6

The Rationality of the Christian Worldview

Classical apologists seek to show that the Christian worldview is rational or reasonable and therefore worthy of belief. The characteristic approach they take to accomplish this task is a two-step or two-stage argument. First, classical apologists seek to demonstrate that theism—the general type of worldview that affirms the existence of one personal Creator God and that is associated historically with Judaism, Islam, and Christianity—is true. Arguments of a deductive logical structure—'proofs' in the usual strict sense—are typical of this stage, although many apologists in this tradition also use empirical arguments (especially for creation) and claim only to show that there are good reasons to think that God exists. In the second step or stage of the apologetic, the classical apologist argues that, given the existence of God, the evidence for Jesus Christ and the inspiration of the Bible are sufficient to show that Christianity is true. At this stage the arguments are usually more inductive, and in fact are typically identical to the sorts of arguments used by evidentialists in regards to such subjects as the resurrection of Christ.

William Lane Craig explains the method in just this way. He acknowledges that the main argument he favors in support of belief in God does not prove everything we might like about God, but is rather proof "simply of a Personal Creator of the universe, and then the argument can proceed from there."

> Has this Creator remained distant and aloof from the world that he has made, or has he revealed himself more fully to humankind that we might know him more completely?

> Here one moves to the claims of Jesus of Nazareth to be the unique personal revelation of such a Creator. It will then be the Christian evidentialist's turn to take over the oars from the natural theologian.[1]

Scripture as Conclusion

One of the most fundamental questions concerning apologetic method is the role that Scripture plays in apologetic argument. In general, classical apologists seek to make the existence of Scripture as a body of inspired and authoritative writings *the conclusion of the whole apologetic*.

For example, B. B. Warfield argued that the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture were the conclusion toward which apologetics worked, not its presupposition or starting point. "In dealing with sceptics it is not proper to begin with the evidence which immediately establishes Inspiration, but we should first establish Theism, then the historical credibility of the Scriptures, and then the divine origin of Christianity." On the basis of the divine origin of Christianity, one may then go on to argue for the inspiration of Scripture.[2]

Warfield's placement of Scripture at the end of the apologetic argument is reflected explicitly in the structure of some textbooks on apologetics from a classical approach. Norman Geisler's *Christian Apologetics* is a perfect example.[3] Geisler discusses apologetic methodology in Part One and argues for the existence of God in Part Two. In Part Three he presents an apologetic for Christianity per se, beginning with a defense of the belief in the supernatural (chapter 14) and continuing with a defense of the possibility of knowing that God had intervened supernaturally in history (15). Next, Geisler defends the historical reliability of the New

Testament (16) as a prelude to giving an argument for the deity and authority of Christ (17). Only after all this has been established does he conclude with a final chapter on the inspiration and authority of the Bible (18). "The evidence that the Bible is the written word of God is anchored in the authority of Jesus Christ."[4] As we saw in our overview of Geisler's apologetic in chapter 4, the inspiration of Scripture is the twelfth point in his 12-point argument for Christianity.

In treating the authority of Scripture as the conclusion toward which an apologetic is directed, classical apologists seek to avoid begging the question by assuming the authority of Scripture in apologetic arguments directed to unbelievers. These apologists argue that "reason must judge the credentials of any alleged revelation."[5] Doing so is not seen as arrogant or impious because, classical apologists explain, God gave us our faculty of reason and directed his revelation to it. Therefore God expects us to employ our reasoning abilities both to both recognize his true revelation and to detect the fraudulent revelations of other religions. As Stephen Neill put it: "Reason is not the affirmation of the arrogant autonomy of man, fashioning a universe according to his own ideas. It is that faculty in man which makes it possible for him to receive the revelation of God, to receive revelation in the form of the Word of God. But, to receive it, he must be humble, and ready to listen to God, whenever and however He speaks."[6]

Classical apologists believe that human beings are responsible to use their reasoning faculties to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1). They deny that testing revelations from God is a manifestation of human autonomy that elevates the mind as the final authority for truth. Rather, just as it is reasonable to look for credentials before submitting to a human authority in any given field, so it is reasonable to submit to the authority of revelation once it is shown to be well founded on the basis of God-given rationality. As Gordon R. Lewis

argues, "To be responsible before the Bible, the unbeliever must have enough judgment to know why he should determine his lifestyle by Scripture rather than the Koran or the Book of Mormon. The use of systematic consistency to distinguish the Bible from the Koran in no way detracts from the Bible's authority. It verifies the Bible's claim above all competitors."[7]

Negatively, classical apologists seek to refute common objections to biblical inspiration. This refutation involves both direct answers to specific objections and observations about the assumptions or presuppositions of those who reject biblical inspiration or inerrancy. Geisler, for example, in *Inerrancy*, a book he edited for the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, contributed a chapter entitled "Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Errancy." There he examines the modern neoevangelical drift from the historical biblical doctrine of inerrancy. He traces the current crisis in biblical authority to philosophical presuppositions derived from various unbiblical philosophies.[8] Geisler's thesis is that "contemporary neoevangelical denials of inerrancy borrow from one or more of these alien and unjustified philosophical presuppositions."[9] The solution to such antibiblical presuppositions, for classical apologists like Geisler, is to reexamine the worldviews of those who hold them and make the case for a theistic worldview in which the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture will not be philosophically scandalous.

Disproving Other Worldviews

A **worldview** is the sum of a person's basic assumptions, held consciously or subconsciously, about life and the nature of reality. These assumptions or presuppositions are sometimes "only brought to mind when challenged by a foreigner from another ideological

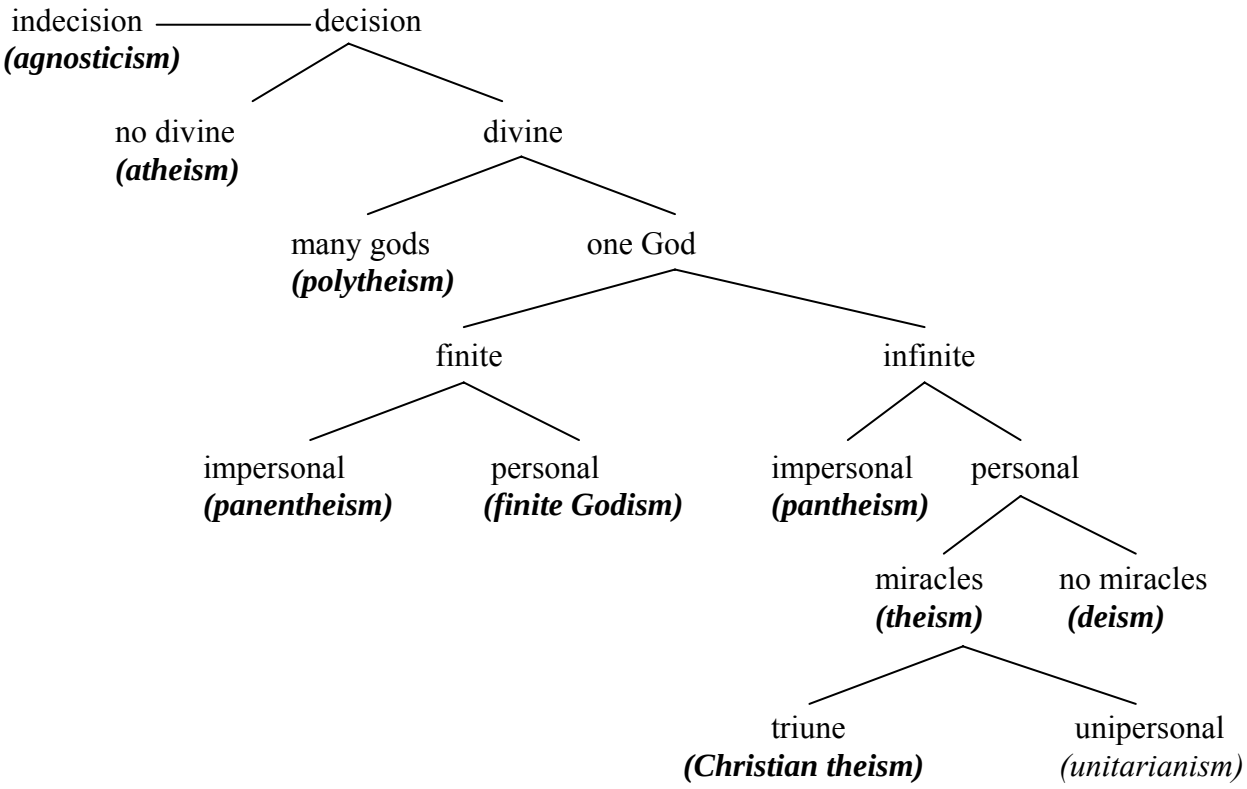
universe."[10] Classical apologists generally maintain that while there may be many internal variations, the actual number of basic worldviews is quite limited. James W. Sire catalogs and contrasts several of these in *The Universe Next Door*, and then comments:

