeology of Palestine*. He wrote numerous articles and extended his influence as editor of the *Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research* from 1931 to 1968. He was a leader in the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR) for some forty years.

Apologetic Importance. Albright's influence on biblical apologetics was enormous and reflected his own theological movement from liberal Protestant to conservative. His work destroyed many old liberal critical views (see BIBLE CRITICISM), which now may be called pre-archaeological. Through his discoveries and research, Albright determined several vital affirmations:

Mosaic Authorship of the Pentateuch. "The contents of our Pentateuch are, in general, very much older than the date at which they were finally edited; new discoveries continue to confirm the historical accuracy of the literary antiquity of detail after detail in it. Even when it is necessary to assume later additions to the original nucleus of Mosaic tradition, these additions reflect the normal growth of ancient institutions and practices, or the effort made by later scribes to save as much as possible of extant traditions about Moses. It is, accordingly, sheer hypercriticism to deny the substantially Mosaic character of the Pentateuchal tradition" (*Archaeology of Palestine*, 225).

Historicity of the Patriarchs. "The narratives of the patriarchs, of Moses and the exodus, of the conquest of Canaan, of the judges, the monarchy, exile and restoration, have all been confirmed and illustrated to an extent that I should have thought impossible forty years ago" (*Christian Century*, 1329).

"Aside from a few die-hards among older scholars, there is scarcely a single biblical historian who has not been impressed by the rapid accumulation of data supporting the substantial historicity of patriarchal tradition" (*Biblical Period*, 1).

"Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob no longer seem isolated figures, much less reflections of later Israelite history; they now appear as true children of their age, bearing the same names, moving about over the same territory, visiting the same towns (especially Harran and Nahor), practicing the same customs as their contemporaries. In other words, the patriarchal narratives have a historical nucleus throughout, though it is likely that long oral transmission of the original poems and later prose sagas which underlie the present text of Genesis has considerably refracted the original events" (*Archaeology of Palestine*, 236).

Support for the Old Testament. "There can be no doubt that archaeology has confirmed the substantial historicity of the Old Testament tradition" (*Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, 176).

"As critical study of the Bible is more and more influenced by the rich new material from the ancient Near East we shall see a steady rise in respect for the historical significance of now neglected or despised passages and details in the Old and New Testaments" (*From Stone Age to Christianity*, 81).

The Dead Sea Scrolls prove "conclusively that we must treat the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible with the utmost respect and that the free emending of difficult passages in which modern critical scholars have indulged cannot be tolerated any longer" (*Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, 128).

"Thanks to the Qumran discoveries, the New Testament proves to be in fact what it was formerly believed to be: the teaching of Christ and his immediate followers between cir. 25 and cir. 80 A.D." (*From Stone Age to Christianity*, 23).

"Biblical historical data are accurate to an extent far surpassing the ideas of any modern critical students, who have consistently tended to err on the side of hypercriticism" (*Archaeology of Palestine*, 229).

Unity of Isaiah. Of the long-popular theory that there were two writers of Isaiah (see ISAAH, DEUTERO), Albright demurred in an interview:

Question: "Many passages in Isaiah 40–66 denounce idolatry as a current evil in Israel (for example 44:9–20; 51:4–7; 65:2, 3; 66:17). How can these be reconciled with a theory of post-Exilic authorship, since idolatry admittedly was never reintroduced into Judah after the restoration . . . ?"

Answer: "I do not believe that anything in Isaiah 40–66 is later than the sixth century" (*Toward a More Conservative View*, 360).

Dating the New Testament. "In my opinion, 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 between about 50 and 75 A.D." (*ibid.*, 359).

"We can already say emphatically that there is no longer any solid basis for dating any book of the New Testament after about A.D. 80, two full generations before the date between 130 and 150 given by the more radical New Testament critics of today" (*Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, 136).

In the article "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John," Albright argued throughout that the evidence at Qumran shows that the concepts, terminology, and mindset of the Gospel of John, probably belonged to the early first century (see NEW TESTAMENT, DATING OF).

Conclusion. From an apologetic standpoint, the eminent and respected archaeologist strongly supports the pillars of historical apologetics. With some uncertainty about transmission of the oral record of the Pentateuch, Albright believes that both evidence to date and anticipated findings will show both testaments to be historically reliable. The dates of these books are early.

Both the predictive prophecy of the Old Testament and the historicity of the story of Christ and the early church in the New Testament are validated by modern archaeology (*see* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF ; BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR ; NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS, RELIABILITY OF ; NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF).

Sources

W. F. Albright, *Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*

———, “Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John,” in W. D. Davies and D. Daube, eds., *The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology*

———, “William Albright: Toward a More Conservative View,” in *CT* (18 January 1963)

———, Interview, *Christian Century* (19 November 1958)

———, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*

———, *The Biblical Period*

———, *The Archaeology of Palestine*

———, *From Stone Age to Christianity*

H. H. Vos, “Albright, William Foxwell,” in W. Elwell, ed., *The Dictionary of Evangelical Theology*

Alfarabi. Alfarabi or Al Farabi (870?–950) was an Arabian philosopher of Turkish descent who lived in Aleppo. He was one of the first monist or pantheist philosophers to introduce the Middle Ages to Aristotle and Plato. He influenced both Avicenna (Ibn Sinā, 980–1037) and Averroes (1126–1198), whose views dominated the discussion in later Medieval times.

Alfarabi’s thought was highly influential on later Christian forms of the cosmological argument (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR ; KALAM COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT). He provided the heart of later scholastic arguments by his distinction between *what* a thing is and *that* it is. Alfarabi took this as a sign of the real distinction between a creature’s essence and its existence—a concept later championed by Thomas Aquinas.

Alfarabi’s Cosmological Argument. Implied in this real distinction is an argument for God’s existence that takes this form:

1. Things exist whose essence is distinct from their existence. Called “possible beings,” they can be conceived as not existing even though they do exist.
2. These beings have existence only accidentally, that is, it is not part of their very essence to exist. It is logically possible that they might never exist.

CT Christianity Today

3. Anything that has existence accidentally (and not essentially) must receive its existence from another. Since existence is not essential to it, there must be some explanation as to why it exists.
4. There cannot be an infinite regression of causes for existence. Since the existence of all possible beings is received from another, there must ultimately be a cause from which existence is received.
5. Therefore, there must be a First Cause of existence whose essence and existence are identical. This is a *Necessary*, and not a mere possible, Being. The First Cause cannot be a mere possible being (whose essence is not to exist), since no possible beings explain their own existence.

Evaluation of Alfarabi’s Argument. Many criticisms of the cosmological argument have been leveled by atheists, agnostics, and skeptics. Most of these emanate from David Hume and Immanuel Kant and have been answered by theists (*see* GOD, OBJECTIONS TO PROOFS FOR).

Conclusion. If there are beings whose essence is not to exist, there must be a Being whose essence is to exist, for the possible beings are not possible unless there is a Necessary Being. No beings are given existence unless some Being gives this existence. Since a being cannot give existence to another when it is dependent for its own existence on another, there must be a first Being whose existence was not given to it by another, but who gives existence to all others. This is basically the same argument as that beneath the first three of Aquinas’s “five ways” to prove God’s existence (*see* THOMAS AQUINAS).

Sources

F. Copleston, *History of Philosophy*

E. Gilson, “Al Farabi,” *EP*

———, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*

Altizer, Thomas J. J. G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) wrote that “God is dead” (Hegel, 506) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) took the concept seriously. He wrote: “God is dead! God remains dead! And we have killed him” (Nietzsche, no. 125). In the 1960s Thomas J. J. Altizer drew out the radical implications of this form of atheism in his “Death of God” theology.

The Meaning of the Death of God. There are several kinds of atheism. The *traditional* atheist believes that there is not now, nor ever was, a God (*see* FEUERBACH, LUDWIG ; FREUD, SIGMUND ; SARTRE, JEAN-PAUL). The *semantical* atheists assert that the term God is dead, that religious language has no meaning (*see* AYER, A. J. ; ACOGNOSTICISM). The *mythological* atheists, of whom Nietzsche is representative, affirm that the myth God was once alive but died in the twentieth century. *Conceptual* atheists believe that there is a God but that he is hidden from our view, being obscured by our conceptual constructions (*see* BUBER, MARTIN). The *practical* atheists contend that God exists, but we should live *as if* he does not, not using God as

a crutch for our failure to act in a spiritual and responsible way. Altizer was a *dialectical* atheist. These held that God actually once lived, but then died in our century.

Stages of the Death. Altizer called Nietzsche the first radical Christian (Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*, 25). Altizer believed that “only the Christian knows that God is dead, that the death of God is a final and irrevocable event” (ibid., 111). God is not merely hidden from our view, as Martin Buber believed. He actually died in three stages:

Death at the Incarnation. First, God died when he became incarnated in Christ. “To know that God is Jesus, is to know that God himself has become flesh; no longer does God exist as transcendent Spirit or sovereign Lord.” As Spirit becomes Word, it empties itself. That is, “if Spirit truly empties itself in entering the world, then its own essential or original Being must be left behind in an empty and lifeless form” (ibid., 67–68). In brief, when God came to earth, heaven was emptied (*see* CHRIST OF FAITH VS. JESUS OF HISTORY ; JESUS, QUEST FOR HISTORICAL).

Death on the Cross. Further, God not only died in general in the incarnation, but he died in particular on the cross when Christ was crucified (and never rose from the grave). “Yes, God died in the Crucifixion: therein he fulfills the movement of the Incarnation by totally emptying himself of his primordial sacrality.” In fact, only in the crucifixion, in the death of the Word on the Cross, does the Word actually and wholly become flesh. And “the incarnation is only truly actually real if it effects the death of the original sacred, the death of God himself” (ibid., 82–90, 113, 149–53; (*see* CHRIST, DEATH OF ; RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR ; RESURRECTION, OBJECTIONS TO).

Death in Modern Times. Finally, God died in modern times. That is, God not only actually died in the incarnation and on the cross, but he died in our consciousness in our time as the reality of his death has worked its way out in Western culture. To understand this, one must speak of a dialectical process. “Progressively but decisively God abandons or negates his original passivity . . . becoming incarnate both *in* and *as* the actuality of world and history.” Thus to cling to a belief in a transcendent God is to negate the historical reality of the incarnation. For “only the sacred that negates its own unfallen or primordial form can become incarnate in the reality of the profane.” So, “dialectically, everything depends upon recognizing the meaning of God’s total identification with Jesus and of the understanding that it is God who became Jesus and not Jesus who becomes God” (ibid., 46). Thus, it is the obligation of every Christian to will the death of God so that the dialectical process may continue.

Evaluation. Dialectical atheism denies the inspiration of the Bible (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR), opting for an unfounded radical criticism (*see* BIBLICAL CRITICISM ; NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF ; REDACTION CRITICISM). It denies the bodily resurrection of Christ against all the historical evidence (*see* RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR).

This theology is based on a misunderstanding of the incarnation. Scripture affirms that when Christ came to earth it was not the subtraction of deity but the addition of humanity. God did not leave heaven; only the second person of the Godhead added another nature, a human one, with out discarding his divine nature (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF ; TRINITY).

Philosophically it is impossible for a Necessary Being (God) to go out of existence. A Necessary Being cannot come to be or cease to be. It must always be.

The dialectical method at the basis of Altizer’s view is unfounded. There is no basis for believing that reality operates through dialectical thesis, antithesis, and synthesis.

Conclusion. The “death of God” movement was short-lived, dominating the scene for only a decade or so. It was based on a dialectical theology, often attributed to Hegel. This thesis demands that every thesis, such as “God exists,” calls forth its own antithesis, “God is not.” This in turn becomes the basis for new synthesis. This always appears in a forward direction. Precisely what form it would take, Altizer did not know. He did believe, however, that one “must ever be open to new epiphanies of the Word or Spirit of God. . . . truly new epiphanies whose very occurrences either effects or records a new actualization or movement of the divine process” (ibid., 84, 105). In this sense, while Altizer appears to negate all forms of transcendence, in fact he negates only traditional forms which transcend backward or upward and replaces them with a forward transcendence. This has been called eschatological transcendence (see Geisler, 49–52).

Sources

T. J. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*

———, *Radical Theology and the Death of God*

N. L. Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*

G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*

F. Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom*

Analogy, Principle of. Two *principles of analogy* sometimes affect Christian apologetics. One is a *rule of historicism*, laid down by historian and liberal theologian Ernst Troeltsch (1865–1923) that the only way the past can be known is by analogy in the present. The implication of this rule is that, since the kinds of miracles performed in the Bible are not taking place today, we cannot know that they took place in the past either. For a discussion of this principle and its difficulties, see the article TROELTSCH, ERNST. The other way in which this term is used is as a fundamental principle of reason (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES). It is in this sense that the principle is considered here.

The Principle of Analogy. The principle of analogy states that an effect must be similar to its cause. Like produces like. An effect cannot be totally different from its cause. An act (or actor) communicates actuality. It affirms that the Cause of all being (God) must be like the beings he causes. It denies that God can be totally different (equivocal) from his effects, for the Being that causes all other being cannot bring into being something that does not have being like he is. Being causes being.

Likewise, analogy affirms that God cannot be totally the same as his effects, for in this case they would be identical to God. But the created cannot be identical to the uncreated, nor the finite to the Infinite. Hence, God the Creator of all being must be similar to the creatures he has made. Likewise, our judgments about God—if they are accurate—are neither totally the same nor totally different; they must be similar (analogous). Analogous religious language, then, is the only way to preserve true knowledge of God. Univocal God-talk is impossible and equivocal God-talk is unacceptable and self-defeating. Only analogy avoids the pitfalls of each and provides genuine understanding of God. As Thomas Aquinas declared “This name God . . . is taken neither univocally nor equivocally, but analogically. This is apparent from this reason—univocal names have absolutely the same meaning, while equivocal names have absolutely diverse meanings; whereas analogical, a name taken in one signification must be placed in the definition of the same name taken in other significations” (*Summa Theologica*, 1a. 13, 10).

The Basis for Analogy. Analogy preserves a true knowledge of God because it is rooted in the very nature of God’s self-expressions. Of course, God can only express himself to his creatures in terms other than himself. Thus, by its very nature such expression or manifestation of God will be limited, whereas God himself is unlimited. Nonetheless, an expression about God must express God. Hence, analogy flows from the very nature of the process of God’s self-revelation.

Analogy in Causality. The similarity between Creator and creature is based in the causal relation between them (see CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF). Since God is pure existence (Being), and since he causes all other existence (beings), there must be a similarity between him as the efficient Cause and his effects. For a cause communicates itself to the effect. Being causes being. The Cause of being must be a Being. For it cannot give what it has not got; it cannot produce reality it does not possess. Therefore, even though the Cause is Infinite Being and the effect is finite being, the being of the effect is similar to the Being that caused it. Analogy is based in efficient causality. For “we can name God only from creatures. Hence, whatever is said of God and creatures is said according as there is some relation of the creature to God as to its principal cause, wherein all the perfections pre-exist excellently” (ibid., 1a. 13, 5).

The Witness of Analogy. The need for analogy is not only apparent in God’s general revelation in nature; it is also essential to God’s special revelation in Scripture (see BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). The Bible declares true knowledge of God (see BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). But this knowledge is contained in a book composed of human words and sentences based in finite human experience. Thus the question is: How can finite human concepts convey an Infinite God? Aquinas’s answer is that they must do so analogically. God is neither identical to nor totally different from our expressions about him. Rather, he is similar to them.

Special Revelation in Analogy. The Bible is emphatic about two things in this connection. First, God is beyond our thoughts and concepts, even the best of them (cf. Rom. 11:33). God is infinite, our concepts are finite, and no finite concept can capture the infinite. It is also clear in Scripture that God goes way beyond the puny ability of human concepts to convey his ineffable essence. Paul said, “now we see as in a mirror dimly” (1 Cor. 13:12). John said of mortal man in this life, “no one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18). Second, yet human language is adequate for expressing the attributes of God. For in spite of the infinite difference between God

and creatures there is not a total lack of similarity, since the effect always resembles its efficient Cause in some way.

But if God is both adequately expressed in, and yet infinitely more than, human language—even inspired language—can express, then at best the language of Scripture is only analogous. That is, no term taken from human experience—and that is where all biblical terms come from—can do any more than tell us what God is *like* . None of them can expressive comprehensively what God really *is* . Religious language at best can make valid predications of God’s essence, but it can never express his essence fully.

Language of Analogy. There are two reasons that statements made about God on the basis of general revelation (see REVELATION, GENERAL) are merely analogous. First is the matter of causality. The arguments for God’s existence are arguments from effect to the efficient Cause of their being (ibid., 1a. 2, 3; see GOD, EVIDENCE FOR). Since the effects get their actuality from God (who is Pure Actuality), they must be similar to him. For Actuality communicates and produces actuality.

Second, Pure Actuality (God) cannot create another Pure Actuality. Pure Actuality is uncreated, and it is impossible to create an uncreated Being. But if uncreated Actuality cannot create another Pure Actuality, then it must create an actuality with potentiality (Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*). Thus, all created beings must be composed of actuality and potentiality. They have actual existence, and they have potential not to exist. Anything that comes into existence can pass out of existence. But if all created beings have a potential that limits their existence, then they are limited kinds of existence, and their uncreated Cause is an unlimited kind of existence.

Thus, there must be a difference between creatures and their Creator. They have limitations (potency), and he does not. It follows that, when making statements about God based on what he has revealed of himself in his creation, there is one big proviso: God is *not* like his creation in their potentialities, but only in their actuality. This negative element is called “the way of negation” (*via negative*), and all adequate God-talk must presume it. This conclusion emerges from the very nature of the proofs for God’s existence.

We may state the positive and negative as two propositions:

God is a Cause.

This is the positive element of similarity in the creature-Creator analogy. Whatever actuality exists is like the Actuality that gave it.

God is an uncaused cause.

This is the negative element. The same negation must be taken into account when considering other attributes of God that emerged from the argument for his existence. As Aquinas said, “no creature being finite, can be adequate to the first agent which is infinite” (*On the Power of God*, 7.7). God is the infinite cause of all finite existence. But infinite means not-

finite; it too is a negation. God is the eternal, that is not-terminal or non-temporal, Cause. Some of the negations are not immediately obvious. God is the simple Source of all complex being. But “simple” here really means noncomplex. We know creatures are contingent and God is necessary, but by “necessary” we simply mean that God is *not* contingent. We have no positive concepts in our experience that can express the transcendent dimension of God’s unlimited metaphysical characteristics.

Therefore, the analogy with which we speak of God will always contain an element of negation. The creature is *like* God because Actuality communicates actuality, but *unlike* God because it has a limiting potentiality God does not have. He is Pure Actuality.

Kinds of Analogies. Two basic kinds of analogy should be distinguished: *extrinsic* and *intrinsic*. The analogy between God and the creation is based in an intrinsic analogy. Otherwise, there would be no real similarity.

Extrinsic Analogy. There is no real similarity between two parties in an *extrinsic* analogy. Only one thing possesses the characteristic; the other is *called* that characteristic by its relation to it. This can best be explained by looking at the kinds of extrinsic analogy.

Extrinsic analogy is based on efficient causality. This analogy is called “analogy by extrinsic attribution.” The characteristic is only *attributed* to the cause because the cause produces the characteristic in the effect. It does not really possess the characteristic. Some food is *called* “healthy” because it encourages health in the body, not because any food in itself really is healthy.

This analogy does not provide any real basis for knowledge of God. It simply tells us what the cause can produce, not what characteristic it actually possesses. In this kind of analogy, God might simply be *called* good because he produces good things, but not because he actually *is* good in himself. Therefore, analogy based on extrinsic attribution leaves us in a state of agnosticism about God.

Extrinsic analogy is based on similarity of relations. An analogy based on similar relationships is sometimes called “the analogy of improper proportionality.” It is “improper” because the relationship exists only in the mind doing the comparing. There is no real similarity between the “analogates” (the two things being compared). This kind of analogy declares that:

<i>Smile</i>	as	<i>Flowers</i>
Face		Meadow

A smile is not really like flowers. However, a smile brightens a face in the way flowers adorn a meadow. There is a perceived relationship between *smile* and *face* that corresponds to the perceived relationship between *flowers* and *meadow*. This is a relationship between two relationship.

<i>Infinite Good</i>	as	<i>Finite Good</i>
Infinite Being		Finite Being

Infinite good is related to an infinite Being the way finite good is related to a finite being. This, however, is not helpful, and could be misleading, in finding a relationship (similarity) between an infinite good and finite good. This is not the kind of analogy on which Aquinas based the similarity between Creator and creature.

Intrinsic Analogy. An intrinsic analogy is one in which both things possess the same characteristic, each in accordance with its own being. There are, again, two kinds: the analogy of proper proportionality and the analogy of intrinsic attribution.

Intrinsic analogy is based on similarity of relations. By subtly changing the statement of relationship in the analogy of improper proportionality, we can develop an “analogy of proper proportionality.” In the analogy of proper proportionality two like things are being compared, not two like relationships. There is a proper relationship between the attribute they each possess and their own respective natures. Applied to God this analogy would declare that:

<i>Infinite Good</i>	as	<i>Finite Good</i>
Infinite Being		Finite Being

While this analogy does not explain a direct relationship between the attribute of goodness as it applies to both parties, it does compare the way an attribute in God relates to his essence and, by comparison, the way a similar attribute in man as a creature relate to his essence. The analogy tells us nothing directly about the similarity between God and creation. Rather, it informs us about the same relationship of goodness to being in an infinite being and in a finite being.

The analogy of intrinsic attribution. In the analogy of intrinsic attribution, the analogs possess the same attribute, and the similarity is based on a causal connection between them. For example, hot water causes the egg floating in it to become hot. The cause communicates itself to the effect. A mind communicates its intelligence to a book. The book, then, is the intelligible effect of the intelligent cause.

This is the kind of analogy on which Aquinas bases the similarity of Creator and creatures. What God creates must be like him because he communicates himself to the effect. Being communicates being. Pure Actuality creates other actualities. This kind of analogy of intrinsic attribution, where both the cause and the effect have the same attribute, is the basis for making true statements about God. These statements correspond to the way God really is because these characteristics were derived from him and communicated by him to his effects. In short, the similarity between Creator and creatures is derived from the characteristics the Creator gave to his creature.

Creatures do not possess a common characteristic (say, goodness) in the same way God does. An infinite being possesses goodness in an infinite way, and a finite being possesses goodness in a finite way. Nevertheless, they both possess goodness, because a Good Being can only communicate goodness. The extent to which the creature falls short of God’s goodness is due to the finite and fallible mode of the creature’s existence; it is not caused by the infinite goodness of its cause. But the degree to which a creature has *any* goodness, that goodness is like the attribute in its Creator, who *is* Goodness.

God and Creatures. All meaningfully descriptive talk about God is based on the analogy of intrinsic attribution, whereby creatures are like the Creator because of the causal relationship between them. Aquinas wrote, “Some likeness must be found between them [between effects and their cause], since it belongs to the nature of action that an agent produces its like, since each thing acts according as it is in act” (*Summa contra Gentiles*, I, 29, 2). Important features of this relationship should be understood.

A Causal Relationship. The relationship between God and the world is causal. In names given to both God and creatures “we note in the community of such names the order of cause and effect” (ibid., I, 33). Hence, “whatever is said of God and creatures is said according as there is some relation of the creature to God as to its principal cause” (ibid., I, 13, 5). Causality is a relation of dependency, not of dualism. The creatures possess the characteristic only because they got it from the Creator. To state the matter simply, *the Cause of being shared being with the beings it brought into being*. Apart from this causal relation of dependency, there would be no common, shared attribute between the Creator and creatures.

An Intrinsic Relationship. The causal relationship between God and human beings is real. Similarity is based on the fact that both cause and effect have the same characteristic, the effect getting it from the cause. God is not called good, for example, simply because he made good things. This would be an extrinsic causal relation, like hot air making clay hard. The air is not hard; it simply made the effect hard. The same hot air makes wax soft.

Rather God *is* good, and so a human being has a source of good. Both hot air and clay become hot, because heat communicates heat. Heat producing heat is an intrinsic causal relation. This kind of causal relation exists between God and creation.

All of creation is like God insofar as it is actual, but unlike God insofar as it is limited by its potentiality to receive his likeness. A sculptor, the cause, cannot get the same effect in pudding as in stone, even though the same form is imposed on both. Pudding simply does not have the same potential as stone to receive a stable and lasting form. The similarity between God and a creature will depend on the limited potential of the creature to receive his actuality. Thus, creatures *differ* from God in their potentiality, but are *like* (though not identical to) God in their actuality.

An Essential Relationship. The causal relationship between God and the world is *per se*, not *per accidens*. That is to say, it is an essential, not an accidental relationship. God is the cause of the *being* of the world, not merely the cause of its *becoming*.

An accidental causal relationship is one where there is only nonessential relation between the cause and the effect. Musicians give birth to non-musicians. Musical skill is not an essential element of the relationship between parent and child. So there cannot be said to be an essential relationship between two great violinists, even though they might be mother and daughter, and even if genetics and nurture did contribute to the daughter’s accomplishments.

However, humans give birth to humans. Characteristics of humanness were essential to the relationship of those mother-daughter musicians. The daughter might have been born tone deaf,

but she could not have been born feline. Humanity is an essential causal relation. The essential characteristics of humanness are possessed by both the cause and the effect. This is the kind of causal relation that exists between God and his creatures.

An Efficient Cause. The *efficient cause* is a cause by which something comes to be. An *instrumental cause* is that through which something comes to be. The student is the efficient cause of the completed examination paper; the student’s pen is only the instrumental cause. Therefore, the exam will resemble the student’s thoughts, not any ideas in the pen, even if it were fitted with a powerful microcomputer. The garage resembles the plan in the carpenter’s mind, not the carpenter’s hammer. Hence, there is no necessary connection between an instrumental cause and its effect, only between the efficient cause and its effect.

The same can be said of the efficient cause as opposed to the *material cause*. The material cause is that *out of which* something comes to be. The sun produces heat, which is an efficient cause of the heat absorbed by the piece of clay baking on the stone. The sun’s heat is a material cause of the hardness produced as the clay bakes on a rock. But the hardness is not caused by the sun’s heat. The hardness is not even caused “efficiently” by the material conditions of the clay. That is another sort of material cause. The efficient cause of the hardened clay is the God who designed the physics by which clay reacts to heat.

Furthermore, just because God created Adam’s body out of matter (its material cause) does not mean that God is a material being. Efficient causes do not need to resemble their effects any more than Wilbur and Orville Wright’s minds had wings and a fuselage. An airplane is made of matter; the mind that designed it is not. The visible, material words on this page resemble my mind (their efficient cause), but my mind is not made of paper and ink. Likewise, the invisible God (efficient cause) is not like the visible world (material cause), nor is the material world like the immaterial God (John 4:24).

Criticisms of Analogy. A number of objections have been raised against the principle of analogy (for example, Ferre, 1:94–97). Many of these were answered by Aquinas or can be inferred from what he said. The following are responses to some significant objections.

A General Theory of Analogy Does Not Work. So long as analogy is tied to the metaphysics of intrinsic causality, analogy does work. In fact, analogy seems to be the only adequate answer to the problem of religious language. All negative God-talk implies positive knowledge of God. But positive affirmations of God are possible only if univocally understood concepts can be applied to both creatures and Creator (as Duns Scotus argued).

On the other hand, since God is infinitely perfect and creatures are only finitely perfect, no perfection found in the finite world can be applied univocally to both God and creatures. But to apply them equivocally would leave us in skepticism. Hence, whatever perfections are found in creation and can be applied to God without limits are predicated analogically. The perfection is understood univocally (in the same manner), but it is predicated analogously (in a similar manner), because to affirm it univocally in a finite way of an infinite Being would not truly describe the way he is. And to affirm it equivocally in an infinite way would not describe him at all. Hence, a univocal concept, drawn from the finite world, can speak of God only analogically.

Distinctions among Univocal, Equivocal and Analogical Are Obsolete. According to Ludwig Wittgenstein, expressions receive meaning from their use in language games based in experience. Each language game is autonomous. (It sets its own rules for establishing meaning.) insofar as there are no universal criteria for meaning. Words that carry over from game to game or words with similar meanings bear family resemblance, but we can never isolate a core meaning they must share. Thus, Wittgenstein believes that the separation of meanings into categories of *univocal*, *analogical*, or *equivocal* breaks down in dynamic usage of language.

