

## 1: Ultimate Reality

*Christian Philosophy. Christian Philosophy - Introduction What is Christian Philosophy? Because it requires faith in biblical revelation, you might assume that the Christian worldview cannot possibly have a philosophy of its own.*

Lorem About Philosophy and the Christian Worldview Philosophy and the Christian Worldview is a collection of new essays written by fifteen philosophers of religion. Bringing together some of the leading lights in current academic philosophy of religion, including William Hasker, Charles Taliaferro and Keith Yandell, it offers a fresh perspective on four major areas of discussion: United by the argument that the core claims of religion have metaphysical, epistemic and moral entailments, these essays represent a state of the art discussion in contemporary philosophy of religion. Griffiths Introduction Part One: Religion and Worldview Assessment 1. Is Philosophy of Religion Possible? The Naturalists are Declaring the Glory of God: Religion and Epistemology 4. In Defense of the Numinous Charles Taliaferro 6. Religion and Morality 8. Religion and Metaphysics The Explanatory Approach Noel Hendrickson What impressed me most about the book is its unity and thematic development. While the book included a number of different authors, they have managed to write as one. The book moves carefully from the issue of religious pluralism and worldview assessment, to epistemic topics relevant to the topics surfaced in part one. Given these epistemic considerations, we are then presented with discussions of the relationship between religion and morality and religion and central metaphysical concerns. This book will make an excellent text for a course in philosophy of religion. The contributors, including Yandell himself, rigorously assess various truth claims pertaining to religious beliefs, and in so doing, provide some significant rational support for the truth of the Christian worldview. A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith. Each rewards close attention. All exhibit attributes that are associated with the analytic style: Werther and Linville have done a fine job at bringing together these contributors to offer a careful analysis and development of the Christian worldview while at the same time engaging in cross-cultural assessment. This book deserves a close read from philosophers and theologians. For information on how we process your data, read our Privacy Policy.

## 2: Philosophy of Religion | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy

1. *Philosophy and Christian Theology.* In the history of Christian theology, philosophy has sometimes been seen as a natural complement to theological reflection, whereas at other times practitioners of the two disciplines have regarded each other as mortal enemies.

On the one hand, it differentiates the philosophical doctrines of Plotinus and his successors from those of the historical Plato. Some contemporary scholars, however, have taken issue with this assumption and have doubted that neoplatonism constitutes a useful label. Whether neoplatonism is a meaningful or useful historical category is itself a central question concerning the history of the interpretation of Plato. For much of the history of Platonism, it was commonly accepted that the doctrines of the neoplatonists were essentially the same as those of Plato. The most important forerunners from Greek philosophy were the Middle Platonists, such as Plutarch, and the neopythagoreans, especially Numenius of Apamea. Philo, a Hellenized Jew, translated Judaism into terms of Stoic, Platonic and neopythagorean elements, and held that God is "supra rational" and can be reached only through "ecstasy". Philo also held that the oracles of God supply the material of moral and religious knowledge. The earliest Christian philosophers, such as Justin and Athenagoras, who attempted to connect Christianity with Platonism, and the Christian Gnostics of Alexandria, especially Valentinus and the followers of Basilides, also mirrored elements of neoplatonism, [11] albeit without its rigorous self-consistency. Saccas[ edit ] Ammonius Saccas died c. Through Ammonius Saccas, Plotinus may have been influenced by Indian thought. The similarities between neoplatonism and the Vedanta philosophies of Hinduism have led several authors to suggest an Indian influence in its founding, particularly on Ammonius Saccas. Eusebius and Jerome claimed him as a Christian until his death, whereas Porphyry claimed he had renounced Christianity and embraced pagan philosophy. Plotinus[ edit ] Plotinus c. While he was himself influenced by the teachings of classical Greek, Persian and Indian philosophy and Egyptian theology, [16] his metaphysical writings later inspired numerous Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Gnostic metaphysicians and mystics over the centuries. Plotinus taught that there is a supreme, totally transcendent "One", containing no division, multiplicity, nor distinction; likewise, it is beyond all categories of being and non-being. The concept of "being" is derived by us from the objects of human experience and is an attribute of such objects, but the infinite, transcendent One is beyond all such objects and, therefore, is beyond the concepts which we can derive from them. The One "cannot be any existing thing" and cannot be merely the sum of all such things compare the Stoic doctrine of disbelief in non-material existence but "is prior to all existents". Porphyry[ edit ] Porphyry Greek: He wrote widely on astrology, religion, philosophy, and musical theory. He produced a biography of his teacher, Plotinus. Porphyry is also known as an opponent of Christianity and as a defender of Paganism; of his *Adversus Christianos* Against the Christians in 15 books, only fragments remain. He famously said, "The gods have proclaimed Christ to have been most pious, but the Christians are a confused and vicious sect. He is perhaps best known for his compendium on Pythagorean philosophy. The world is thus peopled by a crowd of superhuman beings influencing natural events and possessing and communicating knowledge of the future, and who are all accessible to prayers and offerings. Iamblichus had salvation as his final goal see henosis. The commentaries of this group seek to harmonise Plato, Aristotle, and, often, the Stoa. He set forth one of the most elaborate, complex, and fully developed neoplatonic systems, providing also an allegorical way of reading the dialogues of Plato. The henads are beyond being, like the One itself, but they stand at the head of chains of causation *seirai* or *taxeis* and in some manner give to these chains their particular character. They are also identified with the traditional Greek gods, so one henad might be Apollo and be the cause of all things apollonian, while another might be Helios and be the cause of all sunny things. The henads serve both to protect the One itself from any hint of multiplicity and to draw up the rest of the universe towards the One, by being a connecting, intermediate stage between absolute unity and determinate multiplicity. Teachings[ edit ] The *Enneads* of Plotinus are the primary and classical document of neoplatonism. As a form of mysticism, it contains theoretical and practical parts. The theoretical parts deal with the high origin of the human soul, showing how it has departed from its first estate.

The practical parts show the way by which the soul may again return to the Eternal and Supreme. The One[ edit ] For Plotinus, the first principle of reality is "the One", an utterly simple, ineffable, unknowable subsistence which is both the creative source and the teleological end of all existing things. Although, properly speaking, there is no name appropriate for the first principle, the most adequate names are "the One" or "the Good". The One is so simple that it cannot even be said to exist or to be a being. From the One emanated the rest of the universe as a sequence of lesser beings. Demiurge or Nous[ edit ] The original Being initially emanates , or throws out, the nous , which is a perfect image of the One and the archetype of all existing things. It is simultaneously both being and thought, idea and ideal world. As image, the nous corresponds perfectly to the One, but as derivative, it is entirely different. What Plotinus understands by the nous is the highest sphere accessible to the human mind, [11] while also being pure intellect itself. Nous is the most critical component of idealism , Neoplatonism being a pure form of idealism. The world-soul[ edit ] The image and product of the motionless nous is the world-soul , which, according to Plotinus, is immaterial like the nous. Its relation to the nous is the same as that of the nous to the One. It stands between the nous and the phenomenal world, and it is permeated and illuminated by the former, but it is also in contact with the latter. It therefore occupies an intermediate position. As a single world-soul, it belongs in essence and destination to the intelligible world; but it also embraces innumerable individual souls; and these can either allow themselves to be informed by the nous, or turn aside from the nous and choose the phenomenal world and lose themselves in the realm of the senses and the finite. This world ought to be so pervaded by the soul that its various parts should remain in perfect harmony. Plotinus is no dualist in the same sense as sects like the Gnostics ; in contrast, he admires the beauty and splendour of the world. So long as idea governs matter, or the soul governs the body, the world is fair and good. It is an image " though a shadowy image " of the upper world, and the degrees of better and worse in it are essential to the harmony of the whole. But, in the actual phenomenal world, unity and harmony are replaced by strife or discord; the result is a conflict, a becoming and vanishing, an illusive existence. And the reason for this state of things is that bodies rest on a substratum of matter. Matter is the indeterminate: If destitute of form and idea, it is evil; as capable of form, it is neutral. The neoplatonist gods are omni-perfect beings and do not display the usual amoral behaviour associated with their representations in the myths. Evil[ edit ] Neoplatonists did not believe in an independent existence of evil. They compared it to darkness, which does not exist in itself but only as the absence of light. So, too, evil is simply the absence of good. Things are good insofar as they exist; they are evil only insofar as they are imperfect, lacking some good which they should have. Return to the One[ edit ] Neoplatonists believed human perfection and happiness were attainable in this world, without awaiting an afterlife. Perfection and happiness" seen as synonymous" could be achieved through philosophical contemplation. All people return to the One, from which they emanated. Although the most pure and holy souls would dwell in the highest regions, the impure soul would undergo a purification, [29] before descending again, [34] to be reincarnated into a new body, perhaps into animal form. However, Porphyry maintained, instead, that human souls were only reincarnated into other humans.