> The fact is that while worldviews at first appear to proliferate, they are made up of answers to questions which have only a limited number of answers. For example, to the question of prime reality, only two basic answers can be given: Either it is the universe that is self-existent and has always existed, or it is a transcendent God who is self-existent and has always existed. Theism and deism claim the latter; naturalism, Eastern pantheistic monism, New Age thought and postmodernism claim the former.[11]

There are different ways of categorizing worldviews because of areas of overlap. Sire devotes separate chapters to eight basic worldviews: Christian theism, deism, naturalism, nihilism, existentialism, Eastern pantheistic monism, the New Age, and postmodernism.[12] Norman Geisler and William Watkins in *Worlds Apart*, another evangelical overview of worldviews, distinguish seven worldviews, and their list differs in some respects from Sire's (deism, pantheism, panentheism, finite godism, polytheism, atheism, and theism). There is more overlap here than may meet the eye: Sire's naturalism is the same worldview as atheism, and nihilism and existentialism are philosophies that seek to apply the atheistic worldview to human life. Moreover, pantheism includes both Eastern pantheistic monism and the New Age. Narrowing the options enables the apologist to show non-Christians the fundamental choices that need to be made. Once they realize there are only a few basic worldviews, the excuse that there are so many beliefs in the world drops away.

One way classical apologists demonstrate that the number of worldview choices is finite and manageable is by presenting the major worldviews as the conclusions to a series of choices

between two opposing alternatives. Doing so also allows the apologist to identify the critical issues that need to be addressed in choosing a worldview. Here again the classical approach's characteristic emphasis on logic is evident. The following chart presents this schema.[13]



C. S. Lewis reduced the number of worldviews even further, to three. In broad terms, he held that most if not all people hold to some variation of three views of reality: materialism or atheism, Hinduism (of which Buddhism was a simplification), and Christianity (of which Islam was a simplification). For Lewis, the best options could be narrowed down to Hinduism and Christianity, and from there to Christianity alone because of the person and work of Christ.[14]

Having narrowed the worldview options to a manageable number, whether two, three, seven, or more, the classical apologist then examines the alternatives to theism in order to show that they are to be rejected. The basic strategy here is to show that these other worldviews are

rationally incoherent. Other considerations may also be pressed (for example, that they are in conflict with certain facts, or that they are unlivable), but the characteristic emphasis of the classical approach to refuting non-Christian worldviews is to show that such worldviews are logically self-contradictory or self-refuting.

If nontheistic worldviews can be eliminated and theism established as the most credible one, this would reduce the number of viable world religions to three: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The classical apologist can then point to various evidences that Christianity is the true fulfillment of original (Old Testament) Judaism and that both Judaism and Islam fail to reckon adequately with the claims of Christ.

Although classical apologists argue that non-Christian religions as well as worldviews are false, they do not claim they are false in every respect. Rather, they typically argue that non-Christian belief systems incorporate significant truths, but also contain grave errors about God and his relation to the world, and so in the end must be deemed inadequate. Thus non-Christian belief systems do contain truth, but as a whole their final answers to life's most fundamental questions are false. Again, the reason for acknowledging truth in other belief systems can be seen graphically from the worldviews chart: most of the worldviews clearly do make one or more right choices.

For example, C. S. Lewis frequently asserted that other religions contained much truth. "And it should (at least in my judgment) be made clear that we are not pronouncing all other religions totally false, but rather saying that in Christ whatever is true in all religions is consummated and perfected."[15] Geisler is careful to note positive features of such worldviews as pantheism, deism, and even atheism before presenting his critical arguments against those

beliefs.[16] The Calvinist theologian B. B. Warfield showed himself consistent with the classical tradition when he made much the same point as Lewis:

> Christianity does not stand in an exclusively antithetical relation to other religions. There is a high and true sense in which it is also their fulfilment. All that enters into the essence of religion is present in them no less than in it, although in a less pure form. They too possess the idea of God, the consciousness of guilt, the longing for redemption: they too possess offerings, priesthood, temples, worship, prayer. Israel's Promise, Christianity's Possession, is also the Desire of all nations.[17]

The classical approach to refuting these non-Christian worldviews may be illustrated with pantheism. Most nontheistic religions have affirmed one of the many forms of **pantheism**, all of which in some way identify or equate God with the All—so that God is in some sense the ultimate and only Reality. Pantheism is closely related to **monism**, according to which reality is ultimately one and not many, a unity rather than a plurality. The rediscovery of Eastern (particularly Indian) culture and the promulgation of Eastern thought in the West have stimulated pantheistic thinking in Western culture, notably in what has come to be known as the New Age movement.

Geisler notes that pantheism is a comprehensive philosophy that focuses on the unity of reality and seeks to acknowledge the immanence and absolute nature of God. In spite of these positive insights, pantheism is an inadequate worldview because "it is actually unaffirmable by man."[18] Specifically, it is self-defeating for a pantheist to claim that individual finite selves are less than real. To assert "*I* believe that *I* am not an individual" is to utter a self-refuting statement (because it assumes the existence of the individual who says "I" while at the same time denying it). Pantheism wrongly assumes "that whatever is not really ultimate is not ultimately or actually

real."[19] Pantheism also cannot adequately account for evil (its assertion that evil is an illusion is meaningless, since pain that is felt is real), and it is unable even to distinguish good from evil (since in theory all is one, nothing can be evil as opposed to good). Geisler also argues that to say that God and the universe are one says nothing meaningful about God and is indistinguishable from atheism.[20]

Proving God's Existence

Disproving nontheistic worldviews and philosophies of life does not necessarily prove theism. Classical apologists, therefore, offer a variety of arguments in support of theism.

