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TRUST of
PEOPLE, 
WORDS, 
and GOD

A ROUTE FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

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demons are believers, according to the letter of James: “You believe that God is one, even the demons believe, and tremble.” But, presumably, their believing does not save the demons; indeed, demon-like believing does not save anyone. Whence, then, salvation? From God? Yes; but without anything on anyone’s part? The supposition behind this book is that trusting is key; trustings directed towards some people and towards some words and towards God are key to what theistic religion offers as the target of hope. Or should trusting be directed towards God but not towards words and not towards people? Responses to such questions may come from theologians. But philosophers can make precise the questions.

This book takes up the fiducial side of theistic religion. Philosophy of religion typically offers much on characteristics of God as one, simple, eternal, and free, as well as much on arguments for and against the existence of God. Typically also, philosophy of religion considers the relationship between God and evil. When philosophy of religion does consider religious believing, it offers little. It tends to construe the biblical *pistis* as holding propositions to be true, and then to consider what might serve as sufficient justification for holding some proposition to be true in matters religious.

But religion *as practiced* includes how people live as well as what they hold to be true. While maybe it is love or obedience that is central to religious living and to theistic religious living, it is the relation of trusting that has a central or, I propose, even the central role in how people relate to God. We are saved “through trust,” according to the Pauline Letter to the Ephesians (2:8, *dia pisteos*). Trusting, in the *practice* of theistic religion, is my topic for philosophy of religion.

*Opening hands* is an image for such practice. Reflection on this image will return in this book’s conclusion. Suffice it here to note
that the image is polyvalent, a multiple metaphor. It may be misleading to have a metaphor for the thesis of a book, so if this one gets in the way, drop it.

The biblical *pistis*, rendered both as believing-that and as believing-in, subsequently became, in the history of Christianity and in the Reformation debates, “faith” (*fides*) and “confidence” (*fiducia*). (I myself would be content to see New Testament translations replace most of the two-hundred-plus occurrences of “faith” with “trust.”)

People give thought to trust in ethics, in epistemology, and in social and political theory, as we shall see. But they hesitate to apply their thinking about trust to matters religious. Yet key words naming one’s relationship to what religion is about are plausibly translated as “trust.” I think of not only the Greek *pistis* but also of the Hebrew *emunah*, the Arabic *iman*, the Sanskrit *visvasa*, and the Japanese *tariki*.

Trusting well is a further matter. Trust should be rationed, it seems—extended to the trustworthy and withheld from the treacherous. Yet some religious trusting is proposed as ideally unconditional. Yet even among those calling for religious trusting directed towards God, there can be sin in such trusting: Thomas Aquinas proposes that, while trust directed towards God should not be limited, it is a worse sin to trust God badly than to trust oneself badly.² So what might bad trusting directed towards God be? Is it like bad trusting directed towards some people?

This book is an essay, in two senses. It is one essay with a unity of topic and treatment. It also endeavors to push into territory less mapped even if more lived in. Other authors, I hope, will improve on the effort I make in this book. If *fides quaerens intellectum* has been receiving its due, then consider this an effort towards *fiducia quaerens intellectum*. The territory from which the book pushes may be less familiar to those whose primary background is theology, since the book draws on others’ thought in ethics, epistemology, and ontology as well as in philosophy of religion.

This book began as further thoughts after my 1987 *A Philosophy of Human Hope*. I was not content with that book’s treatment of trust. As I worked in philosophy of religion, I had a double realization: trust is important in religion, even central to it; and well-known treatments of trust do not readily fit the trust called for in a religious
context. That trusting is more central than, say, compassion, or love, I do not substantially argue, although I have proposed some such thought elsewhere.

Besides its focus on the fiducial side of theistic religion, a number of features distinguish this book. My central proposal consists of a fourfold way of understanding trusting together with a core meaning for trusting, a definition that both fits and ranges over varieties of fiducial experience. It surveys how others understand trusting and how these provide depth to my approach. It shows how trusting may be understood analogously, and it moves to an “analogy of recommendation”: Go and do likewise in your trusting. It argues for and employs distinguishing between vulnerability and dependence; and this distinguishing between vulnerability and dependence in thinking about trust is unusual.

The book considers ways in which trusting may be done well and thus may be virtuous, not presuming that trusting is ipso facto good as well as not presuming that everything else “is not really trust.” It considers how knowing is helpful for good trusting, and how trusting is helpful for knowing. Furthermore, it proposes that even to believe-that is to trust—to trust propositions to put a person in cognitive contact with the way things are. It presents ontological models that are plausibly assumed for my own and others’ thinking. It studies arguments linking trusting with God derived from proponents working explicitly with trust: Richard Taylor, Hans Küng, Donald Evans, and then myself. Some aspects of the works of Richard Foley, Alvin Plantinga, and Richard Swinburne also figure in considering arguments linking trusting and God. One might label some forms of such arguments “cosmofiducial,” “ontofiducial,” and “teleofiducial.” The book then turns these reflections towards religious faith, considering trusting in religion, in theism, and in Christian theism. It delivers questions from a philosopher of religion to theologians, especially questions to Christian theologians. Its conclusion offers a brief look at trusting and evil as well as a summary reflection.

To focus is to limit: there are several things this book is not. It is not about trustworthy things, nor is it about trustworthy persons, nor about doing things with trustworthy words, nor weighing whether
God is trustworthy. (It might be instructive to consider whether traditional transcendental—real, one, good, and true—might include trustworthiness as genuine.) This book focuses on what a person is doing when trusting; only incidentally does it address the trusted.

Further, this book is not about suspicion. There is plenty of material considering the best ways to be suspicious about people, suspicious about words or discourse, and suspicious about religion, theism, and God. While it does not chart how to develop sound trusting, readers may along the way glean ideas about better ways to engage in trusting.

In several senses of the term, this book is not a theology. It is not a treatise about God either as a natural theology or as a philosophical theology. It does not present an understanding of God in terms either of metaphysical predicates such as eternal, one, or simple, or of economic predicates such as creator, redeemer, or incarnate.

Neither is it a theology in the sense that it takes a particular “God” discourse as normative because it has normative status in some religious community. However, it does deal with some theology, it does offer some questions for theology, and it does have implications for theology. It is thus similar to philosophy of science, reflecting on what scientists are doing, raising questions, and generating both understanding of what these scientists are doing and recommendations for doing it better. So this book will yield some recommendations: in the matters of people, words, and God, “Go and do likewise; do some trusting like this.” It is up to theologians to set forth their understandings of those features of religion, theism, and Christianity that meet, overturn, surpass, or fall short of the understandings of religiously situated trusting that I develop in these pages.

This book does not take up evil to any extent. It does offer a brief sketch in its conclusion, but there is no treatment of evils as grounds for withholding trust. Accordingly, recommendations are provisional and conclusions are prima facie.

