

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

A Reasonable Response

Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible



A REASONABLE RESPONSE

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Answers to Tough Questions on

**GOD • CHRISTIANITY
AND THE BIBLE**

AND JOSEPH E. GORRA

By: William Lane Craig & Joseph E. Gorra

من أهمّ كُتب الفيلسوف الأمريكي «ويليام كريج» في مجال الرّدّ على أسئلة المُشكّكين في الإيمان والدين.

الكتاب مُقسّم إلى ستّة أجزاء، الجزءان الأخيران مُختصان بالدِّفاع عن المسيحية تحديداً، أمّ الأجزاء الأخرى تتناول الإجابة عن أسئلة مُختلفة مُشتركة بين أديان المذهب الألوهي، وهي: إمكانية معرفة الحقّ، وجود الله، الحياة والغاية من الوجود، وجود الشر والحياة بعد الموت.

الكتاب يُناقش بعمق إشكاليات حول كيفية المعرفة، والصّياغات المنطقية للحجج، والقيّم الموضوعية، ووجود الله، وطبيعته وصفاته، ونشأة الكون، وسبب وجوده، وكيف أن يكون الله هو خالق الكون (مناقشة عميقة وصعبة جداً)، ومعنى الحياة، وفلسفة العِلْم وعلاقته بالمذهب الألوهي، وكذلك نظرية التّطور (في نقاش فلسفي عميق جداً لم أقرأ مثله من قبل)!

الكتاب تعليمي من الدّرجة الأولى، يهدف إلى تنمية مهارات المدافعين عن الإيمان في الرّدّ على الأسئلة التي تُوجّه إليهم من قبل الذين يرفضون الإيمان، وذلك من خلال تزويدهم بخلاصة خبرة «كريج» في مجال الرّدّ على أسئلة غير المؤمنين، مع إرشادهم لمراجع أخرى على مُستويات علمية مُختلفة للمزيد من القراءة الإثرائية!

الكتاب ليس للذين لم يطلّعوا على مؤلّفات «كريج» من قبل، ولهذا يُشير الكتاب إلى المؤلّفات الإثرائية قبل طرح الأسئلة والأجوبة، وليس بعدها، فالكتاب يُناقش بعض الإشكاليات المطروحة حول مواضيع من المُفترض أنّك قرأت عنها من قبل، خُصّوصاً كما يطرّحها «كريج».

وقد تطرّق كريج إلى مواضيع مسيحية خالص، مثل الثالوث والتجسد والصلب والفداء، ومصداقية وموثوقية الكتاب المقدس، وبعض الأخلاقيات المسيحية، وكيفية مُعالجة مُشكلة الشر والألم، وقد تجاهلت كل هذا لعدم اهتمامي بهذه الأبواب حالياً، أو بسبب معرفتي لمؤلّفات أخرى اكتفيت بها في المواضيع السابقة.

الكتاب يستحقّ تقدير جيّد جداً، مع العلم أنّه كتاب فلسفي من الدّرجة الأولى، يهدف إلى الوُصول للضّبط

Introduction

- For example, two people may ask about whether there are good arguments for God's existence. Even if posed as the same question, it does not follow that an identical answer should be given. For two people could ask the same question out of different needs and desires, background, degrees of care, assumptions, concerns, etc. So, we have tried to dignify the inquirers (who are real people on the other end) by keeping the context of their correspondence intact. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p15.]
- The purpose in responding, of course, is not to win arguments, but to remove barriers that keep the inquirer from seeking further, all the while responding in a gracious and patient manner. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p20.]
- Step 1: Read a question directed to Bill. Step 2: After you read the correspondence and understand what is being asked, pause, don't rush to Bill's answer, but ponder the following two questions:2 What is this person revealing about the question(s) they ask? (e.g., assumptions of their mind, "reasons of their heart," role of their passions in the question-asking). How would I directly respond to this person if I had an opportunity to enter into real, give-and-take communication? Step 3: You may want to briefly document your thoughts to the two questions so that you can compare what you would say with what Bill says. In so doing, you can open up your thought process to be weighed by Bill's approach, and then also assess his approach in light of your own take on the matter. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p21.]
- Tough questions not only require tough-minded answers, but the skillfulness to know how to say what needs to be said in order to help others come to

understand this for themselves. In that regard, we should seek to have patience, to stay with people in their question asking and communicate for the sake of educating insofar as they want to know what it is that they need to know. Ultimately, the practice and ministry of answering questions, like most anything else that is meaningful in life, is for the “whosoever is willing.” [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p22.]

Part 1: Questions On Knowing and Believing What Is Real

- But one of the dignifying features of theism, and Christian theism specifically, is the acknowledgement that human beings are “more than” what our society pressures us into being. We have minds to know, hearts to grow in love and understanding, and beliefs to help order our ways in the world. Herein, the dignity of asking questions and discovering answers is given a hospitable home. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p47.]

1 On Believing and Knowing

Does Knowledge Require Certainty?

- **Q:** They state that since every possible option has not been explored that nothing can be said for certain. Since nothing can be said for certain, all of the premises that you pose may seem true to us, but we cannot say they are absolutely true. If they cannot be proven absolutely true, then there is no reason to believe them, and the argument dies right there. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p53.]
- ask them for their justification for thinking that knowledge requires certainty. Anything they say, you can reply to by asking, “Are you certain of that?” If they say, “No,” then they don’t know that knowledge requires certainty. If they say, “Yes,” then it’s not true after all that we can’t know anything about life, the universe, or logic. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity*

and The Bible), Moody Publishers 2013, p54.]

On How to Confront the Challenge of Apatheism

- **Q:** However, I've recently come across a person who describes himself as an apatheist. After a little research, I find that all of the arguments that I can come up with will be responded by, "Your God's not relevant, and it doesn't matter to me." [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p55.]
- "Apatheism" (presumably from "apathy" + "theism") characterizes people who just don't care whether or not God exists. As such, apatheism is not a truth claim and so can be neither true nor false. It asserts nothing and denies nothing. It is merely an attitude or a psychological state of indifference with respect to God's existence. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p56.]
- In fact, it would be interesting to see what your friend would say if you were to respond to his apatheism by saying, "I realize that you don't care whether or not God exists. But do you think He does exist? Since it doesn't matter to you, you can be totally objective. So what do you think? Is there a God?" He may reveal that he's really an atheist or agnostic after all, and then you can ask him for his reasons for believing as he does. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p56.]

On Common Sense, Intuitions, and the Limits of Reason

- **Q:** We are not in an age where we can be confident that the laws of reason are the same as the laws of reality, like people in the time of Aristotle believed. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p58.]
- First, it seems to me that we have no choice but to take common sense and intuition as our starting points. I very strongly suspect that even those who claim to place no stock in common sense and intuition in fact rely on them all the time with respect to unconscious metaphysical assumptions. So when

a philosophical viewpoint flies in the face of common sense and intuition (e.g., that the external world does not exist), then we may justly demand a very powerful argument in favor of that viewpoint. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p60.]

- As science advanced in our understanding of nature's laws, Aristotelian physics was replaced by Newtonian physics, which was in turn replaced by Einstein's physics, which will soon, we expect, be superseded by a quantum gravitational unified physics. In each successive scientific revolution, the earlier science is not simply abandoned; rather its truths are recast and preserved in the theory that supersedes it and its inaccuracies abandoned. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p61.]

How Is Belief in God Properly Basic?

