

APOLOGETICS

by

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2023 James F. Stitzinger Jr

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DESCRIPTION & REQUIREMENTS

I. For Apologetics

A. Course Description

A careful biblical and theological development of a consistent presuppositional apologetic. The course provides a basis for the evaluation of various empirical systems as well as a working knowledge of presuppositionalism for use in all aspects of practical ministry. Evangelism is then studied within a presuppositional framework to present the student with a consistent position for propagating and defending the Christian faith.

B. Course Objectives

1. To focus the student's attention on a consistent presuppositional apologetic as developed from the biblical and theological data. To give clear focus to a very confusing subject.
2. To develop a consistent presuppositional methodology that the student can effectively use in presenting and defending his Christian world view in ministry.
3. To help the student understand transcendental argumentation (TAG); arguing the existence of God from the impossibility of the contrary.
4. To provide an adequate Scriptural basis for presuppositionalism along with biblical evangelism.
5. To introduce the student to the thinking and writings of Cornelius Van Til, Greg Bahnsen, along with other presuppositional thinkers.
6. To give the student a brief understanding of the nature and content of various empirical, semi-rational, and so called Biblical fiedistic apologetic systems including their misuse or neglect of Christian evidences and arguments.
7. To interact with the student in helping him articulate and defend his own presuppositions by providing him with opportunities to take his message to the streets.
8. To introduce the student to the study of biblical ethics.
9. To cultivate an affection for a biblical apologetic and its worth in preaching, counseling, evangelism, and other situations when the truth must be defended before a pagan world, a cult setting, or before a disobedient Christian.

C. Presentation and Evaluation

1. Class sessions will be used for lectures and discussions on various aspects of apologetics. These will follow and parallel the lectures and discussions on evangelism.
2. Students will be required to read various materials in preparation for class lectures.
3. Occasionally the student will be asked to write a brief analysis of his reading in preparation for class.
4. Evaluation will be based on the following:
 - a) Careful Reading and Projects 40%
 - b) Class Participation 20%
 - c) Acts 17 Paper 40%

**ALL READING MUST BE COMPLETED ON TIME
IN ORDER TO PASS THE CLASS**

D. Texts

1. Required C

- Bahnsen, Greg. *Always Ready*. ed. by Robert Booth. Atlanta: American Vision, 1996.
- Bahnsen, Greg. *Van Til's Apologetic Reading and Analysis*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1998
- Murray, John. *Principles of Conduct: Aspects of Biblical Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991.
- Pratt, Richard L. *Every Thought Captive*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983.
- Sproul, R.C. *The Consequences of Ideas*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2000.
- Van Til, Cornelius. *The Defense of the Faith*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1980.
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2. Supplemental

- Bahnsen, Greg. Encounter of Jerusalem with Athens, @ *Ashland Theological Bulletin*. 1980, pp. 4-40.
- _____ Machen, Van Til, and the Apologetic Tradition of the

- OPC, @ *Pressing Toward the Mark*. ed. by Charles G. Dennison and Richard C. Gamble. Orthodox Presbyterian Church, 1986, pp. 259-294.
- _____. Socrates or Christ, the Reformation of Christian Apologetics, @ *Foundations of Christian Scholarship*. ed by Gary North. Ross, 1976, pp. 190-239.
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- _____. *Christian Apologetics*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1988.
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- Gunn, Grover. *A Short Explanation and Defense of Presuppositional Apologetics*. Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
<http://www.capo.org/cpc/apolo00.htm>
- _____. *I Peter 3:15 Giving a Reason for Our Hope*
<http://www.capo.org/cpc/apolo12.htm>
- _____. *A Comparison of Apologetic Methods*

- <http://www.capo.org/cpc/apolo22.htm>
 _____. *Weighing the Evidence But on Whose Scales*
<http://www.capo.org/cpc/apolo32.htm>
 _____. *Epistemology 101*
<http://www.capo.org/cpc/apolo42.htm>
- Halsey, Jim S. *For a Time Such as This*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976.
- Mayers, Ronald B. *Both/And: A Balanced Apologetics: Using Evidences and Presuppositions in Defense of the Faith*. Grand Rapids, Kregel, 1996.
- MacArthur, John. *Ashamed of the Gospel*. Crossway, 1993.
- _____. *The Resurrection Cover-Up Matthew 28:11-15*. (Tape)
- _____. *Survival Strategy for Apostate Times*. Pt I Jude 17-19 (Tape)
- _____. *Survival Strategy for Apostate Times*. Pt II Jude 20-21 (Tape)
- _____. *Survival Strategy for Apostate Times*. Pt III Jude 22-23 (Tape)
- _____. *Why One Way?, Defending an Exclusive Claim in an Inclusive World*. W. Publishing Group, 2002.
- North, Gary. *Foundations of Christian Scholarship: Essays in the Van Til Perspective*. Vallecito: Ross House Books, 1976.
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- Van Til, Cornelius. *Apologetics*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1976.
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- _____. *AMy Credo@ in Jerusalem and Athens*. ed. by E. R. Geehen, pp. 1-22.
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- _____. *Toward a Reformed Apologetic*. Private Publisher
- _____. *Why I Believe in God*. Phillipsburg: Presbyterian and Reformed, no date.
- _____. *The Works of Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987)*. CD-ROM. ed. by Eric Sigward. Logos Library System, 1997.
- Whitcomb, John C. *Contemporary Apologetics* (4 tapes) Published as articles in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1977. Available from Dr. John C Whitcomb Jr., 2798 Admirals Walk West, Orange Park, FL 32073. 1-904-278-9441.

E. Reading and Assignments

1. Read the texts and other reading according to the following schedule.
Approximately 1,300 pages
2. Read slowly and carefully.
3. Takes notes on your reading as needed.
4. Submit a reading report on the last class day _____

**BE SURE YOU COMPLETE THE READING REQUIREMENT
BY THE DATE ASSIGNED**

F. Comprehensive Bibliography

1. Note the excellent bibliography produced and annotated by **Clark Pinnock** offered below:
2. **Additional Resources beyond Pinnock's bibliography**
Bahnsen, Greg L. *A Biblical Introduction to Apologetics*. Covenant Media Foundation (syllabus and 31 tapes)
_____. *Cornelius Van Til's Presuppositional Apologetic*. Covenant Media Foundation (9 tapes).
_____. *Defending the Faith, A Mid-Level Course in Apologetics*. Covenant Media Foundation (9 tapes)
Barker, Dan *Losing Faith in Faith*. FFRT, Inc, 1992.
Bauman, Michael, David W. Hall, and Robert C. Newman. *Evangelical Apologetics*. Christian Publications, 1996.
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Bristley, Eric D. *A Guide to the Writings of Cornelius Van Til (1895-1987)*. Chicago: Olive Tree Communications, 1995.
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Budziszewski, J. *Written on the Heart, The Case for Natural Law*. IVP, 1997.
Burson, Scott R. and Jerry Walls. *C.S. Lewis and Francis Schaeffer*, Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1998.
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- Demarest, Bruce A. *General Revelation, Historical Views and Contemporary Issues*. Zondervan, 1982
- Dembski, William A. and Jay Wesley Richards, eds. *Unapologetic Apologetics*. IVP, 2000.
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- Edgar, William *Reasons of the Heart, Recovering Christian Persuasion*. Presbyterian and Reformed, 2003.
- , and K. Scott Oliphint *Christian Apologetics Past and Present, A Primary Source Reader*, Crossway, 2009, 2011, 2 vols
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<http://www.lasalle.edu/~garver/presup.htm>
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- _____. *Life's Ultimate Questions, An Introduction to Philosophy*. Zondervan, 1999.
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- , *Reason for Faith Philosophy in the Service of Theology*, PandR, 2006.
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- Post Modern World*. IVP, 1995
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- *The Defense of The Faith* Edited by K. Scott Oliphint Fourth Edition, PandR, 2008.

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Vangemeren, William A., et. al. *The Law, the Gospel, and the Modern Christian*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993.

Vickers, Douglas. *The Fracture of Faith*. Mentor. Christian Focus Publications, 2000.

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<http://capo.org/premise99/jan/p990107.html>

Wells, David F. (ed). *Dutch Reformed Theology* Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989

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White, James Emery. *What is Truth*. Nashville: Broadman, 1994.

Wilson, Douglas. *Persuasions* Moscow, Idaho: Canon Press, 1989

Winn, Ralph B. *American Philosophy*. Philosophical Library, 1955.

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_____. *Lotus and the Cross: Jesus Talks with Buddha*. Multnomah, 2001.

_____. *Recapture the Wonder*. Integrity Publishers, 2003.

_____. *Sense and Sensuality*:

_____. *A Shattered Visage, The Real Face of Atheism*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1999

_____. And Norman Geisler, gen eds. *Is your Church Ready?, Motivating Leaders to Live an apologetic Life*. Zondervan, 2003.

Zuck, Roy, gen ed. *Vital Apologetic Issues*. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1995.

3. Important apologetic web sites

Alpha & Omega Ministries: Ministry of James White, Good Articles and Information
www.aomin.org/

Apologia: Archives of Valuable information on Apologetics.
www.pobox.com/~think/

Applied Presuppositionalism: Resources from the late Dr. Greg Bahnsen.
www.chesco.com/~topcat/ap.html

Christian Research Institute: Full-Text Articles from the CRI Journal
www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/cri/cri-home.html

Probe Ministries: Apologetics and Discussion on Cults

www.indirect.com/www/wbrown

Trust the Truth: Association Information and Documentation on Mormonism members.

aol.com/PeterElias/thetruth.htm

Your Online Guide to the Major Cults

www.serve.com/larryi/cult.htm

The Watchman Fellowship: Information and Articles on various cults
rampages.onramp.net/~watchmen/

Witness Box Ministries: Useful Apologetic and Legal Information for Christians

www.witnessbox.com

Electronic Religious Texts: Searchable Book of Mormon and Koran
etext.virginia.edu/relig.browse.html

Mission to Catholics International: Good Information on Roman Catholic Theology

www.mtc.org/~bart/

The Center for Reformed Theology & Apologetics

www.reformed.org/apologetics

Dr. John C. Whitcomb Jr. Web site

<http://members.aol.com/whitmin/index.htm>

The Van Til List

<http://www.ccir.edu.ac.uk/~jad/vantil.html>

Sean=s Christian Apologetics Page

<http://members.tripod.com/~vantillian/main.html>

Covenant Media Foundation

www.cmfnow.com

Center for the Advancement of Paleo Orthodoxy

<http://www.capo.org>

Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

www.rzim.org

www.vantil.info

G. Glossary of Terms

The following two glossaries are used by permission.

1. Jim S. Halsey For Time Such As This

Analytic (1) In general philosophy analytic is used to denote that judgment in which the predicate is contained in the subject. This sort of judgment does not appeal to experience for its verification. (2) When Van Til uses the term in a Christian context, such as, God's knowledge is analytic, he simply means to say that God's knowledge is self-contained. God does not learn or grow in His knowledge.

Antinomy Contradiction of two inferences which rest upon equally valid premises (cf. Our discussion of God's sovereignty and man's freedom).

Apologetic, Classical An apologetic method which seeks common ground with the unbeliever, whether that ground be found in man's natural reason or in the neutral facts of history.

Apologetics Defense of Christianity in the face of the various attacks made upon it by the unbelieving world.

A Posteriori Inductive reasoning. Reasoning which begins from the observed facts and reasons to general conclusions (contrasted to *a priori* reasoning).

A Priori Deductive reasoning. Reasoning which does not depend upon sense experience but upon the reason alone. When Van Til uses the term in the context of a Christian theory of knowledge, the triune God is assumed as the Christian's *a priori*.

Aseity Simply put, the term aseity refers to the absolute independence of God. God does not depend upon anything or anyone for His Being or knowledge.

Autographa The original, no longer extant, manuscripts of the Old and New Testaments.

Bifurcate To divide into two parts.

Common Notions Ideas which, it is thought, all men share in common as

men. Such concepts as God, Truth, Beauty, and Justice, are numbered among these notions. The common-notions theory has been used throughout history as a platform upon which the classical apologetic has been raised.

Continuity, Principle of In general philosophy the determination of the whole of reality via the law of non-contradiction. (2) In the Christian sense the principle of continuity is to be found in the providence of the predestinating God.

Contradiction, Law of In general philosophy the law of contradiction has been thought of as an essentially timeless absolute. The principle itself asserts that a proposition cannot be both true and untrue at one and the same time: A cannot be both A and Not A at one and the same time. (2) In the Christian sense this principle (law of contradiction) is not conceived as a timeless absolute, but rather as a law which functions beneath the authority of the Scriptures.

Deductive In general philosophy the term is used to designate that type of reasoning which progresses from the general to the particular. Begins with a general premise and logically deduces the conclusions from the premise. (2) Van Til criticizes this general as it presupposes the autonomy of the reason. Proper deduction, for Van Til, always functions within the analogy and authority of the Scripture.

Determinism Theory that all facts in the universe are what they are by necessity. Reality as thoroughly conditioned by law. Rules out any notion of contingency. For Van Til the Christian notion of determinism is found in God's all-controlling providence. In a Christian context, however, the term should never be thought of in an impersonalistic fashion.

Discontinuity, Principle of In general philosophy the principle of discontinuity is equivalent to indeterminism; contingency. (2) In a Christian context the principle of discontinuity is found in the fact that for man there is the new Man can learn new facts, etc.

Diversity Multiplicity; particularity.

Empiricism Theory of knowledge which holds that all knowledge is based upon the data of the senses. Denies possibility of innate knowledge.

Epistemology Investigation of origin, structure, and validity of knowledge.

Equivocism Ambiguous. (2) An equivocal predication is one wherein the same predicate can be attributed to both God and man in any way. For example, in equivocism God cannot be said to be good because good can only be thought of as a finite good. Therefore, it cannot, it is held, apply to the Infinite in any way whatsoever.

Evangelical Though the meaning of the term varies somewhat in Van Til's writings, he usually means by it one who holds to a basically Arminian theology.

Fideist One who holds that Christianity must be accepted on the authority of blind faith. It should be noted, however, that fideism presupposes the autonomy of the human reason in order to invalidate it (the reason). The fideistic concept of faith and of authority should not be confused with Van Til's notion of the same.

Fundamentalism As the term is used throughout this work it is meant to designate one who is Arminian in theology (i.e., one who holds to free-will in the sense of the absolutely contingent).

Indeterminism Uncaused; contingent.

Individuation Principle which makes an existent a singular member of a species. That which makes Socrates, *Socrates*.

Inductive Reasoning which leads from the particular to the general.

Metaphysic Theory of being, or philosophy of being.

Monergistic Regeneration by God alone. Man does not cooperate with God in his regeneration.

Monism Reality as composed of one fundamental material or immaterial substance.

Noetic Van Til often uses the expression, the noetic effects of sin. He means by this phrase the effects which the fall wrought upon the reason and knowledge of man.

Noumenon In Kant's philosophy the noumenon is the thing-in-itself.

It is that which lies beyond the Atheoretical@ reason of man.

Ontological Trinity The three Persons of the Godhead considered in their inter-trinitarian relationship.

Phenomenal In Kant's philosophy the phenomenal is the world of cause and effect. It is The world as appearance, the world as determined, in contrast to the noumenal, the World as it is.

Rationalism A method of philosophy based upon the self-sufficiency of the reason. Its criterion of truth is not sense experience but rather the law of contradiction. It follows the deductive method of reasoning rather than the inductive (empiricism).

Self-Attesting, Self Authenticating Is its own criterion of truth. The Scriptures are self-attesting (i.e., there is no criterion above and beyond the Scriptures by which they are validated).

Sensus Deitatis A Seed of religion. That which every man knows concerning God but seeks to suppress. It is in the Ascensus deitatis that Van Til finds the true common ground.

Synthetic Knowledge As Van Til uses the term it can best be defined as knowledge which is Built-up from experience or learned.

Teleology Theory of purpose, goals, and ends. Reality, conceived of teleologically, is purposive and is ordered to definite ends.

Univocism Has one meaning only. As applied to God and man univocism declares that words are applied to God in exactly the same way as they are applied to man. When we say, for example, that God Knows and man Knows, univocism declares that the word Know applies in the same way to both God and man.

2. Ronald B. Mayers **Both/And: A Balanced Apologetic**

Absolute That which is unconditioned, uncaused, and not limited by anything outside of itself.

Agnosticism The theory that it is impossible to obtain knowledge about anything, especially Go

Analogy The resemblance in some particulars of things otherwise unlike; a mode of speaking about God first advocated by Aquinas that is supposedly midway between equivocal and univocal use of language; basis of the a posteriori theistic arguments.

Analysis The separation of a whole into its component parts; a particular form of philosophical reasoning; deductive; logically necessary (antonym: *synthesis*).

Animism The primitive belief that all living things or natural objects are inhabited by a spirit.

Apologetics The establishment of the truthfulness of a world view; Christian apologetics attempts to enable believers to understand the implications of their faith to a fuller extent, philosophically and theologically construct the biblical framework of the Christian world-and-life view, and point out the inconsistencies and inadequacies of alternative perspectives.

A Posteriori A method of thinking that goes from particulars to universals; a posteriori knowledge is based on the evidence of sense experience; such knowledge is only probable (synonym: *inductive*; antonym: *a priori*).

A Priori A method of thinking that goes from universals to particulars; a priori knowledge is based on the innate capacities and knowledge of the human mind, logic, the image of God in man, and general and (from an interpretive standpoint) special revelation; such knowledge is necessary and universal and thus certainly true (synonym: *deductive*; antonym: *a posteriori*).

Axiom A basic principle that cannot be deduced from other principles, but is the starting point from which other statements are deduced.

Behaviorism A psychological theory that equates consciousness and identity of an organism with its behavior; ultimately naturalistic.

Being An entity or object that exists or has existence; Christianity distinguishes between conditioned and created being and unconditioned and eternal Being.

Cartesian The philosophical emphasis of Descartes (1596-1650).

Category A fundamental principle that is implied or presupposed for all experience, e.g., the category of space must be assumed before one can think of material objects.

Cause In science, the antecedent of a 'given event; usually called empirical. In philosophy, the ultimate power that produces the being of anything; such cause is, therefore, metaphysical.

Coherence An epistemological view that believes that which is systematic and internally consistent as well as externally adequate to the facts is the truth.

Concept A universal object or category of the mind; independent of sensation.

Cosmological Argument An argument that is empirical because it is based on observation of nature, but attempts to derive some universal generalizations (such as God exists).

Deduction The type of argument or inference whereby the conclusion is claimed to necessarily follow from the premise.

Deism The theory that God is only transcendent and not immanent in His creation.

Determinism The theory that the universe is so constructed that everything occurs as the inevitable consequence of antecedent causes.

Dialectic The process of considering pros and cons in an effort to arrive at a decision as to what is true or is to be done (Plato). (2) The view that the history of the world is the result of the tendency of an idea to develop into another more complete idea that incorporates both the partial truth of the original idea and the partial truth contained in the denial of the original idea (Hegel, Marx).

Dualism The view that there exist two ultimate principles neither of which can be reduced or explained in terms of the other. In metaphysics, the view that reality is made up of two opposing forces such as

body and spirit. In epistemology, dualism refers to the mental idea and the object known.

Empiricism The epistemological theory that contends that the only source of knowledge is experience; experience is usually limited to sensation.

Epistemology The branch of philosophy that seeks to discover the sources and limits of human knowledge; How we know that we know.

Equivocal Using the same word with two different meanings in the same argument or presentation.

Essence That which makes an object what it is in itself; the nature rather than the existence of anything.

Ethics The branch of philosophy and religion that attempts to set or discover norms by which people ought to live.

Existence The state of actual being instead of simply possible being; that which can have a definite place in space and time.

Existential Fallacy The mistaken logical assumption that there is at least one particular member of a universal category; for example, the actual existence of a necessary being, or the ontological argument.

Existentialism The belief that the universe is basically irrational and that man is responsible for inserting meaning into his individual existence. Philosophical expressions are usually atheistic and pessimistic. Theological existentialists stress man's absolute dependence on God and the subjective and noncognitive facets of religious experience.

Faith Belief founded on the basis of rational evidence; trust and dependence in another.

Fallacy An error in reasoning that makes it impossible to establish the conclusion in question on the given premise; a logical mistake that makes deductive arguments invalid.

Fideism The exclusive reliance upon irrational faith (belief without evidence) with a consequent disparagement of rational assessment of philosophical and religious truth (Kierkegaard); in another sense, all perspectives are fideistic as they must start somewhere,

that is, presuppositions (Augustine, Pascal).

God This is traditionally defined as the supreme and ultimate Being who is the ground and cause of all existence. Contemporary philosophy often uses the term to mean simply the religious object, be it defined as personal, impersonal, or imaginative.

Humanism The world view that conceives of humanity as the supreme factor in reality.

Idea (1) A universal or eternally real object (Plato). (2) A synonym for God or the Absolute (Hegel). (3) In psychology, a perception in consciousness of an object.

Idealism The theory that reality is of the nature of mind or consciousness. There are many types, but objective (or one mind, usually pantheistic) idealism and subjective (many minds, God being the supreme one) idealism are its primary manifestations in the history of thought.

Immanent That which dwells in or is present with. Example: an immanent God is present in the world.

Indeterminism The theory that the universe is constituted in such a way that some events are not the inevitable consequence of antecedent events.

Induction The process of arriving at generalizations (universals) by an observation of facts (particulars).

Inference B A proposition that follows logically from other statements; an implication.

Infinite That which is without limit; unending.

Innate That which is inborn; arising from the mind rather than from experience.

Intuition An act whereby the mind discerns nonempirical qualities and groups a priori truths; a direct or immediate perception.

Judgment The activity of the mind in describing or interpreting reality.

Knowledge A statement that can be affirmed both by empirical facts and valid logic.

Logic A study of the principles by which one may distinguish correct from incorrect reasoning.

Materialism The metaphysical theory that views reality as only matter and its determinations (cf. Naturalism).

Metaphysics The study of the nature and structure of being (reality; synonym: *Ontology*).

Monism The theory that one principle or nature will explain the plurality in the world. Primary monisms are idealism and materialism.

Mysticism The belief that direct knowledge of God may be obtained by the human spirit separate from both empirical experience and propositional revelation; such knowledge is incommunicable.

Naturalism The theory that physical nature, however defined, is a sufficient explanation of everything. Thus, the whole of reality consists of objects and events occurring in space and time and thus all interpretation is historically continuous.

Naturalistic Fallacy The mistake of defining the good or Ought in terms of natural qualities; the attempt to derive normative statements from probable ones; deriving the Ought from the is.

Natural Law A fundamental principle of right or justice that human reason can supposedly discern, usually by intuition.

Natural Theology The attempt to know (prove) God by studying nature and relying on human reason; a posteriori and empirical in methodology.

Necessary In logic, any statement whose denial would involve a contradiction. In ontology, the quality of a being that has the cause of its existence within itself.

Neo-Orthodox A twentieth-century theological movement that denies the supernatural quality of the Bible because God cannot communicate verbally with man.

Nihilism Literally a view that nothing is worth living for and thus human existence is meaningless.

Nominalism The view that universals exist only in language and are thus only names and not realities.

Noumena The object as it is in itself, independent of thought (Kant).

Objective That which relates to objects in reality that are supposedly the same for all experiences.

Omnipotence Having infinite power.

Omniscience Having infinite knowledge.

Ontological Argument The classic argument that attempts to prove God by demonstrating that the denial of the proposition God exists is self-contradictory. The argument that the essence of God demands His existence (i.e., God exists by definition); originated by Anselm though overtones of such in Augustine; *a priori*.

Ontology The study of the structure of being; metaphysics.

Panentheism The teaching that everything exists in God but God is greater than the totality of reality; usually associated with process theology (Whitehead).

Panpsychism The view all reality consists of mind (spirit) of various levels of consciousness (Leibniz, Hegel).

Pantheism The theory that identifies the totality of the universe with God.

Paradox An apparently self-contradictory assertion that is nevertheless made on the ground that to eliminate the apparent contradiction would involve denying some truth.

Percept That which is Before the mind through perception; sense data.

Perception The process of understanding or viewing the world through the senses.

Phenomenon The object as it appears to the senses.

Phenomenalism The view that the reality of a material object consists only in its being perceived by some perceiver.

Philosophy of religion That which seeks to explain the universality and

necessity of religious experience, the validity of religious knowledge, and the problem of evil.

Pluralism The idea that reality is not reducible to one or two ultimate substances; contrasts with dualism and monism.

Positivism The idea that philosophy is science; all knowledge is thus empirical; no metaphysical knowledge is possible.

Pragmatism The idea that truth is determined by the practical consequences of ideas; Deweyism.

Presupposition Initial assumption(s) upon which all thought is based; difficult to become aware of or prove because they stand prior to proof and become the criteria of possibility (e.g. theistic or non-theistic world view).

Proposition That which is affirmed or denied by a declarative sentence. Propositions have the quality of being either true or false.

Proposition Revelation Scripture is the written Word of God and thus has conceptual form and cognitive content that can be stated in propositions that are either true or false.

Rationalism The theory that reason is the source of knowledge independent of sense perceptions; *a priori*.

Realism That which refers epistemologically to the fact that the object known is independent of the knowing mind. Metaphysically it denotes that universals exist external to our minds as opposed to nominalism; also, any belief that reality is extra mental.

Reality Everything that is; contrasted with appearance.

Reason (1) The final or ultimate cause as opposed to antecedent or secondary causes; (2) the capacity to know things without reliance on sense experience; (3) ability to make inferences and discover explanations.

Relativism The view that one's understanding is always limited to one's situation; particularly applicable to ethics.

Revelation (1) General revelation is given to man by nature and one's selfhood through creation. It demonstrates God's existence and holy majesty. (2) Special revelation is given to man as sinner

through God's intervention in history. It uncovers His person and will and reveals redemptive acts for man's salvation, culminating in the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

Scientism The elevation of science to the position of being the sole source of knowledge on any subject; positivism.

Scholasticism The name given to medieval philosophy and theology.

Self-Evident The quality of a proposition that can be seen to be true merely by considering the proposition itself, and thus need not be proved either by deduction or induction; tautology.

Sense Data The immediate, uninterpreted objects of sense experience.

Skepticism The view that something cannot be known; may be total, or restricted to ethics, metaphysics, religion, etc.

Solipsism The belief that Myself alone exists. All objects and persons around me are only my ideas. Probably no philosopher ever held to such a view, but many have been told that it is the logical conclusion of their philosophy.

Subjective This is used to denote what exists only in consciousness but is not true of objects beyond consciousness.

Substance The primary nature of the real; that which possesses attributes, properties, qualities, etc.; essence.

Summon Bonum Literally Highest good; that which is most worthy of being sought for its own sake; in Christianity, God.

Supernatural That which is beyond and above the natural order of the universe; belief that God is outside the universe and in control of it.

Syllogism The logical form that has two premises in which the conclusion necessarily follows if valid; deduction.

Synthesis The combination of parts or elements so as to form a whole; particular form of philosophical reasoning; inductive; probability (antonym: *analysis*).

System A comprehensive set of coherent and interdependent propositions

by which one attempts to understand reality; may be either philosophical or theological, or both.

Tautology An analytic proposition that is necessarily true; self-evident; a formal statement containing no information.

Teleological Pertaining to ends, goals, purposes; the view that reality is being guided by an Ultimate for definite purposes.

Teleological Argument The argument that- the coordination of means/ends in natural phenomena suggests an intelligent designer; analogical and empirical methodology; one of the classic a posteriori Proofs of God.

Theism The belief in a personal God that is other (transcendent) than all created beings but nevertheless is in and with (immanent) all creation; world view that reality can only be understood if a Supreme Being is presupposed.

Theodicy An attempt to show that the occurrence of evil in the world is consistent with belief in a God who is perfect in knowledge, power, and goodness.

Theology The study of God within a given religion; in Christianity, the systematization of cognitive propositions that are only known through God's self-revelation; the sum of biblical teaching.

Transcendent (1) Literally Other than,@ A beyond,@ Outside of; example-a transcendent God is other than the world; (2) beyond the categories of human experience (Kant); (3) beyond the world of space and time (antonym: *immanence*).

Truth This is variously defined according to one's world view: generally, that which corresponds with reality as it is; for theism, that which corresponds to the mind of God.

Universal That which is common to all members of a class.

Univocal Having the same basic meaning in a instances of the use of a word (antonym: *equivocal*).

Valid In logic, the term that indicates that the conclusion is in keeping with the premises; a conclusion may be formally valid but not materially true.

Value That which is intrinsically worthy rather than simply desired or preferred.

Verifiability Testability; for example, a theory is verifiable if it is possible to set up experiments the results of which prove the theory.

Vitalism The view that some creative principle is operating within nature.

Via Negativa A mode of speaking of God wherein one attempts to say not what God is but what He is not. The practice was popular in medieval times.

Voluntarism The metaphysical theory that identifies cosmic energy with will (Schopenhauer).