The method involves ideas and techniques from Anglo-American analytic philosophy, Continental philosophy, and scholastic-Thomistic philosophy in ways consistent with the deeper instincts of these styles. Philosophy since Descartes has been known for the “turn to the subject,” and for the stress on identifying and assessing the war-
rant or justification for what the subject believes or holds to be true, especially beliefs in the form of propositions. While this book on the activity of trusting is, of course, attending to what the trusting subject is engaged in doing, it departs from the turn to the subject and from holding-true believing in two ways. First, the turn to the subject has often been taken in a way that understands the subject to be, as it were, in a bubble, or behind a screen, wondering what can be said about what is outside the subject’s subjective bubble or beyond the object-screen. Is there an epistemologically recognizable connection between objects of thought and objects of action? Is there an an sich that we can actually deal with? Second, trusting is at its heart not a matter of what the subject believes or holds to be true. A person can hold it to be true that someone is trustworthy, but such “holding” or believing-about is distinguishable from that person’s actually trusting that someone. The “about” of intentionality is different from the “towards” of activity. This study’s analysis does not settle for merely a subject plus some feature of the subject that is “about” (that is, is referring to) something else. Rather, it includes the interaction—the dealings—between the one who is trusting and the other being trusted. Realities involved in such dealings may be modeled in two ways. One is the subject-object model, which I call the will-nature model. The other is an intersubjective or I-thou model, derived from the thought of Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel.

The chapters are fairly well integrated, so that readers may plunge in and discover what at that point is built upon something earlier in the book or has implications developed later. The index helps follow the threads. The book privileges concepts over citations, despite its fair range of references. Indeed, where the thought of others is set forth, the book aims to appreciate whatever contributes to, coincides with, and extends my own. It often adverts to an implied and sometimes explicit objection raised by the thought of others. When I pay attention to the thought of someone else instead of developing an argument of my own from the ground up, I do so because I take that thought as fairly well established and as contributing to the path I have chosen. I have neither time nor talent to develop ab ovo every line of thought I trace, so I am grateful to others who have blazed many such paths ahead of me.
Readers may enter the book’s argument at different points—some at arguments for the existence of God, some at chapters on epistemology or ethics or models for ontology. Those not interested in others’ views may skip the dialectical sections in chapter 3 but should attend to the section “Defining Trust: Advanced Stage.” The index can guide a reader to the assumptions and distinctions presumed by her or his entrance point. The bibliography includes materials helpful for reflection on trust. Of the notes, some entries contain bibliographical information related only to the point made by way of illustration or analogy and are therefore not included in the bibliography; some entries contain references to works commonly available in multiple print and online formats.

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A portion of chapter 7, on two models for reliance trusting and I-Thou trusting, is based on chapter 14 of my A Philosophy of Human Hope (Dordrecht, Boston, and Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987). It is used with kind permission from Springer Science+Business Media B.V.

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TRUST of
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CHAPTER 1

Imagining the Route

Introduction

The route of the pioneer transcontinental railroad in nineteenth-century United States stretched over deserts and cut through mountains, crossed rivers, and spanned valleys. When possible, it avoided difficult terrain. It connected the Atlantic and the Pacific or, more precisely, Omaha, Nebraska, and Sacramento, California. Its surveyors proposed temporary tracks until better could be built. Telegraph poles and wires strung beside the rails kept the project connected in plans, supplies, and workers. Land was cleared, cut, or filled; tracks were laid. Rails from the east would meet rails from the west. Some critics viewed the project as impossible, but planners and financiers, and President Lincoln and the Congress, thought that it could go through. Such a railroad is this book’s first image.

This book is a project that, I think, goes through. It makes its way through philosophically difficult territory. Like any route, it goes one way rather than another. As an expedition, it gathers more resources at the beginning and spends them as the exploration extends. The final stages are more of a reach. As a construction, it sets the segments on shifting ground and on trestles that may not stand against critical storms. Some, indeed many, sectors are contested. At the final summation of the argument, I readily concede that for each element there are objections that may in the longer run prevail. The route of this book is less traveled than I would wish, but it is a path that can be cleared and that may be developed. The
project concludes with a picture of trusting that theologians and general readers may find suggestive, challenging, or fruitful.

And here is a second image: We may picture trusting somatically, as hands opening. The concepts that philosophers use are connected with somatic conditions, many of them linked to human bodies and to human hands. Hence there are conceptions, unfoldings (“implications”), closings (“concludings”), and the graspings and seeings (“ideas”) and carryings (“inferences”) and pregnancies (“conceptions”) that lie at the root of philosophical and other human discourse. At the end of this book, we will return to the analogy of opening hands to gather the implications of this study. Hands open to be receptive is a leitmotif of this study.²

Trust in God as Central in Theism

Trust in God is central in theistic religion, and fiducial aspects of religion are neglected in philosophy of religion. Hence the need for a coherent and inclusive understanding of trust that will help us to understand the fiducial component of theistic religion. I therefore consider manners of trusting that are not explicitly directed towards God, intending thereby to develop some understanding of trusting that can be recommended both to those who would set forth elements of religion and to those who would seek a good fiducial relationship to God. Two dicta of Aristotle are useful: first, that we should expect only that precision which the subject matter allows; and, second, that, by analogy with Aristotle’s view of ethics, we are undertaking this inquiry not simply to know what trust of God is, but also in order to become people of appropriate trust in God.³

While the cognitive side of human living is important, I focus on the fiducial area, because trust is central to human living. In effect, this book contains a study of varieties of fiducial experience. Its target is religion, and thus it is an exercise in and for the philosophy of religion. Mostly it will engage theistic religion, and principally Christian theism.

Regarding trust and God, the more familiar loci are those that treat of divine providence. Divine providence surfaces some of
these considerations under the headings of grace and free will, and of Molinism, Báñezianism, and Calvinism, and in discussions of divine omnipotence.\textsuperscript{4} I do not focus deeply on the understandings of causality that categorize what God does in relation to what human beings do. While God’s trustworthiness can be located under the heading of divine providence, we proceed from the human fiducial end of this relationship.

This book makes use of some thought of a Heideggerian and counter-Heideggerian sort, but it does not mount a major effort to making plausible a Heideggerian-type distinction between the level of particular acts and the level or setting of the fundamental or existential or existentialistic.\textsuperscript{5} It presumes that making reference to the fundamental or existential makes sense, doing so in order to consider what we may term security-trusting. Yet, as we will see, security-trusting is not a relationship fundamentally beyond or beneath any and every setting. It has a local habitation and even perhaps a name.

