

Part Two

Classical Apologetics:

It Stands to Reason

4

Apologists Who Emphasize Reason

The classical apologetical tradition, as the term *classical* suggests, is the dominant approach to apologetics in church history, especially prior to the modern period. It emphasizes the presentation of Christianity as *rational*—as logically coherent and supportable by sound arguments—and offers what its advocates consider *proofs* of various types (though especially philosophical proofs) for the existence of God as a first step in defending the truth claims of the Christian faith. As we are using the term in this book, ‘classical apologetics’ also refers to an idealized type that is more or less fully exemplified in apologists in that tradition. Of necessity, then, we will be offering generalizations; that is, what we say about apologetics of this idealized type or approach is generally applicable to apologists in the classical tradition, but one must allow for considerable variations and exceptions. One other qualification needs to be made: as a distinct approach and explicit methodological stance, classical apologetics, like the other three basic approaches discussed in this book, is actually a modern development.

In this chapter we will examine the roots of classical apologetics and consider briefly the thought of five modern classical apologists, among whom is Norman L. Geisler, who represents perhaps the “purest” form of this approach.

Historical Roots of Classical Apologetics

Classical apologetics, more than the other three systems discussed in this book, draws on the apologetic thought of Christian theologians and philosophers throughout church history. Indeed, most advocates of the classical approach count it an important point in their favor that their approach is in line with the major apologists from the early and medieval church. The authors of the book *Classical Apologetics*, for example, assert with regard to “the classic Christian view” that “theistic proofs” are a valid part of apologetics, “From the Apologists to the dawn of our own era, this has been the central teaching of the church, Eastern, Roman, Protestant, the teaching of the creeds and of the theologians.”¹ Although this claim is arguably overstated, there is a significant tradition of Christian apologetics throughout church history in which theistic proofs played a major role. Since we have already given a fairly detailed survey of the history of apologetics in chapter 2, we will review that history only very briefly here.

The classical apologists lay great emphasis on the *examples* of apologetic argument found in the New Testament (especially Paul’s apologetic speech in Athens in Acts 17). Elements of the classical method were developed by the Apologists of the second century, most notably **Justin Martyr**. Certain aspects of the apologetic thought of Augustine continued this classical tradition. He made use of philosophical proofs for God’s existence, especially but not exclusively in his earlier writings. To prove that this God had revealed himself in Christ, Augustine cited miracles and fulfilled biblical prophecy and emphasized the dramatic growth and triumph of the church through centuries of persecution and suppression.

It is in the medieval period, though, that the classical approach began to receive systematic formulation. **Anselm** offered his ontological argument for the existence of God both to edify believers and to challenge and persuade unbelievers. He also presented an argument for the necessity of God becoming man in order to redeem us that proved the point, he claimed,

without assuming any knowledge about Christ. Anselm was careful to add that in the end faith was to be placed in God and in his revelation in Scripture, not in Anselm's arguments. Still, his approach was quite rationally oriented.

Likewise, **Thomas Aquinas** developed a number of philosophical arguments for the existence of God and expounded Christian teaching on the nature of God in Aristotelian philosophical categories. Thomas rejected Anselm's ontological argument, preferring various forms of the cosmological argument, but both types of argument are philosophical arguments for theism. Again, Thomas was very careful to say that such philosophical proofs were not the basis of faith or a substitute for faith. According to Thomas, those who rely on philosophical argument alone will never have an adequate knowledge of God. Yet his theistic proofs have often been utilized as a line of defense against atheism, which was not even a serious problem in his day. Thomas's approach to philosophy (known as **Thomism**) has inspired many succeeding works of classical apologetics.

While many of the Reformers in the first generation of the Protestant Reformation rejected or denigrated classical apologetic arguments, not all of them did. Philip Melancthon, in particular, was in his later years more appreciative of classical apologetics than Martin Luther had been, and presented arguments in the Thomistic fashion in the later editions of his *Loci communes*. Likewise, many Calvinist theologians in the seventeenth century found greater value in philosophical proofs of a classical type than had John Calvin himself. When deism and other forms of skepticism arose in the seventeenth century, Protestants typically answered with arguments rooted in the classical apologetics of Anselm and Aquinas. **Natural theology**, the construction of arguments defending or proving a theistic worldview on the basis of rational considerations apart from divine revelation, became a regular part of Christian apologetics.

In the nineteenth century the classical theistic proofs were endorsed and utilized by a wide variety of Christian theologians and apologists, including **Charles Hodge**, whose three-volume *Systematic Theology* was probably the most influential work of its kind published in nineteenth-century America. In the twentieth century Roman Catholic philosophers, most notably Étienne Gilson and Jacques Maritain, rekindled an interest in Thomistic philosophy, which is probably more popular and influential now than ever before among both Catholic and Protestant apologists.

In the rest of this chapter we will examine in some detail the apologetic contributions of four modern apologists in the classical tradition. Although they have their differences, they all endorse an approach that seeks to offer a rational method of proof (however variously the proofs may be derived) for the Christian position.

B. B. Warfield

Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield (1851-1921) was a professor of theology at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1871 until the end of his life.² During that half-century he wrote an impressive array of books and articles in the fields of New Testament criticism and theology, historical theology, and systematic theology.³ Although few of his works would be classified as apologetics per se—in fact, Warfield wrote no book on the subject—virtually all his writings had a strong apologetic purpose and thrust to them. He was the last and arguably the most brilliant representative of the so-called Old Princeton school of theology and apologetics. A few years after he died, Princeton Seminary was reorganized under liberal theological leadership, and the mantle of Old Princeton was taken up by Westminster Theological Seminary in nearby

Philadelphia. Westminster was founded by Warfield's former student and younger colleague at Princeton, J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937).⁴

What engulfed Princeton shortly after Warfield's death was in fact the main focus of his apologetic labors throughout his ministry: the rise of liberal theology grounded on an antisupernaturalist approach to the Bible and Christianity. Arguably the primary concern of Warfield's apologetics was to uphold the supernatural character of Christianity. This meant arguing, first of all, that unless Jesus Christ was a supernatural person, specifically truly God incarnate, and unless he rose supernaturally from the grave, Christianity is simply not true. It is one thing for avowed non-Christians to reject the supernatural; it is another thing entirely for professing Christians to do so. Warfield lamented the fact that many people were rejecting Christianity while clinging to it in name. That people do this is testimony to the significance of Christianity in the world, but it is still misleading.⁵

Thus, for Warfield a great deal of apologetics was simply explaining why Christianity could not be affirmed or accepted without the supernatural. A naturalistic Christianity is a mere moralism, a philosophy of human self-improvement inspired by the idea of the divine. True Christianity is a religion of redemption, a revelation of the real God's grace reconciling us and transforming us through faith in Jesus Christ. Although Warfield unabashedly defended Calvinism as the most consistent form of Christianity, in fact the general tenor and focus of his apologetics was supportive of the most basic elements of orthodox Christianity: the truth of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and the virgin birth, sinlessness, miracles, atoning death, and resurrection of Christ.