Weltanschauung World view; the system of belief held by each man that enables him to live and act in the world and that explains how the various parts of the universe fit together

II. Schedule

Apologetics

Sch. Date	Discussion Topic & Requirements	
	Introduction to the Course & List of Requirements	
	Bibliography Whitcomb: Contemporary Apologetics (tape #1)	
	Introduction pt 1	
	Introduction pt 2 (1) Read Reymond, <i>The Justification of Knowledge</i> , pp. 1-46 (2) Read Bahnsen, <i>Always Ready</i> , pp. 1-26 (3) Read Dulles, <i>A History of Apologetics</i> , pp. 22-71 (4) Read and Study the Glossary by Halsey, pp. 167-172 — (pp. 10-14 of this syllabus) (5) Read and Study the Glossary by Mayers, pp. 219-228 — (pp. 14-24 of this syllabus)	
	Introduction pt 3 (6) Read Sproul, <i>The Consequences of Ideas</i> any 100 pages	
	Apologetics and Christian Theology (7) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 7-22 (8) Read Van Til, <i>Apologetics</i> , 2 nd ed. pp. 1-54 (note Edgar's introduction and comments) (9) Read Frame, <i>Van Til: The Theologian</i> , pp. 3-38	
	The Christian Philosophy of Being (or Reality) (10) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 23-30 (11) Read Mayers, <i>Both/And: A Balanced Apologetic</i> , pp. 1-14 (12) Read article "Machen, Van Til, and the Apologetic Tradition of the OPC" by Bahnsen in <i>Pressing Toward the Mark</i> , pp. 259-294	
	Christian Theory of Knowledge — Epistemology (13) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 31-50 (14) Read Van Til, <i>Apologetics</i> , pp. 55-82 (again, note Edgar's comments)	

	The Christian Philosophy of Behavior — Ethics pt 1 (15) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 51-66 (16) Read Murray, <i>Principles of Conduct</i> , pp. 11-44	
	The Christian Philosophy of Behavior — Ethics pt 2 (17) Read Bahnsen, <i>Always Ready</i> , pp. 27-52 (18) Read Davis, <i>Evangelical Ethics</i> 2nd ed., 1993. — any 50 pages	
	Christian Apologetics — Point of Contact (19) Write a two (2) page statement of your theory of knowledge (20) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 67-95 (21) Read Bahnsen, <i>Always Ready</i> , pp. 53-80 (22) Read Reymond, <i>The Justification of Knowledge</i> , pp. 71-116	
	Christian Apologetics — The Problem of Method (23) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 96-122 (24) Read Bahnsen, <i>Always Ready</i> , pp. 81-106 (25) Read Dennison <i>Analytic Philosophy and Van Til's Epistemology</i> . 33-56.	
	Authority and Reason (26) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 123-150 (27) Read Bahnsen, <i>Always Ready</i> , pp. 107-162 (28) Read article "Socrates or Christ, the Reformation of Christian Apologetics" by Bahnsen in <i>Foundations of Christian Scholarship</i> , 190-239 (29) Read article "Crucial Biblical Passages" by Hughes in Geehen, <i>Jerusalem and Athens</i> , pp. 131-140 (30) Complete Whitcomb tapes #2-4 or Read the Transcript in the articles on library reserve	
	Summary of Argument by Presupposition (31) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 179-208 (32) Read article "My Credo" by Van Til in Geehen, <i>Jerusalem and Athens</i> , pp. 3-21 (33) Read Bahnsen, "The Encounter of Jerusalem with Athens," <i>Always Ready</i> , pp. 235-276 (34) Read Bahnsen, <i>Van Til's Apologetic</i> , pp 311-317, 482-529	

	The Defense of Christianity (Bahnsen/Stein Debate) (35) Read Van Til, <i>The Defense of the Faith</i> , pp. 209-247 (36) Read Pratt, <i>Every thought Captive</i> , pp. 81-142 (37) Read Frame, <i>Apologetics to the Glory of God</i> , pp. 203-247	
	Small Groups to UCLA and/or CSUN (38) Read Frame, <i>Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought</i> , pp. 3-47 This will be held in the afternoon in place of the class.	
	Apologetics Class Discussion & Questions and Answers (39) Read Bahnsen, <i>Always Ready</i> , p. 163-232 (40) Read Bahnsen, <i>Van Til's Apologetic</i> , pp. 698-732	
	The Use of Evidence (41) Write a ten (10) page paper on your understanding of Acts 17:22-34 Include footnotes and bibliography. (42) Read Frame, <i>Cornelius Van Til: An Analysis of His Thought</i> — any 50 pages (do not duplicate previous reading of pp. 3-47) (43) Read Nataro, <i>Van Til and the Use of Evidence</i> , pp. 1-10	
	Empirical Systems (44) Read Geisler, <i>Christian Apologetics</i> , pp. 237-258. (45) Write a two (2) page paper evaluation of the Geisler reading (46) Read Reymond, <i>The Justification of Knowledge</i> , pp. 117-159 (47) Read Frame, "Van Til and the Ligonier Apologetic" <i>WTJ</i> 47 (1985) 279-299. (48) Read Van Til, <i>Why I Believe in God</i> , pp. 2-20 (49) Read Van Til, <i>Toward a Reformed Apologetic</i> , pp. 1-28 (50) Read article "Progressive and Regressive Tendencies in Christian Apologetics" by Knudson in Geheen, <i>Jerusalem and Athens</i> , pp. 275-305	

	Summary of Apologetics (51) Listen to John MacArthur, “The Resurrection Cover-Up” (52) Read Grover Gunn Five <i>Apologetics Lectures</i> on the Web (53) Write a list of 10 principles you learned from the class (54) Turn in Reading Report for the Apologetics Reading Assignments <i>For Extra Credit:</i> Read additional in Bahnsen, <i>Van Til’s Apologetic</i>	

The Student is encouraged to consider the following as a Next step upon completing this course in Apologetics:

Complete a careful reading of Bahnsen, *Van Til’s Apologetic*

Listen to tape set: Bahnsen, *Defending the Faith, A Mid-Level Course in Apologetics*. Covenant Media Foundation (9 tapes)

APOLOGETIC LECTURE NOTES

III. Introduction

A. A Working Definition

1. Greek word *πολογία* (*apologia*) Defense, Reply to a formal charge, or a defense of one's innocence, or To give an answer, or To speak in defense of.

The Apology of Socrates an account of his defense before the court of Athens

Justin Martyr *Apology* defended fellow Christians against false accusations

2. 20 occurrences in the Greek New Testament

Luke 12:11; 21:14

Acts 19:33; 22:1; 24:10; 25:8, 16; 26:1-2, 24

Romans 2:15

1 Corinthians 9:3

2 Corinthians 7:11; 12:19

Philippians 1:7, 16

2 Timothy 4:16

1 Peter 3:15

see also: Romans 1:20 & 2:1

Note: Acts 22:1 Paul before Jerusalem Mob:
here my defense

3. Christian apologetics is the discipline wherein an intelligent effort is made to defend before an unbelieving world the truth claim of the Christian faith, specifically its claim of exclusive true knowledge of the living and true God, in a manner consistent with the teaching of Scripture Reymond, p. 1

The vindication of the Christian philosophy of life against the various forms of non-Christian philosophy of life

Van Til, *Apologetics*, p. 1

{To vindicate is to provide justification or defense for (to justify)
or to protect from attack.}

Literally, a defense of one's innocence; Our statement as to why Christ is innocent of the charge made against him.

4. It involves justification or vindication of the Christian cause
 - a) Answering not saying Sorry
 - b) Providing a reason for the hope within 1 Peter 3:15 (NASB) Ready to make a defense
 - c) A biblical command required of all Christians Philippians 1:7, Jude 3 C not just pastors and professors or scholars as required in Titus 1:9. Also note Romans 10:14
 - (1) God does not need us (Acts 17:25), but he chooses to use us. This is a privilege! God can make a donkey speak (Numbers 22) or the stones cry out (Luke 19:40)
 - (2) Apologetics occurs when He is ridiculed, not when we are ridiculed.
 - d) A direct confrontation he is Called on the carpet Isaiah 1:18
 - e) Evangelistic character and thrust it involves the propagation of the faith. Its study should help take away the fear in evangelism. One need not fear the task if well prepared (1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Philippians 1:7)
 - f) It clears up doubts for the believer; gives confidence 2 Timothy 4:16, 17 the Lord stood with Paul at his defense
5. Christian apologetics is both a negative defense and a positive offensive effort.
6. It is not the building of a foundation upon reason for faith to sit, but rather, it is building a witness to the truth of Christianity based on a biblical (rational) thinking and reasoning.

1 Peter 3:15 stresses the following:

 - a) Submitting to the authority of Christ is necessary for a proper defense. Christ must be sanctified as Lord before an adequate defense can be made. Christ must be Lord of our reason and intellect our reason is not free to do what it pleases in apologetics.
 - b) A heart of faith is required the recognition of this commitment on the part of the pagan asking for the reason.
 - c) That the Christian faith is fully capable of such defense. We are to give an answer
 - (1) To give a biblical answer or reason to answer the question or objection to the hope.
 - (2) To answer his arguments in such a way that you close his mouth (not changing his heart) Romans 3:19; Isa 52:15; Without an apologetic Ro 1:20.
 - (3) To provide the witness for the Holy Spirit to do His work to persuade the unbeliever

Apologetics is NOT persuasive!

- d) It assumes the possibility of contact between the believer and the unbeliever. It does not imply that this Point of contact is actually Common ground between the believer and the unbeliever.
- e) All believers are to be ready at all times to confront everyone (Ezra 7:10)
- f) The attitude of the apologist is Meekness and fear having a good conscience (2 Timothy 2:24-26)

7. Apologetics is **not**

- a) **Subjectivism** an inner conviction of salvation or assurance of truth. The Holy Spirit does assure us but this is not apologetics. **Truth is objective = God is not subjective.**
- b) **Relativism** saying truth is True for me as a peaceful way to conclude a disagreement. Truth is not relative C our feelings do not make something true. Nice people relegate objective truth to relativism when they do not want to believe it. Greg Bahnsen

8. Apologetics is a defense on two fronts.

- a) The Godless pagan
- b) The errorist within the church

9. Concerning the relationship of Apologetics to the four disciplines of theology: (1) exegetical, (2) historical, (3) systematic, and (4) practical:

- a) Warfield argued that apologetics was separate and did its work first and independently. The apologist must do his work of establishing the existence of God before the systematician may speak.
- b) Kuyper, Berkhof, and others held to the reverse that the nature of the Christian faith must precede the question of whether it is true.
- c) Van Til holds to a mutual dependence of apologetics and systematic theology upon each other. He is concerned with the thatness of Christianity at the same time as the Thatness (Reymond).

Van Til says, Christianity is objectively defensible. And the natural man has the ability to understand intellectually, though not spiritually, the challenge presented to him. And no challenge is presented to him unless it is shown him that on his principle he would destroy all truth and meaning. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 266.

10. The Bible is foundational to Apologetics at two levels:

- a) The Bible is the foundation upon which our defense is built.
- b) The Bible is our belief which must be defended

What is needed is a Biblical defense of a Biblical belief. The temptation by many is to build a defense upon human wisdom. Generals in the army defend kings but they must defend them according to orders given by the king.

11. Concerning Faith and Reason

- a) Ours is a faith with good and proper justification or reason.
- b) **Reason is a tool** Man's ability to reason is a product of the *imago Dei* the image of God in man (Genesis 1:26). Reason is the faculty of drawing deductive and inductive conclusion from data. Man's ability to think and reason is effected by the noetic effect of sin (from the Greek-mind). This corruption of the reasoning ability of man effects both the unbeliever and the believer as it is not eradicated at regeneration (anthropocentric hang over!)
- c) **Reason must be the servant of revelation (God's Word)** Our ability to reason must be dedicated to Christ.
 - (1) Matthew 22:37 love the Lord with all your mind
 - (2) Isaiah 1:18 come let us reason together
 - (3) 2 Corinthians 10:5 casting down every imagination
- d) Reason cannot be understood as a **independent** or ultimate **authority** that can itself be the judge of right or wrong (Note: Romans 1:22,25)

There is biblical reasoning = truth

There is human reasoning = foolishness

- (1) All knowledge comes from Christ
 - (a) Colossians 2:3 in Him are hidden all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge = all correct reasoning
 - (b) Colossians 2:4, 8 this is over against deluded or false thinking no one takes you captive thru philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men
- (2) Two kinds of thinkers (Romans 1:25)
 - (c) **Christian** worships and serves the Creator rather than the creature. The Christian thinks dependently submitting to God's truth (Proverbs 1:7)
 - (d) **Pagan** worships and serves the creature rather than the Creator. The pagan thinks independently standing in judgement of God and becoming his own god C in doing so, he is a fool.

e) Reasoning in Apologetics

The use of arguments **from the scripture** to show the unbeliever that without God he is a fool (Psalm 14:1) and that without God he is lost

- (1) Intellectually he has no basis for what he believes
- (2) He cannot even make sense of life
- (3) He cannot give an adequate account of the universality and invariance (unchanging) of the laws of logic or the laws of morality that he employs to advance his criticisms.

(4) In the end their thinking results in self-contradiction and absurdity. Romans 1:22 **B Professing to be wise, they became fools.**

f) All reasoning is circular. All paths or argumentation will trace themselves back to starting points which are taken as Givens. There can be no flat line reasoning to faith because of the fundamental tension between conflicting world views, and competing theories of knowledge. Man is not epistemologically neutral.

g) Thus we reason from faith to faith. Reason is the ability to make the facts stand up against contradiction in view of the pagan and believer's arguments. Reason is a necessary part of apologetics. As Van Til points out, I do not artificially separate . . . reasoning about the facts of nature from reasoning in *a priori* analytical fashion about the nature of human consciousness. On the contrary, I see induction and analytical reasoning as part of one process of interpretation . . . I would not talk endlessly about facts without ever challenging the non-believer's philosophy of facts *Defense of the Faith*, p. 199. The two go together: induction and deduction; facts and the philosophy of facts; and, evidences and presuppositions.

h) God calls us to faith through an abundance of evidence. (Acts 1) Nevertheless, there is no autonomous authority of evidence independent of scripture to verify scripture, it is possible to observe physical or metaphysical things outside the Bible for verification as long as they are understood in accordance with Scripture's authority. (Notaro, p.11) Scripture is self-attesting.

i) There are two kinds of reasoning

(1) **a priori** deductive reasoning reasoning that begins with a reason in the form of an assumed starting point. For the Christian, such reasoning begins with assuming the triune God and draws on Him for all interpretation and understanding.

(2) **a posteriori** inductive reasoning reasoning that begins with observed facts and reasons from there to general

conclusions. The pagan ultimately reasons in this way while the believer can only do so fruitfully when such reasoning is in the context of the Christian a-priori - God.

j) Faith has three key elements in Reformation thought (Latin words)

Authentic faith has all three elements:

- (1) *Notitia* (*pronounced Anotisha@*) knowledge or mental awareness of the message of Christ. *Notae* refers to the data, facts or content of faith.
- (2) *Assensus* assent of the intellect to the truth of the data: the mind=s intellectual acceptance of the data or message, (The demons believe . . . and shudder James 2:19). Note: Rome stops here with cognitive Faith, a Consensus with the church or Absolute assent based on inner certainty
- (3) *Fiducia* personal trust, commitment, or the giving of one=s will over to the truth, flowing out of conviction. The placing of one's personal trust in Christ, resting on Him alone for redemption. This goes beyond the intellect to the heart, the will, the affections, and personal inclinations. This is the work of the Spirit as a response (John 1:12) and a gift (Eph 2:8) and is essential and ultimately unique to Christianity (Heb 11:6). Non-Christians have a measure of Atrust@ due to common grace but never fully come to this level of faith. They *have* faith (trust in some kind of human system) but they *do not* have faith (repentance and the giving over of one's self to his Creator). The Reformers insisted on *fiducia*

k) Our faith is not irrational it has a basis. God does not ask us to suspend reason. The Spirit convicts men when they are reasoned with out of the Scriptures. God convicts men through the witness of men.

- (1) Isaiah 1:18 Come let us set the record straight . . . Reason is used here in a judicial sense Isaiah is making a judicial settlement (Romans 5:1).
- (2) Isaiah 41:21-24 Present your case . . . Presuppositionalism has no place for feidism

l) Common inadequate views of reason C

- (1) Kant (1724-1804) religion should be confined Within the limits of reason alone. This amounts to the exclusion of all supernatural references from Scripture it sees Scripture as a re-telling of the truths of reason in figurative and emblematic form for popular consumption. For Kant the distilling of the pure essence of religion was individual ethics; for Schleirmacher it was sentiment and pious affection; for Ritschl it was social engagement.

Kant affirmed both sense-oriented experience in human knowledge as well as the reasoning activity of the human mind in organizing and classifying the raw materials of experience. There is thus distinct knowledge of the material world. For Kant, god in his strictest sense, is unknowable and thus demonstrative reason must give way to practical faith. Religion is outside demonstrative reason and thus one must make practical presuppositions about moral life.

(2) Kierkegaard (1813-1855) religion is a leap in the dark. It is an act of trust in God which goes beyond the evidence, and in some cases goes against the evidence. This distrust of reason has sometimes been called fideism. As an existentialist, Kierkegaard revolted against rationalism with its stress on reason alone and its failure to progress beyond the obvious and its lack of engagement with people. Existentialism expresses its view obliquely thru the themes of anxiety, being and existence, intentionality, absurdity, and the choices of the individual. Prevalent in the thought of Jaspers, Sartre, Heidegger, Marcel, and in theologians such as Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, and Macquarrie. Existentialist philosophy asks the fundamental human questions of existence, the theologians provided the answers.

B. The Task of Apologetics

1. Answering specific objections that is, the apologist shares with all Christians the duty of answering alleged contradictions. This task helps believers and removes obstacles for the doubter. It also removes misconceptions or inaccuracies from the lost. It is not, however, the heart of the matter of apologetics. These answers may be used as Conversation to clear up questions in the mind of the lost man.

Example: Machen, *The Virgin Birth of Christ*

2. Raising and answering ultimate questions that is, that apologetics is actually an exercise in philosophical theology, and specifically, in epistemology (the theory of knowledge), Reymond, p. 6 It addresses such questions as:
Who am I?
Where did I come from?
What is truth?
Does God exist?

Has He revealed Himself?
Why do I believe?
The Christian faith alone provides true answers to these questions.

3. Challenging and non-Christian systems Many have taken the offensive and sought to (1) lay open the inadequacies of non-Christian systems and, (2) challenged such systems to justify epistemologically their very existence. Many apologists have made themselves deeply knowledgeable with respect to contemporary pagan thought and have expended considerable energy exposing these systems. e.g. Schaeffer and Van Til
4. Presenting the truth of the Gospel Growing out of the above is the positive declaration of the truth of the gospel. Such a presentation is mindful of the fallen condition of the hearer and of the power of the Holy Spirit to change lives.

C. The Relationship of Apologetics to Philosophy

1. Definition of Philosophy the term has various meanings (Webster's 9th edition):
 - a) All learning exclusive of technical precepts and practical arts.
 - b) The sciences and liberal arts exclusive of medicine, law, and theology (doctor of . . .).
 - c) A discipline comprising as its core logic: aesthetics, ethics, metaphysics, and epistemology.
 - d) The pursuit of wisdom. Greek words mean Love of wisdom
 - e) A search for a general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative rather than observational means.
 - f) An analysis of the grounds of and concepts expressing fundamental beliefs.
 - g) The word can also mean a theory underlying or regarding a sphere of activity or thought. Hence one's philosophy of life is his overall vision of life, or attitude toward life, or purpose in life.
 - h) The asking of basic questions (metaphysical questions) to determine the meaning of life C to shape a world view.
- *** In view here

2. Understanding Philosophy

- a) An activity that means freedom:
 - (1) It identifies with critical thinking
 - (2) It operates in the interrogative mode asks questions
 - (3) Requires disengagement from the status quo or one's efforts are ideology (the conformity to a certain authority)
 - (4) One Does philosophy rather than Learns philosophy
 - (5) It asks What is truth?
- b) Philosophy has historically generated content. The queen mother of

the sciences. It asks fundamental questions the answers to which form the fields of science. It questions axioms.

(1) Antiquity **Absolute authority of the human mind.** Ancient Greek philosophy assuming the autonomy of the human mind to reason to necessary conclusions

(2) Reformation **Absolute truth from God established by scripture.**

(3) Modernity **Universal objective foundation of knowledge which is tested by reason. Truth established outside God.** This developed out of the Renaissance and Enlightenment. It attempted to establish culture and life on a universal and objective formulation. It offered various lines of reason to set forth a universal objective foundation for knowledge. Key thinkers of modernity included:

(a) Descart (1760) questioned the nature of physical reality. He set forth a rationalist standard of clear and distinct ideas. Newton and others answered him giving rise to modernity with its elevation of modern science.

(b) Hegel (1805) asked questions about the ultimate nature of man. The results include the modern views of Historiography, Sociology, Politics (Marx), Education (Dewey), Evolution (Darwin), and Theological Liberalism (Schleiermacher).

(4) Post-modernity **Relative truth flowing out of the individual person based on the denial of the possibility of truth and reality.** In reaction against modernity, this view repudiates any appeal to reality or truth. Any attempt to define or legitimize reality is denounced as oppressive, leaving only relativism as a source of truth. The self is the source of truth and reality and it constructs human knowledge by use of the whole person (conscious, unconscious, and subconscious reasoning).

c) Philosophy lays the foundation for life. The history of philosophy is the road to understanding our culture and counter- cultures through understanding the philosophies of the past.

The one who does not think about ultimate questions will be putty that someone else will shape.

3. Four traditional areas of Philosophy

a) Logic asks what is the nature of correct thinking
Aristotle identified 3 laws of thought (logic):

1. Law of Identity. Any entity whatsoever is what it is and is not something else. "A rose is a rose."
2. Law of Noncontradiction. No entity whatever can be both what it is and not what it is with the same specification. "A rose cannot be not a rose."
3. Law of the excluded middle. Any entity whatever is either A (some particular kind of thing) or it is not. "A thing is either a rose or it is not a rose."
- b) Epistemology asks what is a correct theory of knowledge, To know the reason behind,@ the science of science asking, What makes something certain?@
- c) Moral Philosophy (Ethics) asks what is right conduct, how does one define the good? Justice? Right values?
- d) Metaphysics asks ultimate questions as to what is real. It is an inquiry into being in its universal and general structures. It goes beyond the realm of sense experience and produces a view of being which explains everything; giving unity and meaning to life.
4. Philosophy's answers provide
 - a. A world view Syn. Ontology (Greek To be; a theory of being
 - b. Cosmology a theory of the cosmos; an actual picture of the physical world
 3. A Life View basic attitudes and conduct dictated by one's world view
5. Some typical world views:
 - a. .The Greek Mind Assumes the autonomy of the human mind and finds answers to all questions of reality within the human mind. Man in his own highest good
 - b. Naturalism Life is absurd, the universe does not co-operate with humans. There is no higher form watching over the earth as the natural universe of matter and energy is all there really is. All supernatural is denied.
 - c. Eastern Ontology Hindu all is divine all is one all contrasts are divine. In creation, a divine being dismembered himself and made it into the world.
 - d. Nihilism the total rejection of tradition, morality, authority, and the social order that enshrines them philosophic skepticism denying objective truth and morality.
 - e. Judaic Christian The universe is the creation of a personal God. Every fact of the universe and all reality is explained in light of the Creator
 - f. Islam A monotheistic world view that somewhat parallels Christianity at points while denying all major biblical doctrine including a personal God, Christ as Lord and Savior, etc.
6. Relating Philosophy to Apologetics
 1. Christianity and Philosophy are not contradicting terms.

- (1) It is not correct to say that Christianity is based on authority and Philosophy on reason.
- (2) Philosophy as a discipline is not inherently evil.
- 2. Philosophy must be Christian philosophy by interpreting its own starting point and its own criterion in terms of the infallible authority of Scripture Van Til, *Christian Philosophy*. Apologetics answers the questions of the Philosophers.
- 3. In reality, Christianity is the only possible philosophy.
 - (3) Non-Christian thinkers have usurped the term Philosophy.
 - (4) As Van Til points out, Other philosophies are, or should be, called such by courtesy. Those who crucify reason while worshiping it; those who kill the facts as they gather them, ought not really to be called philosophers. *Christian Philosophy*
- d. The Christian apologist must present the true Christian philosophy in sharp contrast to non-Christian thinking. On any but the Christian basis man, using . . . reason is a product of chance and the facts which he supposedly orders by the >law of contradiction= (the logic that: A is B and A is not B cannot both be true) are also products of chance. Why should a >law of contradiction= resting on chance be better than a revolving door moving nothing out of nowhere into no place. Only on the presupposition that the self-contained God of Scripture controls all things can man know himself or anything else. *Christian Philosophy*
- e) The task of apologetics is to offer a proper message and to produce a correct method of accomplishing the task.

D. Major Apologetic Systems

Reymond identifies three distinguishable apologetic systems. Each has its own methodology as it addresses the question of reasoning To or From special revelation. His categories (from pages 8-9) are summarized here:

1. **Presuppositionalism** Systems presupposing the primacy of special revelation as providing the ground for the total theological enterprise. It uses reason and evidences within a biblical framework to give Aa reason for the hope within us.

*** *Characteristics Include* ***

- a) The apologetic discussion is one of a discussion of starting points.
- b) Faith in God precedes understanding everything else (Hebrews 11:3).
- c) Elucidation of the system follows faith in that system. Reasoning is from faith to faith.
- d) The religious experience must be grounded in the objective work of Christ.
- e) Human depravity has rendered autonomous reason incapable of

- satisfactorily anchoring its truth claims to anything objectively certain.
- f) A special regenerating act of the Holy Spirit is indispensable for Christian faith and enlightenment.

This is the position of Whitcomb, Van Til, Bahnsen, and Frame (though defective).

Special Note Some who would consider themselves presuppositionalists misrepresent the position as a kind of fideism leaving little or no room for the use of Christian evidences or reasoning with the pagan. Fideism views reasoning as inappropriate and says that truth is inaccessible to reason. One does not suspend reason to believe, but exchanges false reasoning (a lie) for the truth (Romans 1:25). Others start with presuppositionism but revert to a form of naturalism in reasoning, rather than a strict argument by presupposition (e.g. John Frame, and to a great degree Gordon Clark (a spiritual rationalist", and Carl F.H.Henry.

2. **Evidentialism** Systems stressing some form of natural theology as the point at which apologetics begins. common ground. Also known as semi-rationalism, classical apologetics, or empirical apologetics.

***** Characteristics Include *****

- a) A genuine belief in the ability and trustworthiness of human reason in its search for religious knowledge.
- b) The effort to ground faith upon empirical and/or historically verifiable facts starting with reason and proceeds to faith.
- c) The conviction that religious propositions must be subjected to the same kind of verification namely, demonstration that scientific assertions must undergo.

This is the position of Roman Catholicism, Arminians (Montgomery, Pinnock, and Geisler), and less consistent Calvinists including Warfield, Buswell, Cernel, McDowell, Schaeffer, Gerstner, Moreland, Sproul, and Zacharias

3. **Experientialism C** Systems, neither presuppositional nor evidential, stressing the inward religious experience as the foundation of the theological structure (New Modernism C Van Til).

***** Characteristics Include *****

- a) Insistence upon revelation as existential encounter.
- b) Great stress upon the subjective religious experience as the ground of truth, truth and meaning being defined in terms of inwardness and subjectivity.
- c) Insistence upon the paradoxical character of Christian teaching C that is to say, Christian truth is not capable of rational analysis.
- d) Emphasis upon the A Otherness, the transcendence, and hiddenness of God.

This is the position of the Barthian tradition

E. The Common Enemy

1. The lost mind is the focus of the apologetic method. Its characteristics are as follows:
 - a) A total denial of any need for divine revelation as essential to understanding the world and man.
 - b) Complete confidence in the human rational process to discover all knowledge.
 - c) One only believes to be true what can satisfy the demands of autonomous reason.
 - d) The rejection of biblical or supernatural Christianity.
 - e) This rejection of revealed truth is willful and deliberate and therefore an ethical matter.
 - f) These points should not be granted to the lost man when confronting with the Christian faith.
2. The implications of Romans 1:18-25; 2:5; 5:10 for apologetics:
 - a) The pagan suppresses the truth

Romans 1:18

The Wrath of God God's holy aversion to all that is evil. The antagonism of God's holiness and love against evil. Righteous indignation

Revealed A continued outpouring, Dynamically, effectively operative in the world of men . . . proceeding from heaven@ Murray, p. 35. Present tense, ongoing disposition; settled indignation.

Against Ungodliness (disregard directed against God Himself) and ***Unrighteousness*** (disregard for God=s laws); the latter flows from the former.

Suppression To hinder or hold down as a captive what is true (Psalm. 14:1). They continue to try to convince themselves that there is no God. All men are theists in their heart.

