



## Religion

### Modernizing the Case for God

*Philosophers refurbish the tools of reason to sharpen arguments for theism*

**G**od? Wasn't he chased out of heaven by Marx, banished to the unconscious by Freud and denounced by Nietzsche to be discarded? Did not Darwin drive him out of the empirical world? Well, not entirely. In a quiet revolution in thought and argument that hardly anyone could have foreseen only two decades ago, God is making a comeback. Most intriguingly, this is happening not among theologians or ordinary believers—most of whom never accepted for a moment that he was in any serious trouble—but in the crisp, intellectual circles of academic philosophers, where the consensus had long banished the Almighty from fruitful discourse.

Now it is more respectable among philosophers than it has been for a generation to talk about the possibility of God's existence. The shift is most striking in the Anglo-American academies of thought, where arid forms of empiricism have reigned. "What science cannot tell us, mankind cannot know," declared Bertrand Russell. And A.J. Ayer, on behalf of logical positivism, decreed that "all utterances about the nature of God are nonsensical." The accepted wisdom was that the only valid statements were those verifiable through the senses.

Today even atheistic philosophers agree that Ayer's rigid rule is inadequate to deal with human experience. Meanwhile, science, his model for learning, has become less presumptuous and ambitious, its theorizing about cosmic autonomy closer to theology, its promise as savior and absolute codifier of the world somewhat tarnished. In the era of quarks, black holes, physics can seem as baffling as foreign policy in the age of the Ayatollah. Philosophers of science, such as Thomas Kuhn of Princeton, have applied relativism, formerly employed against religion, to scientific knowledge. Cornell President Frank Rhodes, a geologist, once observed that "the qualities that [scientific] man may have as little relation to the world itself as a telephone number has to its subscribers."

Broad cultural forces are also at work. Says Douglas Hall, a theologian at Montreal's McGill University: "The experiment with secularism finally proved to be too much for the human psyche to cope with, both in the Marxist world and our

world. If you begin to doubt that there is some meaning in the process of history, then you get frightened of your own secularity, and you return to religion."

Though still a distant minority in secular universities, some philosophers are not only willing to talk about God but to believe in him. In the U.S., 300 of them belong to the Society for Christian Philosophy. Some scholars are attacking atheism and reviving and refining arguments

pher and guru of the Great Books Program, published *How to Think About God: A Guide for the 20th Century Pagan* (Macmillan, \$9.95). In September Doubleday will issue the English version of disident Konrad Catholic Theologian Hans Kung's latest, which despite its 850 pages is a huge bestseller in West Germany. The title: *Does God Exist?*

His predictable answer, yes. Even nonbelievers, Kung writes, know that an unjust world raises the question of morality and, in turn, religion. Besides that, the 20th century is littered with the scary results of supplanting God with an absolute force that is not divine such as the "people" in Nazism or the party in Communism. Kung's lucid analysis contends that atheism's 19th-century patriarchs proclaimed their theories but never bothered to prove them. Ludwig Feuerbach, the founder of modern atheism, asserted that religious beliefs were mere projections of mankind's godly qualities. Kung responds: "But such philosophers' belief in the goodness of human nature is far more likely to be such a projection."

Whatever atheism's weaknesses, what about the other side? Can God's existence be established by reason, without resorting to the Bible, revelation, church dogma or a leap of faith? The attempt is traditionally known as "natural theology," and except for the largely self-contained world of Roman Catholic philosophy, it went out of style more than a century ago.

In the current revival, most arguments still employ the traditional definition of God as a unique personal creative entity. What is new is the effort to refurbish and enhance the traditional approaches to the problem. A summary of the work being done is not new in these old wineries.

**The Moral Proof.** This is essentially Kung's approach. Consciousness itself makes Christianity—at least theism—of or all. The case builds upon the universal signs among mankind of conscience, of some moral law and of each person's inability to keep it satisfactorily, all of which cannot be explained as mere conditioning or self-interest. The source of that spark of conscience, theists contend, is God. The most celebrated exponent, Immanuel





God: William Blake

God: Michelangelo

God: 13th century France

God: Lucas Cranach

### Religion

Kant (1724-1804), wrote that each person's quest for the "highest good" implies the existence of a moral being as the necessary condition for this idea, who is himself the source of all morality.

Updating Kant, Dartmouth Scholar Ronald Green argues in *Religious Reason* (Oxford, 2012) that though skeptics may think primitive instincts or emotions are the basis for religion, faith actually stems from the sophisticated reasoning process that distinguishes humans from animals. To Green, man must seek an independent, coherent source for his morality. Although Kant ended with a personal God, Green will only go so far as to postulate "some kind of supreme moral causal agency," whether a personal deity or Hinduism's impersonal karma.

**The Mental Proof.** In this formulation, an all-intelligent Being is offered as the only explanation for the power of reason and for humanity's other nonmaterial qualities of mind and imagination. A contemporary restatement is the 1947 classic *Miracles* by the late English literary critic C.S. Lewis, the century's most read apologist for God. Lewis dismissed the philosophy that mind results from nature: "If any thought is valid, an eternal, self-existent Reason must exist and must be the source of my own imperfect and instrumented rationality."

America's leading orthodox Protestant philosopher of God, Alvin Plantinga of Michigan's Calvin College, develops a related argument from one of the pressing issues in modern epistemology. Though it sounds strange to the man in the street, philosophers ponder how an individual can know that there is any creature besides himself who thinks, feels and reasons, or how he can know that anything ever existed in the past. How, for instance, can we know if another person is in pain? Plantinga answers that such knowledge is acquired through analogy and in *God and Other Minds* (Cornell, \$13.50) he makes an airtight case that this is the way believers know God. Since it is perfectly plausible to infer that other minds exist, he thinks it is reasonable to believe that God does as well.

**The Experiential Proof.** Because religious experiences are so widespread, that argument runs, there must be something for them. Someone inspiring them. Skeptics, of course, reply that experiences are subjective, hence unreliable as evidence, and besides they can be explained apart from God. Harvard's Quine, for example, dismisses beliefs as the product of "tradition, wishful thinking or something in the genes." However, one of Britain's most

distinguished zoologists, Alister Hardy, begs to wonder. A project he founded at Oxford has issued a rigorous scientific study of 3,000 religious experiences, and reports a striking—and intriguing—commonality among them.

**The Teleological Proof.** Here the infinitely complex structure of the universe is used to argue the necessary existence of an intelligent Designer. In English Archdeacon William Paley's famous analogy of 1802, anyone who sees a watch is forced to assume the existence of a watchmaker who made it. The marvels of nature's design, from snowflakes to developing embryos, are comforting buttresses to faith for many people.

Since the Enlightenment, though, philosophers have not been impressed. The great skeptic was David Hume (1711-'76),

who narrowly antireligious Darwinism ignores the way in which inanimate nature is in harmony with organic evolution. Nor, he asserts, can evolutionary theory possibly explain the rapid emergence of the large brain in the developing human species.

**The Ontological Proof.** This, the most controversial approach, moves from a mental concept of God to his actual existence. It was originated by Anselm, the 11th century Archbishop of Canterbury who defined God as "a being than which nothing greater can be thought." The Archbishop reasoned that since existence would have to be part of any such perfect and necessary being, this being must actually exist. This is "too good to be true," says one skeptic, and even one of its current defenders admits that it "looks

too much like word magic."

The method lay in dispute after Kant supposedly demolished it, until Norman Malcolm, then at Cornell, suddenly "claimed" in a 1960 article that it was partly defensible. Since then it has been the most debated proof among philosophers. Three current advocates reinvigorate it by applying a technique known as modal logic: Plantinga, Unitarian Charles Hartshorne, a follower of Alfred North Whitehead's "process" philosophy, now retired from the University of Texas, and Roman Catholic Layman James F. Ross of the University of Pennsylvania.

In *The Nature of Necessity* (Oxford, \$8.50), Plantinga, who had long opposed ontological theories, explains that his mind was changed through the curious logical process of speculating about "possible worlds" in which things could be different. For example, he says, Raquel Welch has "impressive assets" in our world. But there are possible worlds in which she is "tiny and 50 lbs. overweight," and others in which she is totally non-existent. "What Anselm means to suggest is that Raquel Welch enjoys very little greatness in those worlds in which she does not exist."

Ross, a leader in modernizing the thought of medieval scholars, favors the revision of Anselm done by John Duns Scotus (1265-1308) but does some revision himself. In the forthcoming new edition of his *Philosophical Theology* (Hackett, \$17.50), Ross is bold enough to claim that he has an airtight proof that "remains unscathed" after a decade of scrutiny. Ross does this with his "Principle E" (for explicability), which is virtually ineluctable to the uninitiated. Roughly, it means that it is possible for everything, including God's existence, to be



Anselm of Canterbury



Immanuel Kant



Thomas Aquinas



David Hume

who scoffed at the design argument because nature is so savage and wasteful that it might have been the work of "some infant deity who afterwards abandoned it, ashamed of his lame performance." Turned inside out, the proof is really a question: Could this intricate universe have evolved by pure trial and error? The last major philosopher to promote the argument Britain's F.R. Tennant, wrote in 1934: "Presumably the world is comparable with a single throw of the dice. And common sense is not foolish in suspecting the dice to have been loaded."

Foreaken by philosophers, the proof was brought up to date last year by James E. Horgan, a devotee/lover intrigued by scientific theory. In *Chance or Design?* (Philosophical Library, \$13.95) he cen-



Anselm of Canterbury

Immanuel Kant



Thomas Aquinas

David Hume

explained, but that God's nonexistence does not admit of explanation. Even atheistic philosophers grant that by the latest rules of logic, the updaters of Anselm are right. If it is even possible that a highest conceivable being exists, then he must exist in actuality. The trouble is, the atheists do not accept that he is even possible.

**The Cosmological Proof.** The term applies technically to any argument for God through reflection upon the natural world. But most often "cosmological" refers to reasoning generalizations about ultimate origins and why the cosmos exists at all. Evolutionary schools of thought do not entertain such notions because they fall, by definition, outside what can be observed or tracked. If such questions are never asked, of course, they require no answer. Bertrand Russell once remarked in a 1956 debate that the universe is "just there, and that's all." He was convinced that "all the labors of the ages, all the devices, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system."

The classic cosmological inquirer was Thomas Aquinas (1224-74), and the classic modern innovator is Canadian Jesuit Bernard J.F. Lonergan, whose "transcendental Thomism" in *Imphilo* (Philosophical Library, \$10) justifies Aquinas in the modern world through a complex philosophy of human understanding. Chicago's Mortimer Adler has long been interested in Aquinas' thought. Though not formally religious, he nonetheless pondered the God problem for most of his 75 years before writing his readable *How to Think About God*. Aquinas reasoned that each effect must have a cause and that an endless chain must proceed back to a primordial First Cause or Prime Mover. In *How*, Adler rejects that starting point because a universe with a beginning presupposes the Creator that it seeks to prove. Therefore Adler maintains that the universe had no beginning. He also rejects the idea that a higher cause underlies and explains all phenomena in the universe, on the ground that natural processes provide sufficient explanation. That leaves the most obscure of Aquinas' "five ways" of proving God, from "contingency." Things can be divided into two categories: "contingent" ones that could either exist or not exist, and "necessary" ones that cannot not exist. The latter is a category of one, namely God. The reason that anything at all exists, cosmologists argue, is that there must be a "necessary" being.

At one time Adler embraced Aquinas' proof, then for decades he thought it did not work because although everything in the universe is contingent, nothing ceases to exist absolutely (e.g., burning wood only changes form, so no God is needed to explain the existence of contingent things. Last May he suddenly changed his mind again after applying the "possible worlds" approach Adler speculated that the universe is only one of many possible universes, any of which—including this actual universe—can just as easily not exist as exist. The universe is "radically contingent," the only thing capable of not existing and leaving behind absolutely nothing. An "efficient cause" is needed to explain "the actual existence here and now of a merely possible cosmos," something that preserves it in being and prevents it from being replaced by nothingness. Color that cause God. Philosopher Ross

what nature and history show to be quite likely—that there is a God who made and sustains man and the universe." Basil Mitchell, a philosopher of religion at Oxford, advocates a "many-stranded rope of reason" like that employed by historians or scientists to develop the best explanation of evidence. Among his strands: individuals' experience of a mysterious "other" outside nature, the simple faith of believers and "cosmic awe" in encountering unusually saintly persons.

The procedure is double-edged. Oxford's J.L. Mackie, perhaps the ablest of today's atheistic philosophers, offers nonempirical explanations for such evidence, and raises the problem, as old as the *Book of Job*, of evil. The existence of evil is no "knock-down disproof" of an omnipotent and wholly good God," he says, but it does make God improbable. Plantinga responds to the theist's classic reply to this, the free will argument. Examining whether a semirational, corrupt Boston mayor would have taken smaller jobs in other "possible worlds," he argues that even an all-powerful God cannot create a world in which mayors can choose to take bribes and that also contains no evil. In religious ethics, natural theology is not in vogue. Not all Roman Catholics, for example, wholeheartedly accept the first Vatican Council's decree that "man can know the one true God and Creator with certainty by the natural light of human reason." At the same time, though few people come to religion through the exercise of reason, cathedrals of thought can provide sanctuary for many when faith falters or is attacked by skeptics. Iona Dougherty, dean of philosophy at the Catholic University of America, also sees value in continuing to labor to reason God out in a day when all sorts of bizarre cults flourish. "If religion is not placed on a rational footing, then *anyhow* can be considered religion."

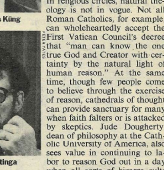


England's J.L. Mackie West Germany's Hans King

Other scholars use what could be called the cumulative argument: they contemplate the comparative plausibility of various arguments and evidence using Adler's favored standard of judgment, the jury's proof "beyond a reasonable doubt." This permits atheists to avoid having to disprove God absolutely, which is as hard to do as prove his existence, and lets theists cite human phenomena that strict empiricism used to rule out. In *The Existence of God* (Oxford, \$7.50), Richard Swinburne of England's Keele University concludes, "The experience of so many men in their moments of religious vision corroborates

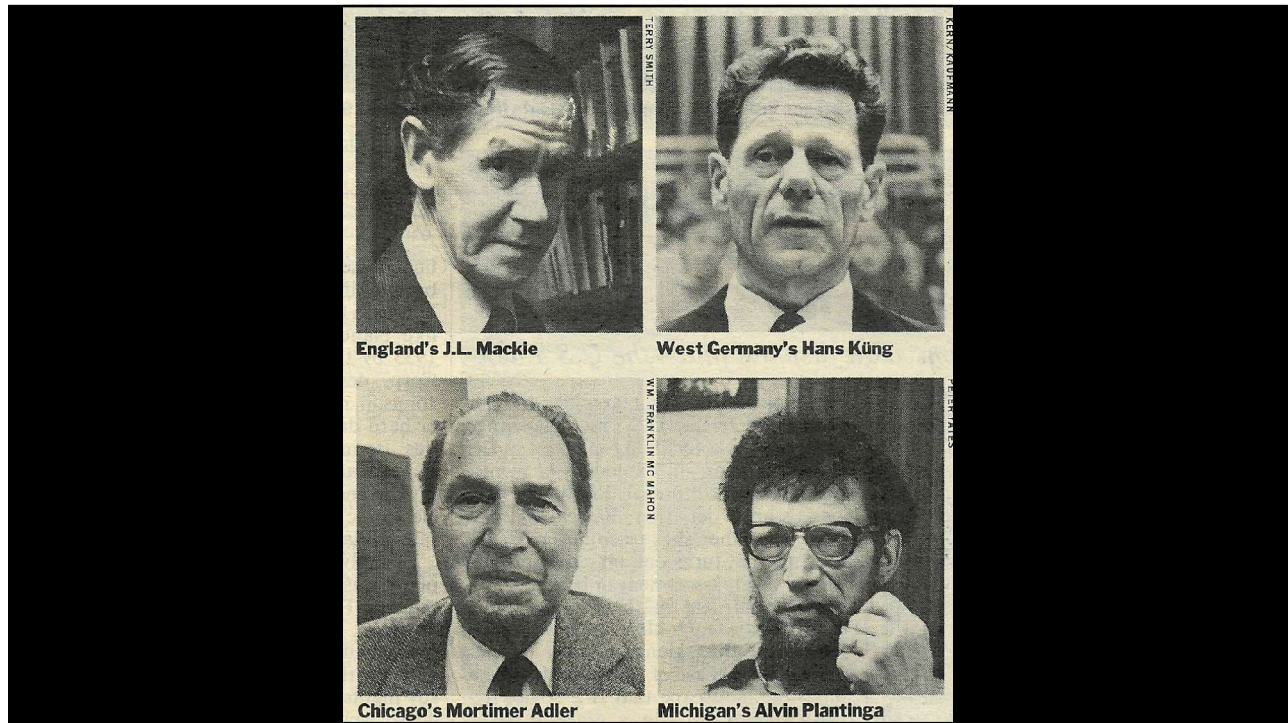
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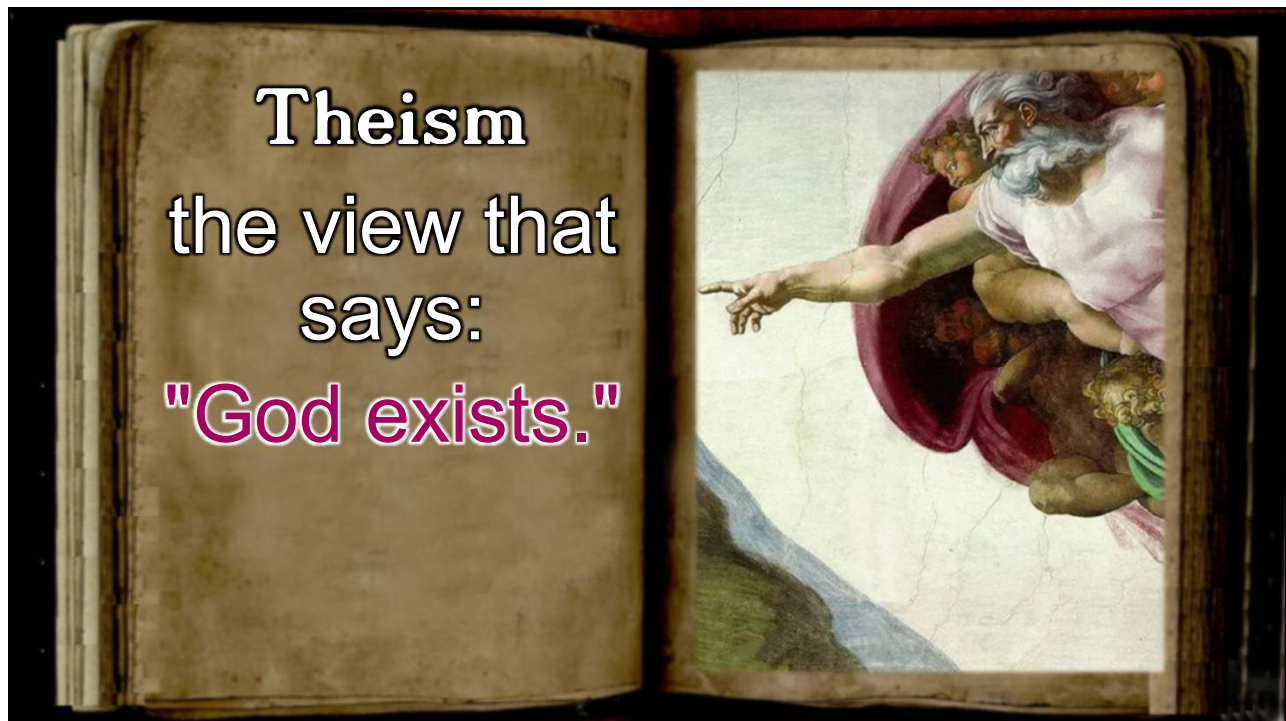
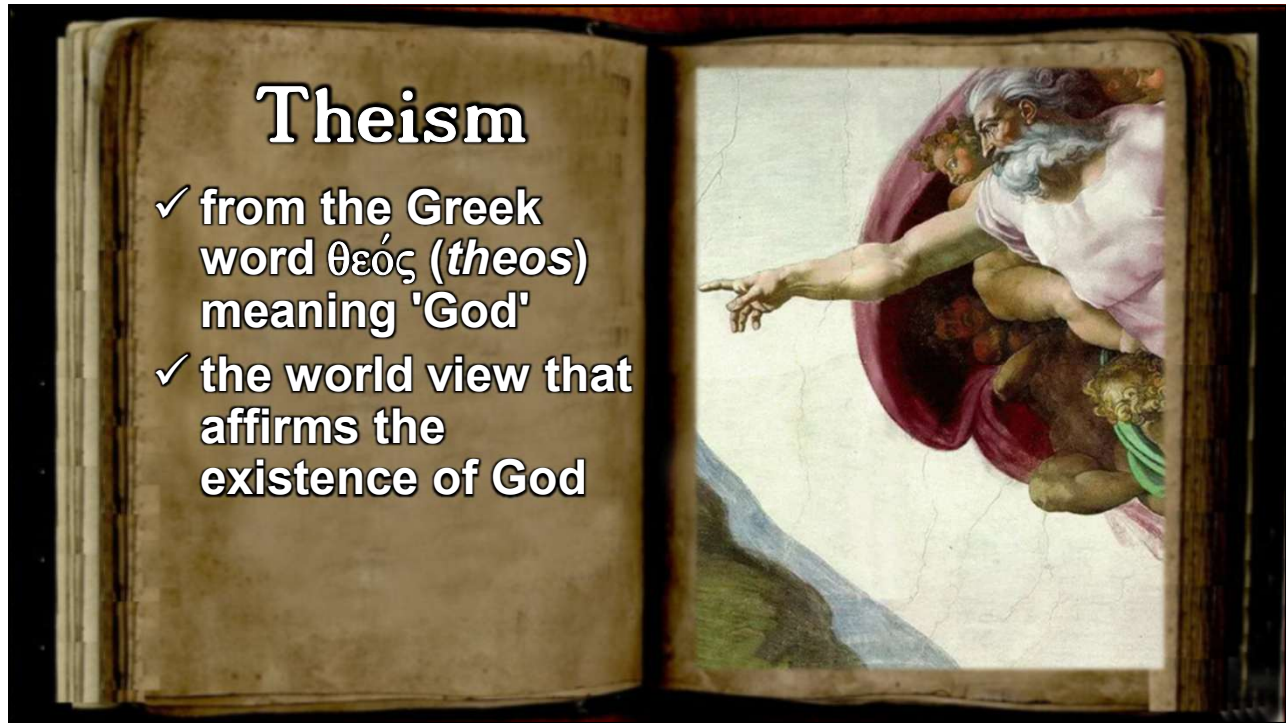
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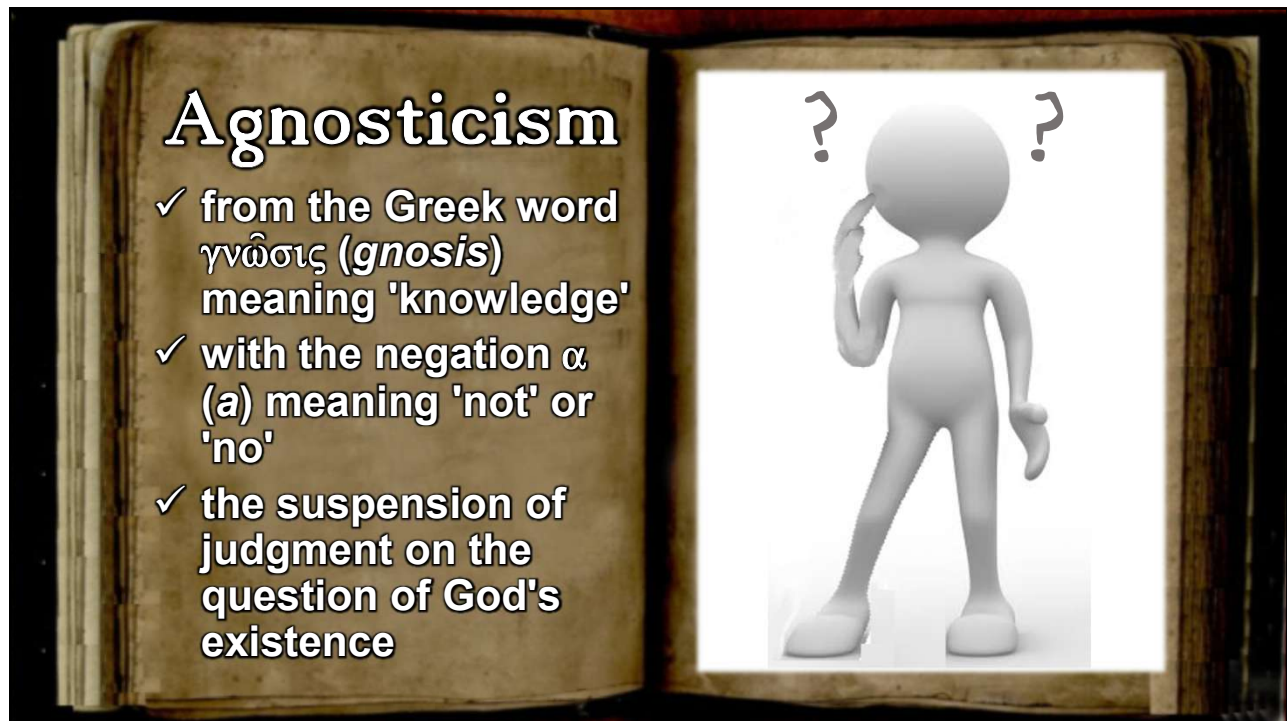
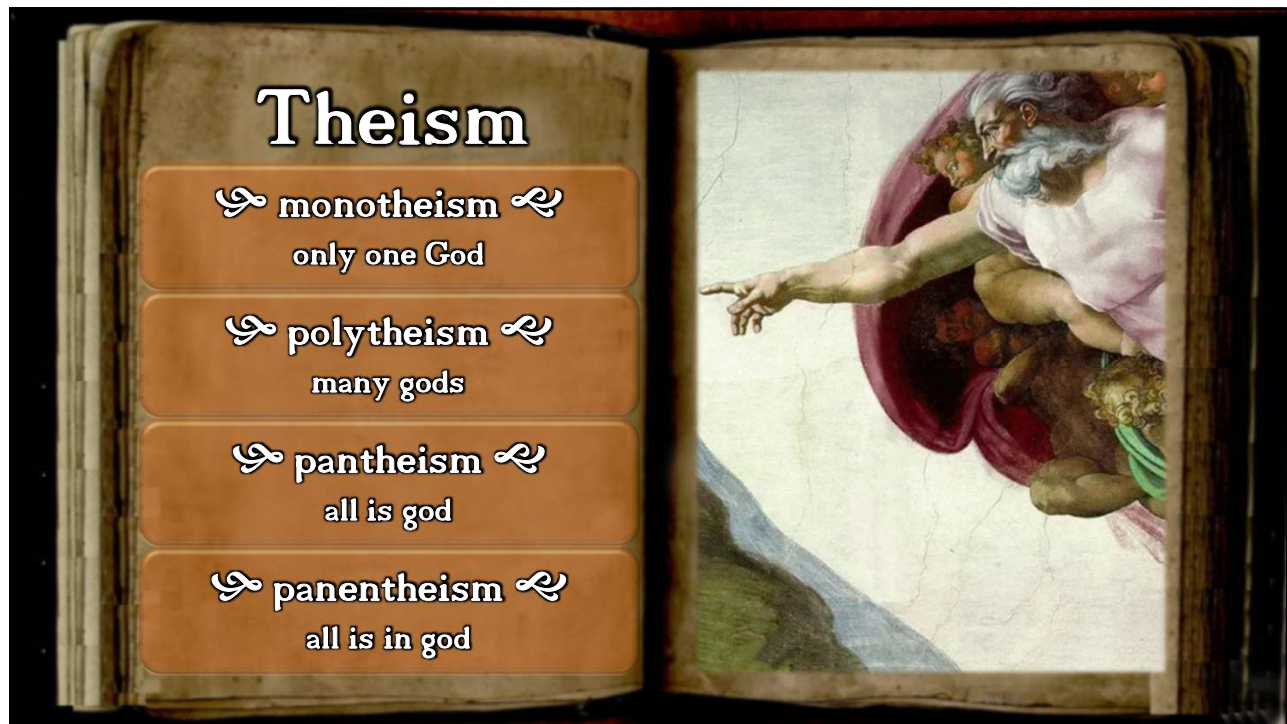