Is meaning so arbitrarily established at the whim of the context? Unless there is an essential, as opposed to a purely conventional, meaning to language, then all meaning (and truth) is relative (*see* CONVENTIONALISM). But it is self-defeating to claim that “No meaning is objective,” since even that statement would be without objective meaning. If there were no objective meaning, then anything could mean anything to anyone, even the opposite of what the communicator intended. This would be linguistic (and social) chaos.

Also, distinctions between *univocal*, *equivocal*, and *analogical* are not arbitrary. In fact, they are logically exhaustive; there are no other alternatives. A term is understood or applied in entirely the same way (univocally), in an entirely different way (equivocally), or in a similar way (analogically). Wittgenstein does not offer another alternative. Rather, as applied to objective reality, his view reduces to equivocal God-talk. For although he accepts meaningful God-talk, insofar as it is based in meaningful religious experience, nonetheless, it is not really talk about God. It is really talk about religious experience. God remains part of the mystical and inexpressible, at least so far as descriptive language is concerned.

Why Only Some Qualities Apply to God. Only these characteristics (authenticity, compassion, freedom, goodness, holiness, immanence, knowledge, love, righteousness, wisdom) apply to human actuality rather than to human potentiality. So only these flow from God’s efficient, essential, principal, and intrinsic causality. Other beings *have* these qualities; God *is* these qualities. Only these characteristics may be appropriately applied to an unlimited Being. Things are like God in their actuality, but not in their potentiality, since God has no potentiality. He is Pure Actuality. So, only their actuality is like God.

Applying Words to the Infinite. Words divorced from their finite condition are devoid of meaning. This means that all God-talk about analogies or anything else is meaningless, since the concepts cannot apply to an infinite, transcendent Being. Such a criticism overlooks the distinction between a concept and its predication. The concept behind a word remains the same; only the way in which it is predicated changes. The meanings of the words *goodness*, *being*, and *beauty* can be applied to finite reality, and they can be applied to God; when used in the divine setting, the words are merely extended without limits. Being is still being, and goodness is still goodness; in application to the essence of God they are released from any limiting mode of signification. Since the perfection denoted by some terms does not necessarily imply any limitations, there is no reason why perfection cannot be predicated of an unlimited Being. In Aquinas’s terms, that which is signified is the same; only the mode of signification is different.

Analogy and Causality. It is argued that analogy rests on the questionable premise of causality. It is true that Aquinas bases analogy in the similarity that must exist between an

efficient cause and its effect. This is true because Being communicates only being. The Cause of existence cannot produce perfection that it does not “possess” itself. If God causes goodness, then he must be good. If he causes existence, then he must exist. Otherwise the absurd consequence ensues that God gives what he does not have to give.

Tailoring Terms to the Infinite. An analogous predication of God fails to identify the univocal element. In drawing an analogy between the finite and the infinite, we must be able to isolate that “univocal” attribute or quality that both share. And we can identify the basic element, though we have to drop the limitations from our thinking when applying it to its Pure Actuality. For a predication of a perfection of an infinite Being cannot be done in the same way of a finite being because it does not have qualities in a finite way. The objection would hold for equivocal concepts, those that cannot be applied both to God and to creation, but it is not true of univocal concepts that have analogical predications. One must have a univocal understanding of what is being predicated. I must be careful of my definition of *love* when I say that “I love,” and that “God is love.” The only way to avoid equivocation when predicating the same quality to finite beings and infinite Being is to predicate it appropriately to the mode of being that each is.

Relating Creator to Creature. The real relationship between Creator and creatures is not univocally expressible. This criticism fails to distinguish between the thing signified and the mode of its expression. The concept of *being* or *existence* is understood to mean the same thing, whether we are referring to God or a human being. It is “that which is or exists.” God exists and a person exists; this they have in common. So the concept *being* is univocal to both. But God exists infinitely and independently, whereas a human being exists finitely and dependently; in this they are different. That they both exist is univocally conceived; how they each exist is analogically predicated. For God exists necessarily, and creatures exist contingently.

Conclusion. Religious language does not merely evoke an experience about God that tells us nothing about who “God” is. God-talk is either univocal, equivocal, or analogical. It cannot be equivocal since we do know something about God. The claim: “We cannot make any meaningful statements about God” implies that we know what the word *God* means in the context of other words. By the same token, God-talk cannot be univocal, since we cannot predicate an attribute of an infinite Being in the *same way* that we do of a finite being. God is “good,” for example, in an unlimited way. Creatures can be “good” in a limited, reflective way. Both are good, but not in the same way.

But if God-talk is neither univocal or equivocal, then it *must* be analogical. This analogy of similarity is based in the Creator/creature relations. As Cause of being, God is Being. He cannot give what he does not have to give. Being produces being; Pure Actuality actualizes other actualities. Since God cannot produce another Necessary Being like himself, he must produce contingent beings. But contingent beings, unlike a Necessary Being, have the potentiality to not be. Hence, while God is pure Actuality, everything else is a combination of actuality and the limiting potentiality not to be.

Thus, when we predicate to God things from creation, we cannot predicate any of their limitations to him. We can only ascribe the actuality the creature received from the Creator. In

this sense, creatures are both like and unlike God. That opens the door to understanding by analogy.

The only alternatives to analogy are skepticism or dogmatism: Either we know nothing about God, or we assume that we know things in the same infinite way in which he knows them.

Sources

F. Ferre, "Analogy" in the *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Paul Edwards, ed.

N. L. Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*

———, *Thomas Aquinas: An Evangelical Appraisal*

R. McNerny, *The Logic of Analogy*

B. Mondin, *The Principle of Analogy in Protestant and Catholic Theology*

Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*

———, *On the Power of God*

———, *Summa contra Gentiles*

———, *Summa Theologica*

Annihilationism. *Annihilationism* is the doctrine that the souls of the wicked will be snuffed out of existence rather than be sent to an everlasting, conscious hell. The existence of the unrepentant will be extinguished, while the righteous will enter into everlasting bliss.

Support from Scripture. "*The Second Death.*" Annihilationists point to the Bible references to the fate of the wicked as "the second death" (Rev. 20:14) in support of their view. Since a person loses consciousness of this world at the first death (physical death), it is argued that the "second death" will involve unconsciousness in the world to come.

"*Everlasting Destruction.*" Scripture speaks of the wicked being "destroyed." Paul said: "This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with *everlasting destruction* and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power" (2 Thess. 1:7b–9). Annihilationists insist that the figure of "destruction" is incompatible with a continued, conscious existence.

"*Perdition.*" The wicked are said to go into "perdition" (KJV) or "destruction" (NIV) (2 Peter 3:7), and Judas is called the "son of perdition" (John 17:12). The word *perdition*

kjv King James Version
niv New International Version

(*apoleia*) means to perish. This, annihilationists argue, indicates that the lost will perish or go out of existence.

Like Not Having Been Born. Jesus said of Judas, who was sent to perdition, that "It would be better for him if he had not been born" (Mark 14:21). Before one is conceived they do not exist. Thus, for hell to be like the prebirth condition it must be a state of nonexistence.

"*The Wicked Will Perish.*" Repeatedly, the Old Testament speaks of the wicked perishing. The psalmist wrote: "But the wicked will perish: The LORD's enemies will be like the beauty of the fields, they will vanish—vanish like smoke" (Ps. 37:20 ; cf. 68:2 ; 112:10). But to perish implies a state of nothingness.

Answering Arguments from Scripture. When examined carefully in context, none of the above passages proves annihilationism. At some points language may *permit* such a construction, but nowhere does the text demand annihilationism. In context and comparison with other Scriptures, the concept must be rejected in every case.

Separation, Not Extinction. The first death is simply the separation of the soul from the body (James 2:26), not the annihilation of the soul. Scripture presents death as conscious separation. Adam and Eve died spiritually the moment they sinned, yet they still existed and could hear God's voice (Gen. 3:10). Before one is saved, he is "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1), and yet he still carries God's image (Gen. 1:27 ; cf. Gen. 9:6 ; James 3:9). Though unable to come to Christ without the intervention of God, the "spiritually dead" are sufficiently aware that Scripture holds them accountable to believe (Acts 16:31), and repent (Acts 17:30). Continued awareness, but with separation from God and the inability to save oneself—these constitute Scripture's vision of the second death.

Destruction, Not Nonexistence. "Everlasting" destruction would not be annihilation, which only takes an instant and is over. If someone undergoes everlasting destruction, then they have to have everlasting existence. The cars in a junkyard have been destroyed, but they are not annihilated. They are simply beyond repair or unredeemable. So are the people in hell.

Since the word *perdition* means to die, perish, or to come to ruin, the same objections apply. In 2 Peter 3:7 *perdition* is used in the context of judgment, clearly implying consciousness. In our junkyard analogy, ruined cars have perished, but they are still junkyard cars. In this connection, Jesus spoke of hell as a dump where the fire would not cease and where a person's resurrected body would not be consumed (Mark 9:48).

In addition to comments on *death* and *perdition* above, it should be noted that the Hebrew word used to describe the wicked perishing in the Old Testament (נָפַת) is also used to describe the righteous perishing (see Isa. 57:1 ; Micah 7:2). But even the annihilationists admit that the righteous are not snuffed out of existence. That being the case, they should not conclude that the wicked will cease to exist based on this term.

The same word נָפַת is used to describe things that are merely lost but then later found (Deut. 22:3), which proves that lost does not mean nonexistent.

“It Would Have Been Better. . .” When he says that it would have been better if Judas had not been born, Jesus is not comparing Judas’s perdition to his nonexistence before conception but to his existence before *birth*. This hyperbolic figure of speech would almost certainly indicate the severity of his punishment, not a statement about the superiority of nonbeing over being. In a parallel condemnation on the Pharisees, Jesus said Sodom and Gomorrah would have repented had they seen his miracles (Matt. 11:23–24). This does not mean that they actually would have repented or God would surely have shown them these miracles— 2 Peter 3:9 . It is simply a powerful figure of speech indicating that their sin was so great that “it would be *more tolerable*” in the day of judgment for Sodom than for them (vs. 24).

Further, nothing cannot be better than something, since they have nothing in common to compare them. So nonbeing cannot be actually better than being. To assume otherwise is a category mistake.

Biblical Arguments. In addition to the lack of any definitive passages in favor of annihilationism, numerous texts support the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment. A brief summary includes:

The Rich Man in Hell. Unlike parables which have no real persons in them, Jesus told the story of an actual beggar named Lazarus who went to heaven and of a rich man who died and went to hell and was in conscious torment (Luke 16:22–28). He cried out, “ ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.’ ” But Abraham replied, “Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony” (vs. 24–25). The rich man then begged that his brothers be warned “so that they will not also come to this place of torment” (vs. 27). There is no hint of annihilation in this passage; he is suffering constant and conscious torment.

A Place of Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth. Jesus repeatedly said the people in hell are in continual agony. He declared that “the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12 ; cf. 22:13 ; 24:51 ; 25:30). But a place of weeping is obviously a place of conscious sorrow. Those who are not conscious do not weep.

A Place of Unquenchable Flames. Jesus repeatedly called hell a place of unquenchable flames (Mark 9:43–48) where the very bodies of the wicked will never die (cf. Luke 12:4–5). But it would make no sense to have everlasting flames and bodies without any souls in them to experience the torment.

A Place of Everlasting Torment. John the apostle described hell as a place of eternal torment. He declared that “the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever” (Rev. 20:10). Eternal torment indicates that the everlasting state of woe is conscious.

A Place for the Beast and False Prophet. In a clear example of beings who were still conscious after a thousand years of conscious torment in hell, the Bible says of the beast and false prophets that “The two of them were thrown *alive* into the fiery lake of burning sulfur” (Rev. 19:20) before the “thousand years” (Rev. 20:2). Yet after this period the devil, who deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone where the beast and the false prophet [still] *are*” (Rev. 20:10 , emphasis added). Not only were they “alive” when they entered, but they were still alive after a thousand years of conscious torment.

A Place of Conscious Punishment. The fact that the wicked are “punished with everlasting destruction” (2 Thess. 1:9) strongly implies that they must be conscious. One cannot suffer punishment without existence. It is no punishment to beat a dead corpse. An unconscious person feels no pain.

Annihilation would not be a punishment but a release from all punishment. Job can suffer something worse than annihilation in this life. The punishment of evil men in the afterlife would have to be conscious. If not, then God is not just, since he would have given less punishment to some wicked than to some righteous people. For not all wicked people suffer as much as some righteous people do in this life.

A Place That Is Everlasting. Hell is said to be of the same duration as heaven, “everlasting” (Matt. 25:41). As the saints in heaven are said to be in conscious bliss (Luke 23:43 ; 2 Cor. 5:8 ; Phil. 1:23), so the sinners in hell are in conscious woe (cf. Luke 16).

Philosophical Arguments. For Annihilation. In addition to biblical arguments, many annihilationists offer philosophical reasons for rejecting everlasting conscious punishment. Granting a theistic perspective, most of them, however, are a variation on the one theme of God’s mercy. Arguments by those who deny theism or human immortality are covered in those respective articles.

Annihilationists reason that God is a God of mercy (Exod. 20:6), and it is merciless to allow people to suffer consciously forever. We kill trapped horses if we cannot rescue them from burning buildings. We put other suffering creatures out of their misery. Annihilationists argue that a merciful God would surely do as much for his creatures.

Against Annihilationism. The very concept of an ultimately merciful God supposes that he is the absolute standard for what is merciful and morally right. Indeed, the moral argument for God’s existence demonstrates this. But if God is the ultimate standard for moral righteousness, we cannot impose our concept of justice upon him. The very idea of injustice presupposes an ultimate standard, which theists claim for God.

Annihilation would demean both the love of God and the nature of human beings as free moral creatures. It would be as if God said to them, “I will allow you to be free only if you do what I say. If you don’t, then I will snuff out your very freedom and existence!” This would be like a father telling his son he wanted him to be a doctor, but when the son chose instead to be a park ranger the father shot him. Eternal suffering is eternal testimony to the freedom and dignity of humans, even unrepentant humans.

It would be contrary to the created nature of human beings to annihilate them, since they are made in God's image and likeness, which is everlasting (Gen. 1:27). Animals are often killed to alleviate their pain. But (the euthanasia movement notwithstanding) we do not do the same for humans precisely because they are not animals. They are created in the image of God and, hence, should be treated with the greatest respect for their dignity as God's image bearers. Not to allow them to continue to exist in their freely chosen destiny, painful as it may be, is to snuff out God's image in them. Since free choice is morally good, being part of the image of God, then it would be a moral evil to take it away. But this is what annihilation does: It destroys human freedom forever.

Further, to stomp out the existence of a creature in God's immortal image is to renege on what God gave them—immortality. It is to attack himself in effigy by destroying his image-bearers. But God does not act against God.

To punish the crime of telling of a half-truth with the same ferocity as the crime of genocide is unjust. Hitler should receive a greater punishment than a petty thief, though both crimes affront God's infinite holiness. Certainly not all judgment proportionate to the sin is meted out in this life. The Bible speaks of degrees of punishment in hell (Matt. 5:22 ; Rev. 20:12–14). But there can be no degrees of annihilation. Nonexistence is the same for all persons.

Conclusion. The doctrine of annihilation rests more on sentimental than scriptural bases. Although, there are some biblical expressions that *can* be construed to support annihilationism, there are none that *must* be understood this way. Furthermore, numerous passages clearly state that the wicked will suffer consciously and eternally in hell (*see* HELL ; "HEATHEN," SALVATION OF ; UNIVERSALISM).

Sources

- J. Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*
- E. Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes*
- L. E. Froom, *The Conditionalist's Faith of Our Father*
- N. L. Geisler, "Man's Destiny: Free or Forced," *CSR*, 9.2
- J. Gerstner, *Jonathan Edwards on Heaven and Hell*
- C. S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*
- , *The Problem of Pain* . Chapter 8
- , *The Screwtape Letters*
- F. Nietzsche, *Toward a Genealogy of Morals*

R. A. Peterson, "A Traditionalist Response to John Stott's Arguments for Annihilationism," *JETS* , December 1994

———, *Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment*

C. Pinnock, *A Wideness in God's Mercy*

B. Russell, *Why I Am Not a Christian*

J. P. Sartre, *No Exit*

G. T. Shed, *Eternal Punishment*

Anselm. Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109) was born in Aosta, Piedmont (England). He became a prior in a Benedictine monastery and was later appointed archbishop of Canterbury (1093). Anselm's major works include *Proslogion*, *Monologion*, *Cur Deus Homo?*, and *Truth* .

Philosophically, Anselm's ideas were molded by Plato (428–348 B.C.). Theologically, the writings of Augustine were formative on his thought. Nonetheless, Anselm was an original thinker who originated one of the most creative, controversial, and enduring arguments for the existence of God—the ontological argument.

Anselm's Views. Faith and Reason. Anselm's view of faith and reason was influenced by Augustine's "faith seeking understanding." Nevertheless, Anselm's establishment of reason on its own foundation had been unattained by Augustine. In fact, the late scholastic method of reasoning finds roots in Anselm's philosophical dialectic. His arguments for God are a case in point, especially the ontological argument, which began in meditation and ended with one of the most sophisticated and subtle arguments for God ever devised (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR ; GOD, OBJECTIONS TO PROOFS FOR).

In *Cur Deus Homo?* Anselm made it clear that reason must be used to explain and defend Christianity. He held that it is possible to disclose "in their true rationality, those things in Christian faith which seem to infidels improper or impossible" (*ibid.*, 2.15). Even doctrines like the Trinity and the Incarnation (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF) Anselm believed to be "reasonable and incontrovertible." He concluded that "in proving that God became man by necessity . . . you [can] convince both Jews and Pagans by the mere force of reason" (*ibid.*, 2.22).

Anselm saw a two-fold role of reason. First, he spoke of writing the proof of a certain doctrine of our faith, "which I am accustomed to give to inquirers" (*ibid.*, 1.1). This, he said, was "not for the sake of attaining to faith by means of reason, but that they may be gladdened by understanding and meditating on those things which they believe; and that, as far as possible, they may be always ready to convince anyone who demands of them a reason of the hope which is in us" (*ibid.*, 1.1).

Truth. Few essays better defend the nature of truth than Anselm's work by the simple title, *Truth*. Anselm provides a strong defense of the correspondence view of truth and the absolute nature of truth (*see* TRUTH, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF ; TRUTH, NATURE OF).

God. Anselm was a Christian theologian. As such, he accepted the Bible as the infallible Word of God (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). From this he concluded that God is one in essence (*see* GOD, NATURE OF) and three in persons—the Trinity. But Anselm believed that the existence and nature of this one God (though not his tri-unity) could be demonstrated rationally apart from supernatural revelation. Contrary to popular understanding, Anselm had many arguments for God's existence. He elaborated many forms of the cosmological argument before he ever devised the ontological argument.

Anselm's cosmological type arguments (*see* MONOLOGION). Anselm argued from goodness to God:

1. Good things exist.
2. The cause of this goodness is either one or many.
3. But it can't be many, for then there would be no way to compare their goodness, for all things would be equally good. But some things are better than others.
4. Therefore, one Supreme Good (God) causes the goodness in all good things.

Anselm argued from perfection to God, an argument C. S. Lewis emulated in *Mere Christianity* :

1. Some beings are more nearly perfect than are others.
2. But things cannot be more or less perfect unless there is a wholly perfect to which they can be compared.
3. Therefore, there must be a Most Perfect Being (God).

Anselm argued from being to God:

1. Something exists.
2. Whatever exists, exists either through nothing or through something.
3. But nothing cannot cause something; only something can cause something.
4. And this something is either one or many.
5. If many, they are either mutually dependent or all dependent on one for their existence.

6. They cannot be mutually dependent for their existence, for something cannot exist through a being on which it confers existence.
7. Therefore, there must be one being through which all other beings exist.
8. This one being must exist through itself, since everything else exists through it.
9. And whatever exists through itself, exists in the highest degree of all.
10. Therefore, there exists a supremely perfect Being that exists in the highest degree of all.

With the exception of the last two premises, which are distinctly platonic in speaking of degrees of being, this argument could have been expressed (and to some degree was) by Thomas Aquinas.

Anselm's ontological argument(s) (*see* PROSLOGION). Anselm's most famous contribution was his ontological argument(s), though Anselm himself never so named them. Immanuel Kant did many centuries later, believing they contained an ontological fallacy.

The first form of the ontological argument of Anselm was from the idea of an absolutely perfect being. It takes this form:

1. God is by definition that than which nothing greater can be conceived.
2. It is greater to exist in reality than to exist only in the mind.
3. Therefore God must exist in reality. If he didn't exist, he wouldn't be the greatest possible.

The second form of the ontological argument emerged from Anselm's friendly debate with another monk named Gaunilo. It argues from the idea of a Necessary Being.

1. God is by definition a Necessary Being.
2. It is logically necessary to affirm what is necessary of the concept of a Necessary Being.
3. Existence is logically necessary to the concept of a Necessary Being.
4. Therefore, a Necessary Being (God) necessarily exists.

The pros and cons of the ontological argument(s) are discussed elsewhere (*see* ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT). Whatever its merits, the argument has had a long and illustrious career and is still alive a millennium later.

Christ. Anselm's work *Cur Deus Homo?* (*Why the God-Man?*) is a classic in the history of Christian thought. It is a rational defense of the need for the incarnation of Christ in general and the penal view of the atonement in particular. It is a landmark treatise of rational theology.

The Influence of Anselm. Anselm's popularity, especially through his ontological argument, continues, such detractors as David Hume and Kant notwithstanding. Anselm has had a positive impact on many modern and contemporary thinkers, including Rene Descartes, Benedict Spinoza, Charles Hartshorne, Norman Malcolm, and Alvin Plantinga.

Summary. Anselm is a model of traditional or classical apologetics. He believed in offering proofs for the existence of God. Further, he believed that historical evidence, confirmed by miracles, could be supplied to support the truth of the Christian religion (see MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF). Anselm is the antithesis of fideism and purely presuppositional apologetics.

Anselm was a child of his day, which was dominated by platonic philosophy. The idea of degrees of existence and existence as a perfection is usually rejected. But these are not crucial to his system of classical apologetics as a whole. Indeed, Anselm's cosmological argument from being compares with that of Aquinas.

Sources

Anselm, *Cur Deus Homo?*

———, *Monologion*

———, *Proslogion*

———, *Truth*

N. L. Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*. chaps. 7–8

I. Kant, *The Critique of Pure Reason*

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Antedeluvians, Longevity of. See SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE.

Anthropic Principle. The *anthropic principle* (Greek: *anthropos*, "human being") states that the universe was fitted from the very first moment of its existence for the emergence of life in general and human life in particular (see BIG BANG; EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL; THERMODYNAMICS, LAWS OF). As agnostic astronomer, Robert Jastrow, noted, the universe is amazingly preadapted to the eventual appearance of humanity (see "A Scientist Caught"). For if there were even the slightest variation at the moment of the big bang, making conditions different, even to a small degree, no life of any kind would exist. In order for life to be present

today an incredibly restrictive set of demands must have been present in the early universe—and they were.

Supporting Evidence. Not only does the scientific evidence point to a beginning of the cosmos, but it points to a very sophisticated high tuning of the universe from the very beginning that makes human life possible. For life to be present today, an incredibly restrictive set of demands must have been present in the early universe:

1. Oxygen comprises 21 percent of the atmosphere. If it were 25 percent, fires would erupt, if 15 percent, human beings would suffocate.
2. If the gravitational force were altered by 1 part in 1040 (that's 10 followed by forty zeroes), the sun would not exist, and the moon would crash into the earth or sheer off into space (Heeren, 196). Even a slight increase in the force of gravity would result in all the stars being much more massive than our sun, with the effect that the sun would burn too rapidly and erratically to sustain life.
3. If the centrifugal force of planetary movements did not precisely balance the gravitational forces, nothing could be held in orbit around the sun.
4. If the universe was expanding at a rate one millionth more slowly than it is, the temperature on earth would be 10,000 degrees C. (ibid., 185).
5. The average distance between stars in our galaxy of 100 billion stars is 30 trillion miles. If that distance was altered slightly, orbits would become erratic, and there would be extreme temperature variations on earth. (Traveling at space shuttle speed, seventeen thousand miles an hour or five miles a second, it would take 201,450 years to travel 30 trillion miles.)
6. Any of the laws of physics can be described as a function of the velocity of light (now defined to be 299,792,458 miles a second). Even a slight variation in the speed of light would alter the other constants and preclude the possibility of life on earth (Ross, 126).
7. If Jupiter was not in its current orbit, we would be bombarded with space material. Jupiter's gravitational field acts as a cosmic vacuum cleaner, attracting asteroids and comets that would otherwise strike earth (ibid., 196).
8. If the thickness of the earth's crust was greater, too much oxygen would be transferred to the crust to support life. If it were thinner, volcanic and tectonic activity would make life untenable (ibid., 130).
9. If the rotation of the earth took longer than 24 hours, temperature differences would be too great between night and day. If the rotation period was shorter, atmospheric wind velocities would be too great.

10. Surface temperature differences would be too great if the axial tilt of the earth were altered slightly.
11. If the atmospheric discharge (lightning) rate were greater, there would be too much fire destruction; if it were less, there would be too little nitrogen fixing in the soil.
12. If there were more seismic activity, much life would be lost. If there was less, nutrients on the ocean floors and in river runoff would not be cycled back to the continents through tectonic uplift. Even earthquakes are necessary to sustain life as we know it.

As early as the 1960s it was explained why, on anthropic grounds, “we should expect to observe a world that possesses precisely three spatial dimensions” (Barrow, 247). Robert Dicke found “that in fact it may be necessary for the universe to have the enormous size and complexity which modern astronomy has revealed, in order for the earth to be a possible habitation for living beings” (ibid.). Likewise, the mass, the entropy level of the universe, the stability of the proton, and innumerable other things must be just right to make life possible.

Theistic Implications. Jastrow summarized the theistic implications well: “The anthropic principle . . . seems to say that science itself has proven, as a hard fact, that this universe was made, was designed, for man to live in. *It’s a very theistic result*” (Jastrow, “A Scientist Caught,” 17, emphasis added). That is, the incredible balance of multitudinous factors in the universe that make life possible on earth points to “fine tuning” by an intelligent Being. It leads one to believe that the universe was “providentially crafted” for our benefit. Nothing known to human beings is capable of “pretuning” the conditions of the universe to make life possible other than an intelligent Creator. Or, to put it another way, the kind of specificity and order in the universe that makes life possible on earth is just the kind of effect that is known to come from an intelligent cause.

Astronomer Alan Sandage concluded that “the world is too complicated in all of its parts to be due to chance alone. I am convinced that the existence of life with all its order in each of its organisms is simply too well put together. Each part of a living thing depends on all its other parts to function. How does each part know? How is each part specified at conception. The more one learns of biochemistry the more unbelievable it becomes unless there is some kind of organizing principle—an architect for believers . . .” (Sandage, 54). And all of the conditions were set from the moment of the universe’s origin.

Stephen Hawking described how the value of many fundamental numbers in nature’s laws “seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life” and how “the initial configuration of the universe” appears to have been “very carefully chosen” (cited by Heeren, 67). In spite of the fact that only an intelligent cause can “carefully choose” anything, Hawking at this writing remains skeptical about God. He saw the evidence clearly and asked the right question when he wrote: “There may only be a small number of laws, which are self-consistent and which lead to complicated beings like ourselves who can ask the question: What is the nature of God? And even if there is only one unique set of possible laws, it is only a set of equations. What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to

govern? . . . Although science may solve the problem of how the universe began, it cannot answer the question: Why does the universe bother to exist?” Hawking adds, “I don’t know the answer to that” (Hawking, 99).

Albert Einstein did not hesitate to answer Hawking’s question when he said, “the harmony of natural law . . . reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection” (Einstein, 40). Even Nobel prize winner Steven Weinberg, an atheist, went so far as to say that “it seems to me that if the word ‘God’ is to be of any use, it should be taken to mean *an interested God, a creator and lawgiver who established not only the laws of nature* and the universe but also standards of good and evil, some personality that is concerned with our actions, something in short that is appropriate for us to worship” (Weinberg, 244, emphasis added). Thus, the Anthropic Principle is based on the most recent astronomical evidence for the existence of a Superintelligent Creator of the cosmos. In short, it provides the evidence for an updated Teleological Argument for God’s existence.