Romans 1:19

Natural Revelation What they do know in them subjective (the image of God in them) & Unto them

objective (nature, famines, etc.).

Psalm 19:1,2 The heavens...

Romans 1:20 They know

The Facts of Creation (observed); external as observed

Eternal Power God=s unfailing omnipotence in sustaining the world; internal upon mental reflection of the creation

Godhead The unchanging everlasting deliverance through the ages. Consistency upholding the world.

Clearly Seen Seen (understood) upon reflection and by observation (limited knowledge and awareness of the creator). This is sufficient to condemn him but not to save him. Psalms 97:6 The heavens declare his righteousness...

Romans 1:21 The know but they do not know as they ought to know.

Dan 5:22-23

Hosea 2:8

b) The pagan=s mind is fixed on a lie:

(1) He exchanges truth for a lie (**Romans 1:25**). Opposite of the truth is rebellion, lies, foolishness (Proverbs 1:7; Jeremiah 22:11-14; Matthew 12:30). He worships the creature rather than the Creator this is idolatry.

(2) He has foolishly decided there is no God (Psalm 14:1-2; Romans 3:10-12) in his heart.

(a) His heart is against God inner control center.

(b) Out of the heart are the issues of life Proverbs 4:23

(c) The heart is the location of human character Luke 6:45

(d) The heart is the aspect of man that concerns God most
1 Samuel 16:7

(e) The heart is the seat of our spiritual (Proverbs 3:5), moral (Mark 7:20-23), intellectual (Hebrews 4:12), volitional (Daniel 1:8), and emotional (Proverbs 15:13) aspects of man=s life.

(3) Seeks to wipe out God and be his own god

(a) Genesis 3:1-7 C Satan told Eve a lie she would not be like God

knowing perfect holiness. Adam and Eve sought to interpret the universe without God Jeremiah 8:9

(b) Lost men are usurpers of God's place; they are acting autonomously.

c) The pagan=s conscience accuses him (**Romans 2:15**)

(1) The Law is written in their hearts (conscience) moral conscience.

(2) They know it is wrong to kill reject the God who put this in their heart, but they cannot give an account for why they believe this.

- (3) Calvin: Inescapable sense of Deity in the heart of every person.
- (4) Lost men are spiritual weasels!
- d) The pagan is the enemy of God (Romans 5:10)

IV. Apologetics and Christian Theology

A. Introduction

1. It is absolutely essential that apologetics be seen as an aspect of one's theology. As Van Til states, Only when Protestant theology thus sees its apologetics to be an aspect of its theology of free grace can the glad tidings of the gospel ring out clearly and fully to men. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 4.
2. If one's apologetic is not correctly derived from his theology, it will make an ineffective and more seriously unbiblical witness. One must put his Hands in (his) bosom to see whether it, too, is not white with the leprosy of naturalism. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 5.
3. In the spirit of determining a truly biblical apologetic that is as consistent as possible, it is necessary to examine some of the basics of Christian theology. Van Til's summary of Christian theology is summarized below. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 7-22.
4. We seek to build a defense upon the Word of God rather than follow a defense that Works or is propagated by a famous personality.

B. The Nature of Christian Theology

1. Every teaching of Christian theology should be taken from the Scripture.
2. Scripture contains a System of truth as long as it is carefully noted that its various doctrines are not obtained by way of deduction from some master concept. **All scripture is equally spoken propositional truth.**
3. Apologetics is the defense of this System of truth.
4. To engage in a philosophical discussion with a lost man does not mean beginning without Scripture. One does not reason to theism but rather understands theism and Christianity, are both from the Bible.
5. The Bible speaks to everything directly or indirectly. It gives both history and a philosophy of history. One cannot believe the Bible and separate its religious and moral teaching from its truth concerning the physical universe. All truth is God's truth there is no secular-sacred distinction (See Psalm 19:1 & Isaiah 6:3).
6. Dogmatic or Systematic theology sets forth the System of truth in Scripture C Apologetics presents (defends) it to a pagan world.

C. The Doctrine of God

1. Of fundamental importance the What precedes the That. Gen. 1:1)
2. The attributes or properties of God describe Him. They include:
 - a) Incommunicable Attributes
 - (1) **Independence** God is in no sense correlative to or dependent upon anything. God has no source; He is the source of his own being. He is absolute. (Acts 17:25) C This is significant to Apologetics (Note: Isaiah 40:12-14; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 2)
 - (2) **Immutability** God cannot change.
 - (3) **Infinity** With respect to time, God is eternal now; not having a beginning, end, or succession of moments. This speaks to the matter of the temporal universe. God is also Omnipresent (Isaiah 46:8-12)
 - (4) **Unity** God has singularity in that there is only one God; and He has simplicity in that He is not composed of aspects which existed prior to Him (Exodus 20:5)

The whole of God is equal to the parts the parts form the whole. The unity and the diversity in God are equally basic and mutually dependent upon one another. The simplicity of God addresses the so-called problem of the one and the many.

Man cannot partake of these attributes. Man is not the source of his own being. These stress the transcendence of God (that He exceeds the limits of ordinary experience.) Pagan's attempt to take on these attributes

- b) Communicable Attributes
 - (1) **Light** God's knowledge of the world is self-contained; not dependent on truths above Him. God's knowledge is not obtained as the result of an investigation of the facts of the world. The laws of the world are as they are by God's plan (Psalms 36:9).
 - (2) **Holy** God's moral nature. What God says is right is right because the holiness of God declares it. Isaiah 6:1-6
 - (3) **Sovereign** God's authority in the world. No power exists over God.
 - (4) **Man** can partake of these attributes. These stress the immanence of God (operating with a domain of reality).

Transcendence and Immanence are very important. Transcendence in Scripture is not the separation of Deism and Immanence is not the identification of pantheism. There is a definite conception of the relation of God to the universe, and of everything in the created universe. God is not his creation: He is not it and it is not He. Yet God is perfectly related to His creation (Genesis 1:1)

c) The personality of God

- (1) God is a person (absolute). Christians can be like God (finite persons). All truth, goodness, etc.. that is known to man is part of God's being; not along-side it or above it. (Gen. 1:27)
- (2) God is a trinity. One God, three co-substantial, distinct persons.
- (3) God is the all powerful creator (Romans 11:36)
From Him *ex nilo*
Through Him God sustains and upholds the creation
To Him It is for God's glory

D. The Doctrine of Creation

1. The Bible begins with creation (Genesis 1:1) and the rest of Scripture elaborates on this theme of God as Creator and Lord (Romans 11:36).
2. The act of creation in Genesis 1:1 produces a distinction between the One who created and that which He created. Creator Creature distinction (Romans 1:25). This distinction is indispensable to the development of Biblical Apologetics.
3. The Creator does not depend on the creature but the creature does depend on the Creator for everything (Acts 17:25; Col 1:17; Ps. 100:3). The Christian acknowledges an independent Creator and a dependent creation. Pagans do not account for this distinction and put God and His creation in mutual dependence and ascribe independence to the creation (so Psalm 82:6-7).

4. God has revealed Himself to His creation in two ways:
 - a) Natural or General Revelation every aspect of the created universe.
 - (1) Psalm 19:1-2 Heavens are telling the glory of God
A silent unmistakable revelation.
 - (2) Romans 1:20, 32 The glorious qualities of God
 - (3) Psalm 97:6 All people have seen His glory
 - (4) Thus all men have God revealed to them in every aspect of creation; even in their own personal makeup. Man can only understand the world around him as he recognizes the Creator creature distinction (e.g. the galaxy can only be truly understood in light of God, Psalm 8:1-5 humility and grace).
 - (5) In historical debate there are two (2) kinds of general revelation
 - C
 - (a) **Immediate** what God has placed in any man (a-priori fashion). He knows what God has told him (Calvin and Van Til).
 - (b) **Mediate** a means given him by which he can know and point to God beyond nature. This produces a natural theology or natural apologetic (Roman Catholic Church and Classical Reformed Apologetics).
 - b) Special Revelation The Word
 - (1) Audible in the garden of Eden to Adam
 - (2) To Moses in the burning bush
 - (3) In Christ Past tense (Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 17:5)
 - (4) In the pages of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16-17)

*** The unbeliever holds down the truth he knows in unrighteousness (both natural and special).

E. The Doctrine of Man

1. Man is created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27).
 - a) In a broad sense, he is like God in everything in which a creature can be like God (a perfect creaturely image of God, Ecclesiastes 7:29; Colossians 3:10).
 - b) In a narrow sense, the image is what Christ came to restore; true knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.
2. Man is a creature can never outgrow his creaturehood = the creature/Creator distinction
 - a) Man is like God on a creaturely scale.
 - b) Man was not created with comprehensive knowledge (Colossians 1:17)

- c) Even in heaven, God will not be fully revealed.
- d) This is a mystery for man but not for God.
- e) In paganism, this is not so.
- f) Man in his pre-fall state did not forget his creature-hood and dependence on God as his source of truth.
- g) Man was consciously aware of his need to listen to God.
- h) He also knew he had to obey God.

3. Man is related to the universe.

- a) The changeableness of the universe is related to the deeds of men.
- b) Men are to be:
 - (1) Prophets (interpret the world)
 - (2) Priests (dedicate the world to God)
 - (3) King (rule in the sense of unearthing the many potentials latent in the creation for use in the service of God, Genesis 1:27-31)
 - (4) This is contrary to all pagan world views.

This is neither Christian Reconstruction or Theonomy but a steward of God creation and the obligation to apply Christian principles to all walks of life.

4. Man fell into sin.

- a) Prior to the Fall, man=s nature obeyed the law of God (Genesis 2:7).
- b) Man interpreted the universe under the direction of God.
- c) At the Fall, he attempted life without God (Romans 5:12).
- d) He sought to interpret the universe without reference to God (Jeremiah 8:9).

Man made for himself a false idea of knowledge. He sought to possess God=s attribute of absolute comprehension of knowledge (Romans 11:33). Man sought the unattainable goal of wiping out God. When man could not attain his false idea of knowledge, he blamed his sin on his finite character (circumstances). Man thus confused finiteness with sin. Paganism is still doing this today (Isaiah 55:9; Psalm 94:11; Deuteronomy 29:29).

5. Man=s desperate condition of depravity.

- a) Dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1-3)
- b) Desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9)
- c) Mind and conscience defiled (Titus 1:15)
- d) Minds are blinded (2 Corinthians 4:3-4)

- e) His conscience is seared (1 Timothy 4:1-3)
- f) He is arrogant (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

F. The Doctrine of Christ

1. Christ came to bring about reconciliation of man to God through His death and resurrection.
 - a) Promised at the outset of man's rebellion (Genesis 3:15).
 - b) Prophesied to come (Isaiah 9:6-7).
 - c) Fulfilled in Christ (John 1:29,36).
2. Christ, as fully God, took to Himself; in close union with its divine nature; a human nature. As Chalcedon stated these are Two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, and without separation (Philippians 2:8).
3. The nature of the incarnation is such that Christ shares in the incommunicable attributes of the Godhead.
4. In Christ, man finds the true wisdom and true knowledge he lost in the fall (1 Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 2:17). In Christ, man realizes that he is a creature of God and that he must not seek for comprehensive knowledge. Christ is Prophet.
5. In Christ, man finds reconciliation in that Christ was offered up as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice.
 - a) This work of Christ as a priest cannot be separated from His work as a prophet.
 - b) In order to give man true knowledge about God, it was necessary for Christ to die for mankind; **thus making the matter of knowledge an ethical issue** (not intellectual). John 19:7 He made Himself out to be the Son of God@
 - c) Knowing God in Scripture is knowing and loving God this is true knowledge of God (John 14:15).
6. As King, Christ subdues the believer to Himself. In connection with His work as Priest and Prophet, Christ died to subdue man and gave him wisdom.

G. The Doctrine of Salvation

1. Christ has applied salvation to mankind without which man would have nothing. This addresses what Christ did for the person and what Christ did and does within the person.

2. This application of the work of Christ is done through the Holy Spirit.
3. The Holy Spirit also partakes of the incommunicable attributes of God.
4. The Arminian has made salvation totally dependent on man and in doing so has made the eternal God dependent on man.
 - a) This, in effect, denies the incommunicable attributes of God.
 - b) This error results not only in bad theology but in a false apologetic method.

Classical Apologetics is the last element of Arminian leprosy in the bosom of Calvinism.

H. Conclusion

1. These elements begin a Christian philosophy of life. The truths of Scripture are thus set forth in a systematic theology or Christian world view.
2. This Christian world view is what the apologist defends and his defense must be consistent with his theology.
3. All must be interpreted in light of how God has already interpreted it.

V. The Christian Philosophy of Being (or Reality)

A. Introduction

Being is the domain to which everything real belongs. An entity or object that exists or has existence has being. The study of the nature and structure of being is called ontology or metaphysics.

This section represents both an apologetic exercise and a statement of truth.

B. The Christian as a Theologian and Biblical Philosopher, can speak to the Lost Man in His Language

1. That is, to translate Christian truth into the language of the day so that it can be understood.
2. That is that we provide Christian meanings to be contrasted with non-Christian meanings (Acts 17:22-23).
 - a) Problem: How to get people interested in our faith (Acts 17:19)
 - b) To speak to the lost man, we must use their languages; that is, give biblical answers to their questions in a language they understand (The Language of Philosophy, *Defense of the Faith*, p. 23)
 - c) We must immediately distinguish between the reality of God and His creation.
 - d) We are not saying to import their problems, thinking, or mind-sets into Christianity.
 - e) This becomes our Point of contact the use of language putting Christian content into language we borrow from Them.

This is implemented in the following

C. The Philosopher=s Problem of The One and The Many

1. The question of reality
2. He is seeking to find meaning to the complex nature of reality.
3. Man's problem is to find unity in the midst of the plurality of things that is, a unified outlook in human experience (Ecclesiastes 12:12 an endless number of books!).
 - a) He examines universals and particulars seeking to put them in relationship to one another. Realism, in its pursuit of what was real, started with the universal and reasoned to the particulars (Aristotle, Aquinas). Nominalism starts with

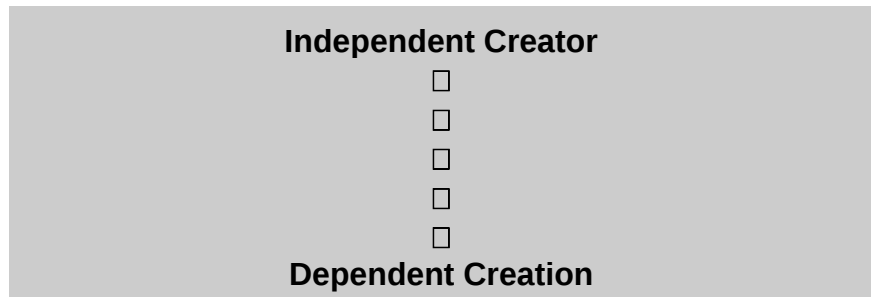
- the particulars and reasoned to the universal (Occam)
- b) The issue in the problem of the one and the many is that of authority.
 - (1) The one refers not to a number but to unity and oneness; in metaphysics, it has usually meant the absolute. The one defines everything in being.
 - (2) The many refers to the particularity or individuality of things; the universe is full of a multitude of beings; at issue here is if truth concerning them is inherent in their individuality, or is it in their basic oneness.
4. The Christian can provide a true answer to this problem; he can provide the comprehensive picture. It is the Christian's task To take the totality picture of Christianity and compare it with the totality picture of non-Christian thought. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 24.

D. The Christian Answer to This Problem

1. The answer makes the following contrasts in sharp opposition to the non-Christian system: (taking into account the Creator/creature distinction)
 - a) Eternal Unity and Plurality (Eternal One and Many)
 - (1) The eternal one and many form a self complete unity
 - (2) God is absolute personality, and therefore, absolute individuality. He has no non-being over against himself in comparison with which He defines Himself. He is internally self-defined C He does not go outside Himself (Romans 11:36; Acts 17:25).
 - (3) Unity and diversity in God are both fundamental.
 - (4) There is no subordination C so faulty views of the Trinity. The Son and Spirit are ontologically on a par with the Father.
 - (5) God (a person) is the concrete universal. In God's being there are no particulars not related to the universal and there is nothing universal that is not fully expressed in the particulars. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 26.
 - (6) There is no definite answer to these problems from a non-Christian point of view. Only in Christianity is there a concrete universal and a proper relationship of all particulars. Christianity eliminates an abstract universal.
2. Temporal Unity and Plurality (Temporal One and Many)
 - a) The temporal one and many are created by God.
 - b) The Creator has ordained order and subordination in the creation (Genesis 1:1; John 1:3)
 - c) No aspect of creation may be regarded as more ultimate to another. All parts of creation are equally derived and dependent.

The particulars or facts of the universe do and must act in accord with universals or laws (Psalm 100:3).

- d) There is thus order in the created universe.
- e) God may at any time take one fact and set it into a new relation. (e.g. the miracles). These are basic to the Christian position. There is no inherent reason in the facts or laws themselves as to why this should not be done.
- f) Man is set as king over nature and is to subdue it; he is priest and thus is to subdue the creation for God; and he is prophet and thus is to interpret it (Genesis 1:28).



- g) Teleological laws (overarching or ultimate laws of purpose) facts of man's will and intellect are higher than mechanical laws facts of nature (e.g. what takes place in a miracle). All higher and lower laws are subordinate to God. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 28.
- h) The created one and the many may be said to be equal as they are equally derived and equally dependent upon God.

3. Sin and Its Curse

- a) Due to the sin of man, the curse rests upon the whole creation (Romans 5:12).
- b) God sent Christ as a remedial influence against sin in the world.
- c) Through redemption, creation's purpose was accomplished (Genesis 1:27; Colossians 3:10; Ephesians 4:24)
- d) Redemption included the destruction of the power of darkness in the world (Psalms 139:21-22)

E. Summary

- 1. The Christian offers the true concept of reality or being (or Christian concept of metaphysics).
- 2. It involves a two-layer concept of reality:
 - a) First, there is God's being which is ultimate.
 - b) Second, there is the created being which is derived.

C God is the eternal as an absolute person (being, rather than a principle, John 1:1)
C He is the personal creator of the temporal universe

(becoming). God=s being is Abefore@ the becoming of the created universe (John 1:3). He made man in His image; the infinite personal God.

C The eternal one and many are Prior to the created one and many. These terms Before and Prior to are not referring to temporal (time) or logical priority but rather to God's creative work (Rom. 11:36). The creation is a product of His will and intellect.

C The creation has fallen into sin ~~+++~~ Christ has come to redeem the sinner who will put faith in Him (John 1:4).

3. This concept of reality represents the only rational answer to the question of the one and the many and it alone offers an intelligible answer to the issue of being. Without it man lacks an understanding of his origin, his meaning of life, his human dignity, his invariant moral code, his reason for existence, and his destiny. Without God, nothing makes sense and man is left with speculative statements (rationality) about reality that ultimately rest upon random chance, coincidence, and irrationality as he appeals without basis to one piece of the creation to explain the rest of the creation.

4. Implications for Apologetics

a) The Ontological Trinity

- (1) Equality in essence in the Godhead (distinct from the economical trinity = associated with activity)
 (2) Temporal Being C no subordination of thought

b) The Christian theory is a powerful alternative to all human philosophies and world views:

Reality

Ultimate being
 Eternal Personal God
 Ultimate rationality
 Intelligent creator

Absurdity

chance, myth, chaos
 incoherence, irrationality
 abandonment of logic
 Mathematical prob.
 Rational suicide

Temporal being
 Temporal universe
 Rationality
 Biblical use of logic

Temporal being
 Science

- c. There can be no intelligible thinking outside of God.
 Man meets God in every aspect of the universe. The main point is that if man could look anywhere and not be confronted with the revelation of God then he could not sin in the biblical sense of the term. Sin is the breaking of the law of God.

God confronts man everywhere. He cannot in the nature of the case confront man anywhere if he does not confront him everywhere. God is one; the law is one. If man could press one button on the radio of his experience and not hear the voice of God then he would always press that button and not the others. But man cannot even press the button of his own self-consciousness without hearing the requirement of God. *A Letter of Common Grace*, pp. 40-41.

- d. Man is confronted with God at every point (Psm 19:1-6) Vs.6 There is nothing hidden from its heat.
- e. I Cor 1:18-24 The inability of man to bring a credible argument against God. What was once foolish now becomes essential:
 - 1) That man needs someone to die for him
 - 2) That man is confronted with his sin
 - 3) That man should need to understand the cross

An independent Creator and his dependent creation with perfect unity and diversity at every level. All flows out of Him. All categories of reality have meaning in Him e.g. Gen 1:1

Time - In the beginning
Force - God
Action - created
Space - heavens
Matter - earth

vs.

A pagan Chain of being contrived through human speculation

god - unsurpassed knowledge (pure spirit)
The ability to will lower life into being.

angels - spirit/physical
The ability to enter the spirit realm

man - soul/mind
The ability to have higher complexity of life

upper life - behavior, animals

lower life - non-behavior, bacteria

physical - the planet

non-being - Inanimate

VI. Christian Theory of Knowledge Epistemology

A. Introduction and Review

1. The Christian view of life comprises three major sections:
 - a) The Christian theory of being
 - b) The Christian theory of knowledge
 - c) The Christian theory of ethics or behavior
2. The Christian view of life is to worship and serve the Creator (Acts 17:28).
The non-Christian view of life is to worship and serve the creature.
3. Through the fall of Adam, the human race became creature-worshippers.
Through the redemption wrought by Christ, those who are saved have come to learn to serve the Creator more than the creature. They have accepted the Christian theory of reality as offered in Scripture Psalm 100:3 It is He who hath made us . . .
 - a) God as self-sufficient
 - b) Creation of all things in the universe by God
 - c) The fall of man and redemption provided by Christ
4. A brief introduction to Epistemology

To know involves perceiving, learning, understanding, performing, experiencing, willing, and discerning. Epistemology addresses one's theory of knowledge or source of truth. It addresses How we know what we know.

- a) Truth is either understood as subjective or objective
 - (1) Subjective truth (truth is what is individually determined as truth). Theories include
 - (a) **Pragmatic** theory of truth Truth is what works
 - (b) **Rationalist** theory of truth Truth is what can be clearly and distinctly understood by reason
 - (c) **Empiricist** theory of truth Truth is what can be obtained by sense perception
 - (d) **Coherence** theory of truth Truth is the harmony among a set of ideas
 - (e) **Emotivist** theory of truth Truth is what I feel
 - (f) **Utilitarian** theory of truth Truth is what is most useful or has the most useful consequence (the greatest pleasure over pain)

- (2) Objective truth (truth that is so independent of the knower and his conscience).
- b) For the Christian truth is objective
 - (1) knowledge = facts interpreted by God
 - (2) truth = God's interpretation and meaning of His creation.
 - (a) 1 Kings 17:24 I know . . . that the word of the Lord in your mouth is truth.
 - (b) Psalm 25:5 Lead me in Thy truth and teach me . . . For Thee I wait all the day.
 - (c) Psalm 119:43 And do not take the word of truth utterly out of my mouth, for I wait for Thine ordinances.
 - (d) John 1:17 . . . grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ
 - (e) John 5:33 he has borne witness to the truth.
 - (f) John 8:32 . . . you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.
 - (g) John 8:45 I speak the truth, you do not believe me.
 - (h) John 14:6 I am the way, the truth and the life
 - (i) John 16:7 But I tell you the truth . . .
 - (j) John 16:13 But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth . . . and He will disclose to you what is to come.
 - (k) John 17:17 Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.
 - (l) 1 John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.
- *** (3) Truth is what God has said

Absolute Truth what we know from God

- c) For the pagan the opposite of truth is not **ignorance** but **rebellion** or **foolishness** (Jeremiah 22:11-14; Romans 8:7, II Pet. 3:3-5)
- d) To know the truth (God) is not to know about Him in an abstract and impersonal manner, but rather to enter into saving actions (Micah 6:5), True knowledge of God involves obeying the stipulations of His covenant (*Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, p. 457).

B. The Relationship of Knowledge to Scripture

1. The Bible has been taken to be the final standard of truth. No areas of known reality exist that may be compared to the Bible.
2. How do we know knowledge is based on What do we know being. The Christian's true knowledge is only such as it is based on God's knowledge.
 - a) Psalm 36:9 In Thy light we see light
 - b) Colossians 2:3 In Him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge
 - c) The non-Christian seeks to answer the question of **knowledge** without addressing the question of **being**. He claims to know **independent** of God.
3. If the Being of God is what, on the basis of Scripture testimony, we have found it to be, it follows that our knowledge will be true knowledge only the extent that it corresponds to His knowledge. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 33.
4. In the Christian theory of knowledge, God is ultimate being and hence ultimate absolute authority. He is the final court of appeal. All we know is rooted in objective truth. The alternative is the position of Eve in the garden where man is the final court of appeal and his own authority. This is the effect of sin in his life he has his own autonomy and refuses to recognize God's authority in his life. Man in this condition needs regeneration.
5. Man does learn from nature, but he must bring this knowledge into relationship with what the Scriptures teach in order that it may be properly understood.

Knowledge with correct interpretation is truth True facts, True knowledge. Things known without God is False knowledge, facts without understanding.

Pratt states, It is not enough to know that cows eat grass. True apprehension of cows and grass reveals the providential power and care of God and the task which was given to man to subdue every other creature to God's glory (Genesis 1:28). The distance between the earth and the nearest star is truly understood only as its disclosure of God is recognized, for the multiple light years of distance is the mere work of God's fingers and displays to man his need for humility before God and thanksgiving for His grace (Psalm 81:5). pp. 14-15. (see 2 Tim. 3:7)

C. God's Knowledge of Himself

1. God's being is coterminous with His self-consciousness.
 - a) By this, Van Til means that God's knowledge and being are identical. What God knows is based on who He is.
 - b) To deny this would make God dependent on something that exists beside Himself, thus creating a pantheism in that the being of God is made dependent upon temporal reality.
 - c) Van Til writes, Scripture portrays God as omniscient, as being completely self-conscious. In God there can be no hidden depth of possibility unfathomed by His own consciousness. Neither can there be anything in non-being for which God must wait before He can be fully aware of Himself. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 36.
2. God's knowledge of Himself is entirely analytical and he has complete internal coherence. **Analytical** knowledge, in distinction from synthetic knowledge, means knowledge that is not gained by reference to something that exists without the knower. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 37. God knows Himself not by comparing Himself with anything.

Note: The issue is one of judgement: **analytical** knowledge in philosophy is the judgement that the predicate is contained in the subject. This kind of judgement does not appeal to experience for its verification. When Van Til says God's knowledge is analytical, he simply is saying that God's knowledge is self-contained, God does not learn or grow in his knowledge. By converse, **synthetic** knowledge is that which is Built up from experience or learned.

3. In God therefore, the real is the rational and the rational is the real.

D. God's Knowledge of the World

1. God has had a plan from all eternity to create the universe.
2. The idea of the universe did not imply the eternal creation of the universe. The idea of a thing and the reality of the thing are not identical with God. God is not His creation.
3. Christianity interprets reality in terms of the eternally self-conscious divine personality; non-Christian thought interprets reality in terms of an existence independent of God (e.g. the non-Christian would insist that there must be succession of moments in the consciousness of God in order to think of God as appreciative of the passage of time in the universe. He explains God in his own way).
4. Finite man cannot comprehend the nature of God's knowledge of the world. The finite mind is not the standard of what is possible and what is

impossible. It is the divine mind that is determinative of the possible (*Defense of the Faith*, p. 39). The creation does not explain the Creator, or pass judgement on the creation.

5. God's knowledge of the universe is also analytical. God's knowledge of the universe depends upon God's knowledge of Himself. The very existence of the universe is dependent on God's knowledge and plan for the universe (Hebrews 4:13).
6. God's knowledge of that which now takes place in the universe is logically dependent upon what He from all eternity decided with respect to the universe.

E. Man's Knowledge of God

1. An order must now be established. Whose knowledge, man's or God's, shall be made the standard of the other *Defense of the Faith*, p. 39. One must be determinative and the other subordinate. One must be original, the other analogical of the original. The order is obvious.

This is an important question in Apologetics

2. Man is created by God in His image (Genesis 1:27). Thus, man is like God and is assured of true knowledge of God. We are known of Him and therefore, we know Him and know that we know Him. God is light and therefore we have light (Psalm 36:9).
3. As creatures, man's knowledge of God is not and cannot ever be comprehensive. Man will know more in heaven, but not all. Man is like God in that his knowledge is true but unlike God in that his knowledge is not comprehensive. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 41.

Isaiah 55:9 God's ways / your ways; God's thoughts / your thoughts (Deuteronomy 29:29)

4. Man's knowledge is True as far as it goes and is rational as God is absolute rationality. Thus, man has a rational relationship with God. Thus, Christianity is an Absolute Rationalism.

God Centered World

God is man's A priori

He is objective truth from which man understands all things (deductive truth)

vs.