## 3: Christian Philosophy

*Moreover, Christian theism claims that God created man. All of reality is what it is because God created it to be precisely what it is. The state of affairs that has obtained in the world has obtained only because God has decreed it. According to Christianity, God created the universe and all that is in it.*

Because it requires faith in biblical revelation, you might assume that the Christian worldview cannot possibly have a philosophy of its own. According to the secular worldviews, naturalism and materialism are grounded firmly in modern scientific methodology and enlightened human experience. How can we as Christians, who are required to postulate existence or reality outside the material realm, ever hope to prove that our beliefs are true, reasonable, rational, and worth living and dying for? Unfortunately, some Christians adopt just such an attitude, concluding that their faith is indefensible. The Apostle Peter encourages Christians to present logical, compelling reasons for their hope in Christ 1 Peter 3: But is this possible? Is Christian faith, and more specifically Christian philosophy, defensible? Why am I here? Where am I going? Those who earnestly seek truth will ultimately find themselves face-to-face with the God of the Bible. While some may enjoy debating about whether or not God exists, for the average person such debate is irrelevant—he or she is aware of His existence on a soul-deep level. Even today the vast majority of people some polls place the figure as high as 95 percent believe in a God, a fact Paul also found to be true in the Athens of his day Acts Christian Philosophy — Rational Foundation The basic tenets of Christian philosophy are rational because they are held by average, rational men and women. How can the knowledge we gain through faith in Biblical revelation compare to knowledge gained by a scientific investigation of the universe? The answer is not as difficult as you might imagine. All knowing requires faith. Faith precedes reason or, as W. This becomes the starting point from which to build a total view of life. While Marxists and Humanists wish to portray science as primary knowledge and faith in biblical revelation as blind second-class epistemology or even superstition, the fact remains that all methods of knowing ultimately rely on certain assumptions. The spiritual man is no less certainly a man of reason than the natural, but his reason, like that of every man, functions within the perspective of his faith. Christians also appeal to science, history, and personal experience, but they know such avenues for discovering truth are not infallible. Christians know that scientists make mistakes and scientific journals can practice discrimination against views considered dangerous. Christians know that history can be perverted, distorted, or twisted and that personal experience is not a good source of fact or knowledge. On the other hand, Christians believe that Biblical revelation is true and that God would not mislead His children. Christianity says the New Testament is true because its truths can be tested. Christian epistemology is based on special revelation, which in turn is based on history, the law of evidence, and the science of archaeology. Philosophical naturalists also make assumptions that they, by definition, accept on faith. All naturalists agree that there is no supernatural. When developing a philosophy, we must be extremely careful to base our case on the most truthful assumptions—otherwise, should one of the assumptions prove to be untrue as it appears the assumptions of the theory of evolution will be , the whole philosophy will crumble. If evolution crumbles which is quite possible—Dr. So far, we have established two things regarding Christian philosophy: Indeed, we could argue that it takes a great deal more faith to believe in the spontaneous generation of Darwinian evolution or the randomness of all nature i. Christian Philosophy - Conclusion Christian philosophy represents an entire worldview, a view that is consistent with the Bible throughout. The Christian philosophy embraces the meaningful, purposeful life, a life in which you shape your beliefs according to a coherent, reasonable, truthful worldview. As a Christian with such a worldview, you will not be tossed to and fro by every secularist doctrine. Philosophy after all is a way of life, and the Christian believes that he has the true way—the true pattern for living. It is the task of the Christian leader to understand the ideologies of his day so that he may be able to meet their challenges. Thus the task of showing the relevance of the Christian realistic philosophy to a world in process is one which requires eternal vigilance. To such a task, to such an ideal, the Christian leader must dedicate himself. Rendered with permission from the book, Understanding the Times: All rights reserved in the original. Faber and Faber Limited, , Henry, God, Revelation and Authority, 6 vols. Word Books, , 1:

Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, , Baker Book House, , Zondervan, ; J. Oxford University Press, God , the Father, sent His only Son to satisfy that judgment for those who believe in Him. Jesus , the creator and eternal Son of God, who lived a sinless life, loves us so much that He died for our sins, taking the punishment that we deserve, was buried , and rose from the dead according to the Bible. If you truly believe and trust this in your heart, receiving Jesus alone as your Savior , declaring, " Jesus is Lord ," you will be saved from judgment and spend eternity with God in heaven. What is your response?

## 4: Ultimate Reality - God and Religion

*Subtitled "Essays Toward a Christian Philosophy of Letters", throughout the book the word "Christian" is used as if interchangeable with "Evangelical", and it might have been more suitable to have used the latter word in the subtitle.*

