

Defending Christianity Without Science

As strange as it may seem, the truth is that science provides more and more evidence of God's existence on a daily basis. Indeed, it is almost impossible for science to discard God now, at least as a very credible theory. And it becomes more difficult as time goes on. I only call this strange because so much "common knowledge" says that science is not only incompatible with God, but that science disproves God. But despite the bravado of those claiming this, they are about a century behind the times. The 1920's brought about quantum theory, the Big Bang Theory, and the start of aggressive atheistic governments founded on man's "enlightenment" that sought out and removed the "corrupting" influence of religion. By 1945, the dramatic use of atomic bombs to end World War II made it impossible to deny the validity of quantum theory (and this theory was only in its nascent stage then). By the 1960's, not only was the expanding universe proved beyond doubt, but the horrors of atheistic socialism were so widespread that they could no longer be ignored. While science could discretely walk away from its role in the socialist genocides (famous people such as Albert Einstein and Jean-Paul Sartre convinced people it wasn't the science, but man's capitalistic application of science that caused the horrors), one has to simply *stop* paying attention to what science is revealing about the certainty of an intelligent design behind the formation of the universe. While science has grudgingly accepted that Genesis 1 - 2:3 was an accurate outline of how our universe developed in the 1960's, since then they have found evidence that went from "God is possible," to "God is at least 50% likely," to "God is very likely," to where science can no longer deny the existence of Jehovah without creating an alternative religion. Of course, national stage scientists won't put it in those terms, but one only has to read between the lines of what they *do* say to see the truth behind my claim.

But for now, I want to focus on just how fickle science really is. It *has* to be that way. Science, by its very nature, is about discovery. When one is deliberately looking to find new things, one needs to expect to find new things. And the high degree of credibility science has earned for itself comes from its trying to prove itself wrong (as defined by Karl Popper with his falsifiability criteria). If one honestly attempts to prove oneself wrong in all things, one should expect to be proven wrong on occasion. So while I, as an engineer, have great respect for science, I also have an appreciation for its limits. One should always be careful in trusting what science says today, as the answer may be quite different tomorrow. I do use science to help me apologize the Christian faith because I can, but I also think it worthwhile to look at the great apologists that came after Sir Isaac Newton and Rene Descartes, but before Einstein and Sartre. This was a time when science was on the side of atheism, and the common man was literate enough to understand some of what science said. Should a day come when science moves away from God again, it may be worth the effort to remember how Christians kept their faith during this time. And since so many contemporary atheists are still trapped in this time zone, we have ready-made arguments against them from those that dealt with it when the ideas were new.

There are seven apologists I will focus on, and how their approaches (for better or worse) defended the Christian faith. I will present them in chronological order. They are Blaise Pascal, Jonathan Edwards, George Berkeley (after whom the campus in California is named), Immanuel Kant, George MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis.

A) Blaise Pascal: He was a Catholic whose work became known just before the Scientific Revolution. But he was also part of a sect called Jansenism, which was very Calvinistic in their views. This sect had a history of going back and forth with the Vatican, and their theology was eventually called a heresy. But he is famous for defining the concept of fideism, or the belief that faith is superior to reason. Pascal is also famous for justifying faith in God using an argument known as Pascal's

Wager.

There are two main versions of fideism. One claims that faith leads to reason, and reason makes faith stronger. Stronger faith leads to better reasoning, and this virtuous cycle continues to grow. This is what the Catholic Church believes is the relationship between faith and reason. But popularly, much more attention is given to the other definition: that faith is not only superior to reason, but that faith must be separate from reason. In the next topic, where I speak about Edwards, this later definition can easily be seen, so I won't talk much about it here. Instead, I want to focus on what is known as Pascal's Wager.

In Pascal's Wager, he noted that one can either believe in God or not. Also, regardless of belief, one can either be right or wrong about the belief. If one believes in God and is right, then one has everything to gain. If one does not believe in God and is wrong, then one has everything to lose. But if one either believes in God and is wrong, or does not believe in God and is right, then it doesn't matter. According to Pascal, one is better off believing in God than not, because it is a no-lose situation whereas the other options are no-win situations at best.