This book is not about suspicion. There is plenty of scope elsewhere for reflection on trusting’s opposites—variously named suspicion, mistrust or distrust, or doubt; these have their own forms of virtue and vice, but here I do not take them up directly.\textsuperscript{6} We have Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud as, in the phrase of Paul Ricoeur, masters of suspicion. Some Darwinian thought suggests that science should take a skeptical view of trust in religious and perhaps other matters. And postmodern thought in large part has been stressing the suspect character of religious discourse presumed to be ordinarily meaningful and realist.\textsuperscript{7}

Nor is there significant engagement of evil, nor of fear at the prospect of evil. Evil and fear militate mightily against the worth of trusting. Omitting suspicion and evil suggests that the book might be dedicated to Saint Pollyanna (or to Candide if the enterprise is ironic). But any task must set limits. I focus on the fiducial and forgo the wary. The fiducial is the greater half, after all: one’s suspicions need to be trustworthy to be trusted.

It would also be gratifying to show how the treatment of every topic in this book is superior to all comparable treatments elsewhere.
Our comparisons will be selective, granted that something major may be missed. Readers may judge for themselves.

**Path, Goal, Method, and Context**

Like the railroad project, the book has two goals. The first is negative, a *removens prohibens* (removal of obstacles), so as to show that understandings that either exclude, or judge inappropriate, trust directed towards God need not be the only understandings of trust in God. For example, some of those writing on trust say that trust in God is unlimited and unconditional—or at least should be so—and that reasonable trust in people should be limited and conditional. Therefore there is no conceptual connection between what is good or bad in trust of people and what is good or bad in trust of God. My aim is to show connections between the two, to show that trust directed towards God is as a notion not ipso facto a category mistake and is as a practice not automatically beyond evaluation. I offer a way for the fly to escape the flybottle, to echo Ludwig Wittgenstein. The second is positive, a construction showing what trust in God may be like, and under what conditions it may be evaluated as sound. *May* here has the double sense of *possible* and *permitted*. My aim is to effect legitimation for thought about trust in God as a topic for philosophy of religion.

*Airtight* is the term sometimes used for arguments that meet the highest standards. Few of the proposals in this book are supported by an argument that is airtight in the sense that—to use one terminology—it has no undefeated defeaters, even no indefeasible defeaters. It does not vanquish rival views, usually because they have allies that stretch beyond the scope of this book. It does, however, point out the strengths of one approach, and it indicates the differences between this and other approaches, together with an assessment of their strengths and weaknesses, usually associated with their assumptions.

Philosophy of religion takes religion as it is; it also asks questions about religion. Some people ask questions as insiders: they are religiously committed, and their queries are not hypothetical. Some as
outsiders ask hypothetical questions: If I were to wish to trust God, how might I do so? For many people the matter is not hypothetical, but nevertheless the hypothetical question should be pursued: How might a person trust God? However, the standard contrast between hypothetical and categorical statements should not substitute for the substantial difference between considering hypothetical propositions and committing to trusting relationships.

Much of philosophy of religion focuses on the justification or warrant for religious beliefs. Yet even when trust rather than belief is highlighted, attention to warrant is central. This book, however, aims to contribute philosophically to assessing and recommending trusting that is sound, where “sound” is more inclusive than “warranted,” because it nominates as worthwhile not only beliefs but also and especially practices. As we shall consider, there seem to be circumstances where trusting someone contributes to that someone becoming trustworthy or providing evidence for trustworthiness; absent the trusting, the trustworthiness remains less, or less apparent. Whether this evoking or creative or elicitative trusting is applicable to God, we shall consider in chapter 11 on religious faith and trust.

The book’s title is “Trust of People, Words, and God” rather than “Trusting and Theism.” There is more flash to “God” than to “Theism.” Yet, in religious contexts, trust engages more than merely God; trust engages creedal aspects of religion, inasmuch as people trust creeds not only to express religious commitments but also to serve as a vehicle for enlightenment and prayer. Lex orandi lex credendi: how we pray governs how we believe. Trust is involved in worship and prayer. Trust is also and especially involved in that aspect of most religions that goes by the name of “community.” In addition, while in this book “God” is synecdochic for theism, the term “theism” also carries the sense of the personal: the God of theism is taken to be essentially person-like rather than essentially thing-like. The theisms of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are those of such a personal sort.

The preposition in the title is of. Why of? It could just as readily be towards. The prepositions of or towards are stipulated to capture what about does not: trusting is something that people do. A rough majority of those writing about trust take trusting to be a kind of believing—that, so that to trust is simply to believe that someone is
trustworthy. But this book takes the activity of trusting to include more than the activity of believing. But also, as we shall see, to hold a proposition to be true is to trust that proposition!

The route of a larger book would come with a larger map, with important adjacent territories located clearly. As it is, readers may judge whether or not the path leads to sites where good thinking and good living can flourish. I will indicate where some borders, quicksands, mirages—and oases—lie. To shift the metaphor to the marine, there are causeways connecting islands in an archipelago, yet to bridge to and develop every island would require a larger enterprise. Readers may judge that the islands remain disparate, but I hope that they can see how they are connected. Assumptions will be pointed out, especially contested assumptions forgone—routes not taken.

What launched my thought about trust is manifold. The earliest is in my 1987 A Philosophy of Human Hope. Taking hope to be about the future and trust to be situated in the present, I distinguished two forms of trust. I now find the treatment in that book to be Procrustean. The work of Annette Baier next drew my attention, as did that of Paul Helm, Marcel Sarot, and Russell Hardin. I found that Thomas Aquinas makes the arresting point that a person can trust God badly. Other influences are Linda Zagzebski, Hans Küng, and Dorothy Emmet. Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel have been icons for me, maddeningly challenging, but occasionally opening up vistas I do not find in other accounts of human living and reflection.

My hypothesis is that there is an intercourse between, on the one hand, the trust and suspicion learned as a child and as an adult and, on the other hand, the trust and suspicion that characterize the religious “faith” of such people. The influence goes both ways. I do not want to adjudicate whether traditions of human thought measure relationships to God, or divine revelation judges human thought. This seems a question for theologians and counter-theologians; I am content to reflect on what I have learned by my own experience and by my reading of others. I do consider revelation, but not as with some de jure ecclesial authority. In particular I am convinced that the wider the range of discourse brought into the conversation, the richer the understanding that can arise, even if a person comes in the end to reject an understanding. So, the ways in which trust is un-
derstood in psychology and ethics and politics can and should influence the ways in which “religious” trust is understood and practiced, and perhaps vice versa. Stepping-stones can be traveled in either direction.

