

# Letters From A Skeptic

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*Letters From A Skeptic*

2023-06-10

## MARISA KIRK

### The Case for Miracles David C Cook

"C. S. Lewis died in 1963, but I met him last week." Robert Velarde tells of an imaginative journey in which the literature professor mysteriously appears in Thomas Clerk's hospital room. "Call me Jack," the writer says as he invites Clerk to step into a wardrobe. From there the two embark on a remarkable journey through Lewis's life. They experience pivotal events from Lewis's childhood and meet many of his real and imaginary friends; they visit the Kilns with his brother, Warnie, and spend time in Oxford with fellow writers and Inklings J. R. R. Tolkien and Charles Williams. They also sit with Lewis's dying wife, Joy Davidman, and they even enter the world of Narnia. Along the way, Lewis challenges Clerk's thinking about the existence of God, the truth of Christianity, the problem of pain and suffering, the nature of love and much more. Are human beings a cosmic accident? Can we have morality without God? Was Jesus just a guru? Can we really believe in heaven and hell? Tom and Jack discuss these and many other questions, and they invite you to eavesdrop on their conversations. Prepare yourself for some of the most invigorating discussions you may ever experience this side of heaven.

### The Skeptic's Guide to the Paranormal Penguin

"Art of Mentoring" series In the book that he was born to write, provocateur and best-selling author Christopher Hitchens inspires future generations of radicals, gadflies, mavericks, rebels, angry young (wo)men, and dissidents. Who better to speak to that person who finds him or herself in a contrarian position than Hitchens, who has made a career of disagreeing in profound and entertaining ways. This book explores the entire range of "contrary positions"-from noble dissident to gratuitous pain in the

butt. In an age of overly polite debate bending over backward to reach a happy consensus within an increasingly centrist political dialogue, Hitchens pointedly pitches himself in contrast. He bemoans the loss of the skills of dialectical thinking evident in contemporary society. He understands the importance of disagreement-to personal integrity, to informed discussion, to true progress-heck, to democracy itself. Epigrammatic, spunky, witty, in your face, timeless and timely, this book is everything you would expect from a mentoring contrarian.

### Unbelievable? Oxford University Press

Is God to blame? This is often the question that comes to mind when we confront real suffering in our own lives or in the lives of those we love. Pastor Gregory A. Boyd helps us deal with this question honestly and biblically, while avoiding glib answers. Writing for ordinary Christians, Boyd wrestles with a variety of answers that have been offered by theologians and pastors in the past. He finds that a fully Christian approach must keep the person and work of Jesus Christ at the very center of what we say about human suffering and God's place in it. Yet this is often just what is missing and what makes so much talk about the subject seem inadequate and at times even misleading. What comes through in *Is God to Blame?* is a hopeful picture of a sovereign God who is relentlessly opposed to evil, who knows our sufferings and who can be trusted to bring us through them to renewed life.

### Describing Inner Experience? InterVarsity Press

Written in a respectful and conversational style, this unique book is designed to promote constructive dialogue and foster mutual understanding between Christians and non-Christians. The author, a skeptic and journalist, asks basic questions about Christian belief. What is the born-again experience? Why would God want to sacrifice his only son for the world? Do miracles really happen? How reliable is the Bible? What is the rapture? Why isn't everyone

a Christian? Each question is followed by commentary and analysis that is skeptical and tough but never argumentative or condescending. Christians will find the book useful as a basis for developing their apologetics, while skeptics will welcome Harrison's probing rational analysis of religious claims.

### How to Talk to a Skeptic Zondervan

Thomas Jefferson and the founding fathers intended a strict separation of church and state, right? He would have been very upset to find out about a child praying in a public school or a government building used for religious purposes, correct? Actually, the history on this has been very distorted. While Jefferson may seem to be the Patron Saint of the ACLU, his words and actions showed that he would totally disagree with the idea of driving God out of the public square. Doubting Thomas documents that. . . \* Jefferson said that our rights come from God. God-given rights are non-negotiables. \* At the time that he wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom---major contributions to human and religious rights---Jefferson served diligently as a vestryman (like an elder and a deacon rolled into one) for the Episcopal Church. \* In 1777, he wrote up the charter for the Calvinistical Reformed Church in his town with an evangelical preacher, the Rev. Charles Clay--with whom he had a lifelong friendship. Jefferson was the biggest single contributor to this fledgling congregation. \* Jefferson had nothing but the highest praise for Jesus' teaching, which he studied religiously (even in the original Greek), in order to pattern his life after that which he called "the most sublime and benevolent code of morals which has ever been offered to man." \* As president, he attended church on a regular basis at the US Capitol building, even sometimes recommending preachers to fill that pulpit. \* He had many positive relationships with orthodox clergymen and active lay Christians. \* He actively supported