- **Q:** According to universal sanction, a belief is properly basic if it is pragmatically indispensable. The nice part about this criterion is that it allows for a type of evidentialism which avoids all of Plantinga's counterexamples. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p64.]
- **Q:** For instance, under universal sanction, memory beliefs, belief in the reality of the external world, belief in other minds, and so on, are properly basic because doubting or denying them would make living a normal human life impossible. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p64.]
- **Q:** The reason we accept belief in other minds, the external world, and our memories is not because we somehow "know" that they are true; it is all psychological, for we desperately want these beliefs to be true because we know that it would be impossible to live a fulfilling life without them. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p64.]

- But the more important point is that given the admitted present absence of such evidence, it is currently irrational to accept classical foundationalism. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p67.]
- Most of our properly basic beliefs are highly individualized and, therefore, not universally sanctioned. (If you relativize your criterion to individual persons, then you'll have to allow that for some people belief in God might be pragmatically indispensable!) (ii) The belief that only universally sanctioned beliefs are properly basic is not itself universally sanctioned. But neither is there any evidence that only universally sanctioned beliefs are properly basic. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p68.]
- An intrinsic defeater-defeater is a belief that is so powerfully warranted that it defeats the putative defeater brought against it without any need of additional beliefs to come to the rescue. Plantinga gives the charming illustration of someone accused of a crime that he knows he didn't commit even though all the evidence is stacked against him. He is rational in believing in his own innocence despite the evidence that would rightly convince someone else that he is guilty. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p68.]
- As for the content of Christian beliefs, you're overlooking the role of Scripture in Plantinga's model: it is through Scripture that we learn of the great truths you mention, and then the Holy Spirit commends these truths to us. We don't just come up with them out of the blue; we read of them in Scripture. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p69.]
- No longer can unbelievers grumble that Christians are irrational, unjustified, or unwarranted in believing as they do in the absence of evidence. Unbelievers will have to come up with disproofs of Christian beliefs in order to show that such beliefs are irrational, unjustified, or unwarranted. [William

Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p69.]

On Question-Begging and Appealing to the Holy Spirit

- Plantinga distinguishes between what he calls de facto and de jure objections to Christian belief. A de facto objection is one aimed at the truth of the Christian faith; it attempts to show that Christian truth claims are false. By contrast a de jure objection attempts to undermine Christian belief even if Christianity is, in fact, true. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p71.]
- Plantinga identifies three versions of the de jure objection: that Christian belief is unjustified, that it is irrational, and that it is unwarranted. Plantinga's aim is to show that all such de jure objections to Christian belief are unsuccessful, or, in other words, that Christian belief can be shown to be unjustified, irrational, or unwarranted only if it is shown that Christian beliefs are false. There is thus no de jure objection to Christian belief independent of a de facto objection. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p71.]
- According to Plantinga's model, God warrants to us the great truths of the gospel by means of the inner witness of the Holy Spirit. Such beliefs are for us properly basic beliefs grounded in (but not inferred from) the witness of the Holy Spirit. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p72.]
- The unbeliever who wants to argue that Christian belief is unjustified, irrational, or unwarranted has to present objections to the truth of the Christian faith. For if he doesn't, then for all he knows, Christianity may well be true, in which case there just is no problem with Christian belief. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p72.]
- Now, of course, a Muslim could make exactly similar claims about Islam, as

Plantinga acknowledges. There is, therefore, no de jure objection to Muslim belief either. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p72.]

- In order to show our Muslim friend that his beliefs are not properly basic, we can present de facto objections to the truth of Islam. Since he does not in fact have a genuine witness of the Holy Spirit to the truth of Islam, we can hope that his confidence will crack under the force of the evidence and that he will come to see that his experience was either non-veridical or misinterpreted. Again, the Muslim can say the same thing and so engage in Muslim apologetics aimed at providing de facto objections to Christianity. Great! Bring on the debate! [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p72, 73.]

2 On Argumentation and Logic 101

What Is a Criterion for a Good (Apologetics) Argument?

- “Question-begging” is an informal fallacy that pertains to whether a person’s only reason for believing in a premise is that he already believes in the conclusion. Notice one could believe in a premise because he believes in the conclusion and this would not be question-begging unless that reason for believing were the only reason. Bottom line: we want to learn to offer arguments that have reasons for a premise that are “independent” of a conclusion. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p79.]
- What makes for a sound deductive argument? The answer is: true premises and valid logic. An argument is sound if the premises of the argument are true and the conclusion follows from the premises by the logical rules of inference. If these two conditions are met, then the conclusion of the argument is guaranteed to be true. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p79.]
- However, to be a good argument, an argument must be more than just sound.

If the premises of an argument are true, but we have no evidence for the truth of those premises, then the argument will not be a good one. (...) in the absence of any evidence for its premises it won't, or at least shouldn't, convince anyone. The premises have to have some sort of epistemic warrant for us in order for a sound argument to be a good one. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p79.]

- I presume the classical Principle of Bivalence, according to which there are only two truth values, True and False. There are different degrees of plausibility, not of truth, given the varying amounts of evidence in support of one's premises. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p80.]
- Moreover, in a valid deductive argument, like the kalam cosmological argument, any probabilities assigned to the premises are not used to calculate the probability of the conclusion. If the premises are true, then it follows necessarily that conclusion is true, period. It's logically fallacious to multiply the probabilities of the premises to try to calculate the probability of the conclusion. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p81.]

Why "Soundness" Is Not Sufficient for Making a Good Argument

- Just as we cannot get outside our five senses to check their veridicality and so prove that we are not the proverbial "brain in a vat" being stimulated by a mad scientist to perceive an external world, so we cannot get outside our moral sense to check its veridicality. But in both cases we are perfectly rational, in the absence of any defeater of our beliefs, to believe that we do apprehend objective realities. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p83.]
- On this basis you construct a parallel argument, which, if dubious, ought to make us think that the moral argument is also dubious. Now, the parallel argument you construct is actually a sort of cosmological argument for God's existence. In fact, I think it is a sound argument! It is obviously valid, and

both the premises seem to me to be true. For the objective outer world obviously exists, and if God did not exist, then no world at all would exist, including an objective outer world! It's not that if God did not exist, then the outer world would be merely a subjective illusion; rather it's that there wouldn't be anything at all! [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p83.]

- The argument must also not commit any informal logical fallacies like begging the question, and the premises must be more plausible than their negations. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p84.]
- In order to run a good cosmological argument, we need to provide some reason to think that if God did not exist, then the world would not exist. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p84.]

3 On the Basis for Objective Morality

Is There Objective Truth?

- **Q:** Having had conversations with several individuals in my school years has taught me that most do not think that there is such a thing as truth, rather the word “truth” is only a matter of opinion and, therefore, has no absolute meaning. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p85.]
- Just ask yourself the question: is the statement “1. There is no such thing as truth” true? If not, then no need to worry, right? On the other hand if (1) is true, then it follows that (1) is not true, since there is no truth. So if (1) is false, it's false; and if (1) is true, it's false. So either way (1) is false. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p85.]
- you go on to affirm quite a number of alleged truths: 2. The word “truth” is

only a matter of opinion and, therefore, has no absolute meaning. 3. Anything that is not a scientific fact is false. 4. Truth is only a coping mechanism that human beings have created. 5. Life really has no meaning. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p86.]

