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of biblical exegesis, namely, that the author of a biblical text wrote exactly what he meant, and nothing should be read into the text that is not there, whether other than law or law itself. Spinoza wields this principle not only against Maimonides for seeing physics and metaphysics in the Bible, but against the ancient rabbis as well for reading in legal content that is not there. Spinoza here means to attack the entire notion of a *tradition* of reading Scriptures that departs from the obvious meaning of the written word, a notion so vital to Judaism and Catholicism. He aims to replace tradition with "reason."

After reading this volume, a Christian philosopher could well conclude that Jewish philosophical sources should be part of the standard curricula in the philosophy of religion and philosophical theology. Focusing exclusively on Christian philosophers, as some of us philosophers of religion do, excludes rich theistic philosophizing concerning the major issues in philosophy of religion of interest to Christian philosophers. The adding of Jewish resources into such courses would also accurately reflect the spirit of religious camaraderie and respect that a Jewish philosopher such as myself enjoys within the precincts of the Society of Christian Philosophers.

Introducing Apologetics: Cultivating Christian Commitment, by James E. Taylor. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2006. ISBN 080102786. \$34.99 (cloth).

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To engage in apologetics is to do one of two things: to offer a reasoned, verbal defense against a real or imagined attack; or to offer a reasoned, verbal attack upon a rival, real or imagined. We might call the former negative apologetics and the latter positive apologetics. What might be defended or attacked? In theory, almost anything (yourself, someone's character, the United States of America, the appropriateness of genocide, the activity of smoking, the truth of Goldbach's Conjecture), but most often some set of views or claims. Why might such defenses or attacks be offered? Again, the possibilities are endless, but usually negative apologetics is concerned to show why some argumentative attack upon some claim(s) fails, while positive apologetics is concerned to show the superiority of some claim(s) over some among (or even all) its possible rivals. The negative apologist adopts the beleaguered boxer's defensive crouch, parrying the opponent's blows; the positive apologist goes for the knockout. These two modalities of the apologetical enterprise are often inseparably mixed in the writing or speech of particular apologists; but it is useful to distinguish them nonetheless, because they have a different grammar, which means that criticisms or recommendations that might reasonably be taken to apply to one mode won't always (or usually) apply to the other.

Christians have often engaged in apologetics, and sometimes also used that word, or its cognates in languages other than English, for what they do. Among the earliest Christian writings, for example, are Justin Martyr's two apologies (mid-second century); in the mid-nineteenth century, John Henry Newman wrote his *Apologia pro vita sua* in defense not only of his own life and opinions, but also of the truth of the Catholic faith against its Protestant detractors (in that particular case, Charles Kingsley); and almost yesterday (2005), Avery Dulles, the recently-deceased Catholic theologian, wrote a substantial history of apologetics, in which, among other things, he argued that performing it is an essential element of the Christian response to the world. And there has been, since the sixteenth century, a flood of Catholic-Protestant apologetics from both sides, and (again from both sides, but more often from the Protestant one), of negative and positive apologetics directed toward anti-Christian arguments made by non-Christians, or toward views held by them that appear to the apologist incompatible with Christian views. The book under review here belongs to this last category.

This long apologetical history suggests that there's something about Christianity that disposes its adherents to perform apologetically. And indeed there is: the Church has doctrines (this is not to say that all Christians know what they are), teachings, that is, about the nature and existence of God, about what God has done and is doing, about how God relates to all that is not God, about what human persons are like and are for, and about many ancillary and related matters. These teachings logically may, and often actually do, come under attack by those who hold rival and apparently incompatible positions, and such attacks may prompt a negatively apologetical response. And among Christian doctrines there are those that suggest that it would be a good thing to persuade those who do not already assent to them to do so—or at least to adopt a mode of life that might dispose them to come to offer such assent. Thinking about such teachings has often led Christians to engage in positive apologetics, and thereby to show what is wrong with or lacking in positions held by those who are not Christians. In extreme cases, Christians have sometimes been led to think it necessary to offer a complete and systematic demonstration of the superiority of Christian views to all conceivable non- or anti-Christian ones.