Unfortunately, this line of reasoning is not the least bit convincing in winning a debate with a skeptic. When one uses it, one is basically saying, "I got nothing." However, I don't think it is completely useless. With only minor rewording, it *can* be used to snap someone out of their acedia and at least recognize what is at stake. I think C.S. Lewis said it best with "Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important." (taken from his article "Christian Apologetics," and found in the collection *God in the Dock*). Note how Pascal's Wager attempts to scare one into believing in God, whereas Lewis is merely pointing out that belief or non-belief in God is a matter that needs to be taken seriously. One won't convert someone to Christianity with this either, but one can at least give the other a non-threatening reason to question their beliefs in being a skeptic. In other words, make the other prove their point (if they have one) instead of making the Christian do all the work.

B) Jonathan Edwards: The Protestant Reformation, led by Martin Luther, John Calvin and others, was based on a rational (as in using man's reason instead of experience) argument on how Catholic teachings and practices were wrong. The Fathers of Protestantism did not agree on many things, but they looked at intelligent debate as healthy for the faith, and in this they all found common ground. By using rational discussion as their common ground, they all endorsed rational thought as a good thing, and as something necessary to keep religion "honest" with respect to holy scripture. However, the Protestant Reformation also logically led to the Atheistic Revolution -- if the one political office appointed by Jesus (Matthew 16:19) could be considered suspect, then why not consider the whole religion as suspect? And if the religion is suspect, would not God be suspect as well? Indeed, several of the Fathers of Atheism never outright denied God, but rather straw manned God into an irrelevant concept (like Baruch Spinoza and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel did) by following the Protestant example of being able to interpret scripture in a rational manner while free from tradition.

And as the inventions that resulted from scientific discovery routinely provided more and more wonders that seemed like minor miracles, the question of Christianity being legitimate was suddenly in front of everybody. While the miracles of science were small compared to those mentioned in the Bible, they were happening on demand. Once people became accustomed to the daily miracles of science, it was easy to look at Bible stories as exaggerations of natural events. And while such "exaggerations" are fun to read, it was science that was making their lives easier.

Jonathan Edwards was credited with shaping the "First Great Awakening" in what would soon be the United States, while a similar movement called the Evangelical Revival was already taking place in Europe. His most famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," ("Sinners") is useful in understanding what was going on as the skepticism borne of the Scientific Revolution was rapidly growing worldwide. "Sinners" is considered the beginning of an Evangelical movement that persists to this day. Edwards' efforts were not unique, but he epitomizes the idea of using emotions over reason to maintain faith (fideism). If reason leads to skepticism, so they thought, then it follows that emotions lead to faith. The apostolic churches (Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican) remained above this movement (although the Anglican Church only barely), making this primarily a Protestant event.

I find this is quite interesting, as the Fathers of Protestantism originally claimed the Catholic Church was not rational enough, but now some of their religious progeny were abandoning all reason. The Evangelical Movement also brought a larger consensus among Protestants as to what Christianity is. This is also a reversal, as the Fathers of Protestantism thought diversity was essential. It appears to me that using emotion to defy science resulted in many Protestant churches abandoning what their founders once stood for. But don't get me wrong, placing God before their own perceptions is not a bad thing, and if that was all that had happened, then I don't think much harm would have been done. But more did happen.

Rather than just choosing God over science whenever the two appeared to be in *conflict*, some Protestant sects choose God over science no matter how much the two *agreed*. No matter how much evidence is presented to validate the Big Bang Theory (which, remember, was inspired by Genesis), they still refuse to admit that science has any place in God's world. They do not see the universe as a playground God gave us to explore and wonder at, but as a diabolical trap of the devil. This not only creates a totally artificial, and equally unnecessary, barrier between the faith and science, but is contrary to the first Biblical command God gave man: "fill the Earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the Earth," (Genesis 1:28). For us to best meet this command, we ought to know how such things work.

C) George Berkeley: George Berkeley was a prominent Anglican priest in the American colonies. I find the Anglican Church during the period I am writing about to be particularly interesting. They believed themselves to be the "middle ground" between the truth-seeking but heretical Protestants, and the purity-seeking but sadly misled Catholics. As such, they retained the rationalistic characteristics of early Protestantism without giving into emotion, and maintained the purity of apostolic tradition without the "taint" of working for the pope's benefit. Four of the seven apologists I will discuss here were Anglican for at least part of their lives, and I could have easily made it five of eight (Saint John Henry cardinal Newman).