I am vividly aware that one can make arguments upon arguments. To persuade a person, it is often useful to back up to that point in the reasoning where both author and readers can recognize that there they indeed do agree. Then the author may seek to draw readers along the author’s road. Sometimes backing up to the point where roads are still undivided is a long journey. In some cases, I indicate where that common point of agreement is; in other areas, no doubt opaque to me, I can only leave readers to identify where they will no longer wish to follow. In any case, I journey from where I now am. To change the metaphor, I seek to discover light that can illumine the trust that characterizes religion—but not for all religion, only for that with which I have familiarity, Christianity mostly of a Roman Catholic sort, but also Lutheran, with some feel for Buddhism. In particular, since my spiritual tradition is filtered through the experience and writings of Ignatius of Loyola and the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), this exploration may lead readers along some paths less taken, with items less familiar—interesting, alarming, challenging?—along the way. My own intellectual route in and of this book may be of interest to them.

The Divide, from the Trust Side

For some current thinkers, there is a major divide between trusting directed towards human beings and trusting directed towards God. It may be something about trust. It may be something about God.

A vivid picture of this divide can be found in philosopher Annette Baier’s “Trust and Antitrust.” As she focuses on trust relationships between those who are unequal, she remarks: “Trust in God is total, in that whatever one cares about, it will not thrive if God wills that it not thrive. . . . Such total dependence does not, in itself, necessarily elicit trust—some theists curse God, display futile distrust or
despair rather than trust.” Thus identifying and contrasting dependence and trust, Baier further comments on trust in God:

The persistent human adult tendency to profess trust in a creator-God can also be seen as an infantile residue of [the] crucial innate readiness of infants to initially impute goodwill to the powerful persons on whom they depend. . . . [W]e might cite the theological contamination of the concept of trust as part of the explanation for the general avoidance of the topic in modern moral philosophy. If trust is seen as a variant of the suspect virtue of faith in the competence of the powers that be, then readiness to trust will be seen not just as a virtue of the weak but itself as a moral weakness, better replaced by vigilance and self-assertion, by self-reliance or by cautious, minimal, and carefully monitored trust.

Baier wryly imagines that modern moral philosophers have shifted their focus from trust in God to the trust involved when people enter into social contracts, “as if once we have weaned ourselves from the degenerate form of absolute and unreciprocated trust in God, all our capacity for trust is to be channeled into the equally degenerative form of formal voluntary and unreciprocated trust restricted to equals.” Here we have a divide because of something about trust.

The Divide, from the God Side

Depending on whether her “degenerate form” is appositive or restrictive regarding absolute and unreciprocated trust in God, Baier’s remark calls down an intended or unintended plague upon both the house of degenerative contract-trusting and the house of “the degenerate form of absolute and unreciprocated trust in God.” We find a less trenchant but all the more sobering warning about trusting in God from Thomas Aquinas, who judges that it is a worse sin to trust God inappropriately than to trust oneself inappropriately. Why? Because going wrong in one’s dealings with God is a bigger
problem than going wrong in one’s dealings with oneself or others. The stakes are higher, and mistakes have graver consequences. Here we have a divide because of something about trust and because of something about God.

Thomas Aquinas could follow the lead of Aristotle and indicate that there could be an extreme of too little trust and an opposing extreme of too much trust. But he does not. In the matter of trust directed towards God, there cannot be too much trust. So, inappropriate trust directed towards God is not a matter of too much. Well, then, how does trusting go wrong when it is directed towards God? A person trusts God badly when he seeks some good which it is not suitable for God to provide, when it is not fitting or appropriate for God to help. An obvious set of cases here would be expecting God to provide me with what does not lead to the ultimate good (the beatific presence of God), or expecting God to save me when I have done nothing to deserve being saved.

While Thomas Aquinas does not simply rule out a common measure for trusting God and trusting people, he does imply problems in assessing trust directed towards God from the standpoint of assessing trust directed towards people—for example, is total trust of God inappropriate? Furthermore, to trust people seems to involve coming to depend on them; but standard theism has it that all creatures, we humans included, de facto depend on God for existence and for everything else, and cannot not so depend. Of course, dependence and trust are not synonyms. As Baier put it, “total dependence does not, in itself, necessarily elicit trust; some theists display futile distrust.”

Trust in God is, arguably, in its very concept, radically different from trust in anything or anyone else, because of something about God—because God is so different. Philosopher Marcel Sarot argues, for example, that since God is neither specifiable nor free to defect, and all other forms of trust involve either specifiability or freedom to defect or both, trust of God is different from all other kinds of trust. From this it could follow that trust of God should be crucially different from trust among human beings, because there is no common measure for speaking of trust of God and of trust of
anything else. A person could not learn about trusting God from reflecting on trusting people.

And there are philosophical and theological problems raised by some who hold that in principle there can be no comparisons between the sphere of trusting God and the sphere of trusting humans. Wittgensteinian and Barthian approaches warn against drawing connections between trusting directed towards people and trusting directed towards God. The reason for this is otherness, the Wittgensteinian otherness of religious language and form of life, and the Barthian otherness of God and of God’s revelation to humanity. Wittgensteinians declare that when one is engaging in secular ethics discourse, the religious ethics language game is simply not being played. Between secular ethics and religious ethics the rules and ways of proceeding are different, and comparisons are misconceived. The Barthian position is that we learn how to trust God from God, not from any mental vapors that philosophers generate. We would thus look to the religious-ethics people, and not to anyone else, for guidance on whether and how to trust God. Again, assessments of trusting among humans and between people and God are not subject to a common measure.

Crossing the Divide

Here we venture onward, taking fiducial theism as attempting to speak not only about God but also about fiducial ways of relating to God. Mainline philosophy of religion, until fairly recently, wrestled with a standard list of divine predicates: omnipotence, omniscience, eternity, necessity, and freedom, and it considered God’s relation to what is not God as a matter of creation of things and people. Religion itself, in the theisms of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, says that the right relationships between God and people are relationships of trust. They may label people’s relationship to God to be a matter of faith or obedience or love, but at heart it is trust in God that makes possible such love or obedience or other aspects of faith. In the Abrahamic traditions, one is called not to put trust in chariots or in princes or even, sometimes, in any human being;
one is called to trust God. Even the demons hold it to be true that God exists, the Letter of James (2:19) remarks. Something further is needed to respond to a call to trust God.

**Categorical Conviction and Hypothetical Assumption**

This book does not argue that trustworthiness is correctly predicated of God. Rather, it proposes that thorough incommensurability is mistaken and therefore that trusting directed to God can be enough like trusting directed towards human persons for there to be an appropriate commending of some forms of fiducial relationships directed towards God. As Kant argued that it is inappropriate to treat people merely as things from the fact that persons are ends in themselves, I argue that, under the hypothesis that God is a possible object of some dimensions of trust, certain trust-recommendations suitable for human persons are not misapplied to God: indeed, some recommendations regarding trust are appropriately applied to God. To use and alter the words of Baier’s surmising interpretation, we may come to understand a nondegenerate form of absolute and unreciprocated trust in God. The terms “absolute” and “unreciprocated” will need to be nuanced, however. The argument is for the truth of a hypothetical proposition: If there is a God like this and God is trustworthy in specified ways, then it is good and recommended to trust God in these ways. It is up to religionists, be they theologians or saints or intelligent faithful, to argue that indeed God is like this and is trustworthy in specific ways.