- (Anything that is not a scientific fact is false) is not itself a scientific fact. There are no experiments you could conduct to prove it, nor will you find it asserted in any science textbook. It is a philosophical statement about the nature of facts. But it states that anything that is not a scientific fact is false. But then it follows that (Anything that is not a scientific fact is false) itself is false! [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p86, 87.]
- We all are led by something or someone. If our “guides” cannot direct us to what is real and knowledge of it, (among other reasons) they should not be considered reliable. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p87.]
- Surely you can think of all sorts of statements you think are true quite independently of whether so thinking helps you to cope in life. Indeed, some of the things we think are true are positive impediments to our coping successfully with life! But let that pass. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p87.]

On the Value of Appealing to One’s Moral Experience

- **Q:** My pastor flat out deemed this as logically flawed, saying that we could not use it at all. He disagreed with premise 2, that objective moral values exist. He said that although we believe they exist, we cannot say they exist until we know that God exists. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p88.]
- His fundamental confusion concerns the difference between the truth of a premise and our warrant for it. I take it as obvious that a statement can be

true even if we have no evidence at all for its truth; by the same token we can have pretty strong evidence for a statement that is, in fact, false. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p89.]

- Rather what he thinks is that we have no warrant for believing (2) independent of our belief in God. For he thinks that once we do know that a transcendent God exists, then we know that there is a ground for objective moral values. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p89.]
- People don't believe in (2) because they believe in God. They believe in (2) because of their moral experience, in which they apprehend certain values that impose themselves upon us and certain duties that lay claim upon us. That goes for atheists and agnostics as well as theists. Non-theists who accept (2) obviously do not do so in a question-begging way, and neither do theists, I should say. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p89.]
- This is an important encouragement to take stock of our own moral experience and to help others learn to pay attention and articulate their experiences in this way. One may think of heinous moral acts— e.g., the 2012 Colorado theater shooting—and show that the response was (and justifiably so) moral outrage at such an evil and unjust act of killing. For it was not a mere “human tragedy” (like a tsunami, for example). [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p90.]
- Your pastor seems to be confusing the order of knowing (*ordo cognoscendi*) with the order of being (*ordo essendi*). In the order of knowing, we first apprehend a realm of objective moral values and then infer to God as their ground. But in the order of being, God is primary as the ground of objective moral values, and moral values depend for their objective reality upon Him. Just because God comes first in the order of being doesn't imply that He comes first in the order of knowing. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E.

Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p90.]

- So in answer to your question, the best way to convince anyone of the objective reality of moral values is to appeal to his moral experience. Give some illustrations of moral outrages and ask people if they think such things are really evil or wrong. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p90.]

How Can God Be the Ground of Morality?

- First, God's existing necessarily is not related to His being all-powerful, all-knowing, and morally perfect, at least in any direct way. For God to be logically necessary He simply needs to exist in every logically possible world; indeed, to say that God is logically necessary just is to say that He exists in every possible world. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p91.]
- The kalam and fine-tuning arguments imply the existence of an enormously powerful and intelligent being, but not an omnipotent or omniscient being. The moral argument can be augmented to lead to the conclusion that God, as the ground of objective moral value, is morally perfect, but that is not the conclusion of the argument itself. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p91.]

The Importance of Distinguishing Between Moral Epistemology and Moral Ontology

- The claim that moral values and duties are rooted in God is a Meta-Ethical claim about Moral Ontology, not about Moral Linguistics or Epistemology. It is fundamentally a claim about the objective status of moral properties, not a claim about the meaning of moral sentences or about the justification or knowledge of moral principles. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p94.]
- A proponent of that argument will agree quite readily (and even insist) that

we do not need to know or even believe that God exists in order to discern objective moral values or to recognize our moral duties. Affirming the ontological foundations of objective moral values and duties in God similarly says nothing about how we come to know those values and duties. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p94.]

- By distinguishing between moral epistemology and moral ontology we can be in a better place to introduce Scripture's witness as an indispensable source of knowledge and wisdom about the moral life and its duties. We can do this by helping people pay attention to their moral experience and considering how Scripture has insight into questions like "how do I become moral?" [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p94.]

Is It Arbitrary to Adopt God's Nature as the Good?

- **Q:** If Christianity were proven false, and Islam true, would you simply drop your current moral convictions and adopt those of Islam because you found you "had the wrong God"? Would there not be a part of you that may rebel, against Allah, when faced with certain scenarios concerning judgments on creaturely wellbeing? [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p95.]
- The important question is not what I would do under the envisioned circumstances, but what I should do. What I would do is an autobiographical fact about my personal psychology, which is of little philosophical interest. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p97.]
- So stated, the question's answer is clear: if Islam were proven true and Christianity false, then Islam would be true, and so of course I should believe in it. The same answer would present itself to the atheist: if atheism were proven false and Islam true, then should you obey the commands of Allah? Of course, for then Islam is the truth, and you really do have those moral

obligations, however difficult it might be for you to stomach them. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p97.]

- On most Divine Command theories God possesses His moral qualities essentially (indeed, that's just what it means to say they're part of His nature!). So there is no possible world in which God is not kind, impartial, gracious, loving, and so on. So I don't think it is possible that Allah is God, since Allah is not all-loving and impartial. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p98.]

Part 2: Questions About God

1 On the Existence of God

On Whether God's Existence Can Be Evident to Every Sincere Seeker

- God's existence may not be evident to someone at certain stages of his life but may become evident when and through what means God chooses. If a person is truly seeking God, he will persist in his search and will eventually find God. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p133.]
- The problem with such an argument, however, is that we're just not in a position to look into the human heart and judge a person's sincerity in this regard. This would require a kind of psychological insight that is not available to us. Only God is capable of doing the spiritual cardiogram necessary for answering this question. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p134.]
- if a person persists in unbelief until his death, then the evidence for Jesus' identity and the truth of His claims gives us reason to think that that person was not as sincere as he imagined himself to be. (...) Notice as well that this answer is not to say that "every non-Christian [who persists until death in unbelief] is lying, either about God's existence being evident or about being sincere." Rather such a person may be self-deceived. He imagines himself to

be sincere and earnest in seeking God, when in truth he may not be. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p134.]

- A Muslim might well claim that Allah will make his existence evident to anyone who sincerely seeks him. I don't find that claim at all implausible, given that Allah exists. The problem is, we have good reasons to think that the God described in the Qur'an does not exist. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p134, 135.]

What Does It Mean to Define "God"?

- During the positivist era back in the 1920s and '30s, it was widely thought among philosophers that "metaphysical" notions like God were meaningless. Why? Because no empirical content could be given to such notions. To be meaningful an informative sentence had to be empirically verifiable. Since it was thought that sentences like "God exists" could not be verified through the five senses, they were dismissed as meaningless. The so-called verification principle of meaning, however, was soon found to be unduly restrictive, rendering even some sentences of science meaningless, and in the end self-defeating. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p136.]
- Richard Swinburne, a prominent Christian philosopher, treats "God" as a proper name of the person referred to by the following description: a person without a body (i.e., a spirit) who necessarily is eternal, perfectly free, omnipotent, omniscient, perfectly good, and the creator of all things. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p136.]
- The best definition of God as a descriptive term is, I think, St. Anselm's: the greatest conceivable being. As Anselm observed, if you could think of anything greater than God, then that would be God! The very idea of God is of a being than which there cannot be a greater. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on*

What Does It Mean for God to Have Necessary Existence?