The complexity of religious knowledge, and the fact that it concerns a transcendent reality, makes proving God's existence quite complex. There is considerable disagreement among apologists over the value and relevance of the theistic proofs. Immanuel Kant's critique of the traditional theistic proofs continues to be influential, and most philosophers and theologians have moved away from the scholastic mentality of solid and unequivocal arguments for God's existence. Classical apologists, while upholding the validity of most or all of the traditional theistic proofs, are generally more cautious about how compelling they are. They believe that arguments for God's existence can show the reasonableness of belief in God even though they may be less than definitive or not persuasive to everyone.

In brief, four major arguments for God's existence have dominated classical apologetics. The first is the **ontological argument**. First formulated in explicit terms by the eleventh-century philosopher Anselm of Canterbury, this argument reasons from the idea of God as the greatest, most perfect, or necessary being to the existence of that God. The second and third theistic

arguments have ancient roots but received their classical formulation from Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, and are known as the cosmological and teleological arguments. The **cosmological argument** reasons from the existence of the world (Greek, *cosmos*) to the existence of God. The **teleological argument** (from the Greek *telos*, "goal") reasons from the evidence of design in the world to the existence of God as the one who created things with a specific purpose or goal. The fourth major theistic argument emerged in modern times and is the **moral argument**, which reasons from the objectivity and absolute character of moral judgments to the existence of a transcendent God as the ground of morality.

One of the most vigorous twentieth-century defenses of the theistic proofs is *The Resurrection of Theism*, by the evangelical classical apologist Stuart Hackett. In this book Hackett defends the cosmological and teleological arguments specifically against Kant's criticisms. He concludes that the traditional arguments for God lead "to the firm conclusion that theism alone actually poses a solution to the metaphysical problem."[21]

Respect among philosophers for the traditional theistic arguments was at an all-time low for much of the twentieth century. In the late 1960s the Calvinist philosopher Alvin Plantinga helped revive serious interest among professional philosophers in the ontological argument. And in the early 1980s a detailed defense of the cosmological argument by the evangelical classical apologist William Lane Craig (a student of Hackett) prompted philosophers to take it far more seriously as well. The seriousness with which these and other theistic proofs are now viewed can be seen by reviewing academic philosophy journals such as *Religious Studies* and the *International Journal of Philosophy and Religion*.

Classical apologists are careful to issue certain caveats about the use of theistic proofs. One such caveat is that the theistic arguments as they are popularly understood are often invalid;

that is, they need to be formulated carefully and rigorously if they are to be valid. Second, most people actually do not need to hear theistic arguments, since they are not atheists. What they need is evidence that God is the kind of God found in Scripture. [22]

Another caveat, issued by classical apologetics in the Calvinist tradition, is that theistic arguments remind unbelievers of what they already know but have been trying to deny. Warfield, for example, argued that from one perspective everyone already has knowledge of God, though most do not own up to it. People cannot be completely ignorant of God, although they can completely ignore God.[23] We cannot escape all awareness of God. "God is part of our environment."[24] The arguments, though, are still useful and valid.

> This immediate perception of God is confirmed and the contents of the idea developed by a series of arguments known as the "theistic proofs." These are derived from the necessity we are under of believing in the real existence of the infinitely perfect Being, of a sufficient cause for the contingent universe, of an intelligent author of the order and of the manifold contrivances observable in nature, and of a lawgiver and judge for dependent moral beings. . . . The cogency of these proofs is currently recognized in the Scriptures, while they add to them the supernatural manifestations of God in a redemptive process, accompanied at every stage by miraculous attestation. From the theistic proofs, however, we learn not only that a God exists, but also necessarily, on the principle of a sufficient cause, very much of the nature of the God which they prove to exist.[25]

We will now consider three of the four major theistic arguments, focusing on their classical formulation as philosophical proofs for God's existence. (The teleological argument

will be discussed in chapter 10.) Because of its continuing importance in the classical apologetic tradition, the cosmological argument will receive special attention.

THE MORAL ARGUMENT

The moral argument can be viewed as one aspect of a larger argument for God's existence known as the anthropological argument. This broader argument reasons from certain aspects of human nature to the existence of God, and includes arguments from morality, aesthetics, human thought and reason,[26] and the need for meaning, purpose, and hope.

The **moral argument** relates to the universality of moral experience and holds that unless there is a God, there is no ultimate basis for moral law. Classical apologists answer the objection that ethical judgments vary from place to place by arguing that, regardless of time or culture, there is a built-in concept of normative conduct, a universal sense of "ought" and "should." It is true that people can acknowledge the moral law without seeing this as a theistic proof, but this does not mean that such a law could have real validity apart from God. The real thrust of this argument lies in the fact that when people express approval or criticism of the actions of others, they are behaving as if theism were true, that is, as if there are such things as absolute rights and absolute wrongs.[27] Classical apologists typically argue that one would have to assume this position in order to criticize it as wrong.

A good example of the moral argument in classical apologetics is the opening section of C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity*. Lewis begins that book by noting that human beings have the idea that they ought to behave in certain ways—what Lewis calls the Law of Human Nature—and yet they do not behave in those ways (26).[28] After arguing that this Law is real and does not derive from human beings themselves but is instead "something above and beyond the ordinary

facts of men's behaviour" (30), he asks what lies behind the Law. "We want to know whether the universe simply happens to be what it is for no reason or whether there is a power behind it that makes it what it is" (33). The Law shows us that there is such "a Power behind the facts, a Director, a Guide" (34). Lewis hastens to caution, "We have not yet got as far as the God of any actual religion, still less the God of that particular religion called Christianity. We have only got as far as a Somebody or Something behind the Moral Law. We are not taking anything from the Bible or the Churches, we are trying to see what we can find out about this Somebody on our own steam" (37). Lewis goes on to argue that we can infer that this Somebody is rather like a mind, one unyielding in his moral expectations of us, and one whose expectations we have failed to meet (37-38). This strategy of formulating an argument for a general notion of God prior to introducing specific Christian claims is characteristic of the classical approach.

THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The **ontological argument** is the only philosophical theistic proof that reasons in a purely *a priori* fashion (from certain assumptions or ideas as given). The first form of this argument as developed by Anselm was largely ignored until René Descartes revived it in the seventeenth century. The Cartesian formulation was later refuted by Kant, but it continues to resurface in contemporary philosophy of religion, along with Anselm's second form, which adds the concept of necessary existence. Influential advocates of some form of the ontological argument have included Charles Hartshorne (a process theologian who uses it to support a panentheist worldview) and Alvin Plantinga (a Reformed philosopher).[29]

There are many forms of the ontological argument, some too technical to discuss here. Perhaps one of the simplest forms (if any of them may be called simple) is based on Anselm's second version of the argument as restated by various modern philosophers.[30]

1. The existence of a necessary Being must be either (a) a necessary existence, (b) an impossible existence, or (c) a possible but not necessary existence.
2. But the existence of a necessary Being is not an impossible existence because (so far as we can see) there is nothing contradictory about this concept.
3. Nor is the existence of a necessary Being a possible but not necessary existence, since this would be a self-contradictory claim.
4. Therefore, the existence of a necessary Being is a necessary existence.
5. Therefore, a necessary Being necessarily exists.