A person may have as a categorical conviction that theism is correct and that God and creatures are real and are dealing with each other. Or a person may take as a hypothetical assumption that theism is correct and that God and creatures are real and are dealing with each other. Either way, theism focuses on human creatures and on the call, in Abrahamic religions at least, that human beings trust God. So, in fairly standard theism, people are supposed to trust God. People who are not theists can recognize in fiducial theism a hypothetical proposition: If there is a God who is as presented in Muslim, Jewish, and Christian teachings, then people should trust
that God. The believer affirms that such a God exists; the unbeliever
does not. But both the believer and the unbeliever can examine the
hypothetical premise and its connection: what is the connection be-
tween a God calling for trust and whether it is good or right to trust
such a God?

To proceed hypothetically: if religion holds such to be so, then
here is what follows. In this case, if religion and if the Christian reli-
gion correctly understands God to be an “object” of trusting, and if
trusting is of a particular sort or should be of such a sort, then trusting
God should be of this sort. Such a “should” is recommendatory:
one does well to enact or enter into the relationship. To ask where is
the good in trusting directed towards God, we can start by asking
where is the good in trusting directed towards people.

Philosophy of religion has this in common with philosophy of
science: philosophy of religion should take religion as it is, akin to
the way in which philosophy of science takes science as it is and
aims to understand science, especially its key concepts and the rea-
sonableness of its procedures. But there is also a meliorative aspect,
when philosophy aims to help science to be better science; similarly,
philosophy of religion can help religion to be its better self. There is,
however, among the differences between religion and science, an al-
leged central difference: religion seems to be essentially contested,
while science seems to be contested rather less centrally. The present
study will not follow the trail of the unity and difference among reli-
gious traditions; others may do so. Yet, while we may take religion as
religion is, with its practices and traditions and ways of proceeding
and its ethos and beliefs and belief-systems, we may also propose a
meliorist implication: how better might one conceive trusting di-
rected towards God?

Who judges which conceptions, then? What trumps what? Does
theology sit in judgment on philosophy? Or vice versa? Philoso-
phers may ask whether or not, and under what conditions, religious
trusting can be sound. They can give or acknowledge or recognize a
hypothetical answer: If religious trusting is of this sort, then it is sound;
or, if it were, it would be. Those who confess a particular religion an-
swer the question categorically: Religious trusting is indeed of this
sort; therefore it is sound.
This book is not an essay in theology, nor does it propose either a philosophical or a theological anthropology. It includes no historical study. Indeed, it offers questions and suggestions for Christian theism, to theologians and others, for and regarding Christian theism, implying and posing questions for theologians—as its questioning has arisen from theological statements or biblical narratives. It outlines what a philosopher of religion can ask anyone—including religious practitioners and theologians—about the fiducial side of theistic religion.

To ask questions intelligently requires some listening to Christian theism, to develop an understanding of the features of religious trust. While it would be enlightening to extend this approach to encompass more of what goes by the large name of religion, this book contents itself with taking theism as its general form of religion and Christian theism as its particular form. These limits make the subject matter more manageable, and more concrete, since a large readership has some familiarity with and interest in the theism that has the role of Christ as central. There is plenty to think about in directing this exercise in philosophy of religion towards the theism generally characteristic of Christianity, rather than towards that of, indifferently and equally, Aristotelian First Mover, Platonic Good, Rudolf Otto’s The Holy, Jeffersonian Deity, Lakota Wakan Tanka. The theism under discussion is the God communicated in Jesus, the one who created, covenanted with, “redeemed,” and continues to be engaged with humanity. Accordingly, one can read this book either hypothetically or categorically: if God should exist as revealed in Jesus, then these would be the connections between human trust and the trust commended and lived by Jesus; or since God exists as revealed in Jesus, these are the connections between human trust and the trust commended and lived by Jesus. To move from “if” to “since” is to move from philosophy to theology.

A Three-Word Split: Faith, Trust, Belief

There is another way to map the divide between trust in God and trust in what is not God. In the Abrahamic religions, and in
Christianity in particular, what is important is “faith.” In human relationships, what is important is “trust.” In philosophy of religion, one of the most central concepts is that of “belief.” And so we have faith, trust, and belief—these three. They are divided: a belief is primarily examined as a belief-that, the holding of a proposition to be true. Faith is understood to be a human response to God, essential for salvation. (“Faith” is also used to name a taking of the word of another; or to name a firm assertion or conviction or intention that has a less firm basis; or as an antonym to reason; or to name the divine gift connecting people to God; or to name a set of practices that one may persevere in, as in “keep the faith.”) Trust is understood as an element in human interactions (often unnoticed until it is betrayed), as a relationship the role of which is contested in political, commercial, and intimate life, especially when compared to explicit agreements such as contracts. These terms—faith, trust, and belief—suggest three differing human activities and differing human excellences. When believing—that is done well, we have knowledge. When faith is lived well, we have salvation. When trusting is done well, we have help, support, and companionship. Are there overlaps among these three, so that what can be learned about trust can shed light on believing and on religious faith?

Pistis is the most common biblical Greek term that is translated by “faith.” Suppose each occurrence of “faith” were replaced with “trust.” We would find that: we are saved by trust, justified by trust; do not fear, what is needed is trust; increase our trust; O you of little trust; we walk by trust and not by sight; trust is the assurance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen. Admittedly, there are usages of “faith” that differ from the fiducial one. A person keeps the faith, participates in the World Congress of Faiths, has an office in the Interfaith Center. Sometimes the subject seems trimmed to fit the label or else is rejected for lack of fit: “That's not what real faith/trust is.”

**Twelve Narrative Vignettes or Instances of Various Trustings**

Here are some vignettes with their contexts of trust and mistrust: powerlessness and power, ignorance and knowledge, competence
and character, intimacy and technique, vulnerability and fear, poverty and wealth, fidelity and faith. These can be kept in mind in the analyses that fill this book.

1. **Power**

No one who is self-sufficient needs to trust. If I can do anything I want, if my world goes according to my wish and will, if there is no gap between what I want and what I can get, then there is neither trust nor its opposite. But if I cannot do it all by myself . . . Ah! Then things are different.

If I am in control, I neither trust nor mistrust. If I am not in control, then I may trust or mistrust.

I understand that there is a self-trust that goes with the control that a self has over others, and a self-trust that is a self-confidence that neither has nor craves control over others. Self-control is not the same as self-trust. Self-trust that goes with one’s own control over others has matters going according to one’s wish and will, and is therefore not dependent on another’s power or will.

