

## **A History of Philosophy**

### **43 Locke on Religion, Ethics, and Politics**

#### **By Dr. Arthur Holmes of Wheaton College**

with some things about how his epistemology carries over in application to matters of religion, to ethics, and his writings on politics. Perhaps the crucial point of connection between his epistemology and these other areas of thought is evidentialism, which we highlighted last time. That is to say, his insistence that we should proportion our beliefs to the evidence, that we should proportion our beliefs to the evidence.

Now, that has a very evident kind of effect when it comes to his discussion about revelation and reason, faith and reason, which he gets into, actually, in book four of his essay concerning human understanding in chapters 18 and 19. I mentioned that so that you could look them up since they're not in our anthology. And both of those chapters work on the assumption that revelation may be regarded as the addition of further propositions to those which we know by reason alone.

Now, reflect on that for a moment. The first reaction you might have is, yes, knowledge as he talks about it consists of propositions, propositions that embody judgments, their subject and predicate. Subject, after all, knowledge derives from ideas where you predicate something of a subject.

So we've been talking about knowledge in that sense. Revelation adds to that knowledge additional propositions that are not known by reason alone. So, revelation then is propositional revelation.

And the orthodoxy in you may feel like applauding John Locke, but it should be noted that he tends to confine his thinking about divine revelation to simply adding propositions. That is to say, the interpersonal immediacy of religious experience is not something which he includes within that definition of revelation. And we'll be commenting on this a little bit more later on.

He seems to be quite adverse to what he thinks of as any continuing revelation of a private sort, such as in some of the pietist traditions, holiness traditions of that day, were becoming evident, even in Wesley. That was known as enthusiasm. And he has a whole chapter in which he opposes religious enthusiasm in that sense.

Now the underlying reason for this, as I say, is in his view that all knowledge is propositional, consisting of propositions. So that revelation consists of propositions. Some revealed propositions may be known also by reason, but obviously, if they're known by revelation as well, they're not known by reason alone.

His point is that propositions that are in accordance with reason may well be acceptable as revelation. Propositions that go beyond reason, but are not contradicting reason, would likewise be acceptable candidates as revelation. But anything that goes contrary to reason, contradicts reason, could not be revelation.

His point is simply that what we know of what God has made by natural reason cannot be contradicted by what God has said by special revelation. God does not contradict himself. But woven through that is sort of a rational criterion.

Let reason be your guide. A rational criterion for the evaluation of purported revelation. Now granted that there is indeed divine revelation of this sort, revealed propositions have the highest degree of certainty of all propositions, because they come to us from God with his certification, as it were.

The question is, how do we know what is revealed? And that is what has to be adjudged by reason. So revelation then, consisting of propositions. Now faith, therefore, is defined in that regard.

Faith is assent to propositions on the credit or testimony of the proposer. It is assent to propositions on the testimony of the proposer. And let me read a couple of short paragraphs here about what he has to say about reason in relation to faith.

Reason is distinguished from faith. I take it to be the discovery of the certainty or probability of propositions or truths which the mind arrives at by deduction from ideas which it has by means of natural faculties. That is to say, ideas known by sensation or reflection.

So reason then is the discovery of the certainty or probability of propositions deduced from ideas acquired by natural means. Faith, on the other hand, is assent to any proposition that is not made out by reason but upon the credit of the proposer as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication. This way of discovering truths to men we call revelation.

So faith is assent to a proposition. And again, you might well ask yourself, is that the totality of his conception of faith? Seems to be a purely cognitive kind of act. Well, it's in the light of that that what he calls enthusiasm, private revelation, inner light kind of revelation, as in the Quaker tradition.

Those kinds of things are discarded by him. Revelation without reason cannot be assented to. So revelation and reason.

Now Locke seems to be fairly guarded in what he says. There are more problems, I think, in what he doesn't say than in what he does say. But what he does say, taken

by itself, seems to open the door for a kind of approach to religion independently of revelation.

And so the development of deism in the 18th century is often ascribed to Locke's unwitting influence, that is to say, one can know a great deal by reason alone, and deism is an attempt to develop a religious view by means of reason alone, independently of revelation. So deism then traces something of its beginnings to Locke. You have to say, though, that even before Locke, there was quite an active development in Britain of what was known as natural religion.