Part of Warfield's agenda for reclaiming supernatural Christianity as the only true Christian religion was to show that this is what the Christian church had always believed and its

best theologians had always taught. He also wanted to show that the premodern Christian theologians' belief in the supernatural was not an irrational or blind faith, but one grounded in evidence. In making this case he expressed appreciation for the great apologists in the classical apologetic tradition such as Augustine, Anselm, and Aquinas (though above all Augustine). He also held in high regard Joseph Butler and William Paley, apologists who paved the way for the evidentialist approach, and Blaise Pascal, whose apologetic in significant ways moved in a fideist direction.⁶ Although they took apologetics in new directions, these three men were to a great extent consistent with the classical tradition, and thus Warfield could see them as contributing to the development of apologetics as he understood it. He gave considerable attention to showing that the theology of the knowledge of God taught by Augustine and Calvin was consistent with a rational apologetic for the Christian faith.⁷

According to Warfield, the science of theology takes as its primary data the facts of Scripture. But for theology to be properly grounded, we must know that the Bible is indeed inspired Scripture from God. Ultimately this means that the first principles of theology must be to establish the fact of God's existence. Warfield distinguished five subdivisions of apologetics based on five subjects. The first three are God, religion, and revelation, by which he means that apologetics "must begin by establishing the existence of God, the capacity of the human mind to know Him, and the accessibility of knowledge concerning Him."⁸ From there apologetics must go on "to establish the divine origin of Christianity as the religion of revelation in the special sense of the word," and finally "to establish the trustworthiness of the Christian Scriptures as the documentation of the revelation of God for the redemption of sinners."⁹

Warfield thus advocated a two-step method of defending the Christian faith. First, one establishes the truth of God's existence and the possibility of knowing God. Second, one shows

from the evidence that God is known in his revelation in Christ and in Scripture. Sometimes Warfield subdivides these two steps, as when he writes (with A. A. Hodge), “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.”¹⁰ The method of first establishing theism (belief in God) before one seeks to establish the truth of Christianity is at the heart of the classical approach to apologetics.

Not everyone agrees that Warfield was a classical apologist. Most notably, Kim Riddlebarger, in his excellent dissertation on Warfield, interprets Warfield as an evidentialist.¹¹ He specifically distinguishes Warfield’s method from that of Norman Geisler (whom we discuss below) or R. C. Sproul and John Gerstner, the lead authors of the book *Classical Apologetics*.¹² His reason for categorizing Warfield as an evidentialist is that the classical theistic proofs play little role in Warfield’s apologetic, although Warfield acknowledged their validity.¹³ Riddlebarger also shows that Warfield’s defense of the resurrection of Christ as an historical event focused on the evidences.¹⁴ (Still, this would be the case with a classical apologist as well as an evidentialist.) His strongest point for classifying Warfield as an evidentialist is Warfield’s contention that a “non-miraculous world-view” might be overturned by the factual evidence for miracles.¹⁵ However, Warfield is here focusing on establishing a more robust Christian theism, including miracles, over against a “world-view” such as deism. His argument here is thus compatible with understanding his basic method as the “two-step” classical approach (first show that God exists, then show that God has miraculously revealed himself). In any case, Riddlebarger’s excellent analysis shows that the line between classical and evidentialist apologetics was in practice a blurry one even in Warfield’s day.

For Warfield, apologetics is essentially a theological discipline. Indeed, it occupies a primary place in the theological curriculum. It has the inestimably important task of establishing the fundamental truths and principles on which Christian theology rests. In this sense it might be described as a “pretheological” discipline, but in the broader sense Warfield regarded it as the first of the theological disciplines.

It should be noted, then, that strictly speaking Warfield distinguished apologetics as a formal, theoretical discipline at the head of theology, from what he called apology. *Apology* is a branch of practical theology and deals with the pragmatic question of how Christians should explain and defend their beliefs when speaking with non-Christians.¹⁶

C. S. Lewis

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963), known to his friends as “Jack,” was almost without doubt the most popular Christian apologist internationally in the twentieth century.¹⁷ A British scholar of medieval literature who converted to Christianity in midlife, Lewis did not develop a specific apologetic system but approached the claims of Christianity from several directions.¹⁸

Having converted from atheism to Christianity, he gave much attention to refuting the philosophical objections to the Christian faith that had bothered him as an atheist.¹⁹ Thus the focus of his apologetic writings is to defend the Christian claim that a real, personal, and moral Creator exists to whom we are all accountable and who has intervened in human affairs through miracles, especially the miraculous Person of Jesus Christ. Lewis never tired of emphasizing to skeptics that he was not recommending that they believe in Christ because it would make them

happier, but because it was true: “As you perhaps know, I haven’t always been a Christian. I didn’t go to religion to make me happy. I always knew a bottle of Port would do that.”²⁰

Lewis’s best-known apologetic work, *Mere Christianity*, was really a combination of three books (*The Case for Christianity*, *Christian Behaviour*, and *Beyond Personality*). In it he refuted atheism, naturalism, and dualism, and presented a case for the unique claims of Christ. A 1993 *Christianity Today* poll found it far and away the most influential book in readers’ Christian lives, apart from the Bible.²¹ In its original form as BBC radio talks during World War II, *Mere Christianity* may actually have contributed in some measure to the Allied victory by encouraging faith and hope among the British people.

Lewis’s apologetic efforts, unlike those of many in the classical tradition, were not limited to rational argument but adopted a variety of genres, reflecting his literary flair. *The Pilgrim’s Regress* uses allegory to treat many issues in the philosophy of religion.²² *Surprised by Joy* is a biographical apologetic that develops the experience of intense longing for the transcendent.²³ Lewis’s three-volume space trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*) and seven-volume *Chronicles of Narnia* defend the Christian worldview through imagination instead of reason.²⁴ Lewis explained his apologetic purpose by noting that “any amount of theology can now be smuggled into people’s minds under cover of romance without their knowing it.”²⁵ By stripping Christian truths “of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations,” one could sneak past the “watchful dragons” that keep unbelievers from seriously considering those truths.²⁶ Lewis’s humor, wit, and style have thus attracted many non-Christian readers to his books. As Burson and Walls observe, “One should not underestimate the power of style in apologetics, especially in our day. Lewis is an excellent example of how style and substance can work hand in glove to achieve maximum impact.”²⁷ In 1988 over 40 million

copies of Lewis's books were in print.²⁸ No wonder, then, that *Time* magazine labeled him the twentieth century's "most-read apologist for God."²⁹

For the child at heart he created the land of Narnia and the untamed lion/savior, Aslan. For science fiction readers he traveled to Perelandra with Ransom. For the philosopher and theologian he reasoned about pain and miracles, as well as debating doctrines of Christianity and the philosophy of men. For the lover of myth, he wrote an adaptation of the myth of Cupid and Psyche. For the pain stricken he observed grief and spoke of prayer. For those enchanted with rhythm and rhyme he wrote poetry. For those concerned with the afterlife he wrote about Heaven and Hell and exposed the mind of Satan. For the weak and questioning he wrote letters of personal encouragement and advice.³⁰

Lewis's approach to apologetics defies simple categorization precisely because of the diverse ways in which he sought to display and defend the truth of "mere Christianity." However, we agree with Norman Geisler and David K. Clark, both of whom classify Lewis as a classical apologist.³¹ (We will refer to various elements of Lewis's apologetic in the next two chapters, where we elaborate on the classical apologetic model.) When dealing with outright atheism, Lewis generally offered philosophical arguments for belief in God in preparation for presenting the case for Christianity—though not the specific arguments that most classical apologists prefer. Moreover, toward the end of his career, Lewis found that arguments for belief in God's existence were not as helpful as he once assumed:

It is very difficult to produce arguments on the popular level for the existence of God. And many of the most popular arguments seem to me invalid. . . .