Rather than fight reason with emotion, as Edwards had done, Berkeley attempted to fight rationalism with even deeper rationalism. Rather than fight skeptics over what science revealed, Berkeley denied science was meaningful by suggesting that the material world was only an illusion. There is much merit to his argument, although most people won't understand it. Without a doubt, the best adaptation of his theory in contemporary culture was the Matrix movies of the late 1990's. Since virtually everything we think we know of the material world must be *perceived*, and since our senses are so easily deceived, he questioned the importance of matter and focused on perceptions. His theory did address the inconsistencies of infinitely divisible space and time (which geometry and calculus depend on) which had plagued mathematicians and philosophers at least since ancient Greece. Despite the common man not understanding his theories and scientists not liking them, he has never really been proven wrong. All he needed to explain was why perceptions were so consistent, and his answer was

that a never-sleeping and all-knowing consciousness must exist. Berkeley claimed that this proved the existence of Jehovah.

His ideas became widely known, even by commoners, but were generally received poorly. Naturally, he got little support from the scientists and mathematicians, as he effectively belittled their work. Likewise, the tendency of Christians to say, "The world is real because God said it is real," found him with little support from the very group he was trying to encourage. Even those who cared little for religion still relied on the benefits of science and math, and therefore they found it difficult to accept science and math as an illusion. This leaves the skeptic philosophers, who realized that the concept of the transcendental leads one to God, and so were inspired to fully embrace the opposite by showing that reality was limited to the material. So for about 200 years, just about everybody was trying to prove Berkeley wrong. But since the middle of the 20th Century, when a balance between science and religion began to form and the atheistic philosophies were proven to be disastrous, Berkeley's views began to have a greater impact for Christian theology.

It's difficult to tell if Berkeley's efforts were victimized by the intense emotions of all concerned parties, or if his argument must fail in a world where science is hostile to religion. I hope we won't have another period of science disowning God from which to make comparisons. But one important lesson can be found here. His experience seems to suggest that one cannot simply deny science, but instead must learn to work both within and without the limits of science.

D) Immanuel Kant: What is perhaps most interesting about this Christian apologist is that no one is certain whether he was a Christian or not. He was born into a family that took a very literal interpretation of the Bible, and he clearly rebelled against that brand of Christianity. The writing in his books is clearly in contrast to his fundamentalist upbringing, and he usually runs afoul of the canon of Christian churches of all types. Yet his philosophies often focused on morality, ethics and humanity. While controversial, these philosophies came to conclusions that most Christians agree to. This led him to be called "a theist in agnostic clothing" by his contemporaries. He was also accused of "recreating the ten commandments." While I will not attempt to classify him here, it should come as no surprise that his works have both hurt and helped Christianity. But even his most destructive thought, often called the "Copernican Revolution," shows tremendous restraint on his part. He often came to the point where his works seemed to prove God's existence, yet he refused to admit this, and instead backed off. Apparently frustrated at every turn, he eventually decided that philosophers can think whatever they want, but the practical man must be the one to judge the value of the philosopher's work. To give a slightly different explanation, the better one is able to understand a truth, the less capable one is to judge the practical value of the truth, and *vice versa*. The unspoken implication of this is that only God could both fully understand the nature of things and still retain the perspective to judge its value at the same time.

But while the Christian can understandably be disappointed in this conclusion, in truth it was the first major blow to the atheist's logic. Humanity's fixation on science was reaching scary proportions during his time. Science is based on predictable behavior that, if left alone, must happen. This was being applied to the human thought process as well ("We are all cogs in a machine, doing what we were always meant to do, with no actual volition," Baron d'Holbach). In technical terms, the material was reality and the transcendental was an illusion (a deliberate reversal of what Berkeley in **Topic C** taught). Kant proved that the transcendental was just as real as the material. So while Kant never endorsed God, he nonetheless proved that there was a place for God in our understanding of reality. The philosophical and scientific world hated this. Many attempts were made to disprove him, and almost all of them found themselves turning to nihilism. Only Hegel really offered something

different, but only because he replaced Jehovah with "history" as the supreme god. So instead of the depressing nihilism, Hegel unwittingly laid the groundwork for the horrors of socialism.

But let us return to what Kant did to benefit the Christian. His so-called Copernican Revolution forced atheists to admit there was a *place* for God, whether they believed one existed or not. Atheists Friedrich Nietzsche and Sartre lamented the non-existence of God, and blamed all of man's misery on the fact that God did not exist. So while Kant created the vocabulary for the most infamous atheists in history, he simultaneously made atheism a self-contradictory position. To call oneself an atheist implies one has *knowledge* that God does not exist, but to deny God also means knowledge of any type is not possible as an absolute. Ever since Kant, atheists must either accept this contradiction as an absurdity (as did Sartre), or live in a state of bad faith (cognitive dissonance).