Sources

J. D. Barrow, et al., *The Anthropic Cosmological Principle*

A. Einstein, *Ideals and Opinions—The World as I See It*

S. Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*

F. Heeren, *Show Me God*

F. Hoyle, *The Intelligent Universe*

R. Jastrow, “A Scientist Caught between Two Faiths: Interview with Robert Jastrow,” *CT*, 6 August 1982

———, *God and the Astronomers*

H. R. Pagels, *Perfect Symmetry*

H. Ross, *The Fingerprints of God*

A. Sandage, “A Scientist Reflects on Religious Belief,” *Truth* (1985)

S. Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory—The Search for the Fundamental Laws of Nature*

Anthropology and Evolution. See EVOLUTION, BIOLOGICAL ; MISSING LINKS .

Antinomy. The word *antinomy* is used two ways. Strictly, it means an *actual* contradiction, paradox, or antithesis (see KANT, IMMANUEL). Often used to show the absurdity or impossibility of a view, as a *Reductio Ad Absurdum* . Loosely and popularly, it is used of only *apparent*

contradictions, as in the mysteries of the Christian Faith. In this sense it means something that goes beyond reason but not *against* reason (*see* FAITH AND REASON ; MYSTERY).

Apocrypha, Old and New Testaments. *Apocrypha* most commonly refers to disputed books that Protestants reject and Roman Catholics and Orthodox communions accept into the Old Testament. The word *apocrypha* means “hidden” or “doubtful.” So those who accept these documents prefer to call them “deuterocanonical,” or books of “the second canon.”

The Roman Catholic View. Catholics and Protestants agree about the inspiration of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. They differ over eleven pieces of literature in the Old Testament (seven books and four parts of books). These disputed works became an issue in the Reformation and, in reaction to their rejection by Protestants, were “infallibly” declared to be part of the inspired canon of Scripture in 1546 at the Council of Trent (*see* BIBLE, CANONICITY OF).

The Roman Catholic Council of Trent stated: “The Synod . . . receives and venerates . . . all the books [including the *Apocrypha*] both of the Old and the New Testaments—seeing that one God is the Author of both . . . as having been dictated, either by Christ’s own word of mouth or by the Holy Ghost . . . if anyone receives not as sacred and canonical the said books entire with all their parts, as they have been used to be read in the Catholic Church . . . let him be anathema” (Schaff, 2:81). Another Trent document read: “If anyone, however, should not accept the said books as sacred and canonical, entire with all their parts, . . . and if both knowingly and deliberately he should condemn the aforesaid tradition let him be anathema” (Denzinger, *Sources* , no. 784). The same language affirming the *Apocrypha* is repeated by Vatican Council II.

The *Apocrypha* Rome accepts includes eleven books or twelve, depending on whether Baruch 1–6) is split into two pieces, Baruch 1–5 and The Letter of Jeremiah (Baruch 6). The Deuterocanon includes all the fourteen (or fifteen) books in the Protestant *Apocrypha* except the Prayer of Manasseh and 1 and 2 Esdras (called 3 and 4 Esdras by Roman Catholics. Ezra and Nehemiah are called 1 and 2 Esdras by Catholics).

Although the Roman Catholic canon has eleven more pieces of literature than does the Protestant Bible, only seven extra books, or a total forty-six, appear in the table of contents (the Protestant and Jewish Old Testament has thirty-nine). As noted in the accompanying table, four other pieces of literature are incorporated within Esther and Daniel.

The Literature in Dispute

Apocryphal Books	Deuterocanonical Books
The Wisdom of Solomon	Book of Wisdom (ca. 30 B.C.)
Ecclesiasticus (Sirach)	Sirach (132 B.C.)
Tobit (ca. 200 B.C.)	Tobit
Judith (ca. 150 B.C.)	Judith
1 Esdras (ca. 150–100 B.C.)	3 Esdras

1 Maccabees (ca. 110 B.C.)	1 Maccabees
2 Maccabees (ca. 110–70 B.C.)	2 Maccabees
Baruch (ca. 150–50 B.C.)	Baruch chaps. 1–5
Letter of Jeremiah	Baruch 6 (ca. 300–100 B.C.)
2 Esdras (ca. A.D. 100)	4 Esdras
Additions to Esther	Esther 10:4–16:24 (140–130 B.C.)
Prayer of Azariah (ca. 200–0 B.C.)	Daniel 3:24–90—”Song of Three Young Men”
Susanna (ca. 200–0 B.C.)	Daniel 13
Bel and the Dragon	Daniel 14 (ca. 100 B.C.)
Prayer of Manasseh (or second Prayer of Manasseh, ca. 100–0 B.C.)	

The Apocrypha as Scripture. The larger canon is sometimes referred to as the “Alexandrian Canon,” as opposed to the “Palestinian Canon” which does not contain the *Apocrypha* , because it is alleged to have been part of the Greek translation of the Old Testament (the *Septuagint* , or LXX) prepared at Alexandria, Egypt. Reasons generally advanced in favor of this broader Alexandrian list are:

1. The New Testament reflects the thought of the *Apocrypha* , and even refers to events described in it (cf. Heb. 11:35 with 2 Maccabees 7 , 12).
2. The New Testament quotes mostly from the Greek Old Testament, the LXX , which contained the *Apocrypha* . This gives tacit approval to the whole text.
3. Some early church fathers quoted and used the *Apocrypha* as Scripture in public worship.
4. Such early fathers as Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria accepted all of the *Apocrypha* as canonical.
5. Early Christian catacomb scenes depict episodes from the *Apocrypha* , showing it was part of early Christian religious life. This at least reveals a great regard for the *Apocrypha* .
6. Important early manuscripts (*Aleph* , *A* , and *B*) interpose the *Apocrypha* among the Old Testament books as part of the Jewish-Greek Old Testament.

7. Early church councils accepted the *Apocrypha* : Rome (382), Hippo (393), and Carthage (397).
8. The Eastern Orthodox church accepts the *Apocrypha* . Their acceptance shows it to be a common Christian belief, not one unique to Catholics.
9. The Roman Catholic church proclaimed the *Apocrypha* canonical at the Council of Trent (1546) in accord with the early councils noted and the Council of Florence not long before the Reformation (1442).
10. The apocryphal books continued to be included in the Protestant Bible as late as the nineteenth century. This indicates that even Protestants accepted the *Apocrypha* until very recently.
11. Apocryphal books in Hebrew were among Old Testament canonical books in the Dead Sea community at Qumran, so they were part of the Hebrew Canon (*see* DEAD SEA SCROLLS).

Answers to the Catholic Arguments. The New Testament and the Apocrypha. There may be New Testament allusions to the *Apocrypha* , but not once is there a definite quotation from any *Apocrypha* book accepted by the Roman Catholic church. There are allusions to Pseudepigraphical books (false writings) that are rejected by Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, such as the *Bodily Assumption of Moses* (Jude 9) and the *Book of Enoch* (Jude 14–15). There are also citations from Pagan poets and philosophers (Acts 17:28 ; 1 Cor. 15:33 ; Titus 1:12). None of these sources are cited as Scripture, nor with authority.

The New Testament simply refers to a truth contained in these books which otherwise may (and do) have errors. Roman Catholic scholars agree with this assessment. The New Testament never refers to any document outside the canon as authoritative.

The Septuagint and the Apocrypha. The fact that the New Testament often quotes from other books in the Greek Old Testament in no way proves that the deuterocanonical books it contains are inspired. It is not even certain that the *Septuagint* of the first century contained the *Apocrypha* . The earliest Greek manuscripts that include them date from the fourth century A.D .

Even if these writings were in the *Septuagint* in apostolic times, Jesus and the apostles never once quoted from them, although they are supposed to have been included in the very version of the Old Testament (the *Septuagint*) that the Lord and apostles usually cited. Even notes in the currently used Roman Catholic New American Bible (NAB) make the revealing admission that the *Apocrypha* are “Religious books used by both Jews and Christians which were not included in the collection of inspired writings.” Instead, they “. . . were introduced rather late into the collection of the Bible. Catholics call them ‘deuterocanonical’ (second canon) books” (NAB , 413).

Use by the Church Fathers. Citations of church fathers in support of the canonicity of the *Apocrypha* is selective and misleading. Some fathers did seem to accept their inspiration; other

fathers used them for devotional or homiletical (preaching) purposes but did not accept them as canonical. An authority on the *Apocrypha* , Roger Beckwith, observes,

When one examines the passages in the early Fathers which are supposed to establish the canonicity of the *Apocrypha* , one finds that some of them are taken from the alternative Greek text of Ezra (1 Esdras) or from additions or appendices to Daniel, Jeremiah or some other canonical book, which . . . are not really relevant; that others of them are not quotations from the *Apocrypha* at all; and that, of those which are, many do not give any indication that the book is regarded as Scripture. [Beckwith, 387]

Epistle of Barnabas 6.7 and Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.22.5, are not quoting Wisd. 2.12 but Isa. 3:10 LXX , and Tertullian, *On the Soul* 15, is not quoting Wisd. 1.6 but Ps. 139.23, as a comparison of the passages shows. Similarly, Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho* 129, is quite clearly not quoting Wisdom but Prov. 8.21–5 LXX . The fact that he calls Proverbs “Wisdom” is in accordance with the common nomenclature of the earlier Fathers. [Beckwith, 427]

Frequently in references, the fathers were not claiming divine authority for any of the eleven books infallibly canonized by the Council of Trent. Rather, they were citing a well-known piece of Hebrew literature or an informative devotional writing to which they gave no presumption of inspiration by the Holy Spirit.

The Fathers and the Apocrypha. Some individuals in the early church held the *Apocrypha* in high esteem; others were vehemently opposed to them. J. D. N. Kelly’s comment that “for the great majority [of early fathers] . . . the deuterocanonical writings ranked as scripture in the fullest sense” is out of sync with the facts. Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Origen, and the great Roman Catholic biblical scholar and translator of the Latin Vulgate, Jerome, all opposed inclusion of the *Apocrypha* . In the second century A.D . the Syrian Bible (Peshitta) did not contain the *Apocrypha* (Geisler, *General Introduction*, chaps. 27, 28).

Catacomb Art Apocrypha Themes. As many Catholic scholars admit, scenes from the catacombs do not prove the canonicity of the books whose events they depict. Such scenes indicate little more than the religious significance the portrayed events had for early Christians. At best, they show a respect for the books containing these events, not a recognition that they are inspired.

Books in the Greek Manuscripts. None of the great Greek manuscripts (*Aleph* , *A* , and *B*) contain all of the apocryphal books. Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, and Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) are found in all of them, and the oldest manuscripts (*B* or *Vaticanus*) totally exclude the Books of Maccabees. Yet Catholics appeal to this manuscript in support of their view. What is more, no Greek manuscript has the same list of apocryphal books accepted by the Council of Trent (1545–63; Beckwith, 194, 382–83).

Acceptance by Early Councils. These were only local councils and were not binding on the whole church. Local councils often erred in their decisions and were later overruled by the universal church. Some Catholic apologists argue that, even though a council was not

ecumenical, its results can be binding if they were confirmed by a Pope. However, they acknowledge that there is no infallible way to know which statements by Popes are infallible. Indeed, they admit that other statements by Popes were even heretical, such as the monothelite heresy of Pope Honorius I (d. 638).

It is also important to remember that these books were not part of the Christian (New Testament period) writings. Hence, they were not under the province of the Christian church to decide. They were the province of the Jewish community which wrote them and which had, centuries before, rejected them as part of the canon.

The books accepted by these Christian Councils may not have been the same ones in each case. Hence, they cannot be used as proof of the exact canon later infallibly proclaimed by the Roman Catholic church in 1546.

Local Councils of Hippo and Carthage in North Africa were influenced by Augustine, the most significant voice of antiquity who accepted the same apocryphal books later canonized by the Council of Trent. However, Augustine's position is ill-founded: (1) Augustine himself recognized that the Jews did not accept these books as part of their canon (Augustine, 19.36–38). (2) Of Maccabees, Augustine said, "These are held to be canonical, not by the Jews but by the Church, on account of the extreme and wonderful sufferings of certain martyrs" (Augustine, 18.36). On that ground *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* should be in the canon. (3) Augustine was inconsistent, since he rejected books not written by prophets, yet he accepted a book that appears to deny being prophetic (1 Macc. 9:27). (4) Augustine's mistaken acceptance of the *Apocrypha* seems to be connected with his belief in the inspiration of the *Septuagint*, whose later Greek manuscripts contained them. Augustine later acknowledged the superiority of Jerome's Hebrew text over the Septuagint's Greek text. That should have led him to accept the superiority of Jerome's Hebrew canon as well. Jerome utterly rejected the *Apocrypha*.

The later Council of Rome (382) which accepted *Apocrypha* 1 books did not list the same books accepted by Hippo and Carthage. It does not list Baruch, thus listing only six, not seven, of the *Apocrypha* books later pronounced canonical. Even Trent lists it as a separate book (Denzinger, no. 84).

Acceptance by the Orthodox Church. The Greek church has not always accepted the *Apocrypha*, nor is its present position unequivocal. At the synods of Constantinople (1638), Jaffa (1642), and Jerusalem (1672) these books were declared canonical. But even as late as 1839 their Larger Catechism expressly omitted the *Apocrypha* on the grounds that they did not exist in the Hebrew Bible.

Acceptance at the Councils of Florence and Trent. At the Council of Trent (1546) the infallible proclamation was made accepting the *Apocrypha* as part of the inspired Word of God. Some Catholic scholars claim that the earlier Council of Florence (1442) made the same pronouncement. However, this council claimed no infallibility and neither council's decision has any real basis in Jewish history, the New Testament, or early Christian history. Unfortunately, the decision at Trent came a millennium and a half after the books were written and was an obvious polemic against Protestantism. The Council of Florence had proclaimed the *Apocrypha*

inspired to bolster the doctrine of Purgatory that had blossomed. However, the manifestations of this belief in the sale of indulgences came to full bloom in Martin Luther's day, and Trent's infallible proclamation of the *Apocrypha* was a clear polemic against Luther's teaching. The official infallible addition of books that support prayers for the dead is highly suspect, coming only a few years after Luther protested this doctrine. It has all the appearance of an attempt to provide infallible support for doctrines that lack a real biblical basis.

Apocryphal Books in Protestant Bibles. *Apocryphal* books appeared in Protestant Bibles prior to the Council of Trent, and were generally placed in a separate section because they were not considered of equal authority. While Anglicans and some other non-Roman Catholic groups have always held a high regard for the inspirational and historical value of the *Apocrypha*, they never consider it inspired and of equal authority with Scripture. Even Roman Catholic scholars through the Reformation period distinguished between deuterocanon and canon. Cardinal Ximenes made this distinction in his *Complutensian Polyglot* (1514–17) on the very eve of the Reformation. Cardinal Cajetan, who later opposed Luther at Augsburg in 1518, published a *Commentary on All the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament* (1532) after the Reformation began which did not contain the *Apocrypha*. Luther spoke against the *Apocrypha* in 1543, including its books at the back of his Bible (Metzger, 181f.).

Apocryphal Writings at Qumran. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran included not only the community's Bible (the Old Testament) but their library, with fragments of hundreds of books. Among these were some Old Testament *Apocryphal* books. The fact that no commentaries were found for an *Apocryphal* book, and only canonical books were found in the special parchment and script indicates that the *Apocrypha* 1 books were not viewed as canonical by the Qumran community. Menaheem Mansoor lists the following fragments of the *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*: Tobit, in Hebrew and Aramaic; *Enoch* in Aramaic; *Jubilees* in Hebrew; *Testament of Levi and Naphtali*, in Aramaic; *Apocrypha* 1 Daniel literature, in Hebrew and Aramaic, and *Psalms of Joshua* (Mansoor, 203). The noted scholar on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Millar Burroughs, concluded: "There is no reason to think that any of these works were venerated as Sacred Scripture" (Burroughs, 178).

The Catholic Arguments in Summary. At best, all that the arguments urged in favor of the canonicity of the apocryphal books prove is that various apocryphal books were given varied degrees of esteem by various persons within the Christian church, usually falling short of claims for the books' canonicity. Only after Augustine and the local councils he dominated pronounced them inspired did they gain wider usage and eventual infallible acceptance by the Roman Catholic church at Trent. This falls far short of the kind of initial, continual, and full recognition among Christian churches of the canonical books of the Protestant Old Testament and Jewish Torah (which exclude the *Apocrypha*). True canonical books were received *immediately* by the people of God into the growing canon of Scripture (see Geisler, *General Introduction*, chap. 13). Any subsequent debate was by those who were not in a position, as was the immediate audience, to know whether they were from an accredited apostle or prophet. Hence, this subsequent debate over the antilegomena was over their *authenticity*, not canonicity. They were already in the canon; some in subsequent generations questioned whether they belonged there. Eventually, all of the antilegomena (books later questioned by some) were retained in the canon. This is not true

of the *Apocrypha*, for Protestants reject all of them and even Roman Catholics reject 3 Esdras, 4 Esdras and The Prayer of Manasseh.

Arguments for the Protestant Canon. Evidence indicates that the Protestant canon, consisting of the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible and excluding the *Apocrypha*, is the true canon. The only difference between the Protestant and ancient Palestinian Canon lies in organization. The ancient Bible lists twenty-four books. Combined into one each are 1-2 Samuel, 1-2 Kings, 1-2 Chronicles, Ezra–Nehemiah (reducing the number by four). The twelve Minor Prophets are counted as one book (reducing the number by eleven). The Palestinian Jews represented Jewish orthodoxy. Therefore, their canon was recognized as the orthodox one. It was the canon of Jesus (Geisler, *General Introduction*, chap. 5), Josephus, and Jerome. It was the canon of many early church fathers, among them Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, and Athanasius.

Arguments in support of the Protestant Canon can be divided into two categories: historical and doctrinal.

Historical Arguments. The test of canonicity. Contrary to the Roman Catholic argument from Christian usage, the true test of canonicity is propheticity. God determined which books would be in the Bible by giving their message to a prophet. So only books written by a prophet or accredited spokesperson for God are inspired and belong in the canon of Scripture.

Of course, while God *determined* canonicity by propheticity; the people of God had to *discover* which of these books were prophetic. The people of God to whom the prophet wrote knew what prophets fulfilled the biblical tests for God’s representatives, and they authenticated them by accepting the writings as from God. Moses’ books were accepted immediately and stored in a holy place (Deut. 31:26). Joshua’s writing was immediately accepted and preserved along with Moses’ Law (Josh. 24:26). Samuel added to the collection (1 Sam. 10:25). Daniel already had a copy of his prophetic contemporary Jeremiah (Dan. 9:2) and the law (Dan. 9:11 , 13). While Jeremiah’s message may have been rejected by much of his generation, the remnant must have accepted and spread it speedily. Paul encouraged the churches to circulate his inspired Epistles (Col. 4:16). Peter already had a collection of Paul’s writings, equating them with the Old Testament as “Scripture” (2 Peter 3:15–16).

There were a number of ways for immediate contemporaries to confirm whether someone was a prophet of God. Some were confirmed supernaturally (Exodus 3–4 ; Acts 2:22 ; 2 Cor. 12:12 ; Heb. 2:3–4). Sometimes this came as immediate confirmation of their authority over nature or the accuracy of their predictive prophecy. Indeed, false prophets were weeded out if their predictions did not come true (Deut. 18:20–22). Alleged revelations that contradicted previously revealed truths were rejected as well (Deut. 13:1–3).

Evidence that each prophet’s contemporaries authenticated and added his books to a growing canon comes through citations from subsequent writings. Moses’ writings are cited through the Old Testament, beginning with his immediate successor, Joshua (Josh. 1:7 ; 1 Kings 2:3 ; 2 Kings 14:6 ; 2 Chron. 17:9 ; Ezra 6:18 ; Neh. 13:1 ; Jer. 8:8 ; Mal. 4:4). Later prophets cite earlier ones (e.g., Jer. 26:18 ; Ezek. 14:14 , 20 ; Dan. 9:2 ; Jonah 2:2–9 ; Micah 4:1–3). In the New Testament, Paul cites Luke (1 Tim. 5:18); Peter recognizes Paul’s Epistles (2 Peter 3:15–

16), and Jude (4–12) cites 2 Peter. The Revelation is filled with images and ideas from previous Scripture, especially Daniel (see, for example, Revelation 13).

The entire Jewish/Protestant Old Testament was considered prophetic. Moses, who wrote the first five books, was a prophet (Deut. 18:15). The rest of the Old Testament books were known for centuries as “The Prophets” (Matt. 5:17 ; Luke 24:27). Eventually these books were divided into The Prophets and The Writings. Some believe this division was based on whether the author was a prophet by office or by gift. Others believe the separation was for topical use at Jewish festivals, or that books were arranged chronologically in descending order of size (Geisler, *General Introduction*, 244–45). Whatever the reason, it is clear that the original (cf. 7:12) and continual way to refer to the entire Old Testament up to the time of Christ was the twofold division of the “The Law and The Prophets.” The “apostles and prophets” (Eph. 3:5) composed the New Testament. Hence, the whole Bible is a prophetic book, including the last book (for example, Revelation 20); this cannot be said for the *Apocryphal* books.

Nonauthenticated prophecy. There is strong evidence that the apocryphal books are not prophetic, and since propheticity is the test for canonicity, this fact alone eliminates them from the canon. No apocryphal books claim to be written by a prophet. Indeed, Maccabees disclaims being prophetic (1 Macc. 9:27). Nor is there supernatural confirmation of any of the writers of the apocryphal books, as there is for prophets who wrote canonical books. There is no predictive prophecy in the *Apocrypha*, as there is in some canonical books (e.g., Isaiah 53 ; Daniel 9 ; Micah 5:2). There is no new Messianic truth in the *Apocrypha*. Even the Jewish community, whose books these were, acknowledged that the prophetic gifts had ceased in Israel before the *Apocrypha* was written (see quotes above). Apocryphal books were never listed in the Jewish Bible with the Prophets or in any other section. Not once is an apocryphal book cited authoritatively by a prophetic book written after it. Taken together all of this provides overwhelming evidence that the *Apocrypha* was not prophetic and, therefore, should not be part of the canon of Scripture.

Jewish Rejection. In addition to the evidence for the propheticity of only the books of the Jewish and Protestant Old Testament, there is an unbroken line of rejection of the *Apocrypha* as canon by Jewish and Christian teachers.

Philo, an Alexandrian Jewish teacher (20 B.C. – A.D. 40), quoted the Old Testament prolifically from virtually every canonical book. However, he never once quoted from the *Apocrypha* as inspired.

Josephus (A.D. 30–100), a Jewish historian, explicitly excludes the *Apocrypha*, numbering the Old Testament as twenty two books (= thirty-nine books in Protestant Old Testament). Neither does he ever quote an *Apocrypha* 1 book as Scripture, though he was familiar with them. In *Against Apion* (1.8) he wrote:

For we have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another [as the Greeks have,] *but only twenty-two books, which are justly believed to be divine; and of them, five belong to Moses, which contain his law, and the traditions of the origin of mankind till his death. This interval of time was little short*

of three thousand years; but as to the time from the death of Moses till the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, who reigned at Xerxes, *the prophets*, who were after Moses, wrote down what was done in their times in *thirteen books*. The remaining *four books contain hymns to God*, and precepts for the conduct of human life. [Josephus, 1.8, emphasis added]

These correspond exactly to the Jewish and Protestant Old Testament, which excludes the *Apocrypha*.

The Jewish teachers acknowledged that their prophetic line ended in the fourth century B.C. Yet, as even Catholics acknowledge, all apocryphal books were written after this time. Josephus wrote: "From Artaxerxes until our time everything has been recorded, but has not been deemed worthy of like credit with what preceded, because the exact succession of the prophets ceased" (Josephus). Additional rabbinical statements on the cessation of prophecy support this (see Beckwith, 370). Seder Olam Rabbah 30 declares "Until then [the coming of Alexander the Great] the prophets prophesied through the Holy Spirit. From then on, 'Incline thine ear and hear the words of the wise.'" Baba Bathra 12b declares: "Since the day when the Temple was destroyed, prophecy has been taken from the prophets and given to the wise." Rabbi Samuel bar Inia said, "The Second Temple lacked five things which the First Temple possessed, namely, the fire, the ark, the Urim and Thummin, the oil of anointing and the Holy Spirit [of prophecy]." Thus, the Jewish fathers (rabbis) acknowledged that the time period during which their *Apocrypha* was written was not a time when God was giving inspired writings.

Jesus and the New Testament writers never quoted from the *Apocrypha* as Scripture, even though they were aware of these writings and alluded to them at times (e.g., Heb. 11:35 may allude to 2 Maccabees 7, 12, though this may be a reference to the canonical book of Kings; see 1 Kings 17:22). Yet hundreds of quotations in the New Testament cite the Old Testament canon. The authority with which they are cited indicates that the New Testament writers believed them to be part of the "Law and Prophets" [i.e., whole Old Testament] which was believed to be the inspired and infallible Word of God (Matt. 5:17–18; cf. John 10:35). Jesus quoted from throughout the Old Testament "Law and Prophets," which he called "all the Scriptures" (Luke 24:27).

The Jewish Scholars at Jamnia (ca. A.D. 90) did not accept the *Apocrypha* as part of the divinely inspired Jewish Canon (see Beckwith, 276–77). Since the New Testament explicitly states that Israel was entrusted with the oracles of God and was the recipient of the covenants and the law (Rom. 3:2), the Jews should be considered the custodians of the limits of their own canon. As such they have always rejected the *Apocrypha*.

Early church council rejection. No canonic list or council of the Christian church accepted the *Apocrypha* as inspired for nearly the first four centuries. This is significant, since all of the lists available and most of the fathers of this period omit the *Apocrypha*. The first councils to accept the *Apocrypha* were only local ones without ecumenical force. The Catholic contention that the Council of Rome (382), though not an ecumenical council, had ecumenical force because Pope Damasus (304–384) ratified it is without grounds. It begs the question, assuming that Damasus was a Pope with infallible authority. Second, even Catholics acknowledge this council

was not an ecumenical body. Third, not all Catholic scholars agree that such affirmations by Popes are infallible. There are no infallible lists of infallible statements by Popes. Nor are there any universally agreed upon criteria for developing such lists. At best, appealing to a Pope to make infallible a statement by a local council is a double-edged sword. Even Catholic scholars admit that some Popes taught error and were even heretical.

Early fathers' rejection. Early fathers of the Christian church spoke out against the *Apocrypha*. This included Origen, Cyril of Jerusalem, Athanasius, and the great Roman Catholic Bible translator, Jerome.

Rejection by Jerome. Jerome (340–420), the greatest biblical scholar of the early Medieval period and translator of the Latin Vulgate, explicitly rejected the *Apocrypha* as part of the canon. He said the church reads them "for example and instruction of manners" but does not "apply them to establish any doctrine" ("Preface" to Vulgate *Book of Solomon*, cited in Beckwith, 343). In fact, he disputed Augustine's unjustified acceptance of these books. At first, Jerome even refused to translate the *Apocrypha* into Latin, but later made a hurried translation of a few books. After listing the exact books of the Jewish and Protestant Old Testament, Jerome concludes:

And thus altogether there come to be 22 books of the old Law [according to the letters of the Jewish alphabet], that is, five of Moses, eight of the Prophets, and nine of the Hagiographa. Although some set down . . . Ruth and Kinoh among the Hagiographa, and think that these books ought to be counted (separately) in their computation, and that there are thus 24 books of the old Law; which the Apocalypse of John represents as adoring the Lamb in the number of the 24 elders. . . . This prologue can fitly serve as a Helmet (i.e., equipped with a helmet, against assailants) *introduction to all the biblical books* which we have translated from Hebrew into Latin, so that we may know that *whatever is not included in these is to be placed among the apocrypha*. [ibid., emphasis added]

In his preface to Daniel, Jerome clearly rejected the apocryphal additions to Daniel (Bel and the Dragon and Susanna) and argued only for the canonicity of those books found in the Hebrew Bible. He wrote:

The stories of Susanna and of Bel and the Dragon are not contained in the Hebrew. . . . For this same reason when I was translating Daniel many years ago, I noted these visions with a critical symbol, showing that they were not included in the Hebrew. . . . After all, both Origen, Eusebius and Appolinarius, and other outstanding churchmen and teachers of Greece acknowledge that, as I have said, these visions are not found amongst the Hebrew, *and therefore they are not obliged to answer to Porphyry for these portions which exhibit no authority as Holy Scripture*. [ibid., emphasis added]

The suggestion that Jerome really favored the apocryphal books but was only arguing that the Jews rejected them is groundless. First, he said clearly in the above quotation that they "*exhibit no authority as Holy Scripture*." Second, he never retracted his rejection of the *Apocrypha*. Third, he stated in his work *Against Rufinus*, 33 that he had "followed the judgment of the churches" on this matter. And his statement "I was not following my own personal views"

appears to refer to “the remarks that they [the enemies of Christianity] are wont to make against us.” In any event, he nowhere retracted his statements against the *Apocrypha*. Finally, the fact that Jerome cited apocryphal books is no proof that he accepted them. This was a common practice by many church fathers. He had stated that the church reads them “for example and instruction of manners” but does not “apply them to establish any doctrine.”