No, because we are sometimes deceived. We need to tell the difference between hard ground and marsh that only looks hard. We need to know whether something is a bear or only a child with a bearskin rug over its head. We have evolved to tell the real from the false. Injure the brain and the victim may lose their sense of reality. When you have flu the familiar world can seem unreal. It is akin to truthful, valuable, even delightful. Theatre, television, paintings, literature deal in illusion but can be real in the sense that they nurture and enlarge us, help to make sense of experience. They are false, they fail as art. Theatre and everyday life overlap although the murderer in the play is not prosecuted. Electrons, energy, valency, spin are real in so far as the scientific structure they form part of explains what we experience. Phlogiston no longer makes sense, so it has lost its claim to reality, as a banknote which goes out of circulation becomes a piece of paper. Promises, agreements, treaties are real only so long as they can be trusted. Some plans and commitments are called unreal because we know they will come to nothing. To take the big question: We cannot prove the existence of the electron or alpha particles or even such matters as market forces, compassion or philosophy. But we see their effects, and assuming they are real makes sense of great swathes of our experience. Our reflections on this lead us to wonder if we can know of the world beyond our perceptions the underlying cause of our consciousness of appearances. Is reality mental mind; or is it physical matter and energy? If mind, is there a deeper consciousness underlying appearances that unites us all and is the source of our conscious thoughts? If matter, can we understand how the play of material objects and forces can give rise to conscious life? If reality is mental, we might best connect with it by skillful introspection; by a pure, deep, and penetrating way of thought that would see past appearances and show reality directly to the mind. Alternatively we might passively receive, by a process of revelation, a mental image of reality. In revelation, the cosmic mind could speak directly to us, in apparitions or visions. If ultimate reality is instead composed of matter and energy, the method recommended is more empirical; that is, more reliant on the senses. In science, these statements of laws and proposed facts are subject to criticism and testing by observation and experiment. Revelation resists and endures, because science gives scant comfort to the desire for unification with cosmic reality. But science is relentless, and facts, ultimately, are irresistible. Greg Studen, Novelty, Ohio In discussing the nature of reality, we must distinguish between physical reality and immaterial non-physical reality. Physical reality is that which is constrained by physics or physical laws. Perhaps the best person to relegate this part of the discussion to would be a physicist, since a physicist is probably more qualified in discussing physical reality than an armchair philosopher such as myself. Are concepts such as these just the content of our brains and products of our reasoning and emotions? If so, then it is probable these concepts are just subjective and thus non-absolute, since the contents of our beliefs is contingent and always changing. Conversely, if there is a separate and distinct non-subjective immaterial reality, and the aforementioned concepts of character, the Good, and morals etc exist as aspects of this reality, then the existence of objective, absolute concepts is possible maybe even necessary, since the nature of reality is not contingent, dependent on subjective opinion. On the other hand, some questions now arise: And is there a distinct nature for logic and mathematics, or for the connections that exists between these realities. These are questions for the philosopher and physicist to ponder, and perhaps answer, together. I recently uncovered the nature of reality from a man on a flaming pie, who handed me a herbal cigarette. I now know that previously I was a body in a vat being poked by a malignant demon. I was only an ape then, but after millions of years I evolved so that I could have the brain power to lasso the demon with my electrode and thus escape. I was chased by a large white balloon, but made my getaway from the Island. Since then, I have set up my own very successful religion in the U. Simon Maltman, Bangor Definition 1. The nature of a reality, or of Reality, is a description or explanation of that reality, or of Reality. The nature of reality for the stone is not available to any person, since stones do not speak or understand a language any person can understand. One way people interact with what becomes is by

way of their senses. Another way is by reasoning and feeling, or perhaps by way of intuitions or revelations. An hypothesis which can entertain people is that together all the realities "for stones, for people, for whatever" form a single Reality. One can then ask whether or not all these realities, the parts of Reality, have something in common. One answer is that they have in common interacting with what becomes. One can ask further, what is the nature of what becomes? An answer is that what becomes is realities, ie, what becomes consists of interactions with what becomes. That is, the parts of Reality, the realities, interact with each other. Thus Reality is the interaction of realities with each other. A more difficult task would be to explain how one particular reality interacts with another reality, and with all the realities it interacts with. One can then contemplate how all the realities can or might do or did or will interact with each other. This is how one can contemplate the nature of Reality. Gordon Fisher, South Salem, NY One thing that everyone agrees on "idealists, materialists, dualists" is that there is sense to our question. Another thing all these views share is that we all share the same reality. For example, for Berkeley the nature of my reality and your reality is the same "it is all constructed out of mind-dependent ideas. We should be wary of the idea that the nature of reality is relative to what someone believes. Suppose I believe that the Earth is flat and you believe it is round. Therefore, the line goes, we have two different realities. This cannot be right, for we are talking about referring to the same thing. We just differ in our beliefs about it. We can only hope to understand questions about its nature once we admit this. Of course, this rules out solipsism, the view that reality "all of it" is a function of my private experiences. This view is deeply mistaken, for the beliefs and other mental states the solipsist takes to be the sole furniture of his world depend on there being a shared environment. As Wittgenstein, Davidson, and Strawson have all stressed, the development of language and of thought cannot occur in isolation. With two, at least, in reality, we see that the nature of reality cannot just be how the world seems to any one individual. While this is not a full answer to our question, it is a fact we cannot ignore. At the very least, we can now say something of what the nature of reality is not. Casey Woodling, Gainesville, FL Reality is the independent nature and existence of everything knowable, whether it is knowable by logical inference, empirical observation, or some other form of experience. Furthermore, Thomas Aquinas pointed out that our perceptions of the world around us cannot be knowledge, since perceptions can logically contradict each other. Therefore, genuine knowledge of reality would have to be direct knowledge of the object itself. At best, perceptions are not that which we know; rather, perceptions are that by which we know. Craig Payne, Ottumwa, IA USA While much of reality is a shared conceptualization, a great deal of it is personal to the individual, for reality is how we describe the world: Therefore the foundation of our reality is our language use. We must resist the tendency to think of reality as a fixed state of affairs that language merely identifies or labels. Reality is the product of language. Peter Winch states it clearly: The concepts we have settle for us the form of the experience we have of the world. What we know of the world we can only know through language, and as our language is subject to change, so too is our reality. The world will not change in the sense that physical objects may come into existence as a result of language use, but our comprehension of our impressions of the world our experiences often change as a result of language. When Harvey discovered that blood circulates he did not discover red and white corpuscles or plasma. But though corpuscles and plasma existed as part of the perceived world they were not realized. They held no place as conceptual elements of reality. Realization is an act of discovery governed by language use. In this sense, cultural differences in language use often create cultural differences in realities. New Guinea tribesmen who have only two basic colour words light and dark have a different apprehension of reality to us. They live in the same world we do and they are capable of receiving the same impressions, but their reality is different from Europeans as their language use obliges them to divide the world into different categories. Our perception of reality is a generation of sensations caused by our minds, and the sense that they make of the inputs to the brain, be they aural, visual, tactile, taste or smell. These sensations, particularly the visual, will give us a sense of our surroundings and their dimensions. It is very easy to distort this perception, and this can be done through mind-altering drugs or through the loss of one of the senses. People who have never seen can have their own sense of reality, which may be vastly different to that of a sighted person. However, as we are made of essentially the same genetic material and receive essentially the same sensory inputs, this seems unlikely. A

fly for example will have a distorted to us representation of its visual stimuli, caused by the need for the fly to be aware of different aspects of its surroundings. In a dream state, situations often occur which seem absurd when awake. Therefore, we seem to have a dual existence; one conscious and the other subconscious.

## 5: Saint Augustine (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

*Philosophy and reality Discussion in 'Christian Philosophy & Ethics' started by dms, Sep 24, at PM.*