The second and third benefits Kant gave Christianity both come from his discussions of morality. First, Kant argued that one who can make a rational decision on their own, known as a "moral agent," is *not* a means to an end, but rather an end in itself. This concept has been a thorn in the side of atheists in the manner of "having one's cake and eating it too." It is a secular way of skeptics getting treated the way they want to be treated without having to consider the Christian idea of "human dignity." Any while many non-Christians are fair-minded in this regard, it is human nature to seek ways around things that are inconvenient. So while Kant's idea here is close to Christian teaching, it doesn't have the "sanity check" that belief in Jehovah does. Instead of denying the legitimacy of the moral agent concept, skeptics have tried to define what constitutes a moral agent. Efforts to justify slavery, abortion, genocide (such as with all socialist nations to date) have all been done by denying that the victims were ends in themselves because they are not moral agents. Without God to hold man's evil in check, it is easy to rationalize away any secular equivalent of human dignity.

The other moral benefit Kant gave Christianity is the morality known today as Kantianism. While I find it inferior to Christian morality, it does go a long way in justifying the Divine Command laws of Jews and Christians, particularly the Ten Commandments. To Kant, a moral maxim must apply to all people all the time without being self-contradicting. It is difficult for a skeptic to convince others that this is a bad idea, and equally difficult to arrive at moral maxims other than what Moses already prescribed.

The final, and perhaps biggest, benefit Kant gave Christianity was to make God a key figure in philosophy again. Thanks to Kant, one did not have to believe in God, but one could not simply discount God either. There was now a well defined and widely accepted philosophical place where God could exist (as implied by Hegel and freely admitted by Nietzsche and Sartre), and so far no atheist has given a good reason as to why that place should be empty. Atheists can no longer rationally assume that the need for God is an illusion, or that enlightenment is all that is needed to free Christians from their delusion. Instead, many atheists are showing themselves to be the deluded ones through this cognitive dissonance. Russel Bertrand's famous "teapot" is actually in contrast to the theories the Fathers of Atheism finally arrived at. More recently, the late Christopher Hitchens' "agnostic-atheist" argument shows just how much atheism today is on the defensive. Both Bertrand and Hitchens refuse to argue for the non-existence of God, but rather insist theists must be the ones to supply proof otherwise. Skeptics are quick to claim that Christians are making the "trying to prove a negative" fallacy, when in truth skeptics are trying to cover up their own "argument from ignorance" fallacy. Put another way, they are "gaslighting." It is only by sheer nerve that such arguments can be made against Christianity, as they are only bluffing.

These four benefits are not just hypothetical. All great Christian apologists since his time have,

either knowingly or unknowingly, benefited from one or more of them. MacDonald (**Topic E**) and Chesterton (**Topic F**) took advantage of the practical man deciding whether or not a given philosophical idea was valuable. Chesterton's work also calls to mind Kant's efforts to identify man as unique among animals because man is a moral agent, although Chesterton applied this thought to almost every aspect of reality. Lewis (**Topic G**) seems to have all four benefits hiding just below the surface of his works.

E) George MacDonald: From here until the end, everyone being discussed was Anglican for at least some portion of his life. MacDonald is the man Lewis called "the master." Of all the authors Lewis had read (which was a considerable number by any standard), Lewis claimed that no one sounded more like Jesus than MacDonald. If one reads *At the Back of the North Wind* or *Sir Gibbie*, I think one will understand what Lewis was talking about. MacDonald was raised as a Calvinist, but converted to the Anglican Church and became a minister with them.