- Metaphysical necessity has to do with what must be the case, even though its denial does not involve a contradiction. For example, I think it is metaphysically necessary that everything that begins to exist has a cause, even though there is no logical inconsistency in saying that a certain thing came into being without a cause. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p139.]
- Now, de re (from the Latin, meaning pertaining to a thing) modality has to do with a thing's essential properties. When it is said that a property belongs to a thing's essence or is essential to it, that means that the thing could not have lacked that property and still remained itself. If something loses one of its essential properties, then that thing ceases to exist. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p139.]
- Properties that a thing has which are not essential to it are called contingent properties. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p139.]
- When we say that God is metaphysically necessary, we mean that it is impossible that He fail to exist. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p139.]
- Rather, the claim here is that God exists in every possible world. What God has that we don't, then, is the property of necessary existence. And He has that property de re, as part of His essence. God cannot lack the property of necessary existence and be God. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p139.]
- We have here the germ of the ontological argument for God's existence. For if it is possible that God exists, there is a possible world in which God has necessary existence. But then He exists in every world, including this one. Thus, the atheist is thrust into the awkward position of having to say that

God's existence is impossible. It is not enough to say that in fact God does not exist; the atheist must hold that it is impossible that God exists—a much more radical claim! [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p140.]

Naturalistic Appeal to Ignorance

- Scientific evidence can support a premise in an argument leading to a conclusion having theological significance. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p147.]
- The question will always be, what does our best evidence indicate is true? For example, is the evidence of contemporary cosmology more probable given the beginning of the universe or more probable given that the universe is beginningless? [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p148.]
- Note, finally, that some of the theistic arguments are philosophical, for example, the moral argument and the ontological argument, or have premises that are supportable not just scientifically but philosophically, and are, therefore, immune to the objection based on scientific ignorance. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p148.]

On Assessing the Argument from Contingency

- Some atheists have tried to justify making the universe an exception to premise 1 by saying that it's impossible for the universe to have an explanation of its existence. For the explanation of the universe would have to be some prior state of affairs in which the universe did not yet exist. But that would be nothingness, and nothingness cannot be the explanation of anything. So the universe must just exist inexplicably. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p150.]
- This line of reasoning is obviously fallacious. For it assumes that the universe

is all there is, so that if there were no universe there would be nothing. In other words, the objection assumes that atheism is true! The atheist is thus begging the question, arguing in a circle. I agree that the explanation of the universe must be a prior state of affairs in which the universe did not exist. But I contend that that state of affairs is God and His will, not nothingness. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p150, 151.]

Justification of the Moral Argument's Second Premise

- Louise Antony, herself a non-theist, put it so well in our debate a few years ago at U Mass, Amherst: Any argument for moral skepticism will be based upon premises which are less obvious than the existence of objective moral values themselves. That seems to me quite right. Therefore, moral skepticism is unjustifiable. [You can access this debate for free by visiting ReasonableFaith.org (<http://bit.ly/CraigAntony>).] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p154, 155.]
- It is not only valuable when considering objections against the moral argument for God's existence, but it is also useful for weighing a skepticism, in general, which tends to proffer assumptions that are "less obvious" than the existence of x. Bottom line: moral skepticism fails to attend to our direct acquaintance with reality even though this is how our moral experience encounters objective moral values and duties. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p155.]
- The humanist philosopher Peter Cave gives the following example: Whatever skeptical arguments may be brought against our belief that killing the innocent is morally wrong, we are more certain that the killing is morally wrong than that the argument is sound ... Torturing an innocent child for the sheer fun of it is morally wrong. [Peter Cave, *Humanism* (Oxford: OneWorld, 2009), 146.] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p155.]
- In moral experience we encounter objective moral values and duties, and so,

in the absence of some sort of defeater of that belief, we are perfectly rational to hold to it. Moral realism is the default position, and the moral skeptic needs to provide some powerful defeater to overcome it. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p155.]

- For any argument for skepticism about our moral perceptions we could run a parallel argument for skepticism about our sensory perceptions. But you'd have to be crazy to doubt the veridicality of your sense perceptions of a realm of objectively existing physical objects. Similarly, until we are given a defeater, we ought to trust our moral perception of a realm of objectively existing values and duties. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p155.]
- Even if the unbeliever has no justification for believing in premise (2), so long as he does believe in premise (2), the argument goes through. Since almost everyone does believe that (2) is true, the debate really comes down to (1). The unbeliever will have to explain how objective moral values and duties can exist in a world without God as an absolute standard and law-giver. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p156.]
- You want to make the intellectual price tag of atheism as high as you can, in hopes that the unbeliever will come to see that the price is simply too high, that to maintain his atheism in the face of the argument would compromise his intellectual integrity. That is the method of good argumentation. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p156.]

2 On the Trinity

Is Trinity Monotheism Orthodox?

- As Murray Harris explains in his fine book *Jesus as God*, the reason one finds relatively few references in the New Testament to Jesus as ho theos (God) is because that term was reserved for the Father. When the New Testament

writers use the word “God,” they are typically referring to the Father. Since the New Testament writers didn’t believe that Jesus was the Father, they had to find other expressions to indicate His deity, such as ho kyrios (Lord). The creed follows this idiom. [Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992). This has now been reprinted by Wipf and Stock (2008).] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p159.]

3 On Divine Attributes

On Appraising Perfect Being Theology

- Note this important distinction. It also underscores how “conceivability” is not the same as “imaginability,” [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p169.]

In What Sense Is God a “Simple Being”?

- But “simple” can also mean “non-composite,” that is to say, not composed of parts, and this is the relevant sense here. An electron, for example, is a simple particle, whereas a proton is not, the latter being composed of quarks. The degree to which an entity is simple is the degree to which it is made up of potentially separable parts. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p173.]
- Thomas upholds an extraordinarily strong doctrine of divine simplicity, arguing that God is utterly without composition of any sort. In my discussion of this divine attribute, I reject Thomas’s very strong view in favor of a weaker form of divine simplicity. I see no reason, for example, to think that God’s essence and existence are the same. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p173.]
- Having an avid interest in medieval Islamic philosophy and having chosen Islam as my side area of specialization in my doctoral work in theology, I very much enjoy talking with Muslims about these important questions (...) Since Muslims and Christians alike accept Genesis as God’s revealed Word,

we all must deal with the question of what the text means when it says that when God saw the pervasive sin of mankind “it grieved Him to His heart” (Gen. 6:6). [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p180.]

- The view that God is in no way affected by creatures is called the impassibility of God. This seems to be the view that you favor. God cannot suffer emotional pain. Divine impassibility was thought by medieval Christian theologians to be one of the attributes of God. So you would find many Christians historically who would agree with your view. But on the contemporary scene there are very few theologians who would defend such a doctrine. There seems to be no good reason for taking the biblical descriptions of God’s emotions non-literally. Far from seeing susceptibility to emotional pain as a weakness, most contemporary Christian philosophers and theologians would say quite the opposite: that it is a weakness for a person to be unmoved by human suffering and a strength to feel emotions, including pain, indignation, compassion, etc. In fact, think of the etymology of the word “compassion”: to suffer along with. As the greatest conceivable being, God must be compassionate and share our sorrows and joys. Impassibility is actually a weakness, whereas compassion redounds to God’s greatness. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p180, 181.]
- Alvin Plantinga speaks for many Christian thinkers when he writes: As the Christian sees things, God does not stand idly by, coolly observing the suffering of his creatures. He enters into and shares our suffering. He endures the anguish of seeing his son, the second person of the Trinity, consigned to the bitterly cruel and shameful death of the cross. Some theologians claim that God cannot suffer. I believe they are wrong. God’s capacity for suffering, I believe, is proportional to his greatness; it exceeds our capacity for suffering in the same measure as his capacity for knowledge exceeds ours. Christ was prepared to endure the agonies of hell itself; and God, the Lord of the universe, was prepared to endure the suffering consequent upon his son’s humiliation and death. He was prepared to accept this suffering in order to overcome sin, and death, and the evils that afflict our world, and to confer on

us a life more glorious than we can imagine. So we don't know why God permits evil; we do know, however, that he was prepared to suffer on our behalf, to accept suffering of which we can form no conception. [Alvin Plantinga, "Self-Profile," Alvin Plantinga, Jas. Tomberlin, ed. (Dordrecht: Reidel, 1985), 36.] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p181.]

