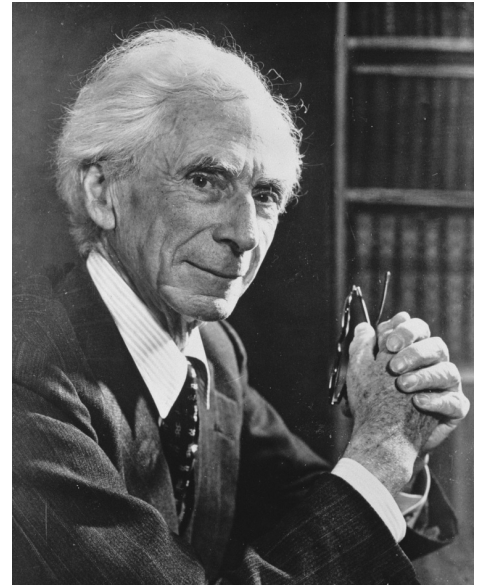


The invisible teapot

The philosopher **Bertrand Russell** proposed a thought experiment to illustrate the **burden of proof**.

Imagine you were told that there was a **teapot** floating in space. Then, imagine you were told that this teapot was always located on exactly the opposite side of the sun from the Earth so that we would never be able to detect it with our telescopes or in any other way.



- 1) Would you believe such a teapot existed?
- 2) Could you prove that it didn't exist?

Many people accept it would not be possible to prove that the teapot did not exist but believe it would be reasonable to doubt it. They believe the responsibility should rest on those who believe in the teapot to provide good evidence that it existed, not on those who doubt it to prove that it doesn't. The important question for many people would be 'Is there any good **evidence** the teapot exists?'

- 3) Is it possible to prove that a god doesn't exist?
- 4) Is it possible to prove anything doesn't exist?
- 5) If we can't prove something doesn't exist, does that mean we should believe it exists?
- 6) Should the responsibility be on religious believers to provide evidence that there is a god or on the atheist to prove that there isn't one?