But Christians have also argued among themselves about whether apologetics is effectively possible, whether it is necessary, whether some kinds are better than others, and the situations, if any, in which it should be performed. These arguments have often centered around the theoretical and practical difficulties involved in arguing with the pagans. If the pagans are really, as some Christians have thought, cognitively as well as morally blind, what's the point in offering them arguments? These disputes have often been closely linked with arguments about the possibility of engaging in natural theology, which is to say (roughly) thinking about God's existence, nature, and purposes without appealing to God's explicit self-revelation in the incarnation and in the ecclesial and scriptural witness to

it. There have also been disagreements about the appropriate audience for apologetical work (Christian? Pagan? Jewish?), about the possibility that engaging in it excessively elevates the importance of the cognitive over the affective and spiritual—and much more. Apologetics, therefore, while widespread in Christian time and place, has often also been controversial, in general and in particular cases.

James Taylor, on the evidence of the book under review here, knows all this very well. His is a book designed with an undergraduate audience in mind, bearing on its face all the marks of a book to be used by people who don't read books as a matter of custom and pleasure. It comprises twenty-five chapters, each with an introductory outline, a generous sprinkling of large-type sidebars, and a concluding set of questions for discussion and reflection together with recommendations for further reading. These devices have the effect of making this reader feel that the author thinks his readers idiots who need to be alternately shouted at and soothed. I wonder whether we wouldn't do better by our undergraduates to treat them as adults who can read and think without these rebarbative devices? I understand that the author is unlikely to be responsible for book design, and that he, like all of us, is subject to forces beyond his control on these matters. But it is still worth castigating publishers for producing aesthetic horrors like this, and authors for letting them get away with it.

Nevertheless, there is a great deal of value in this book: it is written by someone who cares about both thinking and writing, and about the cultivation of "confident Christian conviction and commitment" (p. 12) among the Christian people.

In his first six chapters, Taylor treats the nature of apologetics, objections to it, and its various modalities and audiences. He advocates a responsibly fideist position, according to which faith is prior to reason in at least the double sense that one can properly come to have Christian conviction and to maintain that conviction without engaging in the wind-mill-tilting exercise of assessing the truth of Christianity's claims from a position that pretends not to assume that truth; and that one can reasonably have faith without knowing or being able to voice the reasons why the content of the faith is to be rationally preferred over its competitors. Taylor does not, however, think that the deployment of reasoned argument in apologetics, whether negative or positive, is unimportant for the Christian people. Engaging in apologetical argument can serve to explain the faith's content to those who hold it; to help them to see the distinctiveness of Christian beliefs over against their rivals; to soothe anxieties about challenges to Christianity; and, perhaps, occasionally, to make the faith sufficiently attractive to those who do not hold it that they are converted, or at least moved toward the Church.

Especially valuable in these chapters is Taylor's care with the question of certainty and the relation of argument to its production and maintenance. He is rightly clear that holding certain claims *de fide* (he doesn't put it that way) is not compatible with certain kinds of doubt about said

claims; and he is clear, as well, that assenting to a claim in this way does not insulate those who do so from thinking about said claim, or engaging it argumentatively with its perceived competitors. Apologetics works in the space usefully cleared here between the irrelevance of argument to what's held *de fide* and the epistemic dependence of what's so held upon argument. Taylor's own book moves in this space, and is addressed (almost exclusively) to Christians. This last fact is revealing, and I wish that he had said more about it. He does comment on it briefly in chapter six, but there remains something of a tension between his view that apologetical argument may sometimes appropriately and productively be addressed to the pagan critic of Christianity, and the fact that his own book is addressed to the Christian faithful only, as instruction and comfort. Has there perhaps been a migration of apologetics inwards, away from engaging the pagans and toward cognitive therapy for Christians? There's nothing necessarily wrong with that, if it's so; but it would have been good to have some comment upon it.

Chapters seven through twelve treat what Taylor calls the families of worldviews. There are, he thinks, three such families: supernaturalist, naturalist, and pantheist. Christianity belongs to the perfect-being creation-monotheist subvariety of the first family, and is, he claims, rationally superior both to other kinds of monotheism, and to the varieties of pantheism which together constitute the supernaturalist family. There are, moreover, he thinks, good (but not rationally irresistible) cosmological and design arguments for the existence of the kind of God worshiped by Christians. And there are rational theodicies, which is to say argumentative responses to the problems posed for Christians by the existence of evil in the world, just as there are rational responses to the claim that God's hiddenness from our eyes constitutes evidence against his existence.