Sometimes in a platonic context, but ever since the Renaissance, it has been developing. That is to say, religion on the basis of natural knowledge alone, independently of revelation. So deism was, on one hand, a further development of that, and on the other hand, it was a development that seems to have been spurred by Lockean epistemology.

Okay, any question, comment there? Yeah. So Locke and say Christ and Mary were they outside of reason at work? No, he himself, you see, accepts not only the possibility of revelation but also the Christian revelation, accepts the scripture. In his book *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, you might want to take a look at that.

What he does is to look at Christianity using the kind of rational criterion that we've mentioned, and depending on whose interpretation of what he's saying you follow, he can be taken as a thoroughly orthodox Christian. His emphasis in talking of Christ is much more on Christ as the Messiah than it is on Christ the incarnate second person of the Trinity. But just a quick scanning of that book makes it obvious that it's his attempt to pull together biblical propositions into some sort of coherent teaching.

That's his work, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*. He has another work on religion called *Letter on Toleration*, a *Letter on Toleration*. Which, perhaps, is helpful in putting the context there.

This is at the end of the 17th century, when England had gone through its civil war, which was a mixture of religious and political conflict. The Catholic-Protestant conflict in England continued well into the 17th century, with James II, who was finally ousted from the throne, you remember, in a bloodless revolution in 1688. And the Protestants, William and Mary, came over from Holland to take over the throne.

So there was that tension all the time. There wasn't much tolerance. In fact, it was in that period that the Five Mile Act was passed, forbidding dissenters, that is, non-Church of England, from worshipping within five miles of a community of a certain size.

I have some interesting recollections of the significance of this from my childhood. I grew up in Dover, in the southeast corner of England, in a Baptist family. And it was a matter of habit, custom, in that church.

Every good Friday, virtually the entire church would literally walk five or six miles out into the country to a little village called Aethorn to celebrate the anniversary of that little church that seated about 60 or 100 people out in Aethorn. And so did people from other churches across that whole part of Kent, converging down the spokes of the wheel, Canterbury, Folkestone, Herne Bay, Margate, Ramsgate, Sandwichdale, if you know that part of the country, down the spokes of the wheel to the hub there at Aethorn. You know, I didn't realize until, oh, a remembrance of what they had to do back there before there was an edict of toleration back in the 19th century, which made it permissible for Baptists to worship within their hometowns, you see.

Now here's John Locke back in the late 17th century, arguing for religious toleration, you see. The rule of reason, advocating freedom of belief and the practice of that belief. Yeah.

So what's the alternative to some sort of rational balance in that sort of situation of conflict? Well, the only alternative to rational mediation of disputes is power politics. You see, that's what's going on with the politicization of the universities in this country nowadays, with the political correctness movement, you see. Well, it was going on back there in a very different context.

So John Locke's a very interesting character. All right. Moral knowledge.

How does his epistemology come to bear in matters of ethics? Well, first of all, as you've already read, there are no innate moral ideas. There's no innate moral knowledge. His empiricism disallows that, and his argument against innate ideas is specific in this regard.

The arguments against innate ideas in terms of diversity of beliefs and so on and so forth from culture to culture, John Locke has those. All of our moral knowledge, then, must, like every other kind of knowledge, be ultimately derived from our simple ideas of sensation and reflection. Now, how's that going to be? How's that going to be? Well, what he does suggest is that there are three means by which we have acquired moral knowledge.

One is by demonstration. You remember he says there are three kinds of knowledge: by intuition, by intuition. Demonstration and sensation.

Well, nothing by way of intuition, but by demonstration, yes. We can deduce moral knowledge from our knowledge of God and knowledge of the self as a rational being.

And of course, by virtue of Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, Locke was willing to say that we know ourselves as rational beings.

What am I? I'm a thinking being, a rational being. So when in his essay on civil government, he talks about human rights, what he's trying to do, you see, is to articulate what it is that is proper to a rational being, what is deducible from the fact that we are rational beings. In fact, he has a much longer work dealing with that, a work called an essay on the law of nature, on the laws of nature, which is a kind of essay on natural moral law, an essay on the laws of nature.

