

An Evangelical Appraisal of Greek Philosophy in General and Aristotle in Particular

By Dr. Robert A. Morey

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Introduction

Evangelical Christians have historically held fast to the principle of sola scriptura as defined by the Protestant Reformers. The truth about God, man, sin and salvation has been revealed in the Bible alone. The self-revelation of God in Scripture is thus the final court of appeal in all matters of faith and practice. To “go beyond what is Written” leads to conceit and pride ([1 Cor. 4:6](#)).

While Roman Catholics base their theology on a combination of the Bible and pagan philosophers, particularly Aristotle, the Reformers were men of the Book. They knew that Romans 1 and 2 teach that natural theology is useless because sinful man suppresses any truth he might have derived from the creation around him or the conscience within him. Man shuts his eyes and plugs his ears and then wonders why he does not see the light or hear the music of God’s existence and attributes. Thus, sinful man naturally goes into idolatry as Paul illustrates in Romans.

Evangelicals follow the same path as the Early Church Fathers who denounced Greek philosophers (such as Plato and Aristotle) as demon-possessed. They boldly proclaimed that Christ and Jerusalem had nothing to do with Baal and Athens. As I demonstrated in the book, *Battle of the Gods*, the early Christians had nothing but contempt for pagan theology and philosophy.

The Early Church was Jewish in origin and reflected the orthodox Jewish hostility toward heathen religions. One will search in vain to find a single prophet of God in the Old Testament who showed any appreciation for heathen religions or philosophies. The Gentiles and their religions were all condemned as idolatrous and demonic in worship ([Deut. 32:17](#); [Psa. 106:36-37](#)). The apostles followed the prophets and thus repeated the same condemnation ([1 Cor. 10:20](#); [Gal. 4:8](#); [Rev. 9:20](#)).

What about the Lord Jesus? Surely He must have said something to indicate that God appreciated all the pagan philosophers. Alas, Jesus was just as exclusive as the prophets before Him and the apostles after Him. His words to the Samaritan woman, “Salvation is from the Jews” ([John 4:22](#)), clearly mean that salvation is not from the Greeks, Romans, Indians, Chinese, Africans, Europeans, as well as the Samaritans. Jesus’ words in [John 14:6](#): “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to Father but through me,” forever doom all the ecumenical delusions of such apostates as Peter Kreeft.

While modern Romanists, Protestant liberals, Witches, and New Agers join in an ecumenical frenzy of exalting pagan philosophy, Evangelicals exalt the Word of God. They know that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, according to the Bible alone.

With these few introductory words, the following statement represents the historic Evangelical position:

Since no one seeks after the God who is there, all natural religion has its origin in man’s suppression of and rebellion against natural revelation.

Greek philosophy is just as apostate as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam or Animism. The gods of the Greek philosophers were demonic in origin and idolatrous in nature. The Greek philosophers never found the true God. Their theology sprang from their worship of the creation instead of the Creator, who is blessed forever. Their foolish hearts were darkened as they gave themselves to vain speculations and immoral practices. Their so-called “proofs” for the existence of their false deities do not lead to the one true God of Scripture. Since they do not speak according to the Law and the prophets, they have no light.

The Pagan Philosopher Aristotle

What then shall we say about Aristotle (387-322 B.C.)? He is rightly called, “The High Priest of Empiricism” (John Gates, *Adventures in the History of Philosophy: An Introduction From a Christian Viewpoint*, Zondervan, 1961, p. 27). Any standard reference work on the history of philosophy, secular or Christian, will document that Aristotle believed that all knowledge comes to us via the five senses. This automatically excludes any and all forms of supernaturalism, Christianity included.

Not only is his epistemology anti-Christian, Aristotle’s views on all other subjects are just as pernicious. His metaphysical dichotomy of “form/essence” produced the heresy of the secular/sacred dichotomy that kept papist priests in power for centuries. The idea that the form of something need not correspond to its essence, not only renders knowledge impossible, but it provided the philosophic framework in which the blasphemy of the popish error of transubstantiation in the Mass developed. His ethical relativism was based on a pleasure/pain sliding scale that has no room for the Ten Commandments.

Humanistic “evangelical” philosophers pretend that Aristotle believed in the one true God found in the Bible. But anyone who actually reads the works of Aristotle knows that he was a polytheist. Among the gods and goddesses he worshiped, Aristotle paid homage to a supreme deity whom he defined as “thought thinking itself.”

How anyone can confuse the Triune God of Scripture with an abstract principle of “thought thinking itself” is beyond us. Aristotle’s supreme deity thinks only on itself. How one can reconcile this god with the God revealed in [John 3:16](#) remains a mystery.

Any Christian who is under the delusion that we can find the basis of Christian theology and philosophy in the works of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle or pagan philosophy in general, is either ignorant or deceptive. No philosopher ever found the true God by human reason, experience, feelings or faith. There is no other foundation for truth, justice, morals, meaning and beauty than Jesus Christ!

Recommended Book: [The Bible, Natural Law, and Natural Theology: Conflict or Compromise?](#)



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