Rejection by scholars. Even noted Roman Catholic scholars during the Reformation period rejected the *Apocrypha*, such as Cardinal Cajetan, who opposed Luther. As already noted, he wrote a *Commentary on All the Authentic Historical Books of the Old Testament* (1532) which excluded the *Apocrypha*. If he believed they were authentic, they certainly would have been included in a book on “all the authentic” books of the Old Testament.

Luther, John Calvin, and other Reformers rejected the canonicity of the *Apocrypha*. Lutherans and Anglicans have used it only for ethical/devotional matters but do not consider it authoritative in matters of Faith. Reformed churches followed *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) which states: “The Books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are not part of the canon of the Scriptures; and therefore are of no authority in the Church of God, nor to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than any other human writings.” In short, the Christian church (including Anglicans, Lutherans, and Protestants) has rejected the deuterocanonical books as part of the canon. They do so because they lack the primary determining factor of canonicity: The apocryphal books lack evidence that they were written by accredited prophets of God. Further evidence is found in the fact that the apocryphal books are never cited as authoritative in Scripture in the New Testament, it was never part of the Jewish canon, and the early church did not accept the *Apocrypha* as inspired.

The Mistake of Trent. The infallible pronouncement by the Council of Trent that the apocryphal books are part of the inspired Word of God reveals how fallible an allegedly infallible statement can be. This article has shown that the statement is historically unfounded. It was a polemical overreaction and an arbitrary decision involving a dogmatic exclusion.

Trent’s pronouncement on the *Apocrypha* was part of a polemical action against Luther. Its sponsors deemed an inspired *Apocrypha* necessary to justify teaching Luther had attacked, particularly prayers for the dead. The text of 2 Maccabees 12:46 reads “Thus he made atonement for the dead that they might be freed from his sin.” Since there was an agenda for accepting certain books, the decisions were rather arbitrary. Trent accepted 2 Maccabees, which supported prayers for the dead and rejected 2 Esdras (4 Esdras in the Catholic reckoning), which had a statement that would not support the practice (cf. 7:105).

The very history of this section of 2 (4) Esdras reveals the arbitrariness of the Trent decision. It was written in Aramaic by an unknown Jewish author (ca. A.D. 100) and circulated in Old Latin versions (ca. 200). The Latin Vulgate printed it as an appendix to the New Testament (ca. 400). It disappeared from Bibles until Protestants, beginning with Johann Haug (1726–42), began to print it in the *Apocrypha* based on Aramaic texts, since it was not in Latin manuscripts of the time. However, in 1874 a long section in Latin (seventy verses of chap. 7) was found by Robert Bently in a library in Amiens, France. Bruce Metzger noted, “It is probable that the lost section was deliberately cut out of an ancestor of most extant Latin Manuscripts, because of

dogmatic reasons, for the passage contains an emphatic denial of the value of prayers for the dead.”

Some Catholics argue that this exclusion is not arbitrary because this writing was not part of earlier deuterocanonical lists, it was written after the time of Christ, it was relegated to an inferior position in the Vulgate, and it was only included among the *Apocrypha* by Protestants in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, 2 [4] Esdras was part of earlier lists of books not considered fully canonical. According to the Catholic criterion, the date of writing has nothing to do with whether it should be in the Jewish *Apocrypha* but whether it was used by early Christians; it was used, alongside the other apocryphal books. It should not have been rejected because it held an inferior position in the Vulgate. Jerome relegated all these writings to an inferior position. The reason it did not reappear in Latin until the eighteenth century is apparently because some Catholic Monk cut out the section against praying for the dead.

Prayers for the dead were much on the mind of the clerics at Trent, who convened their council just twenty-nine years after Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses against the sale of indulgences. Doctrines of indulgences, purgatory, and prayers for the dead stand or fall together.

Doctrinal Arguments. Canonicity. The true and false views of what determines canonicity can be contrasted as follows (see Geisler, *General Introduction*, 221).

Incorrect View of Canon	Correct View of Canon
Church Determines Canon.	Church Discovers Canon.
Church Is Mother of Canon.	Church Is Child of Canon.
Church Is Magistrate of Canon.	Church Is Minister of Canon.
Church Regulates Canon.	Church Recognizes Canon.
Church Is Judge of Canon.	Church Is Witness of Canon.
Church Is Master of Canon.	Church Is Servant of Canon.

Catholic sources can be cited to support a doctrine of canonicity that looks very much like the “correct view.” The problem is that Catholic apologists often equivocate on this issue. Peter Kreeft, for example, argued that the church must be infallible if the Bible is, since the effect cannot be greater than the cause and the church caused the canon. But if the church is regulated by the canon, not ruler over it, then the church is not the cause of the canon. Other defenders of Catholicism make the same mistake, giving lip-service on the one hand to the fact that the church only discovers the canon, yet on the other hand constructing an argument that makes the church the determiner of the canon. They neglect the fact that it is God who caused (by inspiration) the canonical Scriptures, not the church.

This misunderstanding is sometimes evident in the equivocal use of the word *witness*. When we speak of the church as being a “witness” to the canon after the time it was written we do not mean in the sense of being an eyewitness (i.e., relating first-hand evidence). The proper role of

the Christian church in discovering which books belong in the canon can be reduced to several precepts.

Only the people of God contemporary to the writing of the biblical books were actual eyewitnesses to the evidence. They alone were witnesses to the canon as it was developing. Only they can testify to the evidence of the propheticity of the biblical books, which is the determinative factor of canonicity.

The later church is not an evidential witness for the canon. It does not create or constitute evidence for the canon. It is only a discoverer and observer of the evidence that remains for the original confirmation of the propheticity of the canonical books. Assuming that it is evidence in and of itself is the mistake behind the Roman Catholic view.

Neither the earlier nor later church is the judge of the canon. The church is not the final arbiter for the criteria of what will be admitted as evidence. Only God can determine the criteria for our discovery of what is his Word. What is of God will have his “fingerprints” on it, and only God is the determiner of what his “fingerprints” are like.

Both the early and later church is more like a jury than a judge. The jury listens to the evidence, weighs the evidence, and renders a verdict in accord with the evidence. The contemporary (First-Century) church looked at the first-hand evidence for *propheticity* (such as miracles), and the historic church has reviewed the evidence for the *authenticity* of these prophetic books which were directly confirmed by God when they were written (*see* MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE).

In a certain sense, the church does “judge” the canon. It is called upon, as all juries are, to engage in an active sifting and weighing of the evidence as it renders a verdict. But this is not what the Roman Church practiced in its magisterial role in determining the canon. After all, this is what is meant by the “teaching magisterium” of the church. The Roman Catholic hierarchy is not merely ministerial; it is magisterial. It has a judicial role, not just an administrative one. It is not just a jury looking at evidence; it is a judge determining what counts as evidence.

Therein lies the problem. In exercising its magisterial role, the Roman Catholic church chose the wrong course in rendering its decision about the *Apocrypha* . First, it chose to follow the wrong criterion, *Christian usage* rather than *propheticity* . Second, it used *second-hand evidence* of later writers rather than the only *first-hand evidence* for canonicity (divine confirmation of the author’s propheticity). Third, it did not use *immediate confirmation* by contemporaries but the *later statements* of people separated from the events by centuries. All of these mistakes arose out of a misconception of the very role of the church as judge rather than jury, as magistrate rather than minister, a sovereign over rather than servant of the canon. By contrast, the Protestant rejection of the *Apocrypha* was based on an understanding of the role of the first witnesses to propheticity and the church as custodian of that evidence for authenticity.

New Testament Apocrypha. The New Testament *Apocrypha* are disputed books that have been accepted by some into the canon of Scripture. Unlike the *Apocrypha* of the Old Testament, the New Testament *Apocrypha* has not caused a permanent or serious controversy, since the church universal agrees that only the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are inspired (

see BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). Books of the *Apocrypha* have been enjoyed for their devotional value, unlike the more spurious (and usually heretical) books of the New Testament pseudepigrapha. Pseudepigraphal writings are sometimes called “*Apocrypha* ,” but they have been universally rejected by all traditions of the church.

The New Testament *Apocrypha* includes *The Epistle of Pseudo-Barnabas* (ca. A.D. 70–79), *The Epistle to the Corinthians* (ca. 96), *The Gospel According to the Hebrews* (ca. 65–100), *The Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians* (ca. 108), *Didache* or *The Teaching of the Twelve* (ca. 100–20), *The Seven Epistles of Ignatius* (ca. 110), *Ancient Homily* or *The Second Epistle of Clement* (ca. 120–140), *The Shepherd of Hermas* (ca. 115–40), *The Apocalypse of Peter* (ca. 150), and *The Epistle to the Laodiceans* (fourth century [?]).

Reasons for Rejecting. None of the New Testament *Apocrypha* have experienced more than a local or temporary acceptance. Most have enjoyed at best a quasi-canonical status, merely appended to various manuscripts or listed in tables of contents. No major canon or church council accepted them as part of the inspired Word of God. Where they were accepted into the canon by groups of Christians it was because they were believed wrongly to have been written by an apostle or referred to by an inspired book (for example, Col. 4:16). Once this was known to be false they were rejected as canonical.

Conclusion. Differences over the Old Testament *Apocrypha* play a crucial role in Roman Catholic and Protestant differences over such teachings as purgatory and prayers for the dead. There is no evidence that the *Apocryphal* books are inspired and, therefore, should be part of the canon of inspired Scripture. They do not claim to be inspired, nor is inspiration credited to them by the Jewish community that produced them. They are never quoted as Scripture in the New Testament. Many early fathers, including Jerome, categorically rejected them. Adding them to the Bible with an infallible decree at the Council of Trent shows evidence of being a dogmatic and polemical pronouncement calculated to bolster support for doctrines that do not find clear support in any of the canonical books.

In view of the strong evidence against the *Apocrypha* , the decision by the Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches to pronounce them canonical is both unfounded and rejected by Protestants. It is a serious error to admit nonrevelational material to corrupt the written revelation of God and undermine the divine authority of Scripture (Ramm, 65).

Sources

H. Andrews, *An Introduction to the Apocryphal Books of the Old and New Testaments*

Augustine, *The City of God* .

R. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and Its Background in Early Judaism*

M. Burroughs, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*

H. Denzinger, *Documents of Vatican II* , chapter 3

———, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*

N. L. Geisler, “The Extent of The Old Testament Canon,” in G. F. Hawthorne, ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation*

——— and W. E. Nix, *General Introduction to the Bible*, rev. ed.

Josephus, *Antiquities*, 1.8

B. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*

B. Ramm, *The Pattern of Religious Authority*

P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*

A. Souter, *The Text and Canon of the New Testament*

B. Westcott, *A General Survey of the Canon of the New Testament*

Apologetics, Argument of. There are many types of apologetics (*see* APOLOGETICS, TYPES OF). But according to classical apologetics, there are certain logical steps in the overall argument in defense of the Christian faith. Since each step is treated in detail in other articles, only the logic of the argument will be sketched here.

The Steps. The overall argument in defense of the Christian Faith can be put in twelve basic propositions. They flow logically one from another:

1. Truth about reality is knowable (*see* TRUTH, NATURE OF ; AGNOSTICISM).
2. Opposites cannot both be true (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES ; LOGIC).
3. The theistic (*see* THEISM) God exists (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR).
4. Miracles are possible (*see* MIRACLE).
5. Miracles performed in connection with a truth claim are acts of God to confirm the truth of God through a messenger of God (*see* MIRACLES AS CONFIRMATION OF TRUTH ; MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF).
6. The New Testament documents are reliable (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, DOCUMENTS, MANUSCRIPTS ; NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF ; NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS).
7. As witnessed in the New Testament, Jesus claimed to be God (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF).
8. Jesus’ claim to divinity was proven by an unique convergence of miracles (*see* MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE).

9. Therefore, Jesus was God in human flesh.

10. Whatever Jesus (who is God) affirmed as true, is true (*see* GOD, NATURE OF).

11. Jesus affirmed that the Bible is the Word of God (*see* BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR ; BIBLE, JESUS’ VIEW OF).

12. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God and whatever is opposed to any biblical truth is false (*see* WORLD RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY ; PLURALISM, RELIGIOUS).

The Application. If a theistic God exists and miracles are possible and Jesus is the Son of God and the Bible is the Word of God, then it follows that orthodox Christianity is true. All other essential orthodox doctrines, such as the Trinity, Christ’s atonement for sin, the physical resurrection, and Christ’s second coming, are taught in the Bible. Since all these conditions are supported by good evidence, it follows that there is good evidence for concluding that orthodox Christianity is true.

And since mutually exclusive propositions cannot both be true (*see* LOGIC), then all opposing world religions are false religions (*see* WORLD RELIGIONS AND CHRISTIANITY). That is, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and other religions are false insofar as they oppose the teachings of Christianity (*see* articles related to ISLAM ; MONISM ; ZEN BUDDHISM). Therefore, only Christianity is the true religion (*see* PLURALISM).

Apologetics, Classical. *See* CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS .

Apologetics, Experiential. *See* EXPERIENTIAL APOLOGETICS .

Apologetics, Historical. *See* HISTORICAL APOLOGETICS .

Apologetics, Need for. *Apologetics* is the discipline that deals with a rational defense of Christian faith. It comes from the Greek word *apologia* which means to give a reason or defense. In spite of the objections to doing apologetics in this sense from fideists and some presuppositionalists (*see* FIDEISM ; PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS), there are important reasons to participate in the work of apologetics.

God Commands It. The most important reason to do apologetics is that God told us to do so. The classic statement is 1 Peter 3:15, which says, “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” This verse tells us to be ready. We may never run across someone who asks tough questions about our faith, but we should still be ready to respond if someone does. Being ready is not just a matter of having the right information available, it is also an attitude of readiness and eagerness to share the truth of what we believe. We are to give a reason to those who ask the questions. It is not expected that everyone needs pre-evangelism, but when they do need it, we must be able and willing to give them an answer.

This command also links the work of pre-evangelism with Christ's place as Lord in our hearts. If he is really Lord, then we should be obedient to him as "we demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ" (2 Cor. 10:5). This means we should confront issues in our own minds and in the expressed thoughts of others that prevent us and them from knowing God. That is what apologetics is all about.

In Philippians 1:7 Paul speaks of his mission as "defending and confirming the gospel." He adds in verse 16, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel." This implies that the defender of the gospel is out where he or she can encounter others and defend truth.

Jude 3 adds, "Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and *urge you to contend for the faith* that was once for all entrusted to the saints." The people Jude addressed had been assaulted by false teachers, and he needed to encourage them to protect (literally agonize for) the faith as it had been revealed through Christ. Jude makes a significant statement about our attitude in verse 22, that we "have mercy on some, who are doubting."

Titus 1:9 makes knowledge of Christian evidences a requirement for church leadership. An elder in the church should "hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and *refute those who oppose it*." Paul also gives us an indication of our attitude in this work in 2 Timothy 2:24–25: "And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. *Those who oppose him he must gently instruct*, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth." Anyone attempting to answer the questions of unbelievers will surely be wronged and be tempted to lose patience, but our ultimate goal is that they might come to a knowledge of the truth that Jesus has died for their sins. With so important a task at hand, we must not neglect obedience to this command.

Reason Demands It. God created humans to reason as part of his image (Gen. 1:27; cf. Col. 3:10). Indeed, it is by reasoning that humans are distinguished from "brute beasts" (Jude 10). God calls upon his people to use reason (Isa. 1:18) to discern truth from error (1 John 4:6) and right from wrong (Heb. 5:14). A fundamental principle of reason is that it should give sufficient grounds for belief. An unjustified belief is just that—unjustified (see FAITH AND REASON).

Socrates said, "The unexamined life is not worth living." He surely would have been willing to add that the unexamined belief is not worth believing. Therefore, it is incumbent upon Christians to give a reason for their hope. This is part of the great command to love God with all our mind, as well as our heart and soul (Matt. 22:36–37).

The World Needs It. People rightly refuse to believe without evidence. Since God created humans as rational beings, he expects them to live rationally, to look before they leap. This does not mean there is no room for faith. But God wants us to take a step of faith in the light of evidence, rather than to leap in the dark.

Evidence of truth should precede faith. No rational person steps in a elevator without some reason to believe it will hold him up. No reasonable person gets on an airplane that is missing part of one wing and smells of smoke in the cabin. People deal in two dimensions of belief: *belief that* and *belief in*. *Belief that* gives the evidence and rational basis for confidence needed to establish *belief in*. Once *belief that* is established, one can place faith *in* it. Thus, the rational person wants evidence that God exists before he places his faith in God. Rational unbelievers want evidence that Jesus is the Son of God before they place their trust in him (see CLASSICAL APOLOGETICS).

Objections to Apologetics. The most frequent opposition to apologetics is raised by mystics and other experientialists (see EXPERIENTIAL APOLOGETICS). Fideists (see FIDEISM) and some presuppositionalists also raise objections of two basic kinds: biblical and from outside Scripture. An apologist for apologetics can see in the Scripture texts usually quoted against the work some misunderstandings or misapplications, which do not really show apologetics to be unnecessary.

Objections to Apologetics from the Bible. *The Bible does not need to be defended.* One objection often made is that the Bible does not need to be defended; it simply needs to be expounded. "The Word of God is alive and powerful" (Heb. 4:12). It is said that the Bible is like a lion; it does not need to be defended but simply let loose. A lion can defend itself.

This begs the question as to whether the Bible is the Word of God. Of course, God's Word is ultimate and speaks for itself. But how do we know the Bible, as opposed to the *Qur'an* or the *Book of Mormon*, is the Word of God? One must appeal to evidence to determine this. No Christian would accept a Muslim's statement that "the *Qur'an* is alive and powerful and sharper than a two-edged sword." We would demand evidence (see BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR).

The analogy of the lion is misleading. A roar of a lion "speaks for itself" with authority only because we know from previous evidence what a lion can do. Without tales of woe about a lion's ferocity, its roar would not have authority. Likewise, without evidence to establish one's claim to authority, there is no good reason to accept that authority.

God can't be known by human reason. The apostle Paul wrote, "the world by wisdom knew not God" (1 Cor. 1:21 KJV). This cannot mean that there is no evidence for God's existence, however, since Paul declared in Romans that the evidence for God's existence is so "plain" as to render "without excuse" one who has never heard the gospel (Rom. 1:19–20). Further, the context in 1 Corinthians is not God's existence but his plan of salvation through the cross. This cannot be known by mere human reason, but only by divine revelation. It is "foolish" to the depraved human mind. Finally, in this very book of 1 Corinthians Paul gives his greatest apologetic evidence for the Christian Faith—the eyewitnesses of the resurrection of Christ which his companion Luke called "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3 NKJV). So his reference to the world by wisdom not knowing God is not a reference to the inability of human beings to know God through the evidence he has revealed in creation (Rom. 1:19–20) and conscience (Rom. 2:12–15). Rather, it is a reference to human depravity and foolish rejection of the message of the

cross. Indeed, even though humankind knows clearly through human reason that God exists, nevertheless, he “suppresses” or “holds down” this truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18).

Natural humanity can't understand. Paul insisted that “the man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God” (1 Cor. 2:14). What use, then, is apologetics? In response to this argument against apologetics, it should be observed that Paul does not say that natural persons cannot *perceive* truth about God, but that they do not *receive* (Gk. δεχομαι, “welcome”) it. Paul emphatically declares that the basic truths about God are “clearly seen” (Rom. 1:20). The problem is not that unbelievers are not aware of God’s existence. They do not want to *accept* him because of the moral consequences this would have on their sinful lives. First Corinthians 2:14 (NKJV) says they do not “know” (*ginosko*) which can mean “to know by experience.” They know God in their mind (Rom. 1:19–20), but they have not accepted him in their heart (Rom. 1:18). “The fool says in *his heart*, There is no God” (Ps. 14:1).

Without faith one cannot please God. Hebrews 11:6 insists that “without faith it is impossible to please God.” This would seem to argue that asking for reasons, rather than simply believing, displeases God. But, as already noted, God does call upon us to use our reason (1 Peter 3:15). Indeed, he has given “clear” (Rom. 1:20) and “infallible proofs” (Acts 1:3 NKJV). Second, this text in Hebrews does not exclude “evidence” but actually implies it. Faith is said to be “the evidence” of things we do not see (Heb. 11:1 NKJV). Just as the evidence that a witness is reliable justifies my believing testimony of what he or she saw and I did not, even so, our faith in “things not seen” (Heb. 11:1 NKJV) is justified by the evidence that God does exist. The latter evidence is “clearly seen, being understood from what has been made” (Rom. 1:20).

Jesus refused to give signs for evil men. Jesus rebuked people who sought signs; hence, we should be content simply to believe. Indeed, Jesus did on occasion rebuke sign seekers. He said, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a miraculous sign!” However, this does not mean that Jesus did not desire people to look at the evidence before they believed. Even in this passage Jesus went on to offer the miracle of his resurrection as a sign of who he was, saying no signs would be given, “except the sign of the prophet Jonah” (Matt. 12:39–40 ; cf. Luke 16:31 ; see MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE).

Jesus offered his miracles as a proof of his messianic office (see MIRACLE ; MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF). When John the Baptist inquired whether he was the Christ, Jesus offered miracles as proof, saying: “Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor” (Matt. 11:4–5). And when replying to the Scribes, he said: “ ‘But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.’ He said to the paralytic, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home’ ” (Mark 2:10–11).

Jesus was opposed to entertaining people by miracles. He refused to perform a miracle to satisfy King Herod’s curiosity (Luke 23:8). On other occasions he did not do miracles because of their unbelief (Matt. 13:58), not wishing to “cast pearls before swine” (Matt. 7:6). The purpose of miracles was apologetic, viz., to confirm his message (cf. Exod. 4:1–9 ; John 3:2 ; Heb. 2:3–4). And this he did in great abundance for “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by

God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him” (Acts 2:22).

Do not answer a fool according to his folly. It is argued that atheism is folly (Ps. 14:1), and the Bible says we should not answer a fool. We agree with Proverbs 26:4, but we also concur with Proverbs 26:5 which says, “Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.” Either the Book of Proverbs was put together by a mad man, or the lesson of the passage is that we have to be careful in how and when we choose to confront false ideas. Don’t just argue with someone who will not listen to reason, or you will be just as foolish as he is. But if you are able to show a person the error of his thinking in a way that he can understand, perhaps he will seek God’s wisdom rather than relying on his own.

Apologetics is not used in the Bible. If apologetics is biblical, then why don’t we see it done in the Bible? By and large the Bible was not written for unbelievers but for believers. Since they already believe in God, Christ, etc., there is no need to prove these truths to them. Apologetics is primarily for those who do not believe, so that they may have a reason to believe.

But apologetics *is used* in the Bible. Even those familiar with it don’t recognize it, since they don’t realize that what they are looking at is really apologetics. Moses did apologetics. The first chapter of Genesis clearly confronts the mythical accounts of creation known in his day. His miracles in Egypt were an apologetic that God was speaking through him (Exod. 4:1–9). Elijah did apologetics on Mount Carmel when he proved miraculously that Yahweh, not Baal, is the true God (1 Kings 18). Jesus constantly engaged in apologetics, proving by signs and wonders that he was the Son of God (John 3:2 ; Acts 2:22). The apostle Paul did apologetics at Lystra when he gave evidence from nature that the supreme God of the universe existed and that idolatry was wrong (Acts 14:6–20).

The classic case of apologetics in the New Testament is Acts 17 where Paul reasoned with the philosophers on Mars Hill. He not only presented evidence from nature that God existed but also from history that Christ was the Son of God. He cited pagan thinkers in support of his arguments. Apologetics was done in the Bible whenever the truth claims of Judaism or Christianity came in conflict with unbelief.

Objections to Apologetics from Outside the Bible. These objections against apologetics arise from assumptions of its irrationality, inadequacy, or fruitlessness. Many come from a rationalistic or skeptical point of view (see AGNOSTICISM). Others are fideistic (see FIDEISM).

Logic can't tell us anything about God. This objection is self-defeating. It says that logic doesn’t apply to this issue. But the statement itself is a statement claiming logical thinking about God. It appeals to logic because it claims to be true while its opposite is false. That claim, called the law of noncontradiction (see FIRST PRINCIPLES ; LOGIC), is the basis for all logic. A statement that logic doesn’t apply to God applies logic to God. Logic is inescapable. You can’t deny it with your words unless you affirm it with the very same words. It is undeniable.

Logic in itself can tell us some things about God—at least hypothetically. For instance, if God exists, then it is false that he does not exist. And if God is a Necessary Being, then he

cannot not exist. Further, if God is infinite and we are finite, then we are not God. Also, if God is truth, he cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). For it is contradictory to his nature to lie. Likewise, logic informs us that if God is omnipotent, then he cannot make a stone so heavy that he cannot lift it. For whatever he can make, he can lift.

Logic cannot “prove” the existence of anything. True, mere logic shows only what is possible or impossible. We know by logic, for example, that square circles are impossible. We know also that something can exist, since no contradiction is involved in claiming something exists. But we cannot prove by mere logic that something actually exists. However, we know that something actually exists in another way. We know it intuitively and undeniably. For I cannot deny my existence unless I exist to deny it. The statement “I don’t exist” is self-defeating, since I have to exist in order to be able to make the statement. So, while mere logic cannot prove the existence of anything, we have undeniable knowledge that something exists. And once we know that something exists (e.g., I do), then logic can help us determine whether it is finite or infinite. And if it is finite, logic can help us determine whether there is also an infinite being (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR).

Reason is useless in religious matters. Fideism argues that reason is of no use in matters that deal with God. One must simply believe. Faith, not reason, is what God requires (Heb. 11:6).

But even in Scripture God calls on us to use reason (Isa. 1:18 ; Matt. 22:36–37 ; 1 Peter 3:15). God is a rational being, and he created us to be rational beings. God would not insult the reason he gave us by asking us to ignore it in such important matters as our beliefs about him.

Fideism is self-defeating. Either it has a reason that we should not reason about God or it does not. If it does, then it uses reason to say we should not use reason. If fideism has no reason for not using reason, then it is without reason for its position, in which case there is no reason why one should accept fideism.

To claim reason is just optional for a fideist will not suffice. For either the fideist offers some criteria for when to be reasonable and when not, or else this timing is simply arbitrary. If a fideist offers rational criteria for when we should be rational, then he does have a rational basis for his view, in which case he is not really a fideist after all.

Reason is not the kind of thing in which a rational creature can choose not to participate. By virtue of being rational by nature one must be part of rational discourse. And rational discourse demands that one follow the laws of reason. One such principle is that one should have a sufficient reason for his beliefs. But if one must have a sufficient reason, then fideism is wrong, since it claims that one need not have a sufficient reason for what he believes.

You can’t prove God by reason. According to this objection, the existence of God cannot be proven by human reason. The answer depends on what is meant by “prove.” If “prove” means to demonstrate with mathematical certainty, then most theists would agree that God’s existence cannot be proven. This is because mathematical certainty deals only with the abstract, and the existence of God (or anything else) is a matter of the concrete. Further, mathematical certainty is based on axioms or postulates that must be assumed in order to get a necessary conclusion. But if

God’s existence must be assumed to be proven, then the conclusion that God exists is only based on the assumption that he exists, in which case it is not really a proof at all.