And in that, he argues for this kind of moral knowledge. The second way of gaining moral knowledge is from sensation and reflection, from experience, that is to say, inasmuch as God has conjoined morality to our happiness, so that in practice, pleasure and pain tend to be our moral teachers. Pleasure and pain tend to be our moral teachers.

And simply in terms of the empirical probabilities that are involved, we come to certain conclusions as to what we will and will not, should and should not. We do. Rightness, you notice, moral rightness becomes a matter of practical utility so that Locke, again unwittingly, is opening the path towards utilitarianism, which is going to be developing shortly.

He's not the first incidentally. If you hark back to Bacon and Hobbes, you recall that they valued knowledge for its practical utility. And Hobbes' whole approach to ethics and to politics was in terms of the very important utility of avoiding that war of all against all and making possible survival and peace.

So the second means of gaining moral knowledge. The third way of gaining moral knowledge is from the biblical revelation. The Bible teaches us a lot of moral matters, and divine moral laws given in scripture are the final criterion, the supreme criterion for what is morally right.

So his epistemology, then, along with its application to religion, leads to the kind of ethics that he would advocate. Now see this also in regard to human freedom. Remember that this is the age of mechanistic science.

Cause, effect, mechanisms. So that people like Hobbes had become thoroughgoing determinists. There is no real freedom of will or of action.

Descartes, on the other hand, had tried to preserve human freedom by making the mind, the thinking thing, an exception to the causal mechanisms of science. His mind-body dualism is what preserved freedom of the will. Locke follows Descartes rather closely in this regard.

He wants to preserve freedom. Human freedom. But he defines human freedom as the freedom to act in accordance with one's choice.

The freedom to do or not to do what I desire. Freedom of action. The question of freedom of will, free choice, he regards as a meaningless debate.

A meaningless debate. Because it's mixing two categories. Confusing two different powers of the person.

The power to do or not to do. The power to act. And on the other hand, the power to think, to prefer.

Yeah, we do indeed think and reflect on our actions. We do prefer doing one thing rather than another. But preferences can well be caused rather than being free.

And ideas, reflection, is likewise caused by what is going on in the world of sensations. And so it's not so much wanting, desiring, or willing that is free, because the desire, the conative, the will is so influenced by ideas that are caused, as it is rather the actions that are free. So one is free to do or not to do when he is able to act in accordance with his desires.

Now, that is somewhat different from Descartes. Somewhat different from Descartes. He's like Descartes inasmuch as freedom of action is possible because we are reflecting beings, reflecting on our actions and acting.

But he's different from Descartes in that he's not talking of freedom of the will so much as of freedom of action. Freedom of action. And that is what plays a crucial role in his political thinking.

Because the thing that is proper to a human being, endowed as a rational being with freedom of action, the thing that is proper to such a human being is that we be granted the freedom to act. And so his conception of freedom immediately begins to develop a theory of rights. And as those of you are well aware who've taken any ethics course that gets into the theory of rights, these are correlatives.

If I have a right to life, you should grant me the freedom to live. If I have a right to property, you should grant me the freedom to own property. Freedoms and rights are correlated, you see.

So what Locke is doing is coming at matters of political philosophy on the basis of this kind of theory of human freedom. Now, what he does then in his second treatise on civil government is what is important. The second treatise on civil government.

His first was a response to other political views of the day. The second is his own constructive proposal. And it builds on the conception of moral knowledge and the conception of freedom that we've referred to.

You can see that when you notice that he distinguishes between the state of nature, on the one hand, and civil society, on the other hand. In the state of nature, we are individuals, each with the power to act freely. In the state of nature, we are individuals with equal freedom and equal freedom of action.

Therefore, with equal rights to act. And so he declares that in the state of nature, we have natural rights. These are not rights granted to us by a civil society.

Rights given to us in a constitution or by laws. These are natural rights inherently ours as individuals, given by God, the ability to act freely. He identifies three such rights.