Provide a brief definition of the branch of philosophy known as metaphysics Understand the basic theological issues related to metaphysics Distinguish between a Christian view of reality and a non-Christian view of reality Recognize the importance of developing a basic understanding of metaphysics Definition Metaphysics is probably the most abstract branch of philosophy. It is a highly complex field. For that reason, I am going to commit the philosophical sin of over-simplification. Metaphysicians will just have to show mercy and tolerance. When we are talking about metaphysics we are talking about the nature of reality. What is this thing we call reality? Metaphysics then is the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of being. The critical task of philosophy is to ask questions about the nature of being, or ultimate reality. The constructive task of philosophy is to erect a cohesive view of reality that reflects the truth about the nature of being, or ultimate reality. Theological Issues As one might imagine, how one understands the nature of ultimate reality is critical to their overall understanding of human experience. There are numerous non-Christian theories expressed by philosophers that seek to explain the nature of ultimate reality. The most basic question for the Christian and the most significant theological issue is how one defines reality. What does it mean to exist? Why does something exist instead of nothing? These questions assume that human beings are capable of knowing something about the nature of reality. But if there is no creator God, then we must ask how we can know anything about reality. How could we ever trust ourselves enough to inform ourselves on these complex questions? If humans evolved from primitive life-forms which somehow came into existence from non-life forms, as one popular theory claims, how is knowledge of anything truly possible? What are we to say about the relationship between particulars and universals? The implications are sweeping. These categories of things share common properties with one another. This brings us to the problem of the one and the many. That subject requires more space than I can devote to it given the basic aim of this short article. The Distinctiveness of the Christian Metaphysic Only the Christian view of reality provides the necessary foundation for the intelligibility of human experience in the world. For it is only a distinctly Christian metaphysic that understands the nature of reality and of the human beings existing within that reality. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Christian theism claims that the world as we know it, as we see it, as we experience is the product of divine creation. And God created man in his image and in his likeness. Moreover, Christian theism claims that God created man. All of reality is what it is because God created it to be precisely what it is. The state of affairs that has obtained in the world has obtained only because God has decreed it. According to Christianity, God created the universe and all that is in it. This means there is a sharp distinction between God, who is uncreated, eternal, and absolute personal being, and man who is created, temporal, and dependent. Man depends on God for all that he is, including his existence, his knowledge, and his very reason for being. According to Christianity, God controls every aspect of the universe in accordance with his plan and for his own glory. As one might expect, this view of reality has far-reaching implications. The Importance of Developing a Basic Understanding of Metaphysics The most basic idea running through the various systems of fallen humanity is the idea of autonomy. When Adam rebelled in the garden so many years ago, that rebellion was a rebellion against dependence. First and foremost, the refusal to acknowledge our complete and total dependence on God is the root of sin and the source of all manner suffering in the world. In other words, only a distinctly Christian metaphysic can honor God in the way that God ought to be honored. Third, a non-Christian view of reality always elevates man. It makes more of man than ought to be made of him. The consequences of a non-Christian metaphysic is simply this: And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview. InterVarsity Press, , pgs.

## 6: What Is The Nature Of Reality? | Issue 61 | Philosophy Now

*Inklings of Reality: Essays Toward a Christian Philosophy of Letters.* By Donald T. Williams. Toccoa Falls: Toccoa Falls College, , pp., \$ paper. Declaring that "Christians have always had to wrestle with what reading means," Williams proposes to look at "several key moments in the.

Philosophy and Christian Theology In the history of Christian theology, philosophy has sometimes been seen as a natural complement to theological reflection, whereas at other times practitioners of the two disciplines have regarded each other as mortal enemies. Some early Christian thinkers such as Tertullian were of the view that any intrusion of secular philosophical reason into theological reflection was out of order. Thus, even if certain theological claims seemed to fly in the face of the standards of reasoning defended by philosophers, the religious believer should not flinch. Other early Christian thinkers, such as St. Augustine of Hippo, argued that philosophical reflection complemented theology, but only when these philosophical reflections were firmly grounded in a prior intellectual commitment to the underlying truth of the Christian faith. Thus, the legitimacy of philosophy was derived from the legitimacy of the underlying faith commitments. It was during this time however that St. Thomas Aquinas offered yet another model for the relationship between philosophy and theology. According to the Thomistic model, philosophy and theology are distinct enterprises, differing primarily in their intellectual starting points. Philosophy takes as its data the deliverances of our natural mental faculties: These data can be accepted on the basis of the reliability of our natural faculties with respect to the natural world. Theology, on the other hand takes as its starting point the divine revelations contained in the Bible. These data can be accepted on the basis of divine authority, in a way analogous to the way in which we accept, for example, the claims made by a physics professor about the basic facts of physics. Since this way of thinking about philosophy and theology sharply demarcates the disciplines, it is possible in principle that the conclusions reached by one might be contradicted by the other. According to advocates of this model, however, any such conflict must be merely apparent. Since God both created the world which is accessible to philosophy and revealed the texts accessible to theologians, the claims yielded by one cannot conflict with the claims yielded by another unless the philosopher or theologian has made some prior error. Since the deliverances of the two disciplines must then coincide, philosophy can be put to the service of theology and perhaps vice-versa. How might philosophy play this complementary role? First, philosophical reasoning might persuade some who do not accept the authority of purported divine revelation of the claims contained in religious texts. Thus, an atheist who is unwilling to accept the authority of religious texts might come to believe that God exists on the basis of purely philosophical arguments. Second, distinctively philosophical techniques might be brought to bear in helping the theologian clear up imprecise or ambiguous theological claims. Thus, for example, theology might provide us with information sufficient to conclude that Jesus Christ was a single person with two natures, one human and one divine, but leave us in the dark about exactly how this relationship between divine and human natures is to be understood. The philosopher can provide some assistance here, since, among other things, he or she can help the theologian discern which models are logically inconsistent and thus not viable candidates for understanding the relationship between the divine and human natures in Christ. For most of the twentieth century, the vast majority of English language philosophy—“including philosophy of religion”—went on without much interaction with theology at all. While there are a number of complex reasons for this divorce, three are especially important. The first reason is that atheism was the predominant opinion among English language philosophers throughout much of that century. A second, quite related reason is that philosophers in the twentieth century regarded theological language as either meaningless, or, at best, subject to scrutiny only insofar as that language had a bearing on religious practice. The former belief is. Since much theological language, for example, language describing the doctrine of the Trinity, lacks empirical content, such language must be meaningless. The latter belief, inspired by Wittgenstein, holds that language itself only has meaning in specific practical contexts, and thus that religious language was not aiming to express truths about the world which could be subjected to objective philosophical scrutiny. In the last forty years, however, philosophers of religion have returned to the business

of theorizing about many of the traditional doctrines of Christianity and have begun to apply the tools of contemporary philosophy in ways that are somewhat more eclectic than what was envisioned under the Augustinian or Thomistic models. In keeping with the recent academic trend, contemporary philosophers of religion have been unwilling to maintain hard and fast distinctions between the two disciplines. As a result, it is often difficult in reading recent work to distinguish what the philosophers are doing from what the theologians and philosophers of past centuries regarded as strictly within the theological domain. In what follows, we provide a brief survey of work on the three topics in contemporary philosophical theology that “aside from general issues concerning the nature, attributes, and providence of God” have received the most attention from philosophers of religion over the past quarter century. We thus leave aside such staple topics in philosophy of religion as traditional arguments for the existence of God, the problem of evil, the epistemology of religious belief, the nature and function of religious language. We also leave aside a variety of important but less-discussed topics in philosophical theology, such as the nature of divine revelation and scripture, original sin, the authority of tradition, and the like.