2. **Shrinking, Nurse and Mother**

The nurse approaches with the needle for the flu shot. The child shrieks and shrinks away. The child clings to her mother while the nurse quickly delivers the shot.

3. **Cardiovascular Surgeon**

I can depend on someone without trusting him. What I need, he can provide. Indeed, he is willing to do so. But I have not come to trust him, despite his ability and willingness. After all, we have not met; I have never even heard of him. But as matters turn out, I do come to hear of him, of his ability and availability. Indeed, he is professionally well regarded.

I am inclined to trust him. We talk, and I learn more of what he can do. Open-heart surgery worries me. He speaks of his experience, about chances for improvement as well as the risks.
I decide to have the operation. I trust him. Now, in trusting this cardiovascular surgeon for my stricken heart, what am I doing? Is it wise so to trust?

4. Intimacy

When speaking with someone I have been with and known for many years, someone who knows me well, I reveal my fears and hopes, my sorrows and joys. I speak of my life, not as viewed from a distance and as a whole, but from within. I say what is not only on my mind but also in my heart.

She listens. I am not particularly wanting her to do anything more than just listen.

I trust her. Now, in trusting her with my heart, with my self, what am I doing? Is it wise so to trust?

5. After Betrayal

In a newspaper advice column, a Betrayed Wife asks, “Should I keep him?” The Adviser answers, “If you love him and plan to stay with him, then sooner or later you’re going to have to trust him. He must do his part by behaving impeccably. And how do you trust him? At first, you force yourself. After that, it comes on its own.”

6. Reconciling

We have long been struggling with our enemy. The struggle has cost us a great deal. They have decimated us, and we them. But now circumstances have led us to talk with them.

We imagine a way of reducing our losses, and they would reduce theirs. But will they cut back? In the circumstances, should we cut back?

We and they agree to cut. There are handshakes, memoranda, news releases. We trust them. Now, in trusting them, in this type of context, what are we doing? Is it wise so to trust?
7. The Poor

We have long been without some of the basic things that human beings need. Finally we get the attention of those who have what we do not. They will do something about it, they pledge.

Our glee eclipses our resentment. We are at the moment more glad than grateful.

They brought a photographer. We shake hands. We trust them. Now in trusting them, in our poverty, what are we doing? Is it wise so to trust?

8. In Government We Trust

A newspaper headline reads “In Government We Trust (As Far as We Can Throw It)”; this links trust to what has come to be known as social capital. The newspaper story observes that in some cases there is greater trust of one’s government representative than of one’s government; in other cases there is greater trust in the system of government and less in specific officials.

There are significant similarities between political faith and religious faith, including being born into and choosing, belonging and loyalties, justifications of policies and practices, and other individual and social components. As in political life, some religious trust may be directed towards particular people and not towards the larger organization, or vice versa.

9. In God We Trust

United States coins bear the legend “In God We Trust,” voicing a motto first used in 1864. What is it for a nation-state—or its citizens severally—to trust God? Is it wise for citizens so to trust or for coins to have this legend?

10. In the Father I Trust

“Into your hands I commend my spirit,” said Jesus.
It looks like the end has come. I can think of nothing more that I am capable of doing. Things have gone from good to bad, from bad to worse, from worse to the cross. Now I can see no way out. I cannot save myself without betrayal. So: “Not my will, but Thy will be done; into Your hands I entrust my spirit.” Now, in trusting You, in this context, what am I doing? Is it wise so to trust?30

11. Abraham and Isaac (Genesis 22)

At the command of God, Abraham takes his son Isaac—or in the Muslim interpretation of the Qur’an, Ishmael—up the mountain, where God has asked Abraham to sacrifice his son. His son trusts Abraham, and Abraham trusts God, or so it seems. Is it wise so to trust?

12. Catholic Bishops

In the wake of sexual-abuse scandals among Roman Catholic clergy in the United States, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops instituted a webpage under the title “Restoring Trust: Response to Clergy Sexual Abuse.”31 Should it not read, instead or additionally, “Restoring Trustworthiness”?

Examples of Others’ Approaches to Understanding Trust

When thinkers wrestle with the practice and theory of trusting, they typically set aside discussion of trust in God, or they point out how incommensurably different it is. For example, according to modern nontheological philosophy, Annette Baier reports that “absolute and unreciprocated trust in God” is considered to be a degenerate form of trust.32 We noted earlier that philosopher Marcel Sarot finds that trusting God differs from all other forms of trust. Robert Solomon and Fernando Flores observe: “Trust in God requires an unconditional trust unlike any other, trust that may remain firm and consistent through any number of seeming betrayals. But in this sense, it is exceptional and not the paradigm”; but “with human beings and in-
stitutions, our trust must always be more circumspect and discriminating, even in our most ‘unconditional’ commitments.”

If scholars pass, saints leap. Kierkegaard’s Abraham accepts leaving his Isaac in the hands of God. Job responds to his challenger with: “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Jesus on the cross says, “Into your hands I entrust my spirit.” Mother Teresa continues in prayer when all is dark. The Psalms speak freely about trusting God, even in adversity.

_Trusting as Subjecting to Superior or Inferior Power: Baier_

Samples of others’ approaches to trust can begin with an important study of trust by philosopher-ethicist Annette Baier. Her aim is to develop criteria for an ethical evaluation of trust, to distinguish between salutary and pernicious trusting. She bypasses trust of predictable physical processes in nature and its related counting-on what people even of ill will predictably do; she bypasses also the trust characteristic of relationships between equals in power and knowledge that is found in promises and contracts. She focuses directly on trust between those unequal in power, where the person trusted has considerable discretion in dealing with what is entrusted. Trust or distrust between equals in power gets attention from male philosophers, but inequality of power relationships is especially characteristic of women. Her understanding will be important throughout this book.

One definition she offers is that trust is “accepted vulnerability to another’s possible but not expected ill will (or lack of good will) toward one.” Here we see vulnerability and the trusted one’s good will as key ingredients. We carry a white flag towards our enemies and we trust strangers for directions, relying on a level of good will or at least on an absence of malice. Discretion is another ingredient: most often the person trusted has a range of ways by which to contribute to the goal of the person who trusts. Other Baier definitions bring into view such discretion (and by implication, as we shall see) motivation. Trust involves entrusting, letting a person take care of something; and typically the one who takes care has some discretion, sometimes in the what-is-cared-for but more often in the outcome.
Her themes of entrusting, vulnerability, good or neutral will, discretion, and motivation will be key elements, even as they are nuanced, in this book.