The right to life, the right to liberty to go on acting freely. The right to life precedes that because you have to live in order to act. And thirdly, the right to property.

Though he's very careful to say that the right to property is not unbounded. Locke is sometimes blamed for all the problems created by free enterprise because of his emphasis on the right to property. If you read his second treatise on civil government you can see that he's doing it while talking about the settling of the Americas.

And he argues that individuals who clear the land in order to settle are entitled to the fruit of their labors in that land and the produce it bears as long as they take just enough for themselves and their dependents and leave enough for others. Rather interesting. John Locke, leave enough for others.

Which is hardly the boundless acquisition rights advocated by some contemporary writers like Robert Nozick at Harvard in his *Anarchy, the State and Utopia*, if you're familiar with that literature. So John Locke then argued for the right to property. As he develops this about the state of nature, it becomes very apparent that this is his translation of that creation mandate that he was aware of in his Puritan Heritage.

The creation mandate implies that in the settling of lands that have never been tilled, you see, that we have a responsibility to subdue and to have dominion to steward, but take enough for yourself and leave enough for others. It's the stewardship mandate. All right, so what he has then is a theory of natural rights, a kind of natural law, okay, a kind of natural law that I think is more in the Stoic tradition, what is appropriate to rational beings rather than in the Thomistic tradition, where you have a teleology and certain natural inclinations and so on and so forth.

Now, the point is that in the state of nature, we have these rights. To have a right is also to have the right to assert and defend those rights. To resist attempts to take away those rights.

So, in the state of nature, there is the right to resist violent attack against one's life. There is a need to resist attempts to take away one's liberty and enslave one. And there is the right to resist attempts to take away your property, to resist the thief.

And it's in this context, therefore, that he talks about God-given rights. The civil society grows out of this need. The civil society is a contractual arrangement.

A contractual arrangement in which our lives together are brought under the rule of reason in order to preserve and to enhance our natural rights. In order to provide for justice. In order to ensure that people's needs are met so that they can exercise their rights properly.

Now, the civil society then embraces all sorts of contractual relationships. It includes marriage, which he sees as a contractual relationship brought under the rule of reason. It includes the master-servant relationship, where, in his day, I suppose, he was thinking of apprenticeship as well as employment.

And it includes, as well, the body politic government, as we think of it now. These are all contractual relationships. So then he has a contractarian basis for society and for social ethics.

A contractarian basis for government. Vastly different, obviously, than feudal monarch rights, divine right of kings, but a very different kind of contractarian arrangement than what you get in Thomas Hobbes, where it's out of fear for your life that you surrender all your rights. In Locke, it's not a matter of surrendering rights to the monarch.

It's a matter of the monarch working to preserve and enhance those rights. It's a very different kind of arrangement. And he therefore wanted a kind of constitutional government, a government with constitutional checks, division of powers, moral limitations on the power of the sovereign, moral limitations on the use of force in war, revolution, and so forth.

So it's a political theory that he works out in the application of a theory of natural rights. Well, that's as far as I think we need to go, then, on Locke. Do you see how it hangs together, the continuity of the thing? Ryan? I question how he compatibilizes his understanding of a revealed morality with his conceptualism.

I mean, it seems that if there's a revealed morality, it has to exist outside of our own minds, in a sense, the ideas of that morality. Yes. The question, though, is what are

our ideas of morality? You see, for the old medieval realism about universals, your ideas of morality are ideas of real universals, metaphysical entities that are either at work in nature or transcendent in some Platonic sense.

For a conceptualist, your ideas, your concepts, can be ideas of God's ideas. Get it? But wouldn't they then be real and outside of God? Oh, no, but ideas are not real in the sense that real universals are real. You see? The conceptualist grants that God has ideas.

God has general concepts, universal concepts in that sense, you see. So what the conceptualist ultimately is doing is, and this is evident, I think, in Abelard in the Middle Ages, the conceptualist there. What the conceptualist is doing is saying, now by what means can we know what God thinks about this? So Locke's means of moral knowledge become really three ways whereby we can gain some idea of what God thinks about human morality, what it should be.

