

THEOLOGY PUB – How (Not) to Speak of God

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“God, rid me of God.” / Meister Eckhart

Quotes from “How (Not) to Speak of God”

That which we cannot speak of is the one thing about whom and to whom we must never stop speaking (xii).

In doing so they (Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Marx, Freud) each helped to point out that when we make absolute claims concerning what we believe about the world or God, acting as if our opinions were the result of some painstaking, objection and rational reflection, we end up deceiving ourselves, for our understanding is always an interpretation of the information before us and THUS is always affected by what we bring to the table (9).

Christianity as a/theistic

As we have seen, we ought to affirm our view of God while at the same time realizing that that view is inadequate. hence we act both as theist and atheist (25).

In short, an emerging discourse acknowledges that speaking of God is never speaking of God but only ever speaking about our understanding of God (32).

So in a sense, when it comes to God, we have nothing to say to others and we must not be ashamed of saying it (41).

Quotes from Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite

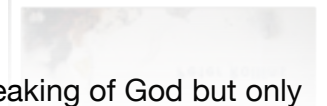
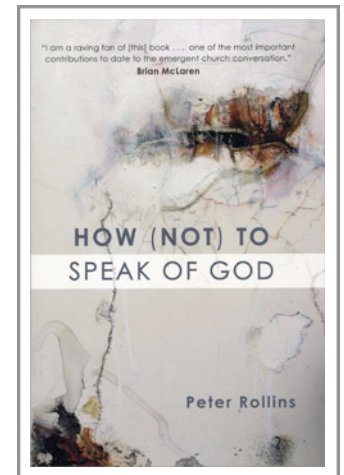
Pseudo-Dionysius: an anonymous theologian/philosopher of late 5th to early 6th century. He claimed acquaintance with biblical characters - so was called the Areopagite.

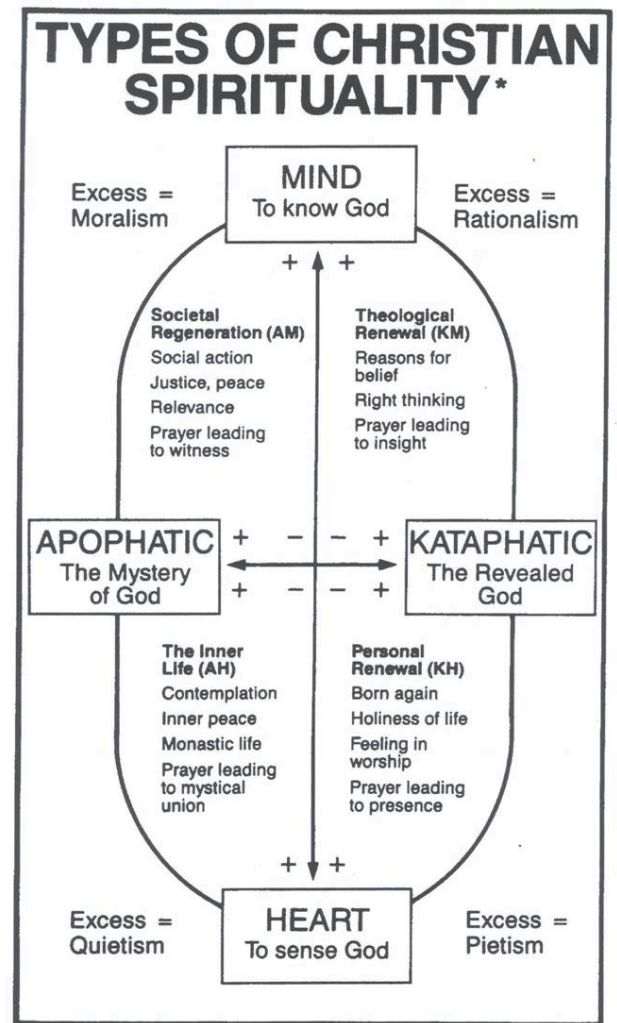
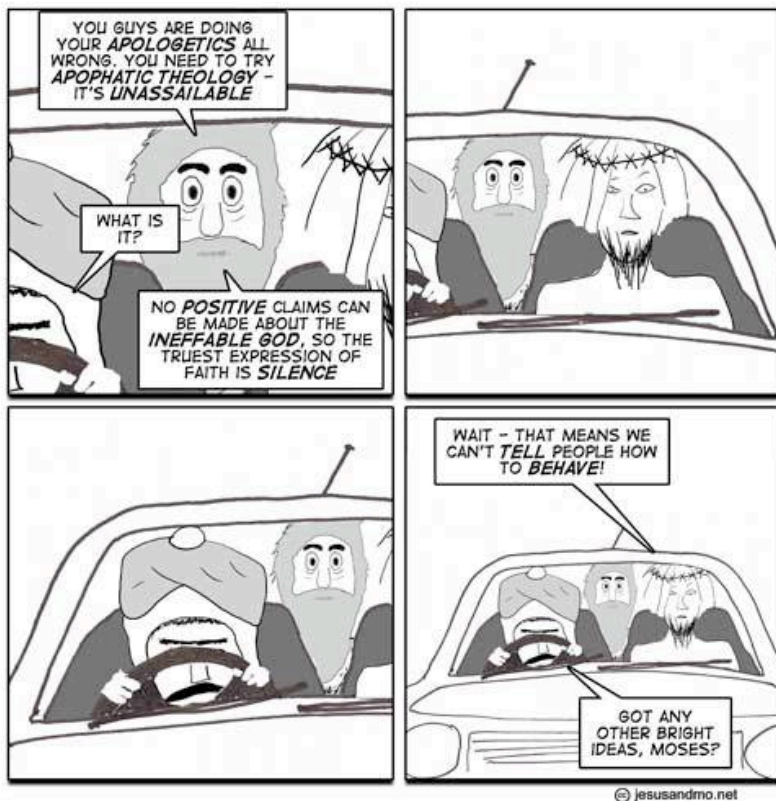
kataphatic: It is the Christian mind deploying all the resources of language in the effort to express something about God (Denys Turner)

It is more of a ‘turning toward’ as opposed to being able to hold a ‘certainty’ about anything that we are claiming to ‘know’ about God.

An apophatic prayer: *For this I pray; and, Timothy...my advice to you as you look for a sight of the mysterious things, is to leave behind you everything perceived and understood, everything perceptible and understandable, all that is not and all that is, and, with your understanding laid aside, to strive upward as much as you can toward union with him who is beyond all being and knowledge. By an undivided and absolute abandonment of yourself and everything, shedding all and freed from all, you will be uplifted to the ray of the divine shadow which is above everything that is.*

Pseudo-Dionysius: “It is beyond assertion and denial. We make assertions and denials of what is next to it, but never of it, for it is both beyond every assertion, being the perfect and unique cause of all things, and, by virtue of its preeminently simple and absolute nature, free of every limitation, beyond every limitation; it is also beyond every denial.”





Where does this leave us?

Epektesis / a place of perpetual seeking

Gregory of Nyssa: "...something will always be discovered, the endless search will never overtake its object..."