Another way to make the point is to note that mathematical certainty is deductive in nature. It argues from given premises. But one cannot validly conclude what is not already implied in the premise(s). In this case one would have to assume God exists in the premise in order to validly infer this in the conclusion. But this begs the question.

Likewise, if by “prove” one means to reach a logically necessary conclusion, then God’s existence cannot be proven either, unless the Ontological Argument is valid. But most thinkers hold that it is not. The reason one cannot prove God by logical necessity is that formal logic, like mathematics, deals with the abstract. Unless one begins with something that exists, he can never get out of the purely theoretical realm. *If* there is a triangle, we can know logically and with absolute certainty that it must have three sides and three corners. But there may not be any triangles in existence anywhere except in someone’s mind. Likewise, unless we know something exists, then logic cannot help us to know whether God exists. And logic by itself cannot tell us whether anything exists.

If by “prove,” however, we mean “give adequate evidence for” or “provide good reasons for,” then it would seem to follow that one can prove the existence of God (*see* GOD, EVIDENCE FOR ; COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT) and the truth of Christianity.

No one is converted through apologetics. The charge is made that no one ever comes to Christ through apologetics. If this implies that the Holy Spirit (*see* HOLY SPIRIT, ROLE IN APOLOGETICS) never uses apologetic evidence to bring people to Christ, this is clearly false. C. S. Lewis noted that “nearly everyone I know who has embraced Christianity in adult life has been influenced by what seemed to him to be at least a probable argument for Theism” (Lewis, 173). Lewis is an example of an atheist who came to Christ under the influence of apologetics. The skeptic Frank Morrison was converted while attempting to write a book refuting the evidence for the resurrection of Christ (see Morrison). Augustine tells in his confessions how he was led toward Christianity by hearing a Christian debate an unbeliever. Harvard Law School professor Simon Greenleaf was led to accept the authenticity of the Gospels by applying the rules of legal evidence to the New Testament. God has used evidence and reason in some way to reach virtually all adults who come to Christ.

Sources

R. L. Bush, ed., *Classical Readings in Christian Apologetics A.D. 100–1800*

D. Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics*

G. H. Clark, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*

W. Corduan, *Reasonable Faith*

N. L. Geisler, and R. Brooks. *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook on Christian Evidences*

P. Kreeft, et al., *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*

G. R. Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*

C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*

J. McDowell, *Answering Tough Questions Skeptics Ask*

—, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*

J. W. Montgomery, *Faith Founded on Fact*

J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*

F. Morrison, *Who Moved the Stone?*

W. M. Smith, *Therefore Stand*

Apologetics, Objections to. See **APOLOGETICS, NEED FOR**.

Apologetics, Presuppositional. See **CLARK, GORDON**; **PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS**; **VAN TIL, CORNELIUS**.

Apologetics, Types of. There are differing kinds of apologetics systems, and no universally-acknowledged way to categorize them. Divergent approaches seem to be determined by the perspective of the one categorizing them. Nonetheless, there are some generally understood terms one can employ to view in a meaningful way the distinctives among more popular approaches.

Categorizing Systems. It is tempting to make logically exhaustive categories of apologetic systems. Two problems preclude this. First, the category may seem to work but the corresponding category that would logically oppose it is too broad. Second, divergent systems often are lumped into one category. For example, if one uses the categories of presuppositionalism and nonpresuppositionalism, not only are there differing kinds of presuppositionalism but significant differences among nonpresuppositional systems. If one uses evidential and nonevidential the same result occurs; classical and historical apologetics and even some forms of presuppositionalism (e.g., Systematic Consistency) must be mated in the same category. The same is true if one uses classical apologetics and nonclassical apologetics as two broad categories.

Types of Systems. Despite the fact that the categories are not logically exhaustive and overlap, it seems best simply to use commonly understood titles and state the differences and similarities. Evaluation of each can be found in other articles on individual systems and their key representatives.

Three points help to understand each type: proponents will be listed; some chief characteristics will be described, and comments on overlap and/or contrast with other approaches will be made.

Classical Apologetics. Characteristics. Classical apologetics stresses arguments for the existence of God (see **GOD, EVIDENCE FOR**) as well as the historical evidence supporting the truth of Christianity. Classical apologetics is characterized by two basic steps: theistic and evidential arguments.

Theistic arguments are used to establish the truth of theism apart from an appeal to special revelation (e.g., the Bible). Classical apologetics accepts the validity of traditional theistic proofs for God, though some stress one over another. And some reject certain traditional proofs as invalid, often the ontological argument. But most accept some form of the cosmological argument and the teleological argument. Many also believe the moral argument is valid.

This first step of classical apologetics also involves drawing the logical inference that if a theistic God exists, miracles are possible; indeed, the greatest miracle of all, creation, is possible. The credibility of miracles (see **MIRACLE**) is essential to the next step in classical apologetics—the historical one—but it flows logically from the first step.

Second, confirmed historical evidence substantiates the truth. The New Testament documents are shown to be historically reliable (see **NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS, MANUSCRIPTS**; **NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF**; **NEW TESTAMENT, NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES**). The apologist also shows that these documents reveal that Jesus claimed to be, and was miraculously proven to be, the Son of God (see **CHRIST, DEITY OF**). From this it is often argued that Jesus confirmed the Old Testament to be the Word of God and promised the same for the New Testament (see **BIBLE, JESUS' VIEW OF**).

Proponents. Classical apologetics was practiced by Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas. Modern classical apologists include Winfried Corduan, William Lane Craig, Norman L. Geisler, John Gerstner, Stuart Hackett, Peter Kreeft, C. S. Lewis, J. P. Moreland, John Locke, William Paley, R. C. Sproul, and B. B. Warfield.

Comparison with other approaches. Sometimes classical apologists begin this second step by showing that the Bible has been proven to be the Word of God. In doing so they often use the same basic evidence used by evidential apologetics. This includes miracles (see **MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF**; **MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE**), fulfilled prophecy (see **PROPHECY, AS PROOF OF BIBLE**), the unity of the Bible, and other indications of its supernatural origin (see **BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR**).

The difference between the classical apologists and the evidentialists on the use of historical evidence is that the classical see the need to first establish that this is a theistic universe in order to establish the possibility of and identity of miracles. Evidentialists do not see theism as a logically necessary precondition of historical apologetics. The basic argument of the classical apologists is that it makes no sense to speak about the resurrection as an act of God unless, as a logical prerequisite, it is first established that there is a God who can act. Likewise, the Bible

cannot be the Word of God unless there is a God who can speak. And Christ cannot be shown to be the Son of God except on the logically prior premise there is a God who can have a Son.

Evidential Apologetics. Evidential apologetics stresses the need for evidence in support of the Christian truth claims. The evidence can be rational, historical, archaeological, and even experiential. Since it is so broad, it understandably overlaps with other types of apologetics.

Some characteristics of evidential apologetics. Since evidentialists encompass a large and diverse category, their characteristics will be delineated according to type. Evidentialists often use *rational evidence* (e.g., proofs for God) in defense of Christianity. As such, they overlap with classical apologetics. However, for an evidentialist this is just one piece of evidence. Also in contrast to classical apologists, evidentialists do not hold that rational evidence is either necessary (since it is only one piece) or logically prior to the other evidence.

In the use of *historical evidence* there is again an overlap with evidential and historical apologetics. Evidentialists do not rest their whole case on historical evidence. They are more eclectic, interweaving evidence from various fields. Evidentialists operate as attorneys who combine evidences into an overall brief in defense of their position, trusting that the combined weight will present a persuasive case.

Many evidentialists focus on *archeological evidence* in support of the Bible. They stress that both the Old and the New Testaments (*see* ARCHAEOLOGY, OLD TESTAMENT ; ARCHAEOLOGY, NEW TESTAMENT) have been substantiated by thousands of discoveries. This, they believe, gives reason to accept the divine authority of the Scriptures. Other types of apologetics appeal to archaeological evidence, who use the evidence in a different way.

Some evidentialists appeal to *experiential evidence* in support of Christianity, most often from changed lives. The testimony of those converted to Christianity is offered as evidence of the truth of Christianity. How else, it is argued, can one explain the dramatic, transforming, enduring, and often radical changes? The conversion of Saul of Tarsus (Acts 9) is a classic case in point.

Prophetic evidence (*see* PROPHECY AS PROOF OF THE BIBLE) is often offered to substantiate Christianity. It is argued that only divine origin accounts for the numerous, precise biblical predictions that have been fulfilled. For the evidentialists prophetic and other evidences do not comprise a specific step in an overall logical order (as it is in classical apologetics). Rather, it is the sum total of all the interlocking evidences that offer high probability of the truth of Christianity.

Some proponents of evidential apologetics. While evidential apologetics enjoys wide popular support, it offers few clear proponents who do not fit into other categories as well. It seems best, then, to characterize evidentialism by the various kinds of evidence stressed in the particular apologetic approach. A noted evidentialist approach is offered by William Paley in his *Evidences for Christianity* , although since Paley offered proofs for God first, he can be listed as a classical apologist. Bernard Ramm's widely used *Protestant Christian Evidences* is another example of

evidential apologetics, though he seemed to move way from this in his later writings. The most widely distributed of evidentialist books is Josh McDowell's *Evidence That Demands a Verdict* .

Some comparisons with other approaches. While the use of evidence is not unique to evidential apologetics, the manner in which it is used is unique. Both classical apologists and some evidentialists use theistic arguments. However, for the evidentialists, establishing the existence of God is not a logically prior and necessary step. It is simply one strand in the overall web of evidence that supports Christianity.

Unlike historical apologetics, the pure evidentialist does not appeal to historical evidence as the sole basis for his case. For the evidentialists there are certain events, such as, the healings of Jesus, raisings from the dead, and fulfilled prophecy, which in themselves, apart from prior presupposition or proof that God exists, substantiate the truth of Christianity. Since the facts "speak for themselves" there is no need, according to evidentialists, to provide an independent reason for believing in God's existence. By contrast, both classical and presuppositional apologetics insist that historical events can only be interpreted in the light of the framework of the worldview of which they are a part.

Experiential Apologetics. Some Christians appeal primarily, if not exclusively, to experience as evidence for Christian faith. Some appeal to religious experience in general. Others to special religious experiences. Within this second category are some who focus on mystical experiences and others who identify what they believe are particularly supernatural conversion experiences. There are obviously some significant differences under the broad experiential umbrella.

Types of experience. The value of general, unspecific religious experience is of limited value for a distinctly Christian apologetic. At best, *general experience* establishes credibility for belief in a supreme being of some kind (not necessarily a theistic God). Nonetheless, proofs from religious experience (*see* GOD, EXPERIENTIAL APOLOGETICS FOR) have been offered by Christians and others. General religious experiences are available to all.

Special religious experiences are more limited. The mystic, for example, claims a special experience of God. *Mystical experiences* (*see* MYSTICISM) differ from general religious experiences in that they claim to be direct and unmediated contacts with God. Christian mystics claim such experiences are self-evidently true.

Although so-called *existential experience* encounters with God (*see* KIERKEGAARD, SØREN) are not the same as mystical experiences, proponents claim that they too are self-authenticating. One is grasped by God in a nonrational, direct encounter that is more basic and real than a sense experience. Although not all would call such experiences apologetic evidence, they do serve, nonetheless, to vindicate Christianity among those who have them. Those who appeal to such experiences reject apologetic approaches in the traditional sense. They spurn rational arguments or factual evidence in favor of what they believe to be a self-verifying experience.

Some proponents of experiential apologetics. Among Christian mystics the name Meister Eckart stands out. Existentialists include Søren Kierkegaard , Rudolph Bultmann , and Karl

Barth (*see also* FIDEISM). Others of a more general experiential nature include Friedrich Schleiermacher , and Paul Tillich.

Some comparisons with other approaches. Experiential arguments for God’s existence are sometimes used by classical apologists and evidentialists. The difference is that, for the experiential apologist, the *only* kind of evidence is nonrational, mystical, and existential. In other apologetic approaches, the argument from religious experience is just one kind of evidence among many.

Presuppositional apologists, especially of the revelational variety, reject purely experiential arguments as unverifiable and of subjective interpretation.

Historical Apologetics . Historical apologetics stresses historical evidence as the basis for demonstrating the truth of Christianity. These apologists believe that the truth of Christianity, including the existence of God, can be proven from the historical evidence alone. In one sense historical apologetics belongs to the broad class of evidential apologetics, but it differs in that it stresses the importance, if not necessity, of beginning with the historical record for the truth of Christianity.

Some proponents of historical apologetics. Christianity is a historical religion, so it is understandable that it would have a historical emphasis from the very beginning. The earliest apologists, including Tertullian , Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen , defended the historicity of Christianity.

Since these early apologists were often unsystematic in their writing, it is difficult to tell whether they fall into the category of historical apologetics. Some did offer theistic arguments, but they probably did not all see this as a logically necessary first step in an overall apologetic. Contemporary historical apologists include John Warwick Montgomery and Gary Habermas.

Some comparisons with other approaches. Historical apologetics is distinct from evidentialism in its narrow focus, using only one kind of evidence rather than many. It also offers a sequential argument. The historical apologist only begins with historical evidence as a basic premise. With historicity established, the apologist argues that certain claims are made in Scripture from which it can be inferred that God exists, the Bible is the Word of God, and Christ is the unique Son of God. The pure evidentialist has no such logical order that begins with historical evidence alone. Rather, the evidentialist employs a whole nest of evidence from which to conclude that Christianity is true.

Both historical and classical apologetics use historical evidence. But the classical apologist believes that historical evidence is only a second step, logically preceded by theistic arguments which establish the necessary worldview evidence by which alone one can properly interpret the historical evidence.

Presuppositional Apologetics. Presuppositional apologetics affirms that one must defend Christianity from the foundation of certain basic presuppositions. Usually, a presuppositionalist

presupposes the basic truth of Christianity and then proceeds to show (in any of several ways) that Christianity alone is true.

According to *revelational presuppositionalism* , one must posit that the Triune God has revealed himself in Holy Scriptures before it is possible to make any sense out of the universe, life, language, or history. This is sometimes viewed as a transcendental argument. Revelational presuppositionalists include Cornelius Van Til, Greg Bahnsen, and John Frame.

The *rational presuppositionalist* also begins with the Trinity revealed in the written Word of God. But the test for whether this is true or not is simply the law of noncontradiction (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES). Christianity demonstrates its own truth in that, of all religions, it alone is internally consistent. Gordon Clark and Carl F. H. Henry are rational presuppositionalists.

Like the rational presuppositionalists, *systematic consistency* presuppositionalists believe a system must be rationally consistent. In addition, it must comprehensively take into account all facts. It must also be existentially relevant in that it meets life’s basic needs. Only Christianity, they believe, offers such a consistent system. Edward John Carnell and Gordon Lewis hold this view.

Francis Schaeffer ’s apologetic approach has occasionally been listed as a separate form of presuppositionalism, a kind of *practical presuppositionalism* . Schaeffer believes that false systems are unlivable, that only Christian truth is livable.

Some comparisons with other Approaches. Presuppositional apologists reject the validity of theistic proofs. They accept the critiques of theistic argumentation by David Hume and Kant (*see* GOD, OBJECTIONS TO PROOFS FOR). Or they believe there is no meaning to “facts” apart from the Christian worldview.

Conclusion. Proponents of one type of apologetic system provide critiques of opposing systems. So both evaluation and sources are listed under each type of apologetic discussed above. Only books that treat apologetic systems in general are listed below in the “Sources” section.

Sources

D. Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics*, Ch. 5

N. L. Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* , Part 1

G. Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*

B. Ramm, *Varieties of Apologetic Systems*

Apollonius of Tyana. Apollonius of Tyana (d. A.D. 98) is sometimes presented by critics of Christianity as an example of someone who rivaled Christ in his claim to be the Son of God and had the ability to do miracles to support his claim. Philostratus, in the *Life of Apollonius*, records

post-death miracle stories, including appearances and deification (apotheosis). Some critics use these stories to deny the uniqueness of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

Evaluating the Claims. The claims for Apollonius fall far short of those of Christ (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF). Philostratus's biography of Apollonius ends with his death. Jesus' biographies do not (*see* Matthew 28 ; Mark 16 ; Luke 24 ; John 20–21). His ends in the resurrection (*see* RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR). There is nothing supernatural in Apollonius's biography, either as to claims of deity or miracles done to prove such a claim. The postresurrection miracle stories are not even part of his biography. They are simply called "stories" by his biographer, Philostratus. In fact, they are later legends.

The book by Philostratus is the only extant source of his life. Hence, the authenticity of this account is unconfirmed. In Jesus' case we have many multiple contemporary accounts of his life, death, and resurrection (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, DATING OF ; NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS, RELIABILITY OF ; NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF).

The alleged source for these stories, Damis, is most likely a nonexistent person used as a literary device. James Ferguson states: "Philostratus professed to have discovered an old document by one Damis as his source, but such discoveries are the stock-in-trade of historical romances, and we can place no credence upon Damis" (Ferguson, 182). Damis is alleged to have come from a city, Nineveh, that did not even exist during the time of his life. Throughout, there is no evidence for a factual basis of the stories.

By contrast, the Gospel accounts of Jesus offer various historically verifiable evidences of their accuracy. The record is filled, for example, with historical persons, among them the Herodian kings of the time, Pontius Pilate, Tiberius and Augustus, Philip Tetrarch of Iturea. Detailed information can be verified for Judea, Galilee, Samaria, Syria, Bethlehem, Nazareth, and Jerusalem (*cf.* Luke 1:26 ; 2:4 ; 3:1), as can times (Matt. 14:1–7 ; Luke 2:1–2 ; 3:1–2). The disciples of Jesus who wrote of him were real historical persons.

The style of writing used by Philostratus was a popular literary form of the day called "romance" or "romance fiction." It is not to be taken literally or historically. The plot unfolds through contrived situations; it involves exotic animals and formal descriptions of works of art; and it has lengthy speeches by the characters.

As a report, the account contains many geographical and historical inaccuracies. For example, Nineveh and Babylon were destroyed 300 years earlier. The Caucasus Mountains are described as a dividing point between India and Babylon, which is inaccurate. Philostratus's speeches are anachronistically put into Apollonius's mouth (from *Lives of the Sophists*).

Philostratus was not an eyewitness but was commissioned to compose his book by Julia Domna, wife of the Roman emperor Septimus, 120 years after Apollonius's death. The writers of the New Testament were contemporaries and/or eyewitnesses of the events (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF).

A possible motive for the publication was a desire to counteract the growing influence of Jesus. One historian says, "It was she (Julia Domna) who encouraged Philostratus to put together a life of Apollonius of Tyana as a counterblast to Jesus" (*ibid.*, 51). Another said that, since she was to become the high priestess of the Hellenistic polytheism, "Realizing the need of finding a historical figure fitted to counter the propaganda of the subversive gospels, she sought particularly to revive the memory of a hero of pagan hagiology, Apollonius of Tyana" (Cook, 613).

The miracle stories about Apollonius are contradictory. Some say he died in Ephesus, others in Lindus or Crete, and then appeared. Only one such appearance is recorded by Philostratus. This was to a man while he slept, a vision 200 years after Apollonius is to have lived (A.D. 273). Others say he did not die but was deified because he disappeared.

Finally, there is an important difference between the claims that Apollonius was deified and that Jesus was Deity (*see* CHRIST, DEITY OF). Apollonius's deification is known as apotheosis, the process by which a human becomes God. Christ's incarnation was a process by which God became human. Further, the concept of "God" differed. Christ was God in the theistic sense. The claim for Apollonius would make him God only in a polytheistic (*see* POLYTHEISM) sense.

Conclusion. There is no evidence for the historicity of Philostratus's work on Apollonius. It gives every evidence of being a work of fiction. Unlike the Gospels, it provides no eyewitnesses, no resurrection, and no confirmation. By contrast, the Gospels have abundant evidence for their authenticity and historicity. The testimony of the New Testament witnesses has been confirmed by numerous manuscripts (*see* NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPTS) and other sources (*see* NEW TESTAMENT WITNESSES, RELIABILITY OF). In short, there is no real comparison between Apollonius and Christ. Jesus claimed to be the Son of the theistic God and proved it by historically verified miracles, including his own resurrection from the dead (*see* MIRACLES, APOLOGETIC VALUE OF ; MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE). Apollonius made no such claims and had no such witnesses to support any alleged miracles. On the contrary, the single witness is late, unsubstantiated, and shows every sign of being myth, not history.

Sources

S. A. Cook, *The Cambridge Ancient History*

J. Ferguson, *Religions of the Roman Empire*

G. Habermas, *Ancient Evidence for the Life of Jesus*

G. Habermas, et al., "Apollonius of Tyana: First Century Miracle Worker," paper presented before Evangelical Philosophical Society

Apotheosis. Critics have used theories of apotheosis to argue that Christ's deity and resurrection are not unique beliefs to Christianity. Theories of apotheosis regarding persons who are taken to heaven and divinized have been told by other religions (*see* MITHRAISM). Among notable modern critics who have used these stories to cast doubt on the New Testament accounts are Otto

Pfleiderer in *The Early Christian Conception of Christ* (1905) and W. Bousset in *Kurios Christos* (1913).

Claims of divinization are not uncommon in ancient mythology and mystery religions (Pfleiderer). Among those supposedly divinized are various Roman emperors (notably Julius and Augustus caesars) and Apollonius of Tyana (Habermas, 168).

Claims of Apotheosis. Suetonius reported that after Julius Caesar's death "a comet appeared about an hour before sunset and shone for several days running. This was held to be Caesar's soul, elevated to heaven; hence the star, now placed above the forehead of his divine image" (Suetonius 1.88).

During the cremation of Augustus, Suetonius states that his spirit was reportedly seen "soaring up to Heaven through the flames" (ibid., 2.100). This too was taken to be a sign of apotheosis.

Antinoüs, the favorite slave of Emperor Hadrian, was also said to be divinized at death. Hadrian believed that a star was created from his soul, and so he built a city at the site and erected several statues in Antinoüs' honor. One such statue declares that Antinoüs was glorified in heaven and actually was the god Osiris (Cartlidge, 198).

Apollonius, a first-century neo-Pythagorean, was also reputed to have been transported to heaven after exhibiting miraculous powers. Later he was reported to have appeared to a young man in a dream.

Alexander the Great was said to have been born of a virgin, to have done wondrous deeds, and to have accepted accolades of being divine (Boyd, 49). He too is put in the category of divine-man legends.

Resurrection Claims. In addition to Apollonius of Tyana, there are claims that non-Christian leaders rose from the dead. Robert Price has made an extensive comparative religion study of post-death phenomena found in other religions that rival Christian claims about Christ. These stories have also been used to undercut claims of the uniqueness of Christianity (see CHRISTIANITY, UNIQUENESS OF ; PLURALISM, RELIGIOUS).

Evaluation. The divine-man hypothesis has been debunked by such diverse theologians as Oscar Cullmann (*The Christology of the New Testament*), Reginald Fuller (*The Foundation of New Testament Christology*), Gary Habermas ("Resurrection Claims in Non-Christian Religions" in *Religious Studies* 25 [1989]), and Ronald Nash (*Christianity and the Hellenistic World*).

There are difficulties if these legends are used as competitive claims to those of Christ. Sources of these stories are all far later than the events described and are questionable. Suetonius lived 150 years after Julius and nearly 100 years after Augustus. The report of Dio Cassius about Hadrian was about 100 years later. Philostratus wrote over 100 years after Apollonius died. By

contrast, Christ's incarnation and divinity were attested by eyewitnesses in contemporary testimony (see CHRIST, DEITY OF ; NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS, RELIABILITY OF).

A political agenda accompanied most of these reports. Nearly one-half of Suetonius's twelve emperors were said to have been deified, and the story of Apollonius appeared at a time when some in the Empire were attempting to stimulate renewed mythological worship. They cannot be said to be historical accounts in any case, since there is no way to verify whether a spirit ascended to heaven or a soul turned into a star. Such are highly subjective testimonies. But the claim that Christ was raised physically from the dead, leaving an empty tomb and appearing in a physical body over a period of weeks to hundreds of people is historically verifiable (see RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR).

The concept that a human being could be divinized is not the same as the Christian concept of the incarnation, wherein the second person of the Godhead became human. In Christ, the monotheistic God became human. In apotheosis a human becomes one among many gods.

The Case of Alexander. The claims about Alexander the Great illustrate the radical difference between these divine-men stories and that of Christ. Unlike the early Gospels, the earliest records of Alexander contain none of the features of the later legends about him. The stories of Alexander's miracles developed over a period of 1000 years. The miracles of Jesus were recorded within thirty years of their occurrence (see MIRACLES IN THE BIBLE ; MIRACLES, MYTH AND). The legends of Alexander actually date from later than the time of Christ. It is likely that the stories of Alexander's super-normal feats were influenced by the Gospel accounts.

The Gospels were written within the context of Jewish monotheism, which held that human beings cannot be God. The stories of Alexander, however, were composed within a pagan, polytheistic setting where the concept of divinized humans was accepted.

Conclusion. Attempts to reduce Jesus to a Greek divine-man legend are ill-fated. The differences are too radical, and if one influenced the other the Christian record of God incarnate in human flesh came first.

Sources

B. L. Blackburn, "Miracle Working *Theioi Andres* in Hellenism (and Hellenic Judaism)," D. Wenham, *Gospel Perspectives* , Vol. 6: *The Miracles of Jesus*

W. Bousset, *Kurios Christos*

G. Boyd, *Jesus under Siege*

D. R. Cartlidge, *Documents for the Study of the Gospels*

O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*

R. Fuller, *The Foundation of New Testament Christology*

G. Habermas, "Resurrection Claims in Non-Christian Religions," *RS* 25

R. Nash, *Christianity and the Hellenistic World*

O. Pfeleiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ*

R. Price, "Is There a Place for Historical Criticism?" paper presented before "Christianity Challenges the University: An International Conference of Theists and Atheists," Dallas, Texas, 7–10 February 1985

Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars*

M. Wilkins, *Jesus under Fire*

Yamauchi, E. "Magic or Miracle? Disease, Demons and Exorcisms," D. Wenham, ed., *Gospel Perspectives*, Vol. 6: *The Miracles of Jesus*

Aquinas, Thomas. See THOMAS AQUINAS .

Archaeology, New Testament. The science of archaeology has brought strong confirmation to the historicity of both the Old Testament (*see* ALBRIGHT, WILLIAM F. ; ARCHAEOLOGY, OLD TESTAMENT) and the New Testament. Archaeological evidence for the reliability of the New Testament is overwhelming (*see* NEW TESTAMENT, DATING OF ; NEW TESTAMENT, HISTORICITY OF). This evidence will be summarized in three parts: the historical accuracy of Luke, the testimony of secular historians, and the physical evidence relating to Christ's crucifixion (*see* CHRIST, DEATH OF).

Historical Accuracy of Luke. It was once thought that Luke, writer of the most historically detailed Gospel and of Acts, had concocted his narrative from the rambling of his imagination, because he ascribed odd titles to authorities and mentioned governors that no one knew. The evidence now points in exactly the opposite direction (*see* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF).

The Census in Luke 2:1–5. Several problems are involved in the statement that Augustus conducted a census of the whole empire during the reign of both Quirinius and Herod. For one, there is no record for such a census, but we now know that regular censuses were taken in Egypt, Gaul, and Cyrene. It is quite likely that Luke's meaning is that censuses were taken throughout the empire at different times, and Augustus started this process. The present tense that Luke uses points strongly toward understanding this as a repeated event. Now Quirinius did take a census, but that was in A.D. 6, too late for Jesus' birth, and Herod died before Quirinius became governor.

Was Luke confused? No; in fact he mentions Quirinius' later census in Acts 5:37. It is most likely that Luke is distinguishing this census in Herod's time from the more well-known census of Quirinius: "This census took place before Quirinius was governor of Syria." There are several New Testament parallels for this translation.

Gallio, Proconsul of Achaia. This designation in Acts 18:12–17 was thought to be impossible. But an inscription at Delphi notes this exact title for the man and dates him to the time at which Paul was in Corinth (A.D. 51).

Lysanias, Tetrarch of Abilene. Lysanias was unknown to modern historians until an inscription was found recording a temple dedication which mentions the name, the title, and is in the right place. The inscription is dated between A.D. 14 and 29, easily compatible with the beginnings of John's ministry, which Luke dates by Lysanias' reign (Luke 3:1).