Man' Centered World

Man develops his own sense-perceived-truth in an A posteriori manner

(inductive truth)

5. Thus, Christian epistemology is ultimate rationalism and sets forth incomprehensive knowledge about man from God. Non-Christian epistemology is ultimate irrationalism and sets forth comprehensive knowledge about man and God from man.

F. Man's Knowledge of the Universe

the whole of the created world

1. It must first be established that man's knowledge about God is prior to his (man's) knowledge of the creation.
2. Man must know himself in relationship to his environment which is God.
3. Man exists by virtue of God's existence. Back of all man's finite relationships with other men and the finite creation is the infinite personal God. God is man's ultimate environment.
4. The whole of man's environment, as well as man himself, is already interpreted by God.
5. Man cannot know himself in any true sense unless he knows God.
6. By knowing God truly but not comprehensively, man then knows the world truly but not comprehensively.
7. The world is only meaningful when it is interpreted by man to the glory of God (Romans 11:33).
8. If the Christian theory of creation by God is not true, then we hold that there cannot be objective knowledge of anything. The Christian view relates all things to each other and gives them fruitful contact. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 43.
9. While man's knowledge is not comprehensive, it is still true. Man's knowledge is true because God is true.
10. Antinomies (contradictions between two apparently equal principles) or seeming paradoxes exist in the Christian's knowledge of God.
 - a) An example is prayer and the sovereignty of God.
 - b) There are no real contradictions as God is all glorious and all creation exists to glorify Him.
 - c) Thus, in God there is self-complete unity behind the finite creation.
 - d) Such seeming paradoxes bring to light that human knowledge can never be completely comprehensive knowledge.
 - e) Human knowledge is analogical (on the basis of analogy), and therefore, must be paradoxical.
 - f) Men do not fully understand the absolute system of knowledge of God

which relates to everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-11; 5:8-9,18-20)

11. The contradictions that seem to exist in the nature of the case are no more than seeming contradictions.
- a) To admit to real contradictions would deny the biblical concept of the self-complete universal in God.
 - b) It must always be maintained that there is coherence in God's thinking.
 - c) Seeming contradictions do not have to be resolved to have truth.
 - d) Examine Ecclesiastes 5:8-20 & Romans 8:20-28

G. Sin and Its Curse

1. The statements made up to this point do not take into account that sin has entered the heart of man. Sin is man's breaking loose from God (ethically, not metaphysically). It is man's enmity and rebellion against God.
2. Sin involves every aspect of man's personality, including the ethical and the intellectual. All of man's reactions in every relation in which God had set him were ethical and not merely intellectual; the intellectual itself is ethical. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 46 Colossians 2:8-10.
3. Man's rebellion at the fall was his attempt to interpret everything with which he came into contact without reference to God. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 47.
 - a) This is not to say that man henceforth denied that there is a God, but it is saying that man was clearly denying that God is self-sufficient or self-complete.
 - b) He would say that God and man are correlative. He might say that the temporal cannot be interpreted without reference to the eternal, but he would at the same time say that the eternal cannot be interpreted without reference to the temporal.

In the garden (Genesis 3:1-19), Adam was denied the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil to test his obedience and prove that he was willingly under God's command. The serpent contradicted God (You surely shall not die) and the Creator-creature distinction (You will be like God). When Adam ate of the fruit, his sin was rebellion against recognizing his dependence upon God in everything along with the assumption of his independence from God. In reality, Adam was no less dependent, but simply refused to acknowledge his dependence. Thinking themselves to be wise, they became as fools (Romans 1:22 Proverbs

28:26 & Ephesians 4:17-18). Through this act, Adam's sinful condition passed upon all men (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Corinthians 15:22), They are under the influence of Satan (Ephesians 2:2).

4. Thus, some men worship and serve the Creator and are Christians. All other men worship and serve the creature rather than the Creator and are non-Christians.
5. Christianity has two levels of thought absolute and derivative. Likewise, there are two levels of interpreters God who interprets absolutely and man who re-interprets God's interpretation.

In Christian theism, human thought is analogical (showing a likeness that permits one to draw an analogy a resemblance based on particulars that agree) of God's thought.

The issue here is that man's knowledge is never comprehensive. God's thoughts will always be higher (Gordon Clark's charges that this leads to skepticism is for this writer unwarranted. To read further on this controversy see Nash, Gordon Clark in Elwell, *Handbook of Evangelical Thought*, p. 187-188).

The non-Christian in his sin wipes out this distinction between absolute and derivative thought. He makes man's thought univocal (having one meaning only) rather than analogical. God is a corroborator with man. Instead of thinking God's thoughts after Him, he, together with God, thinks out thoughts that have never been thought by God or by man.

Thus, he holds to the ultimacy of the created universe and of the mind of man. He denies the necessity of analogical thought. *Defense of the Faith*, pp. 47-48 In this context, mistakes are thought of as natural and to be expected not as a result of sin.

6. There are then three (3) kinds of consciousness
7.
 - a) **Adamic Consciousness** man when he was created perfect.
 - (1) He understood himself as a creature and only sought to re-interpret the interpretation of God.
 - (2) He was receptive of revelation and could reconstruct this revelation.
 - (3) He was *receptively reconstructive* (God made men upright, Ecclesiastics 7:29).
 - b) **Fallen or Non-Regenerate Consciousness** man in his sinful state.
 - (1) He denies his creaturehood.
 - (2) He will not receive revelation of God's interpretation.
 - (3) He wants to create his own interpretation without reference to

God.

- (4) He believes in the ultimate autonomy of the human mind.
- (5) He is *creatively constructive*.
- (6) There is no unity in his thought as he has cut himself off from the source of unity.
- (7) Yet man has not cut loose from God metaphysically and thus this man has some knowledge of God as outlined in Romans 1.
- (8) This Shadow unity which man possesses prevents him from falling into complete disintegration in his world.
- (9) Complete disintegration will follow in hell.

c) **Regenerate Consciousness** the restoration in principle to the position of the Adamic consciousness.

- (1) Man has been regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit and again sees himself as God creature who has fallen into sin.
- (2) He has been saved by grace and, thus, desires to be *receptively reconstructive* once more.
- (3) He interprets reality in light of the absolute God although he does not have comprehensive knowledge or comprehensive unity.
- (4) His knowledge is in principle only because of the remnants of sin that remain in him.(Romans 7:14-21) and prevents him from thinking God's thought at every point. Relative evil still exists in him.
- (5) This evil has a detrimental effect both on man's ability to argue the Christian position correctly and on his living of the Christian life in front of the non-Christian (True knowledge according to the image of the one who created . . . (Colossians 3:10).

- 8. In conclusion, the Christian must recognize where the non-Christian is and of the total inability of his consciousness to accept the Christian position. Man is never epistemologically neutral. He either loves God or he hates God. He is *for* Him or *against* Him.

H. Summary Statements Concerning Christian Epistemology

- 1. God is the ultimate authority and man learns of Him in the Scriptures.
- 2. God=s being is coterminous with His self-consciousness. God has analytical knowledge about all things.
- 3. God has planned the creation from eternity. He is not His creation. God has complete knowledge about the creation and this makes the creation possible.

4. God's knowledge is the standard of man's knowledge. Man has incomprehensive, but true, knowledge about God (analogical).
5. Man can only know the creation by knowing God first. Seeming contradictions are the result of man's finite nature.
6. In the fall, man interpreted the creation without God. He became creatively constructive.
7. Only in regeneration when man sees himself as God's creature does he once again receptively reconstruct knowledge given him by God.
8. Man is not epistemologically neutral. The ultimate question to ask is By what standard? All men have faith, the issue is the content and direction of their faith.
9. All facts are thus Interprefacts (Zemek) and are governed by presuppositions and pre-understandings that arise out of these presuppositions

True Epistemology is

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. 4. | <p>Pneumatic from the Holy Spirit
 Pistic believed by faith
 Receptionistic received by faith
 Reconstructive thinks God's thoughts after Him</p> |
|--|---|

The Conflict of World Views

Creator (GOD)

Independent Creator
Ain the beginning God . . .
Source of all truth -- (a priori)

Chance

Irrationalism
Absurdity
Abandonment of logic
Rational Suicide
Foolishness

Creation (Man)

Dependent creation
True Knowledge of God and His creation
True righteousness

Believers

Worship the Creator
Thinks God's thoughts after Him
In principle (noetic effects of sin)
Dependent reasoning (biblical)

Unbelievers

Worship the creature -- Self
Reject God=s thought but do not live that way. They know God but do not glorify Him as God -- A truth
Inconsistent:
In rebellion they assert independence (Pretended neutrality and autonomy)
In reality they continue to think according to the remaining effects of God's image in them.
A-theism presupposes Theism
Depends on God for the laws of logic, uniformity in nature, human dignity, a moral code Rom 2:14,15

Conclusion: Speak to unbelievers with confidence
that they are made in God's image,
putting the unbeliever on trial
2 Cor 10:5

VII. The Christian Philosophy of Behavior Ethics

A. Introduction

1. The Christian's highest good is to do good works to the glory of God. As a redeemed creature, this is his goal to live to the glory of God.
2. Man cannot set his own standard of criterion by which he will seek to do good but must conform to the standard of the revealed will of God in Scripture.
3. The sinner has no power with which to work toward doing good without faith it is impossible to please God. Faith comes from God through regeneration by the Holy Spirit. This is man's true motivation.
4. There are, thus, three aspects to ethical questions:
 - a) Man's Summum Bonum Highest Good
 - b) Man's Criterion Standard
 - c) Man's Motivation Faith
5. A preliminary discussion of Christian Ethics
 - a) Humanistic Definitions
 - (1) Aristotle that branch of science which studies human character
 - (2) Bouma that scientific study of man's moral life as determined by its true ideal or norm
 - (3) Baker the science of conduct
 - (4) Unknown that discipline which seeks to determine what ought to be the universal character and conduct of mankind.
 - (5) Humanistic discussions
 - (a) Philosophical Ethics an approach to man's responsibility from what can be known from natural reason
 - (b) Theological Ethics an identification of principles of conduct gained from a system of religion
 - (6) In all of these, man becomes the Measure of all things. definitions allow for a humanistic-intrinsic approach to ethics in which man creates his own standard.
 2. Christian Ethics
 - (1) God spoke via His Word providing a moral obligatory standard to which man is compelled to submit.
 - (2) Christian ethics presupposes

- (a) Regeneration
- (b) Biblical revelation from God as the ethical authority
- (c) Man's reconstruction of God Word as his pattern,
thereby submitting to a higher authority and
his exclusion from being the measure of all
things.

(3) Murray's definition the biblical ethic is The sum total of the ways in which the renewed consciousness of man reacts to the demands of the diversified concrete situations in which he is placed *Principles of Conduct* (pp. 21-22).

(3) Important biblical words

- (a) Ethics from Greek words ἥθος and ἥθος meaning custom, habit, conduct C a custom or practice prescribed by law or code (1 Corinthians 15:33).
- (b) Good ἁγός and καλός goodness, purity, and holiness (James 3:13; 1 Peter 3:2,16; 2 Peter 3:11)
- (c) Way often characterizes the meaning of a moral standard of living (Psalm 1:1,6; 1 Samuel 12:23; Proverbs 22:6, John 4:6; Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 22:4)

Note: Associated with these words is the term Moral which means the ability or capability to choose right (as opposed to wrong) in an ethical system.

3. Some Biblical Postulates for Ethics (Murray, *Principles of Conduct*, pp. 12-13)

- (1) Christian ethics looks beyond the sum total of actions known as behavior (overt action) to the dispositional character that determines the action. The heart is the prime issue (Proverbs 4:23; Jeremiah 17:9).
- (2) Christian ethics view behavioral actions in their organic relations to one another. (A system of ethics in which all traits must be held uniformly as part of a coherence and unity, keeping all in balance, Ecclesiastes 3:11; Galatians 5:22-23).

Augustine If a robber demands all your money Do you give him the \$5.00 in your pocket or do you also give him the \$10.00 hidden in your shoe?

- (3) Christian ethics takes into account not only the actions of individuals as individuals but also individuals in their corporate action. (The Christian ethic is not lived by oneself, but in relationship with all others, Romans 14:7 harmony must persist).
- (4) The sum total of behavior by believers individually or corporately when observed (either in biblical times or currently) cannot necessarily show the true biblical ethic. (The fact that one individual or a group of people is saved does not mean he/she will always act with a biblical ethics). e.g. David / Bathsheba or David / Nabal Rahab?

The focus in biblical ethics must be upon the divine demands (the revelation of God's will for man) not solely on human behavior.

- 4. Questions with which ethics deal
 - (1) What is the highest ideal man can have in life?
 - (2) What is the source of knowledge of the highest good?
 - (a) God's precepts (direct commands Thou shall not)
 - (b) God's principles (secondary application wisdom, discernment, etc...)
 - (3) What is the final authority for what is right and wrong?
 - (4) Why does an individual act as he does? sin, environment, cultural conditioning, mental illness ?!?
 - (5) Is man ever free to do what he thinks or chooses to do?
 - Yes and No He has freedom on a leash He is free to obey; The truth shall make you free (John 8:32; Galatians 5:1).
 - (6) What are the temporal / permanent results for individual choices and actions?

B. Ethics and the Christian Philosophy of Knowledge

The above mentioned aspects can only be dealt with as one relates them to a Christian view of knowledge.

Since man is created by God, he is absolutely dependent upon his relationship to God for the meaning of his existence in its

every aspect. It then follows that good is good for man because it has been set as good for man by God. Good is good because God says it is good.

The non-Christian says that the good exists in its own right and that god strives for that which is good in itself.

1. Man is Made in the Image of God

- a) Man, as he was originally created, Appeared with a perfect moral consciousness *Defense of the Faith*, p. 53.
 - (1) In this original perfect condition, it must be remembered the moral consciousness of man was derived and not the ultimate source of information as to what is good.
 - (2) That is man's moral consciousness was finite.
- b) Thus, the Christian view of epistemology, as related to ethics, is that man's moral activity is receptively reconstructive while the non-Christian system sees man's moral activity as creatively constructive.
 - (1) For the Christian, God is the infinite moral personality who reveals to man the true nature of morality and good.
 - (2) For the non-Christian, there is no absolute moral personality to whom man is responsible and from whom he has received his conception of the good. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 53.
- c) Even in man's perfect state, while man had within himself a love for that which was good, it required supernatural revelation from God.

2. Sin and Its Curse

- a) Sin has blinded the intellect of man as well as corrupted his will.
 - (1) Man's heart is hardened and is at enmity against God.
 - (2) He does not know what good is.
 - (3) In his depraved condition, man cannot be the source of good, nor the standard of good, nor the one who understands the nature of the will which is to strive to do good.
- b) The Christian believes without apology and without concession that it is the Scripture and the Scripture alone in the light of which all moral questions must be answered.
 - (1) Scripture was given as God's revelation because of sin.
 - (2) As Van Til states; No man living can even put the moral problem as he ought to put it, or ask the moral questions as he ought to ask them, unless he does so in the light of Scripture. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 54.
- c) Thus, man is both finite and sinful.
 - (1) In this condition, man is restrained by God's common grace from living out his sinful principle.

(2) To the extent man is not restrained, the natural man makes his own moral consciousness the ultimate standard of moral action. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 55.

3. The Regenerated Consciousness

- a) The believer now has a regenerated consciousness, and thus, in principle he is returned to his former place.
- b) He now once again must depend on revelation and is still finite in his knowledge.
- c) In his regenerate moral consciousness, he is still capable of error, and thus Van Til describes his state as *Ain* principle. Man must constantly test all by Scripture.
- d) As a Christian's moral consciousness nourishes itself on the Scriptures, it knows truth in ethical questions. In this sense it is a source of information.

4. To summarize

- a) There once was in Adam a moral consciousness that was perfect and could act as a source (though finite) on moral questions.
- b) At present there exists two (2) types of moral consciousness (regenerate and non-regenerate). These agree on no ethical questions as they have opposite starting points.
- c) The Christian affirms and the non-Christian denies that the moral verdict of any man must be tested by Scripture because of sin *Defense of the Faith*, p. 56. There are, thus, those who obey God, having tested all by Scripture and those who please themselves, testing nothing by Scripture.

5. Roman Catholicism

- a) Catholicism seeks to maintain a position halfway.
- b) In the thinking of Aristotle and Aquinas, a large measure of autonomy is given to the human consciousness. Thus, in ethical questions man assigns a large degree of autonomy.
- c) Thomas saw man before the fall as largely independent of the counsel of God. It is only in this light that Thomas can view man as free and responsible. Thus, there is no biblical idea of authority in Catholicism.
- d) There is too high a notion of the consciousness of fallen man viewing the natural man as being in the same position as Adam before the fall.
 - (1) Man errs and thus is in need of God's grace because he is finite not because he is a sinner.
 - (2) Man is only partly guilty for his errors.
 - (3) Man still has ethical power within himself.
 - (4) Thomas does not see man subjecting himself to Scripture completely.
 - (5) He sees a distinction between theological virtues whose object is God Himself and intellectual or moral virtues

- which are comprehensible to human reason.
- (6) Thus, ethical questions may be known apart from supernatural revelation.
- (7) The believing Catholic is in the same place as the pagan.
- (8) Faith is not required in addressing the natural relationships of life.
- (9) Paul said whatsoever is not of faith is sin!
- e) Romanism has no challenge to the non-Christian position.

6. Evangelical Protestants

- a) C. S. Lewis takes a similar view That man is, through grace, to participate in the divine nature. In the ethical area, man=s troubles are because of his finite nature, not because of his sinful state and disobedience of God. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 58.
- b) Lewis appeals to the lost man to Dress up as Christ in order that while they have the Christ ideal before them and see how far they are from realizing it. Christ may turn them Into the same kind of thing as Himself, injecting AHis kind of life and thought, His Zoe, in them. C. S. Lewis, *Beyond Personality*, p. 37.
- c) Van Til gives this analysis of Lewis How shall men ever be challenged to look inside themselves and find that all that is not of faith is sin if they are encouraged to think that without the light of Scripture and without the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit they can, at least in the natural sphere, do what is right? *Defense of the Faith*, p. 59. Can man practice cardinal virtues without faith?
- d) Lewis further speaks of objective standards in ethics.
 - (1) He speaks of general objectivity that is common between Christians and non-Christians.
 - (2) This objectivity between all men Lewis calls the Tao
- e) Again, it must be reaffirmed that man in his non-Christian state may hold to many views, but without belief in Christ and obedience to Him does man have any true ethics and truth (Hebrews 11:6).
 - (1) Lewis is thus in the same position as the Romanist in challenging the lost man.
 - (2) Van Til says, The gospel according to St. Lewis= is too much of a compromise with the ideas of the natural man to constitute a clear challenge in our day. *of the Faith*, p. 60.

C. Ethics and The Christian Philosophy of Reality

- 1. God has been good from everlasting to everlasting. That is, God did not have to become good He is absolute will, just as He is absolute rationality.

2. In the Christian view, God is finally and ultimately self-determinative. He is the necessary presupposition of all human activity.
 3. In the non-Christian view, a god is determined and ultimately indeterminative (that is not one who fixes a standard). Character is an achievement through a process for god as well as for man. He denies a self-determinative God.
 4. The Christian's ethical system thus comes from God while the non-Christian's system does not believe that the Christian's God exists. Furthermore, the non-Christian holds that the existence of such a God spells the end of all ethical activity!
 5. In the pagan view, the good is the ultimate concept rather than God.
 1. Such was true for Plato.
 2. Chance is ultimate and good is a product of chance.
 3. god and the good are determined by chance.
 6. The basic difference that distinguishes Christian ethics from non-Christian ethics is the acceptance, or denial, of the ultimately self-determinative will of God.
 1. Without this God man has no end to work for, no plan in which to operate, nor way to get started.
 2. Thus, the absolute sovereign God becomes the foundation of the possibility of human responsibility.
 3. God has chosen to give man true but limited freedom to make ethical choices for which He holds him responsible.
3. The Kingdom of God As Man's Highest Good (Matthew 6:33)
1. The Non-Christian Summum Bonum
 1. All non-Christian ethics take existence, as it now is, for granted as being normal.
 - (1). Pagan men rebel against the idea that their ethical ideals must be judged by the ethical ideals of Adam.
 - (2). They hate the God of the Bible and His claims on their life.
 - (3). He also has denied man's responsibility for sin (Romans 5:12)
 - b. He further assumes that man's consciousness is non-created and therefore ultimate. Self is not thought of as a creature of God, but as an aspect of rationality somehow here in the midst of a universe among other specks of rationality also somehow here. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 63
 2. There is thus assumed correlativity of God and man and all differences in non-Christian ethical systems are explained in light of this.
 - (1). This view assumes the denial of the creation doctrine with

an assumed ultimacy of evil.

- (2). The only ethical ideal of such a system is That of a give-and-take, of a claims and counter-claims= between individuals who must live together and who yet must live at the expense of one another. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 64.
- (3). Only the common grace of God accounts for any good ethics that might arise out of such a mind-set (Romans 1:26).

2. The Biblical Summum Bonum

- 1. The Christian view holds to the absolute ideal as maintained in the Scriptures.
 - (1) God is man's creator and judge and has set the ideal for man's life.
 - (2) Man was created in the image of God and with the ability to do the will of God perfectly.
 - (3) Thus, man was given an absolute ideal.
 - (4) In light of the fall, the ideal of absolute perfection must be seen as something man strives after and can still actually accomplish at times.
- 2. Because man is a sinner, God presents his Summum Bonum as a gift to him. Van Til calls this The Kingdom of God.
- 3. The biblical Summum Bonum requires the absolute destruction of sin and evil in the individual and in society.
 - (1) This further involves the destruction of the consequences of sin in this world as much as possible.
 - (2) This involves the use of the sword (to cut down) and the trowel (to build up) Neh 4:17-18.
 - (3) Progress may be slow, but the Christian has the obligation to re-establish biblical ethics at any place he finds himself.
 - (4) Such is accomplished by the power of God.

It is easy to see how many who follow Van Til in reformed circles have taken this to a post-mill position of bringing in the kingdom. Associated with this The Christian Reconstruction Movement and The Culture Mandate View (which placed upon man the obligation to Christianized each sphere of God's creation) and Theonomy (which calls for the state's obligation to enforce the moral law 10 commandments).

- 4. The biblical ethic is one of hope as it looks forward to the day when there will be a kingdom of God on earth C not just the quest for its ethical standards. This will be even more true of the new heavens and the new earth.
- 5. This represents a unique ethical system in distinction to anything

the non-Christian can offer. The biblical view is in perfect disagreement with all other ethical ideals.

4. Summary of Christian and Non-Christian Ethics

1. Summum Bonum

1. Christian glory of God as outlined in Scripture; God-centered
2. Non-Christian man's autonomy as normal ultimate existence; man-centered, man as highest good

2. Standard (Criterion)

1. Christian absolute revealed will of God
2. Non-Christian relative standard in human experience

3. Motivation

3. Christian God, realizing the power of God given through faith
4. Non-Christian realization of man's ideal in his own power; true for the idealist, realist and pragmatist

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VIII. Christian Apologetics Point of Contact

A. Introduction

1. Having examined what the Christian believes, it is now time to put forth a proper way to defend and propagate what is believed.
2. The question of a point of contact between the believer and the non-believer must now be addressed.
 - a) It is impossible to identify such a common area of knowledge unless there is agreement between the Christian and the non-Christian as to the nature of man himself.
 - b) The conception of man in pagan thought has been seen to be entirely different than the view of man in Scripture.
 - c) The Christian is thus faced with being a good doctor who does not prescribe a few pills when a patient needs an immediate operation.
3. Christianity then must present itself as the light that makes the facts of human experience, and above all the nature of man himself, to appear for what they really are. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 69.

Several attempts toward a point of contact will now be examined.

B. The Roman Catholic Position

1. The difference between the Roman Catholic and biblical positions on the point of contact is really rooted in the differences between their respective theologies. The question of point of contact is really the question of the nature of Christianity.
2. The Roman Catholic plan of salvation in the end is naturalism.
 - a) A salvation of works righteousness
 - b) A salvation is dependent upon the individual

Note the Ordo salutis of Rome

**(Elwell,
EDNT, p.
802)**

- 1) Baptism, in which the soul is regenerated**
- 2) Confirmation, in which baptized persons receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**
- 3) Eucharist, in which they partake of the very body and blood of Christ in the transubstantiated wafer.**
- 4) Penance, by which the benefit of Christ's death is applied to those who have fallen after baptism.**
- 5) Extreme Unction, which prepares the recipient for death and cleanses him from the remains of sin.**

3. Comparing Romanism with Christianity - Christianity is the only consistent supernaturalism that leaves the soul dependent on God alone for salvation apart from all works.
4. In defining the essence of Christianity, it must be viewed in terms of its highest forms; that is its most consistent presentation.
5. Romanism is consistently inconsistent with Christianity.
 - a) It is deformation of Christianity.
 - b) It confuses (mixes) non-Christian and Christian elements all along the way.
 - c) This includes:
 - (1) The nature of man as to how he was created
 - (2) The effect of the entrance of sin upon the nature of man
6. In Catholic theology, man lost only original supernatural righteousness at the fall. He is still righteous.
7. Since the image of God in man is still intact, which for the Romanist is the understanding that the unbeliever is correct in how he views the powers of his will and intellect, the natural man does not need the light of Christianity to enable him to understand the world and himself aright.
8. Christianity is thus merely *additional information* to be added to what man already knows.
 - a) In reply, How can a man blinded by sin have a correct view of himself or God without the light of Christianity?
 - b) All aspects of man were corrupted at the fall including man's ability to reason.
9. The Disturbance in man's make-up, according to Romanism, is not due to any fault of man. It is not viewed as the result of sin.
10. The resulting point of contact in Roman Catholic thought is a Common area of agreement or understanding on certain facts arising out of an unbiblical view of the lost man's condition before God.

Note the four traditional arguments commonly used by Roman Catholics

These are based on Common agreement on certain facts or understandings.

They show probability in a traditional apologetic setting.

They first appear in the ancient philosophers and developed further by the Scholastics definition and argument

1) Cosmological Argument Everything begun, whether substance or phenomenon, owes its existence to some producing cause. In the case of the universe, this cause must be great.

Cosmology the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of the universe.

2) Teleological Argument Order and useful collocation (noticeable arrangement) pervading a system respectively imply intelligence and purpose as the cause of that order and collocation (an adequate divine will).

Teleology the study of evidences of design or purpose in nature it looks to final cause.

3) Anthropological Argument Man's intellectual and moral nature must have had for its author an intellectual and moral being.

Anthropology the science of human beings the study of human beings in relationship to distribution, origin, classification, etc...

4) Ontological Argument We have the idea of an absolute perfect being, but existence is an attribute of perfection. An absolutely perfect being must therefore exist.

Ontology the branch of metaphysics concerned with the nature and relation of being. It addresses the nature of God.

With the case of Aquinas, he argued that the philosophic arguments listed above were for the philosophers and were too sophisticated for butchers, bakers, and candle-stick makers.

11. The Roman Catholic Problem

- a) Denial of the biblical truth that man=s consciousness of himself and of all objects presupposes for their intelligibility the self-consciousness of God. For the Christian, God is always the ultimate final reference point in human interpretation.
- b) The question is thus one of ultimate presuppositions. When man became a sinner, he made himself, instead of God, the

- ultimate or final reference point.
- c) This exact issue must be addressed.
 - d) If the presupposition is left *unquestioned* in any field, all the facts and arguments presented to the unbeliever will be made over by him according to his pattern. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 77.
 - e) Man is the final reference point in Romanism and all that the lost Romanist sees as a sinner is seen through colored glasses cemented to his eyes.
 - (1) These he cannot remove.
 - (2) There can be no intelligible reasoning unless those who reason together understand what they mean by their words.
 - f) If the lost man's presupposition is not challenged as to himself being the final reference point, he may accept Atheistic proofs as fully valid and still not accept the God of the Bible. The God whose existence he proves will always be something other than the self-contained ontological Trinity of the Scripture.
 - g) The Roman Catholic apologetic does not want to prove the God of the Bible. He wants to prove the existence of a god who will leave intact the ultimate autonomy of man.
12. If this man knows any truth by his legislative powers using the law of non-contradiction and any general method of reasoning, this is tantamount to saying that he, in effect, knows all truth, and as an autonomous man needs no revelation.
13. In summary then, Romanism has a point of contact with the unbeliever that is consistent with its defective view of depravity.

****** The entire process is faulty!!! ******

C. The Evangelical (Arminian) Position

1. To Van Til, these non-Calvinist Protestants hold to a kind of Romanism.
2. In summary, they Have conceived of >the operations of God looking to salvation universalistically= in order to leave room for an ultimate decision on the part of the individual human being. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 78. God makes salvation available and man is free to take it.
3. Like Romanism, Evangelicalism thinks of human self-consciousness and consciousness of objects as to some extent intelligible **without the consciousness of God**. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 78-79.
4. Evangelicalism and Romanism are in agreement on the question of point of

contact; having a coloring of underlying naturalism.