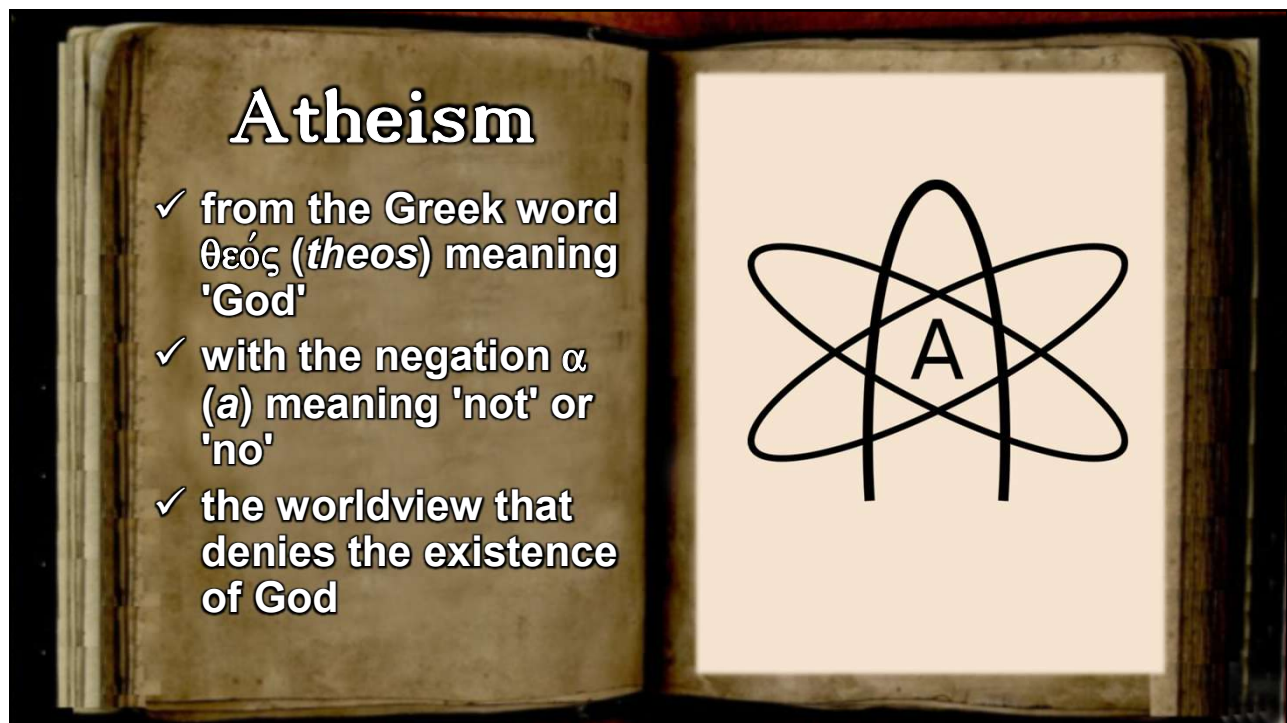
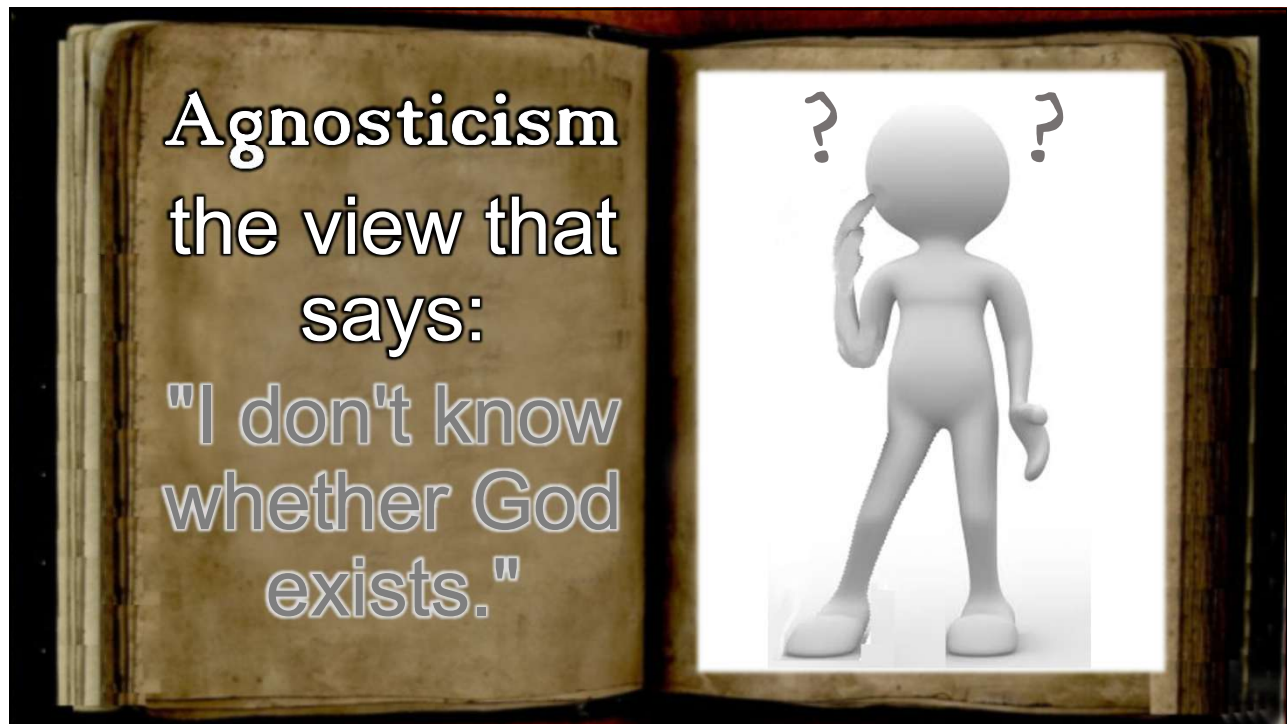
Chicago's Mortimer Adler Michigan's Alvin Plantinga

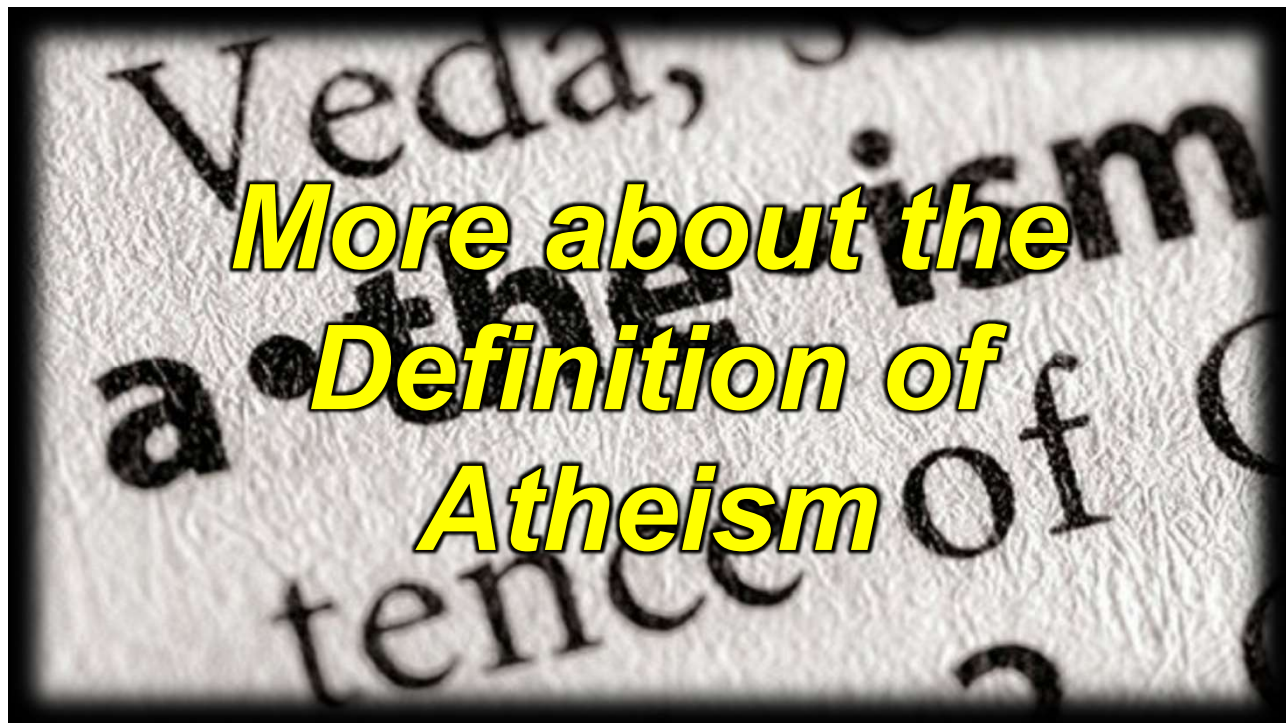
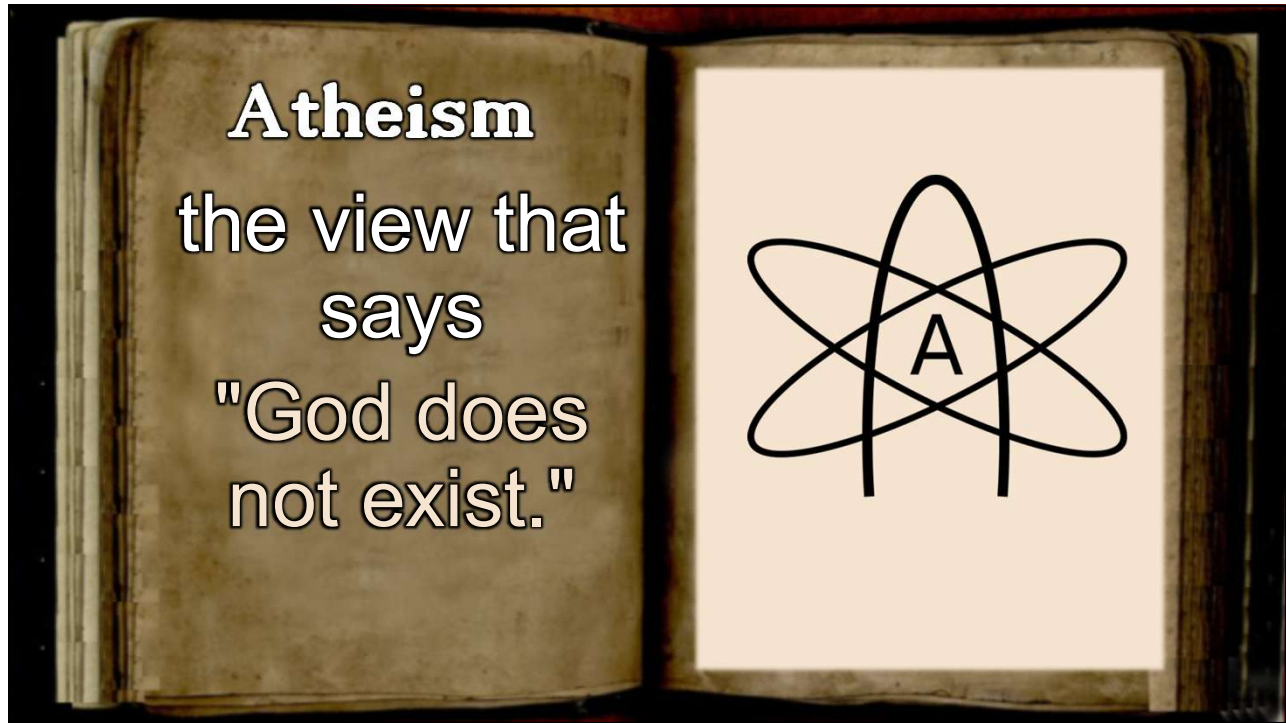
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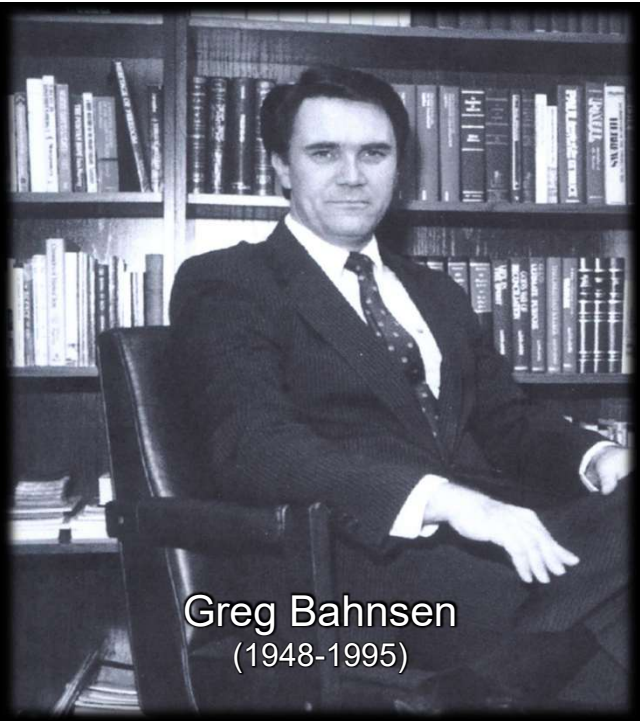








George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)



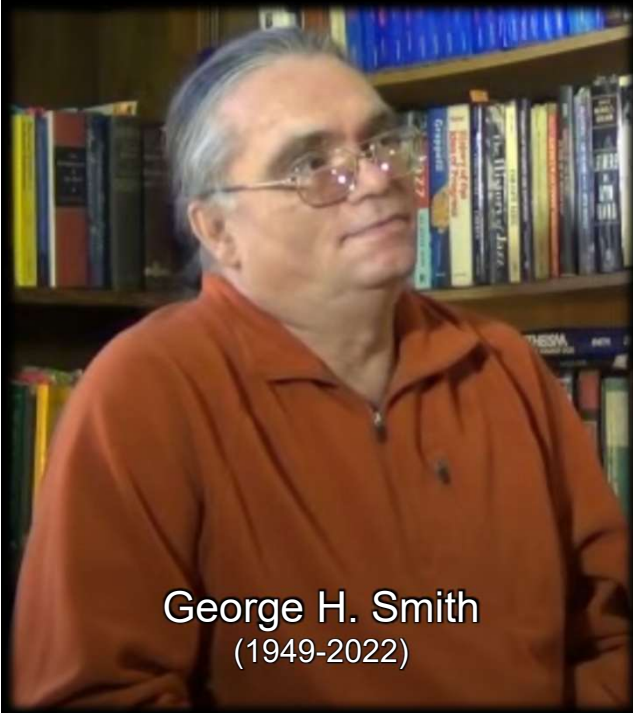
Greg Bahnsen  
(1948-1995)



George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

***"There is no atheistic worldview. Let's be clear about that. Atheism is simply the absence of belief in God."***


*[Debate between George H. Smith and Greg Bahnsen]*



George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

**ATHEISM**  
**THE CASE AGAINST GOD**  
BY GEORGE H. SMITH

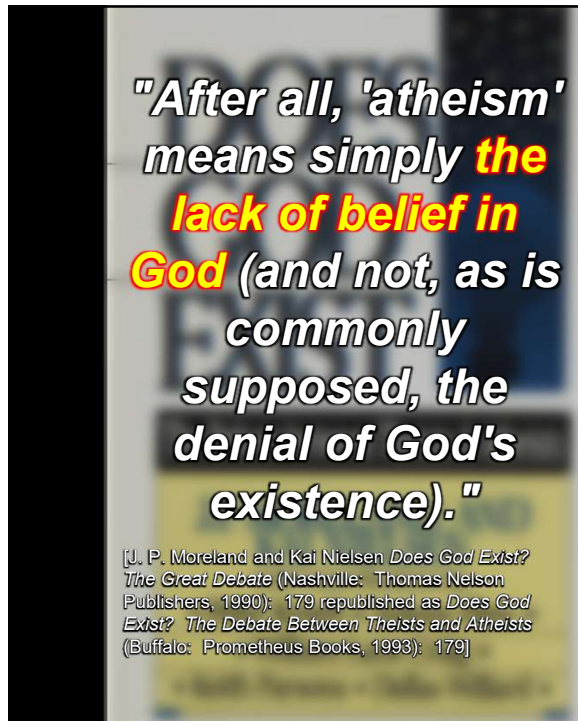
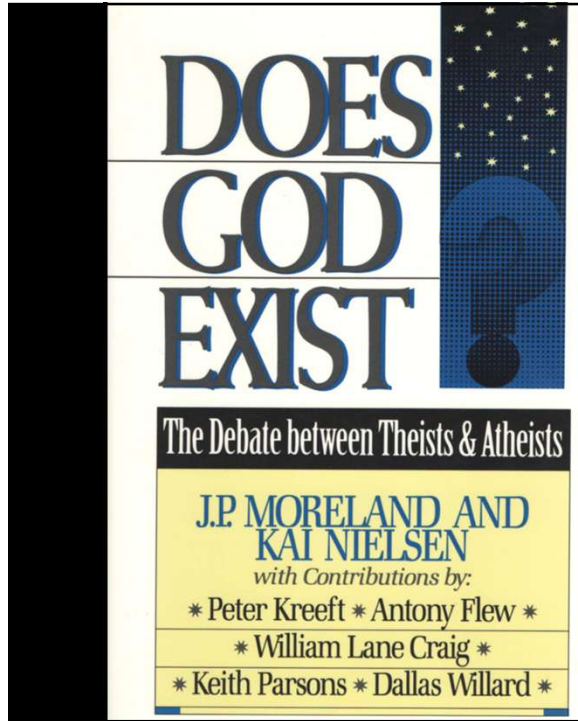
The Skeptic's Bookshelf