Erastus. In Acts 19:22, Erastus is named as a Corinthian who becomes a co-worker of Paul. If Luke were going to make up any names, this would seem to be the best place to do it. How would anyone know? In excavating Corinth, an inscription was found near the theater which reads, "Erastus in return for his aedileship laid the pavement at his own expense." If these are the same men, then it explains why Luke would have included the detail that a prominent and wealthy citizen of Corinth had been converted and had given his life to the ministry.

In addition to these, Luke gives correct titles for the following officials: Cyprus, *proconsul* (13:7–8); Thessalonica, *politarchs* (17:6); Ephesus, *temple wardens* (19:35); Malta, *the first man of the island* (28:7 ; Yamauchi, 115–19). Each of these has been confirmed by Roman usage. In all, Luke names thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, and nine islands without an error. This led the prominent historian Sir William Ramsay to recant his critical views:

I began with a mind unfavorable to it [Acts], for the ingenuity and apparent completeness of the Tübingen theory had at one time quite convinced me. It did not lie then in my line of life to investigate the subject minutely; but more recently I found myself often brought into contact with the book of Acts as an authority for the topography, antiquities, and society of Asia Minor. It was gradually borne in upon me that in various details the narrative showed marvelous truth. [Ramsay, 8]

In full agreement, Roman historian A. N. Sherwin-White says, "For Acts the confirmation of historicity is overwhelming. . . . Any attempt to reject its basic historicity must now appear absurd. Roman historians have long taken it for granted" (Sherwin-White, 189). The critical theories spawned in the early 1800s that persist today are left without substantiation. Archaeologist William F. Albright says, "All radical schools in New Testament criticism which have existed in the past or which exist today are pre-archaeological, and are therefore, since they were built *in der Luft* [in the air], quite antiquated today" (Albright, 29).

More recently another noted Roman historian has catalogued numerous archaeological and historical confirmations of Luke's accuracy (Hemer, 390f.). The following is a summary of his voluminous, detailed report (*see* ACTS, HISTORICITY OF ; NEW TESTAMENT, NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES):

- Geographical or other detail that may be assumed to have been generally known in the first century. It is difficult to estimate how much knowledge should be expected of an ancient writer or reader.

- Specialized details, which would not have been widely known except to a contemporary researcher such as Luke who traveled widely. These details include exact titles of officials, identification of army units, and information about major routes.
- Details archaeologists know are accurate but can't verify as to precise time period. Some of these are unlikely to have been known except to a writer who had visited the districts.
- Correlation of dates of known kings and governors with the chronology of the narrative.
- Facts appropriate to the date of Paul or his immediate contemporary in the church but not to a date earlier or later.
- “Undesigned coincidents” between Acts and the Pauline Epistles.
- Internal correlations within Acts.
- Independently attested details that help scholars separate the original Acts text from what may have been added later in the Alexandrian or the Western text families. Alleged anachronisms can now be identified as insertions referring to a later period.
- Off-hand geographical references that bespeak familiarity with common knowledge.
- Differences in formulation within Acts that indicate the different categories of sources he used.
- Peculiarities in the selection of detail, as in theology, that are explainable in the context of what is now known of first-century church life.
- Materials whose “immediacy” suggests the author was recounting a recent experience, rather than shaping or editing a text long afterward.
- Cultural or idiomatic items now known to be peculiar to the first-century atmosphere.
- Interrelated complexes of detail in which two or more kinds of correlation are combined or where related details show separate correlations. Through careful analysis of these correlations, it is possible for the historian to reconstruct quite detailed pieces of history by fitting together the interlocking pieces of fact as in a jigsaw puzzle.
- Cases where the information provided by Luke and details from other sources mesh to simply provide new background color. These do not bear significantly on historicity.
- Precise details in Luke that remain unverified or unrefuted until more is known.

Confirmation by Non-Christian Historians. One popular misconception about Jesus is that there is no mention of him in any ancient sources outside of the Bible. On the contrary, there are numerous references to him as an historical figure who died at the hand of Pontius Pilate. Some

even noted that he was reported to have risen from the dead, and was worshiped as a god by all who followed him. Gary Habermas discusses these exhaustively. Quotations from historians and other sources are found in the article NEW TESTAMENT, NON-CHRISTIAN SOURCES .

Evidence Relating to Jesus' Death. Three fascinating discoveries illuminate the death of Christ and, to some degree, his resurrection. The first is an unusual decree; the second is the body of another crucifixion victim.

The Nazareth Decree. A slab of stone was found in Nazareth in 1878, inscribed with a decree from Emperor Claudius (A.D . 41–54) that no graves should be disturbed or bodies extracted or moved. This type of decree is not uncommon, but the startling fact is that here “the offender [shall] be sentenced to capital punishment on [the] charge of violation of [a] sepulchre” (ibid., 155). Other notices warned of a fine, but death for disturbing graves? A likely explanation is that Claudius, having heard of the Christian doctrine of resurrection and Jesus' empty tomb while investigating the riots of A.D . 49, decided not to let any such report surface again. This would make sense in light of the Jewish argument that the body had been stolen (Matt. 28:11–15). This is early testimony to the strong and persistent belief that Jesus rose from the dead.

Yohanan—A Crucifixion Victim. In 1968, an ancient burial site was uncovered in Jerusalem containing about thirty-five bodies. It was determined that most of these had suffered violent deaths in the Jewish uprising against Rome in A.D . 70. One of these was a man named Yohanan Ben Ha'galgol. He was about twenty-four to twenty-eight years old, had a cleft palate, and a seven-inch nail was still driven through both his feet. The feet had been turned outward so that the square nail could be hammered through at the heel, just inside the Achilles tendon. This would have bowed the legs outward as well so that they could not have been used for support on the cross. The nail had gone through a wedge of acacia wood, then through the heels, then into an olive wood beam. There was also evidence that similar spikes had been put between the two bones of each lower arm. These had caused the upper bones to be worn smooth as the victim repeatedly raised and lowered himself to breathe (breathing is restricted with the arms raised). Crucifixion victims had to lift themselves to free the chest muscles and, when they grew too weak to do so, died by suffocation.

Yohanan's legs were crushed by a blow, consistent with the common use of the Roman *crucifragium* (John 19:31–32). Each of these details confirms the New Testament description of crucifixion.

Much more textual and archaeological evidence supports the accuracy of the New Testament (see CHRIST, DEATH OF). But even these examples reveal the extent to which archaeology has confirmed the truth of the Scriptures. Archaeologist Nelson Glueck has boldly asserted that “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).

Sources

W. F. Albright, “Retrospect and Prospect in New Testament Archaeology,” in E. J. Vardaman, ed., *The Teacher's Yoke*

F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*

N. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*

G. R. Habermas, *The Verdict of History*

C. J. Hemer, *The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History*, C. H. Gempf, ed.

J. McRay, *Archaeology and the New Testament*

W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller and the Roman Citizen*

J. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament*

A. N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*

C. A. Wilson, *Rocks, Relics and Biblical Reliability*

E. Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures*

Archaeology, Old Testament. Several things must be kept in mind when reviewing archaeological data as it relates to Christianity (*see* ARCHAEOLOGY, NEW TESTAMENT). First, meaning can only be derived from context. Archaeological evidence is dependent on the context of date, place, materials, and style. How it is understood depends on the interpreter's presuppositions. Therefore, not all interpretations of the evidence will be friendly to Christianity.

Second, archaeology is a special kind of science. Physicists and chemists can do all kinds of experiments to recreate the processes they study and watch them over and over again. Archaeologists cannot. They have only the evidence left from the one and only time that civilization lived. They study past singularities, not present regularities. Because they can't recreate the societies that they study, their conclusions can't be tested as can other sciences. Archaeology tries to find plausible and probable explanations for the evidence it finds. It cannot make laws as can physics. For this reason, all conclusions must be subject to revision. The best interpretation is the one that best explains all the evidence.

Third, the archaeological evidence is fragmentary. It comprises only a tiny fraction of all that occurred. Hence, the discovery of more evidence can change the picture considerably. This is especially true when conclusions have been based on silence—a lack of existing evidence. Many critical views about the Bible have subsequently been overturned by archaeological discoveries (*see* BIBLE CRITICISM). For example, it was long believed that the Bible was in error when it spoke about Hittites (Gen. 23:10). But since the discovery of the Hittite library in Turkey (1906) this is no longer the case.

Archaeology Supports the Old Testament. The Creation. The opening chapters of Genesis (1–11) are typically thought to be mythological explanations derived from earlier versions of the story found in the ancient Near East. But this view chooses only to notice the similarities between Genesis and the creation stories in other ancient cultures. If we can propose derivation

of the human race from one family, plus general revelation, some lingering traces of the true historical account would be expected. The differences are more important. Babylonian and Sumerian accounts describe the creation as the product of a conflict among finite gods. When one god is defeated and split in half, the River Euphrates flows from one eye and the Tigris from the other. Humanity is made of the blood of an evil god mixed with clay. These tales display the kind of distortion and embellishment to be expected when an historical account becomes mythological.

Less likely is that the literary progression would be from this mythology to the unadorned elegance of Genesis 1 . The common assumption that the Hebrew account is simply a purged and simplified version of the Babylonian legend is fallacious. In the Ancient Near East, the rule is that simple accounts or traditions give rise (by accretion and embellishment) to elaborate legends, but not the reverse. So the evidence supports the view that Genesis was not myth made into history. Rather, the extrabiblical accounts were history turned into myths (*see* CREATION AND ORIGINS ; CREATION, VIEWS OF ; GENESIS, DAYS OF).

The recent discoveries of creation accounts at Ebla (*see* EBLA TABLETS) add evidence of this. This library of sixteen thousand clay tablets predates the Babylonian account by about 600 years. The creation tablet is strikingly close to Genesis, speaking of one being who created the heavens, moon, stars, and earth. The people at Ebla believed in creation from nothing (*see* CREATION, VIEWS OF). The Bible contains the ancient, less embellished version of the story and transmits the facts without the corruption of the mythological renderings.

The Flood of Noah. As with the creation accounts, the flood (*see* FLOOD, NOAH'S) narrative in Genesis is more realistic and less mythological than other ancient versions, indicating its authenticity. The superficial similarities point toward an historical core of events that gave rise to all, not toward plagiarism by Moses. The names change. Noah is called Ziusudra by the Sumerians and Utnapishtim by the Babylonians. The basic story doesn't. A man is told to build a ship to specific dimensions because God(s) are going to flood the world. He does it, rides out the storm, and offers sacrifice upon exiting the boat. The Deity(-ies) respond with remorse over the destruction of life, and make a covenant with the man. These core events point to a historical basis.

Similar flood accounts are found all over the world. The flood is told of by the Greeks, the Hindus, the Chinese, the Mexicans, the Algonquins, and the Hawaiians. One list of Sumerian kings treats the flood as an historical reference point. After naming eight kings who lived extraordinarily long lives (tens of thousands of years), this sentence interrupts the list: "[Then] the Flood swept over [the earth] and when kingship was lowered [again] from heaven, kingship was [first] in Kish."

There are good reasons to believe that Genesis gives the original story. The other versions contain elaborations indicating corruption. Only in Genesis is the year of the flood given, as well as dates for the chronology relative to Noah's life. In fact, Genesis reads almost like a diary or ship's log of the events. The cubical Babylonian ship could not have saved anyone. The raging waters would have constantly turned it on every side. However, the biblical ark is rectangular—long, wide, and low—so that it would ride the rough seas well. The length of the rainfall in the

pagan accounts (seven days) is not enough time for the devastation they describe. The waters would have to rise at least above most mountains, to a height of above 17,000 feet, and it is more reasonable to assume a longer rainfall to do this. The Babylonian idea that all of the flood waters subsided in one day is equally absurd. Another striking difference between Genesis and the other versions is that in these accounts the hero is granted immortality and exalted. The Bible moves on to Noah's sin. Only a version that seeks to tell the truth would include this realistic admission.

Some have suggested that this was a severe but localized flood. However, there is geological evidence to support a worldwide flood. Partial skeletons of recent animals are found in deep fissures in several parts of the world and the flood seems to be the best explanation for these. This would explain how these fissures occur even in hills of considerable height, and they extend from 140 feet to 300 feet. Since no skeleton is complete, it is safe to conclude that none of these animals (mammoth, bears, wolves, oxen, hyenas, rhinoceros, aurochs, deer, and smaller mammals) fell into these fissures alive, nor were they rolled there by streams. Yet because of the calcite cementing of these diverse bones together, they must have been deposited under water. Such fissures have been discovered in various places around the world. This is exactly the kind of evidence that a brief but violent episode of this sort would be expected to show within the short span of one year.

The Tower of Babel. There is considerable evidence now that the world did indeed have a single language at one time. Sumerian literature alludes to this several times. Linguists also find this theory helpful in categorizing languages. But what of the tower and the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel (Genesis 11)? Archaeology has revealed that Ur-Nammu, King of Ur from about 2044 to 2007 B.C ., supposedly received orders to build a great ziggurat (temple tower) as an act of worship to the moon god Nannat. A stele (monument) about five feet across and ten feet high reveals Ur-Nammu's activities. One panel has him setting out with a mortar basket to begin construction of the great tower, thus showing his allegiance to the gods by taking his place as a humble workman. Another clay tablet states that the erection of the tower offended the gods, so they threw down what the men had built, scattered them abroad, and made their speech strange. This is remarkably similar to the record in the Bible.

Conservative scholars believe Moses wrote these early chapters of Genesis (see PENTATEUCH, MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF). But how could he, since these events occurred long before his birth? There are two possibilities. First, God could have revealed the accounts to Moses supernaturally. Just as God can reveal the future by prophetic revelation, he can reveal the past by retrospective revelation too. The second possibility is more likely, namely, that Moses compiled and edited earlier records of these events. This is not contrary to biblical practice. Luke did the same in his Gospel (Luke 1:1–4). P. J. Wiseman has argued convincingly that the history of Genesis was originally written on clay tablets and passed on from one generation to the next with each "clan leader" being responsible for keeping them edited and up to date. The main clue that Wiseman found to this in the Bible is the periodic repetition of words and phrases, especially the phrase "This is the generation of" (for example, Gen. 2:4 ; 6:9 ; 10:1 ; 11:10). Many ancient tablets were kept in order by making the first words of a new tablet a repetition of the last words of the previous stone. A literary evaluation of Genesis compared to other ancient

literature indicates that it was compiled no later than the time of Moses. It is quite possible that Genesis is a family history recorded by the patriarchs and edited into its final form by Moses.

The Patriarchs. While the narratives of the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob do not present the same kinds of difficulties as do the earlier chapters of Genesis, they were long considered legendary because they did not seem to fit with the known evidence of that period. As more has become known though, these stories are increasingly verified. Legal codes from the time of Abraham show why the patriarch would have been hesitant to throw Hagar out of his camp, for he was legally bound to support her. Only when a higher law came from God was Abraham willing to put her out.

The Mari letters reveal such names as Abam-ram (Abraham), Jacob-el, and Benjamites. Though these do not refer to the biblical people, they at least show that the names were in use. These letters also support the record of a war in Genesis 14 where five kings fought against four kings. The names of these kings seem to fit with the prominent nations of the day. For example, Genesis 14:1 mentions an Amorite king Arioch; the Mari documents render the king's name Ariwuk. All of this evidence leads to the conclusion that the source material of Genesis was first-hand accounts of someone who lived during Abraham's time.

Sodom and Gomorrah. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was thought to be spurious until evidence revealed that all five of the cities mentioned in the Bible were in fact centers of commerce in the area and were geographically situated as the Scriptures say. The biblical description of their demise seems to be no less accurate. Evidence points to earthquake activity, and that the various layers of the earth were disrupted and hurled high into the air. Bitumen is plentiful there, and an accurate description would be that brimstone (bituminous pitch) was hurled down on those cities that had rejected God. There is evidence that the layers of sedimentary rock have been molded together by intense heat. Evidence of such burning has been found on the top of Jebel Usdum (Mount Sodom). This is permanent evidence of the great conflagration that took place in the long-distant past, possibly when an oil basin beneath the Dead Sea ignited and erupted. Such an explanation in no way subtracts from the miraculous quality of the event, for God controls natural forces. The timing of the event, in the context of warnings and visitation by angels, reveals its overall miraculous nature.

The Dating of the Exodus. One of the several issues about Israel's relationship with Egypt is when the Exodus into Palestine occurred (see PENTATEUCH, MOSAIC AUTHORSHIP OF ; PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS). There is even an official "Generally Accepted Date" (GAD) for the entrance into Canaan of about 1230–1220 B.C . The Scriptures, on the other hand, teach in three different texts (1 Kings 6:1 ; Judg. 11:26 ; Acts 13:19–20) that the Exodus occurred in the 1400s B.C ., with the entrance into Canaan forty years later. While the debate will rage on, there is no longer any reason to accept the 1200 date.

Assumptions have been made that the city "Rameses" in Exodus 1:11 was named after Rameses the Great, that there were no building projects in the Nile Delta before 1300, and that there was no great civilization in Canaan from the nineteenth to the thirteenth centuries. However, the name Rameses is common in Egyptian history. Rameses the Great is Ramses II. Nothing is known about Rameses I. Also, the name might not refer to a city but to an area. In

Genesis 47:11 , the name *Rameses* describes the Nile Delta area where Jacob and his sons settled.

Some scholars now suggest that reinterpretation of the data requires moving the date of the Middle Bronze (MB) age. If this is done, it would show that several uncovered cities of Canaan were destroyed by the Israelites. Evidence has come from recent digs that the last phase of the MB period needs more time than originally thought, so that its end is closer to 1400 B.C. than 1550 B.C. This realignment would bring together two events previously thought to be separated by centuries: the fall of Canaan's MB II cities and the conquest.

Another change may be warranted in the traditional view of Egyptian history. The chronology of the whole ancient world is based on the order and dates of the Egyptian kings, which was generally thought to have been fixed. However, Velikovsky and Courville assert that 600 extra years in that chronology throw off dates for events all around the Near East. Courville has shown that the lists of Egyptian kings should not be understood to be completely consecutive. He argues that some "kings" listed were not pharaohs, but high officials. Historians had assumed that each dynasty follows after the one before it. Instead, many dynasties list subrulers who lived at the same time as the preceding dynasty. Working out this new chronology places the Exodus about 1450 B.C. and would make the other periods of Israelite history fall in line with the Egyptian kings mentioned. The evidence is not definitive, but there is no longer any reason to demand a late-date Exodus. For more information, see the article PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS .

Saul, David, and Solomon. Saul became the first king of Israel, and his fortress at Gibeah has been excavated. One of the most noteworthy finds was that slingshots were one of the most important weapons of the day. This relates not only to David's victory over Goliath, but to the reference of Judges 20:16 that there were seven hundred expert slingers who "could sling a stone at a hair and not miss."

Upon Saul's death, Samuel tells us that his armor was put in the temple of Ashtaroth (a Canaanite fertility goddess) at Bethshan, while Chronicles says that his head was put in the temple of Dagon, the Philistine corn god. This was thought to be an error because it seemed unlikely that enemy peoples would have temples in the same place at the same time. However, excavations have found that there are two temples at this site that are separated by a hallway: one for Dagon, and the other for Ashtaroth. It appears that the Philistines had adopted the Canaanite goddess.

One of the key accomplishments of David's reign was the capture of Jerusalem. Problematic in the Scripture account was that the Israelites entered the city by way of a tunnel that led to the Pool of Siloam. However, that pool was thought to be *outside* the city walls at that time. But in the 1960s excavations it was finally determined that the wall did indeed extend well past the pool.

The psalms attributed to David are often said to have been written much later because their inscriptions suggest that there were musician's guilds (e.g., the sons of Korah). Such organization leads many to think that these hymns should be dated to about the time of the

Maccabees in the second century B.C. Following excavations at Ras Shamra it is now known that there were such guilds in Syria and Palestine in David's time.

The time of Solomon has no less corroboration. The site of Solomon's temple has not been excavated, because it is near the Muslim holy place, The Dome of the Rock. However, what is known about Philistine temples built in Solomon's time fits well with the design, decoration, and materials described in the Bible. The only piece of evidence from the temple itself is a small ornament, a pomegranate, that sat on the end of a rod and bears the inscription, "Belonging to the Temple of Yahweh." It was first seen in a shop in Jerusalem in 1979, verified in 1984, and was acquired by the Israel Museum in 1988.

The excavation of Gezer in 1969 ran across a massive layer of ash that covered most of the mound. Sifting through the ash yielded pieces of Hebrew, Egyptian, and Philistine artifacts. Apparently all 3 cultures had been there at the same time. This puzzled researchers greatly until they realized that the Bible told them exactly what they had found. "Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife" (1 Kings 9:16).

The Assyrian Invasion. Much was learned about the Assyrians when 26,000 tablets were found in the palace of Ashurbanipal, son of the Esarhaddon who took the northern kingdoms into captivity in 722 B.C. These tablets tell of the many conquests of the Assyrian empire and record with honor the cruel and violent punishments that fell to those who opposed them.

Several of these records confirm the Bible's accuracy. Every reference in the Old Testament to an Assyrian king has proven correct. Even though Sargon was unknown for some time, when his palace was found and excavated, there was a wall painting of the battle mentioned in Isaiah 20 . The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser adds to our knowledge of biblical figures by showing Jehu (or his emissary) bowing down to the king of Assyria.

Among the most interesting finds is Sennacherib's record of the siege of Jerusalem. Thousands of his men died and the rest scattered when he attempted to take the city and, as Isaiah had foretold, he was unable to conquer it. Since he could not boast about his great victory here, Sennacherib found a way to make himself sound good without admitting defeat:

As to Hezekiah, the Jew, he did not submit to my yoke. I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities, walled forts, and to the countless small villages in their vicinity . . . I drove out of them 200,150 people, young and old, male and female, horses, mules, donkeys, camels, big and small cattle beyond counting and considered (them) booty. Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage. [Pritchard, 288]

The Captivity. Various facets of the Old Testament history regarding the captivity have been confirmed. Records found in Babylon's famous hanging gardens have shown that Jehoiachin and his five sons were being given a monthly ration and place to live and were treated well (2 Kings 25:27-30). The name of Belshazzar caused problems, because there was not only no mention of him, but no room for him in the list of Babylonian kings; however, Nabodonius left a record that he appointed his son, Belshazzar (Daniel 5), to reign for a few years in his absence. Hence,

Nabodonius was still king, but Belshazzar ruled in the capital. Also, the edict of Cyrus as recorded by Ezra seemed to fit the picture of Isaiah's prophecies too well to be real, until a cylinder was found that confirmed the decree in all the important details.

In every period of Old Testament history, we find that there is good evidence from archaeology that the Scriptures speak the truth. In many instances, the Scriptures even reflect firsthand knowledge of the times and customs it describes. While many have doubted the accuracy of the Bible, time and continued research have consistently demonstrated that the Word of God is better informed than its critics.

In fact, while thousands of finds from the ancient world support in broad outline and often in detail the biblical picture, not one incontrovertible find has ever contradicted the Bible.

Sources

W. F. Albright, *Archaeology of Palestine*

G. L. Archer, Jr., *Encyclopedia of Biblical Difficulties*

J. Bimson and D. Livingstone, "Redating the Exodus," *BAR*, September–October 1987

N. Glueck, *Rivers in the Desert*

K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament*

J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near East Texts*

C. A. Wilson, *Rocks, Relics and Biblical Reliability*

E. Yamauchi, *The Stones and the Scriptures*

Aristotle. Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) holds immense importance for Christian apologetics. He laid down the basic principles of reason used by most apologists (see CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF; FIRST PRINCIPLES; LOGIC). Many of the greatest apologists, especially Thomas Aquinas, were dependent on Aristotelian principles.

Born in Stagira, Greece, as the son of a physician, Aristotle entered Plato's academy in about 367 and remained there until Plato's death (347). He began teaching Alexander the Great (356–323) in about 342. With Alexander's conquests, Aristotle's thought spread, along with Greek language and culture, throughout the world.

Major writings of Aristotle can be categorized under logic, physical studies, psychology, and philosophy:

Logic: *Categories*, *On Interpretation*, *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, *On Sophistical Refutations*, *Topics*

Physical sciences: *Meteorology*, *On Coming-to-be and Passing Away*, *On the Heavens*, *Physics*

Psychology: *On Dreams*, *On Memory and Reminiscence*, *On Prophesying by Dreams (Parva Naturalia)*, *On the Soul*

Philosophy: *Art and Poetry*, *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Politics*, *Rhetoric*

Few, if any, thinkers, before or after Aristotle, had a more analytic, encyclopedic, and productive mind.

Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge). Aristotle was an empiricist who believed all knowledge begins in the senses. Once an object is perceived by one or more of the five senses, the mind begins to act upon it with its powers of abstraction. Aristotle saw three acts of the intellect: *apprehension* (understanding), *predication* (declarations), and *sylogistic reasoning* (logic).

Apprehension. The first act of the mind is apprehension or the understanding of a thing or object. The *subject* of apprehension is a rational animal (human being). The *object* of apprehension is the essence (quiddity) or form of things. The *method* of apprehension is the intellectual process of abstraction, through which the mind obtains a universal from processing information about the particulars. In this Aristotle differed from the later nominalists, who denied universals and taught that only particulars exist.

Ten modes of apprehension are called the "predicaments" or *categories*. Categories include:

1. *Substance* — *what* is apprehended. This is also called the *subject* of apprehension. Primary substance is the ultimate subject of all predication. Secondary substance is the universal that is predicable for a class.
2. *Quantity* or *how much* of the subject is apprehended.
3. *Quality* is *what kind* of subject is apprehended.
4. *Relation* informs us *to what* the subject has reference.
5. *Action* speaks of *on what* the subject is acting.
6. *Passion* is *from what* the subject receives action.
7. *Place* answers *where* the subject is apprehended to be.
8. *Time* answers *when* the subject is apprehended.

9. *Position* refers to *under what circumstances* the subject is apprehended.
10. *Habit* or *state* tells in *what condition* the subject apprehended is found to be. A habit is natural but not essential to a thing, like clothes to humans.

Predication. Once an object is apprehended (understood), certain predications can be made about it. Similar to apprehension, predication can be broken down into the *subject* of predication (human being) and *object* of predication (quiddity or form of a thing). To these are added the *purpose* of predication (the definition or nature of a thing), *means* of predication, and the *mode* of predication.

The means of predication can be communicated as a proposition with a subject, predicate, and copula, a statement of what it “is” or “is not.” The modes of predication are the predicables, the various kinds of reality a predicate can convey about a thing. Modes of predication include:

Genus. Humankind fits the genus “animal.” This characteristic is common to many subjects.

Specific difference. Humans are “rational” animals. That is a difference specific to this subject.

Species. The subject denotes both the genus and the specific difference. Through our understanding of creation, we automatically know that *human* means “rational animal.” In this particular example, the subject has been assigned a scientific species name, which says just that in Latin: *Homo sapiens*.

Property. A subject is predicated by what flows from its essence but isn’t part of it. Human beings laugh. Risibility, the ability to laugh, is a property of human beings.

Accidents. The predicate describes what is in the essence of the subject but not part of it. In the sentence “He has black hair,” the characteristic of black hair is not part of the human essence, but it is part of a category system that adheres to it.

Quantity/Extent. This predication can be universal, when all of the class is included, or particular, when a limitation is specified. “Human beings are rational animals, but few human beings do their thinking in Gaelic.”

Quality. Predication that must be expressed by an affirmative (“is”) or a negative (“is not”) statement. “A human being is able to give glory to God.”

Reasoning (Logic). Once something is apprehended, and propositions (declarations) are made about it, then conclusions can be drawn from combining two or more of these predications. Putting together predications and drawing conclusions from them results in a *syllogism*. There are three basic kinds of reasoning: *deductive*, *inductive*, and *fallacious*.

Deductive logic deals with the validity of deductions given to the premises in a syllogism. Aristotle developed this logic in *Prior Analytics*, and in *Posterior Analytics* he added *material*

logic, which deals with the truth of such deductions or demonstrations. *Inductive logic* (called “opinion”) deals with probability reasoning. This is discussed in *Topics*. *Fallacious logic* deals with incorrect reasoning and is covered in detail in *Sophistical Refutations*.