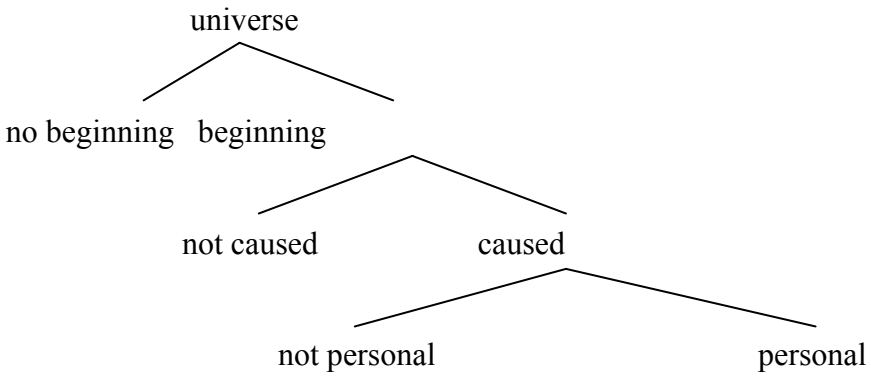
Although classical apologists employ a wide variety of arguments for God's existence, most do not accept the ontological argument. Most apologists and philosophers continue to accept the rebuttal that the ontological argument commits the fallacy of deducing the existence of God from the concept of God. For example, the formulation given above can be criticized by alleging that all point 4 means is that *if* a necessary Being exists, his existence must be a necessary existence. This still leaves open whether a necessary Being exists in the first place. Most classical apologists concur with Geisler's conclusion: "No valid ontological proof has been given that makes it rationally inescapable to conclude that there is a necessary Being."[31]

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The **cosmological argument** reasons from the nature of the world as temporal and contingent to the conclusion that an eternal, necessary being must exist. Proponents argue that if

anything now exists, something must be eternal, or else something not eternal must have emerged from nothing. Since the notion of something emerging from an absolute nothing is generally considered absurd, the principal options are that either the universe is eternal or it is the product of an eternal and necessary being. Two main forms of the cosmological argument enjoy widespread support among contemporary classical apologists.

One form reasons from the fact of a beginning for the universe to the existence of a Beginner. This argument is known as the *kalām* cosmological argument, and was first developed by medieval Muslim philosophers. As articulated by William Lane Craig, the *kalām* argument is essentially a philosophical, deductive proof.[32] It may be formulated as a series of logical alternatives, as follows.[33]



Craig himself offers the following simple form of the argument:

> Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
>
> The universe began to exist.
>
> Therefore, the universe has a cause.

Craig argues that the first premise is "intuitively obvious" and should be accepted without trying to base it on something else.[34] He then defends the second premise on both

philosophical and scientific grounds. His principal argument here is a philosophical argument based on the impossibility of a temporally infinite past. The idea of time extending backward infinitely (what is known as an **infinite regress**), through an actually infinite series of moments or events, is said to be inherently irrational. Therefore, on *a priori* philosophical grounds, this argument concludes that the universe must have had a beginning.[35] The third statement is a conclusion that follows necessarily from the foregoing two premises but leaves open the question of what this cause is. Craig offers additional philosophical and scientific arguments in support of the belief "that it is a personal being who caused the universe."[36]

Although the *kalām* argument as originally formulated is a deductive philosophical proof, Craig and other classical apologists supplement this rather abstract argument with the scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning. The argument here is based on the virtual consensus among cosmologists that this beginning occurred in what is called the big bang. It has been pointed out that even if a series of big bangs were postulated (for which there is no evidence), it is clear that the universe would not oscillate through such a series from eternity.[37]

The second major form of the cosmological argument originates from Thomas Aquinas; its most notable advocate among contemporary apologists is Norman Geisler.[38] Geisler developed a modified form of the Thomistic cosmological argument that begins with the premise, not that the universe must have had a beginning (as in the *kalām* argument), but that there are undeniably finite, contingent, and temporal things. According to Geisler, the *kalām* argument is suggestive but not demonstrative. In brief, his argument states that "if any finite being exists, then an infinite Being exists as an actual and necessary ground for finite being."[39] If the universe is contingent, it requires a cause—and its ultimate cause cannot be contingent because of the problem of infinite regress. (Note that both Craig's and Geisler's versions of the

cosmological argument appeal at some point to the impossibility of an infinite regress.) There must be, then, an uncaused or necessary being. Geisler sets out the argument in several of his books; here is one of his earliest and simplest versions:

1. Some limited, changing being(s) exist(s).

2. The present existence of every limited, changing being is caused by another.

3. There cannot be an infinite regress of causes of being.

4. Therefore, there is a first Cause of the present existence of these beings.

5. The first Cause must be infinite, necessary, eternal, simple, unchangeable, and one.

6. This first uncaused Cause is identical with the God of the Judeo-Christian tradition.[40]

Geisler explicates and defends each premise in detail, and then systematically argues that none of the usual objections validly apply to his restated cosmological argument. According to him, this argument from "existential causality," while not rationally inescapable, passes the test of undeniability.

Opponents have raised a variety of objections to these arguments. For example, they claim that reasoning from the finite, temporal, or contingent nature of all things in the universe to the conclusion that the universe itself is finite, temporal, or contingent commits the *fallacy of composition*. This fallacy occurs when the attributes of the parts are attributed to the whole (for example, it would be a mistake to reason from the premise that all atoms are invisible to the conclusion that all physical objects, since they are composed of atoms, should also be invisible!). One answer to this objection is that arguments appealing to composition are often valid (for example, if all the pieces of a puzzle are red, the puzzle as a whole will also be red). Furthermore, at least some forms of the cosmological argument do not appeal to composition.

For example, Geisler's argument appeals to the existence of *any* or *some* finite beings; it does not require the assumption that the universe as a whole is finite.

Another criticism of the cosmological argument is that it moves from finite effects to an infinite cause. A finite effect, it is argued, requires only a finite cause. Classical apologists maintain that this criticism misunderstands the argument. It is true that a finite effect implies *for itself* only a finite cause, but such a finite cause must itself have been caused, and so forth. That is, a finite effect can be directly produced by a finite cause, but ultimately the whole reality of finite causes requires an infinite cause—an "uncaused cause," as it is often called.

Yet another objection is that the argument begs the question by assuming what it sets out to prove. The *kalām* argument, in particular, is often criticized for reasoning from the inconceivability of an actual infinite series to its nonexistence. It is suggested that what seems inconceivable to the human mind is not necessarily nonexistent. Defenders of this form of the cosmological argument typically respond that the issue is not subjective inconceivability (what one person's mind can conceive) but objective irrationality (whether the concept is rationally coherent).

The Deductive Problem of Evil

The problem of evil has been used by such thinkers as David Hume, H. G. Wells, and Bertrand Russell to challenge the existence of an omnipotent and benevolent God. Theists believe the problem is soluble, "since the events we condemn and the moral law by which we condemn them are both traceable to the same Source."[41] Historically, the problem has most

commonly been set forth formally as an apparent contradiction among three propositions (often called the **inconsistent triad**):

1. God is all-loving (God *would* eliminate evil if he could).
2. God is all-powerful (God *could* eliminate evil is he wanted).
3. Evil exists (God *does not* eliminate evil).

This problem has elicited a number of **theodicies**,[42] or explanations for the occurrence of evil in a world made by God, but classical apologists agree that these three propositions are not incompatible or inconsistent with one another. In essence, there are five logically distinguishable responses to this problem. One may (1) deny that God exists (atheism), (2) deny that God is all-loving (dualism), (3) deny that God is all-powerful (finitism), (4) deny that evil exists (illusionism), or (5) affirm that all three of the propositions in the list above are true (theism). The strategy used by classical apologists is to criticize proposed theodicies that solve the problem by denying one of these propositions and then to show that affirming all the propositions is not irrational.