One is by deduction from what it means to be a rational being. God made us rational beings. What does that imply? Another is from experience in the course of life.

God made life to function this way. What do we learn in the course of life, you see? A sort of common moral law that becomes evident. And then the third is revelation.

These are three ways in which we can get some idea of what God thinks. He's very plain that the empirical way, learning from experience, gives only some degree of probability. The surest of the three is revelation.

So I don't think there's any incompatibility between a conceptualist and one who says we can know what God thinks. All the conceptualist is denying is that there are independently real forms, universals in the Greek sense. What about Augustine in that sense? Didn't you say that he thought that they were ideas in the mind of God? Yeah, but they are also real principles that work in nature, the *rationes seminales*.

You see, the eternal, the *rationes eterne*, the eternal forms in the mind of God are God's preconceptions. But the *rationes* in nature are forms. Yeah, so Augustine's a realist.

Aquinas, likewise, for the same reason. David? I was afraid to ask this about Aquinas because when I was reading Locke, I didn't know why, but Aquinas kept popping into my head. Yes.

Are they totally different or similar? Well, you see, I just said that Aquinas is a realist. Yeah, a moderate kind of realist about universals. Because he thinks there are universal principles of a real sort, you see, involved in being an individual, being a human, being biologically an animal, being a physical being at all.

Real principles at work. Not just matter with processes that go on. But there is an inherent, intrinsic metaphysical principle that makes it that way.

You see. Now, Locke doesn't talk that way. When Locke talks of natural rights and natural law, he's talking of what is logically implicit in the general characteristic, the essence of being human.

And the essence is just a concept, remember. The essence of being human is that we are rational beings. Do you follow? Didn't Aquinas also say sort of like we could, sort of, by looking at nature, we could... Yes.

Yeah, but you see, Aquinas, as an Aristotelian, looks at nature differently than Locke, who is not an Aristotelian. When Aquinas looks at nature, Aristotelian epistemology, he is trying to abstract, you see, from that cumulative experience of a species, the nature of the real essence that's at work there. Of the real form that's at work.

Now, Locke talks of abstract ideas. But notice that what he says we're doing is abstracting from all the simple ideas we have, you see, what they have in common. It's more like a general idea, you see, an abstract general idea.

The form is not a generalization, you see. It's not simply a commonality. It's a real entity.

And what Locke is after is simply commonalities. Yeah, so there's a subtle difference there. But, you know, as you remember, the difference between Thomas Aquinas and conceptualism is not that great.

Remember the ambiguity and stump as he tries to make that distinction. OK, anything else? Yes, Janelle. Can you identify conceptualism as a political philosophy? He talks about freedom, power to act, versus the power to think or prefer.

It seems to me that he treats the power to act as more of a reality than the power to think. And that's what so much of the American rights is built upon. I don't know that it's more of a reality than the right to think.

You see, the basic premise for his entire ethic, including his political theory, is that we're rational beings. I think, therefore I exist. You know, he reiterates this.

And if the basic premise is that we're rational beings, that had better be real. Nothing had better be more real than that. You see.

The fact that we have the power to act is only significant because we are rational beings. If we did not have the freedom to act, then our rationality would not be that significant to him, I think. Yeah.

The purpose of thinking is so you can act. You know, that's the way it is in Bacon, Hobbes. Just going back to when we were talking about ideas, we talked about simple, complex, and abstract ideas.

I was wondering, first, whether abstract ideas are a type of complex ideas? Yeah. He certainly talks about abstract ideas initially in a section dealing with complex ideas. But then he comes back to them again later on, you recall, in a section that's dealing with the philosophy of language.

In other words, he's well aware that there is more to an abstract idea than simply an empirical generalization. You see. When I say that the human person is a rational being, I'm doing more than saying all humans think.

You see. And the way he puts it is, it is the essence of a human being. How do you get at an essence? You see.

Well, it's an essential characteristic that we've conceptualized. And it's in the conceptualization of the essential characteristic that we get this abstraction. Yeah.

Because the notion of an essential characteristic is very much an abstract idea. Yeah, let's try putting it this way. For Aquinas, you abstract something that is non-empirical from your experience.

