

Superficial differences between scientists and Xtians:

- Scientists proportion their belief to evidence
- Xtians believe in God contrary to evidence or without any evidence for or against
- The Xtian is commended for doing so, the scientist is condemned.

If these superficial differences are true, then there can be no overlap between being a scientist and being a Xtian.

How the superficial differences are wrong:

- The "scientist at work" moves from not-knowing to knowing. The "scientist at home" does not proportion his belief to the evidence.
- After examining the evidence, testing hypothesis, etc., scientist says he knows.
- Must examine the behavior of the scientist in his everyday life.

Belief vs. Knowledge

Lewis is concerned with believing in God, not concerned with proving God's existence; i.e., with knowing.

Belief = assent to a proposition which we think so overwhelmingly probable that there is a psychological exclusion of doubt, though not a logical exclusion of dispute.

- Disbelief in miracles to a materialistic scientist is equivalent to belief in God for a Christian.

Beliefs are not Knowledge:

- Knowledge is stronger - there is objective evidence for the truth of the proposition.

Belief is not like knowledge:

- we can adopt beliefs for personal reasons
- we will not doubt beliefs unless there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary.
- We hold beliefs very strongly which would not survive scientific scrutiny.
- All we must do, in a dispute, is to convince the other person.

Assenting and Adhering to a belief:

- Why do we assent to beliefs in the first place?
- Assenting to a belief:
- Evidence for assenting to belief in God: Xtian must have evidence:
 - Physical & metaphysical arguments, historical evidence, evidence of religious experience, authority, combination.
- Evidence only has to convince the believer, but...
- "...the evidence cannot be so weak as to warrant the view that all whom it convinces are indifferent to evidence." (pg.18)
 - [The Teacher's Aide and the Psychic](#)
- Debate between materialistic scientists and Xtians—one is in error but neither is irrational/unreasonable.

How a Xtian adheres to belief

Here, the charge of irrationality is important:

- Meritorious for a Xtian to ADHERE to belief contrary to evidence.
- Do not compare the scientist at work to the Xtian. Compare the scientist at home to the Xtian.
- (scientific hypotheses are NOT beliefs) If the scientist at home were to utilize the scientific method, in some instances, scientist will be accused of a moral flaw.
- Demands for obstinate adhering follows directly from the evidence for assenting (pg. 24-25).

Belief in God is Trust

- Assenting is not being faced with a proposition we think overwhelmingly true (subjective certainty) but with a person who demands your confidence/trust.
- **Trust (faith/belief) = confidence in a person's ability to assist you while accepting apparent impossibilities (not logical contradictions).**
- Success comes from the person's trust (faith/confidence).
- In all of Lewis' examples, you put trust in someone who is more knowledgeable than you.

Assenting to the Xtian propositions is to believe we are to God what the dog caught in a trap is to the rescuer.

- We are to trust (place confidence in) the actions of God (who is benevolent) in spite of contrary evidence. "If human life is in fact ordered by a beneficent being whose knowledge of our real needs and of the way in which they can be satisfied infinitely exceeds our own, we must expect *a priori* that His operations [actions] will often appear to us far from beneficent and far from wise,..." (pg. 24)
- Adherence to belief in god is "trusting in a person who demands your confidence. You are no longer faced with an argument which demands your assent, but with a person who demands your confidence."

Evidence for distrusting someone:

- Once we trust someone, it takes a lot to violate that trust especially if they are generally trustworthy overall - individual instances will carry less weight.
- Since the trust is in a person, and that person is so far beyond our understanding, it will take a lot to lose trust.
- "Senseless to ask for trust when demonstrative evidence is given. This is the condition that makes trust possible. The demand for confidence by a true friend is the same as the demand for confidence made by a trickster. So... it is best to be wary - but if the person is trustworthy, then no harm is done by the trust and nothing gained by the skepticism." (Appealing to Pascal's Wager)

Consequences:

Not believing in (trusting in) God is warranted if one never enters a situation demanding our trust in God versus some other thing or person. (pg. 29)

Cannot make truth claims about the world or many other kinds of claims about the world that many theists frequently make; e.g. creationism/ID.

For consideration:

- How do we come to trust one another? Reciprocity
- What evidence can we offer of the trustworthiness of another person (normally)?
- Do we have the same sort of evidence when it comes to "trusting in God"? How do we know god is not a trickster?
- Assenting without religious experience: recommender and reputation trust matrixes

Criticisms:

1. Not very many Christians believe in God *for* the reasons Lewis asserts. They believe first, usually as a consequent of rearing, and maybe later come to possess the kind of evidence Lewis demands. (See William James' arguments)
2. Is Kenneth Ham "in error" or "irrational", or both?
3. Only makes sense to trust existent persons and is psychotic to trust non-existent persons. How do we know the Christian (or any) deity exists? (Lewis' answer is a religious experience of a certain type where **all** physical explanations fail. Go back to #1.)
4. A) Problem of evil: Can we trust God? If we are to god what a child is to a parent (or dog to person), parents will not and cannot allow certain kinds of harm to come to their children. God, who is superior to a parent, must be held to at least the same standards if not higher ones—cannot allow certain *kinds of* harm to come to us. Since those kinds of harms do come to humanity, God has violated that trust.

B) With the court case analogy, strangers (the jury) do not have faith (trust/confidence) in the accused. They reserve judgment until all evidence is given (move from "atheists" to warranted belief surpassing reasonable doubt). Relatives, friends, etc. have faith (confidence/trust) because they have years of experience to support the person. The jury is closer to the role of assenting and the relatives the role of adhering. What *epistemic* stance should the relatives take and why?

C) Appeal to ignorance fallacy: (pg. 24) The analogy fails even if we do not have contradictory evidence. We must have evidence as Lewis admits as in the cheating spouse example. Why does no evidence count against God; i.e., why is obstinacy in the face of all evidence warranted?
5. It is not clear that scientists do *not* abstain from employing *critical reasoning* underlying all disciplines in their personal lives, even regarding personal relationships (see Clifford for a stronger claim). Lewis seems to want us to forego critical thinking regarding adherence.