Fortunately, though very oddly, I have found that people are usually disposed to hear the divinity of Our Lord discussed *before* going into the existence of God. When I

began I used, if I were giving two lectures, to devote the first to mere Theism; but I soon gave up this method because it seemed to arouse little interest. The number of clear and determined atheists is apparently not very large.³²

In the above comments, Lewis sounds closer in spirit to the evidentialist approach of launching directly into the factual evidence for Jesus' divine acts and identity without first trying to make a case for theism.³³ One should note, though, Lewis's explanation for this change in tactic: he did not find it necessary or helpful to argue separately for theism because apparently few of his listeners were dogmatic atheists. The implication is that Lewis would have continued to argue for theism before discussing the evidence for Christianity if the opposition to theism had been more forceful.

Lewis, then, may be broadly described as a classical apologist, with the qualification that (like most apologists) he did not espouse an explicit apologetic method derived from a formal theory of apologetics. Indeed, in his published writings he never discussed apologetic theory. Rather, he employed varying tactics and modes of argument and persuasion in order to address people's questions, doubts, and skepticism in interesting and effective ways.

Norman L. Geisler

One Christian apologist who *has* advocated a formal theory of apologetic method is Norman L. Geisler, whose books on apologetics, philosophy of religion, ethics, and biblical studies have made him a key figure in Christian apologetics. He has authored, co-authored, and edited some sixty books.³⁴ A philosopher by training, Geisler has taught apologetics and theology at several major evangelical seminaries since the late 1950s, and is the president of

Southern Evangelical Seminary in Matthews, North Carolina, which he co-founded in 1992. He was also a prominent member of the Evangelical Theological Society,³⁵ culminating in his serving as president in 1998.

Although Geisler is evangelical Protestant in his theology, he is a convinced Thomist in his philosophy and apologetics. His approach to apologetics proceeds in two steps.³⁶ First the apologist builds a case for theism by demonstrating how it conforms to rational criteria used to evaluate the truth claims of competing worldviews. Having shown that theism is true according to these criteria, the apologist may then present the evidence for the historical truth claims of Christianity.

Geisler elaborates this two-step method (characteristic of classical apologetics) in a series of “Twelve Points that Show Christianity is True”:

1. Truth about reality is knowable.
2. The opposite of true is false.
3. It is true that the theistic God exists.
4. If God exists, then miracles are possible.
5. Miracles can be used to confirm a message from God
(i.e., as an act of God to confirm a word from God).
6. The New Testament is historically reliable.
7. The New Testament says Jesus claimed to be God.
8. Jesus' claim to be God was miraculously confirmed by:
 - a. His fulfillment of many prophecies about Himself;
 - b. His sinless and miraculous life;
 - c. His prediction and accomplishment of His resurrection.

9. Therefore, Jesus is God.
10. Whatever Jesus (who is God) teaches is true.
11. Jesus taught that the Bible is the Word of God.
12. Therefore, it is true that the Bible is the Word of God
(and anything opposed to it is false).

Geisler says that this argument “builds the case for Christianity from the ground up”—that is, it begins with undeniable points and proceeds from those to show that Christianity is true.³⁷ The first five points correspond to the first step of the classical argument, while the last seven points correspond to the second step.

Geisler’s two most important works, for our purposes, are his *Philosophy of Religion* (the second edition of which was co-authored with Winfried Corduan) and *Christian Apologetics*. In view of his influence in contemporary evangelical apologetics, we will review the argument of both of these books in some detail.

GEISLER’S *PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION*

Geisler divides philosophy of religion into four major divisions, dealing with (1) religious experience, (2) God and reason, (3) religious language, and (4) the problem of evil. We will consider each of these subjects in turn.

Religious experience. The issue dominating the first part of Geisler’s *Philosophy of Religion* is whether experiences of God or the supernatural can be considered rational. Geisler argues that they can because “the history of mankind, sacred or secular, supports the thesis that by nature man has an irresistible urge to transcend himself” (63-64).³⁸ Nevertheless, he argues

that verification is necessary to discern *that* there really is a God to fulfill the human need for transcendence

God and reason. Such verification can be found in a philosophical theistic proof. In the second section of the book, titled “God and Reason,” Geisler examines the function of theistic proofs and defends a version of the cosmological argument. He maintains that “the theist need not be concerned about showing that God’s nonexistence is *inconceivable* but only that it is *undeniable*. After all, what the theist seeks is not mere rational inconceivability but existential undeniability. That is, the theist seeks a necessary *Being*, not a necessary Thought at the end of his argument” (100-101). The theistic proof that Geisler regards as fundamental is the cosmological argument, which is based on the principle of causality. He examines three other standard philosophical arguments for God’s existence—the argument from design in nature, the argument from morality, and the ontological argument—and argues that in each case the principle of causality is assumed. If this principle is accepted, Geisler maintains, each of these three arguments will depend on a causal form of the cosmological argument.

Religious language. The third part of Geisler’s book focuses on the problem of religious language. Even if a sound argument for the existence of God can be made, how can we intelligently speak about that which transcends all our experience? Geisler maintains that every negation implies a prior affirmation, and that therefore purely negative God-talk is meaningless. The positive knowledge of God implied by negative God-talk requires that language about God be understood **univocally**—as having an identity of meaning when referring to both God and creatures—to avoid a descent into religious skepticism. Without such univocal understanding, Geisler (along with the late medieval philosopher Duns Scotus) maintains that we would be

using words without really knowing what they meant. On the other hand, Geisler also agrees with Aquinas that God cannot possess perfections in the same way created things possess them.

The problem of evil. In the fourth and final part of *Philosophy of Religion*, Geisler considers three ways to relate God and evil. The first, atheism, affirms the existence of evil and denies the existence of God. Atheists reason that if God exists, he is not essentially good, since he should destroy all evil but does not. Moreover, God evidently cannot do the best, since this is not the best of all possible worlds. Geisler argues that although God has not yet destroyed evil, he will do so, and in a way that leads to the best possible world. The second alternative is illusionism, the denial of the reality of evil. Geisler points out that illusionism cannot account satisfactorily for the origin of the illusion of evil. The third alternative affirms both God (though not necessarily the biblical God) and evil. Some options in this category, such as dualism, finite godism, and sadism, are incompatible with theism. Geisler raises logical objections to each option and turns to solutions to the problem of evil that are open to theism. After examining the alternatives available to the theistic God, Geisler concludes that “the morally best world is better than a morally good world or than no moral world at all” (354). That this world, despite its temporary degradation due to sin, is the best way to the best world will eventually be confirmed at the end of history in the Final Judgment.