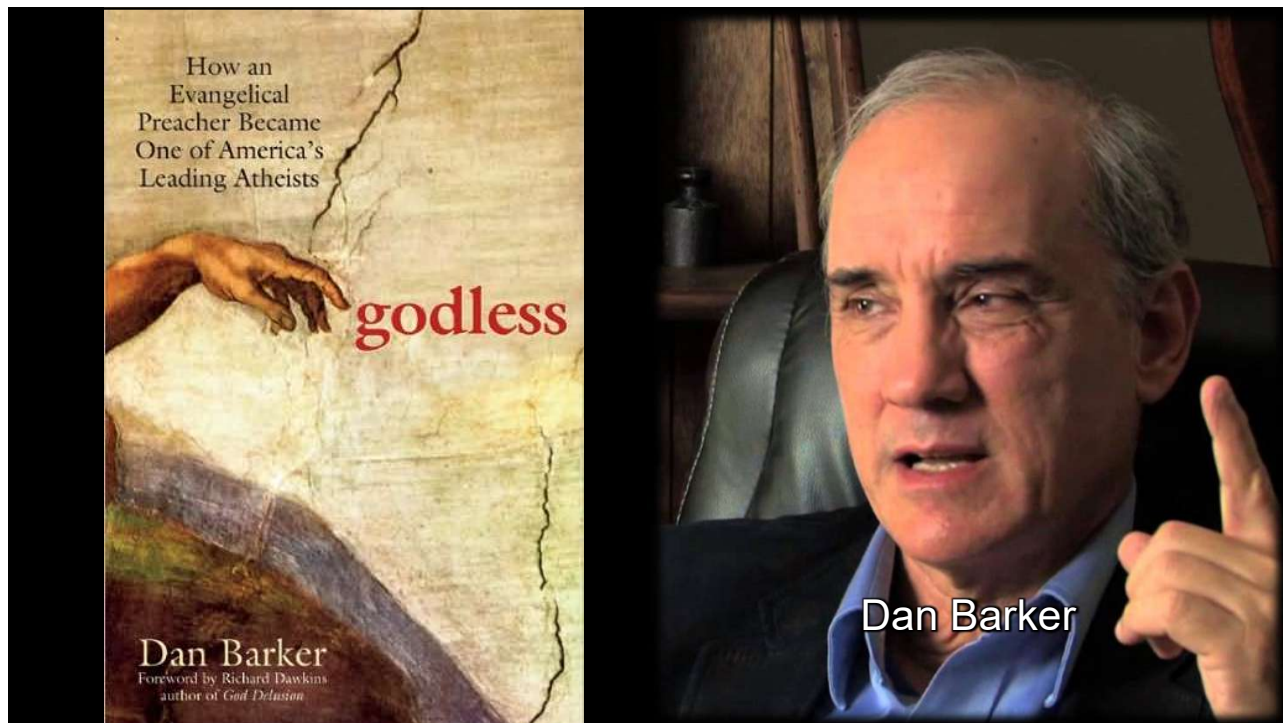
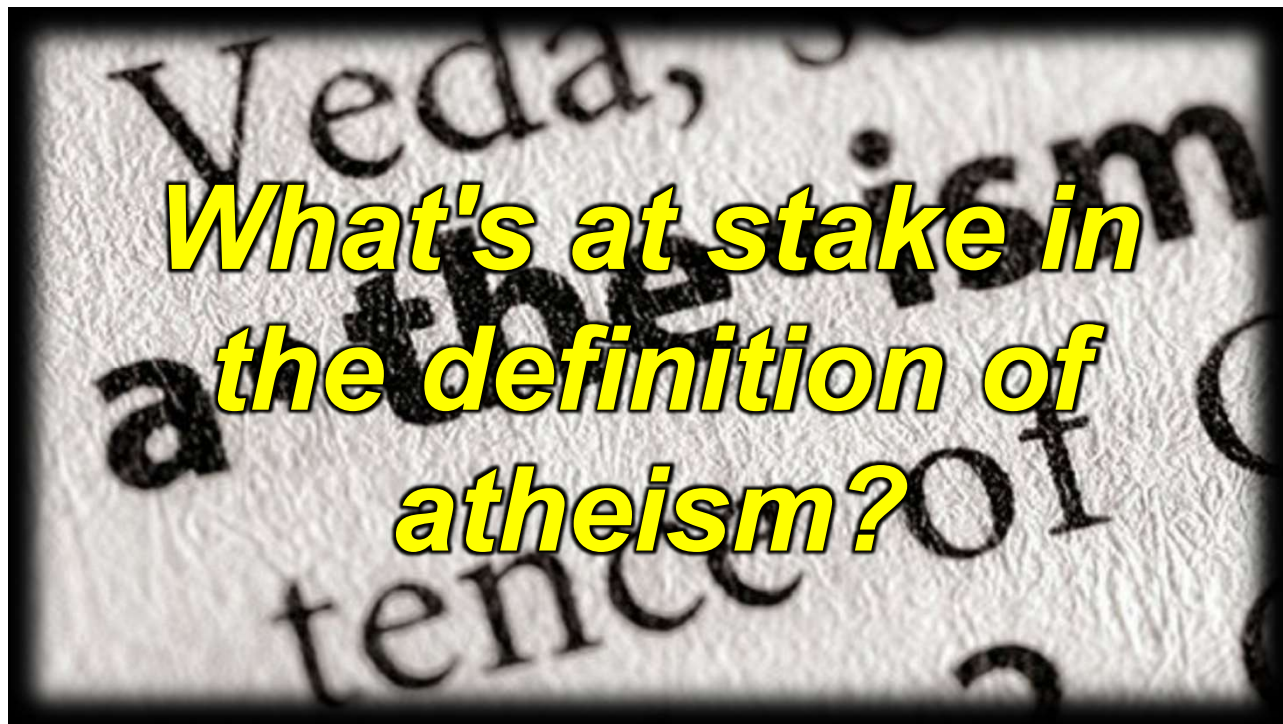


George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

*"Atheism, in its basic form, is not a belief: **it is the absence of belief.** An atheist is not primarily a person who believes that a god does not exist; rather, he does not believe in the **existence of God.**"*

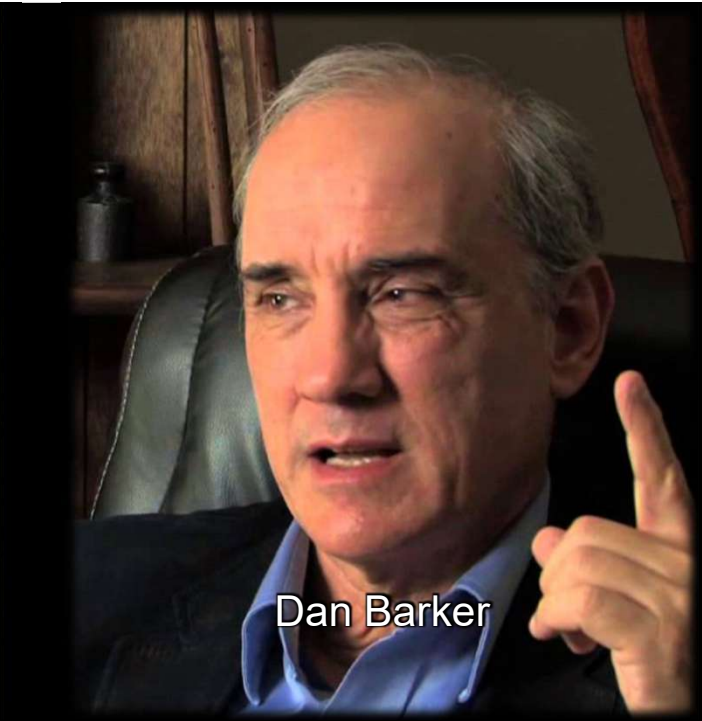
[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 7]





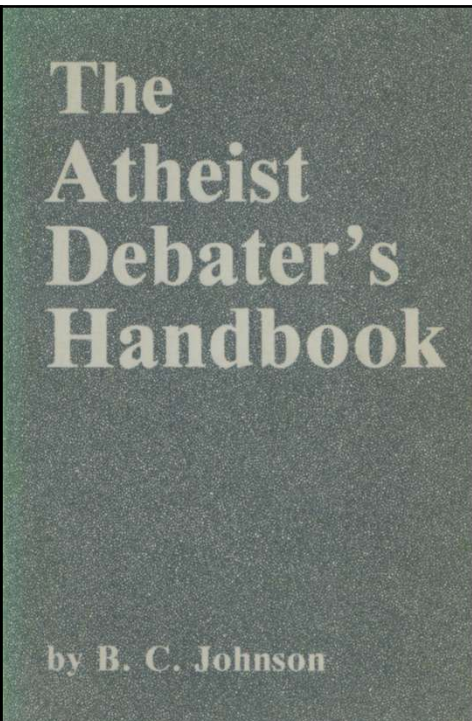

**"Theists claim that there is a god; atheists do not. ... In any argument, the **burden of proof** is on the one making the claim."**

[Dan Barker, *Godless: How an Evangelical Preacher Became One of America's Leading Atheists* (Berkeley: Ulysses Press, 2008), 104]



Dan Barker

The image shows a split-screen layout. On the left, a quote is displayed in white and yellow text against a blurred background. On the right, a photograph of Dan Barker is shown. He is an older man with grey hair, wearing a blue shirt and a dark jacket, sitting in a black leather chair and pointing his right index finger upwards. The name 'Dan Barker' is written in white text at the bottom of the photograph.



The Atheist Debater's Handbook

by B. C. Johnson

The image shows a split-screen layout. On the left, there is a grey silhouette of a person's head and shoulders against a white background. On the right, the cover of the book 'The Atheist Debater's Handbook' is shown. The cover is dark green with the title in large, white, serif font. Below the title, the author's name 'by B. C. Johnson' is written in a smaller, white, serif font.

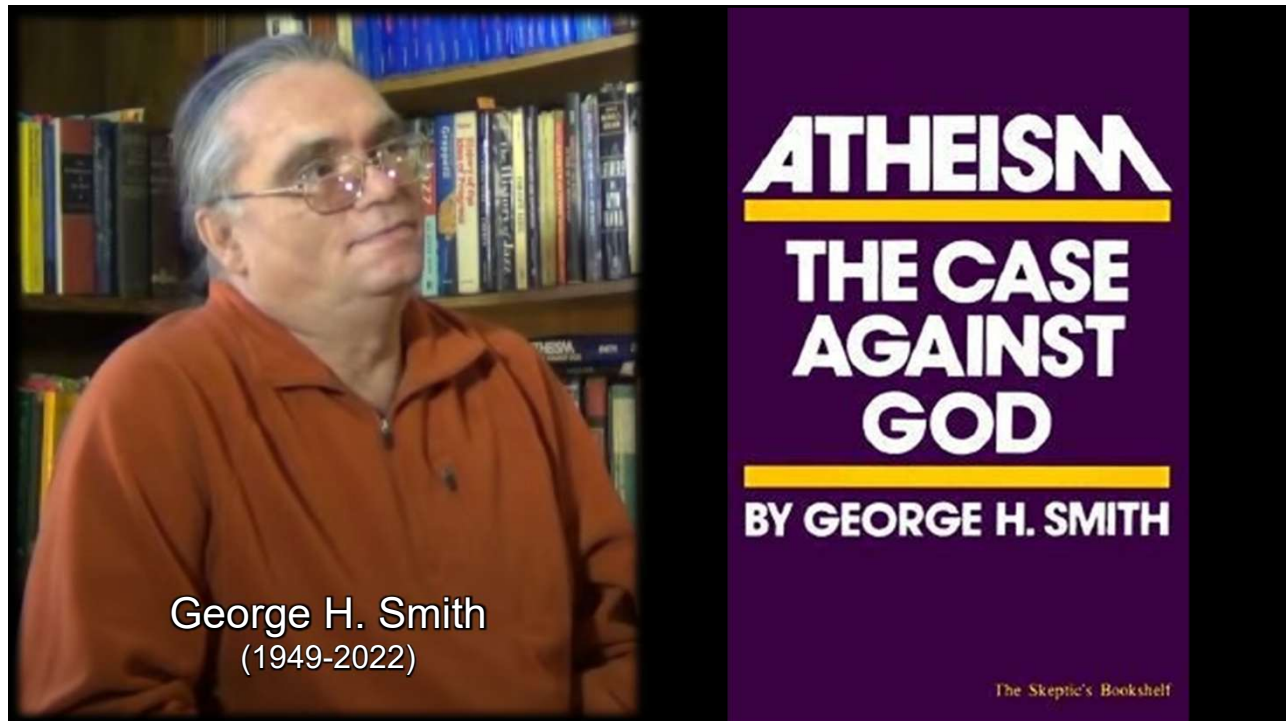
*"Theists believe in God, while atheists do not have such a belief. Many theists insist that it is the responsibility of the atheist to offer evidence justifying his lack of belief in God. But is the theist's demand rational? Must the atheist justify his lack of belief in God? Or does the burden rest with the theist?"*

[B. C. Johnson, *The Atheist Debater's Handbook* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1983): 11]

## The Atheist Debater's Handbook

by B. C. Johnson

***What can be said  
about this attempt  
to redefine  
atheism?***





George H. Smith  
(1949-2022)

*"As used throughout this book, 'theism' signifies the belief in any god or number of gods. The prefix 'a' means 'without,' so the term 'a-theism' literally means 'without theism,' or without belief in a god or gods."*


[George H. Smith, *Atheism: The Case Against God* (Buffalo: Prometheus, 1989), 7]

Granted that the suffix "ism" constitutes a belief system, Smith still illicitly has the negation "a" negating "belief" rather than negating "God."

Thus, rather than  
**"no belief in a God"**  
it should be  
**"a belief in no God."**

*"As used throughout this book, 'theism' signifies the belief in any god or number of gods. The prefix 'a' means 'without,' so the term 'a-theism' literally means 'without theism,' or without belief in a god or gods."*

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Douglas E. Krueger

# What Is ATHEISM?

A  
Short  
Introduction

**DOUGLAS  
E. KRUEGER**



Douglas E. Krueger

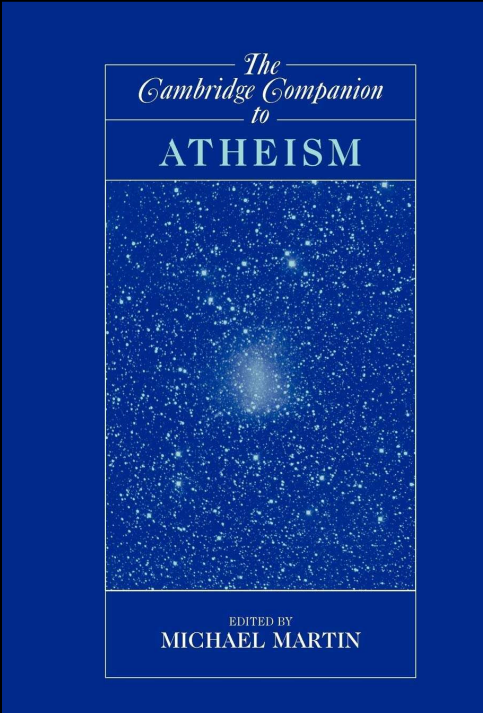
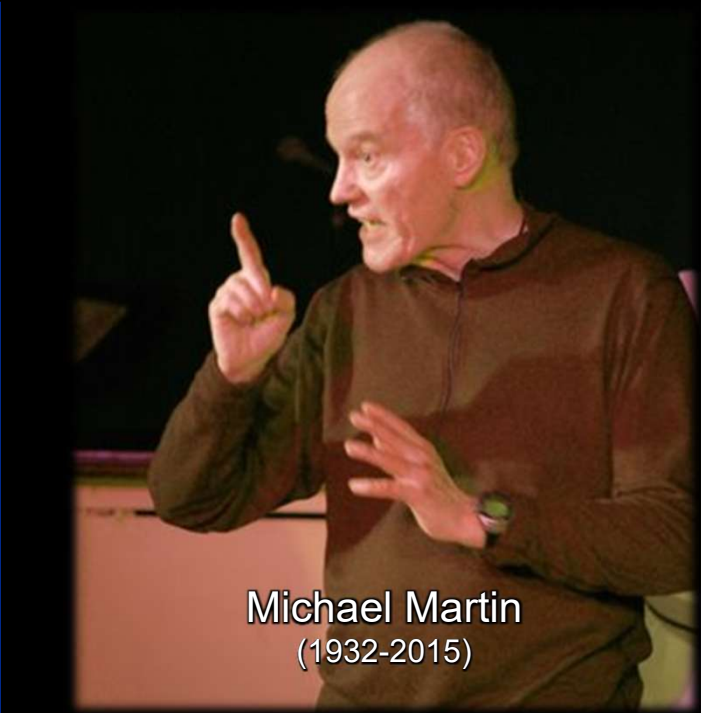
*"The term 'atheism' is from the Greek atheos. The prefix **'a'** means **'without,'** and the Greek theos means 'god,' so atheism means simply **'being without god.'** Theism asserts that there is a god, so atheism is the view which **does not assert** that there is a god."*

[Douglas E. Krueger, *What is Atheism? A Short Introduction* (Amherst: Prometheus, 1998), 17]

Notice that Krueger moves from the alpha negating 'god' (which would mean 'without god' or 'not-god') to the alpha negating the **assertion** (which means the absence of the assertion of god instead of the absence of god).

"The term 'atheism' is from the Greek *atheos*. The prefix 'a' means 'without,' and the Greek *theos* means 'god,' so atheism means simply 'being without god.' Theism asserts that there is a god, so atheism is the view **which does not assert that there is a god.**"

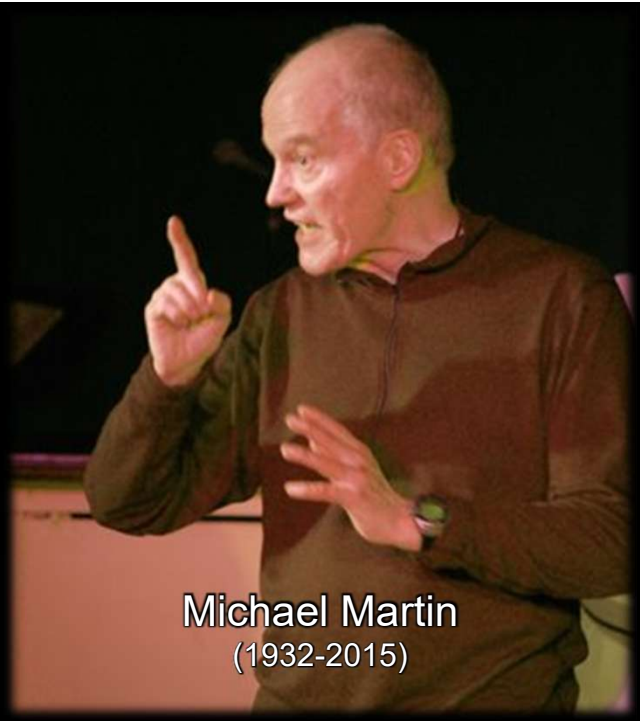
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Michael Martin  
(1932-2015)

"If you look up 'atheism' in a dictionary, you will find it defined as the belief that there is no God. Certainly, many people understand 'atheism' in this way. Yet this is not what the term means if one considers it from the point of view of its Greek roots. **In Greek 'a' means 'without' or 'not' and 'theos' 'god.'** From this stand point, an atheist is someone **without a belief in God**; he or she need not be someone who believes that God does not exist."

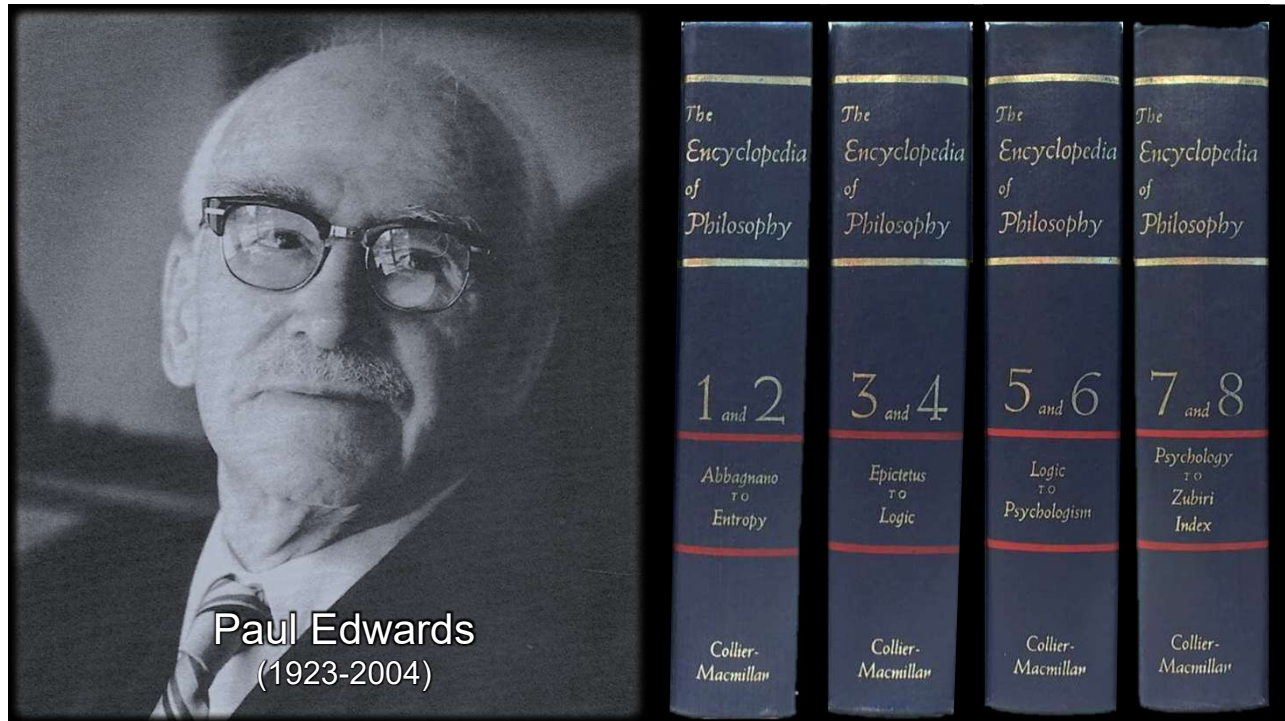
[n.a., "General Introduction," in *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1]



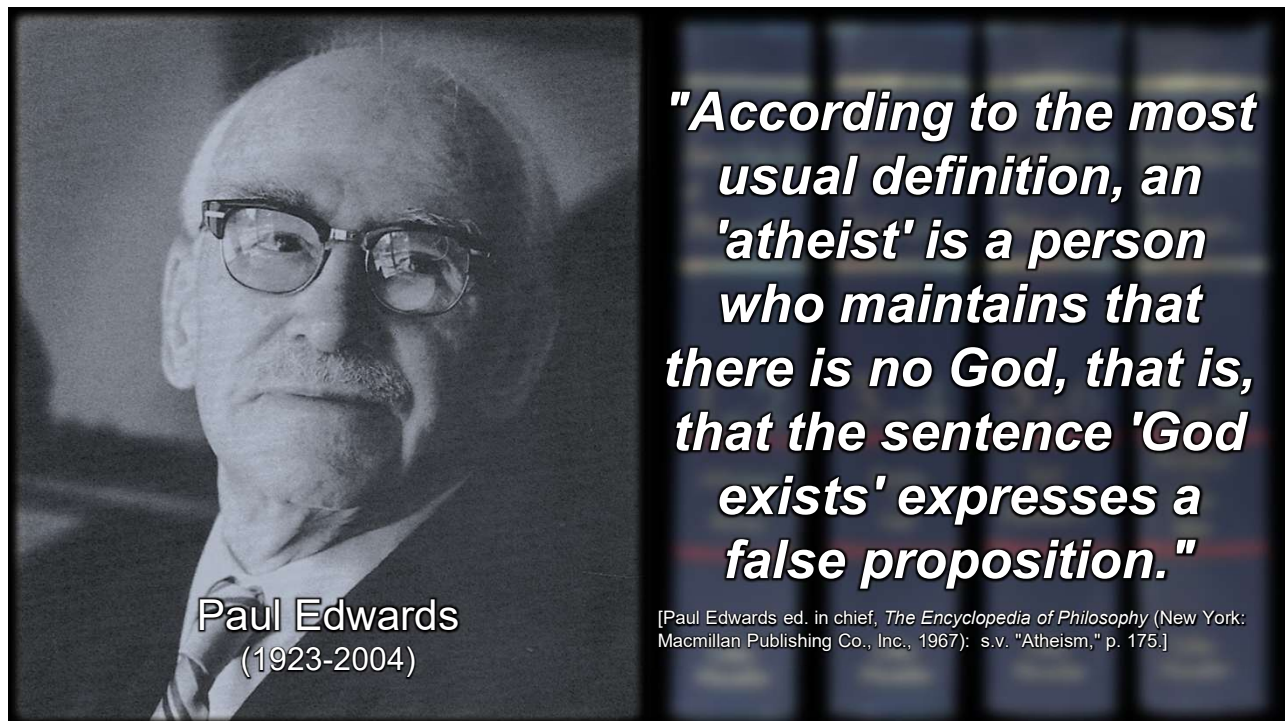
Michael Martin  
(1932-2015)



**Second, this definition conflicts with the standard academic definition of atheism.**




Paul Edwards  
(1923-2004)



Paul Edwards  
(1923-2004)

**"According to the most usual definition, an 'atheist' is a person who maintains that there is no God, that is, that the sentence 'God exists' expresses a false proposition."**

[Paul Edwards ed. in chief, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1967): s.v. "Atheism," p. 175.]