Trinity From the beginning, Christians have affirmed the claim that there is one God, and three persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each of whom is God. Although we profess three persons we do not profess three substances but one substance and three persons. If we are asked about the individual Person, we must answer that he is God. No doubt this is an understatement. Indeed, it looks like we can derive a contradiction from the doctrine, as follows: Either way, however, we have a problem. If the Father is identical to God and the Son is identical to God, then by the transitivity of identity the Father is identical to the Son, contrary to the doctrine. On the other hand, if the Father is divine and the Son is divine and the Father is distinct from the Son, then there are at least two divine persons. Either way, then, the doctrine seems incoherent. At first blush, it might seem rather easy to solve. The answer, in short, is that the Christian tradition has set boundaries on how the doctrine is to be explicated, and these sorts of models fall afoul of those boundaries. Modalism confounds the persons. It is the view that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are mere manifestations, modes, or roles played by the one and only God. Ruling out modalism thus rules out analogies like the Superman analogy just given. Tritheism divides the substance. It is a bit tricky because controversial to say exactly what tritheism, or polytheism more generally, is. For discussion, see Rea. But whatever else it might be, it is certainly implied by the view that there are three distinct divine substances. Assuming the items in your shopping cart count as multiple distinct substances, then, the problem with the shopping cart analogy is that it suggests polytheism. In what follows, we will consider several more sophisticated models of the trinity: These do not exhaust the field of possible solutions, but they are the ones to which the most attention has been paid in the recent literature. For more detailed surveys, see Rea and, at book length, McCall. This suggests the analogy of a family, or, more generally, a society. Thus, the persons of the trinity might be thought of as one in just the way that the members of a family are one: Since there is no contradiction in thinking of a family as three and one in this way, this analogy appears to solve the problem. Those who attempt to understand the trinity primarily in terms of this analogy are typically called social trinitarians. This approach has been controversially associated with the Eastern Church, tracing its roots to the Cappadocian Fathers—Basil of Caesarea, his brother Gregory of Nyssa, and their friend Gregory Nazianzen. Against this practice, see especially Ayres and Barnes. Consider, for example, the children of Chronos in Greek mythology, of whom Zeus was the liberator. These children included Zeus, Hera, Ares, and a variety of other Olympian deities—all members of a divine family. Nobody, however, thinks that the fact that Zeus and his siblings nor even, say, Zeus and his begotten daughter Athena count in any meaningful sense as one god. For this reason, social trinitarians are often quick to note that there are other relations that hold between members of the trinity that contribute, along with their being members of a single divine family, to their counting as one God. Richard Swinburne, for example, has defended a version of this view according to which the unity among the divine persons is secured by several facts in conjunction with one another. First, the divine persons share all of the essential characteristics of divinity: Second, unlike the deities of familiar polytheistic systems, their wills are necessarily harmonious, so that they can never come into conflict with one another. Third, they stand in a relationship of perfect love and necessary mutual interdependence. On this sort of view, there is one God because the community of divine persons is so closely

interconnected that, although they are three distinct persons, they nonetheless function as if they were a single entity. One might think that if we were to consider a group of three human persons who exhibited these characteristics of necessary unity, volitional harmony, and love, it would likewise be hard to regard them as entirely distinct. And that is, of course, just the intuition that the view aims to elicit. Still, many regard the sort of unity just described as not strong enough to secure a respectable monotheism. Thus, some social trinitarians have attempted to give other accounts of what unifies the divine persons. Perhaps the most popular such account is the part-whole model. Moreland and William Lane Craig have argued that the relation between the persons of the Trinity can be thought of as analogous to the relation we might suppose to obtain between the three dog-like beings that compose Cerberus, the mythical guardian of the underworld. One might say that each of the three heads—or each of the three souls associated with the heads—is a fully canine individual, and yet there is only one being, Cerberus, with the full canine nature. At this point, therefore, it is natural to wonder what exactly it is that makes both proposals count as versions of social trinitarianism. Unfortunately, this is a question to which self-proclaimed social trinitarians have not given a very clear answer. However, this answer is less than fully illuminating. What is needed is some characterization of the common core underlying the diverse views that are generally regarded as versions of social trinitarianism. The following two theses seem to capture that core: One of the more serious problems is that it is inconsistent with the Nicene Creed. Likewise, the Creed says that Father and Son are consubstantial. This claim is absolutely central to the doctrine of the trinity, and the notion of consubstantiality lay at the very heart of the debates in the 4th Century C. But the three souls, or centers of consciousness, of the heads of Cerberus are not in any sense consubstantial. Other versions of the part-whole model raise further worries. A cube, for example, is a seventh thing in addition to its six sides; but we do not want to say that God is a fourth thing in addition to its three parts. The reason is that saying this forces a dilemma: Either God is a person, or God is not. If the former, then we have a quaternity rather than a trinity. If the latter, then we seem to commit ourselves to claims that are decidedly anti-theistic: Bad news either way, then. Thus, many are motivated to seek other models. Historically, the use of psychological analogies is especially associated with thinkers in the Latin-speaking West, particularly from Augustine onward. Augustine himself suggested several important analogies, as did others in the medieval Latin tradition. However, since our focus in this article is on more contemporary models, we will pass over these here and focus instead on two more recently developed psychological analogies.

## 7: Christian Philosophy and Metaphysics

*QUESTION: Christian Philosophy and Metaphysics ANSWER: The Christian philosophy view of metaphysics is of ultimate reality (ontology and cosmology) is part of what C.S. Lewis termed "Mere Christianity." There are certain things virtually all Christians believe, and one is that God is the supreme source of all being and reality.*

Context Only four of his seventy-five years were spent outside Northern Africa, and fifty-seven of the remaining seventy-one were in such relatively out of the way places as Thagaste and Hippo Regius, both belonging to Roman provinces, neither notable for either cultural or commercial prominence. However, the few years Augustine spent away from Northern Africa exerted an incalculable influence upon his thought, and his geographical distance from the major intellectual and political capitals of the Later Roman Empire should not obscure the tremendous influence he came to exert even in his own lifetime. Here, as elsewhere, one is confronted by a figure both strikingly liminal and, at times, intriguingly ambivalent. He was, as already noted, a long time resident and, eventually, Bishop in Northern Africa whose thought was transformed and redirected during the four brief years he spent in Rome and Milan, far away from the provincial context where he was born and died and spent almost all of the years in between; he was a man who tells us that he never thought of himself as not being in some sense a Christian [Confessions III. Perhaps most striking of all, Augustine bequeathed to the Latin West a voluminous body of work that contains at its chronological extremes two quite dissimilar portraits of the human condition. In the beginning, there is a largely Hellenistic portrait, one that is notable for the optimism that a sufficiently rational and disciplined life can safely escape the ever-threatening circumstantial adversity that seems to surround us. Nearer the end, however, there emerges a considerably grimmer portrait, one that emphasizes the impotence of the unaided human will, and the later Augustine presents a moral landscape populated largely by the massa damnata [De Civitate Dei XXI. The sheer quantity of the writing that unites these two extremes, much of which survives, is truly staggering. There are well over titles [listed at Fitzgerald , pp. It is arguably impossible to construct any moderate sized and manageable list of his major philosophical works that would not occasion some controversy in terms of what is omitted, but surely any list would have to include Contra Academicos [Against the Academicians, 426 C. Born in C. He subsequently taught rhetoric in Thagaste and Carthage, and in he made the risk-laden journey from Northern Africa to Rome, seeking the better sort of students that was rumored to be there. Disappointed by the moral quality of those students academically superior to his previous students, they nonetheless had an annoying tendency to disappear without paying their fees , he successfully applied for a professorship of rhetoric in Milan. After this separation, however, Augustine abruptly resigned his professorship in claiming ill health, renounced his professional ambitions, and was baptized by Bishop Ambrose of Milan on Easter Sunday, 387, after spending four months at Cassiciacum where he composed his earliest extant works. Shortly thereafter, Augustine began his return to Northern Africa, but not before his mother died at Ostia, a seaport outside Rome, while awaiting the voyage across the Mediterranean. Not too long after this, Augustine, now back in Thagaste, also lost his son . The remainder of his years would be spent immersed in the affairs and controversies of the Church into which he had been recently baptized, a Church that henceforth provided for Augustine the crucial nexus of relations that his family and friends had once been. In 395, Augustine was reluctantly ordained as a priest by the congregation of Hippo Regius a not uncommon practice in Northern Africa , in he was made Bishop, and he died August in Hippo, thirty-five years later, as the Vandals were besieging the gates of the city. However, when Augustine himself recounts his first thirty-two years in his Confessions, he makes clear that many of the decisive events of his early life were, to use his own imagery, of a considerably more internal nature than the relatively external facts cited above. From his own account, he was a precocious and able student, much enamored of the Latin classics, Virgil in particular [Confessions I. For Augustine, the problem was of a more general and visceral sort: In this sense, the wisdom that Augustine sought was a common denominator uniting the conflicting views of such Hellenistic philosophical sects as the Epicureans, Stoics, Skeptics, and Neoplatonists though this is a later title such as Plotinus and Porphyry, as well as many Christians of varying degrees of orthodoxy, including very unorthodox gnostic sects such as the