For Locke, you think abstractly about something that is empirically observable in particular cases. You were rehearsing those words to yourself, I noticed. Let me try to say that again.

In Aquinas, you think abstractly about something that is not empirically observable. Namely, the universal principle, therefore. For Locke, you think abstractly about something that is empirically observable in particular cases.

But you think about it in detachment from all particularities. Yeah. I think that's as close as I can get to their ways of talking about it.

Yes, yes. He'd be very quick to say that. He is very quick to say that.

Well, I think he would want to say that there is nothing in the Bible that is contradictory to reason. What might it be? Oh, if somebody said he had a revelation from God to the effect that Jesus was not the Son of God. You see, that would be a revelation contradicting revelation, wouldn't it? A self-contradictory one.

Okay, let me try again. If he had a revelation from God to the effect that the laws of logic are invalid. So, all biblical truth.

Yeah, he seems to be saying that all biblical teaching is either in accordance with revelation or goes beyond revelation, but it does not contradict revelation. Did I say revelation? Wipe that off the board. All biblical teaching is either in accordance with reason or goes beyond reason, but does not contradict reason.

Yeah. I think that's where John Locke comes in. At least it must not contradict what the assured conclusions are.

Yes, you see, and it's this which in a way sets up a little more the tension between science and religion as it's going to be in the 19th century. Those of you who've read any of the historical stuff about this period, for instance, that Mark Knoll has been writing, realize that he talks, as historians do, of the Baconian ideal in science, that is to say of a purely objective kind of empirical science, which was accepted in the 18th century not only by Locke but by Scottish realists that we'll be talking about later on. And that in that way the Scottish realists who had such an influence on Christian thought in Britain and in this country in the 19th century were buying for what now we call scientific realism, a realistic understanding of science.

So that there is naturally going to be some conflict between the truth claims of science understood realistically, and the truth claims of religion understood realistically, you see. Well, you say, how else are you going to understand science? And science to speak realistically but only to speak about appearances because ultimate reality is not of the nature of matter but of mind, you see. And to this day, there is a realism, anti-realism controversy that goes on in the philosophy of science, you see.

If you follow at all the creation science business, remember the creation science controversy over evolution, what you have in the creation science movement, it seems to me, I don't follow it closely, but from what I read it seems to me that in the creation science movement, there is a very unqualified realism about science. And so they're not saying now science doesn't tell us about reality, they're saying true science does, but evolutionary science isn't true science, creation science is true science, you see. So what you get there is a conflict between two realistic readings of science, you see, which one is true.

There are others who will say that science only tells you about certain operational conditions in which further consequences are observable. So science cannot tell you about the nature of reality, particularly in things past and so forth. So there's no conflict.

And others again will say, well, wait a minute, science isn't that objective anyway. It may be attempting to tell us about reality, but there are all sorts of presuppositions at work in scientific work, and drawing on the Kuhnian revolution, you know, the structure of scientific revolutions, maintaining that while science might intend to tell us about reality, it's much more ambiguous in what it's actually saying than individual scientists often recognise. I'm wondering what Lark's problem was with Wesleyan and religious enthusiasm.

Yeah, he seems to think that the enthusiasts accept as revelation sorts of private intuitions they get, which are not checkable. But all by reason. They're not amenable to rational checks because they're private.

They're not public. I was reading yesterday an essay that Dr. Sarah Miles has in the latest issue of Perspectives, which is the Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation. I think it's the December issue.

January, you think, is the latest? No. Well, this was in the December issue. In which she discusses the science-and-theology debate as it was in the 18th century, and has a final section in which he discusses the enthusiasts, particularly Wesley.

Take a look at that. Which further consequences are observable? So science cannot tell you about the nature of reality, particularly in things past and so forth.

So there's no conflict. And others again will say, well, wait a minute, science isn't that objective anyway. It may be attempting to tell us about reality, but there is all sorts of presuppositions at work in scientific work, and drawing on the Kuhnian revolution, you know, the structure of scientific revolutions, maintaining that while science might intend to tell us about reality, it's much more ambiguous in what it's actually saying than individual scientists often recognize.