GEISLER’S *CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS*

Geisler’s textbook *Christian Apologetics* is divided into three parts. In the first part he considers how to test competing truth claims. Having chosen a test for truth, he applies it to the major worldviews in the second part and argues that theism—the view that the world was

created by a God who is able to perform miracles—is the true worldview. Finally, in the third part he presents evidence in support of the Christian faith.

Apologetic method. Geisler critically evaluates seven methodological approaches to the question of God: agnosticism, rationalism, fideism, experientialism, evidentialism, pragmatism, and combinationalism. He concludes that each of these epistemological methods makes a contribution but is inadequate as a test for truth. In their place he proposes *unaffirmability* as the test for the falsehood of a worldview and *undeniability* as the test for the truth of a worldview. Unaffirmability occurs when a statement is directly self-defeating, such as “I cannot express myself in words,” or indirectly self-defeating, such as “I know that one cannot know anything about reality” (142).³⁹ Undeniability applies to statements that are definitional or tautologous, such as “Triangles have three sides,” as well as to statements which are existentially self-confirming, such as “I exist” (143-144). These tests for truth should be compared to the first two points of Geisler’s 12-point argument (truth is knowable and the opposite of true is false).

Theistic apologetics. Using the two tests of unaffirmability and undeniability, Geisler seeks to demonstrate that all nontheistic worldviews are directly or indirectly unaffirmable, and only theism is affirmable and undeniable. He examines several competing worldviews (deism, pantheism, panentheism, atheism) and argues that all of them fail the test for truth. For example, deism is a self-defeating position because it acknowledges the miracle of an *ex nihilo* creation but denies that other miracles are possible. Pantheism is self-defeating because it involves a person (the pantheist) claiming that individual finite selves (such as the pantheist) are less than real. Dogmatic atheism, in its insistence that God must not exist because of the reality of evil, must assume God (as the ground of morality) in order to disprove God. By contrast, Geisler develops a revised cosmological argument with undeniable premises (something exists, nothing

comes from nothing) “that leads inescapably to the existence of an infinitely perfect and powerful Being beyond this world who is the current sustaining cause of all finite, changing, and contingent beings” (258). This conclusion corresponds to the third point of Geisler’s 12-point apologetic.

Christian apologetics. Having established the validity of the theistic worldview, Geisler then deals with miracles, the role of history and the establishment of the historical reliability of the New Testament, the deity and authority of Jesus Christ, and finally the inspiration and authority of the Bible. Since he is shifting from judging between worldviews to judging within the theistic worldview (that is, Islam, Christianity, and Judaism), he moves away from the criteria of unaffirmability and undeniability to the probabilistic criterion of systematic consistency (comprehensiveness, adequacy, consistency, coherence). Geisler argues that given the truth of theism, one must acknowledge the possibility of miracles (the fourth point of Geisler’s 12-point apologetic). Furthermore, the existence of God guarantees that history has meaning and that it is possible for human beings to know historical events. This means that God could use miracles in history to confirm his message (the fifth point). From these premises Geisler proceeds to examine the case for Christianity. He argues that the New Testament writings may be regarded as authentic and reliable (point #6), and then applies the methods of historical investigation to those documents to show that Jesus Christ claimed to be God (point #7) and that he vindicated this claim by fulfilling Old Testament prophecies and rising from the dead (point #8). The most systematically consistent interpretation of these facts is that Christ was, in truth, the Son of God (point #9). On the basis of Christ’s divine authority, then, Christians believe the Bible to be the word of God (264-265; compare points #10-12).

Peter Kreeft

Peter Kreeft is a Roman Catholic professor of philosophy at Boston College. He has written numerous books and has emerged as a Christian apologist whose works are popular among Protestants as well as Catholics.⁴⁰

Even more so than Geisler, Kreeft models his approach on the work of Thomas Aquinas. Kreeft edited and annotated one of the best digests of Aquinas's major work, the *Summa Theologica*,⁴¹ and in his *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, co-authored with Ronald K. Tacelli, he self-consciously modeled his method on that of Aquinas. In fact, they “even thought of titling it *Summa Apologetica*” (12).⁴² The book is divided into chapters dealing with broadly defined issues (e.g., God, evil, the Resurrection, the Bible), and each issue is subdivided into more specific questions or problems. In turn each question can, they say, be broken down into seven parts, though for the sake of readability they do not cover all seven for each question. The seven parts are as follows (20):

1. Definition of terms and the meaning of the question
2. The importance of the question, the difference it makes
3. Objections to the Christian answer to the question
4. Answers to each of these objections
5. Arguments for the Christian answer from premises accepted by the unbeliever as well as the believer
6. Objections to *these* arguments
7. Answers to each of these objections

The crux of this method is found in the fifth part, in which the apologist presents arguments for the Christian position “from premises accepted by the unbeliever as well as the believer.” The arguments thus function as proofs that should be acceptable to unbelievers if they are constructed properly and if the unbelievers reason properly. “The arguments in this book demonstrate that the essential Christian doctrines are true, unless they are bad arguments; that is, ambiguous, false or fallacious.” Not all the arguments have conclusive demonstrative force, though; some are “probable” and function more as “clues” that gain persuasive force when “considered cumulatively” (18).

Although for Kreeft apologetics at its core offers positive arguments as proofs (both demonstrable and probable) for the Christian position, most apologetic argumentation is taken up with answering objections to these proofs or other objections to the Christian faith (parts 3-4, 6-7 above). Following Aquinas, Kreeft is confident that “every possible argument against every Christian doctrine has a rational mistake in it somewhere, and therefore can be answered by reason alone” (39).

Kreeft’s approach is well illustrated by his handling of arguments for the existence of God. He admits that some people do not personally need proofs of God’s existence in order to believe in him, but he points out that the arguments can help others take belief in God seriously. Moreover, Kreeft and Tacelli acknowledge at the outset that their arguments for God’s existence differ in demonstrative power. For example, arguments from miracles or religious experience “claim only strong probability, not demonstrative certainty,” and were included “because they form part of a strong cumulative case.” They believe the arguments with the most demonstrative certainty are the cosmological arguments based on Aquinas’s “five ways,” but these proofs “are not the simplest of the arguments, and therefore are not the most convincing to most people”

(49). In the end they offer twenty distinct arguments for God’s existence; while not depending too heavily on any one argument, the authors express confidence that “all twenty together, like twined rope, make a very strong case” (50). These references to a “cumulative case” in which multiple arguments work together “like twined rope” are actually more characteristic of the evidentialist approach to apologetics. This should not be surprising, since many apologists today freely utilize different sorts of arguments. Still, the overall approach that Kreeft and Tacelli take in their book follows the classical model: first argue for the theistic worldview, then argue more specifically for the truth of the Christian revelation.