Reality and God. Aristotle’s view of God grows out of his view of reality, called “metaphysics.” *Metaphysics* as Aristotle understood the term can be understood most clearly in contrast to other disciplines. For Aristotle, *Physics* studies the real that can be experienced through the five senses. *Metaphysics* studies reality outside sensory perception. *Mathematics* is the study of the real (being) insofar as it is quantifiable (though this is not true of all modern mathematics). *Metaphysics* is the study of being insofar as it is real.

Actuality (Act) and Potentiality (Potency). Aristotle’s understanding of reality involved what actually is (*actuality*) and what it can be (*potentiality*). Everything in creation is composed of both form (actuality) and matter (potentiality), a view called “hylomorphism.” Its immutable implication is that the reality we perceive through our senses is changing.

Change is the passing from potentiality to actuality. Aristotle posited two kinds of change, *substantial* and *accidental*. Substantial changes alter substance—what something essentially is. This change happens when substance comes to be (generation) or ceases to be (corruption). Accidental change is a change in what something *has*, in its *accidents*. An accident is what inheres in a substance but is not of the essence of that substance. Dying is a substantial change. Learning is an accidental change.

The Four Causes of Things. In studying the nature of being, Aristotle posited four causes. Two intrinsic causes are inside the thing. As applied to a wooden chair, they are:

1. The formal cause—that *of which* it is made, its form or essence: chairness.
2. The material cause—that *out of which* it is made, its material: wood.

The two extrinsic causes are outside the thing. In the example of the chair they are:

3. The efficient cause—that *by which* it is made, the agent: carpenter.
4. The final cause—that *for which* it was made, the purpose: to sit in.

Aristotle’s Answer to Monism. Aristotle’s metaphysics can be understood as a response to the argument by Parmenides (b. 515 B.C.) for monism (see MONISM; ONE AND MANY, PROBLEM OF). Parmenides argued that: (1) Either everything is one or it is many. (2) If there are many beings, they must differ. (3) If they differ, they must differ by being or by nonbeing. (4) They cannot differ by nonbeing, since nonbeing is nothing (and that would mean they do not differ). (5) Neither can they differ by being, since being is what they all have in common. They cannot differ by the sense in which they are the same. (6) Hence, there can only be one being (monism).

There were four basic answers to Parmenides. (1) Atomism said that things (atoms) differ by absolute nonbeing (the void). (2) Platonism argued (see PLATO) that things (forms) differ by

relative nonbeing (otherness), determination by negation. (3) Aquinas later affirmed that since being is a complex of act and potency, things differ by the kind of being they are. (4) Aristotle believed only material things were composed of form (act) and matter (potency). Pure forms, such as gods are, are simple. So the forty-seven or fifty-five forms (gods) differ in that they are simply different beings.

The Existence and Nature of God. From this answer to Parmenides, one can see that Aristotle's concept of god(s) was by no means the Creator as understood by Judaism. Like many later Christians, however, Aristotle believed that the existence of God could be proven. His proof went like this:

1. Things do change. This is established by observing movement, the most obvious form of change.
2. All change is a passing from potentiality to actuality. That is, when a potential is actualized, change has occurred.
3. No potential can actualize itself. Wood cannot make itself into a chair, although it has the capacity to become a chair.
4. There must be an actuality that actualizes everything that passes from potentiality to actuality. Otherwise, nothing would be actualized.
5. An infinite regress of actualizers is impossible, for the whole series would not be actualized unless there is a first actualizer.
6. This first actuality actualizes things by final causality, by drawing things to it the way a lover is drawn by his loved one.
7. There are forty-seven (according to the astronomer Eudoxus) or fifty-five (according to Callipus) of these pure actualities ("unmoved movers").
8. Ultimately, there is only one heaven and one God. Only material things can be numerically different, since matter is the principle of individuation.
9. This last point was either a later addition by Aristotle or by one of his editors after his death. It gives the appearance of being the latter. For Aristotle's context in the history of the cosmological argument, see COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT .

Several things are noteworthy about Aristotle's argument: It introduces the question of an infinite regress of causes (see INFINITE SERIES). It posited a plurality of first causes with a note attached (that may be by a later editor) that posits one God. Unlike Plato's demiurges, Aristotle's First Cause is a final purposing cause, not an efficient cause. Neither was the Unmoved Mover a personal God who had love or concern for creation. In fact, Aristotle's God had no religious significance or need for worship. This God was simply a logical necessity to be used to explain the cosmos and then discarded. This First Cause was not infinite as is the God of Christian

theism. Aristotle followed the Greek belief that only what was formless and indefinite could be considered infinite. Aristotle's God did not create everything freely and *ex nihilo* (see CREATION, VIEWS OF). The universe is eternal, and God has been forming it by drawing it to himself. So God is not the producing (efficient) cause but a pulling (final) cause.

Other views of Aristotle are of interest to Christian apologists. He believed in a literal (vs. an allegorical) hermeneutic. In contrast to Plato, Aristotle denied the immortality of the soul or the afterlife. According to Aristotle, the soul, which is the form of the body, dies with the body (see IMMORTALITY). Aristotle espoused a "golden mean" ethic that others have developed into a situational ethic (see MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF).

Sources

Aristotle, *Aristotle's Categories and De Interpretatione*, W. D. Ross, trans.

———, *The Works of Aristotle Translated into English*, W. D. Ross, ed.

W. Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, R. Robinson, trans.

J. Owen, *The Doctrine of Being in the Aristotelian Metaphysics*

W. D. Ross, *Prior and Posterior Analytics*

Athanasius. Athanasius of Alexandria (296–373) was one of the great early defenders of the Christian faith. He was educated in the catechetical school of Alexandria. As secretary to Bishop Alexander, he attended the Council of Nicea (325). He succeeded Alexander three years later. Probably before 318, while still in his twenties, he wrote *De Incarnatione* (*On the Incarnation*) and *Contra Gentes* , explaining how the Logos (Christ) became human and redeemed humanity. Later, in *Letters Concerning the Holy Spirit* , he defended the personality and deity of the third person of the Trinity.

Orthodoxy of Athanasius. Athanasius not only defended orthodox Christianity, he helped set the standard for it, particularly on the deity of Christ. From 339 to 359 he wrote a series of defenses of the faith (*Orations Against Arians*) aimed at those who denied the full deity of Christ. Grammatically, the issue centered around whether Christ was *homoiousion* (of "like substance"), or *homoousion* (of the "same substance") with the Father. Athanasius stood firm, against great odds and at great personal cost, to preserve a biblical stand when most church leaders wandered into Arianism. For this he earned the title of *contra mundum* ("against the world").

The Nicene Creed. It is uncertain what exact role Athanasius played in framing the Nicene Creed. He certainly defended it with his life. This creed reads, in part, in its original form:

We believe in ONE GOD THE FATHER Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, the only-begotten son of God, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, Being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made. . . .

And in the HOLY GHOST, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets.

Sources

Athanasius. *On the Incarnation*

———, *Contra Gentes*

———, *Orations Against Arians*

F. L. Cross, "Athanasius, St." in *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

———, *The Study of St. Athanasius*

J. A. Dorner, *History of the Development of the Doctrine of the Person of Christ*, vol. 2

A. Robertson, *St. Athanasius*

R. V. Sellers, *Two Ancient Christologies*

P. Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 1

Atheism. While polytheism dominated much of ancient Greek thought and theism dominated medieval Christian view, atheism has had its day in the modern world. Of course not all who lack faith in a divine being wish to be called "atheist." Some prefer the positive ascription of "Humanist" (*see* HUMANISM, SECULAR). Others are perhaps best described as "materialists." But all are nontheists, and most are antitheistic. Some prefer the more neutral term a-theists.

In distinction from a theist, (*see* THEISM) who believes God exists beyond and in the world, and a pantheist, who believes God is the world, an atheist believes there is no God either beyond or in the world. There is only a universe or cosmos and nothing more.

Since atheists share much in common with agnostics (*see* AGNOSTICISM) and skeptics, they are often confused with them (see Russell, "What Is an Agnostic?"). Technically, a skeptic says "I *doubt* that God exists" and an agnostic declares "I *don't know* (or can't know) whether God exists." But an atheist claims to *know* (or at least believe) that God does not exist. However, since atheists are all nontheists and since most atheists share with skeptics an antitheistic stand, many of their arguments are the same. It is in this sense that modern atheism rests heavily upon the skepticism of David Hume and the agnosticism of Immanuel Kant .

Varieties of Atheism. Broadly speaking, there are differing kinds of atheism. *Traditional* (metaphysical) atheism holds that there never was, is, or will be a God. The many with this view include Ludwig Feuerbach , Karl Marx , Jean-Paul Sartre , and Antony Flew . *Mythological* atheists, such as Friedrich Nietzsche , believe the God-myth was never a Being, but was once a live *model* by which people lived. This myth has been killed by the advancement of man's understanding and culture. There was a short-lived form of *dialectical* atheism held by Thomas Altizer which proposed that the once-alive, transcendent God actually died in the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ, and this death was subsequently realized in modern times. *Semantical* atheists (*see* VERIFICATION, EMPIRICAL) claim that God-talk is dead. This view was held by Paul Van Buren and others influenced by the logical positivists who had seriously challenged the meaningfulness of language about God. Of course, those who hold this latter view need not be actual atheists at all. They can admit to the existence of God and yet believe that it is not possible to talk about him in meaningful terms. This view has been called "agnosticism," since it denies that we can speak of God in cognitive or meaningful terms. *Conceptual* atheism believes that there is a God, but he is hidden from view, obscured by our conceptual constructions (*see* BUBER, MARTIN). Finally, *practical* atheists confess that God exists but believes that we should live *as if* he did not. The point is that we should not use God as a crutch for our failure to act in a spiritual and responsible way (some of Dietrich Bonhöffer's writings can be interpreted in this category).

There are other ways to designate the various kinds of atheists. One way would be by the philosophy by which they express their atheism. In this way one could speak of *existential* atheists (Sartre), *Marxist* atheists (Marx), *psychological* atheists (Sigmund Freud), *capitalistic* atheists (Ayn Rand), and *behavioristic* atheists (B. F. Skinner).

For apologetics purposes the most applicable way to consider atheism is in a metaphysical sense. Atheists are those who give reasons for believing that no God exists in or beyond the world. Thus we are speaking about philosophical atheism as opposed to practical atheists who simply live as though there were no God.

Arguments for Atheism. The arguments for atheism are largely negative, although some can be cast in positive terms. Negative arguments fall into two categories: (1) arguments against proofs for God's existence (*see* GOD, OBJECTIONS TO PROOFS FOR), and (2) arguments against God's existence (*see* GOD, ALLEGED DISPROOFS OF). On the first set of arguments most atheists draw heavily on the skepticism of Hume and the agnosticism of Kant.

Atheists offer what they consider to be good and sufficient reasons for believing no God exists. Four such arguments are often used by atheists: (1) the fact of evil (*see* EVIL, MORAL PROBLEM OF); (2) the apparent purposelessness of life; (3) random occurrence in the universe; and (4) the First Law of Thermodynamics —that "energy can neither be created or destroyed" as evidence that the universe is eternal and, hence, needs no Creator.

Responses to the Arguments. The Existence of Evil. A detailed response to the problem of evil is given elsewhere (*see* EVIL, PROBLEM OF), so it will be treated here only in general terms. The atheist's reasoning is circular. Former atheist C. S. Lewis argued that, in order to know there is injustice in the world one has to have a standard of justice. So, to effectively eliminate God via

evil one is to posit an ultimate moral standard by which to pronounce God evil (*Mere Christianity*). But for theists God is the ultimate moral standard, since there cannot be an ultimate moral law without an Ultimate Moral Law Giver.

Atheists argue that an absolutely good God must have a good purpose for everything, but there is no good purpose for much of the evil in the world. Hence, there cannot be an absolutely perfect God.

Theists point out that just because we do not know the purpose for evil occurrences does not mean that there is no good purpose. This argument does not necessarily disprove God; it only proves our ignorance of God's plan. Along the same reasoning, just because we do not see a purpose for all evil now, does not follow that we never will. The atheist is premature in his judgment. According to theism, a day of justice is coming. If there is a God, he must have a good purpose for evil, even if we do not know it. For a theistic God is omniscient and knows everything. He is omnibenevolent and has a good reason for everything. So, by his very nature he must have a good reason for evil.

Purposelessness. In assuming that life is without purpose, the atheist is again both a presumptuous and premature judge. How does one know there is no ultimate purpose in the universe? Simply because the atheist knows no real purpose for life does not mean God does not have one. Most people have known times that made no sense for the moment but eventually seemed to have great purpose.

The Random Universe. Apparent randomness in the universe does not disprove God. Some randomness is only apparent, not real. When DNA was first discovered it was believed that it split randomly. Now the entire scientific world knows the incredible design involved in the splitting of the double helix molecule known as DNA. Even actual randomness has an intelligent purpose (*see TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT*). Molecules of carbon dioxide are exhaled randomly with the oxygen (and nitrogen in the air), but for a good purpose. If they did not, we would inhale the same poisonous gases we have exhaled. And some of what seems to be waste may be the product of a purposeful process. Horse manure makes good fertilizer. According to the atheist's time scale the universe has been absorbing and neutralizing very well all its "waste." So far as we know, little so-called waste is really wasted. Even if there is some, it may be a necessary byproduct of a good process in a finite world like ours, just like sawdust results from logging.

The Eternality of Matter (Energy). Atheists often misstate the scientific first law of thermodynamics. It should not be rendered: "Energy *can* neither be created *nor* destroyed." Science as science should not be engaged in "can" or "cannot" statements. Operation science deals with what *is* or *is not*, based on observation. And observation simply tells us, according to the first law, that "The amount of actual energy in the universe remains constant." That is, while the amount of *usable* energy is decreasing, the amount of *actual* energy is remaining constant in the universe. The first law says absolutely nothing about the *origin* or *destruction* of energy. It is merely an observation about the continuing presence of energy in the cosmos.

Unlike the second law of thermodynamics, which tells us the universe is running out of usable energy and, hence, must have had a beginning, the first law makes no statement about whether energy is eternal. Therefore, it cannot be used to eliminate a Creator of the cosmos.

Tenets of Atheism. Atheists do not have identical beliefs, any more than do all theists. However, there is a core of beliefs common to most atheists. So while not all atheists believe all of the following, all of the following are believed by some atheists. And most atheists believe most of the following:

About God. True atheists believe that only the cosmos exists. God did not create man; people created God.

About the World. The universe is eternal. If it is not eternal, then it came into existence "out of nothing and by nothing." It is self-sustaining and self-perpetuating. As astronomer Carl Sagan put it, "The Cosmos is all there is, all there was, and all there ever will be" (Sagan, *Cosmos*, 4). If asked "what caused the world?" most atheists would reply with Bertrand Russell that it was not caused; it is just there. Only the parts of the universe need a cause. They all depend on the whole, but the whole needs no cause. If we ask for a cause for the universe, then we must ask for a cause for God. And if we do not need a cause for God, then neither do we need one for the universe.

If one insists that *everything* needs a cause, the atheist simply suggests an infinite regress of causes that never arrives at a first cause (i.e., God). For if everything must have a cause, then so does this "first cause." In that case it really isn't first at all, nor is anything else (see Sagan, *Broca's Brain*, 287).

About Evil. Unlike pantheists (*see PANTHEISM*) who deny the reality of evil, atheists strongly affirm it. In fact, while pantheists affirm the reality of God and deny the reality of evil, atheists, on the other hand, affirm the reality of evil and deny the reality of God. They believe theists are inconsistent in trying to hold to both realities.

About Human Beings. A human being is matter in motion with no immortal soul. There is no mind apart from brain. Nor is there a soul independent of body. While not all atheists are strict materialists who identify soul and body, most do believe that the soul is dependent on the body. The soul in fact dies when the body dies. The soul (and mind) may be more than the body, the way a thought is more than words or symbols. But as the shadow of a tree ceases to exist when the tree does, so the soul does not survive the body's death.

About Ethics. No moral absolutes exist, certainly no divinely authorized absolutes. There may be some widely accepted and long enduring values. But absolutely binding laws would seem to imply an absolute Law Giver, which is not an option (*see MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF*).

Since values are not *discovered* from some revelation of God, they must be *created*. Many atheists believe values emerge by trial and error the way traffic laws developed. Often the right action is described in terms of what will bring the greatest good in the long run (*see UTILITARIANISM*). Some frankly acknowledge that relative and changing situations determine

what is right or wrong. Others speak about the expedient behavior (what “works”), and some work out their whole ethic in terms of self-interest. But virtually all atheists recognize that each person must determine personal values, since there is no God to reveal what is right and wrong. As the *Humanist Manifesto* put it, “Humanism asserts that the nature of the universe depicted by modern science makes unacceptable any supernatural or cosmic guarantees of human values” (Kurtz, 8).

About Human Destiny. Most atheists see no eternal destiny for individual persons, though some speak of a kind of collective immortality of the race. But the denial of individual immortality notwithstanding, many atheists are utopians. They believe in an earthly paradise to come. Skinner proposed a behaviorally controlled utopia in *Walden Two*. Marx believed an economic dialectic of history would inevitably produce a communist paradise. Others, such as Rand, believe that pure capitalism can produce a more perfect society. Still others believe human reason and science can produce a social utopia. Virtually all, however, recognize the ultimate mortality of the human race but console themselves in the belief that its destruction is millions of years away.

Evaluation. Positive Contributions of Atheism. Even from a theistic point of view, not all views expressed by atheists lack truth. Atheists have provided many insights into the nature of reality.

The reality of evil. Unlike pantheists, atheists do not close their eyes to the reality of evil. In fact, most atheists have a keen sensitivity to evil and injustice. They rightly point to the imperfection of this world and to the need for adjudication of injustice. In this regard they are surely right that an all-loving, all-powerful God would certainly do something about the situation.

Contradictory concepts of God. In contending that God is not caused by another, some have spoken of God as though he were a self-caused being (*causa sui*). Atheists rightly point out this contradiction, for no being can cause its own existence. To do this it would have to exist and not exist at the same time. For to cause existence is to move from nonexistence to existence. But nonexistence cannot cause existence. Nothing cannot cause something (*see CAUSALITY, PRINCIPLE OF*). On this point atheists are surely right.

Positive human values. Many atheists are humanists. With others they affirm the value of humanity and human culture. They earnestly pursue both the arts and the sciences and express deep concern in ethical issues. Most atheists believe that racism, hatred, and bigotry are wrong. Most atheists commend freedom and tolerance and have other positive moral values.

The Loyal Opposition. Atheists are the loyal opposition to theists. It is difficult to see the fallacies in one’s own thinking. Atheists serve as a corrective to invalid theistic reasoning. Their arguments against theism should give pause to dogmatism and temper the zeal with which many believers glibly dismiss unbelief. In fact, atheists serve a significant corrective role for theistic thinking. Monologues seldom produce refined thought. Without atheists, theists would lack significant opposition with which to dialogue and clarify their concepts of God.

A Critique of Atheism. Still, the position that God does not exist lacks adequate rational support. The atheist’s arguments against God are insufficient (*see ATHEISM*). Further, there are good arguments for the existence of God (*see GOD, EVIDENCE FOR*). For many things, atheism provides no satisfactory answer.

Why is there something rather than nothing? Atheism does not provide an adequate answer as to why anything exists when it is not necessary for anything at all to exist. Nonexistence of everything in the world is possible, yet the world does exist. Why? If there is no cause for its existence, there is no reason why the world exists (*see COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT*).

What is the basis for morality? Atheists can believe in morality, but they cannot *justify* this belief. Why should anyone be good unless there is a Definer of goodness who holds people accountable? It is one thing to say that hate, racism, genocide, and rape are wrong. But if there is no ultimate standard of morality (i.e., God), then how can these things be wrong? A moral prescription implies a Moral Prescriber (*see MORAL ARGUMENT FOR GOD*).

What is the basis for meaning? Most atheists believe life is meaningful and worth living. But how can it be if there is no purpose for life, nor destiny after this life? Purpose implies a Purposer. But if there is no God, there is no objective or ultimate meaning. Yet most atheists live as if there were.

What is the basis for truth? Most atheists believe that atheism is true and theism is false. But to state that atheism is true implies that there is such a thing as objective truth. Most atheists do not believe that atheism is true only for them. But if atheism is true, there must be a basis for objective truth (*see TRUTH, NATURE OF*). Truth is a characteristic of a mind, and objective truth implies an objective Mind beyond our finite minds.

What is the basis for reason? Most atheists pride themselves on being rational. But why be rational if the universe is the result of irrational chance? There is no reason to be reasonable in a random universe. Hence, the very thing in which atheists most pride themselves is not possible apart from God.

What is the basis for beauty? Atheists also marvel at a beautiful sunset and are awestruck by the starry heavens. They enjoy the beauty of nature as though it were meaningful. Yet if atheism is true, it is all accidental, not purposeful. Atheists enjoy natural beauty as though it were meant for them, and yet they believe no Designer exists to mean it for them.

Sources

T. Altizer, *The Gospel of Christian Atheism*

P. Bayle, *Selections from Bayle’s Dictionary*

L. Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*

J. N. Findlay, “Can God’s Existence Be Disproved?” A. Plantinga, *Ontological Argument*

C. Hartshorne, "The Necessarily Existent," A. Plantinga, *The Ontological Argument*

J. Hick, *The Existence of God*

B. C. Johnson, *An Atheist Debater's Handbook*

P. Kurtz, *Humanist Manifestos I and II*

C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

M. Martin, *Atheism: A Philosophical Justification*

K. Marx, *Marx and Engels on Religion*

G. Maurades, *Belief in God*

T. Molnar, *Theists and Atheists*

J. P. Moreland, *Does God Exist?*

F. Nietzsche, *Joyful Wisdom*

———, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*

K. Nielson, *Philosophy of Atheism*

A. Rand, *For the New Intellectual*

B. Russell, "What Is an Agnostic?" In *Look* (1953)

C. Sagan, *Broca's Brain*

———, *Cosmos*

J. P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*

B. F. Skinner, *About Behavioralism*

G. Smith, *The Case Against God*

R. C. Sproul, *If There is a God, Why are There Atheists?*

———, *Walden Two*

P. Van Buren, *The Secular Meaning of the Gospel*

Athenagoras. Athenagoras was a second-century Christian apologist who was called the "Christian philosopher from Athens." His famous *Apology* (ca. 177), which he called

"Embassy," petitioned Marcus Aurelius on behalf of Christians. He later wrote a strong defense of the physical resurrection (see RESURRECTION, PHYSICAL NATURE OF), *On the Resurrection of the Dead*.

Two later writers mention Athenagoras. Methodius of Olympus (d. 311) was influenced by him in his *On the Resurrection of the Body*. Philip Sidetes (early sixth century) stated that Athenagoras had been won to Christianity while reading the Scriptures "in order to controvert them" (Pratten, 127). His English translator noted, "Both his *Apology* and his treatise on the Resurrection display a practiced pen and a richly cultured mind. He is by far the most elegant, and certainly at the same time one of the ablest, of the early Christian Apologists" (ibid.). The silence about Athenagoras by the fourth-century Church historian Eusebius, is strange in view of his work.

Apologetics. The basic elements of later apologetics were present in Athenagoras's treatises. He defended Christianity against charges of atheism, cannibalism (eating Christ's body), and practicing incest. He focused attention on the peaceful, blameless lives of Christians and claimed that they deserved equal rights with other citizens.

Scripture. As other church Fathers, Athenagoras believed the Bible was the inspired Word of God (see BIBLE, EVIDENCE FOR). He claimed that "it would be irrational for us to cease to believe in the Spirit from God, who moved the mouths of the prophets like musical instruments" (ibid., vii). He spoke of "The Holy Spirit Himself also, which operates in the prophets" (ibid., ix), and "the writings either of Moses or of Isaiah and Jeremiah and the other prophets, who lifted up with ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit, uttered the things with which they were inspired the Spirit making use of them as a flute player breathes into a flute" (ibid.).

God. Athenagoras affirmed the existence, unity, trinity, and essential attributes of God. This he did against the challenge of polytheism. Athenagoras first defended the existence of God against the Roman view that Christians were atheists since they did not accept the Roman pantheon nor did they worship the emperor. Christians are not atheists, Athenagoras wrote, in that they acknowledge one God. Unlike some Greeks who denied God, Christians "distinguish God from matter, and teach that matter is one thing and God another, and that they are separated by a wide interval (for that the Deity is uncreated and eternal . . . while matter is created and perishable), is it not absurd to apply the name of atheism?" (*Apology*, 4).

Against the pagan polytheistic context, Athenagoras affirmed the unity of God (ibid., 5). He chided the "absurdities of polytheism," asking, "If there were from the beginning two or more gods, they were either in one and the same place, or each of them separately in his own. In one and the same place they could not be. . . . But if, on the contrary, each of them exists separately, since He that made the world is above the things created . . . where can the other or the rest be?" (ibid., 8).

God is both unity and trinity. He is a plurality of persons within the unity of one God. Athenagoras made clear that "we acknowledge also a Son of God. . . . The Holy Spirit Himself also . . . we assert to be an effluence of God." Thus, we "speak of God the Father, and of God the

Son, and of the Holy Spirit” (ibid., 10). Athenagoras stresses that, the Father and Son being one, the Son was the one through whom the universe was created. The Father had the “logos in Himself” from eternity. Hence the Logos was begotten of the Father, but “not as having been brought into existence” (ibid.).

Athenagoras affirmed the essential elements of classical theism, insisting “we acknowledge one God, uncreated, eternal, invisible, impassible, incomprehensible, illimitable . . . Who is encompassed by light, and beauty and spirit, and power ineffable, by whom the universe has been created through His Logos, and set in order, and is kept in being” (ibid., 10).

Creation. For Athenagoras, “the Deity is uncreated and eternal . . . while matter is created and perishable” (ibid., 4). And repeatedly he affirmed that the universe had been created through the Logos. He uses this radical distinction between Creator and creation to show the absurdity of polytheism. He criticized those who cannot see the distance between themselves and their Creator, and so prayed to idols made of matter (ibid., 15). Distinguishing between the Artist (God) and his art (the world), he concluded: “I admire its beauty, and adore the Artificer” (ibid., 16). He pointed out that polytheistic gods were themselves created. “Every one of them has come into existence just like ourselves” (ibid.).

The Resurrection. Athenagoras wrote a treatise *On the Resurrection of the Dead*. With all other early Fathers (except Origen who was condemned for heresy on the point), Athenagoras affirmed the physical resurrection of the same material body of flesh and bones that died (*see* GEISLER). He insisted that God’s power is sufficient to raise dead bodies, since he created those bodies (*On the Resurrection* , chap. 3). As for the charge that God cannot bring together the scattered parts of a dead body, he said, “It is not possible for God to be ignorant, either of the nature of the bodies that are to be raised, as regards both the members entire and the particles of which they consist, . . . although to me it may appear quite impossible” (ibid., 2). God was quite capable, he assured the reader, of bringing together these bodies “with equal ease” (ibid., 3).

His strong teaching on the resurrection is used to refute the charge of cannibalism. He asks “Who, then, that believes in a resurrection, would make himself into a tomb for bodies that will rise again? For it is not the part of the same persons to believe that our bodies will rise again, and to eat them as if they would not” (*Apology* , 36).

One reason for the resurrection is that “Man, therefore, who consists of the two parts [body and soul], must continue forever. But it is impossible for him to continue unless he rise again. For if no resurrection were to take place, the nature of men as men would not continue.” Thus, along with the interminable duration of the soul, there will be a perpetual continuance of the body according to its proper nature” (*On the Resurrection* , 15). He added that each person must have both body and soul at the judgment if it is to be just. If the body is not restored alongside the soul, there “is no longer any remembrance of past action, nor sense of what it experienced in connection with the soul” (ibid., 20). In biblical terms, a person will be judged for the things done “in the body” (2 Cor. 5:10). This is not fully possible unless the body is resurrected.

Sources

Athenagoras, *Apology: A Plea for the Christian*

———, *On the Resurrection of the Dead*

F. L. Cross, “Athenagoras,” in *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*

N. L. Geisler, *The Battle for the Resurrection* , chap. 4

B. P. Pratten, “Introductory Note to the Writings of Athenagoras,” in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* , vol. 2

Atomism. Ancient atomists were materialists (*see* MATERIALISM) who believed that the universe was made up of pellets of reality. They believed that absolute space (the Void) was filled with these tiny, unsplittable particles. All variety in the universe was explained in terms of different combinations of atoms.