Christian causes, financially, in ways that would put the average Christian to shame. \* He set out to create a non-denominational college that accommodated Christian groups of different stripes. And on it goes. Historical revisionism has distorted the religious views of Thomas Jefferson, making him far more skeptical than he was. But there is no doubt that by the end of his life, he seemed to privately embrace Unitarian views of the Christian faith, while outwardly supporting and attending his local Trinitarian church. Thus, a legacy of Jefferson's has been taken out of context and used to squelch religious freedom in America. Ironically, religious freedom was one of Jefferson's core beliefs and contributions. But this is being turned on its head. Chiseled in stone at the Jefferson Memorial are his famous words: "The God who gave us life gave us liberty. And can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the Gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath?" Regardless of Jefferson's private religious views, he stood solidly against the state making theological decisions for its people. Therefore, he would stand solidly against the anti-Christian crusade being carried out in his name today. It's time to set the record straight. *Belief and Truth* Simon and Schuster

New York Times bestselling author Lee Strobel trains his investigative sights on the hot-button question: is it really credible to believe God intervenes supernaturally in people's lives today? This provocative book starts with an unlikely interview in which America's foremost skeptic builds a seemingly persuasive case against the miraculous. But then Strobel travels the country to quiz scholars to see whether they can offer solid answers to atheist objections. Along the way, he encounters astounding accounts of healings and other phenomena that simply cannot be explained away by naturalistic causes. The book features the results of exclusive new scientific polling that shows miracle accounts are much more common than people think. What's more, Strobel delves into the most controversial question of all: what about miracles that don't happen? If God can intervene in the world, why doesn't he do it more often to relieve suffering? Many American Christians are embarrassed by the supernatural, not wanting to look odd or extreme to their neighbors. Yet, *The Case for Miracles* shows not only that the miraculous is possible, but that God still does intervene in our world in awe-inspiring

ways. Here's a unique book that examines all sides of this issue and comes away with a passionate defense for God's divine action in lives today. Also available: *The Case for Miracles* Spanish edition, kids' edition, and student edition.

*Love Songs for Skeptics* InterVarsity Press

Award-winning reporter and author Lee Strobel uses his investigative skills to address the primary objections to Christianity.

**The Jesus Legend** Oxford University Press

Greg Boyd and his father, Ed, were on opposite sides of a great divide. Greg was a newfound Christian, while his father was a longtime agnostic. So Greg offered his father an invitation: Ed could write with any questions on Christianity, and his son would offer a response. *Letters from a Skeptic* contains this special correspondence.

*Letters to a Young Contrarian* Baker Books

Share Your Faith Effectively in a Cynical and Skeptical Age Talking about faith with friends and family members can be a daunting prospect. What do you say if they have questions you can't answer or if they're outright hostile toward God? Actually, you don't have to have all the right answers, just the right questions--and a willingness to listen. As trust and understanding grow, the door to fruitful dialogue will open. *How to Talk to a Skeptic* shows you how to: · Ask probing questions and avoid being on the defensive in spiritual conversations. · Tell God's story of the world in a winsome and easily understood way. · Gently respond to the most common misunderstandings skeptics have about God.

Here's a natural, relational approach to evangelism and a proven way to reach out to an unbelieving world.