While the rational structure of his apologetic is especially rooted in Thomistic philosophy, Kreeft is greatly indebted to C. S. Lewis for the practical expression of much of his approach.⁴³ Kreeft and Tacelli conclude their *Handbook* by reprinting the essay “Man or Rabbit?” which “we think is the most effective essay written by the most effective Christian apologist of our century, C. S. Lewis” (388).⁴⁴ Kreeft is perhaps best known for his books in which various characters, some fictional and some historical, engage in dialogue about ethical, philosophical, and religious questions. In one of these, *Between Heaven and Hell*, he imagines a discussion between C. S. Lewis, who represents Kreeft’s Christian position, and two men who happened to die on the same day as Lewis (22 November 1963)—John F. Kennedy, representing the modernist or humanist tradition, and Aldous Huxley, representing the mystical or pantheist tradition. Early in the dialogue Lewis and Kennedy discuss the grounds of Lewis’s faith in Christ:

Kennedy: If you want to be so logical, I challenge you: prove to me logically that Jesus is God and not just man.

Lewis: All right.

Kennedy: What?

Lewis: I just said, “All right.” Why the surprise?

Kennedy: I thought you were going to say something about mysteries and faith and authority and the church. Do you mean you are going to try to *reason* yourself into the old faith?

Lewis: Not myself; I’m already there. But you, perhaps.

Kennedy: Did you reason yourself into it? Did you arrive at your belief by reason alone?

Lewis: Reason *alone*? Of course not. But I looked before I leaped. I reasoned before I believed. And after I believed too—I mean, once I believed, I was convinced by the way reason backed up faith. It couldn’t prove *everything*, but it could give strong arguments for many things, and it could answer all objections.

Kennedy: *All* objections?

Lewis: Certainly.

Kennedy: That sounds pretty arrogant to me. Who are you to answer all objections?

Lewis: No, no, I don’t claim that *I* can answer all objections but that *reason* can—that all objections are answerable.

Kennedy: Why do you believe that?

Lewis: If truth is one, if God is the author of all truth, both the truth of reason and the truth of faith (I mean divine revelation), then there can never be a rational argument against faith that’s telling, that’s unanswerable. Faith may go beyond reason but it can never simply contradict reason.⁴⁵

William Lane Craig

William Lane Craig's work has put him at the forefront of evangelical apologetics in the early twenty-first century. The scholarly depth and range of his work and his effectiveness as an apologist are very impressive. Most academics make their mark in only one field, and as specialization increases, that field tends to be ever narrower. Craig is one of the leading evangelical theorists in at least three areas of academic research. The first is the cosmological argument, an approach to proving God's existence that Craig has developed along both philosophical and scientific lines, both with great sophistication.⁴⁶ Craig is also widely viewed as one of the leading evangelical scholars in the historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus, an extremely well plowed field that has produced new fruit through Craig's efforts.⁴⁷ Yet a third area in which Craig is a leading evangelical researcher is the philosophical analysis of the attributes of God. Craig has given special attention to the doctrine of God's omniscience, defending an orthodox (though frankly Arminian⁴⁸) theological understanding of this doctrine with a rigorous and fresh approach.⁴⁹ Craig has also published extensively on the question of God's relation to time.⁵⁰

Besides writing both technical and popular books defending these three aspects of Christian faith, William Lane Craig has written one of the best recent textbook introductions to the subject of apologetics⁵¹ and co-authored a major textbook on Christian philosophy.⁵² In addition, he has publicly debated atheists and skeptics widely, with great success. Some of these debates have been published,⁵³ most notably his 1997 debate on the Resurrection with radical New Testament scholar John Dominic Crossan⁵⁴ and his 1998 debate with renowned atheist philosopher Antony Flew.⁵⁵ Craig's debate with Flew was held on the fiftieth anniversary of the

famous 1948 BBC radio debate between Fredrick Copleston and Bertrand Russell. A few years later, in 2004, Flew abandoned atheism, announcing that he had concluded that some sort of God exists, although he still did not accept the Christian view of God.⁵⁶

In most of his earlier works Craig did not identify himself as an advocate of any particular apologetic methodology. However, in 2000 Craig defended the classical model in a book on different apologetic methods.⁵⁷ That he is a classical apologist may also be seen in his apologetics textbook and in some of his more wide-ranging debates, where he follows a fairly traditional, classical pattern. He opens by presenting arguments for the existence of God and follows these with arguments for the truth of Christianity (based mainly on the evidence for Jesus' resurrection and deity). Still, some of Craig's arguments have been extremely influential in evidentialist apologetics. Here we will present an overview of his textbook on apologetics, *Reasonable Faith*.

Craig begins by exploring the question, "How do I know Christianity is true?" According to Craig, the key to answering this question is "to distinguish between *knowing* Christianity to be true and *showing* Christianity to be true" (31).⁵⁸ "We *know* Christianity is true primarily by the self-authenticating witness of the Holy Spirit. We *show* Christianity is true by demonstrating that it is systematically consistent" (48). In other words, Christian apologetics does not pretend to create the grounds for knowing that Christianity is true, but rather points to or presents Christianity as rational as a means of encouraging unbelievers to receive the witness of the Spirit.

Rather than launching immediately into arguments for God's existence, Craig begins his apologetic by showing "the absurdity of life without God" (chapter 2). This argument is not intended to prove that Christianity is true, but to show "the disastrous consequences for human

existence, society, and culture if Christianity should be false” (51). “If God does not exist, then life is futile. If the God of the Bible does exist, then life is meaningful. Only the second of these two alternatives enables us to live happily and consistently. Therefore, it seems to me that even if the evidence for these two options were absolutely equal, a rational person ought to choose biblical Christianity” (72).

Given that God’s existence would give meaning to life, we do not believe in God in an irrational attempt to convince ourselves that life has meaning. We believe in God because there is proof that he exists. “Thus, people are without excuse for not believing in God’s existence, not only because of the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit, but also because of the external witness of nature” (77). Arguments in support of belief in God “provide an intellectual, cultural context in which the gospel cannot be dismissed simply as a logical absurdity and is therefore given an honest chance to be heard” (78). Craig surveys the traditional arguments for God’s existence, including the ontological, cosmological, teleological, and moral arguments, and finds “quite a number of the proffered theistic arguments to be sound and persuasive and together to constitute a powerful cumulative case for the existence of God” (91-92). Craig’s favorite theistic argument is the *kalām* cosmological argument, which was originally formulated by medieval Arabic Muslim philosophers. Craig concludes that, “amazing as it may seem, the most plausible answer to the question of why something exists rather than nothing is that God exists. This means, in turn, that the first and most fundamental condition for meaning to life and the universe is supplied” (121-122).

In chapter 4 Craig defends the possibility of miracles. He concludes that the philosophical objections from such thinkers as Spinoza and Hume are without merit. His final words on the subject indicate that for him the reasonableness of belief in miracles rests on the

reasonableness of belief in God: “Once the non-Christian understands who God is, then the problem of miracles should cease to be a problem for him” (155). This line of reasoning is characteristic of the classical approach, which rests belief in the possibility of miracles on belief in God.

In chapter 5 he considers the question of the possibility of historical knowledge as a prelude to the examination of the historical claims of the New Testament concerning Jesus Christ. Here the major error to be combated is historical relativism, the belief that our distance from the past and our lack of neutrality or objectivity makes it impossible for us to know what actually occurred in the past (169-172). In answer to the objection that we lack direct access to the past, Craig argues that we may test theories about the past using the same criterion of systematic consistency that we use in other matters of truth. “The historian should accept the hypothesis that best explains all the evidence” (184). To the objection that objectivity in historical knowledge is impossible, Craig points out that our ability to distinguish history from propaganda and to criticize poor history reveals our ability to access genuine historical facts (185-187).

