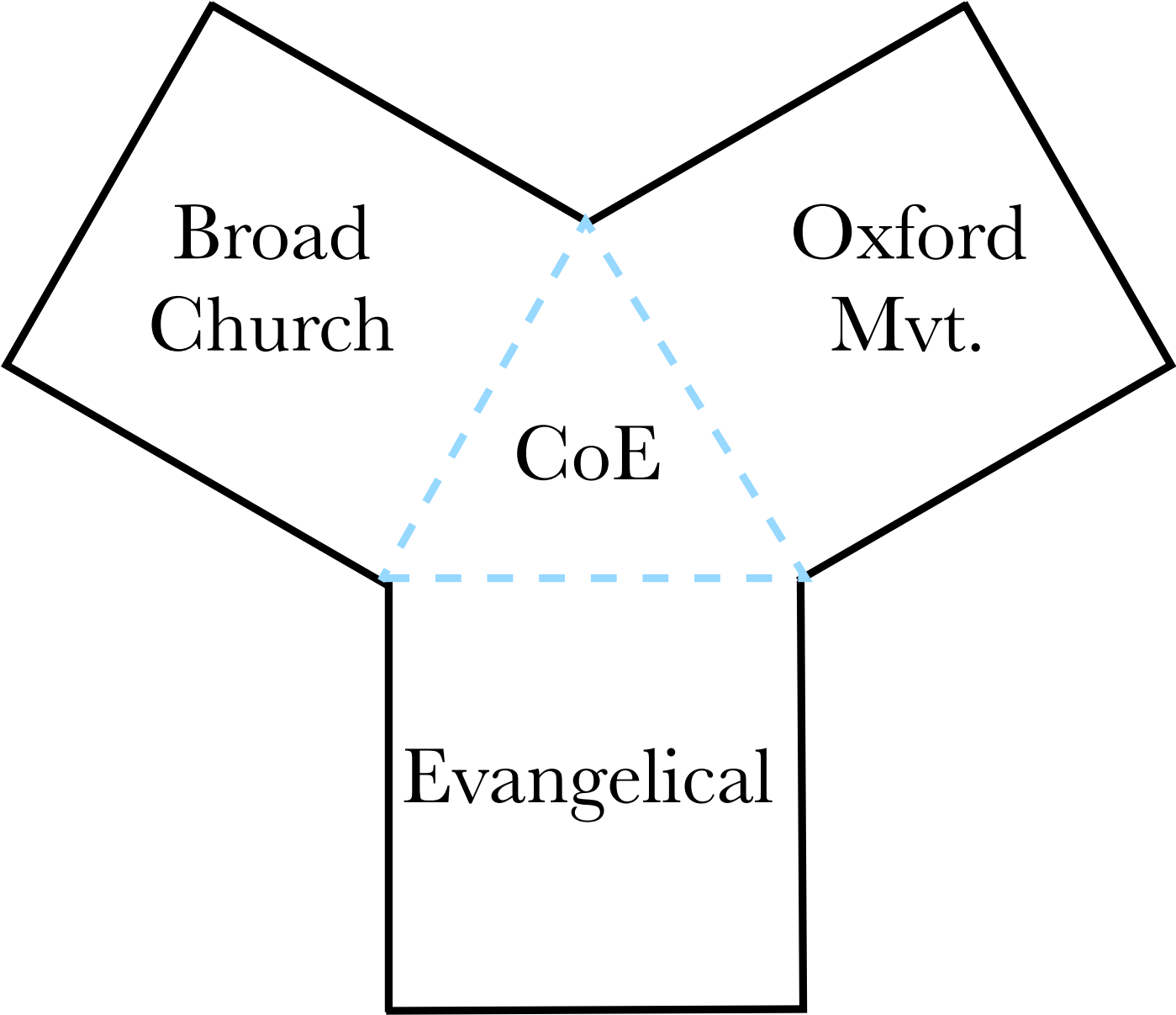


The Religious Spectrum of Victorian England