Ernest Nagel  
(1901-1985)

# Critiques of GOD

Making the case against belief in God

Edited by  
**PETER A. ANGELES**

- KURT BAIER
- JOHN DEWEY
- PAUL EDWARDS
- ANTONY FLEW
- SIGMUND FREUD
- ERICH FROMM
- SIDNEY HOOK
- WALTER KAUFMANN
- CORLISS LAMONT
- WALLACE I. MATSON
- H. J. McCLOSKEY
- ERNEST NAGEL
- KAI NIELSEN
- RICHARD ROBINSON
- BERTRAND RUSSELL
- MICHAEL SCRIVEN



Ernest Nagel  
(1901-1985)

***"[A]theism is not to be identified with sheer unbelief... A child who has received no religious instruction ... is not an atheist—for he is not denying any theistic claims."***

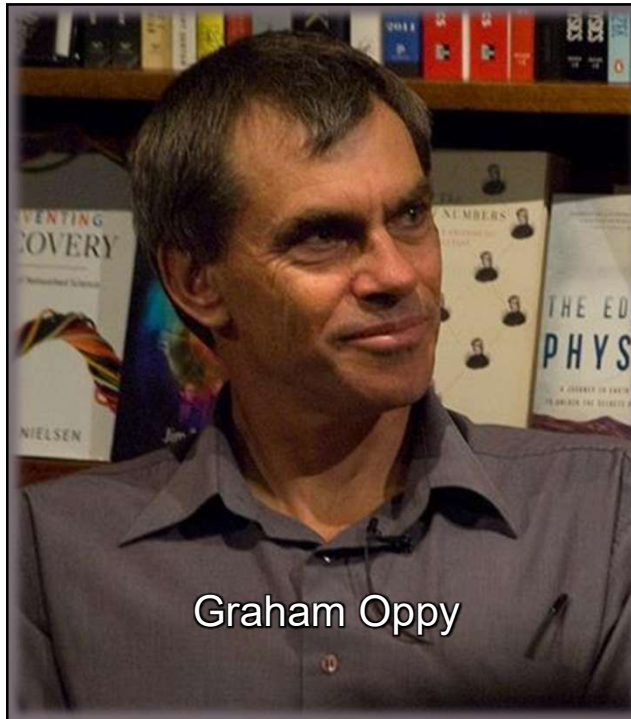
[Ernest Nagel, "Philosophical Concepts of Atheism" in *Critiques of God: Making the Case Against Belief in God*, Peter A. Angeles, ed. pp. 4-5]



Theodore M. Drange

***"Is the proposition that God exists true or false? You are a theist if and only if you say that the proposition is true or probably true, you are an atheist if and only if you say that it is false or probably false, and you are an agnostic if and only if you understand what the proposition is, but resist giving either answer, and support your resistance by saying, 'The evidence is insufficient' (or words to that effect)."***

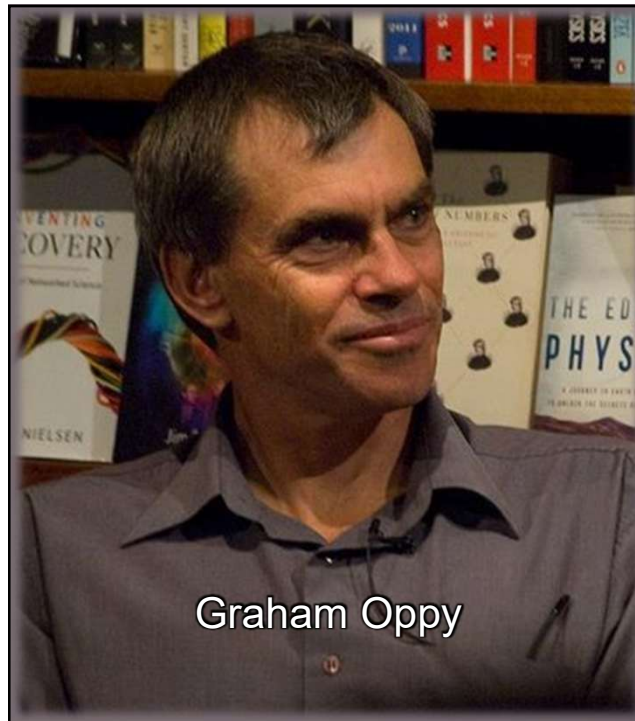
[Theodore M. Drange "Atheism, Agnosticism, Noncognitivism," from [https://infidels.org/library/modern/theodore\\_drange/definition.html](https://infidels.org/library/modern/theodore_drange/definition.html), accessed 01/15/19]



Graham Oppy

***"Properly, we should define theism as the view that there's at least one god and atheism as the view that there are no gods, and monotheism then as the view that there is exactly one God and we call that one God with a capital 'G'. Atheists then are people who believe that there are no gods and particular in our context, they believe that God doesn't exist."***

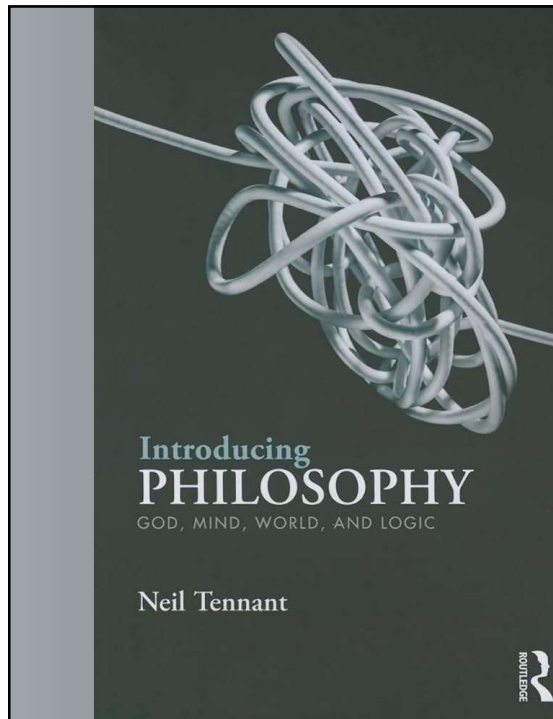
...



Graham Oppy

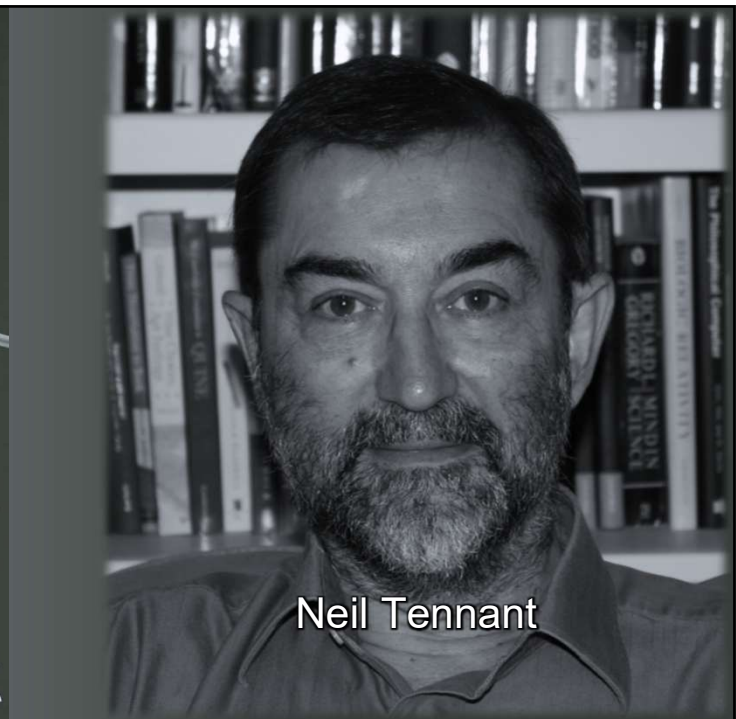
***"Other people like to say that atheism is just lacking the belief that God exists which lumps together ... the class of agnostics with the class of atheists; if you define it that way, which I don't like."***

[Graham Oppy vs. Ben Arbour, "The Ontological Argument" on *Capturing Christianity*, YouTube video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udxfuPgq4TY>, @1:05:20, accessed 06/13/22]



Introducing  
**PHILOSOPHY**  
GOD, MIND, WORLD, AND LOGIC

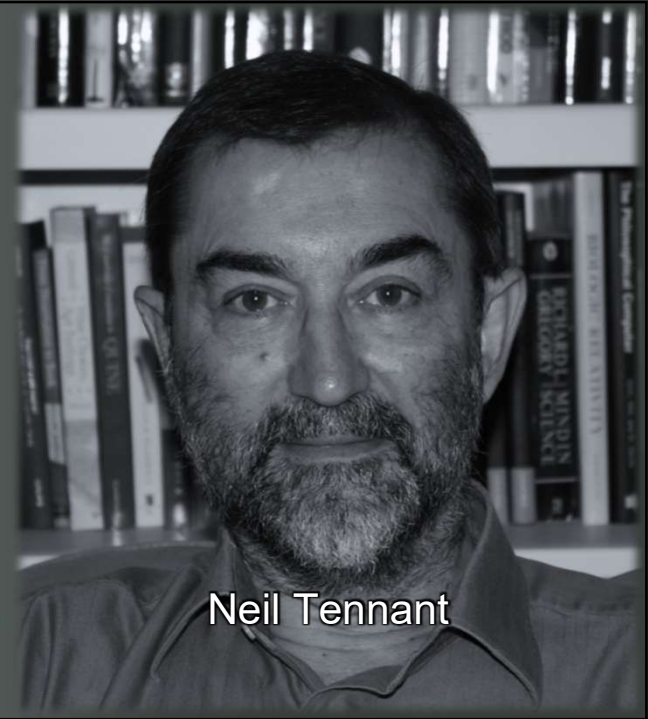
Neil Tennant



Neil Tennant

***"['Does God exist?'] is a philosophical question. At one extreme, the theist will answer 'Yes', and offer all manner of arguments and considerations in support of that answer. At the other extreme, the atheist will answer 'No', and likewise offer all manner of arguments and considerations in support of that answer."***

[Neil Tennant, *Introducing Philosophy: God, Mind, World, and Logic* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 29]



Neil Tennant



***Third, this definition entails an absurdity if not an outright contradiction.***

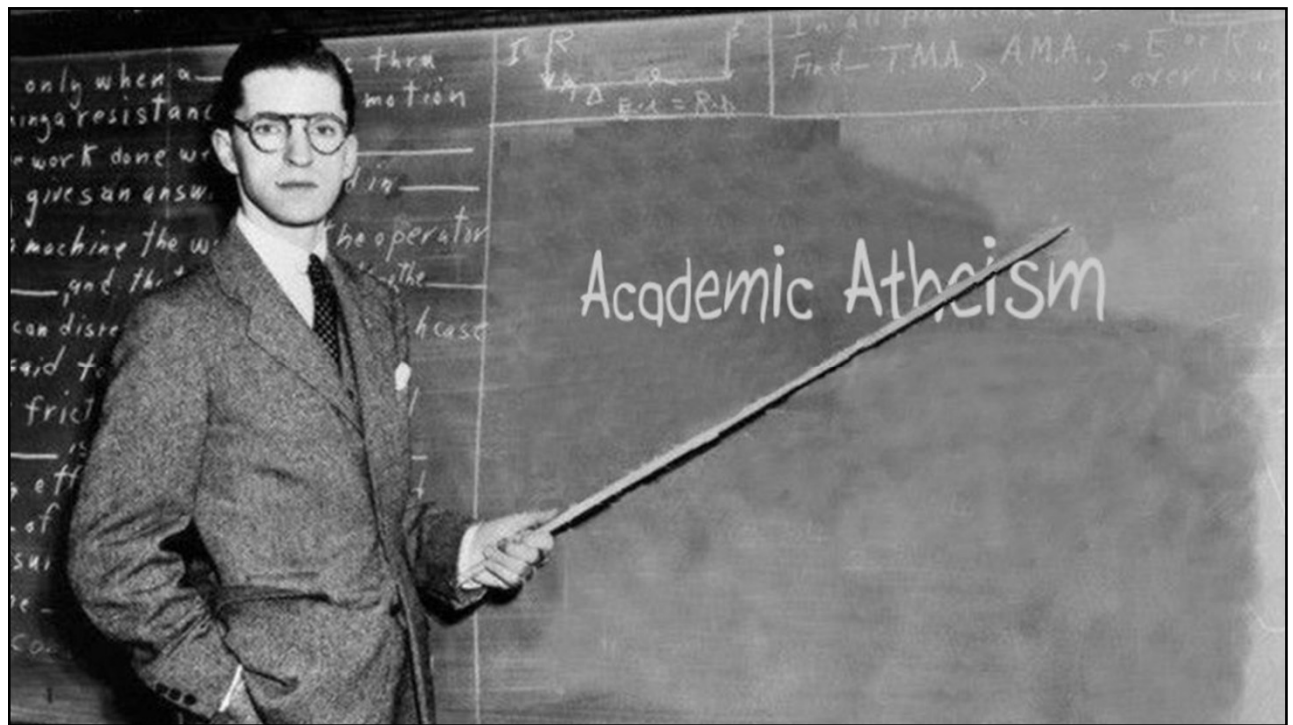


***The absurdity is that atheism could be true and God still exist. In other words, atheism would be indifferent to the question of God's existence.***



***The contradiction would be that theism and its opposite, atheism, could both be true at the same time!***





# *What Is Popular Atheism?*



*The term 'popular' here does not mean that it is well liked or well known.*



*Rather, in this context, 'popular' is in contrast to 'scholarly.'*



*It means that the writing is for a more general audience instead of the experts or technicians in the field.*



*As such, it requires of the reader less background knowledge and is generally free of technical terminology.*



***What Is the  
New Atheism?***



***The expression "New Atheism" refers to an atheism characterized by the influences of four main figures:***

***The expression "New Atheism" refers to an atheism characterized by the influences of four main figures:***



Richard Dawkins



Sam Harris



Daniel Dennett



Christopher Hitchens

***These "apostles" of the New Atheism sometimes refer to themselves as "The Four Horsemen," an obvious reference to the four horsemen of the Book of Revelation.***

***It is now the name of a CD you can purchase from Richard Dawkins' website as well as the title of a book.***

DISCUSSIONS WITH  
**RICHARD DAWKINS**



EPISODE ONE

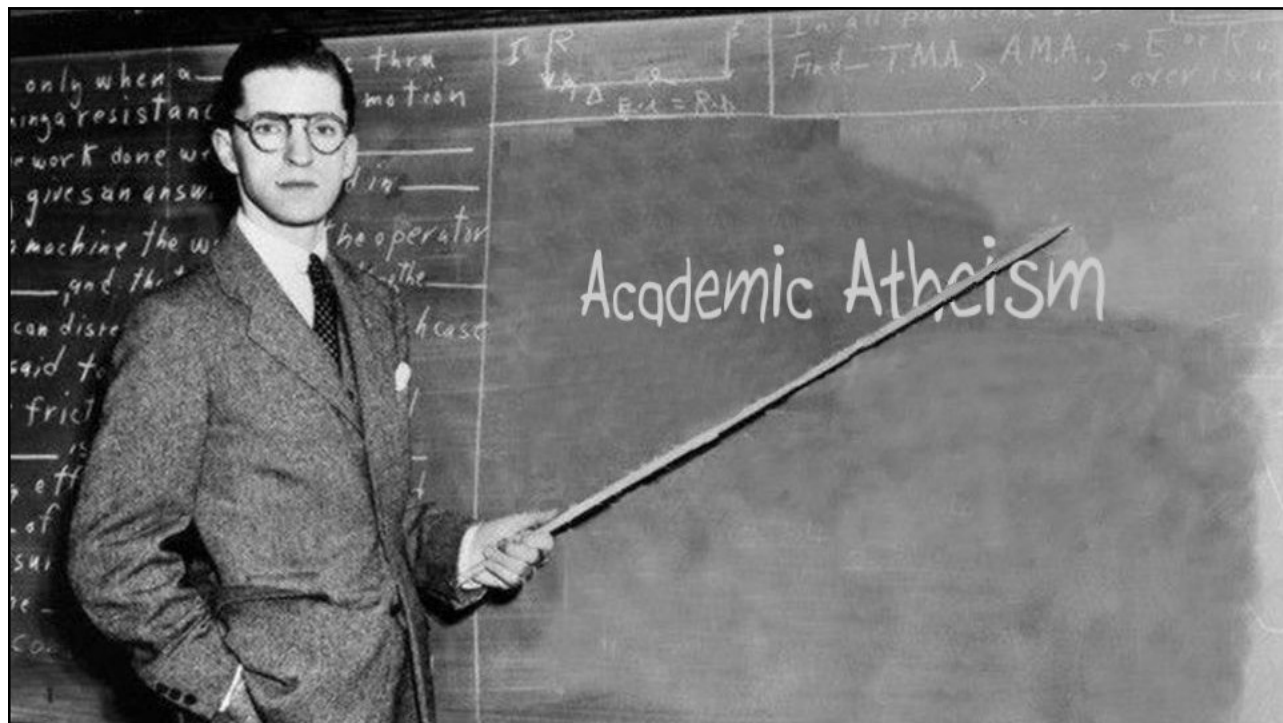
**THE  
FOUR HORSEMEN**




A Round Table Discussion With:  
RICHARD DAWKINS • DANIEL C. DENNETT  
SAM HARRIS • CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

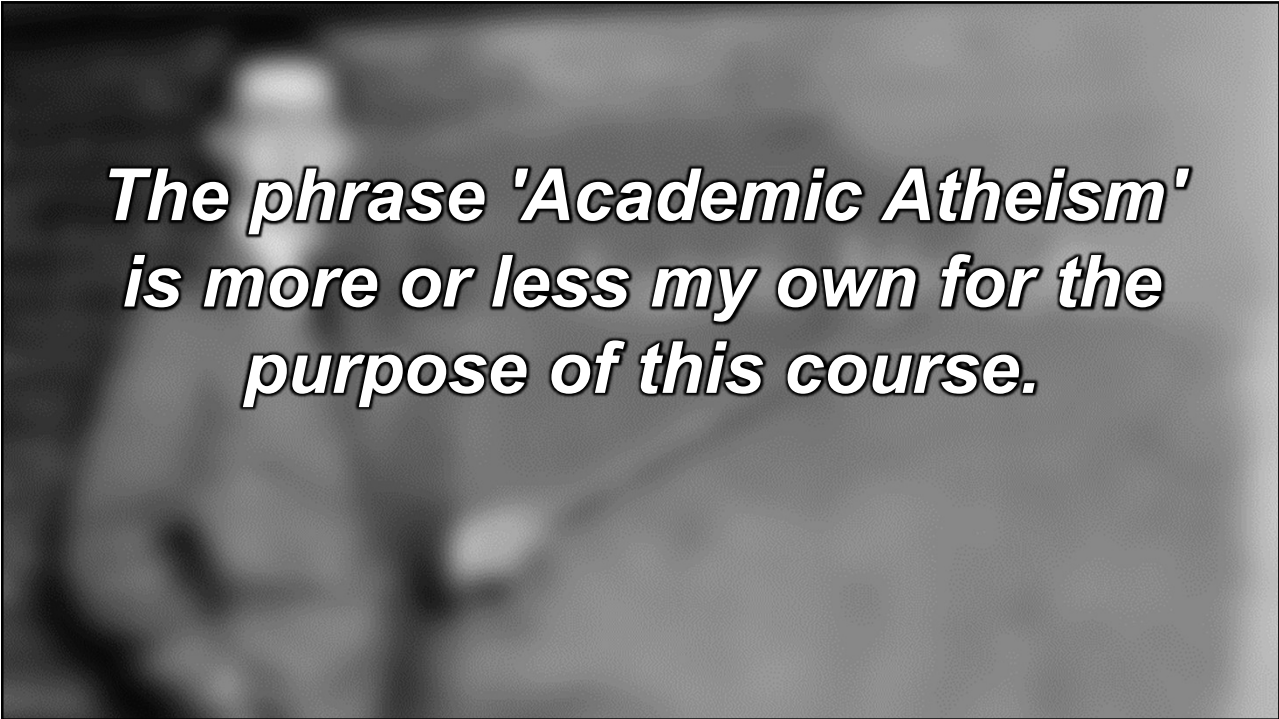
**HITCHENS  
THE CONVERSATION THAT SPARKED AN  
DAWKINS  
THE FOUR  
HORSEMEN  
HARRIS  
ATHEIST REVOLUTION  
DENNETT**

FOREWORD BY STEPHEN FRY

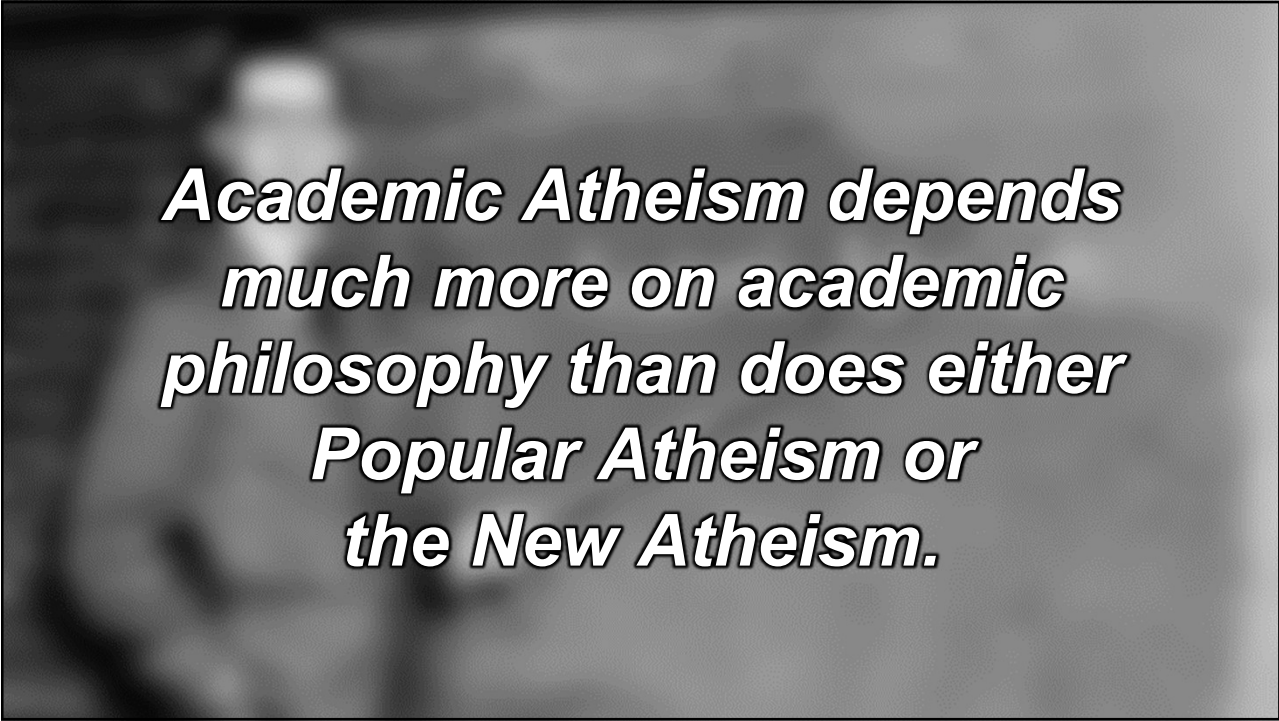




# ***What Is the Academic Atheism?***



***The phrase 'Academic Atheism'  
is more or less my own for the  
purpose of this course.***



*Academic Atheism depends much more on academic philosophy than does either Popular Atheism or the New Atheism.*