Craig L. Blomberg, an evangelical New Testament scholar, wrote chapter 6, on “the historical reliability of the New Testament,” to document that it is “probable that a substantial *majority* of the details in the gospels and Acts do describe what Jesus and the apostles actually said and did” (226). In chapter 7 William Lane Craig turns the discussion directly to Jesus’ claims about himself as reported in the Gospels. “At the center of any Christian apologetic must stand the person of Christ; and very important for the doctrine of Christ’s person are the personal claims of the historical Jesus” (233). Craig admits “that the majority of NT scholars today do not believe that the historical Jesus ever claimed to be the Son of God, Lord, and so forth” (243). But

while Jesus' use of these titles for himself is widely questioned, the self-understanding they express can be clearly traced back to Jesus himself in the rest of what he said about himself (244). Suppose we take only the sayings of Jesus admitted by the extremely liberal "Jesus Seminar" to be authentic. Even these sayings show Jesus as someone who "thought of himself as being the Son of God in a unique sense," who "claimed to speak and act with divine authority" and to be "able to perform miracles," and who "claimed to determine people's eternal destiny before God" (244-252). Radical critics refuse to draw the obvious conclusion—that Jesus claimed to be God—not because of a lack of evidence but because of their prejudice against the Christian doctrine (253).

The importance of Jesus' claims to deity is that they "provide the religio-historical context in which the resurrection becomes significant, as it confirms those claims" (253). This leads Craig to the capstone of his apologetic, the historical argument for the resurrection of Jesus (chapter 8).

The case for the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus seems to me to rest upon the evidence for three great, independently established facts: the empty tomb, the resurrection appearances, and the origin of the Christian faith. If these three facts can be established and no plausible natural explanation can account for them, then one is justified in inferring Jesus' resurrection as the most plausible explanation of the data. (272)

The structure of Craig's apologetic closely parallels that of Norman Geisler, with some minor differences. Both begin by considering matters of epistemology and then move to defend the existence of God, primarily on the basis of a form of the cosmological argument. (Craig uses a version of the *kalām* argument originated by medieval Muslim philosophers, while Geisler uses

a form of the cosmological argument dependent on the medieval Christian philosopher Thomas Aquinas.) Having established the credibility of belief in God's existence, both apologists argue for the possibility of miracles and then for the possibility of historical knowledge of such miracles. They then move to specifically Christian claims, making the case for the reliability of the New Testament, from there to Jesus' claims to deity and the evidence for his resurrection, and conclude that Jesus' resurrection confirms his claims to deity and therefore the truth of all that Jesus taught.

In the conclusion to his book, Craig presents "the ultimate apologetic," which he says "will help you to win more persons to Christ than all the other arguments in your apologetic arsenal put together" (299). This ultimate apologetic is to show people our love for God and our love for one another (299-301). "This, then, is the ultimate apologetic. For the ultimate apologetic is: your life" (302).

Conclusion

Although the five apologists profiled in this chapter are all identified with the classical apologetical tradition pioneered by Thomas Aquinas, some distinct differences among them should not be overlooked. Norman Geisler is perhaps the most unremittingly rationalist of the five, by which we mean that deductive logic plays the most comprehensive role in his apologetic. Even Geisler, however, is not a thoroughgoing rationalist.

Peter Kreeft's and William Lane Craig's methods differ somewhat from that of Geisler. While upholding the rational ideal of deductive proof for theism, Kreeft and Craig also draw on a wide variety of arguments that fall short of deductive proof and employ them in defense both of

theism and of Christianity per se in cumulative-case arguments. Thus these two apologists show some affinities for the evidentialist approach that defends theism using inductive, empirical evidences. What makes their method classical is that they follow the pattern of defending theism as a worldview within which the historical evidences for Christianity (miracles, fulfilled prophecy) are to be considered. In this respect, as we have just seen, Craig's apologetic follows essentially the same structure as Geisler's.

B. B. Warfield, writing at the beginning of the rise of the Reformed apologetic tradition, articulated a fairly traditional, classical apologetic. Yet Warfield, who was himself a Calvinist, anticipated in certain respects the Reformed apologetic of Cornelius Van Til. He regarded theistic arguments as reminders of the immediate awareness of recognition of God that all human beings have because of their creation in the image of God. His affirmation that the facts of Christianity are also Christian doctrines anticipated Van Til's teaching that all facts are interpreted facts. Warfield's apologetic also has affinities with the evidentialist approach, notably in his view that evidence for miracles could be in some sense part of the case for God's existence.

Finally, C. S. Lewis's apologetic, while broadly fitting the classical approach, also had affinities with other approaches. Lewis's stock method was to argue first for God's existence and then for Christianity, but in later years he often found it prudent to start immediately with the evidence for Christ's deity. In this respect his later method was similar to that of evidentialism (although his reason for not arguing for theism first was that he found it largely unnecessary). Lewis also showed the sensitivity to personal, relational concerns that characterizes the fideist approach. For him apologetics was a function of the whole human person, dealing as much with

the imagination as with the intellect, and ultimately was concerned with the personal reality of Christ himself.

In the following chapters, we will examine the classical approach in greater detail, drawing on the writings of these five classical apologists and other modern apologists who follow in that tradition.

For Further Study

Hackett, Stuart C. *The Reconstruction of the Christian Revelation Claim: A Philosophical and*

Critical Apologetic. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984. An apologetics textbook by William

Lane Craig's philosophy professor at seminary, advocating a "rational empirical" theory of knowledge as the basis for a classical defense of Christianity.

Jones, Charles Andrews, III. "Charles Hodge, the Keeper of Orthodoxy: The Method, Purpose and Meaning of His Apologetic." Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 1989. A dissertation on the apologetic of the premier systematic theologian of Old Princeton.

Moreland, J. P. *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987.

An apologetics textbook taking an approach very similar to that of William Lane Craig—generally classical in structure with some evidentialist leanings in content.

Noll, Mark A., ed. *The Princeton Theology, 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological*

Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Grand Rapids:

Baker, 1983. A helpful collection of essays and excerpted writings from Old Princeton.

Sproul, R. C. *Defending Your Faith: An Introduction to Apologetics*. Wheaton, Ill.: Good News Publishers—Crossway Books, 2003. Recent text by a popular Reformed theologian and

classical apologist in the tradition of Warfield. Sproul discusses the task of apologetics, delineates “four essential principles of knowledge” from which he will make his case (the law of noncontradiction, the law of causality, the reliability of sense perception, and the validity of analogical language for God), presents his argument for God from the existence of the universe, and finishes with the case for the authority of the Bible, relating it to both Jesus’ teaching and the testimony of the Holy Spirit.

¹R. C. Sproul, John Gerstner, and Arthur Lindsley, *Classical Apologetics: A Rational Defense of the Christian Faith and a Critique of Presuppositional Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan—Academie, 1984), 210.

