

# CUMULATIVE CASE APOLOGETICS

## INTRODUCTION

Entirely compatible with evidential apologetics, cumulative case apologetics argues that over time the accumulative evidence for the existence for God can be seen to be more compelling.

Every piece of evidence – historical, personal, archaeological, literary, philosophical – when added together, offers an increased probability of the existence of God.

On their own, each individual theory and piece of evidence does offer some evidence, but combined they offer a far more powerful case for God's existence.

## WHAT EVIDENCE?

- The universe – connected to the teleological argument, creation, with its order, purpose, and regularity. It also includes the existence and validity of mathematics, along with the laws of logic and science.
- Morality – connected to the moral argument, the existence of universal moral values.
- Human beings – their existence, consciousness, rationality, free agency, enigmatic nature, moral and aesthetic impulse, and their need for meaning and purpose in life.
- Personal experience – connected to evidential apologetics, our spiritual nature and religious experience, the miraculous events of Christianity, and the unique character and claims of Jesus Christ

## PROFESSOR BASIL MITCHELL

The theologian and philosopher, Basil Mitchell (1917-2011), argued that the question of whether there is a God is not just a scientific one, but a sociological and metaphysical one.

A good analogy is comparing this form of apologetics to a court case. In any court case, we find lawyers offering evidence to defend or prosecute, bringing in all manner of witnesses, before a judgement is arrived at. This judgement is made by weighing up all the evidence together, not just one or two pieces.

To Mitchell, it makes much more sense to take the evidence as a whole, to weigh it all up before reaching a judgement on whether or not God exists.

**PROFESSOR RICHARD SWINBURNE**

Professor of Philosophy at Oxford University, Swinburne (1934-) also supports this approach to apologetics, writing:

*'Scientists, historians, and detectives observe data and proceed thence to some theory about what best explains the occurrence of these data... We find that the view that there is a God explains everything we observe, not just some narrow range of data... The very same criteria which scientists use to reach their own theories lead us to move beyond those theories to a creator God who sustains everything in existence.'*

*(‘Is There A God?’, 1997)*

**TASK**

*'Cumulative case apologetics is the best argument for God's existence.'*

Do you agree? In your answer, refer to other arguments that you've learned about, e.g. teleological, evidential, ontological.