What I find most interesting about MacDonald's defense of Christianity against science-backed atheism is that he rebelled against a millennia-long assumption that one can understand what something is by picking it apart. Consider this quote from UNSPOKEN SERMONS, Third Series, *The Truth*: "Human science is but the backward undoing of the tapestry-web of God's science, works with its back to Him, and is always leaving Him -- His intent, that is, His perfected work -- behind it, always going farther and farther away from the point where His work culminates in revelation." This may seem harsh, but in reality he does not deny that good can come from doing so, but simply points out that when you take something apart, it is no longer that something. He continued with, "The truth of the flower is, not the facts about it, be they correct as ideal science itself, but the shining, glowing, gladdening, patient thing throned on its stalk -- the compeller of smile and tear ... The idea of God is the flower: His idea is not the botany of the flower. Its botany is but a thing of ways and means -- of canvas and color and brush in relation to the picture in the painter's brain." One can take a car apart to learn how the car works, but when one does so it is no longer a car. The car is not the sum of its parts as individuals, it is what all the parts are when assembled as intended. This is very much against what science and philosophers have been thinking (consider what was said above with Kant), yet even atheists like Nietzsche have accepted this as true, as will be talked about shortly.

While this seemingly obvious conclusion may sound trite, the truth is that so much of what skeptics attack Christianity on follows the same pattern. I am still asked where in the human body the soul can be found, as if one can cut open a cadaver and find where it is (or was). But perhaps we see this most often when discussing miracles. Of course, before we go further, I think we need to define exactly what a miracle is. I define a miracle as God influencing the natural order of things (with the creation of the universe being the ultimate example -- creating the natural order out of nothing).

For the sake of demonstration, let us take for example someone dying because white blood cells are being destroyed by a disease faster than the body can reproduce them. After some praying, the white blood cell count spikes and the patient soon recovers. Science will attempt to break down the event and say there is no miracle because it is the white blood cells destroying the disease, not God erasing the disease. Obviously, they are using a much different definition of "miracle" than I am, as they are looking for the disease to simply disappear while the white blood cells slowly build back up in a manner predicted by medical science. Based on their definition, we cannot call them "wrong." But we can point out that they are not using "miracle" the same way we are, and therefore their argument does not discredit our claim. Indeed, they are limiting God: not only are they asking for God to intervene, but they are very specific on how God must act (which would be considered unscientific if applied to examining any other phenomenon). In this specific example, they are gaslighting Christians and ignoring the medically unexplained spike in white blood cells. They are attempting to divert the Christian's attention to the lingering evidence of the disease as the white blood cells destroy it, and

hoping the Christian won't call their bluff on it.

And while this is building on what MacDonald actually taught, the concept of focusing on what really is important and not being distracted by outside "noise" has been found useful in more complex matters as well. As Nietzsche pointed out in *The Gay Science*, science as a whole really doesn't *explain* anything, but rather it gives increasingly better ways of *describing* things. Take, for example, the question of why the wind blows. Science shows that wind comes from differences in temperature between adjacent air masses, not from a cupboard (as suggested in Jeremiah 10:13). They therefore conclude that Judaism and Christianity must be wrong. But science only explained *how* wind acts, not *why* it acts. It does not really answer the original question, it only pushes it back one level, and actually brings up more questions. Now we must ask what caused different temperatures between adjacent air masses, and why is it that air acts in that particular way when there is a difference in temperatures? And this process can go back any number of steps until the limits of contemporary science are reached. To truly understand "why," we have to have an uncaused cause (or ultimate causation), and the fundamental process science uses does not allow for an uncaused cause. Every effect must have had a cause, and that cause was itself an effect of a previous cause. In contrast, all forms of theism give man this uncaused cause: the wind happens because a god willed it to happen. Once God decides the wind will blow, science can discover the means by which God's will is fulfilled. But science still needs wind to exist in order to discover how wind works, whereas the wind will blow whether or not a scientist is studying it.

To sum this all up, MacDonald pointed out that science doesn't discredit religion after all, but rather that science explains the process in which God makes His will manifest. Note how different this view is from the extreme *fideism* discussed at the very end of **Topic B**.

F) G.K. Chesterton: Chesterton was a skeptic who first converted to Anglicanism and later converted to Catholicism. Whole books could be written on just how unusual this gentleman was, but I think the most interesting fact about him is that one of his two greatest works defending Catholicism (*Orthodoxy*) was written fourteen years before he became a Catholic! Still, this fact also speaks volumes about his fanatical demand for truth. Chesterton's conversion to Catholicism also coincides rather nicely with the final days of scientifically-backed atheism. Within a few years of his conversion, quantum physics was being discovered and the Big Bang Theory was being formulated. Although atheists would not give up science without a fight, we can see optimism and hope in Chesterton's works, not the somberness that characterized so many others before him.