²Introductions to Warfield include Mark A. Noll, “B. B. Warfield,” in *Handbook of Evangelical Theologians*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 26-39; Stanley W. Barnberg, “Our Image of Warfield Must Go,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 34 (1991): 229-41. Important works on Warfield, especially relevant to apologetics, include the following: William D. Livingstone, “The Princeton Apologetic as Exemplified by the Work of Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen: A Study in Modern American Theology, 1880-1930” (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1948); Woodrow Behannon, “Benjamin B. Warfield’s Concept of Religious Authority” (Th.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1964); John H. Gerstner, “Warfield’s Case for Biblical Inerrancy,” in *God’s Inerrant Word: An International Symposium on the Trustworthiness of Scripture*, ed. John Warwick Montgomery (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1974), 115-42; John E. Meeter and Roger Nicole, *A Bibliography of Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield* (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1974); W. Andrew Hoffercker,

Piety and the Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981); Mark A. Noll, ed., *The Princeton Theology, 1812-1921: Scripture, Science, and Theological Method from Archibald Alexander to Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983); James Samuel McClanahan, Jr., “Benjamin B. Warfield: Historian of Doctrine in Defense of Orthodoxy, 1881-1921” (Ph.D. diss., Union Theological Seminary [Richmond], 1988); Kim Riddlebarger, “The Lion of Princeton: Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield on Apologetics, Theological Method and Polemics” (Ph.D. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1997); and Paul K. Helseth, “B. B. Warfield’s Apologetical Appeal to ‘Right Reason’: Evidence of a ‘Rather Bald Rationalism’?” *Scottish Journal of Theology* 16 (1998): 156-77.

³Warfield’s most important writings can be found in two collections: *The Works of Benjamin B. Warfield*, 10 vols. (reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981), which are individually titled; and *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. John E. Meeter, 2 vols. (Nutley, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1970, 1973); hereafter cited as *Shorter Writings*.

⁴Westminster Seminary’s apologetic changed directions from the Old Princeton approach under the leadership of Westminster’s professor of apologetics, Cornelius Van Til (see chapter 12).

⁵Warfield, “Christianity and Our Times,” in *Shorter Writings*, 1:48-49.

⁶Warfield, “Apologetics,” in *Studies in Theology*, 17-18.

⁷See especially Warfield, *Calvin and Augustine*, ed. Samuel G. Craig (Philadelphia: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1956).

⁸Warfield, “Apologetics,” in *Studies in Theology*, 11.

⁹*Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁰Archibald Alexander Hodge and Benjamin B. Warfield, “Inspiration,” *Presbyterian Review* 6 (April 1881): 227.

¹¹Riddlebarger, “The Lion of Princeton,” 83-132, 268-332.

¹²*Ibid.*, 83, 329-30.

¹³*Ibid.*, 101-105, 329 n. 212.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 106-120.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 108, quoting Warfield, “The Question of Miracles,” in *Shorter Writings*, 2:181.

¹⁶Warfield, “Apologetics,” in *Studies in Theology*, 5.

¹⁷Works about Lewis of most relevance to his apologetics include Richard B. Cunningham, *C. S. Lewis: Defender of the Faith* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967); John Beversluis, *C. S. Lewis and the Search for Rational Religion* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985), which is highly (and, most agree, unfairly) critical of Lewis; Richard L. Purtill, *C. S. Lewis’s Case for the Christian Faith* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985); Andrew Walker and James Patrick, eds., *A Christian for All Christians: Essays in Honor of C. S. Lewis* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1990; Washington, D.C.: Regnery Gateway; Lanham, Md.: National Book Network, 1992); Colin Duriez, *The C. S. Lewis Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994); Peter Kreeft, *C. S. Lewis for the Third Millennium: Six Essays on “The Abolition of Man”* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1994); John A. Sims, *Missionaries to the Skeptics: Christian Apologists for the Twentieth Century: C. S. Lewis, E. J. Carnell, and Reinhold Niebuhr* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1995); Scott R. Burson and Jerry L. Walls, *C. S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer: Lessons for a New Century from the Most Influential Apologists of Our Time* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1998); Victor Reppert, *C. S. Lewis’s Dangerous Idea: In Defense of the Argument*

from Reason (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003); and Art Lindsley, *C. S. Lewis's Case for Christ: Insights from Reason, Imagination and Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2005).

For a stimulating perspective on Lewis that does not overtly support his position, see Armand M. Nicholi, *The Question of God: C. S. Lewis and Sigmund Freud Debate God, Love, Sex, and the Meaning of Life* (New York: Free Press, 2002).

¹⁸Lewis wrote voluminously, and many of his writings, while not expressly works of apologetics, had an apologetic function or relevance. His most important and directly apologetical works were *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1952); *Miracles: A Preliminary Study*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1960); *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1962); *Christian Reflections*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967); and *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

¹⁹On Lewis's conversion, see especially David C. Downing, *The Most Reluctant Convert: C. S. Lewis's Journey to Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2002). Even those well read in Lewis will learn much about the context of his thought from this insightful book.

²⁰Lewis, "Answers to Questions on Christianity," in *God in the Dock*, 58.

²¹Michael Maudlin, "1993 Christianity Today Book Awards," *Christianity Today*, 5 April 1993, 28, cited in Burson and Walls, *C. S. Lewis & Francis Schaeffer*, 31.

²²Lewis, *The Pilgrim's Regress: An Allegorical Apology for Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1933; rev. ed., New York: Sheed & Ward, 1944).

²³Lewis, *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1955; New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1956).

²⁴Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (New York: Macmillan, 1943); *Perelandra* (New York: Macmillan, 1944); *That Hideous Strength* (New York: Macmillan, 1946); *The Chronicles of Narnia*, 7 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1950-1956). Helpful studies of these books include David C. Downing, *Planets in Peril: A Critical Study of C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995); Kathryn Lindskoog, *Journey into Narnia* (Pasadena, Calif.: Hope Publishing, 1997); Peter Schakel, *Reason and Imagination in C. S. Lewis: A Study in Till We Have Faces* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984).

²⁵*Letters of C. S. Lewis*, ed. W. H. Lewis (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966), 167, cited in Burson and Walls, *C. S. Lewis & Francis Schaeffer*, 166.

²⁶C. S. Lewis, "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's to Be Said," in *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1966), 37; cf. Burson and Walls, 166.

²⁷Burson and Walls, *C. S. Lewis & Francis Schaeffer*, 46.

²⁸Lyle W. Dorsett, *The Essential C. S. Lewis* (New York: Collier, 1988), 3, cited in Burson and Walls, *C. S. Lewis & Francis Schaeffer*, 12-13.

²⁹*Time*, 7 April 1980, 66, quoted in Purtill, *C. S. Lewis's Case for the Christian Faith*, 1.

³⁰Duncan Sprague, "The Unfundamental C. S. Lewis: Key Components of Lewis's View of Scripture." *Mars Hill Review* 2 (May 1995): 53-63, accessed online at <
<http://www.leaderu.com/marshall/mhr02/lewis1.html> >.

³¹Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, 42; David K. Clark, *Dialogical Apologetics: A Person-Centered Approach to Christian Defense* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 108.

³²Lewis, “Christian Apologetics,” in *God in the Dock*, 92.