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Take a look at that. That says enough. I think the more that you have to say is about the provisionality of science, the fact of scientific change, the fact that science is not the kind of objective, empirically certain thing which it was thought to be back in Lark's day.

You understand? And then there are problems that we have to recognize here as well, with hermeneutical questions that are much more complex than they were thought to be back in Locke's day. So I think Locke's made a good start, but didn't realize the complexity of the problems involved. And I don't think the complexity of those problems in interpreting nature and in interpreting revelation could be seen as clearly until the emphasis on human subjectivity in science and in interpreting texts had surfaced, as it's now surfaced by the 20th century, which is why theories of interpretation are so crucial.

Esther? Is there in Locke, you mean? No. I don't know that he goes into that at any juncture. He's not writing apologetics.

Because, I mean, he states it's a source of revelation. Yeah, yeah. I'm asking myself, if Locke does not give an argument for the claim that the Bible is revelation, how would a Lockean argue for it? And I think the Lockean could argue in at least two ways.

One, granted we have argued effectively for the existence of a God, a personal rational deity who's capable of self-revelation, there is at least the possibility, the plausibility of there being a revelation. So you have to examine claims to revelation. How do you assess revelation claims, you think? Well, if the content of a revelation contradicts reason, you see, then that would count negatively.

If it is in accordance with reason, even if it goes beyond reason, that continues to make it acceptable, viable. Can you strengthen the probabilities any? Well, what about the points where it coincides, where there can be some rational justification? And what you got in British apologetics coming out of the Lockean period was an evidentialist approach to apologetics that I mentioned last time. So the attempt would be to find points within the scripture that could be confirmed by historical evidence.

So on and so forth. In other words, attempts to ascertain the truthfulness of what the scripture says. This might be done by historical evidence, it might be argued with probability by showing the consistency, the coherence.

There developed in the late 19th century an additional procedure that tried to avoid an implicit circularity. If it's a revelation, it must be true. It's true, so it must be a revelation.

No, that doesn't prove it. That's affirming the consequence, you see. And the attempt to avoid that circularity was to say, now, one thing the Bible claims is regarding Jesus Christ, who claims to tell the truth.

Not necessarily claims deity at this juncture, but claims to tell the truth. And in the light of that, you assess, is he telling the truth about himself? Now, if so, and he endorses the authority, the revelational authority of revelation, there is at least the possibility, the plausibility of there being a revelation. So you have to examine claims to revelation.

How do you assess revelation claims, you think? Well, if the content of a revelation contradicts reason, then that would count negatively. If it is in accordance with reason, even if it goes beyond reason, that continues to make it acceptable, viable. Can you strengthen the probabilities any? Well, what about the points where it coincides, where there can be some rational justification? And what you got in British apologetics coming out of the Lockean period was an evidentialist approach to apologetics that I mentioned last time.

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There developed in the late 19th century an additional procedure that tried to avoid an implicit circularity. If it's a revelation, it must be true. It's true, so it must be a revelation.

No, that doesn't prove it. That's affirming the consequence. And the attempt to avoid that circularity was to say, now, one thing the Bible claims, claims deity at this juncture.

It claims to tell the truth. And in the light of that, you assess, is he telling the truth about himself? Now, if so, and he endorses the authority, the revelational authority of scripture, then in accepting his authority, you accept the authority of scripture. Now, that's a line of argument developed by the Princeton theologian B.B. Warfield.

Whether it's sufficient, that's one of the questions under debate. But basically, the Lockean influence on apologetics was in the evidentialist direction. How do you justify believing that scripture is indeed divine revelation? What's the evidence, is his question.

Last question. I don't think of any particular place where he discusses it. I'd have to check the reasonableness of Christianity.

But I can hazard this in the light of the tradition out of which he comes. That the effect of the fall is not so much on the laws of thought as on our capacity to abide by the laws of thought. Not on the laws of thought, that's not us.

But on our willingness, emotional, and moral capacity to abide by the laws of thought. The prejudice that comes in, the blindness, and so on and so forth. Well, we're going to have to quit.

Somebody else is trying to get in.