- I find that Muslims frequently fail to understand that on the Christian view Christ has two natures: His divine nature which He has possessed from all eternity and His human nature which He assumed at the moment of Mary's conceiving Jesus in her womb. Defenders of divine impassibility say that Christ's human nature has both a human soul and a human body, and it was in these that He suffered, not in His divine nature, which was and is impassible. If you want to hold on to divine impassibility, Mun, you can take that route and be a Christian. But like Prof. Plantinga, I think God is greater if He is not impassible. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p182.]

Part 3 Questions about Origins and the Meaning of Life

1 On the Origins of the Universe

"God" and "the Cause of the Universe"

- On the other hand, if you think there is a world in which something other than God is the cause of the universe, then you should give up the principle that only God can create a material thing ex nihilo. In such worlds, God would be the cause of the cause of the universe (e.g., a super-powerful angel to whom God delegated the task of creation). But there is no reason to think that there are worlds like that. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p188.]

On Bringing into Being Things Which Do Not Exist

- Thus, (P1) seems to assume that there are things that do not exist, which most philosophers would regard as absurd. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E.

Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p189.]

- But neither creatio ex nihilo nor beginning to exist implies that something undergoes a change from non-existence to existence. As C. D. Broad put it, absolute becoming is not a case of becoming this or that but just of becoming, period, just beginning to be. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p190.]

Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow: Philosophical Undertakers

- Hawking and Mlodinow open *The Grand Design* with a series of profound philosophical questions: What is the nature of reality? Where did all this come from? Did the universe need a creator? Then they say this: Traditionally these are questions for philosophy, but philosophy is dead. Philosophy has not kept up with modern developments in science, particularly physics. Scientists have become the bearers of the torch of discovery in our quest for knowledge. (p. 5) [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p191.]
- Two scientists who have, to all appearances, little acquaintance with philosophy are prepared to pronounce an entire discipline dead and to insult their own faculty colleagues in philosophy at Cal Tech and Cambridge University, many of whom, like Michael Redhead and D. H. Mellor, are eminent philosophers of science, for supposedly failing to keep up. I couldn't help but wonder what evidence our intrepid authors have of Mr. Redhead's laggard scholarship? What recent works in philosophy have they read that form the basis for their verdict? Alas, they do not say. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p192.]
- Notice what Dr. Craig is describing and the difference it makes in one's evaluation of the authors' ideas. He exposes their naïve disdain for philosophy. This attitude is to their detriment, since philosophy is unavoidable. Such an attitude also precludes any fruitful interdisciplinary discussion between science and philosophy. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God*

Christianity and The Bible), Moody Publishers 2013, p192.]

- Like their claims about the origin of the universe from “nothing” or about the Many Worlds Hypothesis to explain fine-tuning, their claims about laws of nature, the possibility of miracles, scientific determinism, and the illusion of free will are asserted with only the thinnest of justification and little understanding of the philosophical issues involved. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p192.]
- But Hawking and Mlodinow complain that unless one invests God with certain attributes, this answer amounts to no more than defining God as the embodiment of the laws of nature. I find this complaint perplexing. Since the classical theists they have in mind (including Descartes, whose views they misrepresent) thought that nature’s laws were freely willed by God, God could not be just the embodiment of those laws, since God could have established quite different laws. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p193.]
- What Mlodinow and Hawking are describing is the view of Spinoza, a pantheist who regarded “God” and “nature” as synonyms. Of course, classical theists regarded God as having certain attributes, which distinguished Him from nature; that is simply entailed in the answer that God established the laws. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p193.]
- Suppose one is a deist who thinks that God, having established the clockwork universe, chooses not to intervene in it? In that case, there is no “crunch” at all in answering (i) by “God” and (ii) by “No.” [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p193.]
- In any case, why answer (ii) negatively? Incredibly, Hawking and Mlodinow think that science requires it: The scientific determinism that Laplace formulated is the modern scientist’s answer to question two. It is, in fact, the basis of all modern science, and a principle that is important throughout this book. A scientific law is not a scientific law if it holds only when some

supernatural being decides not to intervene. (p. 30) [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p193.]

- This argument is multiply confused. First, it is false that Laplacean determinism is the basis of modern science. Never mind the hordes of theistic scientists who affirm the reality of miracles; there are plenty of scientists, including Hawking and Mlodinow themselves (p. 72), who regard the indeterminism characteristic of quantum physics as ontic, not merely epistemic. [That is to say, real, not just a matter of our limited knowledge. It is an unresolved debate whether the indeterminacy characterizing quantum physics is just a matter of our ignorance or is a mind-independent reality. For example, do sub-atomic particles really lack a precise location at a specific time, or is it just that we cannot simultaneously measure a particle's precise location and motion? Many, if not most, scientists take quantum indeterminacy to be ontic, not merely epistemic, in which case Laplace's boast noted above falls to the ground.] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p193, 194.]
- Perhaps what Hawking and Mlodinow really mean to say is that science must presuppose naturalism in order to be a viable enterprise. But in that case, they have failed to distinguish methodological naturalism from metaphysical naturalism. [Metaphysical naturalism is the view that no supernatural entities exist. Usually, this is taken to imply that nothing other than space-time and its contents exists. Methodological naturalism makes no such claim. It holds that science only seeks for natural explanations of natural phenomena. There may be supernatural entities, but they're not the concern of science.] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p194.]
- Their argument at best would show that science is methodologically committed to entertaining only hypotheses positing natural causes; but that would do nothing to justify a negative answer to (ii), that there are no miracles. And even the question of science's commitment to methodological naturalism is not itself a scientific question but a philosophical question about

the nature of science. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p195.]

- Hawking and Mlodinow plunge into still deeper philosophical waters when they proceed to argue that because people live in the universe and interact with other objects in it, “scientific determinism must hold for people as well” (p. 30). Therefore, “we are no more than biological machines and . . . free will is just an illusion” (p. 32). [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p195.]
- Hawking and Mlodinow ask, “If we have free will, where in the evolutionary tree did it develop?” If this is supposed to be an argument, there are at least two things wrong with it. First, my having free will does not depend upon my being able to specify where in the evolutionary process organisms first acquired it. Second, free will presumably arose as soon as the human brain evolved sufficient complexity to support self-conscious, rational reflection. So what’s the problem? [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p195.]
- I wonder, for example, why they think that anything they’ve said in their book is true, since, on their view, they were determined to write it. Everything they say is the product of blind physical causes, like water’s gushing from a pipe or a tree’s growing a branch. What confidence can they have that anything they have said is true—including their assertion that determinism is true? [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p196.]
- Ontological pluralism holds that there really is no right answer to many ontological questions (such as, “Do composite objects exist?”). According to the ontological pluralist there are just different ways of describing reality, and none of these is more correct or accurate than another. There literally is no fact of the matter at all in answer to these questions. So if you were to ask, “Is there such a thing as the Moon?” the ontological pluralist would say that the question has no objective answer. It’s not true that the Moon exists, and

it's not true that the Moon does not exist. There just is no fact of the matter about whether there is such a thing as the Moon. Ontological pluralism is thus a radical view that is defended by a handful of philosophers. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p196.]