Manicheans. Augustine himself comes to spend nine years as a hearer among the Manicheans [see Brown , pp. The Manicheans proposed a powerful, if somewhat mythical and philosophically awkward explanation of the problem of evil: By means of sufficient insight and a sufficiently ascetic life, however, one could eventually, over the course of several lives, come to liberate the Light within from the surrounding Darkness, thus rejoining the larger Light of which the soul is but a fragmented and isolated part. As Augustine recounts it in the Confessions [see Confessions V. De Moribus Ecclesiae Catholicae 1], he became disenchanted with the inability of the Manichean elect to provide sufficiently detailed and rigorous explanations of their cosmology. As a result, he began to drift away from the sect during his sojourn in Rome, flirting for awhile with academic skepticism [Confessions V. When Augustine eventually comes to write about the Manicheans, there are three features upon which he will focus: According to Augustine, this latter identification not only serves to render the human soul divine, thereby obliterating the crucial distinction between creator and creature, but it also raises doubts about the extent to which the individual human soul can be held responsible for morally bad actions, responsibility instead being attributed to the body in which the soul itself quasi material is trapped. These uncertainties notwithstanding, Augustine himself makes it clear that it was his encounter with the books of the Platonists that made it possible for him to view both the Church and its scriptural tradition as having an intellectually satisfying and, indeed, resourceful content. In his earliest writings [e. Contra Academicos, C. But by the time he composes the Confessions ]C. Part of this gradual change of attitude is attributable to his detailed study of scriptural texts especially the Pauline letters , as well as his immersion in both the daily affairs of his monastic community and the rather focused sorts of controversies that confronted the Church in the fourth and fifth centuries. Beyond his already noted, protracted battle with Manicheanism, there is also his involvement in the North African Donatist controversy [see Brown , pp. In this latter case, serious issues arose regarding the role of grace and the efficacy of the unaided human will, issues that, as we will see, played an important role in shaping his views on human freedom and predestination. These important qualifications notwithstanding, the fact remains that this Platonism also provided Augustine with a philosophical framework far more pliable and enduring than he himself is willing to admit in his later works. Moreover, this framework itself forms an important part of the philosophical legacy that Augustine bequeathed to both the medieval and modern periods. Sometimes this feature is easy to overlook, but its significance is obvious enough: Without this, the work would be rather like a map that is as large as of that of which it is intended to be a map, thus making it not a map at all. In order to bring some coherence to the material at hand, there must be some effort to provide an interpretive framework for the material, focusing on relevant and important highlights while omitting others that would obscure those highlights. The second reason is more specific to Augustine: Presented as an extended prayer to God, Augustine is not merely telling the tale of his own life, but also using his life as a concrete example of how an isolated individual soul can extricate itself from this state and Neoplatonically ascend to a unity that overcomes this isolation and attains to rest in God. Also important are the means by which he seeks to accomplish this task: With respect to his relations with others, he begins with his ruminations upon infancy and the isolation of the infant, which initially seems to be overcome by the acquisition of language. But as he tells the story in Confessions I, language is itself a double-edged sword: Although Augustine is aware by the time he writes the Confessions that there are differences between Christianity and Neoplatonism, he nonetheless makes it clear that the latter makes it possible for him to regard the former as intellectually credible. The overarching Neoplatonic strategy of the first nine Books goes a long way toward explaining what might otherwise be a strange shift in the remaining four books, in which the autobiography recedes into the background. This strategy, combined with the related themes of the role of language and texts in his spiritual progress, also explains the fact that Books XII and XIII are devoted to exegesis of the first chapters of Genesis. As noted above, Augustine at first disdained biblical texts owing to their rhetorical inelegance. Now, however, having a framework that enables him to discern their actual inner depth, these texts acquire a prominence and indicate the culmination of that long journey which began with his immersion into the double-edged domain of human speech and written word. Moreover, these final Books, along with the Neoplatonic framework he discovers in Book VII though, as we have seen, it also governs the structure of the Confessions as a whole , enable him to further probe the puzzles that he raised in the first five

chapters of Book I. In short, what once struck Augustine as the texts least worthy of attention have now become the texts of all texts, because they contain the answers to the questions and problems that have propelled him from the very beginning of the Confessions. As Augustine recounts it Confessions VI. It is also quite possible that it would serve him in the pursuit of a more worldly career. But it could serve as an impediment to social advancement unless it was replaced by the more formal arrangement of matrimonium. Hence, the obvious questions: Why the abruptness of the dismissal? Why not enter with his companion of thirteen years into the more respectable relation of matrimonium? Why anonymity for someone with whom he had spent thirteen years in a monogamous relationship? Why the headlong rush into another, temporary relationship, whereas his companion returned to Northern Africa vowing never to enter into another relationship? Was their devotion to one another as asymmetrical as Augustine seems to suggest? Was he as callous and as indifferent as the text seems to present him? If one examines the text closely enough, there do seem to be answers to these questions: Also, what was the social class of his companion? Differences in social class could often prevent the transition from a relation of concubinatus to one matrimonium. On a more textual level, it is obvious that Monica played a significant role in the arrangement of the more respectable marriage for which Augustine was obliged to wait. More importantly, Augustine makes it clear at VI. As for the anonymity of his companion, this is not unusual in the Confessions as a whole. When he does mention names e. Alypius, Nebridius, Faustus, Ambrose, Monica, they are names that would have been known to contemporary readers of the text. But they also serve as character types: A prime example is his protracted discussion of an anonymous friend in Book IV, a pathos-ridden account that leaves no doubt about the importance of the relationship to Augustine. But perhaps of most importance are two textual points which indicate the significance of this relationship to Augustine. The first is that the episode he recounts is of an intensely personal nature, not necessary to the rhetorical strategy of the Confessions as a whole. But even more important is the imagery employed in his account of the separation. There are only two passages in the entire Confessions which employ similar imagery: Given the imagery employed here, there does look to be some philosophical import in this otherwise intensely personal passage: Needless to say, this does not completely exonerate Augustine. And if the choice was his own, then he appears even more culpable. In the Confessions, where Augustine gives his most extensive discussion of the books of the Platonists, he makes clear that his previous thinking was dominated by a common-sense materialism [Confessions IV. It was the books of the Platonists that first made it possible for him to conceive the possibility of a non-physical substance [Confessions VII. In addition, the books of the Platonists provided him with a metaphysical framework of extraordinary depth and subtlety, a richly-textured tableau upon which the human condition could be plotted. It can both account for the obvious difficulties with which life confronts us, while also offering grounds for a eudaimonism notable for the depth of its moral optimism. In this respect, the ontology that Augustine acquired from the books of the Platonists is, in terms of its intent, not all that different from the materialism of the Epicureans, Stoics, and even the Manicheans. What sets the Neoplatonic ontology apart, however, is both the resoluteness of its promise and the architectonic grandeur with which it complements the world of visible appearances. In spite of the dualistic implications, this is clearly not intended to be a dualistic alternative to the moral dualism of the Manicheans and other gnostics [see, e. Instead, the divide is situated within what is supposed to be a larger, unified hierarchy that begins with absolute unity and progressively unfolds through various stages of increasing plurality and multiplicity, culminating in the lowest realm of isolated and fragmented material objects observed with the senses [see Bussanich, pp. Thus, for Augustine, God is regarded as the ultimate source and point of origin for all that comes below. Augustine, especially in his earlier works, focuses upon the contrast between the intelligible and the sensible, enjoining his reader to realize that the former alone holds out what we seek in the latter: Indeed, in the vision at Ostia at Confessions IX. The intelligible realm, with God as its source, promises the only lasting relief from the anxiety prompted by the transitory nature of the sensible realm. Despite its dualistic overtones, the overall unity of the picture is central to its ability to provide a resolution of the problem of evil. The sensible world, for example, is not evil, nor is embodiment itself to be regarded as straightforwardly bad. The problem that plagues our condition is not that we are trapped in the visible world as it is for the Manicheans; rather, it is a more subtle problem of

perception and will: Thus, we have a tendency to focus only upon the sensible, viewing it as a self-contained arena within which all questions of moral concern are to be resolved. Because we fail to perceive the larger unity of which the sensible world is itself a part, it easily becomes for us though not in itself a realm of moral danger, one wherein our will attaches itself to transitory objects that cannot but lead to anxiety [Confessions VII. Given the essentially rational nature of the human soul and the rational nature of the Neoplatonic ontology, there is nonetheless room for optimism.