5. Both groups are unwilling to challenge the natural man=s basic presupposition with respect to himself as the ultimate reference point in interpretation.
6. The major Arminian apologetic work of all time is Bishop Joseph Butler's *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature* (1736), which gives a careful presentation of the Christian faith in classic Arminian for
 - a) Introduction to Joseph Butler (1692-1752)
 - (1) A leading Anglican opponent of Deism defending the theistic position, he lived at the Golden age of Deism.
 - (2) His work had a profound effect in the effort to defeat Deism in England.
 - (3) His *Analogy* was really a system of Apologetics becoming a textbook to others.
 - b) Butler argued that the order in nature is paralleled by the order in revelation, intimating that God was the order of both.
 - c) Butler further argued that the order and beauty of nature reveals a creating intelligence with some conscious design in view.
 - (1) Butler sought to establish probability and analogy stating, Probability provides the grounds of action, and analogy the direction . . . Analogy is the means of transferring the prudence of one realm to that of another. Experience guides man to identify what is Likely or Similar in life. These similarities forged general maxims of conduct which constitute **the principles of guidance** from the path of experience (p. 123).
 - (2) Butler gave the purpose of the analogy as follows
The design then of the following treatise will be to show, that the several parts principally objected against in this moral and Christian dispensation, including its scheme, its publication, and the proof which God has afforded us of its truth; that the particular parts principally objected against in this whole dispensation, are analogous to what is experienced in the constitution and course of nature or Providence; that the chief objections themselves which are alleged against the former, are no other than what may be alleged with like justness against the latter, where they are found in fact to be inconclusive; and that this argument from analogy is in general unanswerable, and undoubtedly of weight on the side of religion (p. 122).
 - (3) Note a sample of the *Analogy* as Butler argues for the

probability that man will survive death in his
discussion of natural theology

- (a) Many creatures of nature exist in different states of perfection, (e.g. worms become flies, eggs hatch into birds). Human beings themselves change considerably in manner of being as in the contrast between our pre-natal and post-natal condition. Thus, the doctrine that we persist in being after death in altered form finds many analogies in the natural world.
- (b) The powers of life have a Momentum and carry on over a period of time (e.g. we have capacities to suffer, to love, to act). These powers are with us all our lives. It is a general law of nature illustrated in the physical concepts of inertia and momentum that when something exists it persists in existence. Therefore we have analogical evidence for belief in the persistence of our powers after death.
- (c) There is no reason to believe that death ends all for this is neither apparent from the nature of death nor the data from analogy. All we know about death is its effects, but the effects of death do not justify the conclusion that all powers of personality are obliterated. There are many instances in life of the suspension of powers as in sleep or coma, yet suspension is not obliteration. Others experiences reveal how the powers are not dependent on the body but the body is only the medium of their functioning (e.g. the difference between glasses and eyes is apparent, not real. Sight does not take place in glasses nor eyes, for both are only instruments of vision).

Natural religion is rendered credible by analogy; revealed religion is rendered credible by analogy and the evidences of miracles and prophecy (p. 131).

- (4) Conclusion of the *Analogy* The whole of religion then is throughout credible (p. 131).
- d) He thus assumed that the natural man, by a reasonable use of reason can interpret aright The course and constitution of nature.
- (1) Butler appeals to sensory experience in the Lockian empirical tradition.

- (2) He taught that our senses provide our reason with the data for religious thought. Mankind for Butler was an intellectual democracy. Reason was an innate capacity of man, his sovereign court, whose conclusions possessed an intuitive certainty. It was >universal, and thus common to all= and was used equivalent to >infallible common sense.= he calls reason Natural reason, The light of nature, and uses it as a parallel term to experience. Because each man is rationally endowed with the infallibility of common sense, Butler claims that Christianity is demonstrable to the common man (see Ramm, *Types of Apologetic Systems*, p. 119).
- (3) Butler wrote, Let reason be kept to and if any part of the Scriptures account of the redemption of the world by Christ can be shown to be really contrary to it, let the Scripture, in the name of God, be given up@ (p. 120).
- (4) For Butler, there is no *a priori* knowledge of God that is compelling. God's existence and ways are to be deciphered from His handiwork, and/or conclusions are characterized by probability, not deductive certainty (p. 119).
- (5) For Butler and other Armenian's, man is neutral and reason operates independently.
- e) Van Til continues, If only the natural man will continue to employ the same >reasonable use of reason= with respect to the facts presented to him in Scripture about Christ and His work, there is every likelihood that he will become a Christian. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 79.
- 7. Butler was read extensively during the rage of deism in England during the 1700's.

D. Less Consistent Calvinism

- 1. Under this heading, Van Til deals with those theologians who he highly respects and depends on so frequently in the presentation of the Christian faith.
 - a) These include Warfield, Bavinck, and Hodge.
 - b) Van Til is careful to quote Warfield in describing the essence of Christianity and the condition of lost men.
- 2. Van Til notes a flaw in Hodge=s apologetic. He notes Hodge=s three points concerning the office of reason:
 - a) Reason is necessary as a tool for the reception of revelation - agreed (*Sys Theo.* I, 49)
 - b) Reason must judge of the credibility of a revelation. The Credible is that which can be believed. Nothing is incredible but the

impossible. (Sys Theo. I, 50-53) Hodge notes four impossible cases:

- (1) That which involves a contradiction; that a thing is and is not
 - (2) That God should do, approve, or command what is morally wrong
 - (3) That God would require belief in a truth that would contradict any of the laws of belief which are upon man=s nature
 - (4) That one truth should contradict another already known (by intuition, or previous revelation).
- c) Reason must judge of the evidences of a revelation. AAs faith involves assent, and assent is conviction produced by evidence, it follows that faith without evidence is either irrational or impossible. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 81.

Hodge inconsistently goes back to a Romanist view with respect to reasoning.

3. Van Til sees Hodge placing in the unbeliever an acceptance of the doctrine of his creation in the image of God when in reality man receives a sense of deity but not an acceptance of it.
- It is... impossible to appeal to the intellectual and moral nature of men, as men themselves interpret this nature, and say that it must judge of the credibility and evidence of revelation. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 81.
- a) To do so is to tell the pagan to accept what he cares to accept.
 - b) Thus Hodge falsely attributes to the natural man the right to judge by means of his reason of what is good or evil.

Note Van Til's illustration of the saw:

A . . . the saw is in itself a tool. Whether it will move at all and whether it will cut in the right direction depends upon the man operating it. So reason, or intellect, is always the instrument of a person. And the person employing it is always either a believer or an unbeliever. If he is a believer, his reason has already been changed in its set, as Hodge has told us, by regeneration. It cannot then be the judge; it is now a part of the regenerated person, gladly subject to the authority of God. It has by God's grace permitted itself to be interpreted by God's revelation. If, on the other hand, the person using his reason is an unbeliever, then this person, using reason, will certainly assume the position of judge with respect to the credibility and evidence of revelation, but he will also certainly find the Christian religion incredible because impossible [sic.] and the evidence for it is always inadequate. Hodge,s own teaching on the blindness and hardness of the natural man corroborates this fact. To attribute to the natural man the right to judge by means of his reason of what is good or evil, is virtually to deny the Particularism which as Hodge no less than

Warfield, believes to be the very hall-mark of a truly Biblical theology.
Defense of the Faith, 81-82.

4. The defect in this position is that Hodge has not fully taken into account the nature of human consciousness and the effect of sin on the natural man's ability to reason.
 - a) Hodge seems to think that Reason can operate rightly wherever it is found.
 - b) In reality, the reason of sinful men will invariably act wrongly.
 - c) The natural man will employ the tool of reason to reduce the contents of Scripture to a naturalistic level.

Note: If he [the lost man] is asked to use his reason as the judge of credibility of the Christian revelation while at the same time being asked to renounce his view of himself as ultimate, then he is virtually asked to believe and to disbelieve in his own ultimacy at the same time and in the same sense, *Defense of the Faith*, 83.

5. Van Til sees Hodge asking the natural man to use his reason as the judge of the credibility of the Christian revelation without, at the same time, being asked to renounce his view of himself as ultimate.
 - a) Thus Hodge sees the point of contact between the Christian and the non-Christian as the abstraction of reason or intuition.
 - b) To do so is to appeal to some kind of common consciousness of man.
6. Van Til objects to another form of inconsistent Calvinism in the position of D.V. Hepp when Hepp like Hodge, appeals to a general faith in Central truths that all men, when not too sophisticated, accept.
 - a) Hepp sees a kind of common sense philosophy which the natural man has (intuitive or spontaneous), which is so far not tainted by sin.
 - b) Such notions are, in reality, sinful notions.
7. Hodge and Hepp seem to be doing no more than Calvin when he appeals to the sense of deity present in all men, trying to be faithful to Paul's teaching in Romans 1.
 - a) Van Til points out that this notion, true as it is, must be carefully distinguished from the reaction that sinful men make to this natural revelation.
 - b) Such a sense of deity cannot produce a Common consciousness of man upon which to postulate the true God.
 - c) Man upon reflecting on his own awareness suppresses the true God and envisions Aa god, thus denying the existence of the true God.
 - d) He is like the child reflecting upon his home environment who would conclude that a father or a mother exists.
8. The revelation of the true God is immediately present in the natural man and Bears the marks of an intuitive truth in so far as it is the universal and unavoidable belief of men, (Warfield).

This was also the position of Calvin as both addressed Romans 1:19-20. This knowledge of God, which every sinner has, he also suppresses. This reaction of men to the truth refutes Hodge's idea of a Common consciousness of man or Hepp's Central truth as a point of conflict.

8. In conclusion, some questions are now in order :
 - a) Is there any point of contact at all? Can he even become interested in or respond to the truth?
 - b) If man is totally ignorant and blind, why even display the colors of the spectrum in front of him.
 - c) Does man have to be a Christian to know that $2 + 2 = 4$?
 - d) Does Christianity, which tells us much that is above reason, require us to accept anything that is against reason.

E. The Biblical Position Van Til (Reformed)

The above questions are now answered.

1. The major issue addressed here is avoiding the dilemma of absolute ignorance or absolute omniscience on the part of the natural man. A true point of contact must be established.
2. Romanism and Arminianism have incorrectly ascribed ultimacy or self-sufficiency to the human mind. They see a common knowledge between the believer and the unbeliever.
3. Reformed thinkers including Hodge, Warfield, and Calvin, have correctly asserted that man's mind is derivative from God.
 - a) As such he is surrounded by and in contact with natural revelation.
 - b) Man's self-consciousness presupposes God-consciousness.
 - c) God-consciousness was for Adam the presupposition of the significance of his reasoning on anything. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 90.
 - d) It is thus the basis of man's creature-consciousness.
4. Man's self-consciousness depended, even before the fall, upon his being in contact with both supernatural and natural revelation.
 - a) Furthermore, man had a covenant with God and was responsible to obey the revelation given him.
 - b) Covenant consciousness envelops creature-consciousness.
5. Thus, man had originally not merely a capacity for receiving the truth; but was in actual possession of the truth.
 - a) Understanding fallen consciousness is based on the nature of Adam's pre-fall consciousness.
6. After the fall, the natural man, actually possesses the knowledge of God (Romans 1:19-21).

- a) His sin is that When they knew God, they glorified Him not as God.
 - b) Man Ought to be able to recognize God, but fails to, due to his willful transgression of the very law of his being.
 - c) The natural man seeks to Suppress his knowledge of God (Romans 1:18) and is thus constantly throwing water on a fire he cannot quench.
 - d) Thus man continues to yield to Satan=s temptation to Eve viewing his self-consciousness as ultimate rather than derivative and God-dependent.
7. The Romanist and the Evangelical cannot do justice to Paul's teaching in Romans 1 as they fail to surround man exclusively with God's revelation. They see man's consciousness of objects, himself, time, and history as not from the outset brought into an exclusive relationship of dependence upon God (that is arising out of God consciousness. There is still the assumption of autonomy.
8. The Romanist and the Evangelical do not attribute this assumption of autonomy or ultimacy on the part of man as due to sin.
- a) They thus do injustice to Paul=s teaching in Romans 1 with respect to the effect of sin on the interpretative activity of man.
 - b) They virtually deny, says Van Til, that man originally not merely had a capacity for truth but was in actual possession of the truth.
 - c) They also do not see the natural man as suppressing that truth.
 - d) All this is so because they do not distinguish between the natural man=s own conception for himself and the Biblical conception of man.
 - e) Van Til concludes that this position cannot then challenge man=s basic epistemological assumption to the effect that his self-consciousness and time-consciousness are self-explanatory.
9. This is all important concerning a point of contact. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 93.
10. In establishing a consistent biblical (reformed) understanding of the point of contact between the Christian and the non-Christian, the following should be noted
- a) Deep in the mind of every man is the knowledge that he is the creature of God and responsible to God. He knows that he is a covenant-breaker.
 - b) But, every man talks and acts as though this were not true.
 - (1) It is the one point that he does not wish to hear about.
 - (2) He suppresses what he knows about God.
 - (3) He is as the man who has cancer and knows it but does not want to admit it. He will admit he is sick and even submit to a doctor's care, but he will not hear that he has cancer. His condition is such that he needs

- an immediate operation.
- (4) He is alive as a covenant-breaker.
 - (5) His own interpretive activity with respect to all things proceeds on the assumption that such is not the case.
- c) Romanism and Evangelicalism, by failing to appeal exclusively to that which is within man but is also suppressed by every man, virtually allow the legitimacy of the natural man's view of himself. **Their position actually nurtures his rebellion against God!**
- (1) They do not seek to explode the last stronghold to which the natural man always flees and where he always makes his final stand.
 - (2) They cut off the weeds but do not dig up the roots of the weeds.
- d) The Biblical position attacks the presupposition of the natural man's view of himself (with atomic power and flame-throwers).
- (1) It does not fear to lose a point of contact by uprooting the weeds rather than by cutting them off at the very surface.
 - (2) It is assured of a point of contact in the fact that every man is made in the image of God and has impressed upon him the law of God. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 94 Romans 1; 2:15. (This is, however, NOT a common consciousness with the unbeliever as noted above). In that fact alone, we rest secure with respect to the point of contact problem. **This fact makes men always accessible to God.**
- e) By denying that man has autonomy and any common knowledge on which to appeal we are left only to appeal to the truth man already knows about God and suppresses.
- (1) To grant to the lost man autonomy and, at the same time, to expect that man to reason to the position of giving up his autonomy is impossible.
 - (2) The only correct position is to attack man's autonomous stance and demand repentance through exposing him to God's thoughts.
 - (3) The apologist is not using reasoning to establish the possibility of God, but rather he is reasoning about the God the unbeliever already knows about and suppresses.
- f) Every man, then, to be a man, is already in contact with truth and spends a considerable amount of his time and energy in a vain effort to hide this truth from himself. We will speak more later about man's **unacknowledged dependence upon suppressed truth.**
- (1) Only by thus finding the point of contact in man's sense of deity that lies underneath his own conception of self-consciousness as ultimate can we be both true to Scripture and effective in reasoning with the

natural man. Man, knowing God, refuses to keep God in remembrance (Rom. 1:28). *Defense of the Faith*, p. 95.

(2) **The point of contact is thus the sense of deity which every man seeks to suppress.**

11. A note on 1 Corinthians 2:14

a) Concerning this and other absolute passages addressing the condition of the unbelieving human heart e.g. Eph 2:1. These refer to the unbeliever acting *without* the work of the Holy Spirit. Man is dead (Rom 3) and consistently resists the truth (Rom 1) due to the noetic effects of sin.

b) A related question: Does this passage demand regeneration prior to salvation? (radical Calvinism)

c) The CONTEXT is speaking of the work of the Spirit in 1:18, 2:4,10-12. Those *without* the aid of the Spirit do not truly understand (2:6-8).

d) The ISSUE is not the presentation of the truth, but man=s predisposition against accepting it. He refuses it; he has it and dismisses it (Rom 1:18; John 1:9) or Retains it as hostile.

(1) EVERYONE is in this condition until they are enlightened by the Spirit. ***The Effectual Call***

(2) The lost man can make statements about scripture in a judicial sense (judgement, review, criticism). e.g. a commentary by Barclay or a lexical work by Driver, *but*, he cannot make statements internally exercising spiritual discernment. He cannot make appropriate decisions that affect his soul. He lacks the internal mechanism to do so. e.g. The fool has said in his heart, there is no God Psm 14:1 as the fool is inadequate to make a correct internal decision. He is like a non-family member listening to family matters. Those who knew of Christ put him to death (2:8).

(3) When the natural man is under the Spirit's conviction, he begins to understand (enablement) and then he may embraces salvifically as he now truly understands.

(4) The Spirit=s wooing or calling (John 6:44, 65; 12:32; Acts 16:14) comes to all kinds of men (Jew, Gentile, etc.). No one comes unless he is drawn. Calvin: An effectual movement of the Holy Spirit turning men from being unwilling and reluctant into willing. God works a work in man's soul. Zemek, The effectual call is effectual

(a) A verbal summons by God. Luke 10:21,22.

(b) The first action in the Ordo Salutis (order of salvation) e.g. The elect (1 Cor 1:9; Rom 8:29-30) are **predestinated**, resulting in their **effectual calling**, resulting in their **justification** (Romans 8:30).

(5) Regeneration (the new birth) is the work **of** salvation (John 3:5-8), not the work which **begins** or **proceeds** this process as

some radical Calvinists have concluded.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF REGENERATION

Augustine - Regeneration equated with the new birth

**Calvin - Regeneration used loosely to indicate
conversion and sanctification**

**17th century Reformers - Equated regeneration with
effectual calling and conversion**

**Later reformed thought - Regeneration understood
narrowly as the implanting of the seed from
which faith and repentance springs.**

**Arminian regeneration – man's renewal is based on his
co-operation with grace.**

IX. Christian Apologetics The Problem of Method

A. Introduction

1. The issue that now must be discussed is the way that the non-believer should be brought to the knowledge of the truth.
2. The Christian view of man must be assumed and a truly Christian method must be adopted at this point.
3. It also must be remembered that any area or aspect of reality can only be correctly interpreted in light of the main doctrines of Christianity.
4. The matter of method as well as that of a starting point is not a neutral matter as is the case in Romanism and Arminianism. The Christian cannot simply join with the non-Christian scientist or philosopher by using his method of arriving at truth.
5. The non-Christian views natural science as exclusively concerned with the detection of "laws of nature, that is, uniformities of sequence in the course of events. Such a process can throw no light on the question as to whether God exists or not.
6. The whole of created reality (e.g. all of science) reveals the same God of which Scripture speaks.
 - a) The imprint of God's face is upon it.
 - b) The non-Christian deals with that which has the imprint of God's face on it.
 - c) As Calvin said, Amen ought to see God in nature.
 - d) The question of ownership will come up when a stranger enters an estate whose owner's name is plainly written at unavoidable places.
7. There can be no agreement in methodology with the natural man.
 - a) The point of contact with the natural man is that which is beneath the threshold of his working consciousness, in the sense of Deity which he seeks to suppress.
 - b) There must be a head-on collision.
 - c) "If there is no head-on collision with the systems of the natural man, there will be no point of contact with the sense of Deity in the natural man."
8. Van Til writes, All the facts of nature and of history are what they are, do what they do and undergo what they undergo, in accord with the one comprehensive counsel by God. All that may be known by man is already known by God. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 99.
 - a) Thus, one's presupposition determines his method.
 - b) There can be no agreement with the natural man in method.

B. Reasoning by Presupposition

1. The Christian method of apologetic argument must be in agreement with its presupposition. Thus, the epistemological and metaphysical principles that underlie and control one's method must be indicated.
2. The Christian then will admit that his own methodology presupposes the truth of Christian theism. He further points out that every method, the supposedly neutral one of the natural man no less than any other, presupposes either the truth or falsity of Christian theism.
3. The method of reasoning by presupposition may be said to be **indirect** rather than **direct**. "The issue between believers and non-believers in Christian theism cannot be settled by a direct appeal to "facts" of "laws" whose nature and significance is already agreed upon by both parties to the debate.
4. Thus, the discussion with a non-believer is an indirect rather than a direct discussion of facts.
 - a) The Christian places himself upon the position of his opponent and assumes the correctness of his opponent's method for argument sake.
 - b) He does so to show him that the "facts" are not facts and the "laws" are not laws in his system.
 - c) He also asks the non-believer to assume his position in order to show him that only on such a basis that "facts" and "laws" appear intelligible.
 - d) This admission of one's presuppositions as well as those of others is by nature of the case, circular reasoning.
 - e) The starting point, the method, and the conclusion are always involved in one another.

Question: Are the facts what the pagan assumes them to be, or are the facts what the Christian presupposes them to be?

5. In the presentation of the Gospel, the following takes place
 - a) The presentation of the claims of Christ
 - b) The Christian then asserts that his own method of investigation of reality presupposes the truth of his position.
 - c) At this point, the Arminian will tone down the nature of Christianity to some extent to make it appear that the consistent application of the non-believer's Neutral method will lead to the acceptance of Christian theism.
 - (1) Actually the opposite is the case. *One cannot prove the existence of the sky to a blind man!*
 - (2) The true presentation will appeal to that knowledge of the true

God in the natural man which the natural man knows and suppresses.

(3) He, thus, tears off the iron mask from the lost man.

(4) The only method that will lead to the truth is that method which recognizes that man is a creature of God and that man must, therefore, think God=s thoughts after him. There are not **brute facts** to which Roman or Arminian methodology may appeal to lead the non-believer to Christian theism.

(5) **Brute facts** are the product of autonomy and do not actually exist (Van Til, *Defense of the Faith* pp 136-37).

6. The believer thus shows the non-believer that the most consistent application of his position not only leads away from Christianity, but also leads to the destruction of reason and science as well.

a) **He is, thus, a man of water in an ocean of water, seeking to climb a ladder of water to reach a dock of water.**

b) He is hopeless on his presupposition, he is the product of chance.

(1) His methodology is based on the assumption that chance is ultimate.

(2) His own rationality is a product of chance.

(3) His use of the laws of logic is based on chance.

(4) The rationality and purpose he searches for are the products of chance and irrationality

He is his own god.

He has made his own thinking ultimate.

He has built his entire system upon his own conjecture.

He cannot give an account for what he claims.

He is a fool who has said in his heart Athere is no god.

Psm 14:1

7. Christianity, which was once rejected as authoritarian in character, "is the only position which gives human reason a field for successful operation and a method of true progress in knowledge." *Defense of the Faith*, p. 102. I Cor 1:18-25.

a) This is not to assert that non-believers do not discover any truth but rather that the non believers are never able, and therefore, never do employ their own method consistently.

(1) See Van Til's reference to Taylor the so-called "universal reign of law" Science builds its house on nature which cannot be proven to the one who questions it. "The existence of the God of Christian theism and the conception of His counsel as controlling all things in the universe is the uniformity of nature which the scientist needs." (p 103).

(2) The best and only proof for Christian theism is found in the necessity of God's existence for the uniformity of

nature and for the coherence of all things in the world.

- (3) The existence of a floor assumes the existence of beams below.
- (4) There is, thus, **certain proof** for the existence of God and the truth of Christian theism. Even non-Christians presuppose its truth while they verbally reject it.
- (5) They need to presuppose the truth of Christian theism in order to account for their own accomplishments.
- (6) The non-Christian must be challenged to see "In the beginning, God"; that is, he must be challenged to accept the reality of Christian theism.

The Transcendental Argument
An argument that transcends normal thought processes and deals with the possibility of intelligible thought itself.

God is proven from the impossibility of the contrary

- b) Demonstrating that Christian truth is objectively valid is not the same as seeing it subjectively acceptable to the natural man.
 - (1) Actually, the more consistently the Christian method is applied, the less acceptable it will be to the non-Christian.
 - (2) The convicting work of the Holy Spirit must be taken into account.

8. The natural man is, by virtue of his creation in the image of God, always accessible to the truth; accessible to the penetration of the truth by the Spirit of God.

9. Apologetics is valuable to the precise extent that it presses the truth upon the attention of the natural man.

- a) Only a consistent presuppositional approach will confront the non-Christian in such a way as to leave him no place to retreat and no place to dwell in safety.
- b) He is compelled to receive Christ or say "no" (c.f., Psalm 14).

C. The Use of Scripture

- 1. It has been observed that a correct approach must challenge the theory and method of the non-believer rather than grant its essential truthfulness (Catholic-Arminian).
- 2. The Christian is committed to the doctrine of Scripture as the infallible inspired final revelation of God to man. Christian theism is the defense of the God of Scripture.

3. God's revelation to man must be brought into the picture. With or without the presence of sin, natural revelation must be supplemented by supernatural positive (special) revelation.
4. Knowledge of supernatural redemption can only be had through the special revelation of Scripture.
5. Sinful man would naturally want to destroy a supernatural revelation that portrays his sin and shame and tells him that he is helpless and undone. This primary mark of the sinner is pride.
6. The Bible is, thus, the light that stands before all men and which all facts of the universe must be interpreted. As Calvin affirmed, It is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture. I.vi.2.
7. The implication of these statements for apologetics:
 - a) A Christian accepts Scripture to be what Scripture itself says it is on its own authority.
 - (1) It is the only light in which facts may be interpreted.
 - (2) We do not use candles and electric lights to discover whether the light and the energy of the sun exists as the reverse of revelation is the case.
 - (3) The light of the former is a result of the latter.
 - (4) In like manner, we cannot subject the authoritative pronouncements of Scripture about reality to the scrutiny of reason because it is reason itself that learns of its proper function from Scripture.
 - b) The non-believer is being called upon to subordinate his reason to the Scriptures and seek to interpret his experience in light of it.
 - c) The true scientific method, the method which alone can expect to make true progress in learning, is such a method as seeks simply to think God=s thoughts after Him.
 - d) Thus, the method of reasoning we employ is the indirect method of reasoning by presupposition.
 - (1) Christians are called upon to vindicate the existence of the God who has spoken in Scripture.
 - (2) The non-believer is called upon to presuppose the God of the Bible.
 - (3) Note Van Tills illustration of the sun and the cave: One cannot prove the usefulness of the light of the sun for the purposes of seeing by turning to the darkness of a cave. The darkness of the cave must itself be lit up by the shining of the sun. When the cave is thus lit up each of the objects that are in it >proves= the existence and character of the sun by receiving their light and intelligibility from it. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 109.

- e) The Roman Catholic can follow the direct approach in his apologetic as he agrees with the natural man both in his starting point and in his method of human knowledge.
 - (1) He thus, joins the non-Christian in his search for the existence or non-existence of God by the use of reason without reference to Scripture.
 - (2) Rome does not appeal to an absolute authority.
 - (3) Romanism reduces Christianity to make it acceptable to the natural man.
- f) Arminianism follows the same line of reasoning as Rome at this point.
 - (1) The contents of Scripture must be adjusted to the likes of the natural man.
 - (2) Note Butler=s words on reason: Reason can, and it ought to judge, not only of the meaning, but also of the morality and the evidence, of revelation. First, it is the providence of reason to judge of the morality of revelation . . . whether it contains things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness C to what the light of nature teaches us of God. *Defense of the Faith*, pp. 110-11.
 - (3) There is, thus, a compromise with naturalism.
 - (4) The method is faulty.
- g) Correct apologetics cannot find a direct point of contact in any of the accepted concepts of the natural man. There is disagreement with every individual doctrine of the natural man because there is disagreement with the outlook of the natural man as a whole.

Note the illustration of the two men traveling in opposite directions along the road. *Defense of the Faith*, pp 113-14.

D. The Block-House Methodology

1. Every aspect of Christianity must be presented as part of the whole of Christian theism **as a whole unity**.
 - a) Christian truth cannot be presented in piece-meal, block by block, (block house method) fashion but rather, as a whole.
 - b) Argument then, must be made by presupposition.
 - c) Without the presupposition of the truth of Christian theism, no fact can be distinguished from any other fact.
 - d) Since Romanism and Arminianism, are committed to a neutral starting point and methodology, they are bound also to fall into the atomism (individualism) of non-Christian thought.
 - e) They refuse to see all facts as facts of the Christian theistic system and refuse to maintain that anything but a Christian theistic fact can exist at all, thus challenging non-Christian methodology from the outset.

- f) They are, thus, bound to arrive at the non-Christian=s conclusion.
 - g) They have lost all power to challenge the lost man and become victims of his method.
 - h) This piece-meal presentation of Christian theism constantly comes short of the goal.
2. Van Til insists: There can be no joining of issues at the central point of difference, the interpretation by exclusively immanentistic categories or the interpretation in terms of the self-sufficient God, unless it be done by way of presupposition.

See the next page for an Interview with Cornelius Van Til and an outline of His Apologetic

Interview With Cornelius Van Til

Interview was conducted by David E. Kucharsky, former senior editor of *Christianity Today*.