Atheism. The first alternative, atheism, argues that an all-good and all-powerful God must not exist, because he could destroy all evil and would want to destroy all evil, but does not. Moreover, God evidently cannot do the best, since this is not the best of all possible worlds. Most classical apologists relate these objections to the implications of a world where moral creatures have been given the freedom to make real choices, and to the concept that if an all-perfect, all-powerful God does exist, there must be a good purpose for evil. Moreover, although God has not *yet* destroyed evil, he will do so, and in a way that leads to the best possible world. That is, although "*this is not the best of all possible worlds, it is the best of all possible ways (i.e., a necessary way) to achieve the best of all possible worlds*."[43]

Dualism. While the older forms of religious dualism are not influential today, various theories that question the absolute goodness of God continue to be defended. Classical apologists reject the view that God's goodness is different from what humanity calls good, because it renders the goodness of God nugatory and meaningless. In a similar way, they criticize the views that God is somehow "beyond" good and evil, or that all evils are punishments for sin, as inadequate and distorted solutions.

Finitism. The theodicy that God is unable to control or stop evil has been advocated by John Stuart Mill, William James, Edgar S. Brightman, and the Jewish rabbi Harold Kushner. Classical apologists criticize this view because a finite God cannot assure the final triumph of good, and being finite, would need a Creator to explain its existence.

Illusionism. The denial of the reality of evil is an approach to the problem that is standard in much of Eastern religion and philosophy, and has gained ground in Western culture. Geisler points out that illusionism cannot account satisfactorily for the origin of the illusion of evil. He also observes that there is no practical difference between viewing pain and evil as illusions or viewing them as actual realities.

Theism. In addition to offering logical objections to each of these options, classical theists develop a positive case for the theistic solution to the problem of evil. Geisler's argument is a good model of the classical approach. He considers five hypothetical alternatives for theism:

1. God could have created nothing at all.
2. God could have created only beings who were not free.
3. God could have created beings who were free to sin but did not sin.
4. God could have created beings who were free but must sin.
5. God could have created beings who were free to sin and did sin.

The first and second options appear least desirable, and the fourth appears incoherent (if beings *must* sin, they are not free). The third option would appear to be the most desirable, but Geisler argues that what is logically possible and even morally desirable may not be actually achievable. In short, according to Geisler, if God created beings who were free to sin, he could not at the same time guarantee that they did not sin. "The actual alternatives for theism are dictated by the kind of world we do have, not the kind of world there might have been."[44]

Geisler continues by distinguishing the metaphysical, moral, and physical aspects of the problem of evil, all of which must be resolved to have a complete theodicy. Concerning the metaphysical problem, Geisler follows the lead of Augustine and Aquinas: "Metaphysically speaking, evil has no essence or being of its own; it is a privation of the essence or being of another."[45] Evil is the lack of good resulting from the corruption actualized by human freedom. Thus the answer to the metaphysical problem of evil leads to the moral problem of evil, which Geisler traces to human freedom. Classical apologists usually make this **free-will defense** a centerpiece of their theodicy. They point out that the same conditions that are necessary for a volitional response to love also create the possibility of a rejection of that love. "Even God could not create free men without at the same time creating men who were free to rebel."[46]

The classical apologist, then, reasons that evil, or at least the possibility of evil, is a necessary condition and byproduct of a maximally perfect moral world. After examining the alternatives available to the theistic God, Geisler concludes that "a world with evil is a morally necessary prerequisite to the most perfect world possible. A less perfect moral world is possible, but then it would not be the most perfect moral world that an infinitely perfect God could achieve. In brief, permitting evil is the best way to produce the best world."[47] That this world is the best way to the best world will eventually receive **eschatological verification**—a

confirmation at the end of history, in the Final Judgment, of the truth of this answer to the problem of evil.[48] This is an affirmation of the biblical promise that evil will disappear in the consummation of history. "Evil belongs to history; it is not in the eternal constitution of things."[49] Suspension of final judgment is necessary because of the historically bound and finite character of the human perspective. In the meantime, Geisler maintains, we have enough evidence to see that the present world fulfills the necessary conditions, in light of human freedom, that will lead to the best possible world:

> But an optimally perfect moral world should contain four components: the process leading to the final achievement of a world where humans are free but never will do any evil; a world wherein is permitted the full and final uncoerced exercise of moral freedom; a world in which there is permitted the presence of enough evil to provide both the condition for the achievement of higher moral virtues and a comprehensive lesson of the wrongness of evil for free creatures; a world where free creatures learn for themselves why evil is wrong.[50]

Finally, Geisler maintains that all physical evil is to be explained either as a consequence of God's granting free choice to creatures or as a contribution to God's purpose to produce the greatest good. Some physical evil results directly and indirectly from one's own free choices and directly and indirectly from the free choices of others. God may use some physical evil as a warning about moral evils or greater physical evils. Some physical evil occurs because higher forms of life live on lower forms.

Geisler responds to a number of objections to his theodicy with respect to physical evil, including the implication that the end justifies the means. He contends that God has utilitarian *goals* (the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run) but does not employ utilitarian

means (doing evil that good may come). Geisler therefore rejects the idea that a good end justifies evil means.[51]

Miracles as the Credentials of Revelation

The miracles of the Bible are not incidental but integral to Christian theism. Before the modern era, they were generally viewed as contributing to the apologetic for Christianity. In the modern era, the philosophical and scientific objections raised against miracles have led to a reversal of their status in apologetics. Now, instead of citing the biblical miracles in defense of the Christian faith, apologists frequently find themselves having to defend the biblical miracles and even the very possibility of miracles. Thus miracles have seemingly been transformed from an apologetic asset to an apologetic liability.

Christian apologists have responded to these modern assaults in a variety of ways. The basic strategy taken by classical apologists has been threefold. First, they emphasize that miracles are rational concepts in the context of a theistic worldview. Second, they give special attention to answering *a priori* objections to miracles that are based on philosophical or scientific misconceptions. And third, they argue that given a theistic worldview, the miracles of the Bible do provide evidential support or confirmation for the Christian faith.

Consider first the matter of the worldview context of miracles. In an atheistic or naturalistic worldview, miracles are by definition impossible because there is no reality beyond the physical universe to effect the miraculous. Likewise in a pantheistic or panentheistic worldview, the divine is really a function or aspect of the universe, and again miracles are impossible. In a sense the pantheist might regard everything as a "miracle," that is, as a

manifestation of the divine. But, as Warfield points out, a definition of miracle that broadens the concept to everything renders the concept meaningless. Warfield observes that whereas deism regards God as utterly transcendent and denies that God ever intervenes in the world, pantheism regards God as purely immanent and on that basis holds that God never needs to intervene because everything that occurs is an expression of the divine. Thus both deism and pantheism deny the supernatural, though pantheism does so by redefinition: "When the natural is defined as itself supernatural, there is no place left for a distinguishing supernatural."[52] Thus the key to defending belief in miracles according to classical apologists is to defend theism. Once it is understood that the universe was created by an infinite-personal God who is both transcendent and immanent, the possibility that this God could do miracles is a given. Note how Craig overcame his own intellectual prejudice against miracles: "In my own case, the virgin birth was a stumbling block to my coming to faith—I simply could not believe such a thing. But when I reflected on the fact that God had created the entire universe, it occurred to me that it wouldn't be too difficult for him to create the genetic material necessary for a virgin birth! Once the non-Christian understands who God is, then the problem of miracles should cease to be a problem for him."[53] In his debate with radical New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan (who teaches that after the crucifixion Jesus' body was not given a proper burial and was eaten by dogs), Craig pressed this very point. During the dialogue Craig led Crossan, who professes to believe in God as a matter of faith but not fact, to reveal that in his opinion God's existence is not an objective reality:

> **Craig**: During the Jurassic age, when there were no human beings, did God exist?
>
> **Crossan**: Meaningless question.