## 8: Philosophy and Christian Theology (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

*A worldview is the framework from which we view reality and make sense of life and the world. "[It's] any ideology, philosophy, theology, movement or religion that provides an overarching approach to understanding God, the world and man's relations to God and the world," says David Noebel, author of Understanding the Times.*

**Introduction Knowledge** Traditionally, the term "philosophy" referred to any body of knowledge. Natural philosophy "physics" was the study of the physical world physis, lit: Natural philosophy has split into the various natural sciences, especially astronomy, physics, chemistry, biology, and cosmology. Moral philosophy has birthed the social sciences, but still includes value theory including aesthetics, ethics, political philosophy, etc. Metaphysical philosophy has birthed formal sciences such as logic, mathematics and philosophy of science, but still includes epistemology, cosmology and others. Philosophical progress Many philosophical debates that began in ancient times are still debated today. Colin McGinn and others claim that no philosophical progress has occurred during that interval. In that sense, all cultures and literate societies ask philosophical questions such as "how are we to live" and "what is the nature of reality". A broad and impartial conception of philosophy then, finds a reasoned inquiry into such matters as reality, morality and life in all world civilizations. Socrates was a very influential philosopher, who insisted that he possessed no wisdom but was a pursuer of wisdom. The Ancient era was dominated by Greek philosophical schools which arose out of the various pupils of Socrates, such as Plato , who founded the Platonic Academy and his student Aristotle , [35] founding the Peripatetic school , who were both extremely influential in Western tradition. Important topics covered by the Greeks included metaphysics with competing theories such as atomism and monism , cosmology , the nature of the well-lived life eudaimonia , the possibility of knowledge and the nature of reason logos. With the rise of the Roman empire , Greek philosophy was also increasingly discussed in Latin by Romans such as Cicero and Seneca. Medieval philosophy 5th – 16th century is the period following the fall of the Western Roman Empire and was dominated by the rise of Christianity and hence reflects Judeo-Christian theological concerns as well as retaining a continuity with Greco-Roman thought. Problems such as the existence and nature of God , the nature of faith and reason, metaphysics, the problem of evil were discussed in this period. Some key Medieval thinkers include St. Philosophy for these thinkers was viewed as an aid to Theology ancilla theologiae and hence they sought to align their philosophy with their interpretation of sacred scripture. This period saw the development of Scholasticism , a text critical method developed in medieval universities based on close reading and disputation on key texts. The Renaissance period saw increasing focus on classic Greco-Roman thought and on a robust Humanism. The 20th century saw the split between Analytic philosophy and Continental philosophy , as well as philosophical trends such as Phenomenology , Existentialism , Logical Positivism , Pragmatism and the Linguistic turn. Middle Eastern philosophy See also: Islamic philosophy and Middle Eastern philosophy The regions of the fertile Crescent , Iran and Arabia are home to the earliest known philosophical Wisdom literature and is today mostly dominated by Islamic culture. Early wisdom literature from the fertile crescent was a genre which sought to instruct people on ethical action, practical living and virtue through stories and proverbs. Babylonian astronomy also included much philosophical speculations about cosmology which may have influenced the Ancient Greeks. Jewish philosophy and Christian philosophy are religio-philosophical traditions that developed both in the Middle East and in Europe, which both share certain early Judaic texts mainly the Tanakh and monotheistic beliefs. Later Jewish philosophy came under strong Western intellectual influences and includes the works of Moses Mendelssohn who ushered in the Haskalah the Jewish Enlightenment , Jewish existentialism and Reform Judaism. Pre-Islamic Iranian philosophy begins with the work of Zoroaster , one of the first promoters of monotheism and of the dualism between good and evil. This dualistic cosmogony influenced later Iranian developments such as Manichaeism , Mazdakism , and Zurvanism. After the Muslim conquests , Early Islamic philosophy developed the Greek philosophical traditions in new innovative directions. This Islamic Golden Age influenced European intellectual developments. The two main currents of early Islamic thought are Kalam which focuses on Islamic theology and Falsafa which was based on

Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism. The work of Aristotle was very influential among the falsafa such as al-Kindi 9th century , Avicenna 11th and Averroes 12th century. Others such as Al-Ghazali were highly critical of the methods of the Aristotelian falsafa. Islamic thinkers also developed a scientific method , experimental medicine, a theory of optics and a legal philosophy. Ibn Khaldun was an influential thinker in philosophy of history. In Iran several schools of Islamic philosophy continued to flourish after the Golden Age and include currents such as Illuminationist philosophy , Sufi philosophy , and Transcendent theosophy. The 19th- and 20th-century Arab world saw the Nahda awakening or renaissance movement which influenced contemporary Islamic philosophy. Indian philosophy Main articles: Eastern philosophy and Indian philosophy Indian philosophy Sanskrit: Buddhist philosophy begins with the thought of Gautama Buddha fl. The Buddhist philosophy is traditionally classified into four schools, states Karl Potter 1993 the editor of The Encyclopedia of Indian Philosophies. They contributed to the two major surviving traditions of Buddhism, the Mahayana and the Theravada. Buddhist philosophy incorporates epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and psychology to end rebirth and associated dukkha. Mahayana philosophers such as Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu developed the theories of Shunyata emptiness of all phenomena and Vijnapti-matra appearance only , a form of phenomenology or transcendental idealism. After the disappearance of Buddhism from India, these philosophical traditions continued to develop in the Tibetan Buddhist , East Asian Buddhist and Theravada Buddhist traditions. They represent a "collection of philosophical views that share a textual connection", according to Chadha. Hindu philosophers of the six schools developed systems of epistemology pramana and investigated topics such as metaphysics, ethics, psychology guna , hermeneutics and soteriology within the framework of the Vedic knowledge, while presenting a diverse collection of interpretations. Jain philosophy Jain philosophy accepts the concept of a permanent soul jiva as one of the five astikayas, or eternal infinite categories that make up the substance of existence. The other four being dharma, adharma, akasha space and pudgala matter. The Jain thought separates matter from the soul completely. Digambara sky dressed, naked and Svetambara white dressed , along with several more minor traditions such as Terapanthis. Digambara and Svetambara, along with several more minor traditions such as Terapanthis. The Jain thought holds that all existence is cyclic, eternal and uncreated. East Asian philosophical thought began in Ancient China , and Chinese philosophy begins during the Western Zhou Dynasty and the following periods after its fall when the " Hundred Schools of Thought " flourished 6th century to BCE. These philosophical traditions developed metaphysical, political and ethical theories such Tao , Yin and yang , Ren and Li which, along with Chinese Buddhism , directly influenced Korean philosophy , Vietnamese philosophy and Japanese philosophy which also includes the native Shinto tradition. During later Chinese dynasties like the Ming Dynasty 14th as well as in the Korean Joseon dynasty 14th a resurgent Neo-Confucianism led by thinkers such as Wang Yangming 15th became the dominant school of thought, and was promoted by the imperial state. In the Modern era, Chinese thinkers incorporated ideas from Western philosophy. Modern Japanese thought meanwhile developed under strong Western influences such as the study of Western Sciences Rangaku and the modernist Meirokusha intellectual society which drew from European enlightenment thought. The 20th century saw the rise of State Shinto and also Japanese nationalism. The Kyoto School , an influential and unique Japanese philosophical school developed from Western phenomenology and Medieval Japanese Buddhist philosophy such as that of Dogen. African philosophy Main article: African philosophy African philosophy is philosophy produced by African people , philosophy that presents African worldviews, ideas and themes, or philosophy that uses distinct African philosophical methods. Modern African thought has been occupied with Ethnophilosophy , with defining the very meaning of African philosophy and its unique characteristics and what it means to be African. Another early African philosopher was Anton Wilhelm Amo c. Contemporary African thought has also seen the development of Professional philosophy and of Africana philosophy , the philosophical literature of the African diaspora which includes currents such as black existentialism by African-Americans. Modern African thinkers have been influenced by Marxism , African-American literature , Critical theory , Critical race theory , Postcolonialism and Feminism. Indigenous American philosophy is the philosophy of the Indigenous people of the Americas. There is a wide variety of beliefs and traditions among these different American cultures. Among some of the Native Americans in the United States there is a belief in a