Cornelius Van Til wanted to be a farmer. He was born in Holland and grew up on a farm in Indiana. As a young man, he preached at street-corner evangelistic services in Hammond. At Calvin College and then at Princeton, his extraordinary insights into complex issues were readily recognized. Van Til could never go back to the farm. Instead he became one of the foremost Christian apologists of our time.

Van Til has nonetheless kept very much down-to-earth. Like most great thinkers he is not easy to understand, but unlike them he goes the extra mile to reach a broad audience. At eighty-two, he still preaches occasionally. And a distinctive of his scholarly writings is his homespun exposition. For example, he compares the reliability of Scripture to a concrete bridge. The flaws in Bible translations he likens to water on a bridge-the water presenting no great problem unless it gets deep enough to kill the car's engine.

In one major work Van Til structures his argument around the plight of a young pastor with a congregation challenged by modern skepticism. How will he guide his flock, Van Til asks. He has no time to read many books. He lives too far from the centers of Christian learning to profit from personal conversation with others of like mind who have studied these matters in depth. He needs, therefore, a criterion by which he himself may be able to distinguish truth from error. Van Til launches into an involved philosophical discussion, but repeatedly comes back to the young pastor and what it all means to him.

People who know Van Til admire not only his mind but also his heart. As a clergyman he has conducted many funerals before a crowd of unbelievers. Even if given only five or ten minutes to speak he invariably presents the Gospel and urges his audience to believe in Christ. Van Til and his wife of fifty-two years have also had an extensive ministry in comforting the bereaved and visiting sick people.

Van Til has been perhaps the most controversial of the really great evangelical thinkers of the twentieth century. Person to person he is gracious, gentlemanly, humble and considerate. On paper, too, he is respectful of others views and highly charitable toward those with whom he disagrees. But in Christian academic circles Van Til has a host of critics B people who vigorously challenge his system while recognizing and respecting his profundity. One such opponent is Gordon H. Clark, who like Van Til ranks at the top of the list of influential evangelical apologists and yet who with Van Til is sometimes labeled an ultra-Calvinist, an appellation rejected by both men.

Van Til taught at Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, for more than forty years. He has written numerous books on philosophy, theology, and ethics. He lives in the historic Pennsylvania community of Chestnut Hill on the outskirts of Philadelphia. He was interviewed in his home there on three occasions, and the following questions and answers represent an edited version of the conversations with him.

Question: Dr. Van Til, how do you know that what you believe is true?

Answer: I am sure of my faith because its source is the Bible, the revealed word of God.

Question: But doesn't it then become necessary to establish that the Scriptures are true, and that they are as we know them indeed the Word of God?

Answer: The problem with that question is that it shifts the starting point. I concede that the truth of the Bible is a presupposition. My argument is simply that this presupposition is the only one from which a Christian can begin without surrendering the sovereignty of God.

Question: Are you saying that any kind of human test applied to God and his Word violates the concept of God?

Answer: That is my basic position.

Question: I might note here that your supporters see you as a great defender of the faith, and even in a recent major critique of your thought it was pointed out that your apologetic represents a position that is now encountered with increasing frequency. On the other hand, isn't it true that you have been accused by your opponents of substituting proclamation for argument, of championing the idea that the Christian faith is its own best defense?

Answer: I believe in proclamation. I also believe in the need of defending the faith; Scripture enjoins me to be always ready to give an account of my faith. But there are two ways of defending the faith. One of these begins from man as self-sufficient and works up to God, while the other begins from the triune God of the Scriptures and relates all things to him.

Question: Evangelicals, then, who from your way of thinking should know better, are inadvertently diluting their view of God. Is this it? Don't you assign such exclusive epistemological authority to Scripture that you part company even with fellow Calvinists?

Answer: Yes, my good friend Gordon Clark believes in the inerrancy of the Bible, but he builds his philosophical outlook not simply on the Scriptures as such but on the law of contradiction, which has its classic statement in Aristotle and which to my way of thinking has turned out to be an eternally static turnpike in the sky.

Question: What has been your goal in life?

Answer: When I got my Th.M. from Princeton Seminary and the master's and doctorate from Princeton University I was questioned by my ecclesiastical superiors as to why I had spent so much time on education. My reply was that the time being what it is we faced the necessity of meeting unbelief on its own ground and meeting not only the man on the street but also the philosophical person. Study was not easy for me. Having grown up on the farm I was used to weeding onions and carrots and cabbages. It was hard to adjust to classroom work; I had labored physically and my body was aching for that.

Van Til served briefly as pastor of a Christian Reformed Church at Spring Lake, Michigan, before being summoned back to Princeton to teach. He was told that he would be getting a full professorship. It was a time of great doctrinal turmoil. He taught a year at Princeton and then joined a group of conservatives who left the school to form Westminster Theological Seminary.

Question: Do you have any regrets about the move from Princeton? Wasn't it a pivotal event that turned over ecclesiological momentum to liberalism for a half-century and left evangelicals struggling for a new start as Independents?

Answer: In the spring of 1929 the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. reorganized Princeton Seminary by electing a new board containing in it two signers of the Auburn Affirmation. According to this document Aa minister of the gospel may or may not believe such facts and doctrines as the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the incarnation, the atonement, the resurrection, and the continuing life and supernatural power of our Lord Jesus Christ. If two communists were elected to membership in the Supreme Court of my country I would think of it as a collapse not of verbal but of actual democracy. I felt this way when the assembly took my seminary away from me. The fall of Princeton was a tragedy not only for all who lived the Reformed faith but also for all who love the Lord Jesus Christ. In short, when Princeton fell, evangelical Christianity received a body blow.

Question: Your radical reliance on the Bible makes you have more at stake in the current debate over inerrancy. How crucial is the issue? Granted that doctrines are interdependent, wouldn't you still agree that there are times in history requiring a focus on certain ones?

Answer: The biblical teaching about the inerrancy of Scripture is a good deal more important than the present discussion indicates. In the final analysis, I cannot discuss what I believe about Scripture unless at the same time I discuss the content of Scripture. No doctrine of Scripture can stand by itself. I wish that my evangelical brethren would face up to this fact more than they appear to do. To be sure, there have been individual teachings of Scripture that stood in need of special defense. Remember, for example, the old question of whether Christ is a man like God or whether he is God.

Question: As I understand it, you reject all the traditional attempts to prove the existence of God because from the first chapter of Romans we learn that every human being has the idea of God already planted in him.

Answer: Yes. The traditional ideas of trying to find some neutral, common ground on which the believer and unbeliever can stand are based on the notion that man is autonomous. The ancient Greeks began from man as self-sufficient; they took for granted that all being is one. There was for them no distinction between the creator and his creatures. Holding this view, Plato said that man participated in the being of God as absolutely good; but he found it impossible to say anything by way of conceptual reason? Shall the surgeon rely exclusively on the diagnosis the dying patient gives of himself? Did Jesus say to Lazarus that he did his best he would give him a lift so that together they would get him out of his grave? To be sure. I must be all things to all men, but I establish men in their way unto death if I do not say to them, on the authority of Christ, that only if they repent of their sin will they have eternal life in him. Is this blind faith? On the contrary, it is the only basis man has on which he can stand, to know himself, to find the facts of his world and learn how to relate them to one another. Without the Creator-God-Redeemer of Scripture the universe would resemble an infinite number of beads with no holes in any of them, yet which must all be strung by an

infinitely long string. Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not by its wisdom know God through wisdom.

Question: But are you really satisfied that Calvinism has an adequate philosophical base, one which commends itself to the human mind in understandable fashion?

Answer: Calvin says that men take away from God the chief thing: that he directs everything by his incomprehensible wisdom and disposes it to his own end@ (Institutes 1 16:4). On election he says: And as He alone was predestined, as MAN. to be our HEAD, SO Many of us are also predestined to be His members (Calvin's Calvinism, 40). If I do not finally attribute my salvation to God's electing grace, I detract from his glory.

Van Til has a much lighter side. In the classroom he has been enough of a wit to arouse gales of laughter among his students. He admits to throwing chalk at any one who dared to doze. One of these bullets drew blood, he says. The next class the victim of My violence wore a steel helmet. Among his students have been such people as the late Edward John Carnell and Francis A. Schaeffer, who went on to important achievements of their own. His refusal to concede an, common ground between Christians and non-Christians except that given in Romans 1:19 puts him at odds with most of his peers. He transcends those differences with a warm kind spirit.

Question: How does conscience fit into your system?

Answer: I would not think of conscience as some definite entity within my personality. I would think of it as the indestructible consciousness within me that I am a creature of God and will die from my sins unless I repent.

Question: Dispensationalism seems to be the most popular theology today among rank-and-file evangelicals. How do you account for it?

Answer: I know too little about dispensationalism to make a fair judgment of it.

Question: You have been a little hard on Bill Bright and Campus Crusade. Why?
Answer: My problem is with the so-called four spiritual laws that are supposed to be the distilled essence of the Gospel. For Paul, the distilled essence of the Gospel is Christ and him crucified. Christ and his resurrection, and these are conspicuous by their absence in the four spiritual laws. I have a similar problem with Schaeffer.

Question: What do you mean?

Answer: I have not read Francis Schaeffer as warning his fellow evangelical pastors B as he quotes Ezekiel doing B to declare the wrath to come for those who reject God. And, again, with the best of will I cannot find in Schaeffer's writings what Paul says is the heart of his preaching: Christ and him crucified, and Christ and the resurrection. When I read Matthew 25:46 I shudder at what Jesus says. I know Francis believes that as well as I do. Should he not express himself on these his own convictions?

Question: Your criticism of Clark is of a different character.

Answer: Yes. With Descartes man declares as clearly as did Adam his independence from God. It is his Fourth of July. One would think that as a believer in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, Clark would have called the attention of his philosophical colleagues to the exclusiveness of the god of the Cartesian self and the God, world, self, and Satan of the Genesis account.

Question: This is an urgent question. Clark believes, doesn't he, that the law of contradiction is implicit in Scripture? That is, he holds Christianity to be true because it is the most consistent system. He believes in logic and reason as an ally, and he contends that universally and necessarily we cannot affirm and deny the same thing at the same time and in the same way. What is wrong with that? Doesn't it supply him with a common ground and a neutral access to the unbeliever? Doesn't this aid evangelism?

Answer: My concern is that the demand for non-contradiction when carried to its logical conclusion reduces God's truth to man's truth. It is unscriptural to think of man as autonomous. The common ground we with the unbeliever is our knowledge of God, and I refer repeatedly to Romans 1: 19. All people unavoidably know God by hating God. After that they need to have true knowledge and righteousness restored to them in the second Adam. I deny common ground with the natural man, dead in trespasses and sins, who follows the god of this world. When these people, for whom my wife and I pray constantly, are born anew as Jesus tells Nicodemus they must be able to see or enter the kingdom of heaven, then we have common ground and will together call other spiritually dead people to repentance and life. The primary task is always to win people to the triune God of the Scriptures. It is in this interest that it is every Christian's duty to witness. The Christian ought to do this, Speaking the truth in love.

Question: What did you mean earlier when you called the law of contradiction. B an eternally static-turnpike in the sky?

Answer: I meant that there is no way to get on it.

Question: What would you like to be most remembered for?

Answer: I should like to be remembered as one who was faithful to him, From whom, through whom, and unto whom are all things.

Outline of Cornelius Van Til's Apologetic

- 1A. My problem with the Traditional Methods (Of Apologetics)
 - 1B. This method compromises God Himself by maintaining that His existence is only Possible albeit highly Probable rather than ontologically and rationally necessary.
 - 2B. It compromises the counsel of God by not understanding it as the only all-inclusive, ultimate cause of whatsoever comes to pass.
 - 3B. It compromises the revelation of God by B
 - 1C. Compromising its necessity. It does so by not recognizing that even in Paradise man had to interpret the general (natural) revelation of God in the terms of covenantal obligations placed upon him by God through special revelation. Natural revelation on the traditional view, can be understood omits own.
 - 2C. Compromising its clarity. Both the general and special revelation of God are said to be unclear to the point that man may say only that God's existence is probable
 - 3C. Compromising its sufficiency. It does this by allowing for an ultimate realm of chance out of which might come facts such as are wholly new for God and for man. Such facts would be uninterpreted and unexplained in terms of the general or special revelation of God.
 - 4C. Compromising its authority. On the traditional position the Word of God's self-attesting characteristic, and therewith its authority, is secondary to the authority of reason and experience. The Scriptures do not identify themselves, man identifies them and recognizes their authority only in terms of his own authority.
 - 4B. It compromises man's creation as the image of God by thinking of man's creation and knowledge as independent of the being and knowledge of God. On the traditional approach man need not think God's thoughts after Him@.
 - 5B. It compromises man's covenantal relationship with God by not understanding Adam's representative action as absolutely determinative of the future.
 - 6B. It compromises the sinfulness of mankind resulting from the sin of Adam by not understanding man's ethical depravity as extending to the whole of his life, even to his thoughts and attitudes.
 - 7B. It compromises the grace of God by not understanding it as the necessary prerequisite for renewal unto knowledge. On the traditional view man can and must renew himself unto knowledge by the Aright use of reason.
- 2A. My understanding of the relationship between Christian and non-Christian, philosophically speaking B
 - 1B. Both have presuppositions about the nature of reality B
 - 1C. The Christian presupposes the Triune God and His redemptive plan for the universe as set forth once for all in Scripture.
 - 2B. The non-Christian presupposes a dialect between chance and regularity the former accounting for the origin of matter and life, the latter accounting for the current success of the scientific enterprise.
 - 2B. Neither can, as infinite beings, by means of logic as such, say what reality must or

- cannot be.
- 1C. The Christian, therefore, attempts to understand his world through the observation and logical ordering of facts in self-conscious subjection to the plan of the self-attesting Christ of Scripture.
 - 2C. The non-Christian, while attempting an enterprise similar to the Christian's, attempts nevertheless to use logic to destroy the Christian position. On the one hand, appealing to the non-rationality of matter he says that the chance-character of facts is conclusive evidence against the Christian position. Then, on the other hand, he maintains like Parmenides that the Christian story cannot possibly be true. Man must be autonomous, logic must be legislative as to the field of posia and possibility must be above God.
- 3B. Both claim that their position is in accordance with the facts.
- 1C. The Christian claims this because he interprets the facts and his experience in the light of the self-attesting Christ in Scripture. Both the uniformity and adversity of facts have at their foundation the all-embracing plan of God.
 - 2C. The non-Christian claims this because he interprets the facts and his experience in the light of the autonomy of human personality. The ultimate givenness of the world and the amenability of matter to mind. There can be no fact that denies man's autonomy or attests to the world's and man's divine origin.
- 4B. Both claim that their position is rational
- 1C. The Christian does so by claiming not only that his position is self-consistent but that he can explain both the seemingly inexplicable amenability of fact to logic and the necessity and usefulness of rationality itself in terms of Scripture.
 - 2C. The non-Christian may or may not make the same claim. If he does, the Christian maintains that he cannot make it good. If the non-Christian attempts to account for the amenability of fact to logic in terms of the ultimate rationality of the universe, then he will be crippled when it comes to explaining the evolution of man and things. If he attempts to do so in terms of pure chance and ultimate irrationality as being the well out of which both rational man and a rationally amenable world sprang, then we shall point out that such an explanation is in fact no explanation at all and that it destroys predication.
- 3A. My proposal, therefore, for a consistently Christian methodology of apologetics is this B
- 1B. That we use the same principle in apologetics that we use in theology: the self-attesting, self-explanatory Christ of Scripture.
 - 2B. That we no longer make an appeal to common notions which Christians and non-Christians agree on, but the which they actually have because man and his world are what Scripture says they are.
 - 3B. That we appeal to man as man, God's image. We do so only if we set the non-Christian principle of the rational autonomy of man against the Christian principle of the dependence of man's knowledge on God's knowledge as revealed in the person and by the Spirit of Christ.

- 4B. That we claim, therefore, that Christianity alone is reasonable for men to hold. It is wholly irrational to hold any other position than that of Christianity. Christianity alone does not slay reason on the altar of chance
- 5B. That we argue therefore by presupposition The Christian as did Tertullian, must confess the very principle of his opponent's position. The only good proof of the Christian position is that unless its truth is presupposed there is no possibility of proving anything at all. The actual state of affairs as preached by Christianity is the necessary foundation of proof itself.
- 6B. That we preach with the understanding that the acceptance of the Christ of Scripture by sinners who, being alienated by God, seek to flee His face, comes about when the Holy Spirit, in the presence of inescapably clear evidence, opens their eyes so that they see things as they truly are.
- 7B. That we present the message and evidence for the Christian position as clearly as possible knowing that because man is what the Christian says he is, the non-Christian will be able to understand in an intellectual sense the issues involved. In so doing, we shall, to a large extent, be telling him what knows but seeks to suppress. This reminding process provided a fertile ground for the Holy Spirit, who in sovereign grace may grant the non-Christian repentance so that he may know Him who is life eternal.

X. Authority and Reason

A. Introduction

1. The focus of this section is to apply the general principles of methodology more fully to the problem of authority.
2. The issue addressed here is how various non-biblical and biblical thinkers each approach the non-believer on the issue of authority.

B. Non-Christian Views of Authority

1. Few will term themselves atheists and agnostics in the popular sense.
2. Most will appeal to the idea of authority if only the authority of the expert in the use of reason *Defense of the Faith*, p. 124.
3. The pagan cannot conceive of authority Above reason.
4. Acceptable forms of authority for the pagan include:
 - a) Authority that grows out of the existence of the endless multiplicity of factual material.
 - (1) These facts are rooted in the ultimacy of chance rather than the plan of God.
 - (2) Man is lead by the prophet or genius of feeling or will.
 - (3) Both the earlier rationalism of the Greeks and the irrationalism of the modern philosophers partake of this authority.
 - b) Authority that rests on the universal timeless principles of logic.
 - (1) This impersonal principle by nature falls into self-contradiction.
 - (2) All of the speculations of modern philosophy end in mystery.
 - c) Authority that rests on the autonomous Self and the power of language void of any metanarratives or controlling rules outside of the superstatements of the individual proponent of postmodernity.
 - (1) These conclusions about reality and truth are themselves superstatements defining what is claimed as unknowable or undefinable.
 - (2) All such conclusions end in a kind of dogmatic speculation.
 - d) In conclusion, the natural man assumes that he has the final criterion of truth within himself. All forms of authority must justify themselves by standards inherent in man.

C. Modern theological Views of Authority

1. Schleiermacher, in *The Christian Faith* speaks of the religious man's absolute

dependence on God.

- a) This God is contacted by man through his feeling of dependence.
- b) This feeling is autonomous and man's human personality is the final criterion of truth within man.

- 2. A. E. Taylor, in *The Faith of a Moralist* appeals to an authority while stating that no authority is absolute. The mind of man contributes to all that it receives.
- 3. William Temple, in *Nature, Man, and God* asks for no higher authority than that of the expert.
 - a) Authority depends wholly upon the spiritual quality of what is revealed.
 - b) Man must ever be the judge of that which is revealed.
- 4. Barth and Brunner argued for the Absolute other God and argued that a true theology must break with all systems of philosophy.
 - a) Nevertheless they present this God as still controlled by some form of modern critical philosophy.
 - b) The mind of man is always thought of as contributing something ultimate to all the information it receives.
 - c) The Absolutely other god of Barth remains absolute just so long as he is absolutely unknown.
- 5. In conclusion, modern theologians are in general agreement as to the nature of authority and its relationship to reason.
 - a) It is however, merely the authority of the expert.
 - b) This authority presupposes that, in the last analysis, man is dealing with an ultimately mysterious environment.
 - c) Modern theology cannot challenge modern science and philosophy which speak of a universe in which facts are what they are for no rational reason.

D. Roman Catholic View

- 1. Romanism is built first on the philosophy of Aristotle which is viewed as self-supporting and not derived from its theology. Romanism=s rich heritage in Greek thought results in a Natural order which can be discovered by reason apart from faith.
- 2. In addition, there is the order of faith. As the assertions by reason about God in the natural order do not depend for their validity upon faith, so those in the order of faith do not depend for their validity upon the assertions of reason. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 133
- 3. The Catholic dilemma is whether the God of reason and the God of faith are the same.
 - a) Furthermore, in Romanism, reason can deal only with abstract

- essences (It is that is not) and not with existence (He who is
- b) They end with a god of reason who is correlative to the human mind and is not the supreme God of the universe.
 - c) Saint Thomas the philosopher is bound, by the principles of his reason, to bring the information given him by St. Thomas the theologian into orderly relation with the body of his beliefs about reality in general.
 - d) If the autonomy of reason is to be maintained, and the absolute authority of faith as well, any union between them must be one of compromise. p. 136.
4. In addition, the autonomy of reason so strongly insisted upon by Romanism creates a god who is to some measure dependent upon man. God has to wait for man's decisions on many points.
- a) There is thus mystery for God as well as for man.
 - b) God himself is therefore on this basis surrounded by brute fact.
 - c) Man's dealings are partly with God but partly with brute fact.
 - d) Man's freedom to reason is thus based on the idea of the autonomy of the human mind and the will of man to some extent.
 - e) Brute fact is a part of man's ultimate environment.
5. Upon this basis, Rome cannot build a truly Christian concept of authority.
- a) A truly Christian concept of authority presupposes that in all he does man is face to face with the requirement of God.
 - b) Man cannot be face to face with God if God does not control all things.
 - c) Van Til concludes that Romanism offers nothing in the way of authority that is clearly different from the idea of the **expert** as is willingly granted by the natural man.
6. The Roman view of unwritten tradition as having equal authority with Scripture corroborates this view.
- a) They are two distinct streams.
 - b) There is no official writing of this tradition and thus the church accepts the living voice of its officials and especially those things spoken by the Pope as the final guardian of this tradition.
 - c) Tradition is therefore finality which the church propounds from time to time.
 - d) This requires the rejection of the counsel of God as all determinative.
 - e) Man as the expert is interpreting brute facts.
 - f) His autonomous reason is god in the end.
7. Van Til describes Roman authority as the galling authority of one man dealing with >being in general= and guessing about it, over another man also dealing with >being in general, and guessing about it. It has no clear cut position that can be contrasted from the natural man.

E. The Arminian View

1. It appears strange but the Arminian view is similar to the Roman view in terms of a system of theology. It has a similar view of reason and therefore authority.
2. In rejecting the reformed doctrine of election the Arminian rejects the plan of God as all-inclusive.
 - a) This makes brute fact a basic ingredient of the Arminian position.
 - b) Man is therefore once again partly relating to God and partly to some form of being in general.
 - c) Arminianism allows for human ultimacy or autonomy.
3. In response, Van Til notes that the entire idea of inscripturated supernatural revelation is not merely foreign to but would be destructive of the idea of autonomy on which the modern man builds his thought.
 - a) The God of Christianity is for the Arminian logically irrelevant to human experience. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 142
 - b) Note the true attitude of the modern man:
 - (1) Such a God as Scripture speaks of simply does not exist.
 - (2) If such a God did exist, he could not manifest himself in the world that we know.

Autonomous man has no place for him.

- (3) If such a God did reveal himself, no man could receive such a revelation without falsifying it.
 - (4) If such a revelation had been received in the past it could not be transmitted to men of the present time without their again falsifying it.
 - (5) If, in spite of everything, such a revelation of such a God as the Bible speaks of came to man today he in turn could not receive it without falsifying it.
4. Arminianism has no valid argument for the idea of Biblical authority with which to challenge this position of modern man.
 - a) Because the Arminian has the right to think independently of God, he must grant the same to the modern man
 - b) If the modern man is free to contemplate the world rightly without God, then why should he turn to God.
5. The Arminian will speak of the **possibility** of supernatural revelation as if the word meant the same for the natural man as for the believer; but it does not.
 - a) For him, possibility is the same as chance and something he can rationalize.
 - b) The same of the Arminian argument for **probability**.
 - c) As Hume has effectively shown in his criticism of the empirical probability argument for Christianity, there can be no

presumption at all for the >eventuation= of certain things rather than others, once one allows the idea of chance in his system at all.

- d) The Arminian will speak of **facts** and indeed the fact of the resurrection but the problem is the same.
- e) It is vain to speak about the fact of the resurrection without speaking of the meaning of the fact.
- f) The resurrection either **is** what the Christian says it is , or it **is not**.
- g) It is **not** some non-decrypt event upon which Christians and non-Christians agree.
- h) The Arminian will speak of the Bible as the **best seller** and the **most wonderful book**, but this does not allow for an absolutely authoritative book.
- i) Such a book presupposes the existence and knowability of the self-contained God of Christianity. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 146
- j) The starting point and method of the natural man cannot be assumed in the presentation of the truth.

F. The Reformed View C Van Til

1. This position seeks not to depreciate the work of Arminians but rather to appreciate the many important teachings asserted by Arminians in this area. It seeks however, to place under them an epistemology and metaphysic that will make them truly fruitful.
2. The Reformed apologist begins by challenging the non-believer=s assumptions of brute fact and autonomy of the human mind.
 - a) They are the colored glasses through which he sees all his facts.
 - b) He will then present the facts for what they really are and challenge the natural man by arguing that unless they are accepted for what they are according to the Scriptures, no facts will have meaning at all.
3. The **facts** presented to the natural man include:
 - a) The fact of God=s self contained existence
 - b) The fact of creation in general and of man as made in the image of God in particular.
 - c) The fact of the comprehensive plan and providence of God with respect to all things.
 - d) The fact of the fall of man and his subsequent sin.
 - e) The fact of the redemptive plan of Christ.

These facts are what they are because of God is what He is.

They are part of a system.

The idea of human autonomy and chance have no part in the system.

The human being is analogical rather than original in all the aspects of his activity.

Note: The natural man virtually attributes to himself that which a true Christian theology attributes to the self-contained God. The battle is therefore between the absolute self-contained God of the Christianity and the would-be wholly self-contained mind of the natural man. Between them there can be no compromise. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 148

4. The idea of supernatural revelation is inherent in his system.
 - a) Man, as a sinner, needs supernatural redemptive revelation.
 - b) As a hater of God he does not want to hear about God.
 - c) He seeks to suppress the pressure of God's revelation in nature that is about him along with the pressure of conscience within him.
 - d) He does the same with revelation about God in Scripture.
 - e) God calls upon him to listen and be obedient.
 - f) As Van Til says, How can the autonomous man be obedient on his own assumptions? *Defense of the Faith*, p. 148
 - g) His position must be reversed.
5. Both in Preaching and Apologetics, the facts of the gospel must not be toned down in order to gain acceptance.
 - a) He will challenge the natural man at the outset.
 - b) He will address the issues of creation, sin, the broken law of God, and guilt, all of which the natural man does not wish to address.
 - c) He will tear the mask of his face and compel him to look at himself and the world as it **really** is.
 - d) Light will expose darkness.
 - e) The grace of God will enable him to accept the Christian position.
6. The only possible way for the believer to reason with the unbeliever is **by way of presupposition**.
 - a) Unless he will accept the presuppositions and with them the interpretations of Christianity there is no coherence in human experience.
 - b) There is no meaning to anything apart from the Bible.
 - c) It is only with this approach that a fruitful discussion about God and the Scripture can occur.

G. Some Ultimate Questions

1. Why do I believe Christ is the Savior of Men?
Because Christ said He was the Savior and Lord (his Claim).
2. Why do I believe what He says?
Because it is presented in the Bible, the Word of God, and I believe it is the very Word of God.

1. Why do I believe the Bible to be true?
Because through reading it, Christ has convinced me and saved me.
Because without the Bible nothing makes sense - not the past, the present,
or the future. Not morality, reasoning, or understanding.
Because without the Bible, I would be a fool (Psm 14:1).
Because Christianity is the only possible position.

Comparison Of Apologetic Systems

Evidentialism	Presuppositionalism	Fideism
Reason is an independent ultimate authority and a neutral enterprise	Reason is a tool of revelation and is never neutral including the laws of logic	Reason is inappropriate truth is inaccessible to reason
Reason to faith independent rationality	Reason from faith to faith dependent rationality	Suspend reason and leap to faith
Knowledge -- Common ground or ABrute Facts@	Knowledge -- No agreement all facts are interprefacts Only Romans 1:18-22 in common	Same
Opposite of true knowledge is the lack of information	Opposite of true knowledge is rebellion and foolishness	Same
Joins with the unbeliever using common truth	Head on collision with the unbeliever; The truth as the opposite of his position	Does not reason with the unbeliever
Argues a Probability case for Christianity	Argues an Absolute Case for God form the impossibility of the contrary Atheism presupposes theism	Makes no argument merely quotes scripture Denys the possibility of an apologetic
AChristianity is the most logical view@	Christianity is the only view	Repent
Uses classic probability arguments developed by Aquinas	Uses transcendental argumentation To set competing world views against each other and to address precondition of intelligible thought	Uses no arguments
Presents neutral evidences and arguments introducing presuppositions later	Presents Christian Evidences and arguments based on one's presupposition	Presents faith without argument or evidence
God is on trial in man=s court	The unbeliever is on trial in God=s court	No trial takes place

Conclusion of Pre-suppositionalism: We cannot grant the unbeliever his autonomy and at the same time expect him to reason to the position of giving up his autonomy. We must exploit the last stronghold to which the unbeliever retreats. Evidentialism is Arminian leprosy in the bosom of Calvinism. Fiedism is unacceptable in light of the Biblical mandate Prov 26:4,5; I Pet 3:15

XI. Summary of Argument by Presupposition

The Christian position cannot be Proven by traditional methods of Apologetics. Traditional methods were designed by Roman Catholic theologians to fit their theology.