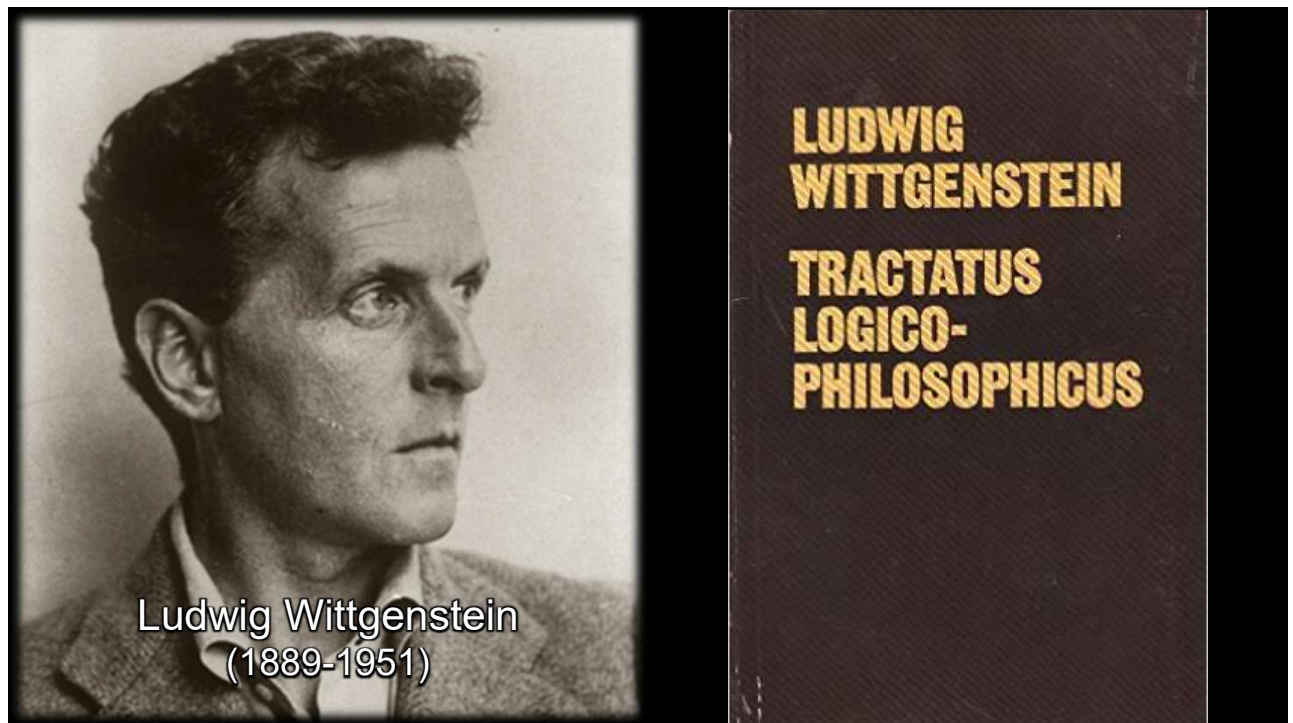
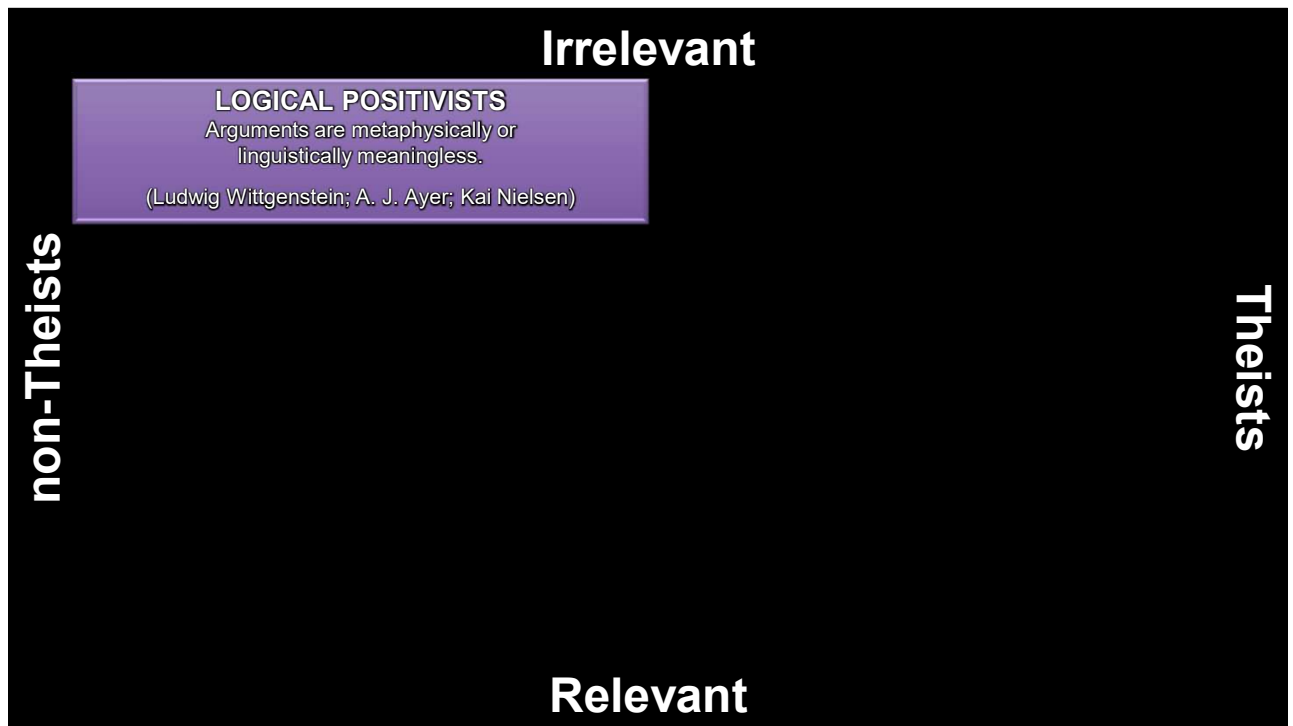
*Positions on Arguments for God's Existence*

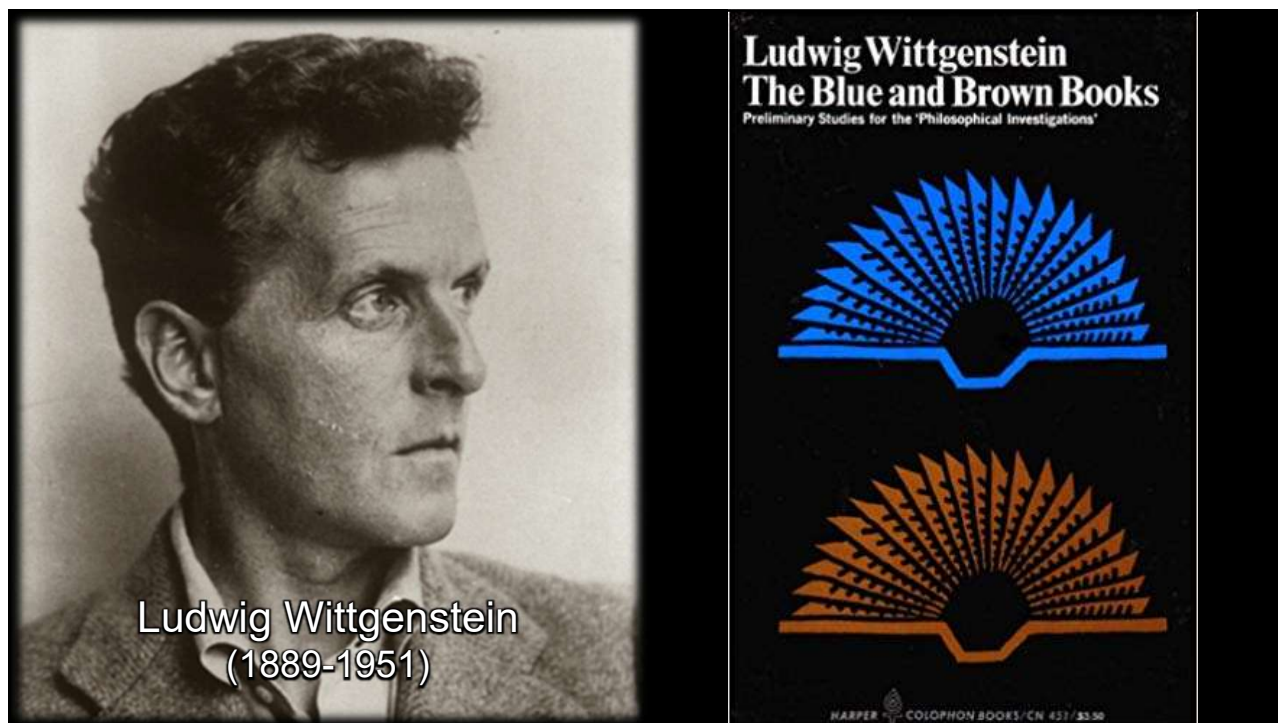
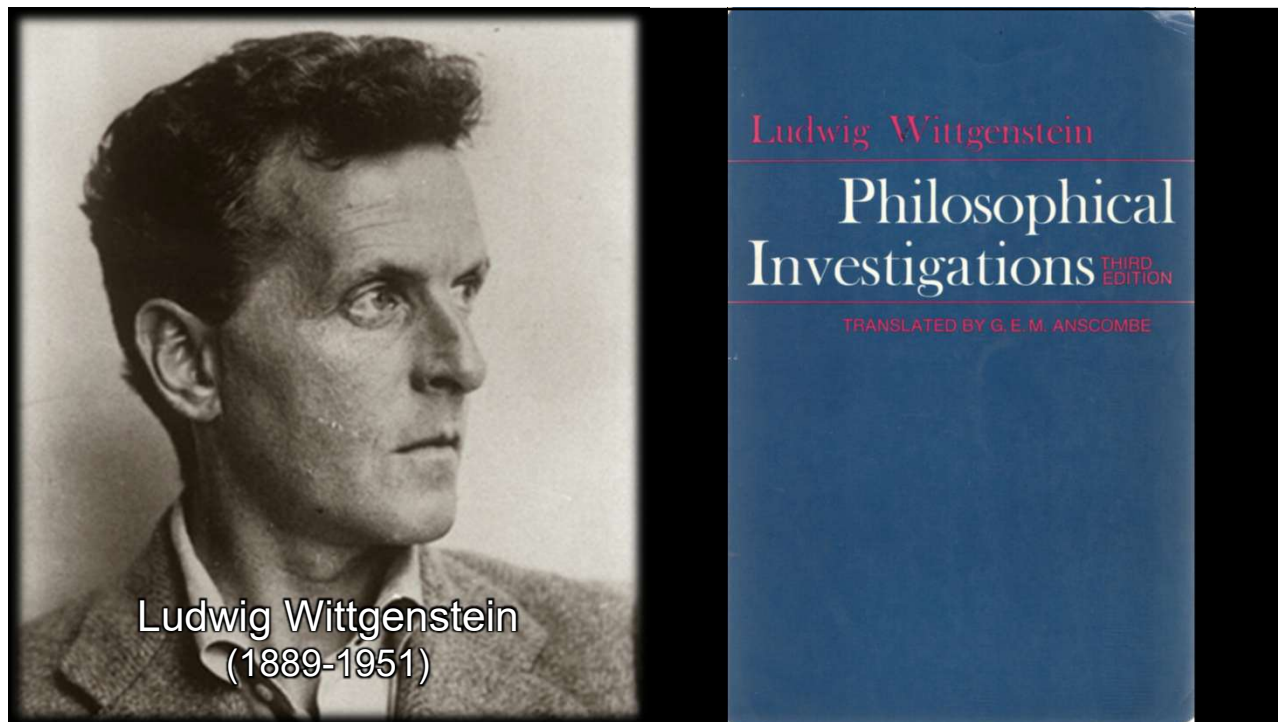
***Perhaps it is not surprising that there are different views on whether or how there is any relevance for the arguments for the existence of God.***

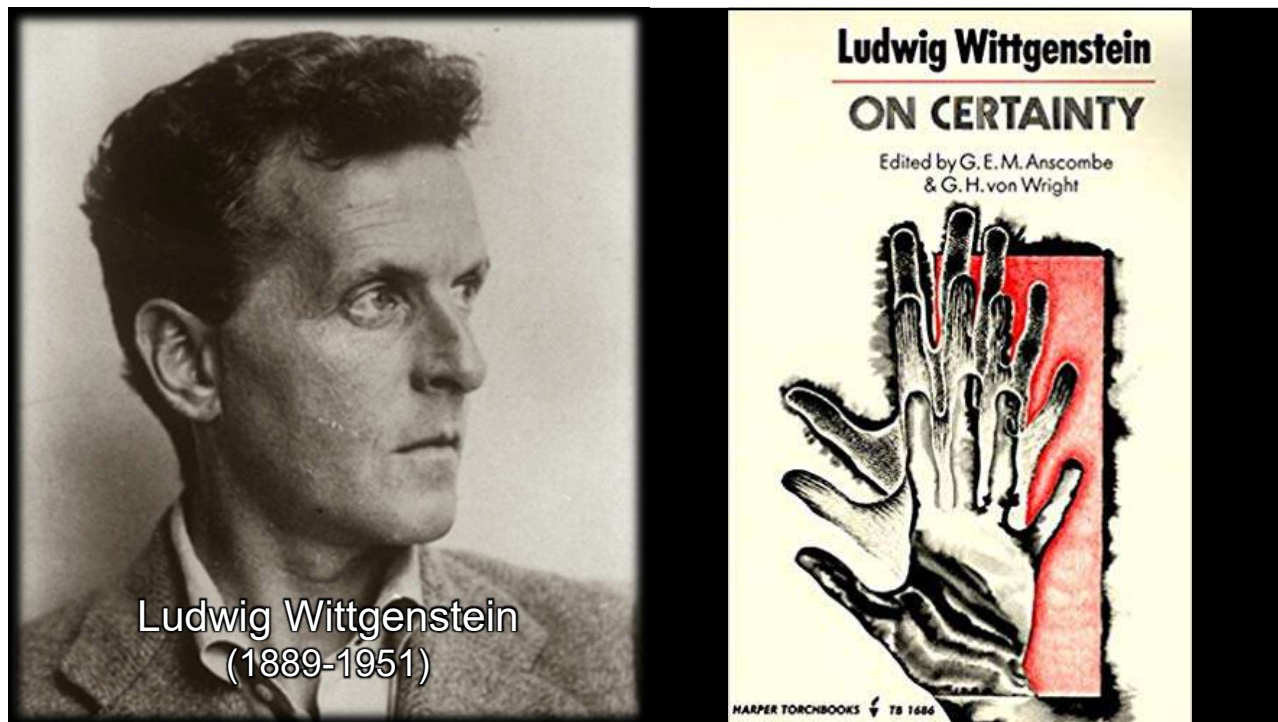
***It might be surprising to some, however, that the different views do not fall along the lines of theists and non-theists.***

***In combining the options of theists and non-theists together with the options of relevant and irrelevant we get these results.***

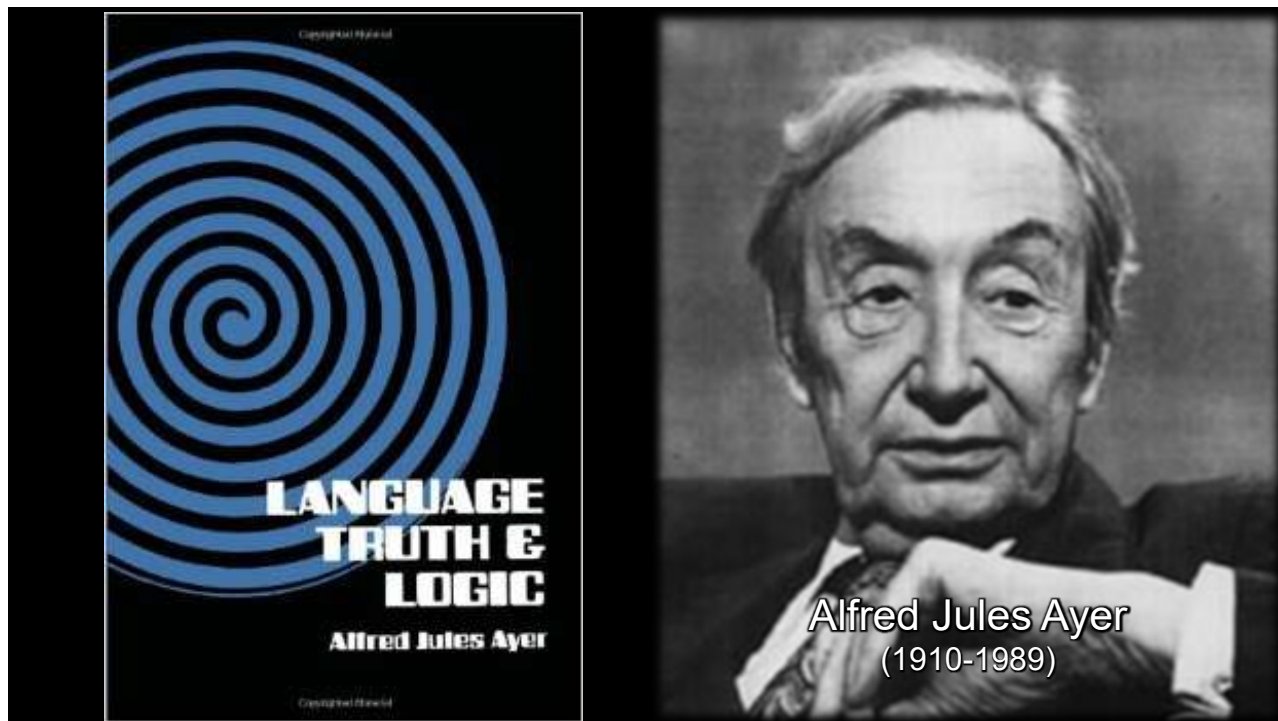
non-Theists / Irrelevant	Theists / Irrelevant
non-Theists / Relevant	Theists / Relevant



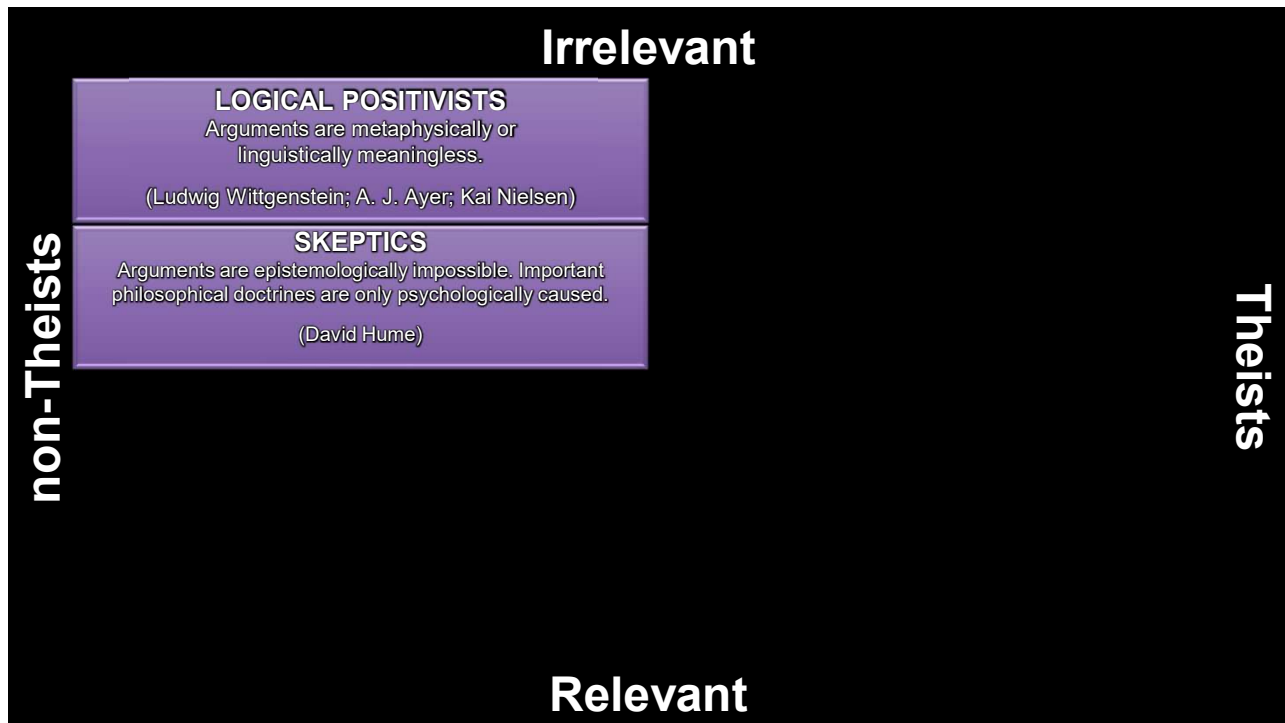
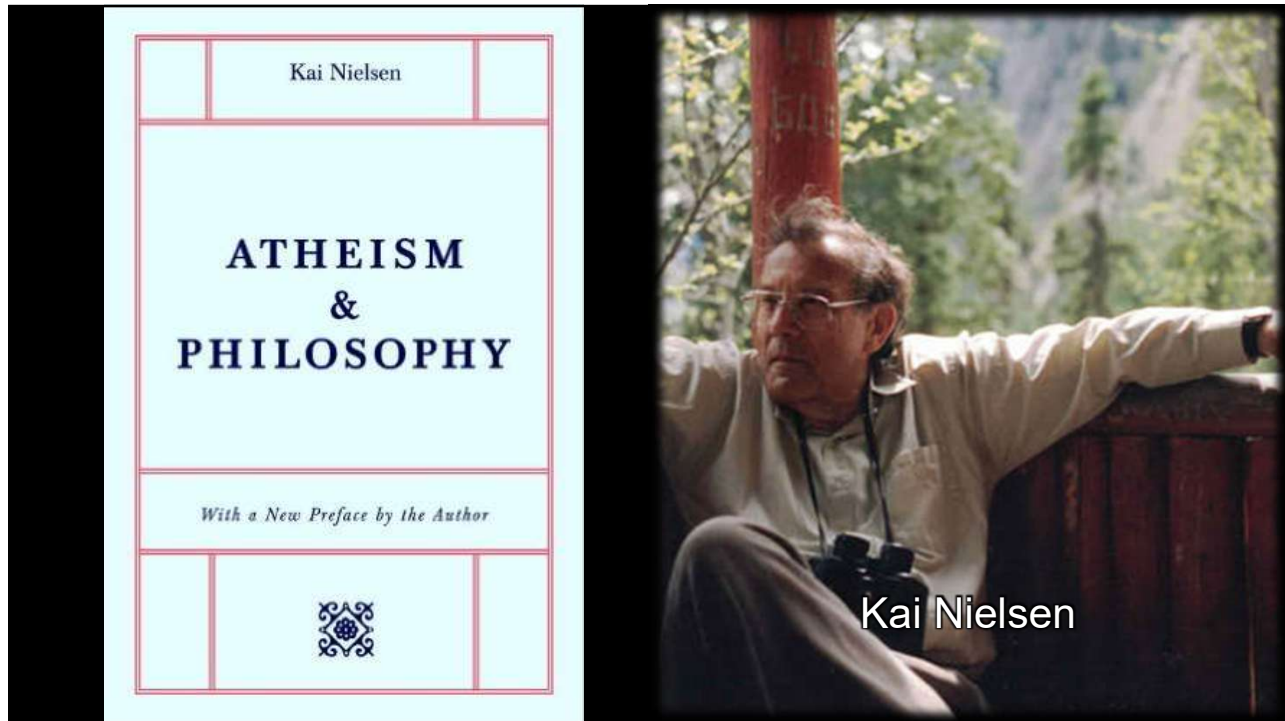