_Trusting as Engaging in Interpersonal Intimacy: Gratton_

A second example offers another dimension of trust, one of interpersonal intimacy. While Carolyn Gratton distinguishes three levels of trust, it is her interpersonal trust rather than doxic confidence or socioeconomic-functional reliability that I highlight. Doxic confidence is the way in which our surroundings are taken for granted as supportive. We trust our bodies, we trust processes in nature around us. Unquestioningly, we take for granted the world, the people in it, and the language we share as full of predictable processes and commonsense meanings. Socioeconomic or functional reliability, however, is more conscious and specific. It is the way in which we trust a lawyer or a cook or a police officer whom we expect to function in a certain manner. There is a continuum, Gratton says, between the personal and the impersonal, and yet “in dyadic situations, there seems to be a cutoff point where the term _intimate_ ceases to be operative, and where, as a consequence, the level of trust can no longer be termed _interpersonal._” Both respecting the continuum she identifies and especially respecting the five cases of her study—wherein some people grew from functional trust towards a lawyer to personal trust of a friend, for example—Gratton nonetheless proposes a difference between functional trust and interpersonal trust. In the latter, people cherish each other as ends in themselves.

We thus close in on our first contrast in understanding trusting, between the dimension of trust wherein others are means for caring for a good I entrust to them, and trust wherein others are seen not only as means but also as free and independent subjects, with goals and needs of their own. Interpersonal, intimate, or I-thou trust is inseparable and perhaps indistinguishable at this point from appreciative love. I expect something of the other whom I love, but this expectation is not something I can put into specifics, nor do I need to.
Sociopolitical calculation, under conditions of knowledge and ignorance, provides a third example, as in the approaches of social scientists Diego Gambetta and Niklas Luhmann. They take trusting as a kind of believing-that regarding the future, as a kind of expecting. When trusting is taken as expecting, it is positioned between knowledge and ignorance, and, insofar as possible, is described in terms of probabilities. Thus, Diego Gambetta:

Trust (or, symmetrically, distrust) is a particular level of the subjective probability with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will perform a particular action, both before he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) and in a context in which it affects his own action. . . . When we say we trust someone or that someone is trustworthy, we implicitly mean that the probability that he will perform an action that is beneficial or at least not detrimental to us is high enough for us to consider engaging in some form of cooperation with him. Correspondingly, when we say that someone is untrustworthy, we imply that that probability is low enough for us to refrain from doing so.43

Such a social-scientist approach has two important and related features. One is that trusting is a kind of believing about the probability of another’s future behavior—the expectation. The other is that this believing is characterized by a degree of ignorance about another’s behavior. Here it suffices to note that to trust is to engage in some kind of believing-about, some kind of holding-to-be-true of some statement, usually a statement based on some probability-assessment.

We find a fourth example in an understanding of trust elaborated for a religious context, as Richard Swinburne does in his Faith and Reason. Swinburne begins with ordinary trust: “To trust someone is to act on the assumption that he will do for you what he knows that
you want or need, where the evidence gives some reason for supposing that he may not, and there are bad consequences if the assumption proves false. He explains:

To act on an assumption that \( p \) (or to act as if \( p \)) is to do those actions which you would do if you believed that \( p \). It is to use \( p \) in your practical inferences, to take it for granted when working out what to do. If you do \( A \) on the assumption that \( p \), you believe that there is a small probability that \( p \), and that given the existence of at least that probability, no other action is more likely to realize your purpose than \( A \). Hence you would still do \( A \) if you believed that the probability that \( p \) was greater, and so you would do it if you believed that \( p \). In short, when a person acts on an assumption that \( p \) his action can also be described as acting on the belief that there is some (albeit small) probability that \( p \).

How Swinburne applies this to religious faith lies ahead, in chapters 3 and 11. But note here that Swinburne defines trusting as a kind of acting, rather than as a kind of believing or expecting. This contrast between acting and believing will be important.

Still, as with Gambetta, we here have trusting tied to probability-estimating. Swinburne observes that it is far from certain what the trusted one will do. There is some evidence that he may not help. Evidence is not compelling either way, or even suasive. There is insufficient reason to hold that he will help as well as insufficient reason to hold that he will not. I act under conditions of ignorance—ignorance delimited at one end by my small probability-estimate that he will help and at the other by some evidence that he may not. Given that small probability that he will do what I want or need, I engage in the action \( A \) which is—given that small probability that \( p \)—most likely to realize my purpose.

**Trusting in Social Contracts**

The fifth example of others’ approaches takes promises, contracts, and self-interest as the principal ingredients of trusting. The as-
sumptions behind a contract are that the parties are equally informed (or equally ignorant), equally powerful, and equally free to consent. While much reflection on trust has been in this context—Prisoner’s Dilemma considerations, for example—and a religious covenant seems to partake of contract considerations, this style of thinking about trust, while acknowledged and evaluated, will turn out to be less central in the long run. These five examples are offered to whet the reader’s appetite for differing understandings of trusting in relation to which this book makes its proposal.

Content of the Chapters

Chapter 1, the introduction, as the reader has found, explains my title as well as the book’s method and some key contrasts. It offers vignettes that are prima facie instances of trusting together with examples of a few ways of thinking about trust, whether in a religious or nonreligious context.

The next chapter is the conceptual center of the book. Chapter 2 proposes that trusting is well considered or analyzed in terms of four dimensions: reliance trust, I-thou trust, security trust, and openness trust. Common to all four is receptivity to enhancement. (“Types” of trust is not used because the four are not exclusive.) My four dimensions are not mutually exclusive, as Aristotle’s causes are not and as various thinkers’ distinguishings of love are not. In a concrete case, more than one way of trusting may obtain. For example, in trust between persons, both reliance trust and I-thou trust may obtain. However, the criteria for trusting well for one dimension may be different from the criteria for trusting well in a differing dimension—perhaps creating some tension between them and, therefore, some tension in the person trusting.

In chapter 3, I compare the approach in chapter 2 with those of other authors addressing the topic: Russell Hardin, Richard Swinburne, J. L. Schellenberg, Annette Baier, Marcel Sarot, Robert Solomon and Fernando Flores, Richard Holton, Alasdair MacIntyre, Jean Vanier, Hilde Lindemann Nelson, Trudy Govier, Niklas Luhmann, Lawrence Becker, Hans Küng, Donald Evans, Erik Erikson,
Paul Helm, and Karen Jones. One major issue that surfaces is the difference between taking trusting to be a kind of believing (with commitments to hold propositions to be true) and taking it to be a kind of acting. To believe-that is not to trust or believe-in.

Chapter 4 presents an understanding of analogy that contributes to understanding trust directed towards God. Analogy provides tools for understanding how trusting may be exercised well or badly, insofar as a manner of trusting appropriate for one context might be inappropriate for another. The uses of analogy surveyed are: linguistic, ontological or real, behavioral, somatic (Mark Johnson), craftbound (James Ross), and recommendatory (“Do it like this”). Somatic analogy and recommendatory analogy are important for understanding trust. Further, a definitional shell-game objection is considered.