³³The evidentialist John Warwick Montgomery, in some comments he made on the first edition of this book, describes Lewis as his “mentor” and expresses incredulity that “C. S. Lewis is put in the same bed with Norman Geisler” (“Editor’s Introduction,” Special Issue: John Warwick Montgomery’s Apologetic, *Global Journal of Classical Theology* 3, 1 [March 2002], online at <http://www.trinitysem.edu/journal/jwm_intro_v3n1.html>. Of course, there are significant differences between Lewis and Geisler (and no doubt significant similarities between Lewis and Montgomery). Yet the approaches of Lewis and Geisler are sufficiently alike (prove that God exists [if necessary], then present the evidence for Christ) that they may be placed in the same ‘family’ or basic type of apologetics.

³⁴The most important books authored by Geisler alone that are of special importance to apologetics include *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976); *The Roots of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978); *Miracles and Modern Thought* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982); *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999); and *Systematic Theology, Volume One: Introduction, Bible* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002). Geisler has also co-authored numerous books, the most important of which for our purposes are *Philosophy of Religion*, 2d ed. with Winfried Corduan (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988); with William D. Watkins, *Worlds Apart: A Handbook on World Views*, 2d ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989); with Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook of Christian Evidences* (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor, 1990); and with Frank Turek, *I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, Foreword by David Limbaugh (Wheaton, Ill.: Good News Publishers—Crossway Books, 2004). See also *To Everyone an Answer: A Case for the Christian Worldview: Essays in*

Honor of Norman L. Geisler, ed. Francis J. Beckwith, William Lane Craig, and J. P. Moreland (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 2004).

³⁵In 2003, Geisler resigned his membership in ETS in protest of the society's retaining Clark Pinnock as a member. According to Geisler, Pinnock's view of Scripture is incompatible with biblical inerrancy as understood historically in the ETS.

³⁶Very little has been written either positively or negatively about Geisler's apologetics or his thought generally. One brief article critiquing Geisler's apologetic method is Richard A. Purdy, "Norman Geisler's Neo-Thomistic Apologetics," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25 (1982). A more recent article that critiques the apologetic of Geisler and other classical apologists is Doug Erlandson, "The Resurrection of Thomism," *Antithesis* 2, 3 (May/June 1991).

³⁷This 12-point argument is prominently featured in Geisler and Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*, and is also developed in a series available in video and audio formats entitled "12 Points that Show Christianity Is True" (<http://www.impactapologetics.com/>).

³⁸All page references in this section are from Geisler and Corduan, *Philosophy of Religion*. Since the book was originally authored by Geisler alone, and since our focus here is on Geisler's apologetic, in the text we refer to the book simply as Geisler's.

³⁹All references in this section are to Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*.

⁴⁰Kreeft's most important apologetics-oriented works include *Between Heaven and Hell: A Dialog Somewhere Beyond Death with John F. Kennedy, C. S. Lewis and Aldous Huxley* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1982); *Making Sense Out of Suffering* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1986); *Socrates Meets Jesus* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1987; reprinted with new introduction, 2002); *Fundamentals of the Faith* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1988); *Yes or No? 2d*

ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991); and with Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics: Hundreds of Answers to Crucial Questions* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1994). Note that Kreeft has books published by the evangelical Protestant firm InterVarsity Press, others by the Catholic firm Ignatius Press, and still others by the ecumenical firm Servant Books.

⁴¹Peter Kreeft, ed., *A Summa of the "Summa": The Essential Philosophical Passages of St. Thomas Aquinas' "Summa Theologica" Edited and Explained for Beginners* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990).

⁴²All parenthetical references in this section are to Kreeft and Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*.

⁴³Kreeft's interest in and affinity for Lewis is typified by his recent book, *C. S. Lewis for the Third Millennium: Six Essays on "The Abolition of Man"* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994).

⁴⁴The essay "Man or Rabbit?" (388-392) was taken from Lewis, *God in the Dock*, 108-113.

⁴⁵Peter Kreeft, *Between Heaven and Hell*, 32-33.

⁴⁶See Craig's books *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).

⁴⁷See *The Historical Argument for the Resurrection of Jesus During the Deist Controversy*, Texts and Studies in Religion, vol. 23 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1985); *Assessing*

the New Testament Evidence for the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus, Studies in the Bible and Early Christianity, vol. 16 (Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989); *Knowing the Truth about the Resurrection* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1991).

⁴⁸Craig argues that God knows all things, including all future events, but in no sense predestines or predetermines the future. This is not a question that will be explored in this book. There are two notable introductions to the most prevalent views within evangelicalism: David Basinger and Randall Basinger, eds., *Predestination and Free Will: Four Views*, by John Feinberg, Norman Geisler, Bruce Reichenbach, and Clark Pinnock (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986); and another ‘Four Views’ book to which Craig contributed: James K. Beilby and Paul R. Eddy, eds., *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views*, by Gregory A. Boyd, David Hunt, William Lane Craig, and Paul Helm (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2001).

⁴⁹In addition to his contribution to *Divine Foreknowledge: Four Views* (see previous note), see Craig, *Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom: The Coherence of Theism: Omniscience* (Leiden and New York: E. J. Brill, 1990); *The Only Wise God: The Compatibility of Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1987); “Politically Incorrect Salvation,” in *Christian Apologetics in the Postmodern World*, ed. Timothy R. Phillips and Dennis L. Ockholm (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 1995), 75-97.

⁵⁰See especially William Lane Craig, *Time and Eternity: Exploring God’s Relationship to Time* (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway Books, 2001), and his contribution to *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature*, ed. Gregory E. Ganssle and David M. Woodruff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).

⁵¹Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway, 1994).

This book is a revised version of *Apologetics: An Introduction* (Chicago: Moody, 1984).

⁵²J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2003).

⁵³Craig also engaged an atheist philosopher in an extremely technical written debate on the cosmological argument: William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

⁵⁴This debate was published with responses from four biblical scholars: *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up? A Debate between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan*, moderated by William F. Buckley, Jr., ed. Paul Copan, with responses from Robert J. Miller, Craig L. Blomberg, Marcus Borg, and Ben Witherington III (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998). Crossan is a former co-chair of the ultraliberal “Jesus Seminar.” See also *Jesus’ Resurrection: Fact or Figment? A Debate on the Resurrection between William Lane Craig and Gerd Lüdemann*, ed. Paul Copan and Ronald Tacelli (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity, 2000).

⁵⁵*Does God Exist? The Craig—Flew Debate*, ed. Stan W. Wallace (Aldershot, Hants, England; Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2003). See also William Lane Craig and Walter Sinnott-Armstrong, *God? A Debate between a Christian and an Atheist*, Point/Counterpoint Series, James P. Sterba, series ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁵⁶“My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism: A Discussion between Antony Flew and Gary R. Habermas,” *Philosophia Christi* 6 (2004): 197-211.

⁵⁷Craig, “Classical Apologetics,” in *Five Views on Apologetics*, ed. Steven B. Cowan, Counterpoint series (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2000), 26-55; see our comments on this book in the Appendix.

⁵⁸All parenthetical references in this section are from Craig’s *Reasonable Faith*.