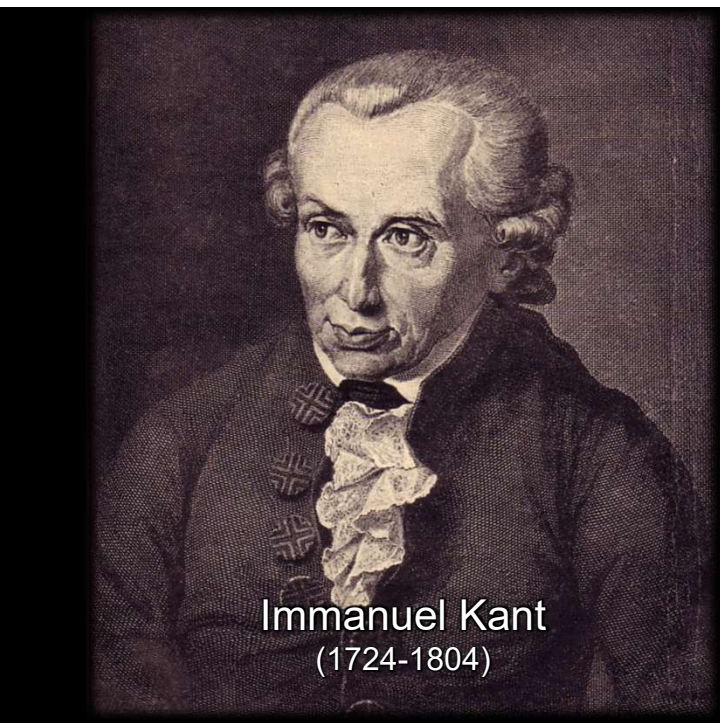
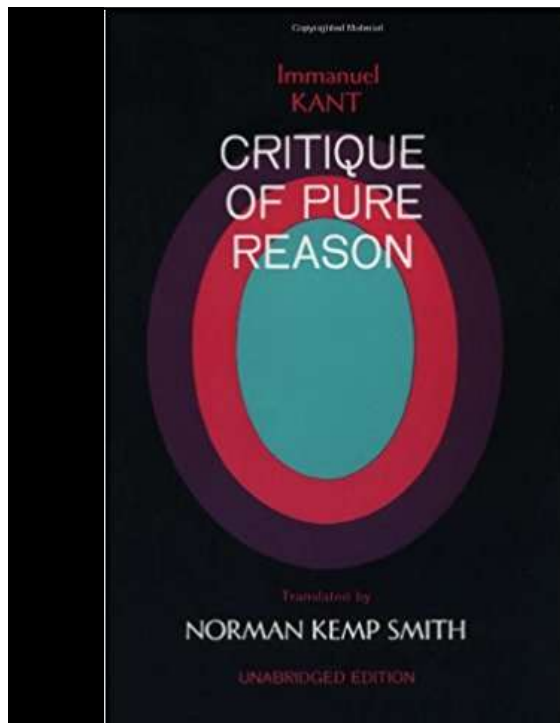
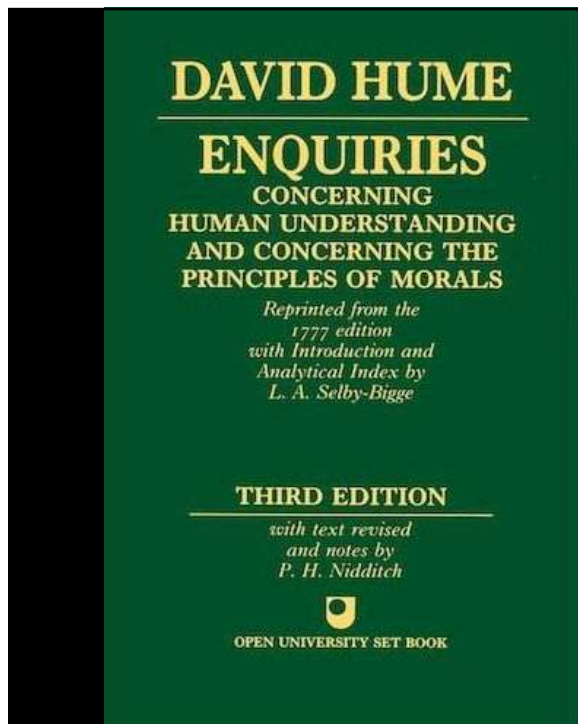


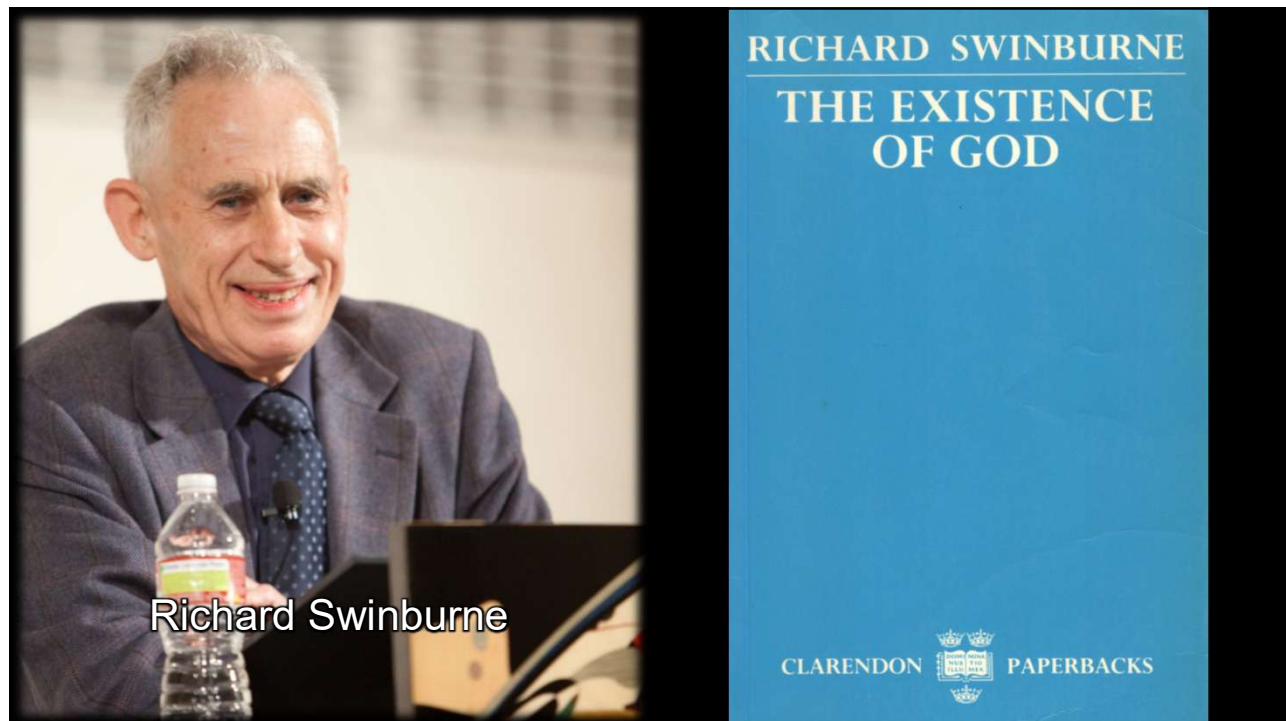
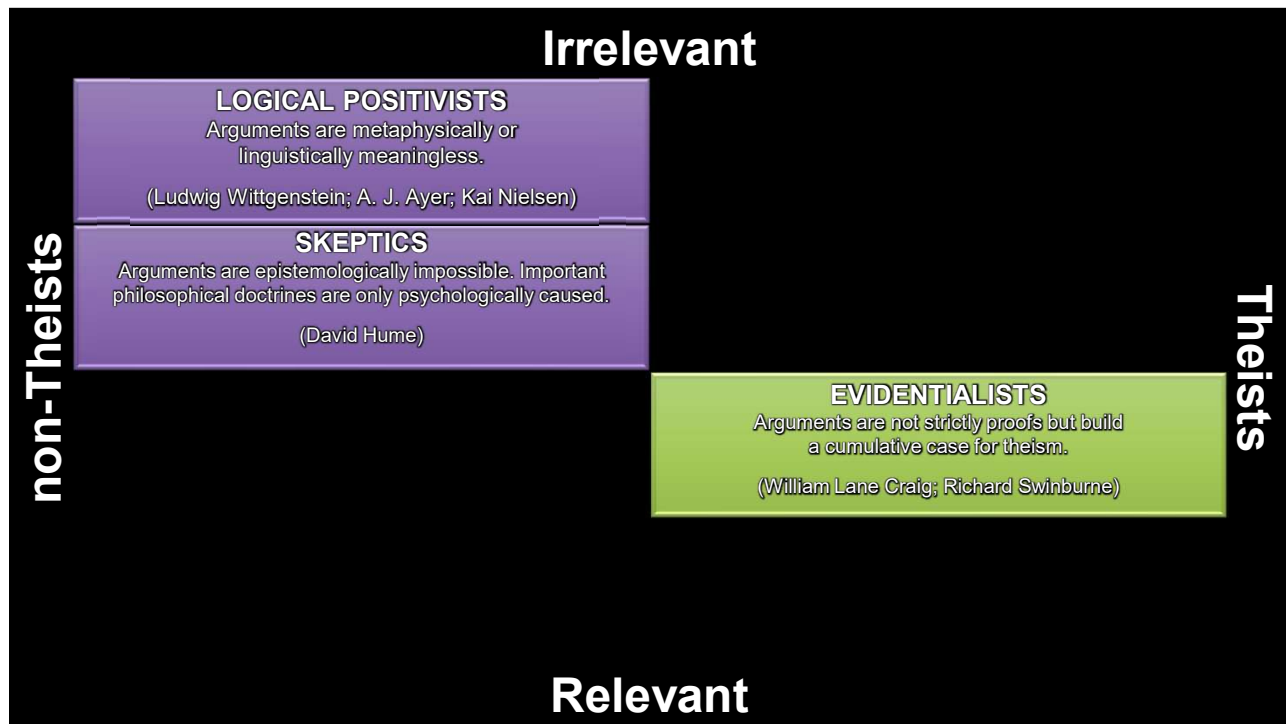
Ludwig Wittgenstein  
(1889-1951)

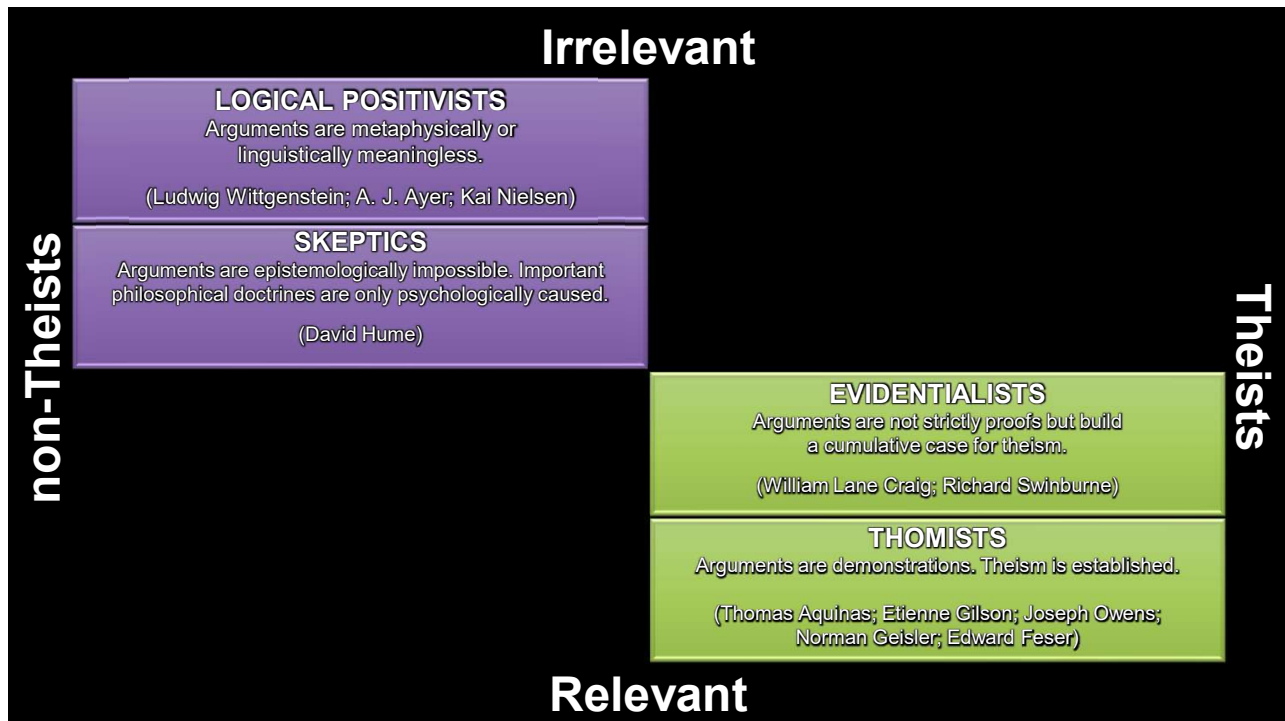
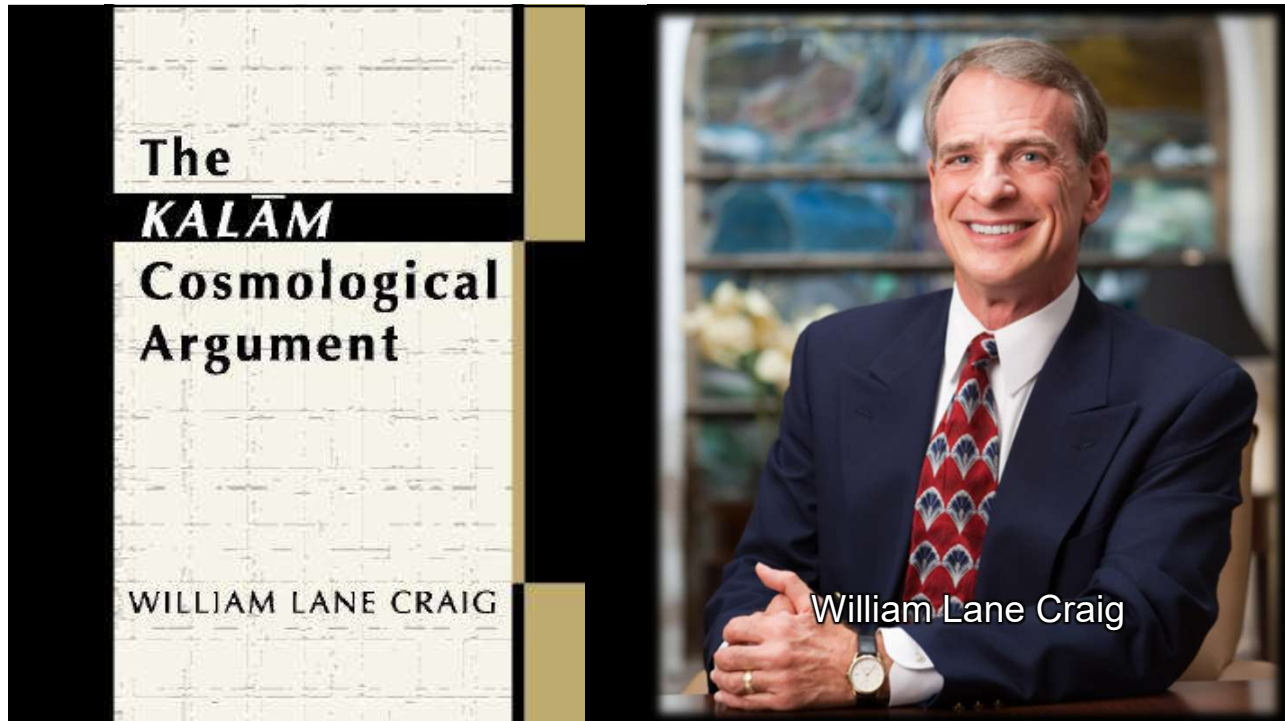


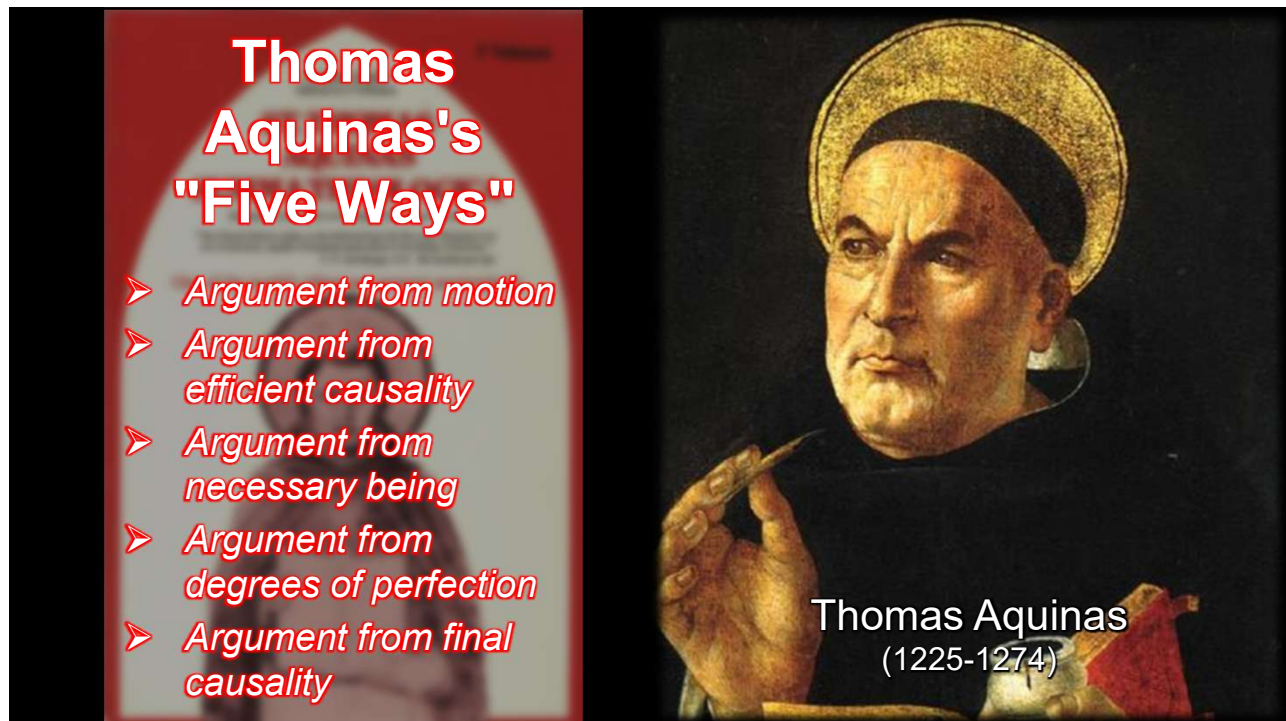
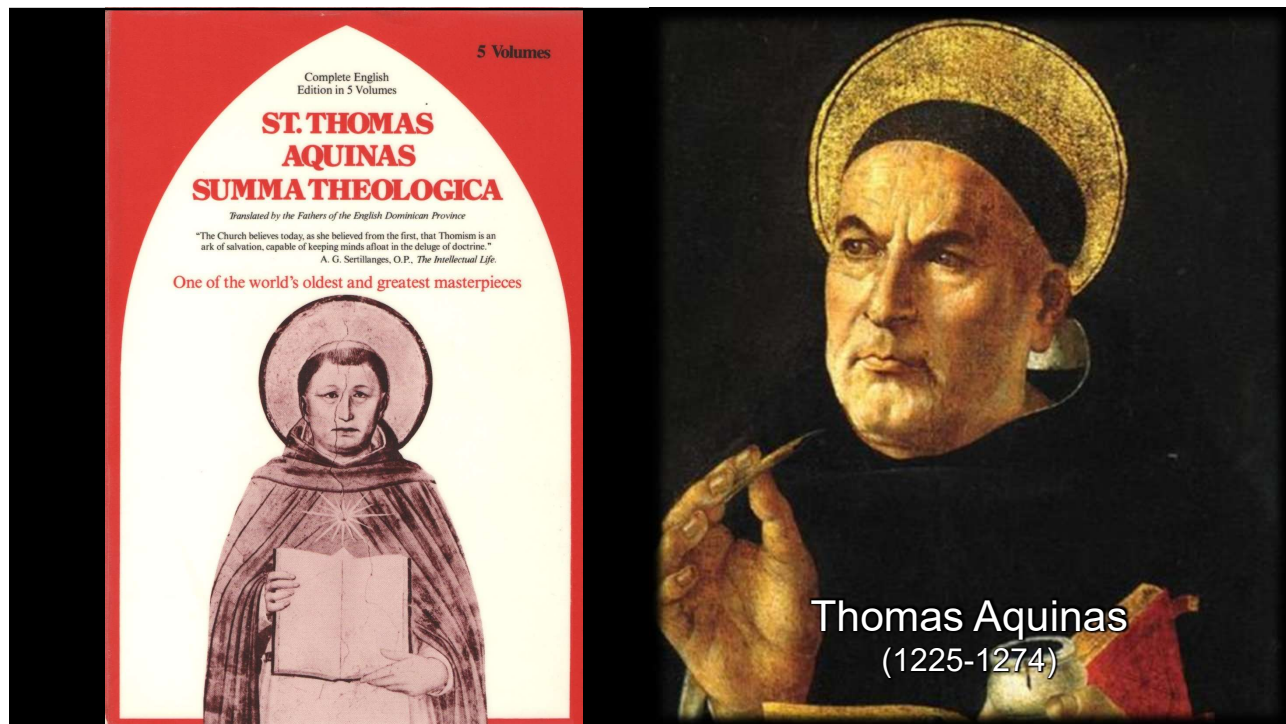
Alfred Jules Ayer  
(1910-1989)