- They (Hawking and Mlodinow) explain: our brains interpret the input from our sensory organs by making a model of the world. When such a model is successful at explaining events, we tend to attribute to it, and to the elements and concepts that constitute it, the quality of reality or absolute truth. But there may be different ways in which one could model the same physical situation, with each employing different fundamental elements and concepts. If two such physical theories or models accurately predict the same events, one cannot be said to be more real than the other; rather, we are free to use whichever model is most convenient. (p. 7) [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p197.]
- On this view, a model seems to be an (at least in part) unconscious way of organizing sense perceptions, which can be refined by scientific theorizing. We never come to know the way the world is; all we achieve are more or less convenient ways of organizing our perceptions. Such skepticism would be bad enough; but the situation is even worse. For these various models are not, even unbeknownst to us, more or less accurate approximations of reality. Rather there is no objective reality to which our models more or less accurately correspond. This is full-blown ontological pluralism. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p197.]
- Mlodinow and Hawking are thus extreme anti-realists. Now, they try to distinguish their view from scientific anti-realism by defining the latter as the view that “observation and experiment are meaningful but that theories are no more than useful instruments that do not embody any deeper truths underlying the observed phenomena” (p. 44). [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on*

God Christianity and The Bible), Moody Publishers 2013, p197.]

- Hawking and Mlodinow are more anti-realist than the positivists, for they not only deny that theoretical statements express objective truths about the world, but they deny this of observation statements as well, since even observation is model-dependent. Again, what they're denying is not just knowledge of the way the world is, but that there even is an objective world to be known. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p197.]
- All that Mlodinow and Hawking have to offer is the fact that if we were, say, inhabitants of a virtual reality controlled by alien beings, then there would be no way for us to tell that we were in the simulated world and so would have no reason to doubt its reality (p. 42). The trouble with this sort of argument is that it does not exclude the possibility that we have in such a case two competing theories of the world, one the aliens' and one ours, and one of the theories is true and one false, even if we cannot tell which is which. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p198.]
- Mlodinow and Hawking, not content with ontological pluralism, really go off the deep end when they assert, "There is no model-independent test of reality. It follows that a wellconstructed model creates a reality of its own" (p. 172). This is an assertion of ontological relativity, the view that reality itself is different for persons having different models. If you are Fred Hoyle, the universe really has existed eternally in a steady state; but if you are Stephen Hawking, the universe really began with a big bang. If you are the ancient physician Galen, blood really does not circulate through the human body, but if you are William Harvey, it does! [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p198.]
- The answer to your question, Matthew—"how can physicists make these statements?"—was given long ago by Albert Einstein, when he remarked, "The man of science is a poor philosopher." Hawking and Mlodinow's book bears witness to Einstein's sagacity. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E.

Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p199.]

On Whether the Universe Must Have a Material Cause

- Let me begin by affirming that Christian theology is committed to creatio ex nihilo, that is to say, the doctrine that God created the universe without any material cause. God is the efficient cause that produced the universe, and there was no material cause. He, Himself, created the matter and energy. When we say that the matter and energy were created out of nothing, we mean merely that, although created, they were not created out of anything. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p201.]
- For that reason, something's coming into being spontaneously from nothing is metaphysically impossible. For, as you say, non-being has no potentialities, no powers, no properties—it is not anything. That's why being comes only from being. Ex nihilo nihil fit—out of nothing, nothing comes. So if something has an absolute beginning of existence, there must exist an actual being which produces the thing in existence. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p201.]
- The question, then, is whether there is a conflict between the principle Ex nihilo nihil fit and creatio ex nihilo. Clearly not! For in creatio ex nihilo there is an efficient cause of the effect, whereas the principle Ex nihilo nihil fit concerns something's beginning to be in the absence of any sort of cause. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p201.]
- But, as Thomas Aquinas pointed out, in creatio ex nihilo the potentiality of the universe lay in the power of God to create it. Since God has the power to create the universe, then even in the state of affairs of God's existing alone, there is the potential for a universe to exist. That potential resides, not in some non-existent object or in nothing, but in God Himself and His ability to cause the universe. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity*

and The Bible), Moody Publishers 2013, p201, 202.]

- This solution is very different from the panentheistic solution you mention and rightly reject, that the universe is made out of God's own being. Rather, the idea is that God has causal powers and, therefore, there is a potential for the universe to be actualized. This account underlines the fact that *creatio ex nihilo* is not a type of change. For in creation there is no enduring subject that goes from non-being into being. It is an absolute beginning of existence. It is not as though there were something with a passive potentiality to be actualized and God acts on that potentiality to actualize it. Rather the potentiality lies wholly in God's power to create. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p202.]

Must the Cause of the Universe Be Personal?

- What do i mean by "eternal" in the argument from the principle of determination? In a word, permanent. Something is eternal if it exists permanently, or without beginning or end. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p205.]
- There seems to be only one way out of this dilemma, and that is to say that the cause of the universe's beginning is a personal agent who freely chooses to create a universe in time. Philosophers call this type of causation "agent causation," and because the agent is free, he can initiate new effects by freely bringing about conditions which were not previously present. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p206.]
- I agree that it makes no sense to ask why the universe didn't begin at an earlier point of time. But it doesn't follow from that that it is meaningless to ask why a universe with a beginning exists rather than an eternal universe with no beginning. Nor is it meaningless to ask how an effect with a beginning can originate from a changeless, permanent cause. That's the real head-scratcher! I think al-Ghazali and those medieval Muslim theologians were dead-on concerning this argument for a free agent as the cause of the universe. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response*

(*Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible*), Moody Publishers 2013, p206.]

- If the argument so far is correct, then we have proved that there exists an uncaused, beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, enormously powerful, indeterministic cause of the universe. Now, the question is, what is it? What entity fits this description? The answer, it seems to me, is clear: a person, an unembodied mind. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p206.]
- We can think of this conclusion as an inference to the best explanation. In inference to the best explanation, we ask ourselves, what hypothesis, if true, would provide the best explanation of the data? The hypothesis that there is a personal Creator of the universe explains wonderfully all the data. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p206, 207.]
- There are two ways to defeat such an inference to the best explanation: (i) provide an equally good explanation that does not involve the existence of a personal Creator; or (ii) provide overriding reasons to think that a personal Creator does not exist. The arguments against the coherence of an unembodied mind would be examples of strategy (ii), while our present discussion concerning an alternative explanation is an example of strategy (i). [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p207.]
- Finally, as for the suggestion that the singularity is the cause of the universe, this has the merit of at least positing some explanatory entity. But in my original response to Cyrus, I explained why the initial cosmological singularity cannot be the ultimate cause of the universe, since it is either unreal or else part of the universe and, therefore, itself in need of explanation of its coming into being. The sense in which the singularity is “timeless,” Shah, is a highly technical sense in that in the General Theory of Relativity, it is not a point in space-time. Rather it is a point on the boundary of space-time. But it is not eternal in the ordinary sense of the term; namely, it is not

permanent. On the contrary, it is fleetingly evanescent. It is, therefore, temporal and began to exist and, therefore, requires a cause. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p208.]