It would be interesting to engage these positions seriatim; to do so is not possible within the scope of a review, but it is possible to identify and comment on what I take to be a series of closely associated and, as it seems to this reviewer, rather serious difficulties in the way that Taylor presents the arguments in these chapters. The first is that Taylor's classification of worldviews is presented as if it were exhaustive—as if, that is, there were no way to think “about God and God's relationship to the universe” (88) that cannot be accommodated into one of his three families. But this is not so, or at least arguably not so. Suppose, for example, God is not thought of as a being in the world whose existence, under a univocal understanding of existence, can be argued about. Suppose, rather, that God is understood as the one in whose existence that of all particular beings participates, and who can be named only analogically. That view of God—‘the Lord’ would be better, since that is a proper name and ‘God’ a sortal—is, in my judgment, the properly Christian one, and it is not accommodated by Taylor's three worldview families because it denies the God-world distinction in the terms by means of which members of his three families argue about it.

This classificatory problem is mirrored by, and involves, a difficulty about the understanding of God implied by Taylor's depiction of the arguments in these chapters. It is, to put a complex matter briefly, that God is understood as an idol, as a being who adds one to the count of beings in the world. This is to think of the Lord as if he were Zeus or Krishna. This difficulty can be seen with especial clarity in Taylor's characterization of "creation monotheism" in chapter eight, in his discussion of Behe's anti-Darwinist arguments in chapter ten, and (most vividly) in his analysis of the theodicy question in chapter eleven. An entailment of a fully Christian understanding of the Lord is that evil is *privatio boni*, an absence or lack rather than something to be accounted for. This has been the standard view of the Church for most of its history, and it is startlingly absent from Taylor's discussion, and, hence, also from his provision of rebuttals to standard forms of the problem of evil. This is not to say that there is a logical problem with the rebuttals Taylor offers; it is, rather, that in offering them he seems to have in mind not the Lord's relationship to the world and its lacks, but rather someone else's.

I understand that the claims made in the last two paragraphs are not ones that all Christians would assent to, and that Taylor, whatever his position on them, might have thought them best left aside in a book like this as technical questions about which Christians differ. But I think this is not so: they are fundamental to the grammar of Christianity, and to leave them aside is likely to give users of the book exactly the impression that the God about whose existence they are being trained to argue is one more being in the world, distinguished from others in degree only.

Chapters thirteen through nineteen treat the question of Jesus and the incarnation, with attention to the reliability of Scripture, Jesus's miracles, his resurrection, whether salvation is dependent upon confessing Jesus as Lord (together with the associated difficulties raised by the existence of long-lived religious traditions other than Christianity). There is much of value here: Taylor has read widely, and thought hard about the complex range of issues he treats in this section. He is properly modest both about what the content of Christian orthodoxy is on some of these matters (for example, on the question of the salvation of the unbaptized), and about the degree of firmness with which claims about the relations between the various documents that make up the New Testament should be held and argued for. But there are some difficulties in these chapters, too, among which I note the one that seems to me especially pressing.

This has to do with Taylor's treatment of the reliability of the texts of the New Testament as witnesses to and descriptions of (for example) what Jesus of Nazareth said and did. It is not that there are problems with the particulars of the arguments; it is rather that there are difficulties with the assumptions that underlie the arguments. Taylor thinks he needs to argue against those who regard (for instance) the Gospels as fictions, or as a complex mix of fact and fiction. But in so doing he accepts the critics' terms, and is as a result largely blind to all the interesting, and properly

Christian, and scripturally serious, questions about Scripture's component texts. How, for instance, do the four Gospels, individually and collectively, present themselves? What signals internal to the text are there about the genre(s) to which they belong and the response they seek—no, demand—from readers? Do the questions that animate the Jesus Seminar and Taylor's rebuttal to it animate them? These questions are not simple, but they are the kinds of question to which a scripturally-serious reader should be drawn, and to which the gaze of a scripturally-serious Christian undergraduate should be turned. Arguments about the extent to which the Gospels serve as windows upon an extra-textual reality that could be filmed or watched are, mostly, beside the point, and their prominence in these chapters is evidence of the extent to which much Christian apologetics has permitted its agenda to be set for it by pagan concerns. Such arguments, to put the matter pointedly, almost always—and often here—deploy an understanding of 'historical event' arrived at by attending to what the pagans ask for, not to what Scripture and tradition say.