*Across the Spectrum* Penguin

Named one of the Top 10 Books of the Year in 2020 by the Academy of Parish Clergy "Drawing on his own spiritual journey, David Gushee provides an incisive critique of American evangelicalism [and] offers a succinct yet deeply informed guide for post-evangelicals seeking to pursue Christ-honoring lives." —Kristin Kobes Du Mez, *Calvin University* Millions are getting lost in the evangelical maze: inerrancy, indifference to the environment, deterministic Calvinism, purity culture, racism, LGBTQ discrimination, male dominance, and Christian nationalism. They are now conscientious objectors, deconstructionists, perhaps even "none and done." As one of

America's leading academics speaking to the issues of religion today, David Gushee offers a clear assessment and a new way forward for disillusioned post-evangelicals. Gushee starts by analyzing what went wrong with U.S. white evangelicalism in areas such as evangelical history and identity, biblicism, incredible theologies, and the fundamentalist understandings of race, politics, and sexuality. Along the way, he proposes new ways of Christian believing and of listening to God and Jesus today. He helps post-evangelicals know how to belong and behave, going from where they are to a living relationship with Christ and an intellectually cogent and morally robust post-evangelical faith. He shows that they can have a principled way of understanding Scripture, a community of Christ's people, a healthy politics, and can repent and learn to listen to people on the margins. With a foreword from Brian McLaren, who says, "David Gushee is right: there is indeed life after evangelicalism," this book offers an essential handbook for those looking for answers and affirmation of their journey into a future that is post-evangelical but still centered on Jesus. If you, too, are struggling, *After Evangelicalism* shows that it is possible to cut loose from evangelical Christianity and, more than that, it is necessary.

**Genesis 1-11** Zondervan

Shares an account of his religiously transformative near-death experience and revealing week-long coma, describing his scientific study of near-death phenomena while explaining what he learned about the nature of human consciousness.

*The Case Against Miracles* Little, Brown

This book offers explanations for twenty-seven phenomena that appear to defy known science, including ghosts and poltergeists, walking over hot coals, telepathic spoonbending, yogic levitation, and many others.

*Living at the Crossroads* Routledge

The modern world portrays Jesus in many ways for many reasons. Some are well-intentioned but misguided, others are aberrations, still others have some but not all the essential keys. In order to see and understand the real Jesus and what the Gospels say about him, we have to see him in his first-century context—and work out from there. Here is a portrait of Jesus that in some ways will affirm what traditional Christianity has always understood about him...and, in other ways, upend it altogether. Award-winning author Mark Clark delves into the person and work of

Jesus of Nazareth: his parables and miracles, his controversial challenge of discipleship and obedience, his seemingly insane claim to be God, and what his death and resurrection (if they did happen) actually mean. Mark is unafraid to tackle questions such as: What would first-century Jews have immediately recognized about Jesus that modern Christians often miss? What do the Gospels accomplish, and can we trust them? Is there a problem with science and Jesus' miracles? What are the barriers stopping people from following him? And what is Christianity in light of an accurate portrayal of the object of its faith? *The Problem of Jesus* engages with ideas from all realms of study: from Malcolm Gladwell and Jordan Peterson to historians, scientists, and philosophers; from N.T. Wright to C.S. Lewis; from *Star Wars* to *Pretty Woman*—all unite to form a breathtaking and accurate portrait of Jesus, the man, the message, and the mission, who forever altered the course of human history. "As a former atheist, I would call this book philosophical dynamite...*The Problem of Jesus* will take your thinking about Jesus—and your relationship with him—to whole new levels." —Pastor and author, Ray Johnston.

#### Benefit of the Doubt Baker Books

We live in an age of skepticism. Our society places such faith in empirical reason, historical progress, and heartfelt emotion that it's easy to wonder: Why should anyone believe in Christianity? What role can faith and religion play in our modern lives? In this thoughtful and inspiring new book, pastor and New York Times bestselling author Timothy Keller invites skeptics to consider that Christianity is more relevant now than ever. As human beings, we cannot live without meaning, satisfaction, freedom, identity, justice, and hope. Christianity provides us with unsurpassed resources to meet these needs. Written for both the ardent believer and the skeptic, *Making Sense of God* shines a light on the profound value and importance of Christianity in our lives.