There are two characteristics from Chesterton I want to focus on. The first is his bitter fight against the depressing Hegelism that found its roots in Kant's German Idealism (alluded to in **Topic D**). Hegel, like Kant, has been highly debated over his religious views. But while Kant always respected God, Hegel looked at God as just one more thing that was part of man's experience that could be torn apart, studied, and rearranged to suit man's purpose (note how this is specifically rejected by MacDonald as discussed in **Topic E**). The most important outcome of Hegel's deconstruction of God was for Hegel to decide that truth and untruth must be the same, it only matters how it is interpreted.

Chesterton, who was a wise, but not a studied, philosopher, took a note out of Kant's argument (either deliberately or accidentally, I don't know) and claimed that, as a practical man, he gets to judge how good Hegel's interpretations really are, not those who "discover" things using Hegel's logic. Just because a Hegelist claims there is no difference between a lemon and an apple (they are both fruit) does *not* mean Chesterton has to drink lemonade when he wants apple juice. In perhaps his most famous book, *The Everlasting Man*, he calls this Hegelistic outlook a "penumbra" (the partially shaded outer

region of the shadow cast by an opaque object.- Oxford Languages Dictionary). Chesterton then claims that man, who is living in the penumbra of Christian ideals and secular problems, is getting lost because man is spending too much time in seeing how two things are the same, instead of how they differ. His solution is to not only encourage, but to even push, such people into the full "dark" so they can better appreciate the "light" portion of the penumbra when they come back. If one thinks all fruit is the same, give one pure lemon juice when one expects something sweet, and one will never confuse the lemon for the apple again.

Chesterton, of course, applied this lesson to all the attacks against Christianity. Just because many *think* Christianity is no different than paganism does not *prove* there is no difference. Chesterton pointed out how human sacrifice is an almost universal pagan practice, and how the Romans (who he argued were the best paganism had to offer) was more "enlightened" than other pagans because they killed people for sport (gladiators) instead of for sacrifice. Only Christianity had a true reversal to the concept of human sacrifice -- by making oneself the sacrifice instead of others. The focus changed from how others could be sacrificed to benefit oneself, to how one could benefit others through self-sacrifice. The godless socialist experiments soon showed all too clearly how the "darkness" of non-Christianity is all there is when one leaves the penumbra of the Christian ideal mixed with secular concerns. But note that Chesterton neither created a real philosophy, nor showed a scientific truth. He, as a practical man, simply looked to see what worked and what didn't (a very Kantian idea).

The second tool Chesterton gave us was his reason for converting to Catholicism -- because Catholicism is true. And while I appreciate my Protestant brethren may feel slighted here, I hope they can realize that they can still use this same argument to defend Christianity against atheism, agnosticism, paganism, naturalism, socialism, wokism and every other "-ism" that seeks to oppose Christianity. And why do we know that it is true? Well, Jesus gave us the answer: "By their fruits you will know them. Do people pick grapes from a thorn bush, or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:16) This is one time I think one can quote scripture to a skeptic, mainly because this argument not only condemns some Christians, but it can justify some non-Christians. It is a neutral position. Only the most corrupted Hegelist would suggest that "truth" must necessarily support a disastrous outcome (indeed, extreme Hegelism invariably does end with disastrous outcomes). Christianity shines its brightest through its fruits: ending the gladiator games of the Romans, stopping the human sacrifice of pagans, opposing slavery, taking care of the poor and disenfranchised, and so forth. No other religion or ideology came close to these achievements (just to be clear, while socialism addresses the same problems Christianity does, their solution is to make everyone equally wretched instead of trying to build the oppressed up). Indeed, non-Christian thought is responsible for most of these problems and more.

So, Chesterton did not really answer philosophy with philosophy, nor science with science. Instead, he called philosophers and scientists out on how poor their outcomes were when they tried to replace God. In other words, he told Christians to stand up and defend self-evident truths.

G) C.S. Lewis: My final biography will be on a man who lived to see the first fruits of science coming back to Christianity. As one who did most of his work when atheism was just starting to be humiliated by scientific discoveries, and before the socialist horrors became too big to hide, I almost excluded him as being outside the scope of the paper. But his conversion from atheism to Christianity (Anglican) was in 1931, long before it was apparent that science was making a move away from atheism and into agnosticism. As such, I believe what convinced him of the existence of God is still within the context of defending Christianity without science.