One way to put the disagreement I've just been expressing is to say that it is about hermeneutics, about what it means to read a text. Taylor is sometimes explicit about his own views on these matters, as when he claims that reading Scripture requires—and is perhaps exhaustively accountable in terms of—answering the question of what the human author of a scriptural text intended to convey in writing it (p. 311, *inter alia*). I think this a quite spectacularly false claim about the reading of texts in general and of scriptural texts in particular: the discernment of human authorial intention is neither necessary nor sufficient for construing any text. But my worry, in a book like this, is not principally about the truth or falsity of this claim, or about the defensibility or indefensibility of the hermeneutical stance it participates in, but rather about the author's insouciance in assuming its obviousness. There is certainly nothing Christian about such a claim; indeed, the witness of the Church is very substantially against it. In inducting students into the discipline of thinking about the content of the faith, isn't it important to signal clearly to them what belongs to the faith and what does not, what is contested and what is not, what is obvious and what is not?

The last section of Taylor's book, chapters twenty through twenty-five, responds to contemporary challenges to Christian claims, challenges from the social and natural sciences, and from some currents of thought in recent philosophy—postmodernism and various kinds of materialism, principally. Here Taylor is on stronger ground, showing with clarity and care the difference between, for example, Darwinism as an explanation of particular facts about the world and Darwinism as an explanation of everything informed by dogmatic naturalism. I have more sympathy than he does with some varieties of what he calls postmodernism, most especially in its critique of various forms of foundationalism and its affirmation of the inexhaustibility of texts. But this is a difference of emphasis only, I think.

As a whole, then, Taylor's work is an instance of a long-lived Christian activity. He instructs Christians in negative and positive apologetics, which is to say in how they might best think about and respond to critiques of Christianity, as well as argue for the rational superiority of Christianity over its rivals. His book is not meant to be read by the pagans, and it does not show deep engagement with particular pagan texts. In this it differs from many premodern Christian apologias (think of Origen on Celsus or Augustine on Faustus). Taylor wants to instruct neophytes in the faith's grammar as a means of helping them deepen their understanding of their faith. This is a noble and properly Christian goal, and while I have many disagreements, some of them fundamental, with the way in which Taylor carries it out, those disagreements should not be taken to impugn the value of the project.

The Works of Bishop Butler, edited by David E. White. University of Rochester Press, 2006. Pp. vii + 433. \$95 (hardback).

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Bishop Joseph Butler (1692–1752), author of the *Fifteen Sermons* and *The Analogy of Religion*, is an important figure in early modern moral philosophy and philosophy of religion. His completed works have long been out of print, however, with J. H. Bernard's 1900 edition being the most recent publication. Time is ripe for a new edition and David E. White's *The Works of Bishop Butler* ably fits the bill. Including all of Butler's surviving writings, an introduction, notes reflecting recent Butler scholarship, and an up-to-date bibliography, *Works* is a valuable addition to the library of philosophers of religion, moral philosophers, and historians of early modern philosophy.

Works opens with White's Introduction, which is an admirable grounding of philosophy in its history. Butler is presented as a brilliant moralist, an incisive apologist, and a caring pastor whose Christian beliefs and pastoral office shaped both his general methodology and his philosophical positions. It is common knowledge that Butler was a Christian philosopher, but few today attend to the ways in which the demands of Butler's office as a parish priest and bishop shaped his philosophical views. White wants to change this, and insists on reading Butler as a philosopher whose work has practical, even *pastoral* aims. He reminds us that

None of Butler's works were written for academic reasons; they were written either to discharge his duties as a priest in the Church of England or in an attempt to advance his career. Their aim is neither to inform nor to persuade but to convert, to convert from the dissolute life, that so often leads to ruin, to the life of virtue and piety, that . . . will bring us the greatest goodness and happiness that is possible for humans. (p. 4)