Joseph J. Godfrey
Trust of People, Words, and God: A Route for Philosophy of Religion.
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Books discussing the nature, meaning, and role of faith are pervasive in the philosophy of religion and theology, but Joseph Godfrey offers something unique in this extensive work. This is not to say that little has been done in the field of trust – Godfrey makes use of numerous works on the subject – but trust has certainly been overshadowed by discussions and studies in faith. Godfrey's thesis is modest: he wishes to show that the ways in which we actually demonstrate trust in our daily lives can be applied analogically towards trust in God. Godfrey focuses on what trusting well looks like rather than advocating which religion or what God is truly worthy of trust. This approach takes up the majority of the text, with the last three chapters consisting of Godfrey's own argument. The book is suitable for anyone interested in the notion of trust and the philosophy of religion, and while Godfrey does not advocate one religion to the exclusion of another, his primary examples come from protestant Christianity.

In the first chapter, Godfrey introduces the idea and concept of trust, laying out the path he takes in the book. He explains that the book has two goals, the first of which is the removal of obstacles that lead some to judge that trust in God has no correlation with trust in people, words, or things. The second goal, this time constructive, is to show 'what trust in God may be like, and under what conditions it may be evaluated as sound' (4). Godfrey concludes the chapter by discussing the threefold split between faith, belief, and trust and then surveying various approaches to understanding trust.

Chapter two is pivotal in the development of the book. In this chapter, Godfrey develops what he calls the 'four dimensions of trust': reliance, relation, security, and openness trusting. Reliance trusting is a kind of expectation, counting on something to happen and preparing for the expected outcome. Godfrey spends more time on this dimension of trust than the other three, setting up basic elements that seem to be more or less apparent in all four of the dimensions. Vulnerability is key to all notions of trust. As Godfrey notes, to trust is to be in another's care with the expectation of good results, but adds, 'with vulnerability to or risk of a bad outcome' (31). Relation trust is treated as 'I-Thou trusting': here, Godfrey relies on existentialist thinkers Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel. I-Thou trusting is less specific about its outcome than reliance trusting but is more specific when it comes to the one who is trusted. In reliance trusting, the one trusted can be replaced and the desired outcome still achieved, but relation trust involves intimacy between the I and the Thou. Security trust is depicted by the image of an infant sleeping in its mother's arms. It is a less calculated trust but more akin to a 'Zen-like action' (45). Godfrey contrasts angst or anxiety (which paralyze) against security trust, which seems to free individuals in their confidence of safety. Finally, Godfrey states, 'openness trust is an orientation or disposition towards the whole world' (49). This is the least specific of the four and has no specific object of trust. Openness trust grounds the other dimensions of trust; it is a general characteristic that promotes trust in specific acts of trust.

In chapter three, Godfrey compares and contrasts his four-dimensional approach to trust against rival depictions and diagrams of trust. Both religious and non-religious understandings of trust are investigated and analyzed so that a proper definition of trust may be developed. The various portrayals of trust discussed are: belief about the interests of others, expectation, noncognitive disposition, vulnerability, risk, dependency, desiring, willing, and letting go. Godfrey next explores the various ways in which explicitly religious trusting has been understood by the likes of Marcell Sarot, Paul Helm, and Richard Swinburne. Godfrey's working definition of trust is simply 'accepting help-ability' or stated another way, 'to trust is to be willing and able to accept enhancement' (75). While there is always danger in defining concepts too briefly, Godfrey's succinctness is appropriate and careful. Later in the chapter Godfrey offers an 'advanced stage' definition of trust in which he concludes that trusting implies desiring, hoping, and – this is essential – what one does rather than what one believes. While some may disagree with Godfrey on his last point, my frustration comes rather with his quick dismissal of the place of vulnerability and risk in the act of trusting (see below).

In chapter four, Godfrey next develops how a proper grasp of the principle of analogy improves our understanding of trust aimed at God. Theories of analogy and their application to trust are unpacked, but Godfrey's primary contribution is his development of 'somatic' analogies for the four dimensions of trust. The primary somatic analogy is the open hand (which is also depicted on the book's cover). The open hand analogously represents trust as being receptive to the help or enhancement of another. Godfrey is not slavish in his use of the somatic analogies and uses others such as 'tool' or 'open window,' but it is the bodily analogies which are most interesting.

In chapters five and six, 'Ethics of Trusting Well' and 'Epistemology', Godfrey's work takes a turn towards the practical. He does not assume that all trusting is virtuous or that all suspicion is vicious. He unpacks various features that that contribute to our trusting well: discretion, rational choice, motives, etc. While Godfrey does not ignore the elements of risk and vulnerability as factors of trust, he does downplay their essentiality. He states that 'a central issue for trust is not whether someone is vulnerable, subject to being *harmed*, but rather whether the party is subject to being *helped*' (138). Readers may be left wondering just how a person can trust, that is *entrust*, without risk being as central as being subject to being helped.

In chapter six, the notion that trust can be equated with 'believing-that' is carefully evaluated. Godfrey accepts that trust involves belief-that; however, in his estimation all belief similarly entails trust. To know anything is to employ trust in words, testimony, cognitive abilities. Godfrey suggests that believing-in is akin to believing-that inasmuch as a trust statement is beneficial to my enhancement. In both this and the previous chapter Godfrey applies his four dimensions of trust to the subject matter at hand.

Chapters seven and eight give us ontological models which are developed for the four dimensions of trust previously given. Godfrey's approach seems to champion relational ontology as opposed to substance ontology; he notes that the Cartesian *cogito* is not his starting point, tracing instead the relationship between human acting, awareness, and reflection (220). These chapters not only develop models for grounding trust in the real but also set up the final three chapters of the book, in which Godfrey seeks to connect trusting and God.

Cosmofiducial arguments for the existence of God are the foci of chapter nine. The main question addressed concerns the difference made by the evocation of trust to design arguments. Godfrey employs the insights of Richard Taylor and Hans Küng. Godfrey questions whether design is seen in the fact that we naturally trust our faculties. Godfrey argues that 'if I am receptive to enhancement, then I implicitly believe that the source of some enhancement is available and a fortiori real. But if I am actually engaged in receiving enhancement, then there should be an explanation for said enhancing coming my way' (277). Furthermore, 'God is the *ratio essendi*, the basis, for reality's fundamental trustworthiness' (300). While cosmofiducial arguments seek to close the gap between world and God by understanding our fundamental trust in enhancement, ontofiducial argument, building on the thoughts of Donald Evans, seeks to figure out 'what or who it is that I now am dealing with' (318).

The book crescendoes with an argument for trust being the most central feature of religion. Godfrey argues that trust is more central to religion than will or love 'because trust makes such dispositions possible'; as regards belief, he contends that trust 'is more central than belief because beliefs are religiously effective only insofar as they are trusted' (359). The rest of the chapter is Godfrey's articulation of what it means to trust well. In this final chapter I found one of Godfrey's most interesting, yet least developed ideas. In a section entitled 'Abraham Trusts and Tests God, as God Tests and Trusts Abraham', which is a mere two paragraphs long, Godfrey teases the reader with the notion of God being an agent of trust when he writes 'Abraham trusts God, and vice versa' (372). Yet he does not develop this! Had Godfrey added a chapter on 'God's Trust', this very good book would have been exceptional. His mentioning of God's trust, without developing the idea, leaves me pondering the possibilities.

Trust of People, Words, and God is a mature work, demonstrating years of thought and research. It is a necessary work for anyone interested in the concept of trust, regardless of religious affiliation. The book is an in-depth study which I will reference for years to come.

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