



Contending with Christianity's Critics: Answering New Atheists and Other Objectors

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Contending with Christianity's Critics is book two in a series on modern Christian apologetics that began with the popular *Passionate Conviction* . This second installment, featuring writings from eighteen respected apologists such as Gary Habermas and Ben Witherington, addresses challenges from noted New Atheists like Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*) and other contemporary critics of Christianity concerning belief in God, the historical Jesus, and Christianity's doctrinal coherence. *Contending with Christianity's Critics* and *Passionate Conviction* are the result of national apologetics conferences sponsored by the Evangelical Philosophical Society (www.epsociety.org).

Contending with Christianity's Critics: Answering New Atheists and Other Objectors Details

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Paul says

Good book offering concise answers to an array of today's more popular-level challenges to Christianity brought out by New Atheists, Bart Ehrman, Internet Atheists, da Vinci Code/Jesus Seminar stuff, etc. All of the chapters are short, and that might matter more in other venues, but the critics this book interacts with are not known for the sophistication and erudition of their challenges to Christianity. The kind of criticisms the book addresses are those you're more likely to hear from your local village atheist, or just-History-channel-informed rank unbeliever.

Here's some of what you'll get: William Lane Craig consigns Dawkins's main argument against God in *The God Delusion* to dustbin of "the worst atheistic argument in the history of Western thought", thus relieving Stephen Hawking of that weighty title (so given to Hawking by atheist Quentin Smith). Victor Reppert offers his argument from reason, looking at some recent criticisms of it. Mark Linville addresses evolutionary ethics, and show the moral poverty of evolutionary naturalism, Greg Ganssle looks at Dawkins's "bets argument against God's existence," Robert Stein discusses the Gospel's authenticity, while Daniel Wallace critiques Bart Ehrman's arguments against New Testament Reliability, Gary Habermas discusses the early witness to Jesus Resurrection, and Craig Evans discusses how scholars fabricate Jesus. These are just some of the chapters in this volume.

There is a section on the coherence of Christian doctrine, but I generally found that to be less than helpful and something I wouldn't recommend without qualification. However, I found two notable contributions in this section: David Hunt critiqued Open Theism and Steve Porter defended Penal Substitution.

Overall, this book is a fine edition to the growing literature of responses to the new atheism, as well as other popular-level criticisms you'll find being made of Christianity.

Jeffrey Backlin says

My second favorite book from these conventions, good sections on history.

Douglas says

Bor-ring. Focus was on (1) The Existence of God (emphasis on philosophical rationalism), (2) The Jesus of History (emphasis on critique of criteria for determining authenticity in historical research), and (3) The Coherence of Christian Doctrine (emphasis on theism and stability of orthodox doctrine). Nothing new here. Perhaps the hope was that saying the same thing in a louder voice would make a difference.

Frank Peters says

This is a very good book that is a collection of essays. It also has one unfortunate Achilles heel: one or two

of the first essays are really nasty to read and appear to be designed only for a fully trained philosopher. After the first section of the book is complete, the rest of the essays are excellent. The final essay, which is an argument against open theology is out of place in this volume. Even the author of the essay apologizes for its inclusion, given that all of the other essays are addressing anti-Christian arguments. A few of the essays are completely outstanding. While I read the kindle version, I am inclined to purchase a paper copy for my library.

Sean Post says

This is a hefty and, at points, highly technical response to many of the key arguments leveled against Christianity by the New Atheists. It was somewhat disappointing to read this on kindle because I know I will have to refer back to my notes and highlights online rather than just grabbing a physical copy off the bookshelf. Really this is a reference book because I could never hope to retain all the data and arguments that are contained throughout.

The book has a dozen or so contributors so the chapters vary widely in readability and enjoyability. In particular, I appreciated Chapters 7 and 11 on authenticity of biblical manuscripts and how they've been handled. Daniel Wallace writes a brilliant piece on Bart Ehrman's bestselling "Misquoting Jesus". It is absolutely fantastic. Paul Copan's essays on Trinity and Incarnation (ch 14-15) are also very well done.

I recommend that you pick it up and just read the essays that look interesting to you.

Matt Norman says

Though I didn't think every argument was particularly compelling, I did find the book to be very interesting and that it had many insightful discussions that were worth the read.

Stephen says

Overall this is an informative book. It is not a book for beginners and not adequate for the advanced. It is suited for the intermediate. I give it three stars because the chapter on hell by Stewart Goetz essentially argues that we choose heaven by choosing to lead good lives and choose hell because we choose to lead not so good lives. This in no way compliments the rest of the chapters which are orthodox protestantism (though the chapter on the relationship between the divinity and humanity of Christ seemed to imply Nestorianism, that Jesus has two persons). It's also ironic that it follows the defense of penal substitution by Steve L. Porter. I cannot understand why Copan (the editor) would include such a heterodox, uncomplimentary argument that adds little theological understanding of heaven or hell. It was a huge mistake, in my opinion.

D W says

Formatting Problem

I first bought the Kindle version of this book some time ago and recently received an updated version.

Updated version contains 12 blank 'pages' between Table of Contents and Title plate before Preface. I don't believe these multiple blank 'pages' serve any useful purpose. If they don't, shouldn't they be deleted? To be clear, this is a criticism of the book's formatting only and not of its content.