metaphysical principle called the "Great Mystery" Siouan: Wakan Tanka , Algonquian: Another widely shared concept was that of Orenda or "spiritual power". According to Peter M. Whiteley, for the Native Americans, "Mind is critically informed by transcendental experience dreams, visions and so on as well as by reason. Another feature of the indigenous American worldviews was their extension of ethics to non-human animals and plants. The Aztec worldview posited the concept of an ultimate universal energy or force called Ometeotl which can be translated as "Dual Cosmic Energy" and sought a way to live in balance with a constantly changing, "slippery" world. The theory of Teotl can be seen as a form of Pantheism. Aztec ethics was focused on seeking tlamatiliztli knowledge, wisdom which was based on moderation and balance in all actions as in the Nahua proverb "the middle good is necessary". These groupings allow philosophers to focus on a set of similar topics and interact with other thinkers who are interested in the same questions. The groupings also make philosophy easier for students to approach. Students can learn the basic principles involved in one aspect of the field without being overwhelmed with the entire set of philosophical theories. Various sources present different categorical schemes. The categories adopted in this article aim for breadth and simplicity. These five major branches can be separated into sub-branches and each sub-branch contains many specific fields of study.

## 9: Neoplatonism - Wikipedia

*Philosophy (from Greek  $\phi\lambda\sigma\sigma\phi\alpha$ , *philosophia*, literally "love of wisdom") is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language.*

The approach adopted in this demonstration relies on identifying a range of agreement about "Core" or "Central" Spiritual Truths as accepted by ALL the major Religions of the World and supporting this demonstration of a range of "Core" or "Central" agreement with "hopefully undeniable" Secular Truths in the form of the Wisdom of the Poets. We cannot deny that there is some divergence between the Christian Religion and in particular, Hinduism, otherwise known as Vedanta, but this divergence will be commented upon fully and shown, we hope, although highly relevant to appreciating an undeniable divergence between Christianity and Hinduism, to be more so one of Emphasis or Focus rather than one of the deepest Essentials of Faith. Whether we realise it or not most people, even though they might consider themselves to be quite un-spiritual and rather un-poetic, have a capacity which allows for a recognition of Profound Truths which have been "somehow encapsulated" within certain spiritual and poetical quotations. It may even be the case that spiritual and poetic wisdom can help us to realise truths that are otherwise largely beyond our reach: Paul Poets are masters of us ordinary men, in knowledge of the mind, because they drink at streams which we have not yet made accessible to science. Sigmund Freud We have found it entirely possible to research into the Profound Truths that have been "captured and somehow encapsulated" within certain spiritual and poetical quotations!!! Some words of background context introduction to the important wisdoms we are attempting to identify as "Central Spiritual Insights" are probably necessary: More than twenty-five centuries have passed since that which has been called the Perennial Philosophy was first committed to writing; and in the course of those centuries it has found expression, now partial, now complete, now in this form, now in that, again and again But under all this confusion of tongues and myths, of local histories and particularist doctrines, there remains a Highest Common Factor, which is the Perennial Philosophy in what may be called its chemically pure state Taken from an introduction, written in by Aldous Huxley, to an English language translation of a principal holy book of the Hindu faith. In his own celebrated study into the central agreements about "Divine Truths" between the Great Religions of the World, first published as *The Perennial Philosophy* in , Aldous Huxley accepted the proposition, deriving from Leibniz, a notably eminent scholar who was an early investigator into the Common Ground shared by The World Religions, that Religions concern themselves "with the one, divine Reality" and that "the nature of this one Reality is such that it cannot be directly or immediately apprehended except by those who have chosen to fulfill certain conditions, making themselves loving, pure in heart, and poor in spirit. However, we came to believe Meekness to be another spiritual endowment which may well tend to contribute towards heightened powers of discernment. This suggestion that Meekness is of immense spiritual value may not surprise. More unexpectedly, perhaps, the outcomes of our comprehensive researches into the mysteries of Deep Spiritual Truth were also such as to suggest that it is appropriate to fully associate A Disdain for Materialism compared to the Spiritual, A Distrust of the Intellect compared to Divine Inspiration, and A Thirst for Spiritual Enlightenment, with the centralities of The Perennial Philosophy. A Disdain for Materialism Some have Me in their mouths, but little in their hearts. There are others who, being enlightened in their understanding and purified in their affection, always breathe after things eternal, are unwilling to hear of earthly things, and grieve to be subject to the necessities of nature; and such as these perceive what the Spirit of Truth speaketh in them. For it teacheth them to despise the things of the earth and to love heavenly things; to disregard the world, and all the day and night to aspire after heaven. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Paul Spiritual Insights are possible! It is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him. But God has revealed them unto us by his Spirit: Paul Charity Beloved, let us love one another: He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. John Purity of Heart Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation

with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke Paul Humility Neither be ye called masters: But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whomsoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted. Jesus Meekness Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath: For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God. James "Central Spiritual Insights" drawn from "non-Christian" Inter-Faith sources A Disdain for Materialism Chuang Tzu put on cotton clothes with patches in them, and arranging his girdle and tying on his shoes, i. Ragged clothes and old boots make poverty, not misery". Chuang Tzu - Taoism Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment; Cleverness is mere opinion, bewilderment intuition. Rumi - Islam Spiritual Insights are possible! The intelligence of the mean man does not rise beyond bribes and letters of recommendation. His mind is beclouded with trivialities. The result is that he is confounded by time and space; and that trammelled by objective existences, that he fails apprehension of that age before anything was. But the perfect man, - he carries his mind back to the period before the beginning. Content to rest in the oblivion of nowhere, passing away like flowing water, he is merged in the clear depths of the infinite. Chuang Tzu - Taoism Charity He that does everything for Me, whose supreme object I am, who worships Me, being free from attachment and without hatred to any creature, this man, Arjuna! Bow humbly to the saint That is a pious act. Bow to the ground before him That is devotion, indeed.

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