The Atomists were pluralists, as opposed to monists, believing reality is ultimately many, not one (*see* MONISM ; ONE AND MANY, PROBLEM OF ; PLURALISM). Ancient atomists included Greek thinkers like Democritus and Leucippus.

Since the Greek word *atom* means unsplittable, many of the atomists’ hard-core materialistic views fell with the splitting of the atom. Contemporary materialists, however, still believe that all reality is comprised of physical energy which, according to the first law of thermodynamics (*see* THERMODYNAMICS, LAWS OF), is neither being created nor destroyed.

Other modern pluralists, however, have opted for a more immaterial view of atom-like entities called “monads” (*see* LEIBNIZ, GOTTFRIED) or eternal objects (*see* WHITEHEAD, ALFRED NORTH). Thus, atomism lives on in various forms, the materialistic varieties of which are still a challenge to Christianity (*see* ATHEISM).

There are several serious problems with materialistic atomism in both its ancient and modern forms. First, Atomists do not solve the problem of the one and the many. They have no adequate explanation for how simple things can differ nor how this can be a *uni*-verse when all that really exists is multiplicity, rather than unity.

Second, the ancient form of atomism has been destroyed by the splitting of the atom. These allegedly irreducibly hard pellets of reality have given way to a softer view of energy.

Third, even in its modern form, the belief in the eternity of matter (physical energy) has yielded to the second law of thermodynamics (*see* THERMODYNAMICS, LAWS OF), which reveals that the physical universe is not eternal, but is running down (*see* EVOLUTION, COSMIC).

Fourth, pure materialism is self-defeating. It is an immaterial theory about all matter that claims there is nothing immaterial. The materialist who peers into the microscope, examining all things material fails to reckon with the immaterial self-conscious “I” and its mental process that are making the deductions.

Sources

J. Collins, *A History of Modern European Philosophy*

F. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*

M. C. Nahm, *Selections from Early Greek Philosophy*

J. Owen, *A History of Ancient Western Philosophy*

J. E. Raven, et al., *The Presocratic Philosophers*

Atonement, Substitutionary. See CHRIST, DEATH OF ; CHRIST'S DEATH, MORAL OBJECTIONS TO ; CHRIST'S DEATH, SUBSTITUTION LEGEND ; RESURRECTION, EVIDENCE FOR ; RESURRECTION, PHYSICAL NATURE OF .

Augustine. Augustine, bishop of Hippo (354–430), made his spiritual pilgrimage from Greek paganism through Manichean dualism to neoplatonism (*see* PLOTINUS) and finally to Christian theism. His great mind and immense literary output have made him one of Christianity's most influential theologians.

Faith and Reason. Like all great Christian thinkers, Augustine struggled to understand the relationship between faith and reason. Many apologists tend to stress Augustine's emphasis on faith and underplay his affirmation of reason in the proclamation and defense of the gospel (*see* FIDEISM ; PRESUPPOSITIONAL APOLOGETICS). They stress passages where the Bishop of Hippo placed faith before reason, such as "I believe in order that I may understand." Indeed, Augustine said, "First believe, then understand" (*On the Creed* , 4). For "if we wished to know and then believe, we should not be able to either know or believe" (*On the Gospel of John* , 27.9).

However, these passages taken alone leave the wrong impression of Augustine's teaching on the role of reason in the Christian Faith. Augustine also held that there is a sense in which reason comes before faith. He declared that "no one indeed believes anything unless he has first thought that it is to be believed." Hence, "it is necessary that everything which is believed should be believed after thought has led the way" (*On Free Will* , 5).

He proclaimed the superiority of reason when he wrote, "God forbid that He should hate in us that faculty by which He made us superior to all other beings. Therefore, we must refuse so to believe as not to receive or seek reason for our belief, since we could not believe at all if we did not have rational souls" (*Letters* , 120.1).

Augustine even used reason to elaborate a "proof for the existence of God." In *On Free Will*, he argued that "there exists something above human reason" (2.6). Not only can reason prove God exists, but it is helpful in understanding the content of the Christian message. For "how can anyone believe him who preaches the faith if he (to say nothing of the other points) does not understand the very tongue which he speaks. . . . Our understanding therefore contributes to the belief of that which it comprehends" (cited in Przywara, 59).

Augustine also used reason to remove objections to Christian Faith. Speaking of someone who had questions prior to becoming a believer, he wrote: "It is reasonable that he inquire as to the resurrection of the dead before he is admitted to the Christian sacraments." What is more, "perhaps he ought also to be allowed to insist on preliminary discussion on the question proposed concerning Christ—why he came so late in the world's history, and of a few great questions besides, to which all others are subordinate" (*Letters 120.1* , 102.38). In short, Augustine believed that human reason was used before, during and after one exercises faith in the Gospel.

God. For Augustine, God is the self-existing I AM WHO I AM. He is uncreated substance, immutable, eternal, indivisible, and absolutely perfect (*see* GOD, NATURE OF). God is not an impersonal Force (*see* PANTHEISM) but a personal Father. In fact, he is the tripersonal Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (*see* TRINITY). In this one eternal substance there is neither confusion of persons nor division in essence.

God is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient. He is eternal, existing before time and beyond time. He is absolutely transcendent over the universe and yet immanently present in every part of it as its sustaining cause. Although the world had a beginning (*see* KALAM COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT), there was never a time when God was not. He is a Necessary Being who depends on nothing, but on whom everything else depends for its existence. "Since God is supreme being, that is, since he supremely is and, therefore, is immutable, it follows that he gave being to all that he created out of nothing" (*City of God* , 12.2).

Origin and Nature of the Universe. According to Augustine the world was created *ex nihilo* (*see* CREATION, VIEWS OF), out of nothing. Creation comes *from* God but is not *out of* God. "Out of nothing didst Thou create heaven and earth—a great thing and a small—because Thou are Almighty and Good, to make all things good, even the great heaven and the small earth. Thou wast, and there was nought else from which Thou didst create heaven and earth" (*Confessions* , 12:7). Hence, the world is not eternal. It had a beginning, yet not in time but with time. For time began with the world. There was no time before time. When asked what God did before he created the world out of nothing, Augustine retorted that since God was the author of all time, there was no time before he created the world. It was not creation *in* time but the creation *of* time that God executed in his initial acts (*ibid.* , 11.13). So God was not *doing* (acting, creating) anything before he created the world. He was simply *being* God.

The world is temporal and changing, and from it we can see that there must be an eternal and unchanging being. "Behold the heavens and the earth are; they proclaim that they were created; for they change and vary." However, "whatsoever hath not been made, and yet is, hath nothing in it, which before it had not, and this it is, to change and vary. They proclaim also, that they made not themselves" (*ibid.* , 11.4).

Miracles. Since God made the world, he can intervene in it (*see* MIRACLE). In fact what we call Nature is simply the way God regularly works in his creation. For, "when such things happen in a continuous kind of river of ever-flowing succession, passing from the hidden to the visible, and from the visible to the hidden, by a regular and beaten track, then they are called natural." But "when, for the admonition of men, they are thrust in by an unusual changeableness,

then they are called miracles” (*On the Trinity*, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 3.6). But even nature’s regular activities are the works of God. For,

Who draws up the sap through the root of the vine to the bunch of grapes, and makes the wine, except God; who, while man plants and waters, himself giveth the increase? But when, at the command of the Lord, the water was turned into wine with an extraordinary quickness, the divine power was made manifest, by the confession even of the foolish. Who ordinarily clothes the trees with leaves and flowers except God? Yet, when the rod of Aaron the priest blossomed, the Godhead in some way conversed with doubting humanity. [ibid., 3.5]

Human Beings. Humankind, like the rest of the world, is not eternal. Humans were created by God and are like God. They are composed of a mortal body and an immortal soul (*see IMMORTALITY*). After death the soul awaits reunion with the body in either a state of conscious bliss (heaven) or of continual torment (hell). These souls will be reunited to their bodies at the resurrection. And “after the resurrection, the body, having become wholly subject to the spirit, will live in perfect peace to all eternity” (*On Christian Doctrine*, 1.24).

For Augustine, the human soul, or spiritual dimension, is of higher value than the body. Indeed, it is in this spiritual dimension that humankind is made in God’s image and likeness. Hence, sins of the soul are worse than sins of the body.

Evil. Evil is real, but it is not a substance (*see EVIL, PROBLEM OF*). The origin of evil is the rebellion of free creatures against God (*see EVIL, PROBLEM OF*). “In fact, sin is so much a voluntary evil that it is not sin at all unless it is voluntary” (*Of True Religion*, 14). Of course, God created all things good and gave to his moral creatures the good power of free choice. However, sin arose when “the will which turns from the unchangeable and common good and turns to its own private good or to anything exterior or inferior, sins” (*On Free Will*, 2.53).

By choosing the lesser good, moral creatures brought about the corruption of good substances. Evil, then, by nature is a lack or privation of the good. Evil does not exist in itself. Like a parasite, evil exists only as a corruption of good things. “For who can doubt that the whole of that which is called evil is nothing else than corruption? Different evils may, indeed, be called by different names; but that which is the evil of all things in which any evil is perceptible is corruption” (*Against the Epistle of Manichaeus*, 38).

Evil is a lack in good things. It is like rot to a tree or rust to iron. It corrupts good things while having no nature of its own. In this way Augustine answered the dualism of the Manichaean religion which pronounced evil to be a co-eternal, but opposed, reality to the good.

Ethics. Augustine believed that God is love by his very nature. Since the human obligation to the creator is to be God-like, people have an absolute moral duty (*see MORALITY, ABSOLUTE NATURE OF*) to love God and neighbor, who is made in God’s image. “For this is the law of love that has been laid down by Divine authority. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,’ but, ‘Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind’ ” (*On Christian Doctrine*, 1.22). Hence, we are to concentrate all our thoughts, our whole life, and our

whole intelligence upon him from whom we derive all that we have. All the virtues are defined in terms of this love.

Augustine said, “As to virtue leading us to a happy life, I hold virtue to be nothing else than perfect love of God. For the fourfold division of virtue I regard as taken from four forms of love”: “Temperance is love giving itself entirely to that which is loved; fortitude is love readily bearing all things for the sake of the loved object; justice is love serving only the loved object, and therefore ruling rightly; prudence is love distinguishing with sagacity between what hinders it and what helps it.” So “temperance is love keeping itself entire and incorrupt for God; justice is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else, as subject to man; prudence is love making a right distinction between what helps it towards God and what might hinder it” (*On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, 15).

The object of this love is God, the chief Good. He is absolute love, and a human being’s absolute obligation is to express love in every area of activity, first toward God and then toward neighbor.

History and Destiny. In his classic, *The City of God*, Augustine wrote the first great Christian philosophy of history. He said there are two “cities” (kingdoms), the city of God and the city of man. These two cities have two different origins (God and Satan), two different natures (love for God and love of oneself, pride), and two different destinies (heaven and hell).

History is headed toward a completion. At this end of time, there will be an ultimate victory of God over Satan and of good over evil. Evil will be separated from the good, and the righteous will be resurrected into a perfect body and a perfect state. The paradise lost at the beginning will be regained by God in the end.

History is *His* -story. God is working out his sovereign plan, and in the end he will defeat evil and perfect man. “Hence we have an answer to the problem why God should have created men whom he foresaw would sin. It was because both in them and by means of them he could reveal how much was deserved by their guilt and condoned by his grace, and, also, because the harmony of the whole of reality which God has created and controls cannot be marred by the perverse discordancy of those who sin” (*City of God*, 14).

Evaluation. St. Augustine has been criticized for many things, but perhaps more than anything else he is guilty of an uncritical acceptance of platonic and neoplatonic (*see PLOTINUS*) thought. Even he rejected some of his own earlier platonic views in his *Retractions*, written near the end of his life. For example, he once accepted Plato’s doctrine of the preexistence of the soul and the recollection of ideas from a previous existence.

Unfortunately, there were other platonic ideas that Augustine never repudiated. These include a platonic dualism of body and soul wherein human beings *are* a soul and only *have* a body. Along with this, Augustine held a very ascetic view of physical desires and sex, even within the context of marriage.

Further, Augustine's epistemology of innate ideas has been contested by modern empiricists (see HUME, DAVID), as has been his view of illuminationism. And even some theists question whether or not his proof for God from truth really works, asking why one needs an absolute Mind as the source of an absolute truth.

Even some who accept Augustine's classical theism point out his inconsistency in not demonstrating a unicity (oneness) of the divine ideas. This resulted from an acceptance of ideas as irreducibly simple platonic forms of which many are not possible in one simple substance (see ONE AND MANY, PROBLEM OF). This problem was later resolved by Thomas Aquinas with the aid of his distinction between actuality and potentiality in the order of being (see MONISM), which was expressed in his doctrine of analogy.

Sources

Augustine, *Against the Epistle of Manichaeus*

———, *On Christian Doctrine*

———, *City of God*

———, *Confessions*

———, *Letters* , 120.1

———, *Of True Religion*

———, *On Free Will*

———, *On Predestination* , 5

———, *On the Creed* , 4

———, *On the Gospel of John* , 27.9

———, *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*

———, *On the Trinity in Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*

N. L. Geisler, *What Augustine Says*

E. Przywara, *An Augustine Synthesis*

Averroes. Averroes (1126–1198) was a Spanish Muslim jurist and physician born in Cordoba. His name is a Latinization of the Arabic form of Ibn-Rushd. Averroes wrote treatises on law, astronomy, grammar, medicine, and philosophy, his most significant being a commentary on Aristotle. He was known by scholastics as “the commentator” (of Aristotle).

Philosophy and Religion. Averroes had an unappreciated influence on the Christian Middle Ages. Because he was the most widely-read commentator on Aristotle, his platonic interpretation was thought to be correct and was adopted by Christians. Actually, like many in his time, Averroes mistakenly believed Aristotle was author of a book called *Theology* , which was really a compendium of Plotinus's writings (Edwards, 221). As a result, Plotinian ideas were read into Aristotle.

The commentaries of Averroes on Aristotle were integral to the education curriculum at early Western European Universities (ibid., 223).

Emanational Pantheism. While it seems strange for an adherent of monotheistic Islam to be a pantheist (see PANTHEISM), this is not uncommon among Sufi Muslims. Averroes' God was entirely separated from the world, exercising no providence. Similar to the theology of Avicenna, the universe was created by emanations from God. There was a series of celestial spheres (intelligences) that descended from God until they reached humanity at the bottom. Matter and intellect are both eternal. God was a remote, impersonal Prime Mover. God's was the only actual Mind in the universe.

The individual under this schema has only a passive intellect. God does the thinking through the human mind. Averroes denied human free will and the soul's immortality.

Double-truths. Averroes has been charged with teaching a “double-truth” theory. In a double-truth, one simultaneously believes two mutually exclusive propositions to be true if one is in philosophy and the other in religion. This is a false charge. It is ironic that it has been leveled against Averroes, who composed the treatise *On the Harmony Between Religion and Philosophy* to refute this very view. Averroes did believe in alternative modes of access to truth, but he apparently did not hold that there could be incompatible truths in different domains (see Edwards, 223).

Nonetheless, later Averroists were charged with holding the double-truth view. Siger of Brabant allegedly introduced such neoplatonic teachings at the University of Paris. Bonaventure and Thomas Aquinas reacted strongly. Aquinas is credited with destroying the popularity of Averroism in the West, particularly through his *The Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists* (1269).

By 1270 Stephen Tempier, bishop of Paris, condemned several of Averroes's teachings, including the eternity of the world, the denial of the universal providence of God, the unity of the human intellect, and the denial of free will. In 1277 he issued more condemnations of similar errors. In the preamble to the latter denunciation, he accused Siger and his followers of saying that “things are true according to philosophy but not according to the Catholic faith, as though there were two contradictory truths”(Cross, 116).

While there is no certainty that Siger actually held the double-truth view, this view did give rise to the Enlightenment assumption that domains of faith and reason could be separated. Forms of this view still prevail widely. Thomas Hobbes, Benedict Spinoza , and Immanuel Kant promoted this idea, as have New Testament critics (see BIBLE CRITICISM) who separate the Jesus

of history from the Christ of faith (*see* BULTMANN, RUDOLPH ; CHRIST OF FAITH VS. JESUS OF HISTORY ; JESUS SEMINAR ; MYTHOLOGY AND THE NEW TESTAMENT).

Allegorical Interpretation. Following Plotinus, Averroes believed the highest form of knowledge leads to a mystical experience of God (*see* MYSTICISM). This experience involves passing from a normal, rational, discursive kind of knowing to a trans-rational, intuitive, and direct experience of God. Such an approach necessitated an allegorical approach to Scripture.

Averroes interpreted the *Qur'an* allegorically and for this was accused of heresy and exiled, though he was recalled shortly before his death. Many Christians from Origen (ca. 185–ca. 254) on took this allegorical approach to Scripture.

Evaluation. Whether he actually taught it, the double-truth theory carried forward by some of his disciples is contrary to basic laws of thought (LOGIC ; FIRST PRINCIPLES). Faith and reason cannot be bifurcated (*see* FAITH AND REASON).

Averroes' pantheism is contrary to the tenets of theism in general and Christian theism in particular. His views about the eternity of matter (*see* CREATION, VIEWS OF) are contrary to biblical teaching about creation (*see* KALAM COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT).

His denial of free will has serious problems and is a form of strong determinism, which most Christians reject. The same can be said for his denial of individual immortality (*see* HELL ; IMMORTALITY). The form of mysticism Averroes held, in which mind and laws of reason are irrelevant, is unacceptable to thoughtful theists (*see* FAITH AND REASON ; LOGIC ; MYSTERY).

Sources

Averroes, *The Works of Aristotle*

———, *Averroes' Commentary on Plato's Republic*, E. I. J. Rosenthal, ed.

———, *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*

P. Edwards, "Averroes," *EP*

N. L. Geisler and A. Saleeb, *Answering Islam*

E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*

A. A. Maurer, *Medieval Philosophy*

S. Munk, *Melanges de philosophie duve et arabe*

E. Renan, *Averroes et l'averroisme*. Paris

Thomas Aquinas, *The Unity of the Intellect Against the Averroists*

Avicenna. Avicenna (980–1037) was a physician and philosopher from near Bokhara in the West Asian region of Uzbekistan. His name is a Latinized pronunciation of the Arabic form of Ibn Sinā. Avicenna wrote about 100 books on logic, mathematics, metaphysics, and theology, and his greatest work, *The Canon*, a system of medicine. He combined Aristotelianism (*see* ARISTOTLE) and neoplatonism (*see* PLOTINUS) in his philosophy of pantheism.

Avicenna's Cosmological Argument. Following the Muslim philosopher Alfarabi, Avicenna formulated a similar cosmological argument that was emulated by later scholastics, including Thomas Aquinas. To find Avicenna's context in the history of the cosmological argument, see COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT .

Avicenna's proof goes like this:

1. There are possible beings (i.e., things which come into existence because they are caused to exist but would not otherwise exist on their own).
2. Whatever possible beings there are have a cause for being (since they do not explain their own existence).
3. But there cannot be an infinite series of causes of being. (a) There can be an infinite series of causes of *becoming* (father begets son, who begets son). (b) There cannot be an infinite series of causes of *being*, since the cause of being must be simultaneous with its effect. Unless there was a causal basis for the series, there would be no beings there to be caused.
4. Therefore, there must be a First Cause for all possible beings (i.e., for all beings that come into existence).
5. This First Cause must be a Necessary Being, for the cause of all possible beings cannot itself be a possible being.

Neoplatonic Influence on Avicenna. By borrowing some neoplatonic premises and a ten-sphere cosmology, Avicenna furthers his argument to prove that this necessary First Cause created a series of "Intelligences" (demiurges or angels) and ten cosmic spheres they controlled:

6. Whatever is essentially One can create immediately only one effect (called an intelligence).
7. Thinking is creating, and God necessarily thinks, since he is a Necessary Being.
8. Therefore, there is a necessary emanation from God of ten intelligences which control the various spheres of the universe. The last of these (agent intellect) forms the four elements of the cosmos. By agent intellect, the human mind (possible intellect) is formed of all truth.

Evaluation. Many criticisms of the cosmological argument have been offered by atheists, agnostics, and skepticism, most emanating from David Hume and Immanuel Kant (*see* GOD, OBJECTIONS TO PROOFS FOR).

In addition to the traditional arguments, Avicenna's form of the argument is subject to many of the criticisms of pantheism and neoplatinian thought. Emanational cosmology has been outdated by modern astronomy.

Conclusion. In common with theism, Avicenna's God was a Necessary Being. But in contrast to theism a serial creative force of ten gods emanated from God with absolute necessity. Also, unlike the Christian theistic God who freely created *ex nihilo* and who is directly responsible for the existence of everything else, in Avicenna's cosmology the universe emanates from a chain of gods (*see* CREATION, VIEWS OF).

Sources

F. Copleston, *History of Philosophy*

N. L. Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*

E. Gilson, "Avicenna" in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*

———, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*

Ayer, A. J. Alfred Jules Ayer (1910–1989) was a British humanist, a graduate of Oxford (1932), and a member of the Vienna Circle of logical positivism. This group, formed in 1932, was influenced by Ernst Mach (d. 1901). Their work was strongly antimetaphysical (*see* METAPHYSICS) and anti-Christian.

In *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936) Ayer tried to eliminate metaphysics via the verifiability principle. *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge* (1940) dealt with problems of private language and other minds. *Philosophical Essays* (1954) contained articles treating problems raised by his first two books. By 1956 Ayer wrote *The Problem of Knowledge* (1956), which reflects moderate antiskeptical realism. He accepts that some statements may be true even if they cannot be justified in principle. A near-death experience in the 1980s convinced Ayer of the possibility of immortality, though he continued to reject the existence of God (*see* ACOGNOSTICISM).

Ayer's Philosophy. According to Ayer and the logical positivists, meaningful statements must measure up to the criterion of verifiability. All genuine propositions must be empirically testable or else they are purely formal or definitional.

Meaningful Propositions. Following David Hume , Ayer taught that there are three types of propositions: (1) Analytic propositions are tautologies, or true by definition. These are explicative, meaning the predicate merely states what the subject says. (2) Synthetic propositions are true by experience and/or in relation to experience. These are ampliative, since the predicate

amplifies or affirms more than the subject. All other propositions are (3) nonsensical. They are meaningless, have no literal significance, and are emotive at best.

Metaphysics Is Meaningless. Ayer followed Immanuel Kant in rejecting metaphysical or theological statements, but for different reasons. Kant used the argument that the mind cannot go beyond phenomena of the physical world. But Ayer recognized that the mind must go beyond the physical. How else would it know it cannot go beyond? Further, whereas Kant had a metaphysics, Ayer did not, reasoning that we cannot speak meaningfully of what may be beyond the empirical. As Ludwig Wittgenstein said, "That whereof you cannot speak, speak not thereof." The impossibility of metaphysics rests not in the psychology of man but in the meaning of language.

Distinctions. Ayer laid down two distinctions in the verifiability principle (*see* VERIFICATION, PRINCIPLE OF). First, there is a difference between *practical* and *principle* verification. Both are meaningful. In practical verification the means for verification are available. Principle verification, on the other hand, involves propositions that we do not have the means to verify now but we know how we could do so. For example, "There is no life on Mars" is verifiable in principle, though not yet in practice.

Second, there is a difference between *strong* and *weak verification* . Only weak verification is valid. Strong verification involves certitude, beyond doubt, or conclusive proof. Early positivists claimed to have this, but later modified their view. If there is strong verification, then there would be a general metaphysics too. And for Ayer to say that there are important types of nonsense would be hedging. Weak verification is subject to change or correction, since it is based on experience. Ayer concluded that no proposition other than tautology can be more than probable, for example, "All human beings are mortal" is either purely definitional, or else it is an empirical generalization.

Further Qualification of the Verifiability Principle. Ayer refined the verification principle in three ways. First, no proposition can be conclusively confuted by experience, any more than it can be conclusively verified by experience. Second, analytic propositions can be neither verified nor falsified by experience. Third, propositions don't have to be directly verifiable to be meaningful. They must, however, have some sense-experience relative to truth or falsity.

In the 1946 revised edition of *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1946) Ayer found it necessary to make further revisions to the verifiability principle. He reluctantly acknowledged that some definitional propositions, for example the verification principle itself, are meaningful without being either factual or purely arbitrary. Also, some empirical statements can be conclusively verified, for example a single sense experience. These qualifications, especially the first one, were to be the downfall of logical positivism.

Applying the Verification Principle. Metaphysics and Theology. Ayer's conclusions were severe: All metaphysical propositions are nonsensical because they are neither analytic nor empirical. All genuine philosophy is analytical, not metaphysical. Also, metaphysics arose by accident of language, a belief that nouns have real referents.

Metaphysics is not merely misplaced poetry. Poetry does not talk nonsense; there is a literal meaning behind most of what poets say. Not so for metaphysics. What is more, no meaningful propositions can be formulated about the terms *God* or *transcendent*. According to Ayer, this is neither atheism nor agnosticism, both of which hold it meaningful to speak of God. This is noncognitivism or acognosticism, which holds the very question of God to be meaningless.

Ethics. Ayer believed that ethical statements are neither formal nor factual but emotive. Such statements merely express the speaker's feeling and attempt to persuade others to feel the same way. For example, "You ought not to steal" means I dislike stealing and I want you to feel this way also. It is not a factually declarative but merely expresses the speaker's attitude. Ethical statements are not statements *about* one's feeling but statements *of* one's feelings. Ayer claims that this view is subjective but not radically subjectivistic. Ethical statements are merely ejaculative and, hence unverifiable, whereas statements about feeling are verifiable: "I am bored" is verifiable; a sigh is unverifiable.

Evaluation. Logical positivism is diametrically opposed to evangelical Christianity. If true, Ayer's logical positivism would hold disastrous consequences for orthodox Christianity. No statement about the existence or the nature of God could even be meaningful, to say nothing of whether it could be true. The Bible could not contain propositional revelation about God, nor could it be the inspired Word of God. There could be no meaningful ethical prescriptions, let alone absolute moral principles.

The Self-Defeating Nature of Empirical Verifiability. The death blow to Ayer's principle of verifiability is the self-destructive fact that it is not empirically verifiable. For according to the criterion of verifiability, all meaningful statements must be either true by definition or empirically testable. But the principle of verifiability is neither. By its own standard the principle of verifiability is meaningless.

Nor does one escape the dilemma by devising a third category intended to include the meaningfulness of the verifiability principle but to exclude all metaphysical and theological statements. For every attempt to define such a principle failed. In the end, most of the original Vienna Circle discarded their strict logical positivism, including Ayer himself.

The revised verification principles died the death-of-a-thousand-qualifications. Every attempt to push metaphysics out the front door and let verification by qualification in the back door found that metaphysics followed them in the back door. It was given new life by the broadened qualifications allowing for metaphysical statements. The narrow statements of verification inevitably eliminated their own principle of verification. The broader statements of the principle that were not self-defeating did not systematically eliminate all metaphysical and theological statements.

Legislating Meaning Without Listening. The problem with logical positivism is that it attempted to legislate what someone meant by their statements rather than to listen to what they meant. Ethical statements are a classic case in point. "Thou shalt not" statements do not mean "I do not like that action." They mean "You should not/ought not do it." It is a fallacy to reduce

ought to is, the *prescriptive* to the *descriptive*. It also is a fallacy to reduce "You ought" to "I feel it is wrong."

Likewise, statements about God need not be reduced to either tautologies or empirical statements to be meaningful. Why should statements about a transempirical Being (God) be subjected to empirical criteria? Metaphysical statements are meaningful within a metaphysical context using metaphysical criteria (*see* FIRST PRINCIPLES).

Sources

A. J. Ayer, *Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*

———, *Language, Truth, and Logic*

———, *Philosophical Essays*

———, *The Problem of Knowledge*

H. Feigl, "Logical Positivism after Thirty-Five Years," *PT*, Winter 1964

F. Ferre, *Language, Logic and God*

A. Flew, et al. *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*

N. L. Geisler, *Philosophy of Religion*, chapter 12