2 God and Time

On a Framework for Thinking about God, Creation, and Time

- I argue that God, existing changelessly alone without the universe, is timeless. Time comes into existence at creation and so has a beginning and is finite in the past. God, in virtue of His real relation to the temporal world, becomes temporal at the moment of creation. So God exists timelessly without creation and temporally since the moment of creation. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p212.]
- If I am right, then there is no moment prior to creation. Rather, time begins at creation. This is the classical Christian view, as defended, for example, by Augustine. On this view, it is logically incoherent to ask, “What was God doing prior to creation?” because “prior to creation” implies a moment before creation, which the view denies. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p212.]
- Now, some theists have disagreed with the classical view. Isaac Newton, the founder of modern physics, for example, believed that time is infinite in the past and never had a beginning. For Newton absolute time just is God’s duration. Because God has always existed, time goes back and back and never had a beginning. So on Newton’s view, it makes perfect sense to ask, “What was God doing prior to creation?” [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p212.]
- One nice way of expressing God’s priority to creation is to say that God is causally but not temporally prior to the beginning of the universe. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers

2013, p213.]

- The very nature of free will is the absence of causal determinants. So a free choice has the appearance of a purely spontaneous event. The man can simply freely will to stand up. Thus, you can get a temporal effect from a changeless cause, if that cause is a free agent. Now, in God's case, God exists changelessly without the universe. Creation is a freely willed act of God that, when it occurs, brings time into being along with the universe. Thus, to say that "a finite time ago a Creator endowed with free will could have willed to bring the world into being at that moment" does not imply that there was time prior to that moment. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p213.]
- What timelessness entails is that one doesn't do anything different, that is, that one does not change. Timelessness implies an unchanging state of being. Now, some activities don't require change and time. For example, knowing something doesn't require change or time. God can know all truths in that timeless state without any change. Similarly, one can have unchanging intentions. So long as one's intentions don't change they can be timelessly held. That's why I said that God can exist without the universe with a timeless intention to create a world with a beginning. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p213.]
- Here we have insight into the nature of the love relationship among the three persons of the Trinity in that timeless state without creation. There exists a perfect, changeless state of mutual knowledge, will, and love among the persons of the Trinity without the creation. (The wonder of creation is that God would bother to create a world of creatures and invite them to freely enter the joy of that fellowship as adopted children!) [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p213, 214.]
- reflecting on agent causation leads me to think that in addition to that timeless intention there must also be an exercise of causal power on God's part. That act is simultaneous with the moment of creation—indeed, it just is the act of creating—and brings God into time. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E.

Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p214.]

Tenseless Time and Identity over Time

- the nature of time: the tensed view, which holds that temporal becoming is a real, objective feature of the world, and the tenseless view, which holds that all moments of time, whether past, present, or future, are equally real and existent, so that temporal becoming is an illusion of human consciousness. Philosophers are deeply divided as to which view is correct. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p219.]
- What this implies is not that the tenseless time theorist must abandon the principle of identity, since that is a necessary truth of logic, but rather that the tenseless time theorist must hold that intrinsic change is impossible and that nothing actually endures through time! These consequences are generally acknowledged by tenseless time theorists. They hold that what we call persons are just three-dimensional slices of four-dimensional space-time “worms.” The various slices are different objects, just as the different slices of a loaf of bread are. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p219.]
- I have every reason to believe that there is at least one thing that endures through intrinsic change, namely, I myself. I existed a second ago, and despite the changes which have taken place in me, I still exist now. No sane person really believes that he is not the same person who existed a minute ago. Moreover, the tenseless view is incompatible with moral responsibility, praise, and blame. The non-conscious, four-dimensional object of which I am a part cannot be regarded as a moral agent and is, therefore, not morally responsible for anything. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p219.]

3 On Atheism and Meaning in Life

Is Life Absurd without God?

- I've tried to analyze the absurdity of life in terms of life's lacking ultimate meaning, value, and purpose. The word "ultimate" is important here, for obviously we can have subsidiary purposes and conditional values without God, but my claim is that ultimately nothing really matters if there is no God. It seems to me that there are two prerequisites to an ultimately meaningful, valuable, and purposeful life, namely, God and immortality, and if God does not exist, then we have neither. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p225.]
- By "meaning" I mean something like significance or importance. By "purpose" I mean a telos or goal of life. By "value" I mean objective moral values and duties. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p225.]
- "If what we do now is ultimately insignificant because it will make no difference in a million years, then what happens in a million years is also ultimately insignificant because it makes no difference to what we do now." That doesn't make sense because the arrow of time is from past to future. To see if what happens in a million years makes any difference, you don't look to its impact on today but to its impact on the future, and there isn't any in the end. So, of course, in the absence of backward causation, it makes no difference now what will happen in a million years. The point is that what happens now or in a million years makes no ultimate difference on the outcome of the universe. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p226.]
- Maybe Nagel's claim is that it doesn't matter that nothing matters; but that doesn't deny my point that it doesn't matter, that there is no ultimate meaning. I agree with him that immortality alone is not sufficient for ultimate meaning: mere prolongation of existence isn't enough. But it is a necessary condition. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p226.]

Bible), Moody Publishers 2013, p226.]

- Here, Nagel misses my point entirely. He asserts that if we were extended throughout all space and time, that would not invest our lives with ultimate significance. But I agree with that! He's confusing necessary with sufficient conditions. Immortality is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for ultimate meaning; we also need God, as I have argued. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p227.]
- As someone whose life has been transformed by the love of God, I, by contrast, find from the engaged perspective nothing more fulfilling than knowing Him. Obedience to His commands comes, not grudgingly, but gratefully and eagerly from a willing heart. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p228.]
- As for your final point, if you've read my work, you know that I never argue for God's existence on the basis of the absurdity of life without God. I'm very explicit about this. Rather the purpose of this exercise is to arouse apathetic people from their stupor and get them to think about the importance of the question of God's existence, to get them to be as passionate as you are! Then, perhaps, they will be interested to hear my arguments for the existence of God. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p228, 229.]

Is Unbelief Culpable?

- I find that contemporary atheists take great umbrage at the biblical claim that God holds people to be morally culpable for their unbelief. They want to maintain their unbelief in God without accepting the responsibility for it. This attitude enables them to reject God with impunity. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p230.]
- Now, we can agree that a person cannot be held morally responsible for failing to discharge a duty of which he is uninformed. So the entire question is: are people sufficiently informed to be held morally responsible for failing to believe in God? [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable*

Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible), Moody Publishers 2013, p230.]

- On the biblical view, people are not like innocent, lost lambs wandering helplessly without a guide. Rather they are determined rebels whose wills are set against God and who must be subdued by God's Spirit. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p231.]
- unbelief is a choice. It is a choice to resist the force of the evidence and the drawing of God's Holy Spirit. The unbeliever is like someone dying of a fatal disease who refuses to believe the medical evidence concerning the efficacy of a proffered cure and who rejects the testimony of his doctor to it and who, as a result, suffers the consequence of his own stubbornness. He has no one to blame but himself. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p231.]

Deism and Christian Theism

- Ayala, though an ardent Darwinian, is very candid that when biologists affirm that "evolution is a fact," what they are talking about is common descent. But he says that "evolution," when defined as either a reconstruction of the evolutionary tree of life or as an account of the mechanisms that explain evolutionary change, is very uncertain and a matter of ongoing study. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p232.]
- Moreover, you're persuaded by the kalam cosmological argument for a personal Creator of the universe. This argument gives us an uncaused, beginningless, timeless, spaceless, immaterial, enormously powerful, personal Creator of the universe, who, as we may infer from the design argument above, designed the universe and the Earth to bring forth intelligent beings like ourselves. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p233.]
- Now, if such a Creator and Designer exists and has brought us into existence,

doesn't that suggest to you that He would have some purpose in mind which He would want us to know so that we might achieve the ends for which He created us? This consideration ought to make us take the claims of revealed religion, or at least the claims of the great monotheistic faiths that are consistent with the existence of such a transcendent Creator and Designer, very seriously. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p233.]

