



Preface

It is an interesting time for a Christian to work in the philosophy of religion. When I went to graduate school in 1969, the number of Christians in philosophy was small and their influence smaller. I have been privileged to live through a period in which God has called a number of people to work in this vineyard. One evidence of this is the fact that the Society of Christian Philosophers currently has over twelve hundred members on its rolls. Philosophy of religion and apologetics seem to be flourishing in ways that would have been unthinkable fifty years ago.

Much of the work that has been done in this area is potentially of great interest to educated Christian laypeople in many fields. Philosophy of religion and apologetics, however, like many fields, have their own specialized jargon that can make it difficult for the nonspecialist to follow the writings. This little dictionary attempts to define some of the key terms needed to understand the philosophers and theologians writing in this area. I have made every effort to be concise and clear. In some cases, though, I do go beyond simple definitions to offer minimal accounts of the important issues. While I am sure my biases will show, and while the book is clearly written from the perspective of one committed to the historic Christian faith, I have attempted to be fair with respect to controversial issues, particularly where there is disagreement among Christians.

This work was inspired by the *Pocket Dictionary of Theological Terms*, and I wish to thank Stanley Grenz, David Guretzki and Cherith Fee Nordling both for the model they provided in that book and for their insight with respect to some of the overlapping terms. I have followed the format of their work, with all terms, phrases and names arranged in alphabetical order. I have, however, elected to include more proper names than might be expected in a dictionary, since I believe that an understanding of apologetics and philosophy of religion requires an





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understanding of the work of important philosophers and theologians, both classical and contemporary.

In a reference work like this a system of cross-references is invaluable. An asterisk before a term or phrase indicates that it appears elsewhere in the book as a separate entry. *See* and *see also* references direct readers to entries that provide additional information.

I hope and pray that this work will be of use to those interested in serious thinking about religious and theological issues, especially those who are part of God's church. In my own attempt at apologetics—*Why Believe?*—I caution against overestimating the importance of apologetics. I do not believe all Christians must explore such issues in order to have a reasonable faith in God as revealed in Jesus of Nazareth. I am convinced, however, that hard, honest thought about what Christians believe and why can be of great benefit to the church, and I will be delighted if this book contributes to that goal in a modest way.

C. Stephen Evans

