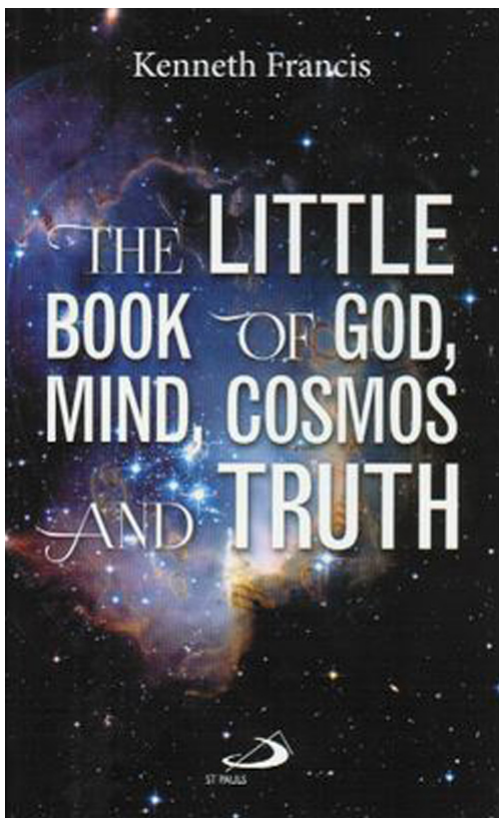


Book Review: The Little Book of God, Mind, Cosmos and Truth

by Daniel Mallock (August 2017)



The Little Book of God, Mind, Cosmos and Truth
Kenneth Francis, St Pauls Publishing, £8.95



Apologetics is a long-honored tradition in Christian theological writing. It has a target audience and a core following of true appreciators. The target demographic, that is the disbeliever and the non-Christian, seems rarely interested. For Christians of all sorts, apologetics is the logical case made for the existence of God and for Jesus

Christ as the Messiah. Apologetics has nothing to do with apologizing for anything.

The conundrum that is a consequence of the elegant and logical defense of belief-in-(Christian) religion, a belief that is essentially a matter of faith rather than of logic, as the author of this book has so finely done, is not a relevant issue. The deployment by this or any apologetics author of logical argument and critical reasoning to justify beliefs that are fundamentally based in faith is no contradiction because Christianity originated in the western tradition.

Kenneth Francis's excellent book, [*The Little Book of God, Mind, Cosmos and Truth*](#) (St Pauls Publishing, £8.95), does an admirable job of arguing some of the key issues relating to belief and to human existence. Don't be misled by the title; its 130-odd pages contain more than enough challenging arguments, evidence, and pertinent references for any book in the same milieu of twice or thrice the length. Mr. Francis has tackled a mighty subject and done it handily in an approachable, entertaining, and enlightening way. Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," noted for its brevity, but remembered for its authoritative power, comes to mind. Sometimes, brevity is a benefit.

Mr. Francis, a scholar of theology, allows his arguments to make the case rather than open with a mission statement. His epilogue begins in this way: "Throughout this book, I have endeavored to make a case for the rationality and truth for belief in God and Christianity." Honest to his subject and with a passion common to apologetics, Mr. Francis puts his keen mind, thorough knowledge, and talent for disputation expertly on display.

The core audience (Christian believers) will applaud at Mr. Francis's erudite arguments and mastery of his subject. The skeptical humanist, atheist, and agnostic will have a different response more in line with the classic refrain of the Missourian—"Show me!" The author delivers the goods.

Francis confidently declares that, "believing in God is not an act of blind faith, but belief based on reasonable, sound, reliable trust." One of his many arguments is that if God does not exist then humans are simply "machines made of meat" whose artifices of morality, ethics, and decency are all mere facades of expediency, chance, and habit. In fact, Mr. Francis makes an excellent case that the "morality" of secular humanists is nothing more than the unadmitted adoption (or aping) of Judeo-Christian ethics and morals. How can there be any ethics if humans and the planet that they live on are all mistakes of a chaotic universe without guidance or a Guide? If there is no essential truth from God, then every system of ethics is just as good or right as any other. The absence of God seems then essential to the multiculturalist. Without a fundamental truth of what is good and right, then all systems of or attempts at ethics are, by definition, subjective and false.

The problem of morals and ethics is resolved when one accepts that God exists. Numerous arguments to support this contention are offered by Mr. Francis in a readable and approachable way that not only Christians will appreciate. Any display of logical thinking and elegant argument construction is a pleasure to read, whatever your particular viewpoint (so long as the reader reveres logical and critical thinking and writing). Mr. Francis's intellectual, rhetorical, and

theological talents are on display for the delight of the interested and thoughtful reader. Covering subjects from God, Jesus, the Apostles, Near Death Experiences (NDEs), Evil and Suffering, Ouija Boards and the Occult, to Secular Humanism, and the problem of "meaning" in a world with or without God (and/or Jesus Christ) the author offers a plethora of arguments for why the reader should believe in God and Jesus and why disbelief is essentially a *bizarre intellectual abandonment of logic* (my words, not the author's).

The problem of meaning and values is a central issue. Regarding the philosopher Nietzsche and his famous assertion that "God is dead," Mr. Francis writes that this concept "...gave great comfort to psychopaths and those seeking moral autonomy. In other words, everything is permitted if God does not exist."

The issue of meaning is one of the central issues of religion and of philosophy, too. If there is no God, then humanity itself and everything that we do is an accident—a galactic happenstance—that shatters human attempts to ascribe meaning and value to thoughts, actions, feelings, and to life itself. Mr. Francis colorfully describes the absence of God in this way: "Without God, we would be nothing more than evolved slime fighting for survival amongst a multitude of advanced apes dressed in skirts and suits with delusions of intellectual grandeur."

Arguments that defend the existence of God, and Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God, are a time-honored tradition for Christian theologians, philosophers, logicians, and scholars. Mr. Francis is safely ensconced among them with this strongly written, and elegantly argued book.

Critics might suggest that there is a certain triumphalism in the genre as all arguments appear to lead to a seemingly pre-ordained conclusion. Such criticism would miss the point, however. In this short but weighty book Mr. Francis asserts what he believes to be true because they are his beliefs *and* because the logical arguments that he presents to the reader support his conclusions.

Logic is not meant to be manipulatable in the same way that statistics can tell whatever story a statistician wishes. Logic and argument are supposed to allow a critical and rational thinker the ability to follow evidence and arrive at conclusions based on both the arguments and the evidence presented. Much like a detective the logician/theologian/scholar is obliged to follow the evidence wherever it might lead. When set out by the apologetics author, the reader does the same. That the conclusion is in favor of God and Jesus is no fault of the author nor is it manipulation of the reader.

In the best apologetics the arguments are solid, the thought-process reasoned and clear, and the logic correct so that the reader can follow the course of the discussion and logical evidence and see that the outcome fits and is reasonable, reasoned, and sensible. The reader may not accept the result of the intellectual exercise thus presented, but that does not mean that the theologian/author/scholar/logician has failed.

While reading this book I was reminded of a lecture that I attended on eschatology some years ago. In a discussion with the Christian lecturer after the program, this conversation

occurred in the parking lot:

Lecturer: Did you enjoy the lecture?

Me: Yes, very much.

Lecturer: Does this subject of Christianity resonate with you?

Me: Yes, it does.

Lecturer: You've studied this subject.

Me: Yes.

Lecturer: Yet, you retain your connection to your current belief system.

Me: Yes.

Lecturer: How do you retain your connection to your current belief system?

Me: It's difficult.



Daniel Mallock is the author of