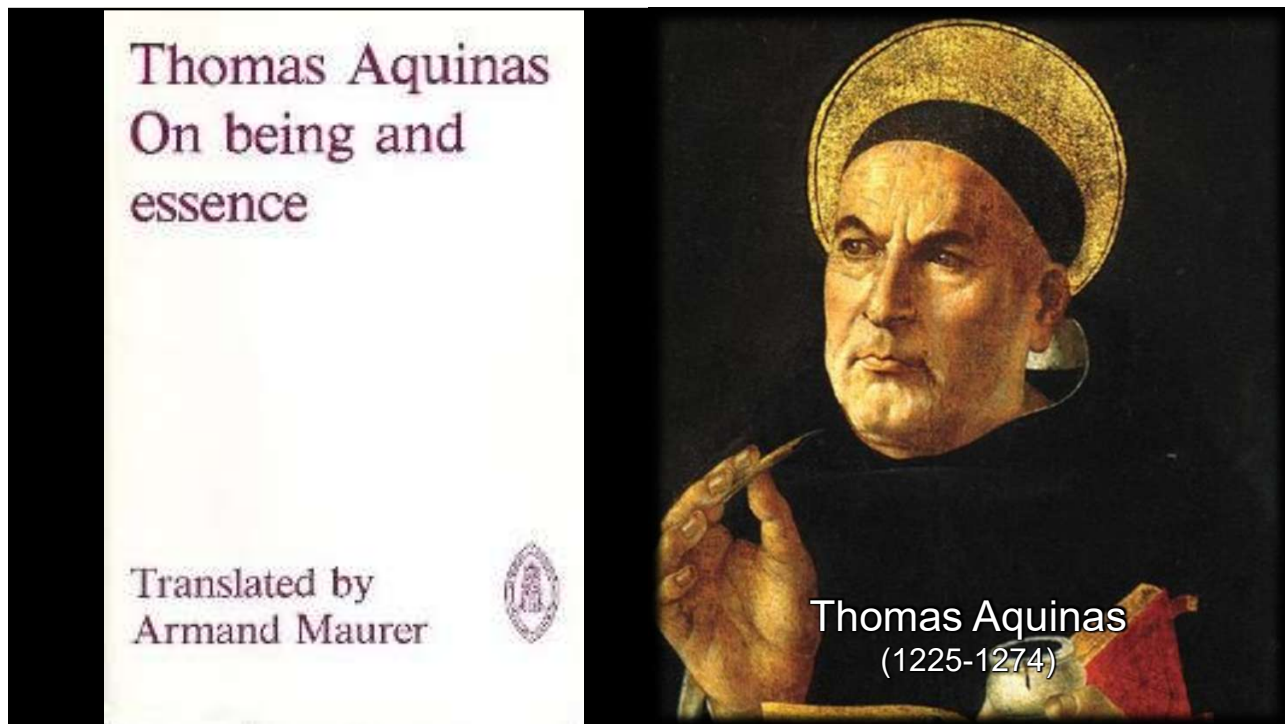


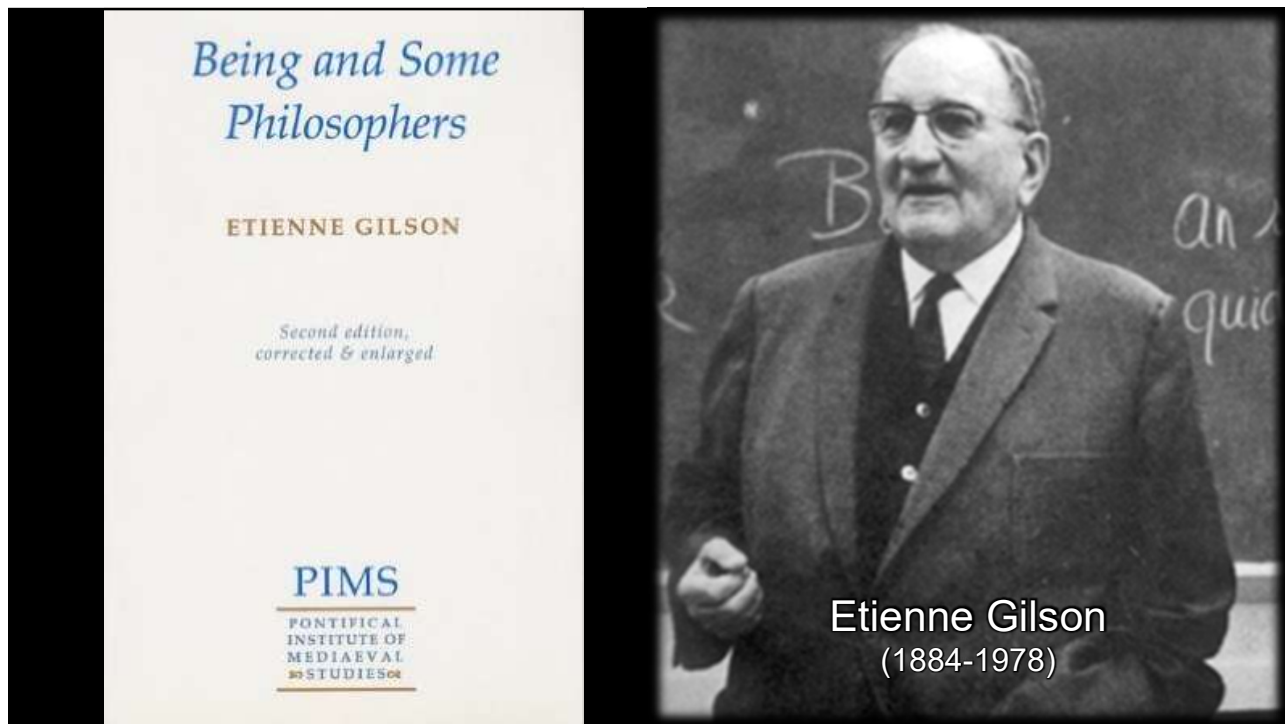












*Being and Some  
Philosophers*

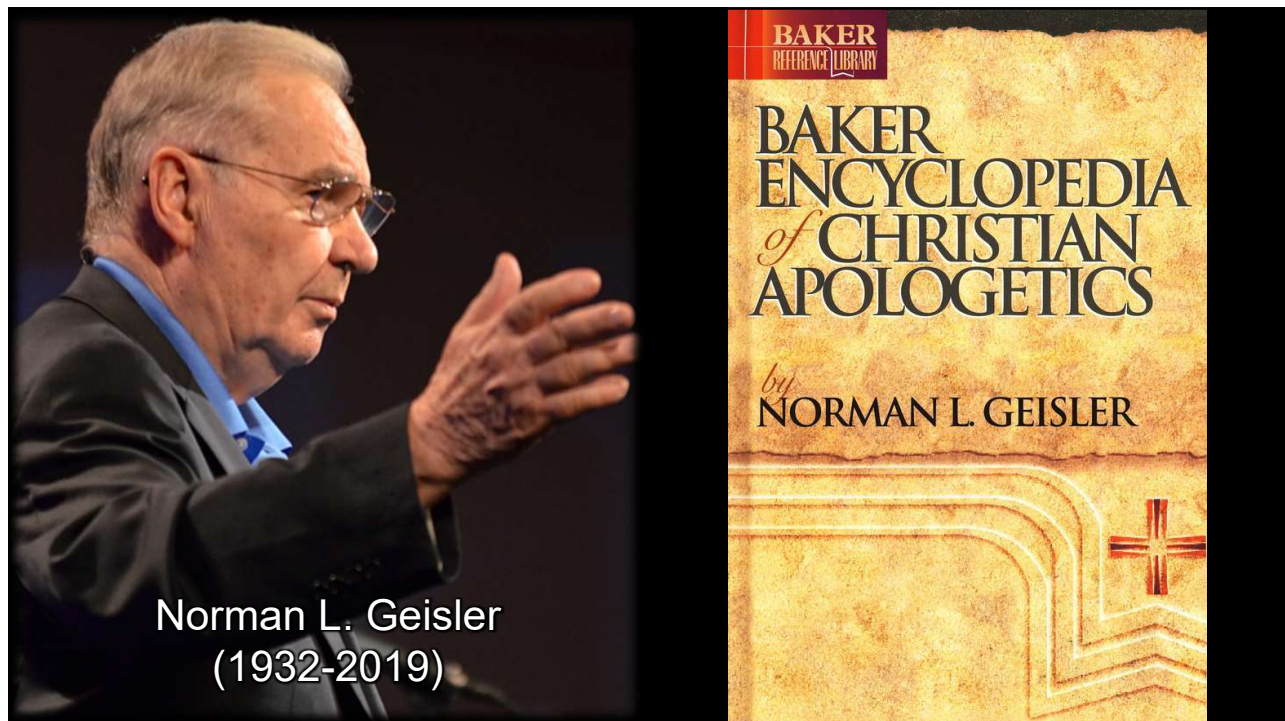
ETIENNE GILSON

*Second edition,  
corrected & enlarged*

**PIMS**

PONTIFICAL  
INSTITUTE OF  
MEDIÆVAL  
STUDIES

Etienne Gilson  
(1884-1978)

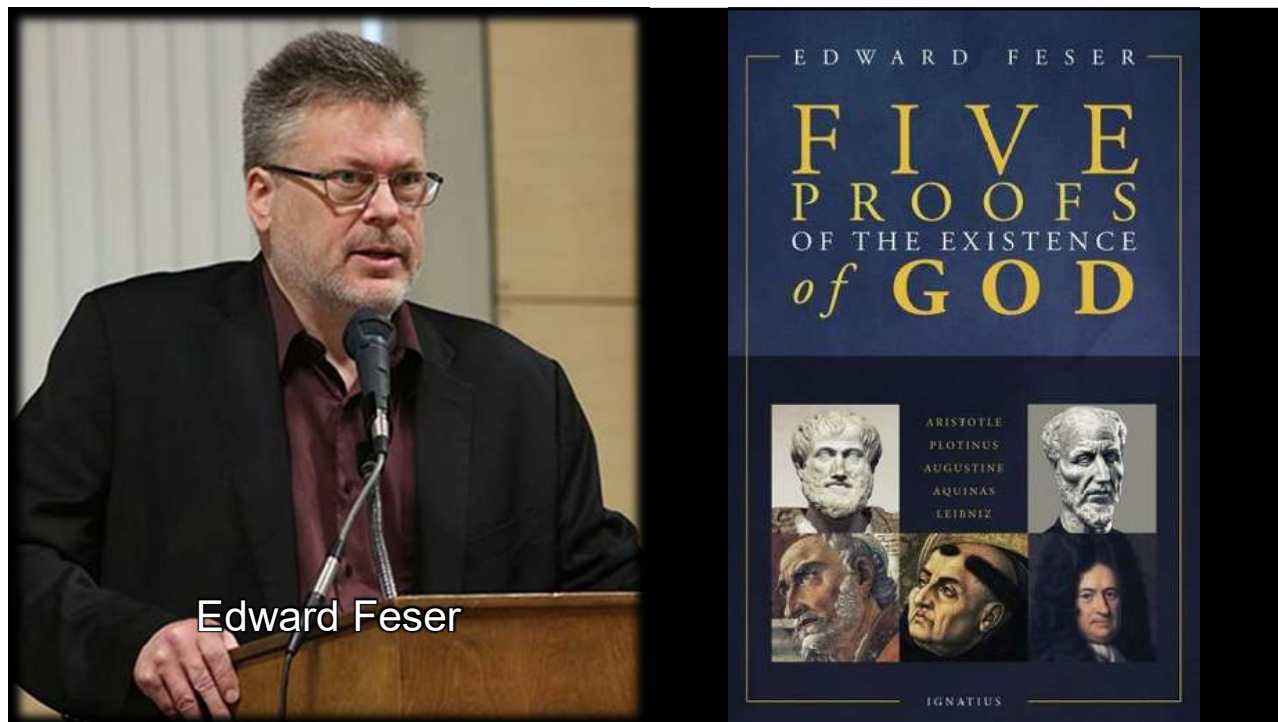


Norman L. Geisler  
(1932-2019)

BAKER  
REFERENCE LIBRARY

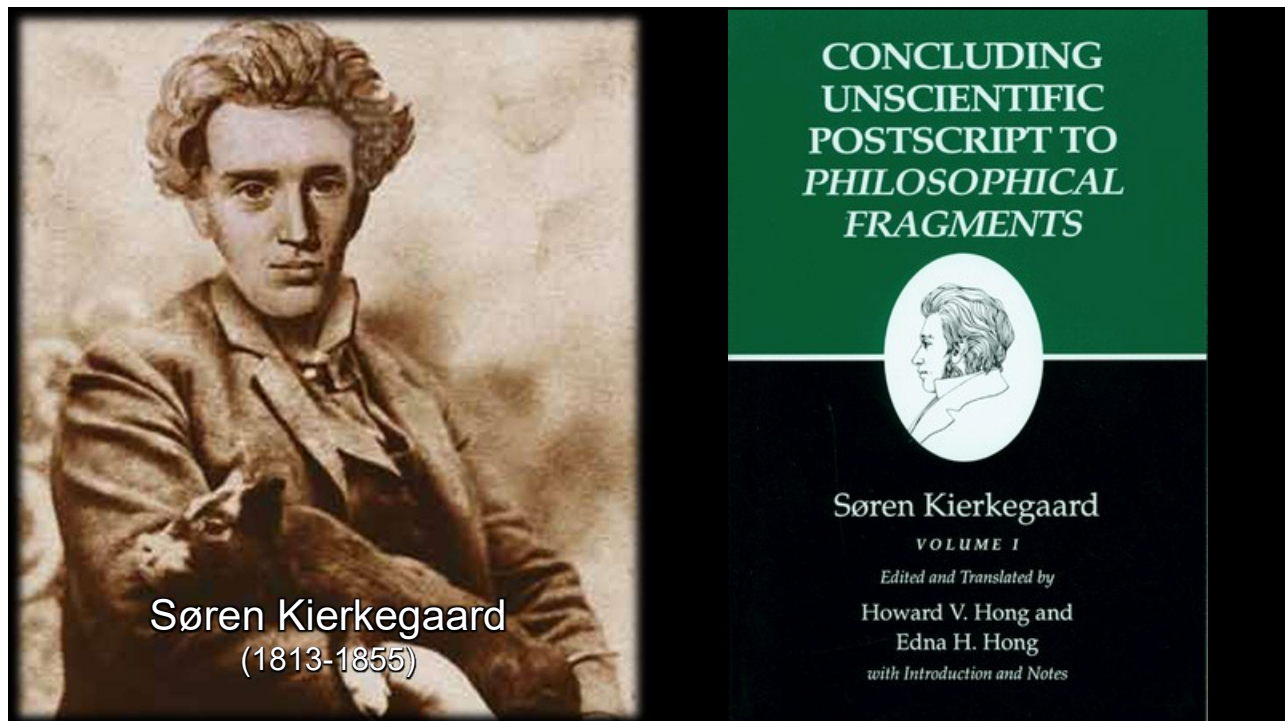
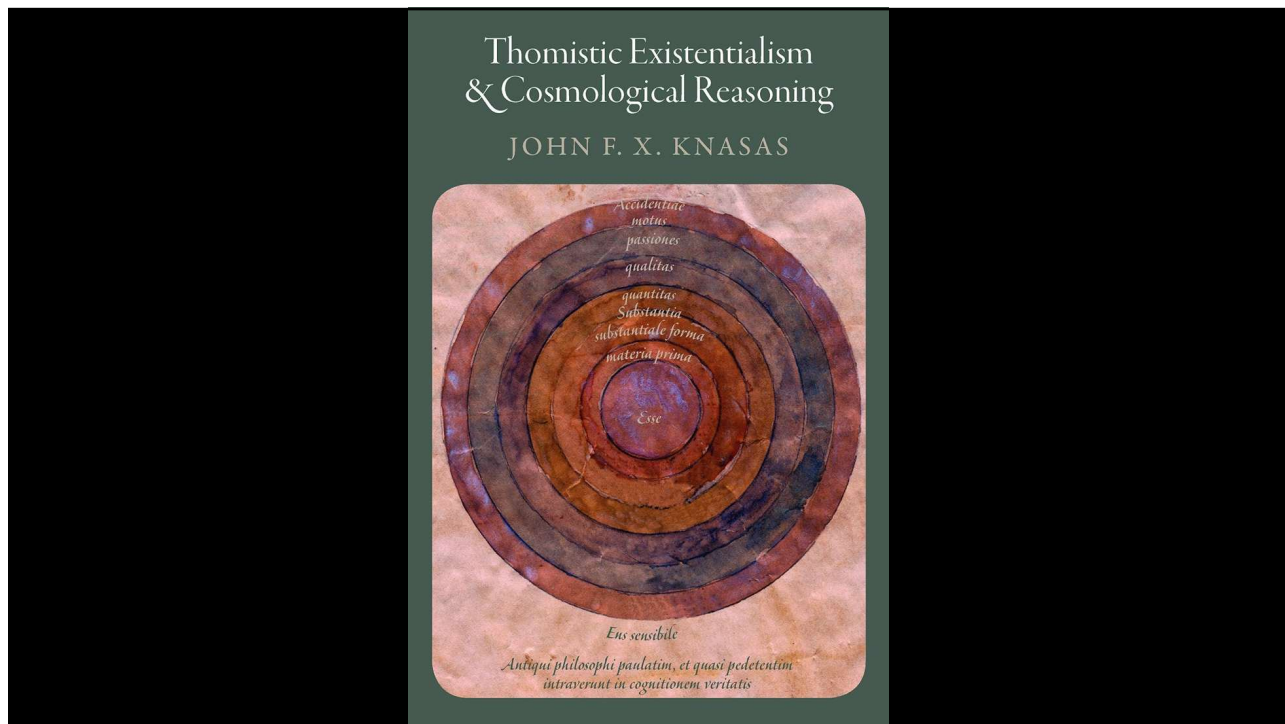
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ENCYCLOPEDIA  
*of* CHRISTIAN  
APOLOGETICS

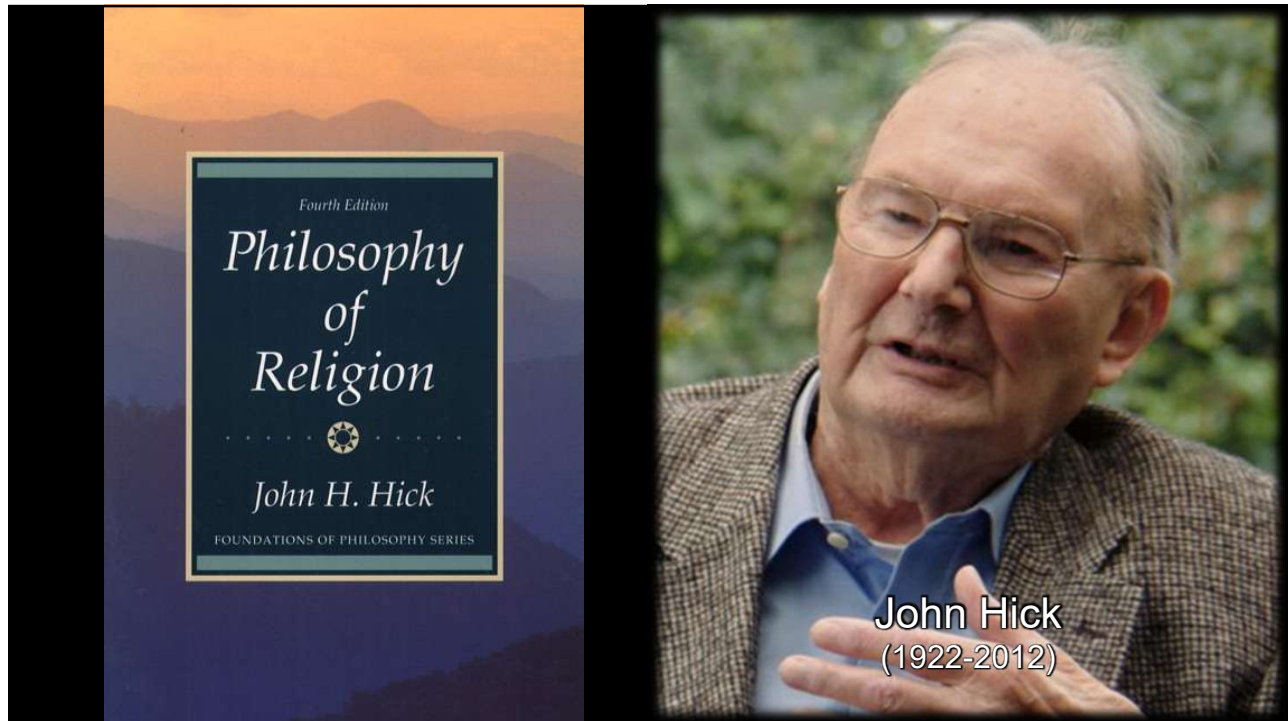
*by*  
NORMAN L. GEISLER



Edward Feser

<b>Irrelevant</b>			
<b>non-Theists</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>LOGICAL POSITIVISTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arguments are metaphysically or linguistically meaningless.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Ludwig Wittgenstein; A. J. Ayer; Kai Nielsen)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EXISTENTIALISTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arguments are relatively or entirely unnecessary. They have little to nothing to do with religion. Religion is primarily experiential and non-propositional.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Søren Kierkegaard)</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SKEPTICS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arguments are epistemologically impossible. Important philosophical doctrines are only psychologically caused.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(David Hume)</p>		
		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>EVIDENTIALISTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arguments are not strictly proofs but build a cumulative case for theism.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(William Lane Craig; Richard Swinburne)</p>	<b>Theists</b>
		<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THOMISTS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Arguments are demonstrations. Theism is established.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Thomas Aquinas; Etienne Gilson; Joseph Owens; Norman Geisler; Edward Feser)</p>	
<b>Relevant</b>			

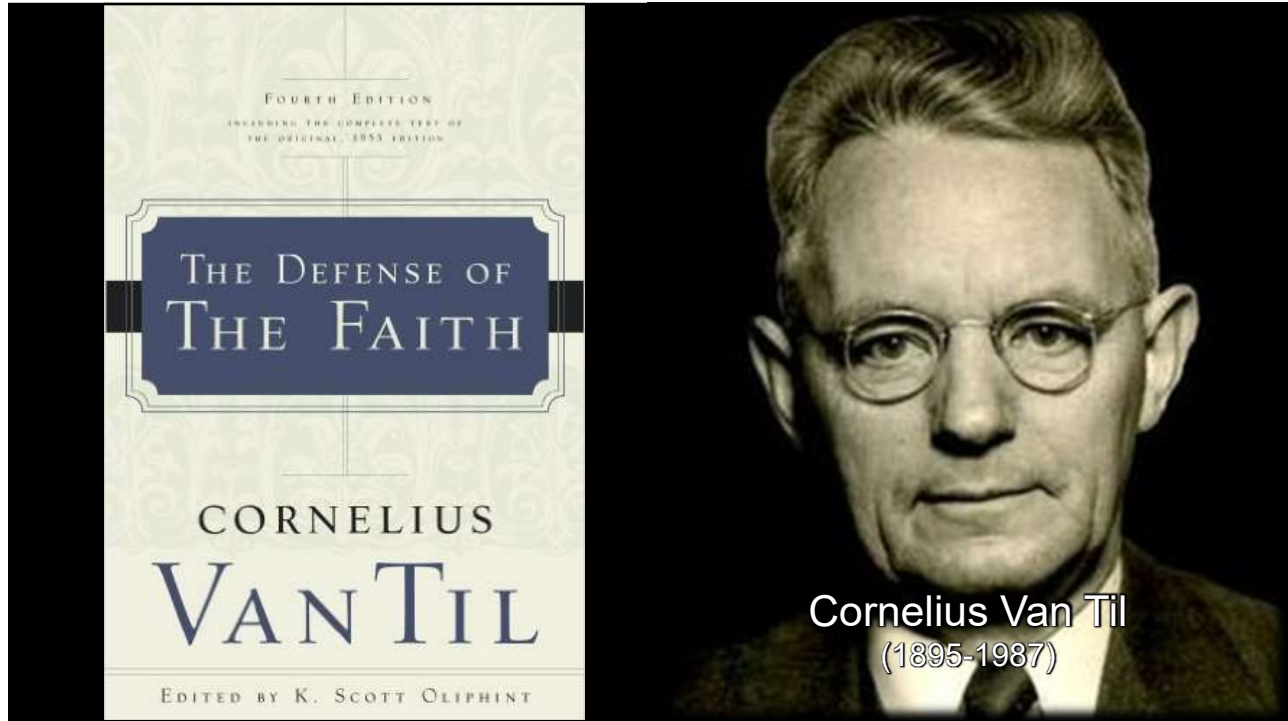




John Hick  
(1922-2012)