A. The Biblical Apologetic

1. The Christian starts by listening with loving obedience to God who identifies himself to man in Christ as his creator and Redeemer. Christ's voice is, in the nature of the case, the voice of authority. Believers accept his Word for what it is by the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in their hearts.
2. The apologist then presupposes that the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, speaks to him with absolute authority in Scripture. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 179
3. He then commits to no reasoning with the lost man from his foundation. This is not the end of reason but the abandoning of futile reasoning which is based on a non-Christian foundation.
4. Two basic presuppositions are recognized **All forms of Intellectual argument rest in the final analysis upon one or the other of two basic presuppositions** *Defense of the Faith*, p. 180.
 - a) Man is the final or ultimate reference point in human predication (the logical affirmation or assertion of something about another to affirm, give ground or relationship, or to found a proposition).
 - b) God, speaking through Christ by His Spirit in the infallible Word, is the final or ultimate reference point in human predication.
5. The authority of Christ speaking in Scripture is then recognized as the only possible foundation for fruitful discussion rather than something that excludes the possibility of fruitful discussion.
6. He proceeds with reasoning which remains true to a Biblical presupposition:
 - a) The task of Apologetics is first that of showing the non-Christian that his system is based on chance and, thus, he is not able to truly know anything about the world.
 - b) His position always moves toward the destruction of predication as he has logically affirmed his own starting point.
 - c) He has no intelligible objection against the Christian view and, in fact, the non-believer needs the Christian position to have truth at all (p.180). He eventually resorts to the Christian position to avoid total irrationality and this he does while using it to reject God.
 - d) If Christian theism is not true, then nothing is true (207-208).

Without God it is impossible to prove anything! The atheistic world view is irrational and cannot consistently provide the pre-condition of intelligible experience, science, logic, or morality. We must ask, which position is objectively true, interminable, incoherent, irrationalism for which no genuinely cogent philosophic case exists or the ultimate rational God of Scripture. We can thus prove the existence of God from the impossibility of the contrary.

- e) The truth of Christian theism is then presented clearly to him with the aid of the Holy Spirit's convicting power.
- f) This entire reasoning process is, in essence, causing the lost man to think **God's thoughts after Him**.

7. For argument's sake the Believer places himself with the unbeliever on his presupposition, in order to show him that he cannot raise an intelligible objection against the Christian view. For in objecting to the Christian view he is compelled to presuppose its truth.

B. Van Til's Method

The reasoning method is indirect rather than direct and does not allow for common ground in its presentation of arguments and evidences for Christian Theism.

Reasoning cannot be a priori.

The facts of Christianity are presented as proving Christianity because they are intelligible as facts in terms of it and in terms of it alone.

Note Van Til's line of reasoning

1. VAN TIL'S STARTING POINT:

- a) He takes what the Bible says about God and His relation to the universe as unquestionably true on its own authority.
- b) God exists apart from and above the world and controls whatever takes place in the world.
- c) Everything in the creation displays the fact that it is controlled by God.
- d) The objective evidence of God's existence and control is clear and inescapable in the universe.
- e) If a man is self-conscious at all he is also God conscious.
- f) Men are always face to face with their maker.
- g) God has clearly revealed himself both in nature and in the Scripture.
- h) Man has no excuse for not accepting this clear revelation.

2. VAN TIL'S DIFFERENCES WITH TRADITIONAL APOLOGETICS:

He departs from traditional apologists which are intent on reasoning in a **flat line** approach appealing to the laws of logic as some sort of neutral fact.

- a) He starts with the Bible as absolute authoritative revelation and does not void that authority.
- b) He stresses the objective clarity of God's revelation of Himself. It is an insult to the living God to say that His revelation of Himself so lacks in clarity that man . . . does justice by it when he says that God probably exists. We should not tone down the objectively valid argument for the truth of Christianity to the probability level.

3. VAN TIL'S VIEW OF THE POINT OF CONTACT:

- a) With Calvin, Van Til finds the point of contact for the presentation of the Gospel to the non-Christian in the fact that they are made in the image of God and as such have the ineradicable sense of deity within them.
- b) Their own consciousness is inherently and exclusively revelational of God to themselves.
- c) Van Til thus sees no atheistic men because no man can deny the revelational activity of the true God within him *Defense of the Faith*, p. 198 & *Common Grace*, p. 55.
- d) His conscience troubles him when he disobeys as he knows deep in his heart he is disobeying his creator.

4. VAN TIL'S USE OF REASONING AND EVIDENCE:

- a) Every man has the capacity to reason logically.
- b) He can intellectually understand what the Christian position claims to be.
- c) Conjoined to this is a sense of God and of his own wrong as taught in Romans 1.
- d) Van Til agrees with Murray that the natural man has an Apprehension of the truth of the gospel that is prior to faith and repentance.
- e) This intellectual cognition of the gospel which is the prerequisite of saving faith can only be true because man's self-consciousness depends on his God-consciousness as taught in Romans 1:20.
- f) Contrary to Romanism and Arminianism, human self-consciousness is not intelligible without God consciousness.
- g) Such reasoning includes induction (**generalizations made by observing facts**), and deduction (**conclusions drawn by necessity of a premise**); that is, evidences (**reasoning about the facts**) and presuppositions (**reasoning in a priori analytical fashion; that is using special revelation**).
- h) They both are part of one process of interpretation

Van Til states: Every bit of historical investigation (historical apologetics), whether it be in the directly

Biblical field, archaeology, or in general history, is bound to confirm the truth of the claims of the Christian position. But I would not talk endlessly about facts and more facts without ever challenging the non-believer=s philosophy of fact. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 199

5. VAN TIL'S UNDERSTANDING OF EPISTEMOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS:

- a) Epistemologically, the believer and non-believer have nothing in common.
- b) Every sinner looks through colored glasses which are cemented on his face.
- c) He interprets all facts and laws (e.g. $2+2=4$) presented to him through these assumptions He does not want to see the facts of nature for what they are and he does not want to see himself for what he is.
- d) Each sinner has a sense of deity and therefore knows God as his Creator and Judge.
- e) Every unbeliever seeks in one way or another to deny this.
- f) He must be renewed unto knowledge (Colossians 3:10), righteousness, and holiness (Ephesians 4:24).

6. THE TRADITIONAL APOLOGIST'S DILEMMA:

- a) The Romanist and Arminian presents compromising theology and compromising apologetics.
- b) They find a point of contact within the thinking of the natural man which is carried on upon false assumptions.
- c) Both assume that the lost man can make correct assumptions about God both to His form and content and have a certain amount of right thinking about God.
- d) But he speaks of a false god.
- e) AThe natural man=s god is always enveloped within a reality that is greater than his god and himself. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 203
- f) Thus, the Romanist seeks to tie to some small area of thought that the believer and unbeliever have in common without qualification.

Van Til states: This is tantamount to saying that those who interpret a fact as dependent upon God and those who interpret that same fact as not dependent upon God have yet said something identical about the fact. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 203

- g) This apologetic cannot challenge the assumptions of the one he is trying to win.

- h) The sinner is ready for him and catches each fact thrown at him like a ball; throwing it behind him into a bottomless pit of pure possibility.
- i) The industrious apologist shows him all the evidence for Christianity including the virgin birth and the resurrection of Christ.
- j) The unbeliever will seek to explain all he is given within the laws that he has found working.
- k) He may at first be surprised but will soon dismiss even Strange things such as the resurrection of Christ as Such as life.
- l) The unbeliever is never called upon to see the facts for what they really are.

The unbeliever must be presented the facts of theism and of Christianity, of Christian theism, as proving Christian theism because they are intelligible as facts in terms of it and in terms of it alone.

- m) The apologist will handle the same facts but will handle them correctly by presenting his philosophy of facts.
- n) The apologist will not appeal to the law of contradiction or the requirements of logic and thus seek to prove all the facts of the Bible to be true by weaving them into aspects of a universe that allows for them as well as for their opposites.
- o) The apologist will instead present the truth claims of Christ as **opposites** at all points.

Van Til states: When the non-Christian, not working on the foundation of creation and providence, talks about musts in relation to facts he is beating the air. His logic is merely the exercise of a revolving door in a void, moving nothing no where into the void. *Defense of the Faith*, p. 206

- p) The unbeliever will dismiss the God presented to him as meaningless and beyond his experience.

C. The Biblical Presupposition Includes the Following

1. There is a God, the God of the Bible, who differs from all other gods. He stands with absolute authority as revealed in Scripture.
2. God has spoken in propositional truth in the Bible, requiring Anormal, literal interpretation.
3. God's decree controls all things.
4. God created a world out of nothing.

5. Sin has entered and corrupted God's creation.
6. Christ has provided salvation on the cross of Calvary.
7. The whole duty of man is to fear God and enjoy him forever **worship and honor**.

D. A Summary of Presuppositional Apologetic Method

1. In essence it is 2 Corinthians 10:5 which teaches that the task of the Christian is to destroy speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and to take **every thought captive** to the obedience of Christ.
2. Major steps in accomplishing this
 - a) Both Evangelism (Proclamation) and Apologetics (Justification) must begin with a godly, consistent lifestyle (Psm 1:2; John 17:23).
 - b) Both must proceed in a gentle and reverent manner. He should be firm and respectful (Gal. 6:1; Eph 4:15; Col 4:5-6; 2 Tim. 2:23-26; 1 Peter 3:15,16).
Gentle firmness
Respectfully challenging
Directed Answers
Concerned Preparation
 - c) The Apologist must follow a correct procedure
 - (1) A method based on Scripture must be used.
 - (2) The believer must present Christianity with the complete assurance that his faith is true and defensible.
 - (3) The Creator-Creature distinction must be maintained in that the discussion must not be horizontal but vertical. That is, it must lead from independence to dependence.
 - (4) The effects of sin on the unbeliever and on his ability to make decisions must be remembered. Satan has blinded their hearts.
 - (5) The apologist is presenting the God of the Bible who is already known to the unbeliever as he is made in God's image.
3. A suggested witness and apologetic :
 - a) A Christian witness
 - (1) **Begin with a clear presentation of the Gospel with the full assurance that it is true and fully defensible.**
 - (a) Ask for the opportunity to present the Christian World view.
 - (b) Present God, creation, holiness, sin, Christ's person and work, man's human condition, salvation, repentance, faith, man's need for dependence on

Christ.

(2) **Call for the unbeliever to submit to his creator and to use his mind to think dependently upon God rather than independently outside of God.**

(3) **Answer honest questions of understanding.**

Present Christian answers and Christian evidences based on the Christian world view. Acts 17:31,32.

(4) **Call for repentance and faith**

b) A Christian defense

Example: I am not convinced that the Bible is true -- it is just a book written by many men.

(1) **Answer from truth. Proverbs 26:4**

(a) The principle -- Do not answer a fool according to **his** philosophy or you will be like him -- to argue from his world view is to **encourage** his rebellion.

(b) The application --- Reason with him **from** the Bible.

-- Press him back to the Bible.

-- Insist that the Bible is the only possible position

(c) Example:

- | | |
|---|---|
| X | My answer is rooted in the Bible Acts 17:23-24 |
| X | Allow me to present the Christian explanation for this question:
(Three levels of argumentation)
(1) The evidence of Scripture (O.T.). I Cor 15:3-4
(The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ from the Scriptures).
(2) The evidence of the External World. I Cor 15:5-7
(External historical arguments from eyewitnesses)
(3) The evidence of Personal experience. I Cor 15:8
(His own private experience; the truthfulness of the Christian Faith). |
| X | Expose the reason why the unbeliever rejects your answer.
Ask the Why question to push him back to his starting point of self authority or autonomy.
Why do you reject the message of the Bible?
Why do you reject its claim of inspiration?
What authority gives you the basis to reject the Bible? |
| X | Conclusion: He has no credible reason as to why he rejects Christ save his pride. Cor 1:20 He is left |

Without an apologetic Rom 1:20 He is vain, with a dark, ignorant mind. Eph 4:17-24.

(2) **Answer from folly. Proverbs 26:5**

- (a) The principle -- Answer him according to his folly (what his folly deserves) by showing him what God says about his world view.
- (b) The application -- Do a **brief internal critique** of his world view showing him that a consistent application of his position reduces to absurdity.
 - Turn the unbeliever's beliefs back on him.
 - Show him the result of his position is the destruction of intelligible and rational thought.
 - A world view based on nothing cannot account for anything.
 - Show him that in his heart he is a theist for **atheism presupposes theism**.
 - He borrows for the Christian world view to make

(c) Example:

- X **Based on his world view knowledge is impossible. He cannot account for anything he believes from within his word view. He continues to make absolute or super statements without authority He offers only mere opinion, arbitrary statements, relativism, ignorant conjecture, and unargued bias. These are sins of the intellect. II Cor 10:5**
- X **His world view reduces to his own arbitrary self invented ideas.
His independent commitment is based on his own independent commitment. (The god he believes in is the one he sees in the mirror John Mac.).**
- X **How can he possibly know enough to stand in judgement of the God of the Bible. His Certain positions (i.e. superstatements) are actually uncertain guesses as they are based in his own conclusions. The same is true about his statements of uncertainty about Christianity.**
- X **In denying theism, he has assumed theism. He is self deceived, for in an effort to deny God he assumes God for the laws of logic, laws of non-contradiction, morality that allow him to assert truth. In biblical terms, he is a fool. Psm 14:1-3; Prov 1:7; Isaiah 32:6 Rom 1:21; Col 2:3-4.**
- X **The unbeliever is proving that Christianity is true by borrowing it's foundation to assert his unbelief. He is saying, given God's creation, man's reflection of God's image, God's laws of logic, etc., I use all of this to rebel against him.**

(3) Press your apologetic advantage

(a) **The Bible can explain everything** -- God created everything and gives life, natural order, and the laws of logic.

(b) **The unbeliever has no credible argument against God** (1 Cor 1:20).

(c) **Return to the Gospel**

At first, the unbeliever says it is foolish to think:

- That man would need one to die for him
- That man should be confronted with his sin
- That man should need to understand the cross

Now it is wise for he is a fool who rejects the Lord (I Cor 1:18-25)

(4) The reason for Our Hope (I Peter 3:15): The impossibility of the

Contrary!

- (a) A transcendental argument is one that transcends normal patterns of thought and speaks to the possibility of intelligible thought or rationality. It is a clash of ultimate starting points.
- (b) It places the **unbeliever's** circular reasoning which is filled with self-contradiction and irrationalism over against the **believer's** circular reasoning based on the Bible which makes total sense out of life.
- (c) The proof of God's existence is the impossibility of the contrary:
 - (i) If Christianity is not true, then nothing is true.
Prov 1:7
 - (ii) Without the Christian world view, no position is possible; nothing makes sense.
 - (iii) The Bible is the precondition of all rational thought
 - (iv) Unbelievers need God to account for the laws of logic, inductive reasoning, uniformity in nature, predication, human dignity, rationality in the world, ethics, an invariant moral code, science, mathematics, and everything that underlies all their thinking. They contradict themselves.
 - (v) Unbelievers use what God gave them to ridicule Him (Psm 10:4; Isa 45:21; Hos 2:8; Acts 17:28). This is their unacknowledged dependence upon suppressed truth.
 - (vi) The unbeliever has rejected God with foolish pride.
- (d) We must call for the unconditional surrender of the unbeliever to Christ so that he would think God=s thought=s after Him. 2 Cor 10:5.
- (e) The unbeliever is as foolish as the little girl, sitting on her father's knee, depending on him for everything while she slaps him in the face.

XII. The Defense of Christianity

This session will be given over to an audio or video presentation of the Bahnsen-Stein Debate.

A. Biography of Greg Bahnsen

Information Obtained from Covenant Media Foundation

Greg L. Bahnsen, (1948-1995), was an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and a full time Scholar in Residence for the Southern California Center for Christian Studies. He received his Ph.D. in philosophy from the University of Southern California, specializing in the theory of knowledge. He previously received the B.A. (magna cum laude, philosophy) from Westmont College, and then simultaneously earned the M.Div. and Th.M. degrees from Westminster Theological Seminary. Dr. Bahnsen lectured to a broad range of evangelical Christian groups at many colleges and conferences. He was an experienced apologist and debater, a clear and cogent teacher of the Christian world view who was devoted to training believers in understanding and applying the Christian faith to every area of life. He published numerous scholarly articles, a number of well known books, and has over 1,500 recorded lectures and sermons.

Note: While Dr. Bahnsen died on December 11th, 1995, his audio tapes and written materials were, and still remain, the foundation for Covenant Media Foundation=s ministry.

B. Greg Bahnsen Materials Can Be Obtained From C

Covenant Media Foundation
4425 Jefferson Avenue
Suite #108
Texarkana, AR 71854

Internet Address: www.cmfnow.com
E-mail Address: tapes@cmfnow.com

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C. Subscribe to Penpoint (and get the back issues!)
SCCCS (Southern California Center for Christian Studies)
Bahnsen Theological Seminary
P.O. Box 328
Placentia, Calif 92871
1-714-572-8358

Internet Address: www.scccs.org
E-mail Address study@scccs.org

XIII. Practical Applications of Presuppositional Apologetics

A. Introduction

1. The Task: Answering specific objections
2. The Goal: Learning principles of methods and reasoning; not pat answers
3. The Approach: Not dodging his bullets, but disarming the opponent; taking the gun out of his hand. Addressing the presuppositions that allow your opponent to shoot at you.
4. The Limit: Our job is to close their mouth.
The Spirit's job is to open their heart.

B. Four key Intellectual Sins that all men commit (Non-Christian and Christian)

Key questions to ask as you listen to your opponent.

Looking for these areas of examination is more important than the content of his thought.

These sins reveal how it is impossible to hold any position other than that of the absolute personal God of scripture.

1. Is he being arbitrary?

a) **Offering a mere opinion** - It's my opinion

Issue: We are not God, we do not run the universe, our opinion means nothing. Opinions are worthless and inconsequential.

b) **Relativism** - You are convinced by this, I am convinced by other things

(1) We are all creating our own reality, all traditions must be respected. Mr. potato head approach to reality.

(2) Issue: If everyone is right, then nothing is wrong, relativism kills itself! Even Hitler!

(3) The statement, There is no absolute truth, all truth is relative is an absolute statement! If he denies that his statement is absolute true, then I am free to believe in absolute truth. If he affirms the statement he has contradicted himself.

(4) Our arbitrary society has gotten used to settling issues by resorting to relativism. People who contradict each other can't both be right (both can be wrong). Can't have cancer and not have it at the same time.

c) **Ignorant conjecture** - People make strong statements against Christianity but can't support them with evidence or research. Ignorant statements that rest on arbitrary prejudice. e.g. attempting to refute the Bible by conjecture.

Issue: Your imagination has no authority! Learn to spot the obvious prejudice and conjecture in their words.

d) **Unargued bias** - Men will dismiss the miraculous even in the face of history.

(1) They dismiss the resurrection as a myth and thus dismiss the Bible on the unargued assumption that Awe know that miracles are impossible.

(2) Issue: Look for controlling unargued assumptions. Do you know miracles are impossible or is this just your opinion? How do you know or is it just your experience?

(3) To assume is to beg the question.

Unbelievers will make hasty generalizations. Scientists use causal analogy (the inductive principle) to explain all things, based on past experience. Question: How can you be sure that the future will be like the past and what basis do you have to predict the future? To prove the predictability of the natural world, he must believe in the Christian world view and God's promise in the Noaic Covenant. The unbeliever can't make sense out of his world view with out Christianity!

2. Is he being internally inconsistent?

(That is; is he in conflict with himself or other known truth)

a) Ad hominum attacks on individual Christians or those claiming to be Christian.

b) Reduction of an argument to absurdity

What ever implies that which is false is itself false.

e.g. The Cultural relativist: If there are no universal moral principles then it is invalid for a culture to condemn another culture. Therefore, cultures that torture babes and murder are acceptable.

Issue: Take their view to its consequences - absurdity it cannot prove anything!

Unacknowledged dependence of the Creator

(1) Men assert one thing and live another way

e.g. evolutionists deny human dignity and yet they presuppose it and go to a funeral!

(2) If Anything goes and free love with no absolutes is the rule, then why is child molestation or racism wrong? they just created a moral absolute.

(3) Issue: Unbeliever are trapped by their actions. Unbelievers never live up to their words but rather keep turning to

Christian presuppositions!

c) Presuppositional tensions

- (1) Examining the unbeliever's approach to life (he often has not done so!).
- (2) When you listen to unbelievers their presuppositions are always inconsistent. They do not comport with each other, or Walk down the street together.
e.g. The scientist says, He can only know what he observes. Question, how do you know that (you didn't observe your basic presupposition!).
- (3) The materialist who says all is material in nature, always has to appeal to the immaterial and abstract (e.g. the laws of logic) to make his claim!
Issue: Confront the authority of their basic presuppositions.

3. What are the consequences of his argument? (That is test its fruit)

- a) Unbelievers live a life of unchallenged wickedness
- b) Unbelievers study at the university but cannot come up with an understanding of how they know what they know!
e.g. The materialist in the math department has to draw on the immaterial (the metaphysical) to make sense of his mathematics.
- c) The fundamental assumptions of the laws of logic, human dignity, uniformity in nature, etc., are all assumed or better borrowed from the Christian world view.

4. What are the preconditions of his argument?

- a) Can typical ways of proving things provide the preconditions of intelligibility?
Rationalism Truth is what can be clearly understood by reason
Empiricism Truth is what can be obtained by sense perception
Pragmatism Truth is what works
But, reasoning, perception, and pragmatic judgements all require the assumption of basic abstract (immaterial), universal (universally applicable), and absolute (with no exceptions) entities such as the laws of logic.
- b) These world views cannot account for these assumptions and thus do not provide the transcendental or pre-conditions for something to make sense.

AOn your world view nothing makes sense. Debate, logic, and reasoning are impossible. By arguing with me, you are assuming what I am trying to prove.

- c) A transcendental proof argues for the impossibility of the contrary.
The non Christian is always driven back to the Christian position to make sense out of reality.
Bahnsan to Stein: Because you came to the debate tonight, I win@

In self deception, you assumed my world view!

- d) Bertrand Russell(1967) like everyone who reasons, assumes the inductive principle (or causal principle) You can induce from particular experience the generalization about the future. Russell when on to say that The inductive principle is incapable of being proved by an appeal to experience, but rather experience assumes the inductive principle.

Russell has a irrational starting point and then promises to be strictly rational! We must either accept the inductive principle on the ground of its intrinsic evidence or forego all expectation about the future!

- e) The personal God of Scripture makes the future like the past, making all things amenable to his Glory. God is the precondition of all enterprises. The only reasonable thing to do is to believe in God!
- f) The atheistic world view cannot provide a cogent reason for what we have to thoroughly assume in all reasoning. It cannot make sense out of reason. It must be dismissed as intellectual arbitrariness. Atheists are fools, living by blind faith!

C. The application of presuppositionalism to competing religious claims

1. How do we make Christianity stand out from the rest.

- a) Answer: We are not defending a god or Generic theism. We are defending the God of the Bible (biblical theism). It is only the God of the Bible that provides a world view that is not arbitrary, inconsistent, laden with objectionable consequences, and which provides the preconditions of intelligibility. All other religions and cults cannot do so! We do not stand together with them on anything (Ezra 4:1-4)
- b) How do we answer the Muslem who has a world view too? We evaluate competing religions in the same way we evaluate any other objection e.g. atheism.
- c) Christianity alone is not:
 - Arbitrary - God revealed it
 - Inconsistent - Show me one!
 - Consequences - The Bible provides the basis for the laws of logic, morality, etc
 - Preconditions of Intelligibility - The Christian world view or truth view makes sense out of reality

2. Three classes of religions

- a) Religions of transcendent mysticism - religions that put their emphasis on that which goes beyond human experience and can only be contacted in a mystical way. e.g. Hinduism -- Brahman (god) is everything and goes beyond our experience and rationality and can only be rightly related to the oneness of being by mystical contemplation. e.g. yoga, etc. It is beyond rationality. There are no more distinctions.

(1) How do you know about it! Anything you tell me about it is rational. Your claims are arbitrary! How can you say that!

(2) Example:

The *Bhagavad-gita* speaks of a non-personal god. When you enter nirvana and leave maya you become enlightened and you stop making distinctions. Yet you make a distinction between nirvana and maya! If they reply by giving up rationality to be a Hindu then they don't! They cannot provide the preconditions of intelligibility

- b) Religions of immanent moralism - religions that put their emphasis on that which is Anear at hand. e.g. Confucianism the noble man lives in a certain way. Also Buddhism. The question: What authority did Confucius or Buddha have? Who are they? When they counter with, who is Jesus? We reply, He is the son of God and the judge of all mankind. In the Christian world view it makes sense to appeal to Christ as the ultimate authority.

(1) Immanent religions do not have a transcendent authority to appeal to (they only appeal to a wise man C Confucius). Why should I listen to Confucius over Buddha? This is arbitrary.

(2) There is no hope or redemption in moralist religions. Go back and try harder to keep the rules. They cannot deal with the human problem or deal with the guilt of past law breaking.

- c) Religions that are counterfeits of Christianity

These are modeled after or imitate the Christian Religion in a conceptual way. We examine the content of these religions and compare it with the Bible asking what do these world views say and provide in light of the intellectual sins identified above.

(1) Polytheistic perversions of Christianity - main error is polytheism

Mormons - believe in many gods as taught in the BoM, D&C, and PoGP. The BoM is additional revelation from God and it affirms the Bible as further revelation. The Bible standard is that no future revelation can contradict previous revelation (Gal 1:8-9; Rev 22:18-19). Their commitment to the Bible obligates them to judge the BoM by previously revelation.

(a) Show them that Mormon theology is in conflict with

the Bible (polytheism, justification, the person and work of Christ, etc.) and is thus self refuted. They will then say the Bible must be properly translated or interpreted. What is the authority for their translation or these so-called interpretations? (e.g. Genesis 50 and the prediction of Joseph Smith).

- (b) The BoM demonstrates tremendous internal inconsistencies including its beginnings in so called Reformed Egyptian, its affirmation by Joseph Smith -a convicted con man in New York and known polygamist, along with other contradiction. All of this is arbitrary speculation.

(2) Unitarian perversions of Christianity - main error is rejection of the Trinity

Islam- It has a personal god, it is monotheistic, and it has a revelation (the Koran) from a personal God and thus many see it as an alternative to Christianity. Mohammed claims to be the true prophet (replacing Jesus) of the one and true god; Allah. He practiced evangelism by the sword. Jews and Christianity have perverted the Bible and Mohammed has come to clear up the scripture. Moslems seem to parallel Christianity at every point, creating a Mexican standoff. We must turn to the *content* of both views:

- (a) As in Mormonism, the Koran affirms the Bible and then profoundly contradicts it. It is self refuted. e.g. The Koran teaches Judas was crucified in stead of Jesus. The deity of Christ and salvation is denied. The Koran cannot be true revelation. The Moslems will then say the Christians corrupted the Bible and the Koran corrects it but they have no manuscript basis for this. In the end their statements are arbitrary.

Conclusion: If the Bible is true then the Bible is false; but if the Bible is false, then the Koran is *still* false because the Koran claims the Bible is true!

- (b) The Koran is self contradicting as it teaches that Allah is so transcendent there is nothing in human experience that can be likened to Allah. Nothing in human language that is adequate to speak of Allah as all human language is based on human experience. Then *what is* the Koran? Therefore IF THE KORAN IS TRUE IT IS FALSE! (It cannot be what it claims to be)
- (c) Moslems and Jews cannot deal with or explain the prophecy or theology of the Old testament e.g. the temple, circumcision.

We present the Bible and the deity of Christ to them as a totality view. As C. S. Lewis said either Jesus is who he claimed he was or he was a manganic! He cannot be half way.

Orthodox Jew- The problem with contemporary Judaism is the same as in Jesus day. They claim to follow Moses but instead they follow the teachings of men (The Talmud-commentary on Moses) instead of the Old Testament. Their opinions are arbitrary.