Craig: But surely that's not a meaningless question. It's a factual question. Was there a Being who was the Creator and Sustainer of the universe during that period of time when no human beings existed? It seems to me that in your view you'd have to say no.

Crossan: Well, I would probably prefer to say no because what you're doing is trying to put yourself in the position of God and ask, "How is God apart from revelation? How is God apart from faith?" I don't know if you can do that.[54]

Craig comments on this exchange at the end of the book: "What this exchange revealed is that on a factual level Dr. Crossan's view is, as I suspected, atheism. 'God' is just an interpretive construct which human beings put on the universe in the same way that 'Christ' is an interpretive construct which Christian believers put on the purely human Jesus. In this light, it is no surprise at all that Dr. Crossan believes neither in miracles nor in the resurrection of Jesus as events of history."[55]

It is essential to the theistic worldview to believe not only in a God, but also that this God created the world as a place of order. Only in a world where natural law ordinarily operates could we even recognize an event as a miracle, as C. S. Lewis argues:

> First we must believe in a normal stability of nature, which means we must recognize that the data offered by our senses recur in regular patterns. Secondly, we must believe in some reality beyond Nature. When both beliefs are held, and not till then, we can approach with an open mind the various reports which claim that this super- or extra-natural reality has sometimes invaded and disturbed the sensuous content of space and time which makes our "natural" world. The belief in such a supernatural reality itself can neither be proved nor disproved by experience.[56]

For example, if babies were conceived in completely random and unpredictable ways, sometimes following sexual relations and sometimes not, no one would be surprised to learn that a young peasant girl had become pregnant before getting married. Only in a universe where babies normally came in the same way time after time would a virgin birth be recognizable as a special act of the Creator. The theistic worldview is not to be confused with the magical worldview in which "impossible things are happening every day."[57] In the theistic worldview God is providentially involved in everything that occurs, but he also intervenes and acts more directly or overtly in the world to accomplish special purposes. These overt interventions are called miracles. In a theistic universe the possibility of miracles cannot be fairly ruled out. This means, as Lewis points out, that the "various reports which claim that this super- or extra-natural reality has sometimes invaded and disturbed the sensuous content of space and time which makes our 'natural' world" should be approached with an open mind and evaluated on their own merits rather than rejected out of hand.[58]

The second aspect of the classical apologetic for miracles is the refutation of *a priori* objections to belief in miracles based on philosophical or scientific misconceptions. For example, it is often maintained that miracles are *scientifically impossible*—that they "transgress," "violate," or "contradict" the laws of nature. Apologists counter that this is based on a "misleading analogy between nature's laws and the laws of society."[59] The biblical miracles are not *anti*natural but *super*natural; they are not caused *contrary to* nature ***(contra naturam)***, but are rather caused by an agent who *transcends* nature ***(extra naturam)***, God. The laws of science are descriptive of how nature normally operates, not prescriptive of what must always occur; they do not legislate what God, who transcends space and time and instituted those laws in the first place, can or cannot do. Classical apologists point out that it would require a

metaphysical assumption that the universe is a system closed to any influences apart from the four-dimensional space-time continuum to maintain that the laws of nature could not be superseded by a higher principle on certain occasions. The idea of a deterministic or mechanistic universe is not scientific but metaphysical, as is theism. The underlying issue with respect to miracles, then, is whether God exists; if so, miracles are possible.

Third, classical apologists argue that, given a theistic worldview, the biblical miracles provide positive evidence for the truth claims of Christianity. This is because belief in God does not automatically imply an endorsement of any or all miracle claims. Although the reality of God's existence proves that miracles *may* have occurred, it does not prove that they *have* occurred. (If it did, theists would have to accept all miracle claims of all religions, or at least admit that any of them might be true.) Whether miracles have in fact occurred is a matter of history, and must be determined by historical investigation. Classical apologists do not ask that biblical miracle claims be accepted uncritically. They do, however, insist that once the existence of the type of God described in the Bible is conceded, the historical evidence for miracle claims must be taken seriously. They urge that the same canons of historical criticism that are applied to other historical records be applied as well to the biblical accounts without prejudging the case with metaphysical assumptions. Once this is done, classical apologists believe that the biblical miracles will be found to be in a class by themselves, and that the evidence for these miracles will be seen as compelling.

In one sense classical apologists argue that the question of miracles cannot be addressed until one has established agreement that God exists. However, Christianity entails certain unique claims about the nature and purposes of God, such as that he is triune or that he intends to save a segment of humanity on the basis of his gracious redemption rather than their works. The

miracles of Jesus Christ in particular reveal *this* God to be the true God. In a sense, then, the biblical miracles do function as proofs, not of "a God" in a generic sense, but of *God*, the true, biblical God.

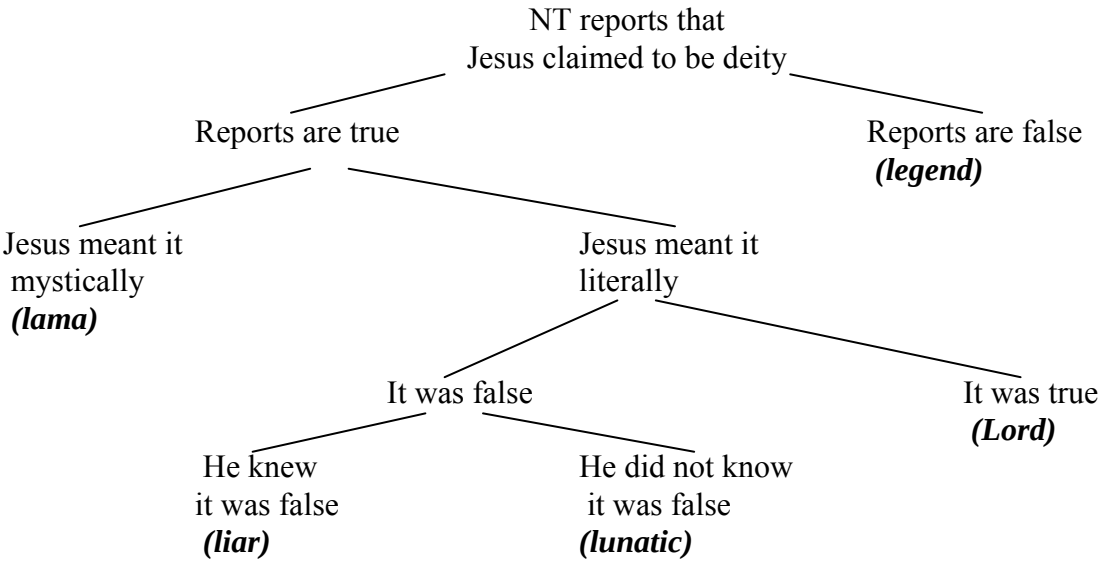
Jesus: The Alternatives

Having demonstrated the possibility of the supernatural, the classical apologist is ready to defend the actuality of the biblical miracles and in particular the claims to deity made by and about Jesus Christ. Norman Geisler's argument for the deity of Christ is typical of the classical approach, and basically proceeds in two steps: (1) Christ claimed to be God; (2) Christ proved himself to be God.[60]

An alternate form of the argument lays out all the alternatives to the Christian view of Jesus as God and then shows that they must be rejected. The simplest form of this process-of-elimination argument is known as the Trilemma,[61] and presents three possibilities—Jesus really was God (or *Lord*), Jesus knew he wasn't God (a *liar*), or Jesus mistakenly thought he was God (a *lunatic*). Apologists need say almost nothing in refutation of the second and third views, since nearly everyone recognizes Jesus to have been at the very least a person of great wisdom and moral courage. This leaves as the only possibility, though, that Jesus really was God.