It should be said at the outset that in chapter 5 I am focusing on trusting rather than on being trustworthy. And it is worth repeating that I do not take trusting to be ipso facto worthwhile, concomitantly taking what is bad to be “not really trusting.” This chapter considers how trusting may be virtuous. It includes factors that contribute to trusting well or badly: vulnerability and trusting; discretion accorded to the one trusted; calculation and rational choice theory (Prisoner’s Dilemma analyses); willing and authentic trusting (Solomon and Flores); candor about motives (Baier); being poor and being trusting; nested trustings (including Becker). Central to this chapter are: evaluating reliance-trusting, evaluating I-thou trusting, evaluating security-trusting, and evaluating openness-trusting. The chapter also considers: improving trusting; trustworthiness (Nancy Nyquist Potter’s criteria); some prima facie ethics of trusting directed towards God; exemplary trustings and trusters. One theme is the way in which knowing contributes to trusting well.

Chapter 6 considers two relationships between trusting and knowledge, especially how trusting contributes to knowing. Its first topic is belief. Trusting can be directed towards propositions. I may trust words, as this book’s title indicates. I may take words as reliable for enabling me to grasp the facts or worth of some matters. To believe-that is to trust: to believe a statement is to trust that statement to do something cognitionally enhancing. Here, believing-that
and believing-in approach each other: to hold that some statement is true is to be receptive to the enhancing it may bring.

The second topic in chapter 6 is testimony. I may trust the word of another person, and in doing so I may, under some conditions, approach or acquire knowledge. There are conditions under which I do well to take the word of another or to pay attention to a communication from another. Further, the word I take may be a word that is reliable. So when I take well testimony given well, I trust well the trustworthy word of another. Thus, trusting directed towards words in a proposition is derivative of trusting directed towards the proposer of the proposition, the one whose proposing is credited as credible.

Chapters 7 and 8 include the key contrast between contact or experiential access to reality and inferential access to reality. Proceeding out of a phenomenological approach and sketching a brief history of ontology and metaphysics, chapter 7 outlines two models for ontology. I find Dorothy Emmet helpful. I contrast “attitude” and “relation.” I employ a theme of Charlotte Witt’s feminist ontology. Further, I consider a context of the horizontal or fundamental or existential, to take account of Heideggerian attention to Angst and Otto Friedrich Bollnow’s contrasting Geborgenheit as well as Martin Buber’s critique of Heidegger. These support my security-trusting and my openness-trusting as well as the plausibility of trust involving thou or Thou. I draw upon Gabriel Marcel’s proposal that fidelity affords access to ontology.

Mediation is a central topic. I position the question implied in the book’s title: Does trusting directed towards God proceed de facto, or ideally, as mediated by trusting of words and trusting of people; or may people and words be mistrusted if one is appropriately to trust God?

Chapters 9 and 10 inquire whether consideration of trust offers anything different for an assessment of any argument for the existence of and character of God. After a review of types of “design” arguments and a preliminary look at what difference a fiducial argument makes, I consider four arguments linking trusting and God. The first is Richard Taylor’s argument from trusting one’s faculties; I consider also challenges to Taylor’s argument from Walter O’Briant,
Jan Narveson, Wilford Paul, and Michael Martin, and I offer modifications. Alvin Plantinga observes that Taylor’s argument is similar to his own, and I set forth some similarities. Also, I find C. S. Peirce’s treatment of signs helpful. The trust that has place in my developed form of Taylor’s argument is openness trust, not reliance trust.

The second argument linking trust and God is Hans Küng’s personal-evidencing “argument” from “fundamental” trust, with critiques by J. L. Mackie, Gregory Rocca, and Hermann Häring. If my four dimensions of trust apply, then Küng’s fundamental trust is my openness trust and security trust, both compatible with specific mistrustings. I ask whether openness trust requires God.

In chapter 10, I turn to the third, or Donald Evans’s, argument from basic trust. Evans takes account of a criticism by George Nakhnikian. I compare Evans’s understanding of attitude with my notion of dealing-with or relating-to as well as with my understandings of openness-trusting and security-trusting. The fourth argument is my own, employing a “contact” metaphysics as well as an inferential metaphysics; it draws not only on the work of Taylor and Küng and Evans but also on this book’s preceding chapters. I indicate the many premises which, insofar as they are plausible (like paths that may converge), make for a plausible conclusion that a person who trusts in a certain way is dealing with God.

These chapters identify assumptions related to these arguments, together with some assessment of the assumptions’ plausibility. Among these assumptions are those involving rationality. I point out rival notions of rationality, as I find these brought into the spotlight when Richard Messer compares a type of argument employed by Richard Swinburne with a type employed by D. Z. Phillips.

Chapter 11 applies the previous chapters’ themes to religion, then to theistic religion, and then to Christian theistic religion. Questions are formulated for posing to theologians. Mediation is important, especially since religion includes trusting directed towards people and towards words in propositions.

Chapter 12, by way of conclusion, revives the image of a pioneering railroad route and moves on to address rebuttals and assumptions. It reviews the application of my results to people, words, and
God. It also takes a brief look at the major challenge to the value of trusting directed towards God, the occurrence of evil.

**Terminology and Usage**

I lowercase *thou* in labeling the dimension of trust that I call “I-thou.” This is to reduce confusion about whether “t/Thou” refers to God. Lowercased, it does not. Those who are familiar with Martin Buber’s use of the phrase know that his translators typically capitalize the “Thou” or “You” in the pairing I-Thou or I-You, without thereby meaning God. In Buber’s terminology, “Absolute Thou” carries this latter reference.

I use the word *cognitional* to name activities that contribute to error or to opinion or to knowledge in a neutral-epistemological sense. I reserve *cognitive* to serve as a success or achievement term in a positive epistemological sense, when cognitional activity succeeds in yielding knowledge. Thus, sensing is cognitional, while, arguably, justified true belief is propositionally cognitive.

*Evidence* is ambiguous. First, in some quarters it means support for some truth-claim derived from one’s senses, in contrast with reason; it is then often equated with experience. Evidence-as-experience is the most restrictive meaning of “evidence.” A second and more inclusive usage occurs when *evidence* refers to both what is given through one’s senses and what is delivered by taking reasoning steps; thus, evidence includes both one’s own experience and one’s own reasoning. *Rationality* is sometimes used for experience plus reasoning steps. Third, *evidence* is used to include one’s own experience and one’s own reasoning plus testimony received from others. Legal and journalistic arguments sometimes employ evidence in this third sense, inclusive of the three: experience and reasoning and testimony; or perhaps melioratively expressed: experience understood, reasoning done well, and successful testimony.