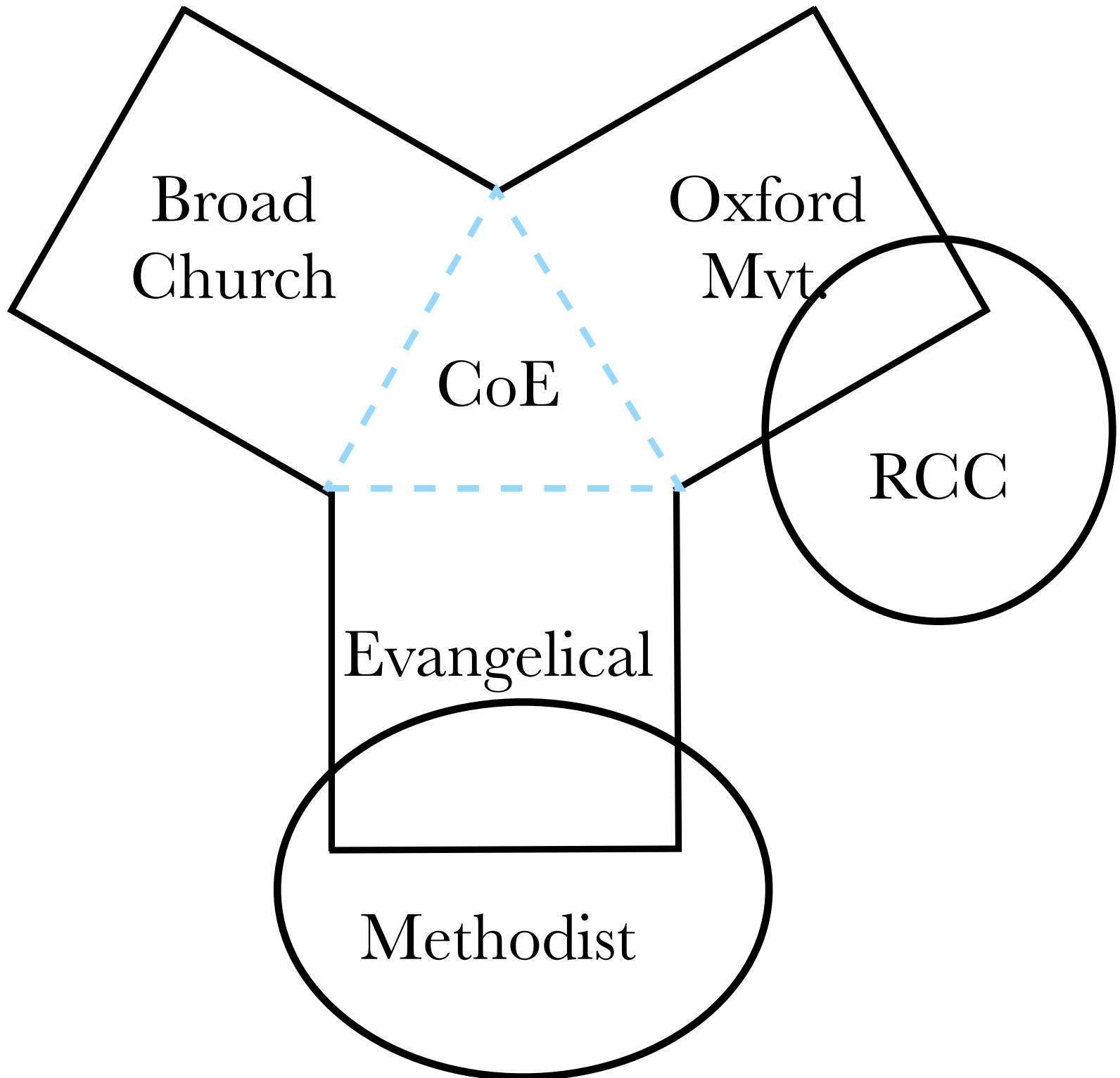


Broad
Church

Oxford
Mvt.