For the Trilemma argument to be complete, however, it must take into consideration that Jesus did not even claim to be God (step one of Geisler's argument). There are two lines of reasoning by which non-Christians have denied that Jesus claimed to be God. They have either denied that he made the claims to deity reported in the Gospels or argued that these should be interpreted to mean something other than a claim to deity. The one clear alternative way of

interpreting Jesus' claims to deity is to interpret them in an Eastern religious sense as mystical affirmations of a unity with God that all people potentially may realize. We thus have a total of five possible views of Jesus—a set of alternatives that Peter Kreeft has called the Quintilemma.[62] We may represent the Quintilemma as a series of dilemmas, as follows:



Again, classical apologists believe that a great deal has been gained if one can simply show that Jesus did in fact claim to be God. After all, most people will hesitate to assert that Jesus *falsely* made such a claim for himself. This is why most skeptics and unorthodox believers simply deny that Jesus ever made such lofty claims.

We will sketch here how classical apologists dispose of the four non-Christian alternatives and thus conclude in favor of the Christian view that Jesus was God.

JESUS' CLAIMS: THE GOSPELS' REPORTS

The primary premise of the Quintilemma is that the Gospels report Jesus claiming to be God. Perhaps the simplest way of undercutting the argument is to dismiss the Gospel reports as historically unreliable. Admittedly many New Testament scholars today contend that Jesus did not claim to be deity; the Gospel accounts of Jesus claiming divine titles or prerogatives, they contend, are later mythical or legendary accretions and do not represent the views of the historical Jesus.

Evangelical scholars and apologists have given enormous attention to rebutting modern skepticism about the historical reliability of the New Testament, especially of the Gospels. Classical apologists appeal to the same types of evidences in defense of the Gospels and the rest of the New Testament as do evidentialist apologists (whose treatment of these matters we will discuss in Part Three), with the aim of showing that the Gospel accounts of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ possess both authenticity and reliability. Their *authenticity* has to do with determining that the New Testament as we now possess it is an accurate representation of what the writers originally wrote. Their *reliability* has to do with determining whether the writers had access to the facts of which they speak, and whether they are credible, faithful witnesses to those facts.

The issue of credibility, or believability, is of course at the heart of the matter. There are two aspects to this question, both of which classical apologists address. The first is whether the New Testament writers, particularly the Gospel writers, *want to be believed* as reporting historical fact. Against those who claim that the Gospels did not have an historical purpose, classical apologists such as Geisler argue that it is highly improbable that the early church had no biographical interests, and explain why the Gospels are vastly different from folklore and myth. The second issue is whether the Gospel writers *can be believed* as reporting historical fact.

Here classical apologists employ a two-pronged defense. Positively they point to the archaeological and secular testimony to the events recorded in the Gospels. Negatively they emphasize that there is nothing incredible about the miracle accounts in the Gospels if the existence of God is admitted.

One aspect of the classical apologetic response to the claim that the Gospel accounts are legendary reflects the distinctive method of the classical approach. As we noted, the Gospels purport to be historical accounts about Jesus. Geisler observes that critics of the Gospels have often alleged either that the apostles and other eyewitnesses had experienced hallucinations of Jesus risen from the dead or that the apostles (or later Christians) had fabricated their accounts about Jesus performing miracles, rising from the dead, and claiming to be deity. Geisler argues that neither of these explanations work and that we should conclude that the Gospels tell us the truth about Jesus.[63] But this argument amounts to an application of the Trilemma to the apostles: either they were delusional (*lunatics*), or they (or the Gospel writers) were *liars*, or they were telling the truth and Jesus really presented himself to the apostles as the *Lord*.

JESUS' CLAIMS: WHAT THEY MEANT

The second line of defense against the Christian view of Jesus as God is to argue that he really did not claim to be God in the Jewish sense. Although there are various heretical distortions of the biblical teaching that Jesus is God, we are here concerned with interpretations that take Jesus' claims completely outside of any professing Christian context. In practice there is only one such interpretation: that when Jesus spoke or acted as if he were God, this is to be understood in an Eastern, pantheistic, and mystical sense. That is, in this view God is all or in all, and Jesus was merely claiming to have realized what is potentially or ultimately true about all of

us—that we are all God. But this means that Jesus was a kind of Eastern guru or lama, a religious holy man who had realized his oneness with the divine and had sought to transmit this understanding to others.

Classical apologists have responded to this theory with a battery of arguments. Peter Kreeft and Ronald Tacelli well represent the classical response when they assert that Jesus could not have been a mystical guru "for one very simple reason: because he was a Jew."[64] Kreeft and Tacelli point out a number of glaring contradictions between the teachings of Judaism in general and Jesus in particular and, on the other hand, those of mystics and gurus. The Jewish belief that Jesus taught was a public faith in a personal Creator who could be known because he had taken the initiative and revealed himself. Eastern gurus taught a secret, mystical experience of an impersonal divine reality in all things that is beyond knowledge but can be experienced by those who pursue it with religious fervor.[65] Kreeft and Tacelli present a number of other differences and conclude: "So we have eight flat-out contradictions, all of them crucially important, between the teaching of Jesus as we have it in the New Testament and the teaching of the Eastern mystics and gurus. To classify Jesus as a guru is as accurate as classifying Marx as a capitalist."[66]

JESUS' CLAIMS: WERE THEY TRUE?

If Jesus really did claim to be God, and if he meant this in the Jewish sense of being the personal Creator of the universe, then the simpler Trilemma comes directly into play. Classical apologists know that if they can reduce the options to these three—liar, lunatic, or Lord—they will have a convincing case for all but the most jaundiced, hostile opponent of Christianity. The reason is simple: even the most avowed non-Christians are incapable of convincing themselves, let alone others, that Jesus was a deceiver or demented. And those really are the choices if Jesus

claimed to be God and yet was merely a human being. C. S. Lewis made this point in what may be the most often quoted passage in twentieth-century apologetic literature:

> A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.[67]

For Further Study

Craig, William Lane. *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*. New York: Macmillan, 1980. An historical study of the cosmological argument, reviewing the most influential versions of the argument in the history of philosophy.

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_____. *Miracles and Modern Thought*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982. A defense of the possibility of miracles and answers to objections from modern skeptics.

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_____. *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*. 2nd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1960. Arguably Lewis's most ambitious, rigorous apologetic work, thoughtfully revised in light of criticisms he received of the first edition.

_____. *The Problem of Pain*. London: Centenary Press, 1940; New York: Macmillan, 1943; paperback ed., 1962. Lewis's insightful treatment of the problem of evil, still somewhat unusual in its approach.

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[1]Craig, "A Classical Apologist's Closing Remarks," in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Cowan, 320-21.

[2]Archibald Alexander Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, "Inspiration," *Presbyterian Review* 6 (April 1881): 227.