#### The Magician's Book Baker Academic

A New York Times bestseller people can believe in—by "a pioneer of the new urban Christians" (*Christianity Today*) and the "C.S. Lewis for the 21st century" (*Newsweek*). Timothy Keller, the founding pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, addresses the frequent doubts that skeptics, and even ardent believers, have about religion. Using literature, philosophy,

real-life conversations, and potent reasoning, Keller explains how the belief in a Christian God is, in fact, a sound and rational one. To true believers he offers a solid platform on which to stand their ground against the backlash to religion created by the Age of Skepticism. And to skeptics, atheists, and agnostics, he provides a challenging argument for pursuing the reason for God.

#### *Proof of Heaven* Henry Holt and Company

*A Friendly Letter to Skeptics and Atheists* helps readers—both secular and religious—appreciate their common ground. For those whose thinking has moved from the religious thesis to the skeptical antithesis (or vice versa), Myers offers pointers to a science-respecting Christian synthesis. He shows how skeptics and people of faith can share a commitment to reason, evidence, and critical thinking, while also embracing a faith that supports human flourishing—by making sense of the universe, giving meaning to life, connecting us in supportive communities, mandating altruism, and offering hope in the face of adversity and death.

#### *Is God to Blame?* John Wiley & Sons

Katja Maria Vogt's *Belief and Truth: A Skeptic Reading of Plato* explores a Socratic intuition about the difference between belief and knowledge. Beliefs -- doxai -- are deficient cognitive attitudes. In believing something, one accepts some content as true without knowing that it is true; one holds something to be true that could turn out to be false. Since our actions reflect what we hold to be true, holding beliefs is potentially harmful for oneself and others. Accordingly, beliefs are ethically worrisome and even, in the words of Plato's Socrates, "shameful." As Vogt argues, this is a serious philosophical proposal and it speaks to intuitions we are likely to share. But it involves a notion of belief that is rather different from contemporary notions. Today, it is a widespread assumption that true beliefs are better than false beliefs, and that some true beliefs (perhaps those that come with justifications) qualify as knowledge. Socratic epistemology offers a genuinely different picture. In aiming for knowledge, one must aim to get rid of beliefs. Knowledge does not entail belief -- belief and knowledge differ in such important ways that they cannot both count as kinds of belief. As long as one does not have knowledge, one should reserve judgment and investigate by thinking through possible ways of seeing things. According to Vogt, the ancient skeptics and Stoics draw many of these ideas from Plato's

dialogues, revising Socratic-Platonic arguments as they see fit. *Belief and Truth* retraces their steps through interpretations of the *Apology*, *Ion*, *Republic*, *Theaetetus*, and *Philebus*, reconstructs Pyrrhonian investigation and thought, and illuminates the connections between ancient skepticism and relativism, as well as the Stoic view that beliefs do not even merit the evaluations "true" and "false."

#### **Skeptic** InterVarsity Press

In *Benefit of the Doubt*, influential theologian, pastor, and bestselling author Gregory Boyd invites readers to embrace a faith that doesn't strive for certainty, but rather for commitment in the midst of uncertainty. Boyd rejects the idea that a person's faith is as strong as it is certain. In fact, he makes the case that doubt can enhance faith and that seeking certainty is harming many in today's church. Readers who wrestle with their faith will welcome Boyd's message that experiencing a life-transforming relationship with Christ is possible, even with unresolved questions about the Bible, theology, and ethics. Boyd shares stories of his own painful journey, and stories of those to whom he has ministered, with a poignant honesty that will resonate with readers of all ages.

#### Making Sense of God SPCK

Greg Boyd and his father, Ed, were on opposite sides of a great divide. Greg was a newfound Christian, while his father was a longtime agnostic. So Greg offered his father an invitation: Ed could write with any questions on Christianity, and his son would offer a response. *Letters from a Skeptic* contains this special correspondence. The letters tackle some of today's toughest challenges facing Christianity, including Do all non-Christians go to hell? How can we believe a man rose from the dead? Why is the world so full of suffering? How do we know the Bible was divinely inspired? Does God know the future? Each response offers insights into the big questions, while delivering intelligent answers that connect with both the heart and mind. Whether you're a skeptic, a believer, or just unsure, these letters can provide a practical, common-sense guide to the Christian faith.

#### *Seeing Is Believing* Zondervan

Examines the apparent contradictions in the world and explains how the invisible, natural, and supernatural worlds might interact and affect people's daily lives.