CoE

Evangelical



Broad
Church

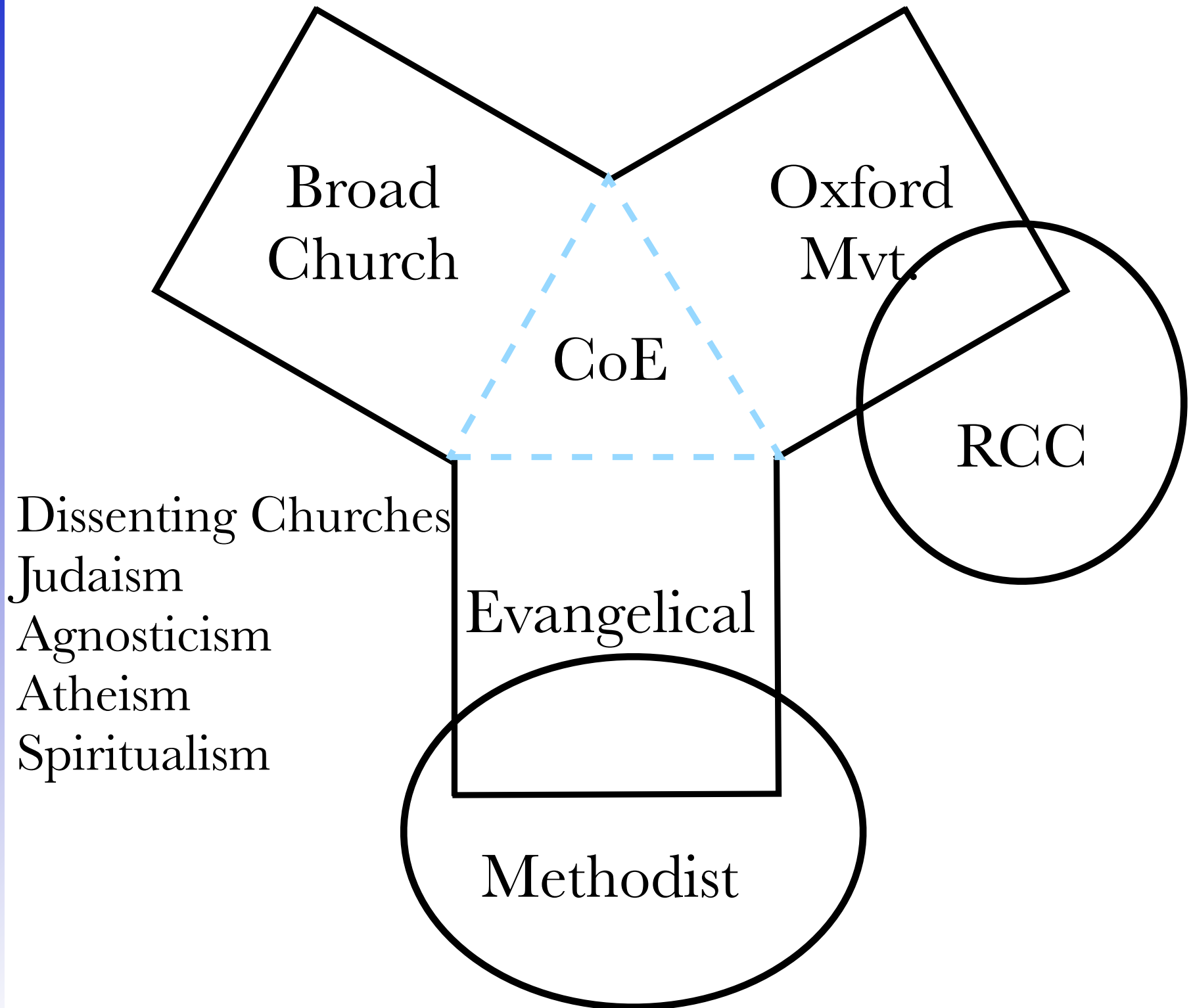
Oxford
Mvt.

CoE

RCC

Evangelical

Methodist



18th and 19th c. Evangelicalism



William Cowper

- emphasized personal relationship with God
- worked on behalf of many social causes
- emotional spiritual life
- emphasized evangelism
- believed in strict Biblical inerrancy
- distrusted science

**“E’er since, by faith, I saw the stream Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.
And shall be till I die, and shall be till I die;
Redeeming love has been my theme, and shall be till I die.”**

The Oxford Movement (Tractarians) 1833-1845

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:John_Keble.jpg



John Keble



<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Johnhenrynewman.gif>

John Henry Newman

The Oxford Movement (Tractarians) 1833-1845

- published *Tracts for the Times*
- defense of CoE against RCC.
- truth of doctrines rests on apostolic tradition in CoE
- attacked “doctrinal laxity” and submission of church to state
- Newman came to admire and promote high church ritual

Newman's *Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles*

- Evidence for God's work is *probabalistic*.
- Puts moral law and physical law on equal footing.
- If you are a Christian, your default attitude towards miracles (both scriptural and ecclesiastical) should be favourable.
- “Ecclesiastical Miracles are probable” follows by analogy from belief in Scriptural miracles.

Newman's *Essay on Ecclesiastical Miracles*

It shall here be assumed that this incredulity [disbelief in miracles] is a fault; and it is the result of a state of mind which has been prevalent among us for some generations, and from which we are now but slowly extricating ourselves. We have been accustomed to believe that Christianity is little more than a creed or doctrine, introduced into the world once for all, and then left to itself, after the manner of human institutions, and under the same ordinary governance with them, stored indeed with hopes and fears for the future, and containing certain general promises of aid for this life, but unattended by any special Divine Presence or any immediately supernatural gift. To minds habituated to such a view of Revealed Religion, the miracles of ecclesiastical history must needs be a shock, and almost an outrage, disturbing their feelings and unsettling their most elementary notions and thoroughly received opinions.