[3]Other good examples include Stuart C. Hackett, *The Reconstruction of the Christian Revelation Claim: A Philosophical and Critical Apologetic* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984); Winfried Corduan, *No Doubt About It: The Case for Christianity* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1997).

[4]Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 353.

[5]Richard L. Purtill, *Reason to Believe* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 119.

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[6]Stephen Neill, *Anglicanism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 123.

[7]Gordon R. Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics* (Chicago: Moody, 1976), 204; cf. Purtill, *Reason to Believe*, 119-27. We should note that Gordon Lewis is not, strictly speaking, a classical apologist, but rather advocates the approach taken by Edward John Carnell (see chapter 20).

[8]Norman L. Geisler, "Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Errancy," in *Inerrancy*, ed. Geisler (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979), 305-24.

[9]Ibid., 306.

[10]James W. Sire, *The Universe Next Door: A Basic Worldview Catalog*, 3d ed. (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1997), 17.

[11]Ibid., 194.

[12]In the first edition of the book (1976), postmodernism was not discussed.

[13]The chart is based in part on Peter Kreeft, "Introduction: Why Debate the Existence of God?" in *Does God Exist? The Debate Between Theists and Atheists*, by J. P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1993), 15, and in part on Norman Geisler and William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 16. It should be noted that in practice religions sometimes combine elements of more than one of these worldviews. For example, some forms of Hinduism affirm both pantheism and polytheism.

[14]C. S. Lewis, letter to Sheldon Vanauken, in *A Severe Mercy* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1977), 89-90.

[15]Lewis, "God in the Dock," in *God in the Dock*, 244.

[16]See Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 168-69, 186-87, 207-208, 223-24; Geisler and Watkins, *Worlds Apart*, 60-61, 101, 139, 180-81, 210-11, 249-50.

[17]Warfield, "Christianity and Revelation," in *Shorter Writings*, 1:23.

[18]Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 187.

[19]Ibid., 188.

[20]Ibid., 189.

[21]Hackett, *Resurrection of Theism*, 365.

[22]Cf. Lewis, "Christian Apologetics," in *God in the Dock*, 92, quoted earlier in chapter 4 of this book.

[23]Warfield, "Atheism," in *Shorter Writings*, 1:39.

[24]Ibid., 1:38.

[25]Warfield, "God," in *Shorter Writings*, 1:70, 71.

[26]On this argument, see especially Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis's Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument from Reason* (Downers Grove, Ill.: lnterVarsity, 2003); Symposium on the Argument from Reason (Reppert, et. al.), *Philosophia Christi* 5, 1 (2003): 9-89; "The Argument from Reason and Hume's Legacy," in *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post-Humean Assessment*, ed. James F. Sennett and Douglas Groothuis (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005), 253-70.

[27]G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, Image Books (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959 [1903]), 106-110; C. S. Lewis, *Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1947)*; Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952).

[28]Parenthetical references in this paragraph are to C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, rev. and enlarged ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960).

[29]Modern works on the ontological argument include Karl Barth, *Anselm:* Fides Quaerens Intellectum: *Anselm's Proof of the Existence of God in the Context of His Theological Scheme*, 2d ed. (London: SCM; Richmond: John Knox, 1960); Charles Hartshorne, *Anselm's Discovery: A Re-examination of the Ontological Proof for God's Existence* (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1965); John Hick and Arthur C. McGill, eds., *The Many-Faced Argument: Recent Studies on the Ontological Argument for the Existence of God* (London: Macmillan, 1968); Alvin Plantinga, ed., *The Ontological Argument from St. Anselm to Contemporary Philosophers* (London: Macmillan; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, Anchor Books, 1968); Alvin Plantinga, *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974); Sproul, Gerstner, and Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics*, 93-108; Norman Geisler and Winfried Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 123-49; Graham Oppy, *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Brian Leftow, "The Ontological Argument," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Religion*, ed. William J. Wainwright (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 80-115.

[30]See Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 143.

[31]Ibid., 148.

[32]William Lane Craig, *The Existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe* (San Bernardino, Calif.: Here's Life, 1979); *The* Kalām *Cosmological Argument*, Library of Philosophy and Religion (New York: Macmillan, 1979); *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz* (New York: Macmillan, 1980); and Paul Copan and William Lane Craig, *Creation Out of*

Nothing: A Biblical, Philosophical, and Scientific Exploration (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic; Leicester, England: Apollos, 2004). Many other apologists and philosophers have written on the subject since Craig, and all of them are heavily indebted to him. Two recent studies worth mentioning are those by evidentialist R. Douglas Geivett, "The *Kalam* Cosmological Argument," in *To Everyone an Answer*, ed. Beckwith et. al., 61-76; and Garrett J. DeWeese and Joshua Rasmussen, "Hume and the *Kalam* Cosmological Argument," in *In Defense of Natural Theology*, ed. Sennett and Groothuis, 123-49.

[33]Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City*, 18; see 18-42 for Moreland's own excellent presentation of the argument.

[34]Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 92-94.

[35]Ibid., 94-100.

[36]Ibid., 116.

[37]Ibid., 100-116. The scientific argument for God's existence is discussed in chapter 10.

[38]For a recent defense by another evangelical scholar, see W. David Beck, "A Thomistic Cosmological Argument," in *To Everyone an Answer*, ed. Beckwith et. al., 95-107 (a book of essays in honor of Geisler).

[39]Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 207.

[40]Ibid., 175.

[41]Purtill, *Reason to Believe*, 52.

[42]The word *theodicy* comes from the Greek words *theos* (God) and *dikaios* (just), and thus means the project of explaining God's justice in light of the evil in God's world. Although the word

might be taken to imply that apologists are "defending God," the point really is not to defend or justify *God*, but to defend or justify *belief in God* in light of the problem of evil.

[43]Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 313, emphasis in original.

[44]Ibid., 310.

[45]Ibid., 328.

[46]Hugh Silvester, *Arguing With God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1971), 61.

[47]Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 339-40.

[48]Ibid., 353-56.

[49]Arlie J. Hoover, *The Case for Christian Theism* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 256.

[50]Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*, 363.

[51]Ibid., 379-85.

[52]Warfield, "Christianity and Revelation," in *Shorter Writings*, 1:26-27 (quote on 27).

[53]Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 155.

[54]Ibid., 51.

[55]Ibid., 174.

[56]Lewis, "Miracles," in *God in the Dock*, 27.

[57]"Impossible," a song by Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, in their 1957 musical play *Cinderella*.

[58]Lewis, "Miracles," 27.

[59]Hoover, *Case for Christian Theism*, 139.

[60]Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 329, where these are numbers (2) and (3), with point (1) being the reliability of the New Testament. But this point may also be treated as part of the argument for (2). Thus at its simplest level the argument involves two steps.

[61]The term *trilemma* apparently originated with Josh McDowell in his extremely popular apologetic book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* (San Bernardino, Calif.: Campus Crusade for Christ, 1972).

[62]Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, 165, 171. Kreeft and Tacelli use the terms *Lord, liar, lunatic, guru,* and *myth* to designate the five alternatives. An interesting variation on this argument is found in Kenneth Richard Samples, *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 104-119, who adds and refutes another alternative (that Jesus was an extraterrestrial). See also Boa and Bowman, *20 Compelling Evidences that God Exists*, 203-216.

[63]Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 314-22, especially 316.

[64]Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, 165.

[65]Ibid., 166-67.

[66]Ibid., 169.

[67]Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 56; cf. "What Are We to Make of Jesus Christ?" in *God in the Dock*, 156-60.