

THE BIG BOOK
— OF —
CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS

AN A TO Z GUIDE

NORMAN L. GEISLER



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Aa

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'S 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.

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 tell us *all*, but all that he tells us is true.

Accommodation and Jesus. It is well known that Jesus expressed a high view of Scripture in the New Testament (*see* BIBLE, JESUS'S 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 the 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's Life. Everything that is known about Jesus's 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’s 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’s 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’s 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 “Jesus 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 Addressed. 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’s 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’S VIEW OF*). Jesus’s 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 (see LIMITATION OF CHRIST, THEORY OF).

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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.”

Following David *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 [1711–76] “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.

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 Immanuel *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 nonsense 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 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.

Of course, with Hick's conversion to belief in God and openness to immortality reflected in his recent book *There Is a God*, the whole scene changed for Flew. Suddenly, both God and immortality became verifiable by reason and good evidence.

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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, OVERALL ARGUMENT OF). Critics often date Acts to about AD 70, but even at this late date many eyewitnesses were still alive (see NEW TESTAMENT, DATING OF), and that 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 AD 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 lifetime of apostles and eyewitnesses) 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. A. N. Sherwin-White is a case in point. 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. The following examples 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 AD 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 AD 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 "Flavius Josephus (*Antiquities*, 20.9.1.200). (6) There is a sense of "immediacy" in 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" (Hemer, 388–89). While some of these reasons are stronger than others, the cumulative evidence provides strong support for the early date of AD 62 for Acts. This in turn supports the historicity of the events recorded in Acts.

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 Acts. (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) *Matters of common geographic knowledge*, mentioned perhaps informally or allusively, with an unstudied accuracy that bespeaks familiarity, and many other things.

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 of 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. 112ff., 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). Yet numerous things are confirmed by historical and archaeological research. For example, the author had:

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. Numerous other details totaling over eighty.

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 AD 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 Sherwin-White 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 (1801–78) challenged the scholars of his day to produce even one example in which a historical event developed many mythological elements within one generation (Müller, 29). None exist.

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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*), and the late date for Adam in the Bible (ca. 4000 BC) 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 (Gen. 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’s 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*).

The Late-Date Objection. The traditional biblical date for the creation of Adam (ca. 4000 BC) 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 BC 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; 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.

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Age of the Earth. See GENEALOGIES, OPEN OR CLOSED; SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE.

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 one hundred years before Huxley (1825–95), the writings of David *Hume (1711–76) 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” (Hume, *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, 173).

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).

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 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 something really was before one so formed it. That is, one can know what something is to oneself 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 that it is there but can never know what it is (Kant, 173ff.).

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 (ibid., 393ff.). 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 (since it needs a First Cause to get the series going). 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.

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 are 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 about God; 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 assertion that "one knows enough about reality to affirm that nothing can be known about reality" (see LOGIC AND GOD). 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 such 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.

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 people 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 but also 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.

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Albright, William F. William Foxwell Albright (1891–1971) was called the dean of American biblical archaeologists in the last century. Born in Chile to Methodist missionaries, he received his PhD 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 concluded that "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 hyper-criticism to deny the substantially Mosaic character of the Pentateuchal tradition" (*Archaeology of Palestine*, 225).

Likewise, "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" (Interview, 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).

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

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 AD" (*From Stone Age to Christianity*, 23).

As for the unity of Isaiah, Albright declared that "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? . . . I do not believe that anything in

Isaiah 40–66 is later than the sixth century" ("William Albright," 360).

As for the dating of the New Testament, he said, "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 AD (very probably between about 50 and 75 AD" (ibid., 359). In the article "Recent Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of St. John," Albright argued that the evidence at Qumran shows that the concepts, terminology, and mind-set 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, HISTORICITY OF).

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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.

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 the myth that 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. 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. He held that God actually once lived but then died in our century in stages. First, God died in the incarnation (when he left heaven and became man). Then he died on the cross at the crucifixion. Finally, God died in our consciousness (the last hundred years or so) (see ATHEISM).

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Analogy, Principle of. The principle of analogy is used in different senses. 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 beings 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 Based 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).

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 negativa*), 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 nontemporal, 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.

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.

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 it is 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 in which 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 Wrights' 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).

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 on 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.

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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 (see HELL).

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 *Proslogium*, *Monologion*, *Cur Deus Homo?*, and *Truth*. Philosophically, Anselm’s ideas were molded by Plato (428–348 BC). 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.

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).

Anselm's Arguments for God. Although he is most famous for his ontological argument for God, Anselm had many other arguments for God (in his *Monologion*). He argued from goodness to a Supreme Good and from more nearly perfect to a Most Perfect Being. His argument from existence to an ultimate Cause of existence is as follows:

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). 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 Immanuel Kant notwithstanding. Anselm has had a positive impact on many modern and contemporary thinkers, including René *Descartes, Benedict *Spinoza, Charles Harts-horne, 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.

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