They are eager to find defects in the evidence, or appearances of fraud in the witnesses, as a relief to their perplexity, and as an excuse for rejecting, as if on the score of reason, what their heart and imagination have rejected already.

The Broad Church

- loose affiliation of “liberal” Anglicans
- Promoted “higher criticism” readings of the Bible
- Favorably inclined to science

“[A] minister of God has no other choice but to ... bid you, the disciples of the Truth, to accept truth thankfully from every source. We will do more than this: we will not only listen to the authoritative inculcations of science, we will even learn forward to catch her whispers, her conjectures, her floating fancies...” Abbott, *Cambridge Sermons*

Agnosticism

T.H. Huxley

So with regard to the other great Christian dogmas, the immortality of the soul, and the future state of rewards and punishments, what possible objection *a priori* can I—who am compelled perforce to believe in the immortality of what we call Matter and Force and in a very unmistakable *present* state of rewards and punishments for all our deeds—have to these doctrines. Give me a scintilla of evidence, and I am ready to jump at them. <http://aleph0.clarku.edu/huxley/letters/63.html#5may1863>

J. Ruskin

You speak of the Flimsiness of your own faith. Mine, which was never strong, is being beaten into mere gold leaf, and flutters in weak rags from the letter of its old forms; but the only letters it can hold by at all are the old Evangelical formulae. If only the Geologists would let me alone, I could do very well, but those dreadful Hammers! I hear the clink of them at the end of every cadence of the Bible verses. <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/ruskin/>

The Kernel and the Husk

1886

“Not very long ago ... the author received a letter from a stranger and fellow clergyman, asking him whether he could visit him on his death-bed. ... “It would comfort my short remainder of life if you would come and look me dying in the face and say, ‘This theology and Christology of mine is not merely literary: I feel with joy of heart that God is not unknown to man: try even now to feel with me.’”

Of what passed at the subsequent interview nothing must be said except that the dying man ... expressed the conviction that one reason why he had fallen into that abyss of agnosticism - for an abyss he then felt it to be - was that he had been “taught to believe too much when young;” and he urged and almost besought that something might be done soon to “give young men a religion that would wear.”

... I learned to look below the surface of a rite at its inner meaning, and also to discern the possibility of illustrating that inner meaning by the phenomena of daily life. It was certainly a revelation to me to know that the sacrifice of a lamb by a human offerer was nothing, except so far as it meant the sacrifice of a human life, and the sacrifice of a human life meant no more (but also no less) than conforming one's life to God's will... If one theological process could be illustrated in this way, why not another?

About this time people began to talk in popular circles concerning Evolution, and alarm began to be felt in some quarters at the difficulty of harmonizing its theories with theology. With these fears I never could in the least degree sympathize. I welcomed Evolution as a luminous commentary on the divine scheme of the Redemption of mankind. ... but I still adhere to the belief that Evolution has made it more easy to believe in a rational, that is to say a non-miraculous, though supernatural, Christianity.

... I was led to see that a great part of what we call knowledge does not come to us, as we falsely suppose it does, through mere logic or Reason, nor through unaided experience, but through the emotions and Imagination, tested by Reason and experience. Even in the world of science, I found that the so-called “laws and properties of matter,” nay, the very existence of matter, were nothing more than suggestions of the scientific Imagination aided by experience. ...

Philomythus 1891

Now we return to Newman's dictum: "as if moral and religious questions required legal proofs." To this we must reply, "If ... you mean such questions as, whether there is a God or not; whether he is just; whether He will ultimately conform man to His image; whether Good will ultimately triumph over Evil - then we agree with you. For these questions are in the region of hope, aspiration, and faith.

But if you mean, ‘by moral and religious questions,’ the question whether God stopped the sun (relatively to the earth) at the prayer of Joshua, and the question whether or Lord killed two thousand swine - then we must reply that you enter the region of historical fact; and here faith has no place, and ‘legal proof’ is the best possible proof; ... and if you cannot get something very like it, you must be content to say, ‘This fact is not proved.’

Against this, Newman would have two rejoinders. In the first place he would reply that although the truth of falsehood of the stopping of the sun ... or the slaying of the [swine], is not *of itself* a “moral and religious question,” yet it becomes so, through its inclusion in the canonical Scriptures.

Newman: You say ‘this fact is not proved’: granted, but a fact is not disproved because it is not proved. Thousands of people in Central Africa have no evidence of the existence of ice, and would deny its existence, yet ice exists.

Abbott: The right answer to this, is, that people *practically deny, and are quite right in practically denying, the existence of everything of which they have no evidence, direct or indirect.*

There *may be* regions of four, five or fifty dimensions ... But we are so constituted as to not act on any “may be” that is not at least suggested by the evidence.