With his autobiography *Surprised by Joy* (interestingly enough, also the name of his best friend,

mistress and future wife, but it would be two years later before CS Lewis would confess to being in love with her), we have come, in a way, full circle to Edward's idea that emotion can lead one to God (**Topic B**). But we have critical differences between what is meant about emotions here. Whereas Edwards was looking at base (animalistic) emotions (especially fear), Lewis began with a sophisticated (reasoned) emotion (wonder). Whereas Edwards would have fear lead to relief and finally to confidence (Evangelists promote a three-step plan of salvation; "Sinners" was step 1 -- Conviction of Sin, step 2 was Conversion, and step 3 was Consolation), Lewis found himself continually longing for the wonder he found that came from reading pagan myths. Although his longing could be satisfied by returning to the books he read as a child, he eventually found a purer (and more fulfilling) form of this wonder in Christianity. The joy he felt as a child reading the pagan myths, he discovered, was actually pushing him to Jehovah. When he finally stopped looking at the dead gods of pagan myth to the living Christian God, he found a sense of completeness that was only hinted at by the pagans. This observation not only brought him to Christianity, but laid the groundwork for many of his books.

While I will not go into full detail here, Lewis gave as an example that we are all bumps on an infinitely large ball. All too often, we take the selfish role and look at the bumps next to us and constantly compare ourselves to them. But when we let go of our selfishness (pride), and accept things as they really are (humility), we realize that we are all part of something infinitely great, and that we all have a unique and necessary role in it. In other books, Lewis suggested that we all have learned some way of forgetting ourselves. It might be a walk on the beach, watching a sunset, reading poetry, etc. These experiences originally bring us an intense feeling akin to happiness, but is different in that joy is something we accept while happiness is something we promote. Once we experience joy, we seek it again, whereas we try to replicate happiness. While the difference is very subtle, we seek happiness out of pride and joy out of humility. Over time, this joy turns into peace.

We can perhaps demonstrate it better than explain it. Almost all pilots can tell of the first time they flew and how overwhelming it was. This euphoria they had then led them to become pilots. While they no longer experience this original euphoria, there is a calm they have when they are flying that they don't get elsewhere. But everyday people do the same without giving it much thought. Anything that lets one forget about oneself can cause joy, and pursuing this loss of self-will brings about peace. This is when we stop looking at the other "bumps" on the "ball" and start looking at the ball itself. So joy is not an end in itself, but rather a taste of ultimate truth that both encourages us to seek it again and teaches us how to find it. When we become skilled at finding joy, we begin to find peace because joy is no longer needed. Lewis even compared joy to a sign that points one to a place one really enjoyed. The more familiar we get with the territory, the less important the sign is, but it was the sign that brought one to the territory the first time.

Note that C.S. Lewis' ideas of joy and peace can be experienced by atheists (other than hard core Hegelists) and pagans as well as Christians, as all believe that there is an absolute truth. The difference between the atheists and the theists is that theists believe this truth is sentient. But we now have science proving (for all practical matters) that intelligent design of the universe must have taken place. The logical conclusion is that the universe must have been created with the help of a deity. Whether or not this deity is Jehovah is still up to discussion at this point (and therefore beyond the scope of this paper), but the atheist has absolutely no support from what science has been discovering.

Conclusion: Science is a very temperamental mistress. While science is of immense benefit for mankind, she has neither remorse for the mistakes she made in the past, nor cares as to what mistakes she will make in the future. One must always be careful of what she says today, as she may say something completely different tomorrow.

In giving a broad view of how our theological ancestors coped with being Christian against a hostile scientific community, we see a variety of ideas that were tried. As can be expected, earlier efforts were not as good as later ones, and sometimes the efforts were counter-productive. But the truth of Christianity remained despite all the attacks from the outside, and the many errors from the inside. In the end, Christians now have a better understanding of what the truth really is, and science must accept that there are things that cannot be explained without religion.

At this time, atheism has nothing from either philosophy or science to stand on. Most self-called atheists are really agnostic and don't know that agnosticism is an option. For those who are truly atheist, they are at least a century out of date with their arguments (if they have any arguments at all). Indeed, many of their arguments were made moot as far back as Kant (who, if one remembers, appears to be agnostic himself!).

If the apologists during the dark time of the Scientific Revolution could still justify the existence of God with science against them, then how much easier should it be to justify Christianity when science is on our side? It does take some effort on our part, but oftentimes this effort only needs to be to point out the obvious inconsistencies in the arguments atheists make themselves.

Raymond Mulholland
Original Publication Date: 25 January 2024