- (3) Pseudo-messianic perversions of Christianity - a false messiah or leader who takes the place of Jesus as deliverer.
Moon, Jim Jones, David Koresh, etc
 - (a) Examine the arbitrary claims of the founder in relationship to the Bible they also affirm.
 - (i) Authority of their additional revelation
 - (ii) Their teachings that are in conflict with the Bible
 - (b) Examine the self contradicting claims in their teachings that are in tension with themselves
 - (c) These arbitrary claims do not provide the pre-conditions of intelligibility

Common Non-Christian World Views

World View	Presupposition	Source of Truth	Line of Reasoning	Answer
Christianity	In the beginning God.	Thy Word is truth which is absolute truth	Submission to the will and intellect of the absolute God.	None
Atheism	In the beginning man	Man is capable of judging of god's existence	There is no God I am my own god	Absurd and arbitrary opinion which assume theism and omniscience for meaning. Self refuting
Agnostic	Man starts from within himself without any outside special revelation	Man is capable of judging of god's existence.	God is unknown and unknowable	Same
Skeptic	Man starts from within himself without any outside special revelation	Man is capable of judging of god's existence	The existence of god is doubtful	Same
Modernist(Hegel)	The ultimacy of the laws of logic and individual A common sense thinking	Objective knowledge is tested by reason and truth is established outside God (chance)	God and the super-natural are not possible	Criteria for establishment is arbitrary and dependent on theism for meaning
Cultural Relativist	Everything is relative to the speaker=s mind --no moral judgements made	Man is the source and measure of all truth	All truth is relative	The absolute nature of this view of truth is self refuting
Nihilist (Postmod)	Everything is relative to the speaker's mind--no moral judgements made	Relative truth flows out of the individual as self is the source of truth	There is no truth (absolute truth)	This itself is an absolute (and arbitrary) statement of truth
Theo. Liberal	Man's sincerity and imagination can produce a religion that makes all happy	Truth is learned by an absolute dependence on subjective understanding	God is what I sense and taste him to be	All judgments or evaluation of God is arbitrary speculation and rebellion
Neo-Orthodox	Man=s subjective judgement is the beginning of reality and ultimately determinative of god	Truth is obtained as man is empowered by god through existential encounter	The Bible becomes the word of God as it speaks to me	You have become your own god!
RCC/ EOC	Reality begins with man guessing about god, the Bible and religion	Truth is found in the Bible as corrected by tradition & experience.	Roman Catholic/EOC teachings are ultimate	Same
Orthodox Jew	Same	Truth is found in the Bible as informed by Jewish tradition (Talmud) & speculation	Denial of the Messiah along with other humanist claims	Same
Muslim	Same	Truth is found in the Bible as Cleaned up by the Koran	The Scriptures must be rejected for the Koran	Same
Mormon	Same	Acceptance of Joseph Smith's corrections & addition to the Bible	The Scriptures must be rejected for Mormon teaching through a subjective conclusion	Same

XIV. The Use of Evidence

Many badly misrepresent presuppositionalism as Afideist@ and represent it as holding that God cannot be known through nature and theistic proof, but only by faith -- a faith independent of all rational evidence. See Sproul, Gersner, and Lindsey, p.27, 34, 35,185. While Van Til went to great length to teach against the notion on fideism, many force him into their own preconception of him while ignoring his principle teachings: Note the following statements by Van Til:

- Van Til explicitly criticized fideism for asking people to believe in their hearts what they allow to be intellectually indefensible. *Christian Theistic Evidences*. P. 37
- Van Til taught that AThere is objective evidence in abundance . . . If the theistic proof is constructed as it ought to be constructed, it is objectively valid, whatever the attitude of those to whom it come may be. *Common Grace*, p.49.
- Van Til refused to follow Kuyper=s view on the uselessness of reasoning with the natural man. *Defense of the Faith*, 1st ed., p.363.
- Van Til wrote, AI do not reject the theistic proofs, Ahistorical apologetics is absolutely necessary and indispensable. and Christianity is the only reasonable position to hold *Defense of the Faith*, p. 256; *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, p. 146, *Common Grace*, p.62.
- See Greg Bahnsen, A Critique of AClassical Apologetics in *The Presbyterian Journal*, December 4, 1985, 6-8,11.

A summary of Nataro, Van Til and the use of evidence

A. Introduction

1. Is there a place for the use of evidence in Van Tills apologetic? Can they be used in a presuppositional apologetic?
2. Is dialog possible over empirical facts?
3. The purpose of this discussion is to show that evidences and presuppositions work together in Van Til's system. pp. 6-9

B. The Legitimacy of Evidences

1. Presuppositional Apologetics does not allow for validation based on brute facts, facts that do not depend on God's revelation for interpretation.
2. Van Til is charged with avoiding objective reality, and leaving men with a defenseless faith. Van Til is viewed as Anti-evidence.
3. Van Til allows for the use of reason and evidence
 - a) . . . we present the message and evidence for the Christian position as clearly as possible . . .

- b) Christianity is not irrational but >is capable of rational defense.
- c) In *Defense of the Faith*, Van Til writes, AI do not reject >theistic proofs= but merely insist on formulating them in such a way as not to compromise the doctrines of Scripture. p.17

4. Evidences can operate in keeping with what Van Til calls the Self-attestation of Scripture.

- a) Facts are proper for discussion as part of one=s presupposition.
- b) If evidences are viewed as within the authority of Scripture they are acceptable.
- c) If they are viewed independent of Scripture or autonomously, then they are not valid.
- d) Since nothing is epistemologically outside of Scripture, evidences provide dependent verification rather than independent verification (a kind of verification).
- e) Thus evidence can operate within Van Tills Self-attesting concept of Scripture.
- f) This is dependent verification p. 19

5. Thus Van Til makes a distinction between induction (a posteriori reasoning from the particular Facts to the general truths) and deduction (a priori reasoning from the general to the particular facts); facts and the philosophy of facts, evidences and presuppositions. Legitimate reasoning and uses of Christian evidences is a part of a correct apologetic pp. 19-20

Evidences are presented within revealed truth and interpreted by revealed truth.

C. Evidences, Apologetics and Theology

1. Apologetics and evidences (a division of the same) must be governed from theology.
2. Apologetics is a broad concern covering every aspect of theology pp. 24-25.
 - a) Theology is equally broad covering all areas of life as theology speaks to all areas.
 - b) Theology involve a world view.
 - c) Theology makes positive statements while apologetics makes a defense of those statements.
 - d) This is a difference in emphasis.
3. Apologetics overlaps with witnessing and ethics.
 - a) Ethics emphasizes man's obligations.
 - b) Witness focuses on the character of a Christian before an unbelieving world.
 - c) Thus apologetics and witnessing are two parts of the same whole.

Witnessing looks to what a Christian is.

I am a Christian Matt 4:19 make

Acts 1:8 be, Acts 22:14'15 be.

Apologetics looks to what a Christian does.

I present this e.g. make a defense

Within this:

Evidences deal largely with the historical.

**Apologetics deals largely with the philosophical
and theological. a conflict between
philosophies of life.**

4. In conclusion, evidences are a part of apologetics and both are inseparable from theology p. 27.
 - a) Both require a theological base.
 - b) Christian evidences, like Christian apologetics, require a particular interpretation, namely, a Christian one.
 - c) It is not Pagan evidence and Christian apologetics.
5. By definition, Evidences are the application of Scripture to controversies primarily of a factual nature. When pagan science raises questions, Christian evidence gives answers p. 28.
***These are not neutral and they are not presented neutral.

D. Two Senses of Knowing

1. Van Til has placed equal stress on man's inability to know and understand spiritual things and the truth man knows and suppresses. Rom 1.
2. Man in his original state was born in perfect relationship with God, having ethical obligations to God. With the entrance of sin, man is either a believer or an unbeliever with respect to his Creator. (Like Adam they have transgressed the covenant Hosea 6:7).
3. Both the non-believer and the believer know God but the unbeliever does not know God as he ought.
4. Knowledge becomes an ethical matter as all knowledge entails obligation.
 - a) For Van Til, every act of man is moral.
 - b) The question is thus whether man accepts or rejects or obeys or disobeys God's will.
5. Through natural revelation, man possesses knowledge of God as Creator, etc... (Romans 1:20 and Psalm 19:1).
 - a) Such knowledge on the part of unbelievers is Intellectual and Theoretically correct seeing things out of context (borrowed out of context). Note: true knowledge flows out of moral obedience to God.
 - b) The sinner makes every effort to avoid the ethical implications of these

facts.

6. The sinner is thus set against God as a matter of principle.
 - a) He cannot avoid the truth, nor can he accept it.
 - b) Knowledge in an intellectual sense and knowledge in a proper sense differ in that the former person refuses to bow to the Lord.
 - c) It lacks the fear of God (Proverbs 1:7) and the honor of God (Romans 1:21).
 - d) It is knowing God without loving God.
7. The sinner's knowledge renders him without excuse.
8. The sinner may also possess much other truth which is actually borrowed or lifted out of its context.
 - a) See the illustration of scientist's knowledge of apples, pp. 38-39.
 - b) The non-believer both knows and fails to know about apples.
 - c) He has knowledge from God and of God and yet he suppresses it in ungodliness.
9. The apologist cannot build on the sinner's knowledge as it is borrowed knowledge.
 - a) The sinner's debased interpretation must be abandoned for the bedrock of the Christian presupposition.
 - b) The point of contact is thus a head-on collision with the natural man in which borrowed truths are returned to their rightful place and man comes to know God as he ought.
 - c) Thus evidence must be used in a **right** way.
10. The natural man's knowledge represents no advance toward biblical knowledge if grounded in non-biblical presuppositions. True knowledge is for the purpose of glorifying God; a matter which is not optional.
11. Thus, the sinner's problem is not that his knowledge is incomplete.
 - a) This must be taken into account in apologetics.
 - b) Man's problem of knowing centers on his rebellion against the Lord.
 - c) The Christian must confront men with the claims of that Lord.
12. While natural revelation declares God's glory, the unbeliever wages warfare by twisting each fact p. 42.
 - a) No matter how hard he tries, he cannot completely rid himself of the knowledge that continually arises.
 - b) He can never leave the covenantal context in which he was created.

E. Epistemological Neutrality

1. The question to be addressed is can the non-Christian suspend disbelief or adopt a neutral standpoint from which to evaluate the claims of

scripture.

- a) Question Is the Non-believer >open?
Is he neutral?
Can the case for Christianity be brought before a
neutral court?

- b. Answer No
 - (1) He is not open to investigation.
 - (2) The evidence is not open to all men (neutral).

2. Evidentialists see man as having Provisional neutrality that is being Somewhat neutral, and not hopelessly biased.

- a) Apologetics is seen as bringing sinners to neutrality in order to present the Gospel in a neutral court.
- b) This is done by reasoning with him and establishing probability with evidence.
 - (1) They see the facts in themselves providing adequate criteria for choosing among variant interpretations of the facts.
 - (2) Evidences are used to prove the Scriptures are authentic, historical credible, generally trustworthy, before they prove that they are inspired (Warfield, p 47).

3. Facts do not speak for themselves. The human mind makes its contribution to the knowledge it obtains.

- a) All facts are significant because God made them fit a particular interpretation.
- b) For any fact to be a fact it must be a revelatory fact.
- c) The sinner will not accept the facts of natural revelation even if they are clear.
- d) Note illustration on p.48 Father and son.

4. The need is for special revelation.

- a) God's truth to interpret facts.
- b) An apologetic discussion must turn back to the matter of presuppositions.
- c) The unbeliever must be asked to state his starting point.

5. The evidentialist under estimates the controlling effect of sinful rebellion upon one's ability to perceive the factual evidences.

- a) They can only be received with genuine understanding after one embraces the Christian presupposition.
- b) Thus Warfield's statement, that All minds are of the same essential structure.

6. Facts and evidence must be presented within their proper theological framework for interpretation.

F. Evidence and Proof

1. Van Til concludes that the sinful orientation of autonomous man results in what he calls the Obscurations of the facts.
2. While the facts are obscure, they still remain perspicuous (clear) to all. The evidence is open to the investigators even if they are not open to the evidence.
3. Theistic proofs are valid as far as they reflect the revelation of God.
 - a) They are a restatement of the revelation of God and presuppose God rather than presuppose man's autonomy.
 - b) True meaning can only be given to the evidence when it is set in reference to the sovereign Lord of Scripture.
4. The evidence, then gives absolute proof, not probability.
 - a) Everything is evidence, every fact, every object, every event properly understood is evidence.
 - b) All of this proves with absolute validity the truth of God's Word.
5. The proof which evidence gives must be seen as dealing with **objective revelation**, regardless of whether man believes or not.
 - a) Proof exists even if man does not believe. Acts 1:3
 - b) Evidentialists such as Warfield and Pinnock underestimate the weight of the evidence p. 59.
6. Van Til, The argument may be poorly stated, and may never be adequately stated. But in itself the argument is absolutely sound.
 - a) Disbelief or Obscuration of the facts does not detract from the clarity or weight of the evidence.
 - b) For Van Til proof is not what men uniformly believe but what men **ought** uniformly to believe p. 61.
7. Proof must operate in full conformity with the biblical notion of God.
 - a) In this way, proof recognizes the evidences for what God has made them to be, absolute valid proof.--p.62.
 - b) When the evidences are seen within the framework of God as the Lord over all facts, that evidence is appreciated to constitute nothing less than absolutely valid proof for the Christian system p. 62.
8. The same should be said with respect to the matter of verification.
 - a) While Van Til does not directly address the issue, Notaro suggests that Van Til would argue for conclusive verification; that all facts declare the glory of God or they say nothing at all.
 - b) This, of course, is true within the framework of Christian theistic presuppositions p. 77.

G. The Presentation of Evidence

1. Presentation must always be in the form of the indirect approach (valid). This approach allows for the importance of Christian presuppositions in the **interpretation** of evidence.
 - a) The direct approach (invalid) attempts to introduce evidence without placing it in a biblical framework.
 - b) The unbeliever will constantly empty these truths of their God-given meaning.
 - c) For Van Til, All knowledge is interrelated, and if one knows >nature= truly, one also knows nature's God truly.
 - d) The converse is also true.
2. Unbelievers redefine all facts to mean something other than what they truly are.
 - a) Even the fact of the resurrection can be Believed by the non-Christian and yet not be the same fact at all.
 - b) The similarity of belief between a Christian and a non-Christian extends only as far as the non-Christian is inconsistent with his anti-biblical principles p. 80.
3. There are no facts other than God=s facts.
 - a) To substitute any other interpretation of the world for God's interpretation is to >exchange the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25) C p. 80.
 - (1) For this reason appeals to evidence cannot be direct.
 - (2) Such a direct appeal would only account for nothing.
4. An indirect appeal to evidences attempts to bring the unbeliever's attention **back to the facts** by confronting him with the **God** of the facts. The self-attesting Christ of Scripture becomes the apologetic starting point. p. 81.
5. Van Til notes, This does not imply that we must always and in every instance bring in the discussion of authority at the outset of every argument with those we seek to win for Christianity. This may frequently be omitted, if only we ourselves do not fall into the temptation of thinking that we can stand on neutral ground with those who hold to a non-Christian position. *Christian Theological Evidences*, p.54.
 - a) One may start with an epistemological starting point or with a temporal starting point (having to do with the sequence of various topics discussed).
 - b) In every instance the challenge for the apologist is to treat the facts in a way that calls the God of Scripture-including the Christian system C into view p. 86.
6. The apologist may even use the language coined by the non-believer.
 - a) In doing so he must remain true to the scriptural message; contrasting

- Christian meanings with non-Christian meanings.
- b) Such use of evidence becomes a vehicle for introduction of the Christian system but will fade into the background as Christian presuppositions are introduced.
7. In summary, properly interpreted evidences and theistic proofs are in fact, a restatement of the revelation of God.
- a) They either say what the Scriptures say or they say nothing at all.
 - b) Fundamentally, presuppositions and evidences are one. (Frame in Notaro p. 92).
 - c) Any event in history may be viewed as a reminder of God's creation, His providence, man's fallen condition, Christ's Lordship, etc...
 - d) When a fact is interpreted according to the norms of Scripture, that fact becomes as expression of Scripture's authority p. 94.
 - e) Such evidences participate in the Bible's self-attestation and become occasions for Scripture's claim on its own behalf. They **remind** the unbeliever of God's truth.
 - f) They are thus Christian **theistic** evidences p. 95.

H. Scriptural Examples

1. John 20:24-29

- a) In this post-resurrection account Thomas asks to see the nail prints in the hands of Jesus in order to believe.
- b) Thomas's response is My Lord and my God, indicating Jesus demonstrated more than his wounds but also his authority.
- c) There is no evidence Thomas ever touched Jesus's hands but rather that he repented of his doubt and affirmed Christ's authority.
- d) Jesus commends those who believe without seeing.

2. Acts 1:3

- a) Here Luke reports that Jesus appeared to his disciples with many convincing proofs.
- b) It is significant that these proofs are offered in the specific context of speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God.
- c) Presuppositions are presented with the evidence.

3. Acts 17: 22-34

- a) In the midst of this speech, Paul brings up the resurrection (vs 31-32) in the context of the person, work, and judging power of Christ.
- b) The reaction of the crowd (some sneer) is further indication that those who heard the evidence also knew the presuppositions associated with it.

4. Acts 26

- a) Here Paul stands before Agrippa and argues for the resurrection.
- b) It is evident from the passage (esp vs 6, 8, ;22-23) that Paul equally presents this evidence and the biblical framework of presuppositions.
- c) The answer to the question of verse 8 is significant: If one presupposes the biblical God, then the idea of a resurrection from the dead is not incredible at all p. 119.

5. 1 Cor 15

- a) Here Paul teaches the resurrection with great clarity in light of the Gospel presented in vs 1-4.
- b) The certainty of other Christian teaching is directly associated with the resurrection (vs 13-19).

XV. Empirical Systems

A. Introduction

1. In contrast to presuppositional apologetics many have chosen to defend Christian theism using an evidential/historical method.
 - a) Reymond terms these Empirical apologists for their epistemological theory is based ultimately upon sense data.
 - b) These empirical apologists seek to ground the truth claims of Christianity upon scientifically demonstrable or sensory foundations Reymond p. 117.
2. In this relationship, Christian revelation, not intended to displace or to function as the ground of the philosophical prolegomenon, presupposes the philosophical prolegomenon, and presumably confirms and supplements it Reymond, p. 117.
3. Empirical apologetics as a [form of] natural theology attempts then to ground the unbeliever=s initial assent to certain Christian truths on an induction from an empirical >given,= this assent to be followed by a call to a more specific commitment to the Christian faith on the ground of special revelation. Reymond, p. 117.
4. Furthermore, this approach implies that men, apart from Christ, have by their own autonomous reasoning, justified their claimed privilege to judge any and all other truth claims.

B. Early Empirical Apologists

1. Justin Martyr (c. 100-165)
 - a) In his *Apology*, gives many analogies of Christian doctrine in Greek Philosophy.
 - b) The God of Christianity was viewed as the highest form of the god spoken of in Greek philosophy.
 - c) This was also the position of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Tertullian.
2. Augustine of Hippo (c. 354-430)
 - a) In his early writings, sought to validate the Christian faith by grounding knowledge in logic.
 - b) This represented the thinking of the Neoplatonists of his day and sought to provide a rationalistic prolegomenon as the foundation for Christian truth.
 - c) Anselm followed a similar commitment.
3. Thomas Aquinas (c. 1224-1274)
 - a) For Aquinas, the last and highest truth arrived at by philosophy and the

first and lowest truth disclosed by revelation is the existence of God.

b) He was committed to an empirical epistemology.

c) Aquinas= Five ways to validate the existence of God

(1) Argument from motion

(a) Every motion requires an explanatory cause.

(b) A first mover is necessary which itself is not moved by anything.

(c) This is God.

(2) Argument from efficient causation

(a) The being of a cause requires an efficient cause outside itself.

(b) This requires a first efficient cause which Aall would agree is God.

(3) Argument from contingency

(a) Since there is never a time when something did not exist a prior cause for existence is necessary.

(b) This first necessary being is God, says Aquinas.

(4) Argument from perfection in things

(a) The degree of perfection in things can only be understood against the back drop of an absolute norm.

(b) This implies an unlimited perfect being.

(c) This is God.

(5) Argument from purpose

The final end and purpose of entities demands the existence of a final purpose; namely God.

d) Analysis Reymond, p. 122

(1) It is often observed that Aquinas's empiricism ends in skepticism.

(2) These arguments do not compel belief in the true God.

(3) Furthermore, these arguments posses internal difficulty.

(4) They assume more than they prove.

(5) Furthermore, the conclusion of the arguments are appealed to uncritically to support the premise.

C. Contemporary Empirical Systems

1. J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. C Inductivistic Reformulation of the Theistic Proofs

a) He insists that the theistic proofs constitute valuable evidence for the truthfulness of the Christian faith.

b) After reworking these arguments to make them Truly inductive, Buswell sees them as establishing a presumption in favor of faith in the God of the Bible.

c) He thus argues inductively from empirical data the probability of God.

d) Man is seen as not being able to understand the true nature of the universe not because of unwillingness and inability but because of lack of full and certain testimony in the

evidential universe itself.

2. E. J. Carnell Systematic Consistency

- a) Carnell was a strong orthodox Christian who writes a powerful defense of the scriptures as self-authenticating in presuppositional style.
- b) Nevertheless, Carnell resorts to traditional methodology by viewing his presuppositional starting point as his Logical starting point.
- c) Carnell goes on to insist that systematic consistency is the test of truth.
- d) All truth must be obedient to the law of contradiction and be totally consistent and externally true to the totality of man's experience.
- e) The Christian apologist is faced with first building a probability case for God (Pre-Evangelism) before he can present the Gospel.

Note Apostate autonomous man is asked to determine what can and cannot be true about the Christian Scriptures.

3. Francis Schaeffer Evangelistic Apologetics

- a) Schaeffer was a student of Van Til and one deeply concerned with confronting the thinking of his day with Biblical Christianity.
- b) Schaeffer insisted that the apologist had to understand the thinking of his times and develop an effective method of communication.
- c) This message was evangelistic.
- d) Such a message describes the condition of despair of the unbeliever in strong philosophical language.
- e) Modern man, in his depravity, has Escaped from reason, in order to retain his rationalism.
- f) While insisting that the unbeliever is to be spoken to in presuppositional terms, Schaeffer calls upon the unbeliever as well as the believer to both continue to examine the validity of Christianity based on the time-space evidence. His writings are difficult to understand and include both presuppositional methodology and a test for truth devised by and acceptable to apostate man.
- g) Schaeffer's work at L'Abri in preparing young college students to understand the nature of the attack upon Christianity was often more destructive to their faith than constructive.

4. John Warwick Montgomery Historical Approach to Christ's Claims

- a) Montgomery, a Lutheran evangelical, insisted that any defense of Christianity must be evidential.

- b) In classic legal terms, Montgomery insists that no defense of Christianity can be made without testimonial and material evidence.
- c) In short, no evidence, no defense.
- d) Thus the apologetic enterprise becomes the presentation of empirical evidence to prove the probability of the Christian world view to the unbeliever.
- e) Montgomery himself claims to have been brought to Christ 11 by the historical evidence in behalf of Jesus's claims. *Historical Claims*, p. 13.
- f) He is the most outspoken of contemporary semi-rationalists.

5. Clark Pinnock Evidential Methodology

- a) A classic Arminian who writes, prior to his later doctrinal drift, in a similar vein as Schaeffer.
- b) Pinnock insists that one's defense must be molded by the intellectual climate of his day in order to be effective and relevant.
- c) He then calls upon the unbeliever to take up the proven method for ascertaining truth, the empirical method, and apply it to the biblical records.
- d) He places great emphasis upon historical evidence to guide this process.
- e) In his book on *Biblical Revelation* he insists that the gospel must be sustained by historical data or it cannot be sustained at all.
- f) His statements are frequently unguarded and theologically weak.

6. Josh McDowell Evidential Methodology

- a) A major contributor to the field of apologetics with several significant volumes of evidence.
- b) He sees this evidence as providing the basis for faith.
- c) He appeals to the facts of history as indisputable facts and seeks to inquire whether the Christian interpretation of these facts is not by far the most logical.
- d) He makes great use of the works of Montgomery, Pinnock, Ramm, and Geisler in his introduction.
- e) He sees faith as not blind but as faith based on evidence.
- f) Faith is the assurance of the heart in the adequacy of the evidence.
- g) McDowell does not challenge man's autonomy but seeks to inform him with massive and strong evidence.

7. Norman Geisler Inductive Reasoning

- a) Geisler is a Lutheran Arminian with strong Roman Catholic training at Loyola in Chicago.
- b) He is a significant influence on contemporary evangelical apologetics.
- c) Geisler spends considerable time rejecting traditional apologetic methodologies including Rationalism, Fideism, Experientialism, Evidentialism, Pragmatism, and Combinationalism (test for systematic consistency).

- d) He see each one of these as inadequate to definitively establish one world view above another.
- e) He then seeks to present his own Adequate Test for Truth.
- f) This test includes **undeniability** as the test for truth of a world view and **unaffirmability** as the test for the falsity of a world view.
- g) Once Geisler has used this test to establish Christianity, he then resorts to consistency and comprehensiveness to determine the probability of what fits into this system as true.
- h) In summary, Christianity best explains all the known facts in the most consistent way and evangelical Christianity qualifies as the most systematically coherent theistic view on all three tests: consistency, empirical adequacy, and experiential relevance.
- i) Logic and philosophical argument become the basis upon which truth is believed.

8. Ronald B. Mayers Evidential/Rational Approach

- a) A recent work by a Western graduate which proposes a system which utilizes Presuppositions and Evidences.
- b) Mayers unfortunately sees the Asides as rationalism and fideism leaving no room for Van Tills position.
- c) It attempts an apologetic which stresses the need for an evidential/rational presentation of the gospel while not forgetting the ethical predicament of depravity.
- d) Mayers frequently writes like Hodge allowing for the work of evidences to build a probability case for God.
- e) He often refers to presuppositional issues in his Balanced apologetic, but stops short of applying their profound implications for the apologist.
- f) He sees evidence as building a probability case for truth and then stresses the need for Biblical interpretation for such facts.
- g) At this point, Mayers is much like Carnell but writes in a strange, unclear, and often contradicting manner.

9. John H. Gerstner C Reasons For Faith

- a) In his book, *Reasons for Faith*, Gerstner seeks to establish the reasonableness and excellence of Christianity.
- b) In doing so, he asserts that the human mind is a reliable guide to truth.
- c) Careful and critical use of reason can lead to the conclusion of the existence of a divine being.
- d) To this special revelation is added with the truth of Scripture which provide further evidence.
- e) Gerstner concludes his book with what he calls The Pragmatic Test.

10. Sproul/Gerstner/Lindsey A Rational Defense

- a) In a recent and significant book, these authors argue strongly against the circular reasoning of presuppositionalism with a

vengeance!

- b) It is impossible for them to accept the idea of starting with what one seeks to prove.
- c) They argue that one must start with man where man is and proceed to God.
- d) Man thus makes use of laws of logic, such as non-contradiction, with which he is endowed, to understand God.
- e) Reasoning thus becomes linear rather than circular.
- f) They thus affirm the primacy of the mind in the Christian faith.
- g) They seek to use reason to assert a rational defense for Christianity Without rationalism.
- h) Apologetics in the classical sense (in distinction from presuppositionalism), gives a reasonable modern response to reasonable modern people who want a reason why they should believe.
- i) It is amazing to see such a line of argument in light of their strong theological commitment to the condition of the human heart.

11. J.P. Moreland C Permissible Belief

- a) In the Geisler tradition, Moreland presents a vast amount of evidence, beginning from cosmology, to contribute to the view that belief that the Christian God exists is at least permissible.
- b) The author would go on to argue obligatory.
- c) His arguments appeal to the unbeliever as a probability case.
- d) He concludes that it is rational to believe that God exists.

Gordon R. Lewis's Summary of Apologetic Systems

reproduced from *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1976), p.286

Issues in Apologetic Systems	Buswell	Hackett	Clark	Van Til	Barrett	Carnell
Logical Starting Point	Empirical Data	Empirical data and rational principles	Axioms of: Logic, God, Bible	Presuppositions of: Autonomous Scripture and the Triune God	Testimony to Christian experience	Hypothesis of: The Triune God of the Bible
Common Ground or Point of Contact	All Facts	Facts and the mind=s thought-forms	The mind=s thought forms	No common ground epistemologically in principle. Actually dependence on God, suppression of awareness of God, guilt	No significant common ground prior to conversion experience	Facts, Law of non-contradiction, the quest for values, law of morality and love
Test for Truth	Integration (Correspondence)	Coherence	Consistency	Self-authenticating biblical claims	Self-authenticating experience	Systematic Consistency (Coherence)
Role of Reason	Pure Induction	Rational Induction	Pure Deduction	Interpretation of Scripture and confessions	Interpretation of experience	Verification of hypotheses by all inner and outer experience
Basis of Faith in God, Christ and Scripture	Intellectual Probability	Rational Demonstration	Syllogistic Certainty	Scriptural Authority	Psychological Certitude	Intellectual Probability and Moral Certainty