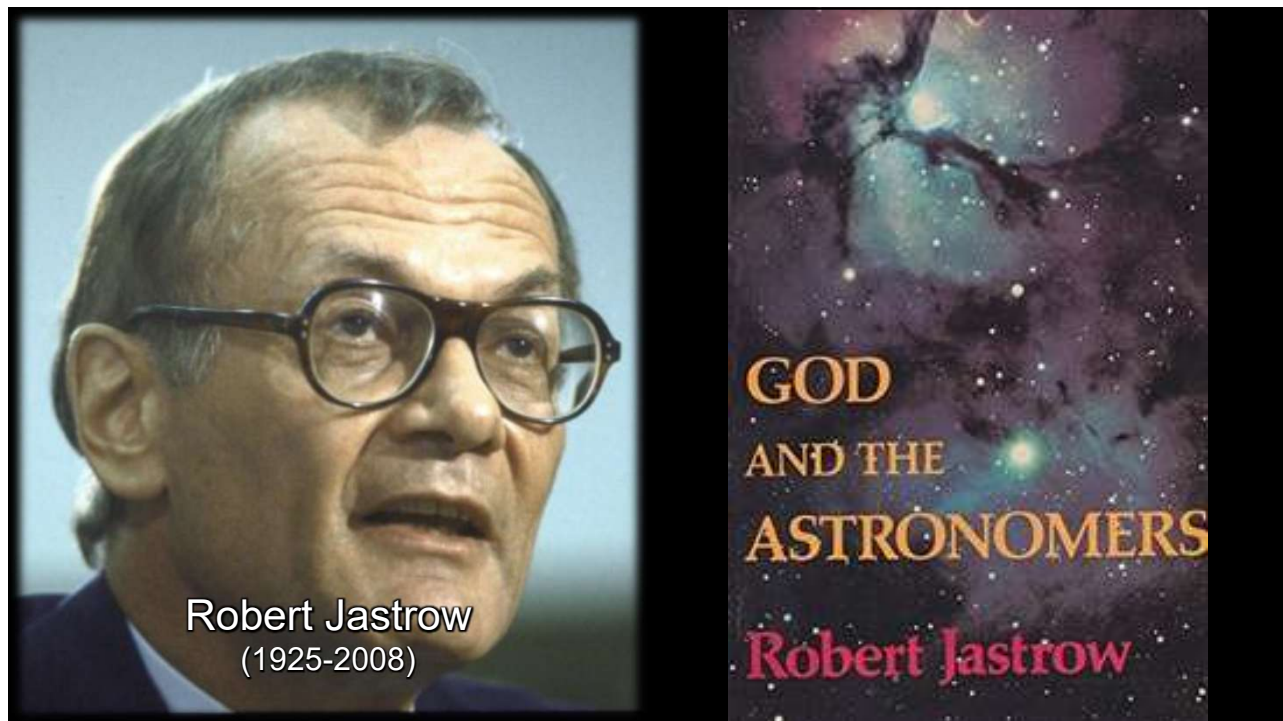


Blaise Pascal  
(1623-1662)



<b>Irrelevant</b>		
<b>non-Theists</b>	<p><b>LOGICAL POSITIVISTS</b>                  Arguments are metaphysically or linguistically meaningless.                  (Ludwig Wittgenstein; A. J. Ayer; Kai Nielsen)</p>	<p><b>EXISTENTIALISTS</b>                  Arguments are relatively or entirely unnecessary. They have little to nothing to do with religion. Religion is primarily experiential and non-propositional.                  (Søren Kierkegaard)</p>
	<p><b>SKEPTICS</b>                  Arguments are epistemologically impossible. Important philosophical doctrines are only psychologically caused.                  (David Hume)</p>	<p><b>FIDEISTS / PRESUPPOSITIONALISTS</b>                  Arguments cannot establish religious first principles. Religion is not propositional (John Hick), or religion is propositional but faith is primary (Blaise Pascal), or God is transcendentally "argued" (Cornelius Van Til; Greg L. Bahnsen).</p>
		<p><b>EVIDENTIALISTS</b>                  Arguments are not strictly proofs but build a cumulative case for theism.                  (William Lane Craig; Richard Swinburne)</p>
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<b>Relevant</b>		
<b>Theists</b>		

		Irrelevant			
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			Relevant		

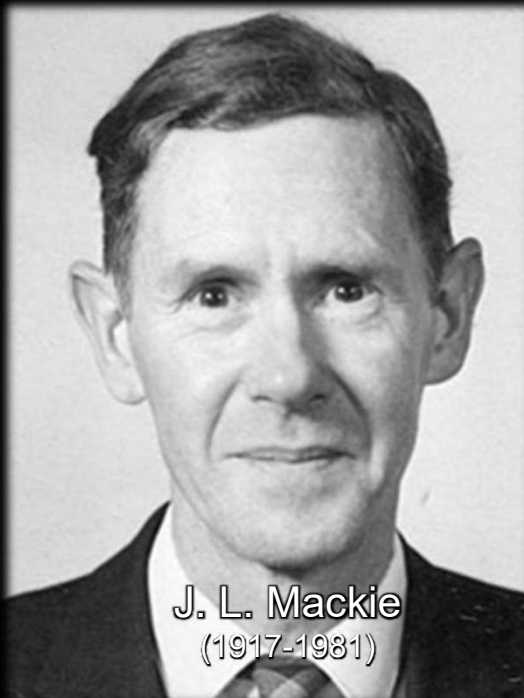


<b>Irrelevant</b>		
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<b>Relevant</b>		
<b>Theists</b>		

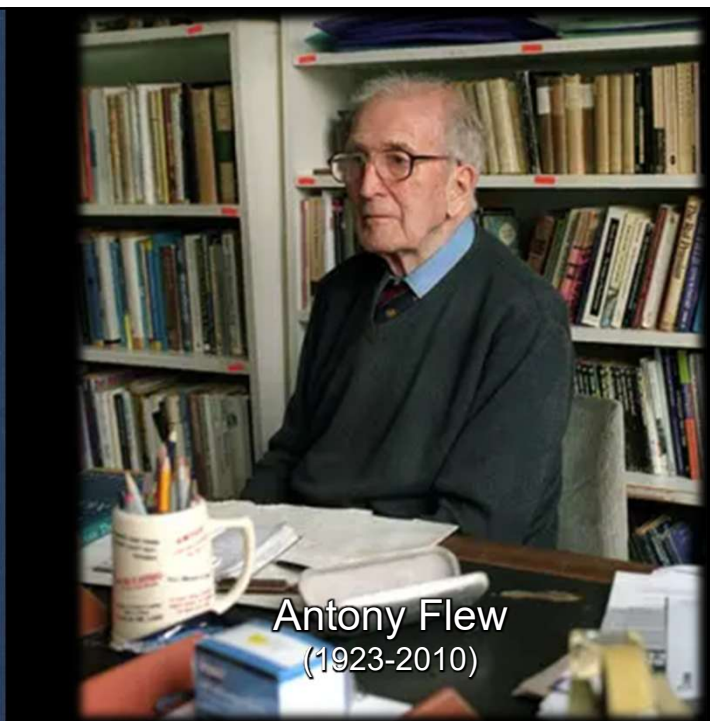
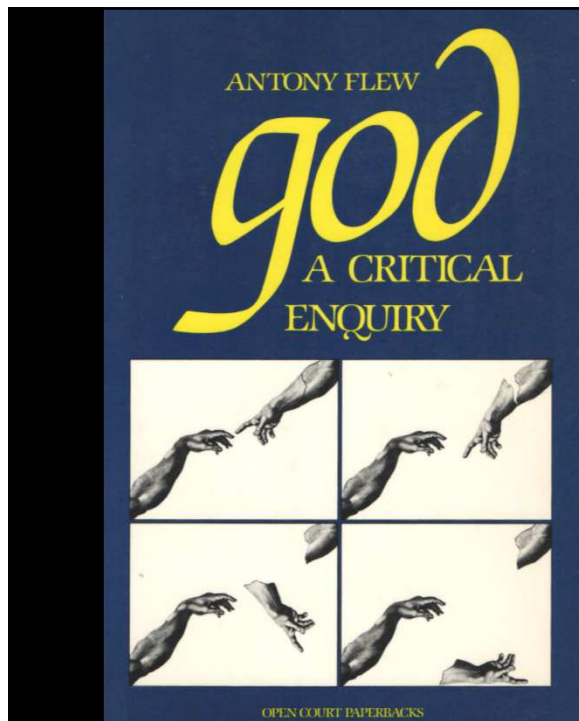
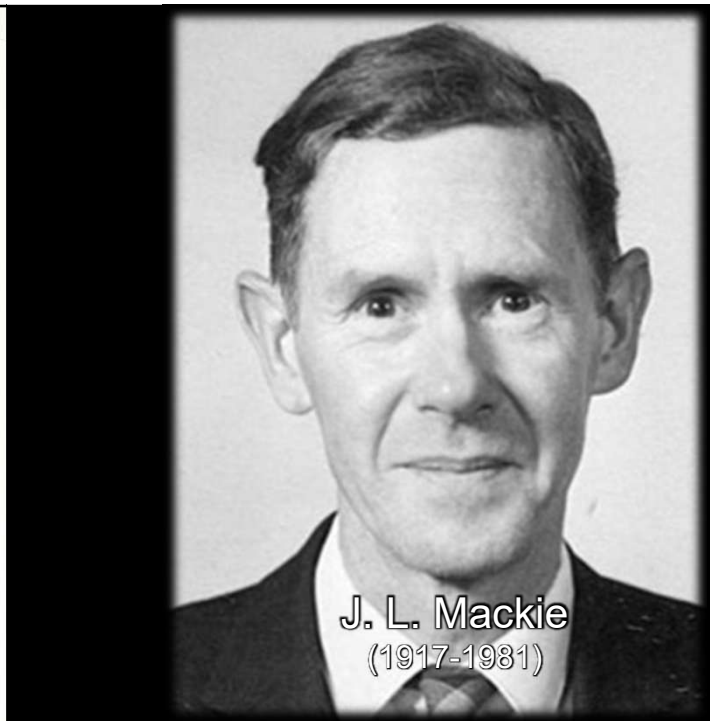
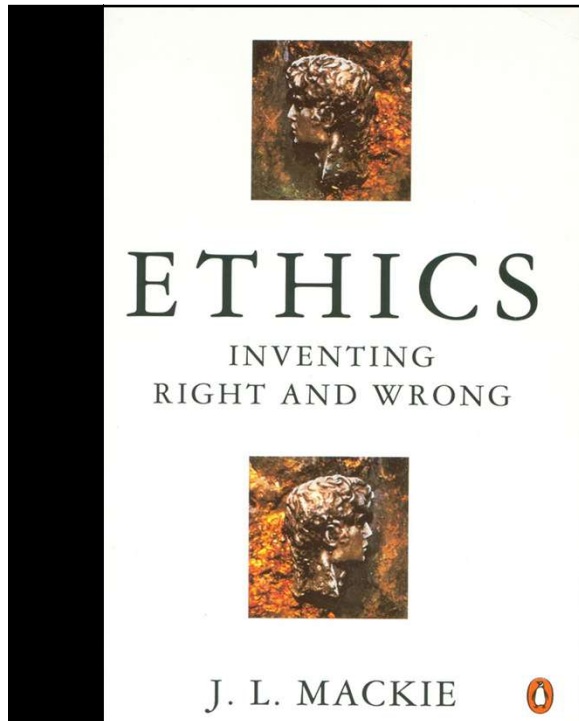
J.L. Mackie

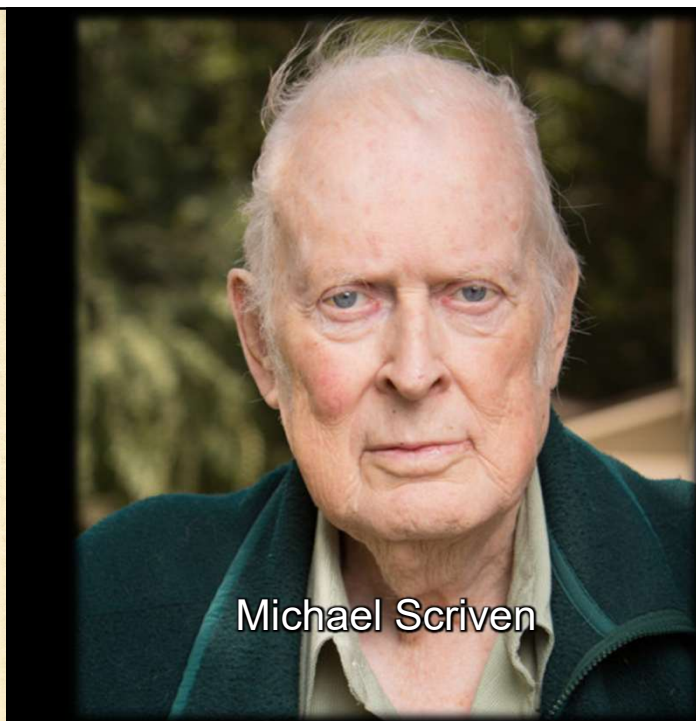
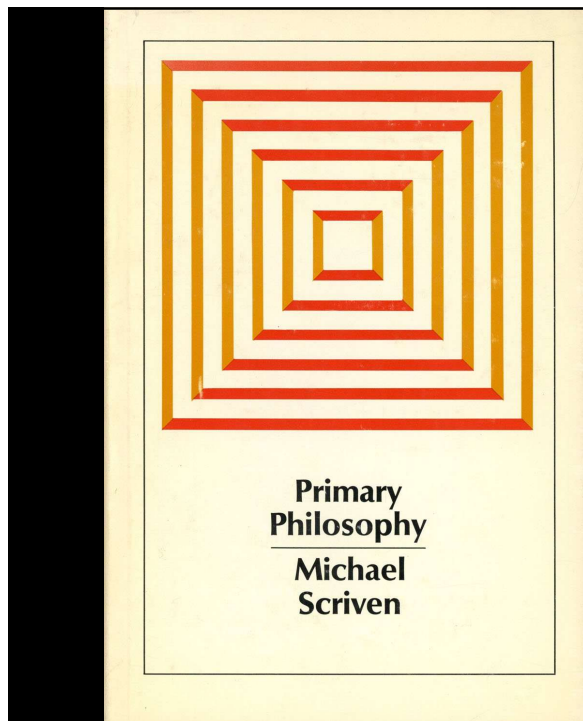
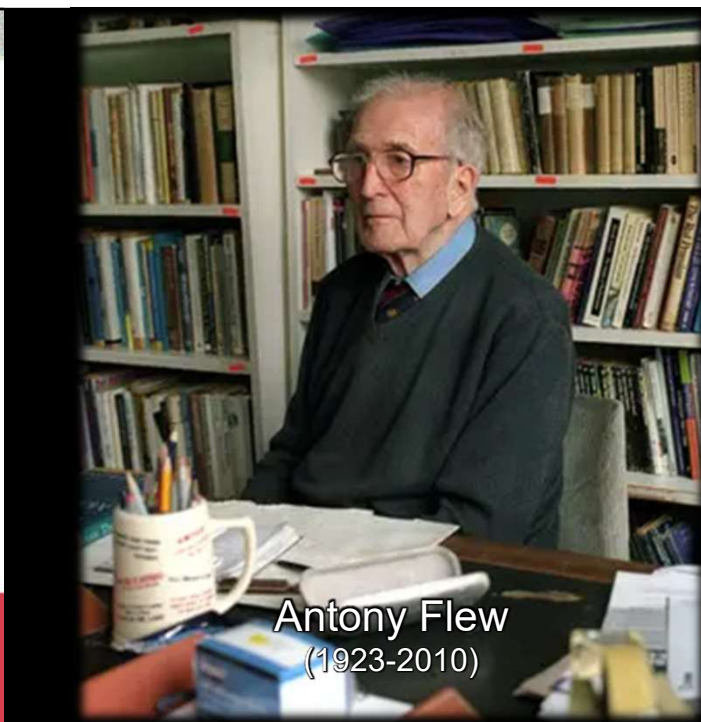
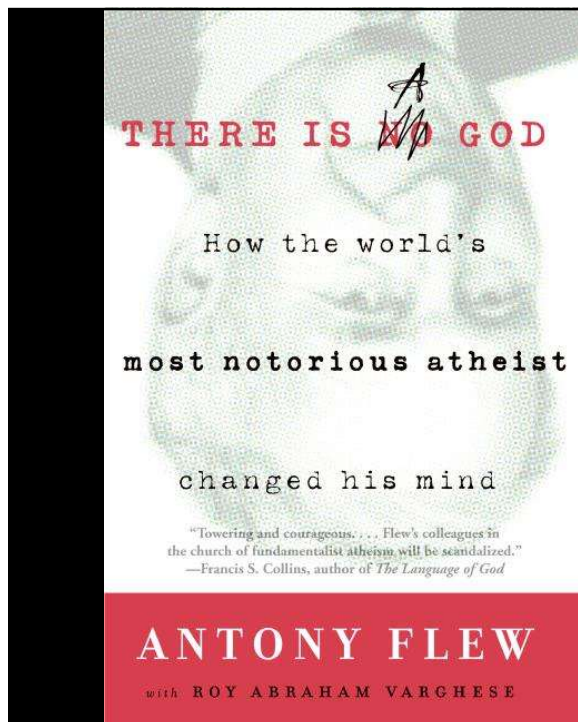
THE  
MIRACLE  
OF  
THEISM

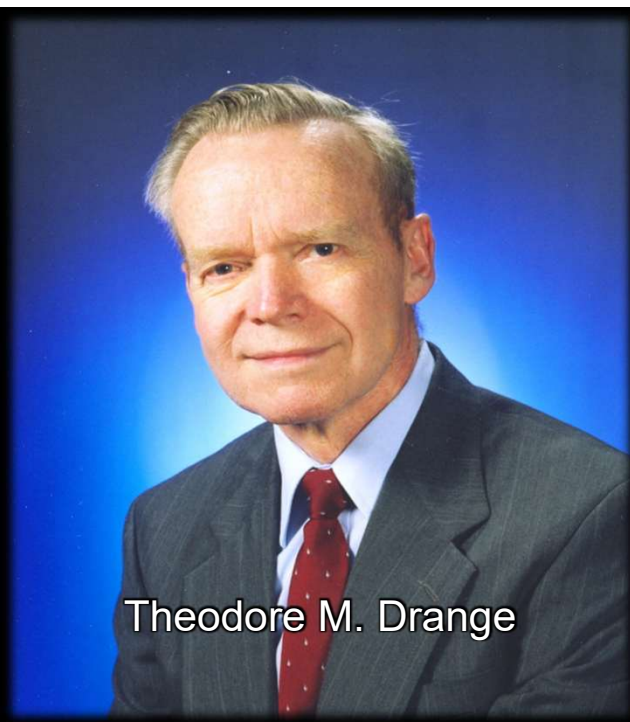
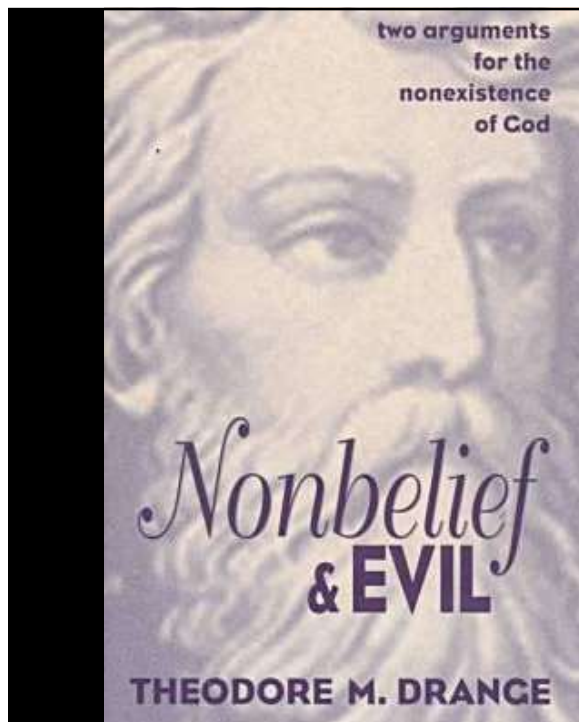
Arguments for  
and against the  
Existence of  
God



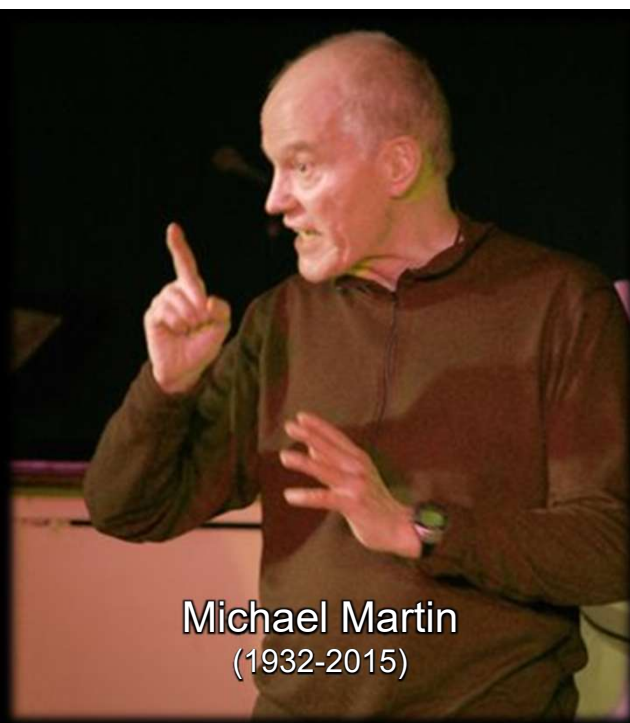
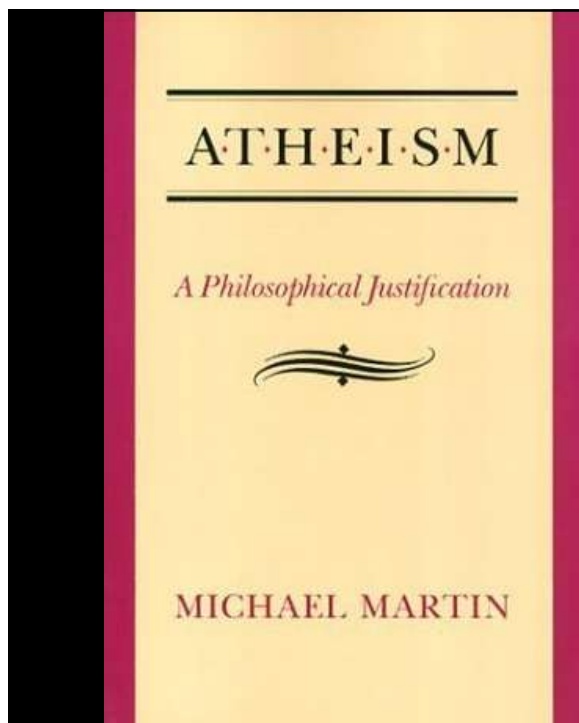
J. L. Mackie  
(1917-1981)







Theodore M. Drange



Michael Martin  
(1932-2015)

	<b>Irrelevant</b>		
<b>non-Theists</b>	<b>LOGICAL POSITIVISTS</b> Arguments are metaphysically or linguistically meaningless. (Ludwig Wittgenstein; A. J. Ayer; Kai Nielsen)	<b>EXISTENTIALISTS</b> Arguments are relatively or entirely unnecessary. They have little to nothing to do with religion. Religion is primarily experiential and non-propositional. (Søren Kierkegaard)	<b>Theists</b>
	<b>SKEPTICS</b> Arguments are epistemologically impossible. Important philosophical doctrines are only psychologically needed. (David Hume)	<b>FIDEISTS / PRESUPPOSITIONALISTS</b> Arguments cannot establish religious first principles. Religion is not propositional (John Hick), or religion is propositional but faith is primary (Blaise Pascal), or God is transcendently "argued" (Cornelius Van Til; Greg L. Bahnsen)	
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		<b>Relevant</b>	