- So why don't you do what most New Testament scholars do: set aside the theological conviction that the gospels are inspired and look at them as ordinary historical documents about the life of this remarkable man, Jesus of Nazareth? What you'll find, Paul, is that we have more information about this relatively obscure man than we do about most major figures of antiquity! It's really quite amazing when you think about it. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p233.]

4 On Theology and Science

Is Scientism Self-Refuting?

- Neel, your friend is confusing scientism (an epistemological thesis) with naturalism (an ontological thesis). Scientism is the view that we should believe only what can be proven scientifically. In other words, science is the sole source of knowledge and the sole arbiter of truth. Naturalism is the view that physical events have only physical causes. In other words, miracles do not happen; there are no supernatural causes. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p236.]
- what problems are there with scientism? There are two that are especially significant. First, scientism is too restrictive a theory of knowledge. It would, if adopted, compel us to abandon wide swaths of what most of us take to be fields of human knowledge. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p236.]
- And what about science itself? Science is permeated with assumptions that

cannot be scientifically proven, so that an epistemology of scientism would destroy science itself. For example, the principle of induction cannot be scientifically justified. Just because A has always been succeeded by B in the past provides no warrant for inferring that the next A will be followed by B. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p236.]

- Secondly, scientism is self-refuting. Scientism tells us that we should not believe any proposition that cannot be scientifically proven. But what about that very proposition itself? It cannot itself be scientifically proven. Therefore, we should not believe it. Scientism thus defeats itself. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p237.]
- methodological naturalism, that is to say, the view that in doing natural science we should assume that all physical events have only natural causes. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p237.]
- is there the possibility that a naturalistic explanation might give way to a supernaturalistic explanation. They argue that it should in the case of biological complexity. But because they are working with a conception of science outside the mainstream (namely, they reject methodological naturalism), it's highly unlikely that their view will ever become the paradigmatic view of science, no matter what the evidence. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p238.]

On Evolutionary Theory and Theism

- How could anyone say on the basis of scientific evidence that the whole scheme was not set up by a provident God to arrive at homo sapiens on planet Earth? How could a scientist know that God did not supernaturally intervene to cause the crucial mutations that led to important evolutionary transitions, for example, the reptile to bird transition? Indeed, given divine middle

knowledge, not even such supernatural interventions are necessary, for God could have known that were certain initial conditions in place, then, given the laws of nature, certain life forms would evolve through random mutation and natural selection, and so He put such laws and initial conditions in place. Obviously, science is in no position whatsoever to say justifiably that the evolutionary process was not under the providence of a God endowed with middle knowledge who determined to create biological complexity by such means. So if the evolutionary biologist were using words like “undirected” and “purposeless” in the sense that the theist is using those words, evolutionary theory would be philosophy, not science (which is precisely what some theists allege). [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p239, 240.]

- According to Ayala, when the evolutionary biologist says that the mutations that lead to evolutionary development are random, the meaning of the word “random” is not “occurring by chance.” Rather it means “irrespective of their usefulness to the organism.” [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p240.]
- If we take “random” to mean “irrespective of usefulness to the organism,” then randomness is not incompatible with direction or purpose. For example, suppose that God in His providence causes a mutation to occur in an organism, not for the benefit of the organism, but for some other reason (say, because it will produce easy prey for other organisms that He wants to flourish or even because it will eventually produce a fossil that I will someday find, which stimulates my interest in paleontology, so that I embark upon the career God had in mind for me). In such a case, the mutation is both purposeful and random. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p240.]
- In a recent report from the National Center for Science Education, which self-advertises as “the premier institution dedicated to keeping evolution in the science classroom and creationism out,” Daryl Domning writes: In truth, many (perhaps most!) evolutionists are theists of one sort or another. Their

views are as sincerely and validly held as those of the atheists and have as much (perhaps more!) claim to be representative of evolutionist thinking. Atheists have every right to believe that theists are woefully misguided in failing to see the obsolescence of religion after Darwin; but that is their philosophical opinion, not an infallibly proven proposition of science or logic. [Daryl P. Domning, “Winning Their Hearts and Minds: Who Should Speak for Evolution?” Reports of the National Center for Science Education 29:2 (March-April 2009), accessed online: <http://bit.ly/Domning>.] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p241.]

- As an anthropological dualist who thinks that human beings are body/soul composites, I think that a hominid animal, however advanced, which lacks a human soul is not a human being. So it really doesn't matter whether or not there was a sharp dividing line biologically between pre-human hominids and human beings. In any case, anthropologists to my knowledge have not been able to come to any sort of consensus on the tree of human ancestry, so that all the hominids you mention may simply be dead ends on the tree of primate evolution which never led to man. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p242.]
- Were Neanderthals truly human? God knows! I don't need to know exactly when humans emerged in the evolutionary process in order to maintain that in God's providence a first human being did arrive on the scene. So while your question poses an intriguing puzzle, I don't see that a theist needs to be able to answer it in order for theism to be rational to hold. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p242.]

Who Speaks for Science?

- that insofar as a person claims that the evidence of evolutionary biology has shown that the evolutionary process, based as it is on genetic mutations and natural selection, is undirected, purposeless, or non-teleological, he is making a claim that hopelessly outstrips the scientific evidence and so is

unjustified. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p246.]

- The fundamental question, then, is, who determines the content of a scientific theory? Who speaks for science? Now, at one level the answer to that question is easy: the expert practitioners of a theory tell us what the content of that theory is. In practice, however, things are not so easy. For scientists, being philosophically untrained, may be blind to the philosophical assumptions and ramifications of their views, so that careless statements are often made, especially by those who have a philosophical or theological agenda, that are not really part of the theory itself. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p247.]

Part 6 Questions about Issues of Christian Practice

1 On Social-Moral Issues

Do We Live in a Postmodern Society?

- Most people don't for a minute think that there are no objective standards of truth, rationality, and logic. As I said in the article, a postmodern culture is an impossibility; it would be utterly unlivable. Nobody is a postmodernist when it comes to reading the labels on a medicine bottle versus a box of rat poison. (If you've got a headache, you better believe that texts have objective meaning!) [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p337.]
- The first half of the twentieth century was dominated by a philosophy of meaning called verificationism. On this view anything that cannot, in principle, be verified through the five senses, that is, through science, is meaningless. Since religious and ethical statements cannot be so verified, it follows that they have no factual content whatsoever. They are merely expressions of personal taste and emotions. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p337.]
- Christians (or Muslims) who claim that their religious view is the objective

truth and that those who disagree with them are wrong will be perceived as closed-minded and dogmatic bigots, on a par with someone who says, “Vanilla tastes better than chocolate, and anyone who thinks otherwise is wrong.” [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p338.]

- Look at the poignant words of Bertrand Russell penned in 1903: ... even more purposeless, more void of meaning, is the world which Science presents for our belief. Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home. That Man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of Man’s achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain, that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul’s habitation henceforth be safely built. [Bertrand Russell, “A Free Man’s Worship,” in *Why I Am Not a Christian* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967), 106–7.] [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p338, 339.]
- All of this is important because an effective response to our culture requires an accurate diagnosis of that culture. [William Lane Craig and Joseph E. Gorra: *A Reasonable Response (Answers to Tough Questions on God Christianity and The Bible)*, Moody Publishers 2013, p339.]

الحمد لله الذي بنعمته تتم الصالحات